

# Discards of Sovereignty: An Analysis of the Biopolitical Machinery of Waste in Beirut

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THIS THESIS IS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE  
DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICS, PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

LANCASTER UNIVERSITY

LANCASTER

MAY 2023

## DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is my own work and that it has not been submitted in any form for the award of a higher degree elsewhere.

Word count: 72,252

## ABSTRACT

Sovereign power conditions the politics of waste through formal and informal regulation, such as legal frameworks and clientelist networks. These mechanisms of control have resulted in the political exclusion and marginalisation of *others* and the destruction of ecosystems. In contested urban spaces (CUS) especially, waste may be used to regulate and control any non-dominant groups through the establishment of hostile environments, threatening their quality of life. Due to the unequal power relations, the quality life of *others* who are politically excluded is particularly at stake. If unchecked, these mechanisms of sovereign power can thrive leading to marginalisation, suppression, and segregation. This research focuses on the intersection of biopolitics, waste, and contested urban spaces, exploring how sovereign power regulates and controls people and the environment through waste. Specifically, this thesis proposes a conceptual framework – the biopolitical machinery of waste – which synthesises biopolitics, the politics of waste, and contested urban spaces. It provides a holistic approach to the socio-political and material ordering of waste by sovereignties and wastes impact on urban spaces. The framework is applied to the case study of Beirut, which has faced a waste crisis for over 25 years that has been facilitated by sovereign power, sectarian politics, and the power sharing system. It is used to analyse the intersectional and pluralistic nature of waste-related issues in Beirut and emphasises the need for a more comprehensive approach to waste that considers sovereign power. Ultimately, this research shed light on the multifaceted ways in which sovereign power regulates and controls people and the environment through waste.

# Acknowledgments

This research has emerged from a keen interest in the impact of environmental crises and the role of sovereign power in facilitating and contributing to these challenges. The main ideas of this research originated back to my time as a master's student and engagement with an internship in the Richardson Institute in 2016. At the time, I was especially captivated by the lack of research in environmental politics across the Middle East. Since then, I have been fortunate to have the support and critical engagement of colleagues, friends, family, and all the other people I have met along the way. My aims for this thesis would not have been possible without their support.

First, I would like to thank my supervisor, Simon Mabon, for his continuous support and guidance during my PhD. I would like to thank him for his encouragement and motivation during this journey and for creating a supportive environment through the PhD group and the countless SEPAD events. I would also like to thank him for all the wonderful opportunities, especially as a PhD Fellow at SEPAD.

A special and heartfelt thanks to my friends. Thank you, Rosie Mutton, for all the love and endless support during my PhD. I am also extremely grateful to Kristin and Håvard Ulvhaug for your kindness and encouragement. I also want to thank Samii and Gareth Bowden, Johanne Mørland Svendsen and Sigrid Lindseth Haugereid for your friendship and support.

Thank you to my family for your endless love and for supporting me on this journey. I am incredibly grateful to my mother Hilde Gundersen, grandmother Berit Gundersen, and sister Ina Gundersen for their unwavering support. Thanks to my siblings Sarah, Abi, and Minah Kumarasamy and my father Param Kumarasamy. A special thanks to my sister Sarah who has sent me endless messages of motivation. I would also like to thank my in-laws, Heath and Steve Boothroyd, for their kind words of encouragement and comments on my thesis. I am grateful to have such a fantastic family.

Finally, and most importantly, my deepest thanks to my husband, Simon Boothroyd. Thank you for all the love, support, for all your comments, and advice; I would not have been able to do this without you.

# Contents

ABSTRACT	iii
ACRONYMS	7
o INTRODUCTION	9
o.1 The Research Problem . . . . .	13
o.1.1 The Research Questions and Key Contributions . . . . .	14
o.2 Biopolitical Debates and Waste in Contested Urban Spaces (CUS) . . . . .	19
o.2.1 Biopolitics in CUS . . . . .	19
o.2.2 Biopolitics in Discard Studies . . . . .	23
o.2.3 Note on Agency and Resistance . . . . .	33
o.3 Intersectional Debates in Beirut . . . . .	35
o.3.1 Waste . . . . .	37
o.3.2 Sovereign Power . . . . .	42
o.3.3 Others . . . . .	48
o.3.4 Contested Urban Spaces (CUS) . . . . .	52
o.4 Methodology . . . . .	58
o.4.1 Methodological Challenges . . . . .	59
o.4.2 Single-Case Study Research Design . . . . .	60
o.4.3 Reflexivity and Positionality . . . . .	63
o.4.4 Research Process . . . . .	65
o.4.5 Documentary Data and Thematic Analysis . . . . .	67
o.4.6 Geospatial Data and Spatial Analysis . . . . .	71
o.5 Thesis Outline . . . . .	75
I THE BIOPOLITICS OF WASTE IN CUS	78
I.1 Polity . . . . .	84
I.1.1 The State of Exception . . . . .	85
I.1.2 Spaces of Exception and Nested Sovereignities . . . . .	88
I.1.3 The Biopolitical Machinery of Waste in CUS . . . . .	94
I.2 Politics . . . . .	97

1.2.1	Bare Life . . . . .	98
1.2.2	Bare Life and Sectarian Politics . . . . .	101
1.2.3	The Socio-Political Ordering of Waste in CUS . . . . .	107
1.3	Governing . . . . .	112
1.3.1	The Camp . . . . .	114
1.3.2	The Camp, Territory, and Urban Geography . . . . .	118
1.3.3	The Material Ordering of Waste in CUS . . . . .	122
1.4	Conclusion . . . . .	126
<b>2</b>	<b>POLITY</b>	<b>129</b>
2.1	Nested Sovereignties . . . . .	131
2.1.1	The Taif Agreement . . . . .	135
2.1.2	The Ordering of Waste . . . . .	141
2.2	Formal Power Structures . . . . .	152
2.2.1	Formal Waste Structures . . . . .	158
2.3	Informal Power Structures . . . . .	164
2.3.1	Informal Waste Structures . . . . .	167
2.4	Conclusion . . . . .	171
<b>3</b>	<b>POLITICS</b>	<b>173</b>
3.1	Marginalisation . . . . .	176
3.1.1	Waste Workers and Waste Pickers . . . . .	186
3.2	Contestation . . . . .	194
3.2.1	Waste-Impacted Communities . . . . .	201
3.3	Movement Activism . . . . .	206
3.3.1	Waste Activism . . . . .	211
3.4	Conclusion . . . . .	217
<b>4</b>	<b>GOVERNING</b>	<b>220</b>
4.1	Territorial Stigmatisation . . . . .	224
4.1.1	Deteriorating Waste Structures . . . . .	228
4.2	Violent Segregation . . . . .	233
4.2.1	The Toxic Waste Scandal . . . . .	235
4.3	Postwar Reconstruction . . . . .	239
4.3.1	The Sacrifice Zone of Reconstruction . . . . .	247
4.4	Urban Decay and Abandonment . . . . .	256
4.4.1	The Regeneration of Toxic Sacrifice Zones . . . . .	259
4.4.2	The Beirut Explosion . . . . .	267
4.5	Conclusion . . . . .	273
<b>5</b>	<b>CONCLUSION</b>	<b>275</b>

5.1	Claims to Originality . . . . .	276
5.2	Research Questions . . . . .	279
5.2.1	Polity . . . . .	280
5.2.2	Politics . . . . .	281
5.2.3	Governing . . . . .	283
5.3	Policy implications . . . . .	284
5.4	Limitations and Further Research . . . . .	286
	<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>	<b>289</b>
	<b>APPENDIX A SATELLITE DATA</b>	<b>346</b>
	<b>APPENDIX B SELECTED SWM LEGAL FRAMEWORKS</b>	<b>348</b>
	<b>APPENDIX C CDR CONTRACTS</b>	<b>352</b>

# List of Figures

i	Sovereign Power, Waste and Others Research Gap in Beirut . . . . .	37
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# List of Tables

1.1	The Biopolitical Machinery of Waste in CUS. . . . .	79
2.1	Selected Legal Frameworks on Waste . . . . .	158
A.1	Satellite Data . . . . .	346
B.1	Selected legal frameworks <sup>1</sup> . . . . .	348
C.1	CDR Contracts <sup>2</sup> . . . . .	353

# List of Maps

1	Greater Beirut and Selected Waste Management Sites in 2023 . . . . .	12
2	Map of the Urban Region of Beirut, Including Key Municipalities . . . . .	54
2.1	Urban Region and Key Waste Management Sites in 2023 . . . . .	159
4.1	The Reconstruction of Downtown Beirut and Expansion of Bourj Hammoud Dumpsite in 1990 and 2000 . . . . .	249
4.2	The Establishment of Costa Brava Dumpsite . . . . .	254
4.3	The Construction and Expansion of Bouj Hammoud Landfill . . . . .	261
4.4	The Construction and Expansion of Costa Brava Landfill . . . . .	264
4.5	Beirut Explosion and Critical Waste Management Facilities . . . . .	271

# Acronyms

## THEORY AND METHOD

<b>CUS</b>	Contested Urban Spaces
<b>ESA</b>	European Space Agency
<b>FCDO</b>	Foreign Commonwealth & Development Office
<b>GHSL</b>	Global Human Settlement Layer
<b>GIS</b>	Geographic Information System
<b>UPE</b>	Urban Political Ecology
<b>USGS</b>	United States Geological Survey

## WASTE ORGANISATION

<b>C&amp;D</b>	Construction and Demolition waste
<b>EIA</b>	Environmental Impact Assessment
<b>ISWML</b>	Integrated Solid Waste Management Law
<b>MSW</b>	Municipal Solid Waste
<b>NSWCC</b>	National Solid Waste Coordination Committee
<b>NSWMA</b>	National Solid Waste Management Authority
<b>PPE</b>	Personal Protective Equipment
<b>SWM</b>	Solid Waste Management

## GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES IN LEBANON

<b>BCD</b>	Beirut Central District
<b>BML</b>	Beirut and Mount Lebanon
<b>CDR</b>	Council for Development and Reconstruction
<b>CEDRE</b>	Conférence Economique Pour le Développement par les Réformes et avec les Entreprises

<b>CoM</b>	Council of Ministers
<b>CoS</b>	Council of the South
<b>HDC</b>	Higher Defence Council
<b>IDPs</b>	Internally Displaced Persons
<b>ISF</b>	Internal Security Forces
<b>LAF</b>	Lebanese Armed Forces
<b>LMI</b>	Lebanese Military Intelligence
<b>MoB</b>	Municipality of Beirut
<b>MoBH</b>	Municipality of Bourj Hammoud
<b>MoD</b>	Ministry of the Defense
<b>MoE</b>	Ministry of the Environment
<b>MOL</b>	Ministry of Labour
<b>MPWT</b>	Ministry of Public Works and Transport

#### POLITICAL GROUPS

<b>LFM</b>	Lebanese Forces Militia
<b>PLO</b>	Palestinian Liberation Organisation

#### NGO's

<b>AOAV</b>	Action on Armed Violence
<b>GGRIL</b>	Green Glass Recycling Initiative Lebanon
<b>LADE</b>	Lebanese Associations for Democratic Elections
<b>LCPS</b>	Lebanese Center for Policy Studies
<b>LEM</b>	Lebanese Eco Movement
<b>WMC</b>	Waste Management Coalition

#### INTERNATIONAL AGENCIES

<b>OCHA</b>	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
<b>ROMENA</b>	Regional Office for Middle East and North Africa
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>UNHCR</b>	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
<b>UNRWA</b>	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East

# 0

## Introduction

WASTE IS A FUNDAMENTAL PART OF THE EVERYDAY ACTIVITIES OF PEOPLE AND GOVERNMENTS ON VARIOUS SCALES ACROSS THE GLOBE. More than a material process, waste (including solid, hazardous, demolition, and so on) significantly impacts the political, economic, and socio-ecological assemblages in urban spaces. By gaining control of waste, political leaders are able to control and regulate such assemblages and through this expose people

and their environments to processes of exclusion.<sup>1</sup> The politics of waste by sovereign power structures further embeds additional layers of inequalities based on factors including ethnicity, nationality, race, sect, gender and any non-dominant group. This serves to facilitate the exclusion of entire categories of *others*. This thesis explores the ways that waste – specifically solid waste – is utilised by states, formally and informally, to regulate and control categories of *others* in contested urban spaces.<sup>2</sup> It investigates the macro – polity - implications on the ‘intimately tiny,’<sup>3</sup> explicitly focusing on politics and governing. Further, a theoretically informed and empirically sensitive framework is developed to explore the role of sovereign power in producing a socio-political and material ordering of waste that leads to inequality and injustices between different communities.

The theoretical framework is applied to the pertinent case study of Beirut, which displays the complexities of these processes. As a physical process, waste management is shaped by challenges such as population growth, geographical constraints, economic instability, conflicts, and disasters. However, the waste system is also implicated by the Lebanese power-sharing agreement fostering competition between *political leaders* or interference on behalf of patronage networks after the civil war (1975-1990). While previous work has explored how waste and other infrastructures have led to corruption, inequality, and neoliberal policies (and subsequently inadequate public services that enable a system of ineffectiveness that financially benefits the few at the cost of increasing economic and socio-ecological inequalities<sup>4</sup>), the effect of sovereign power has largely gone unexplored. Developing such an un-

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<sup>1</sup>The body of work that has been inspired by Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (1966; repr., Oxon: Routledge, 2002).

<sup>2</sup>Solid waste, also known as trash or garbage, consists of everyday items that are no longer needed and are thrown away. Solid waste comes from various sources, including houses, institutions, and businesses; however, does excludes inert or large and bulky waste, industrial waste and medical waste that may be hazardous, and recyclables.

<sup>3</sup>See: Doreen Massey, *For Space* (London: Sage Publications Ltd, 2005), 9.

<sup>4</sup>Reinoud Leenders, *Spoils of Truce: Corruption and State-Building in Postwar Lebanon* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2012); Hannes Baumann, *Citizen Hariri: Lebanon's Neoliberal Reconstruction* (London:

derstanding is important as sovereign power may exploit the organisation of waste to regulate and control people and the environment. As such, this research specifically explores the pressing issue of the socio-political and material ordering of waste by the Lebanese state and its regulation of groups of *others* and their environments whilst ensuring the state's survival amidst urban contestations.

After the civil war in Beirut, waste processes have become a key part of the broader urban assemblages of politics and governing (Map 1). Waste is a part of social, political, and cultural spatial structures, while at the same time, solid waste management (SWM) is a critical infrastructure in urban spaces to ensure public health and environmental protection. The socio-political ordering of waste involves the legal, political, and social exclusion of groups of *others*, like waste workers and waste activists. At the same time, the material ordering of waste enables the unequal distribution of ecological challenges and the abandonment of people in urban regions, as seen with the marine landfills in the southern and eastern suburbs. Combined, the socio-political and material ordering of waste plays a major role in the inclusion and exclusion of groups of people and the degradation of their environments.

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Hurst, 2016); Joanne Randa Nucho, *Everyday Sectarianism in Urban Lebanon: Infrastructures, Public Services, and Power* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016); and Blake Atwood, "A city by the sea: Uncovering Beirut's media waste," *Communication, Culture & Critique* 12 (2019).



**Map 1:** Greater Beirut and Selected Waste Management Sites in 2023



## 0.1 THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

The research problem at the core of this thesis is the need for a conceptual framework to understand the relationship between sovereign power and waste in contested urban spaces. In particular, it explores the multifaceted ways in which sovereign power regulates and controls people and the environment through waste. Waste is a critical enabler utilised by sovereignties that contribute to the unequal distribution of environmental hazards, impacting people and the environment.

In CUS especially, waste may be used to regulate and control any non-dominant groups through the establishment of hostile environments. Due to the unequal power relations between groups, the quality life of *others* who are politically excluded is especially at stake. If unchecked, these mechanisms of sovereign power can thrive, leading to marginalisation, suppression, and segregation.

The aim of this research is to establish a conceptual framework (Chapter 1) that encompasses the intersectional issues of sovereign power and waste in CUS. This conceptual framework highlights the debates on *biopolitics* – the regulation of life by sovereign power – by Giorgio Agamben. In this context, sovereign power is based on the mechanisms and ability to control and regulate political life while ensuring the survival of the political ordering and political projects. This research critiques and expands on this notion of biopolitics through the politics of waste, displaying how waste is a critical instrument in the political machinery of sovereign power that regulates groups of *others* and their environments. This holistic approach allows for an understanding of such pluralistic challenges that, as explored below, previous literature fails to capture. The following sections investigate the backdrop to this conceptual framework. This includes the role of biopolitics in CUS and how the corpus on waste is situated in relation to this literature.

### 0.1.1 THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND KEY CONTRIBUTIONS

This thesis centres around a precise set of research questions on sovereign power and waste in CUS, which have been re-evaluated and expanded throughout the research process. The questions are based on the overarching research question: *How does the political ordering and organisation of waste impact people and the environment in CUS, and vice versa?* This inquiry has led to the following primary questions:

- To what extent is waste conditioned by competing claims to sovereign power?
- How does the political ordering of waste impact processes of political exclusion in CUS?
- What role does the material ordering of waste have in CUS?

To answer these primary questions, a set of responding secondary questions on Beirut have emerged:

- How is sovereign power structured in Beirut?
- How do processes of political exclusion materialise in Beirut?
- To what extent are CUS shaped by sovereign power?

By analysing sovereign power and waste in Beirut, this thesis answers the overarching research questions through three units of analysis: polity, politics, and governing. These units of analysis are interrelated with Agamben's conceptual writings and the politics of waste, which is situated in the inter- and multidisciplinary corpus labelled discard studies. As further articulated in Chapter 1, this holistic conceptual framework is labelled *the biopolitical machinery of waste in CUS*. *The biopolitical machinery of waste in CUS* is then applied and

tested in the case of Beirut in Chapter 2, 3 and 4 highlighting and exposing an array of political dynamics and displaying how the organisation of waste by political agents impacts people and the environment.

The research questions and conceptual framework offers four contributions:

- *Contribution 1: Sovereign Power and Discard Studies*

The fundamental challenge embedded in the research problem includes the lack of discussion on sovereign power and its implications on the ordering of waste. This research contributes to filling this theoretical gap through the creation of a conceptual framework that synthesises biopolitics and sovereign power with the politics of waste, constructing *the biopolitical machinery of waste*.

At the crossroads between disciplines and approaches, this conceptual synthesis differs from the previous research by not only emphasising the limitations of Agamben's conceptualisations on biopolitics but also systematically expanding and moving beyond core biopolitical concepts through discard studies. The research exposes how spaces of regulation have emerged through the politics of waste, including the abandonment of people, places, ecosystems, and even the Anthropocene, as the toxicity of waste leads to planetary crisis. Furthermore, it expands the literature by emphasising the role of the material in space and place, which has previously been limited in the literature. The incorporation of sacrifice zones into the localisation of biopolitics,<sup>5</sup> especially, enables an analysis of the regulation and control of groups of *others* and their environment through the material ordering of waste.

Conversely, the conceptual framework showcases the significance of sovereign power

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<sup>5</sup>See: Steve Lerner, *Sacrifice Zones: The Front Lines of Toxic Chemical Exposure in the United States* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2010), ProQuest Ebook Central; and Robert D. Bullard, *Dumping in Dixie: Race, Class and Environmental Quality*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (2000; repr., New York: Routledge, 2018).

within the corpus of discard studies, thereby expanding on previous research that has primarily focused on capitalism and neoliberalism. The emphasis on sovereign power underscores the critical role of agents in regulating and controlling the life and health of people and their environments through waste and having disastrous impacts on ecosystems.

- *Contribution 2: CUS in Discard Studies and Biopolitics*

The conceptual framework is adjusted to unpack cases within CUS, adapting to the case of Beirut, thus bringing in a third parameter to the conceptual framework. CUS is deeply interconnected with how sovereign power dynamics change across time and space, resulting in institutional, territorial, and spatial struggles that could destabilise the political system and lead to violence.

The focus on CUS contributes to biopolitics and its critiques by expanding on the knowledge gap made by the plurality of agents and postcolonial contexts.<sup>6</sup> The conceptual framework outlines this limitation of Agamben's use of Western ideal types of sovereign power and expands on it by using the conceptualisation of nested and contested sovereignties.<sup>7</sup>

Discard studies, on the other hand, have rarely focused on aspects of CUS as it is not clear how waste in itself could lead to direct violence on a larger scale. It has instead centred around environmental racism in the environmental justice literature or ur-

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<sup>6</sup>For a colonial critique of Agamben See: Marcelo Svirsky and Simone Bignall eds, *Agamben and Colonialism* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), ProQuest Ebook Central; Paul Muldon, "The Sovereign Exceptions: Colonialization and the Foundation of Society," *Social & Legal Studies* 17, no. 1 (2008); and Mark Rifkin, "Indigenizing Agamben: Rethinking Sovereignty in Light of the "Peculiar" Status of Native Peoples," *Cultural Critique* 73 (2019).

<sup>7</sup>For *nested sovereignties*, see: Caroline Humphrey, "Sovereignty," in *A Companion to the Anthropology of Politics*, eds. David Nugent and Joan Vincent (Carlton: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), ProQuest Ebook Central; and Audra Simpson, *Mohawk Interruptus: Political Life Across The Border of Settler States* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014).

ban inequalities in the political ecology literature.<sup>8</sup> Focusing on the politics of waste and the specific implications of CUS provides further knowledge beyond these long-established research fields. As further discussed below, the inclusion of CUS in discard studies reveals how sovereignties use waste to regulate the lives of non-dominant groups and their environments.

- *Contribution 3: More-than-human in Biopolitics*

The conceptual framework critically reflects on how more-than-human forces interact with biopolitics.<sup>9</sup> In the last decades, scholars have increasingly included human agency and resistance within biopolitics and sovereign power. This research highlights that more-than-human agency is not excluded from the interactions of biopolitics. The more-than-human have implications for sovereign power, human beings, and the environment, having slow and silent effects such as toxic flows that impact people, geographical locations, and the Anthropocene but also unexpected and dramatic effects such as flooding. The more-than-human should be explored as more than passive materialism and should be understood as a force that can change the trajectory of urban spaces and geographies that can cause unexpected, dramatic, and subtle effects.

- *Contribution 4: Sovereign Power, Waste and Others Research Gap in Beirut*

The application of this case study of Beirut reveals case-specific dynamics on sovereign power, othering, waste, and urban spaces (although with some limitations, as explored

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<sup>8</sup>For environmental justice literature see: David Naguib Pellow, *Garbage Wars: The Struggle for Environmental Justice in Chicago* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2002); and Robert D. Bullard, "Solid Waste Sites and the Black Hudson Community," *Sociological Inquiry* 53, no. 2-3 (1983). In the political ecology literature, see: Paul Robbins, *Political Ecology: A Critical Introduction*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd., 2012); and Neil Smith, *Uneven Development: Nature, Capital, and the Production of Space* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 2008).

<sup>9</sup>For more-than-human conceptualisations, see: Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things* (Amsterdam: Duke University Press, 2010), ProQuest Ebook Central; and Stacy Alaimo, *Bodily Natures: Science, Environment, and the Material Self* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010).

later in this introduction). This thesis brings together a collection of reports, government documents, and news articles displaying processes from the macro to the intimately tiny, albeit limited to *municipal solid waste*, to form a comprehensive study of the politics of waste in Beirut. Furthermore, this thesis expands the literature on waste in Beirut that has predominantly used waste to explore broader political structures, specifically neoliberalism and corruption. Conversely, scholars studying the region have utilised and discussed Agamben's conceptualisations in the context of the refugee crisis, urban spaces, regime survival, post-war amnesia, and gender inequality but have not yet captured the politics of waste.<sup>10</sup> This research contributes to these debates by examining the formal and informal power of the state, the production of spaces of exception and bare life through the socio-political and material organisation of waste, including the marginalisation of waste workers and the distribution of ecological burdens.

The research questions and conceptual framework addresses the theoretical and empirical knowledge gaps, which are articulated further in this introduction. The following Section, 0.1.2 Biopolitical Debates and Waste in Contested Urban Spaces fleshes out the theoretical research gap – related to Agamben's biopolitics and discard studies – and sets the scene for the theoretical framework to be developed in Chapter 1. It also highlights how the more-than-human has been overlooked in this context. Furthermore, Section 0.1.3 Intersectional Debates in Beirut, showcases the relevant existing literatures in the case study and outline the empirical knowledge gaps to be investigated, relating to the intersectional themes

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<sup>10</sup>Adam Ramadan, "Destroying Nahr el-Bared: Sovereignty and urbicide in the space of exception," *Political Geography* 28, no. 3 (2009); Dina Martin, "From spaces of exception to campscapes: Palestinian refugee camps and informal settlements in Beirut," *Political Geography* 44 (2015); Simon Mabon, *Houses Built on Sand: Violence, Sectarianism and revolution in the Middle East* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2020), Chapter 5 John Nagle, "The biopolitics of victim construction, elision, and contestation in Northern Ireland and Lebanon," *Peacebuilding* (2019); and Maya Mikdashi, *Sectarianism: Sovereignty, Secularism, and the State in Lebanon* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2022).

of *waste, sovereign power, others*, and *CUS*. This allows the appropriate application and testing of the conceptual framework to generate new insights, which in this research is centred around sovereign power and waste in CUS.<sup>11</sup> Finally, this introduction includes the methodology and outline.

## 0.2 BIOPOLITICAL DEBATES AND WASTE IN CONTESTED URBAN SPACES (CUS)

To facilitate the discussion of sovereign power and waste in CUS and the development of the conceptual framework in Chapter 1, this section contextualises the research topic, details the key debates, and positions this research within the main theoretical gaps. It first details biopolitics in CUS (Section 0.2.1), followed by a critical overview of the relevant research in discard studies (Section 0.2.2), and a critical note on agency (Section 0.2.3).

### 0.2.1 BIOPOLITICS IN CUS

Sovereign power is based on the mechanisms and ability to control and regulate political life whilst ensuring the survival of the political ordering and political projects. Within this context, political life is stripped away from communities that become marginalised by the state. Biopolitics reflects the emergence of these processes. Building on the works of Michel Foucault, Hannah Arendt, and Walter Benjamin, the philosopher Giorgio Agamben explores the role of sovereignty in regulating political life by the state, thus locating the *state of exception* and *bare life* at the forefront of politics.<sup>12</sup> The state of exception is a condition that binds and abandons human life to the law, thus enabling the politics of inclusive exclusion. Un-

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<sup>11</sup> Christoph Müller-Bloch and Johann Kranz, "A framework for rigorously identifying research gaps in qualitative literature reviews," *Thirty Sixth International Conference on Information Systems* (2015), 11; and Anthony Miles, "A taxonomy of research gaps: Identifying and defining the seven research gaps," *Doctoral Student Workshop: Finding Research Gaps – Research Methods and Strategies* (2017), 3-4.

<sup>12</sup> Giorgio Agamben, *State of Exception*, trans. Kevin Attell (Chicago: The University of Chicago, 2005); and Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare life*, trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen (Stanford: Stanford University Press).

der the state of exception, the sovereign decides the ways in which the judicial order applies, thus exposing human beings to sovereign violence and regulation, which in turn opens the “threshold on which violence passes over into law and law passes over into violence.”<sup>13</sup> This process is more than a temporary suspension of law or emergency legislation but rather the establishment of a spatial arrangement that enables the regulation and control over groups of *others* that do not belong in the state’s political project, thus creating *bare life* stripped from political meaning.<sup>14</sup> The state of exception thus establishes the juridical distinction between political life and bare life – the people who can participate in the good life and those who have political life stripped away from them.<sup>15</sup> Finally, *the camp* represents the physical localisation of these processes and the paradigm of contemporary politics.

In the aftermath of 9/11 and more recently after the Arab Uprisings, such conceptualisations of regulation and control over life have provided crucial insight into power relations.<sup>16</sup> While initially applied in western contexts to more deeply explore the processes of marginalisation relating to groups of *others* such as refugees, prisoners, and homeless people,<sup>17</sup> it is increasingly being applied more broadly to postcolonial and settler colonial contexts such as

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<sup>13</sup> Agamben, *Homo Sacer*, 32.

<sup>14</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> Agamben, *State of Exception*, 3-4.

<sup>16</sup> In the aftermath of 9/11 and more recently after the Arab Uprisings, such conceptualisations of regulation and control over life have provided crucial insight into power relations. I acknowledge the contested nature of the term global south as it emerged in the aftermath of the cold war. As noted by Nour Dados and Raewyn Connell the concept has “acquired increased sophistication” and “references an entire history of colonialism, neo-imperialism, and differential economic and social change through which large inequalities in living standards, life expectancy, and access to resources are maintained.” In “The global south” *Contexts* 11, no. 1 (2012), 13.

<sup>17</sup> Bülent Diken, “From Refugee Camps to Gated Communities: Biopolitics and the End of the City”, *Citizenship Studies* 8, no. 1 (2004); Fiona Jenkins, “Bare Life: Asylum-Seekers, Australian Politics and Agamben’s Critique of Violence”, *Australian Journal of Human Rights* 10, no. 1 (2004); Bülent Diken and Carsten Bagge Laustsen, “Zones of Indistinction: Security, Terror and Bare life,” *Space and Culture* 5, no. 3 (2002); Anthony Downey, “Zones of Indistinction: Giorgio Agamben’s ‘Bare Life’ and the Politics and Aesthetics,” *Third Text* 23, no. 2 (2009); Sarah Dooling, “Ecological Gentrification: A research Agenda Exploring Justice in the City,” *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 33, no. 3 (2009).



Somalis in Ethiopia, the Palestinian occupation, and Aboriginals in Australia.<sup>18</sup> The growing focus on these dynamics reflects the relevance across the world and serves to emphasise how *others* are marginalised and exposed to violence by the state.

As criticised by countless authors, however, the work of Agamben has yet to account for how urban regions across the globe have increasingly involved political contestation that challenges the western-ideal type of sovereignty.<sup>19</sup> Rather than being centred around representation, welfare, and the monopoly of violence, states are confronted with institutional, territorial, and spatial struggles that have materialised through the formation of contested politics.<sup>20</sup> Contestation has been viewed as a challenge to state sovereignty, rooted in the interconnected processes of postcolonialism, urbanisation, globalisation, and shared histories, thereby shifting the analysis towards the role of agents within political systems.<sup>21</sup> More than a ‘non-state and state’ binary, these agents can be unpacked through *hybridity*, signalling their ability to reside inside and outside the state.<sup>22</sup> This theorisation of the state and sovereignty

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<sup>18</sup>Svirsky and Bignall eds, *Agamben and Colonialism*; Sanaa Al Sarghali, Simon Mabon and Adel Ruished, eds., *States of Exception or Exceptional States: Law, Politics and Giorgio Agamben in the Middle East* (London: I.B.Tauris, 2022); Tobias Hafmann and Benedikt Korf, “Agamben in the Ogaden: Violence and Sovereignty in the Ethiopian–Somali Frontier,” *Political Geography* 31 (2012); Ronit Lentin ed., *Thinking Palestine* (London: Bloomsbury Academic & Professional, 2008), ProQuest Ebook Central; Muldon, “The Sovereign Exceptions”; and Rifkin, “Indigenizing Agamben.”

<sup>19</sup>Ibid.

<sup>20</sup>Western-ideal notions of the state draws on the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648 that established principles of non-interference and executive sovereignty, and the writings of Marx Weber on political organisation and the monopoly of violence in a specific territory, see Max Weber, *Max Weber’s Complete Writings on Academic and Political Vocations*, ed. and intro John Drejmanis, trans Gordon C. Wells (New York: Angora Publishing, 2007), ProQuest Ebook Central.

<sup>21</sup>See: Diane E. Davis, “Non-State Armed Actors, New Imagined Communities, and Shifting Patterns of Sovereignty and Insecurity in the Modern World,” *Contemporary Security Policy* 30, no. 2 (2009); Saskia Sassen, *Territory, Authority, Rights: From Medieval to Global Assemblages*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), ProQuest Ebook Central; Ronald Van Kempen, “Divided cities in the 21st century: challenging the importance of globalisation,” *J Housing Built Environ* 22 (2007); and Frank Gaffikin and Mike Morrissey, *Planning in Divided Cities: Collaborative Shaping of Contested Space* (Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated, 2011), ProQuest Ebook Central.

<sup>22</sup>See, Volker Boege, Anne Brown, Kevin Clements and Anna Nolan, *On Hybrid Political Orders and Emerging States: State Formation in the Context of Fragility* (Berlin: Berghof Research Centre for Constructive Conflict Management, 2018), <https://berghof-foundation.org/library/on-hybrid-political-orders-and-emerging-states-state-formation-in-the-context-of-fragility>; and Joanne Wallis, Lia Kent, Maranda Forsyth,

is a powerful tool in unpacking the role of geopolitics and sectarian politics in the Middle East and beyond, allowing their dynamic role to be readily analysed.<sup>23</sup> It fails however to account for the power dynamics of sovereignties, as it cannot be reduced to hybrid agents alone. In this research, sovereignties and the state are critical to understanding such political challenges. Sovereign power signals the ability to regulate and control political life.<sup>24</sup> State sovereignty embodies such powers however, a distinction between sovereign power and the state enables further exploration of political dynamics beyond the scope of the state, including territorialities and contested politics. Furthermore, as is explored in Chapter 1, Caroline Humphrey's theoretical reflection on *nested sovereignty* and Giorgio Agamben's conceptualisation on *biopolitics* is instead used analyse these processes.<sup>25</sup> Nested sovereignties acknowledge that power is dispersed – between various agents and institutions – and reaffirms that sovereignty exists on different scales – from the macro to the micro contexts – thus making clear that sovereignties can exist within sovereignties.<sup>26</sup> An analysis utilising nested sovereignties enables a better understanding on how sovereign powers regulate and control the life and death of human beings.<sup>27</sup> This approach to sovereignty unravels the formal, informal, and nested roles of agents in the state and their specific role in shaping everyday politics.

In the context of Beirut, as further described at the end of the introduction (Section 0.3), sectarian agents seek to influence and lay claims to various scales of formal and informal governing in urban spaces, thus participating, collaborating, and competing within the established political order. The interactions between these assemblages enable the distribution

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Sinclair Dinnen, and Srinjoy Bose, eds. *Hybridity on the Ground in Peacebuilding and Development: Critical Conversations* (Action: ANU Press, 2018).

<sup>23</sup>Sara Fregonese, "Beyond the 'weak state': Hybrid sovereignties in Beirut," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 30 (2012) and Najib B. Hourani, "Post-conflict reconstruction and citizenship agendas: lessons from Beirut," *Citizenship Studies* 19, no. 2 (2015).

<sup>24</sup>See: Agamben, *Homo Sacer*.

<sup>25</sup>Humphrey, "Sovereignty,"; and Agamben, *Homo Sacer*.

<sup>26</sup>See also: Simpson, *Mohawk Interruptus*; and Davis "Non-State Armed Actors."

<sup>27</sup>Agamben, *Homo Sacer*.

and scaling of sovereign power, leading to the inclusion of additional layers of marginalisation in the everyday lives of groups of *others*.

#### 0.2.2 BIOPOLITICS IN DISCARD STUDIES

Increasingly, scholarship on biopolitics has included everyday politics, including the analysis of gender, refugee politics, and even environmental politics.<sup>28</sup> For example, in environmental politics, Mick Smith argues that sovereign power manufactures processes that not only contribute to an ecological crisis but could also result in the justification for a political state of emergency.<sup>29</sup> Yet, the topic of waste has been absent from this scholarship. The study of waste is critical as it extends beyond the material character, concerning the negative impact on the environment, people, and the Anthropocene, but also includes socio-political constructions and symbolic categories. As such, waste is a socio-political and material instrument in the political machinery of sovereign power that regulates *others* and their environments.

A burgeoning literature has, on the other hand, emerged with a focus on the role of waste in establishing patterns of socio-economic and political exclusion. This literature is situated in the inter- and multidisciplinary corpus labelled discard studies, inspired by the seminal work of Mary Douglas on dirt, pollution, taboo, and disorder.<sup>30</sup> An emerging field of research, discard studies span a range of complementary, contrasting, and opposing disciplinary fields, theories, and approaches, including topics such as sociology and technical

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<sup>28</sup>See: Martin, "From spaces of exception to campsapes;" Mikdashi, *Sextarainism*; and Mick Smith, *Against Ecological Sovereignty: Ethics, Biopolitics, and Saving the Natural World* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011).

<sup>29</sup>Smith, *Against Ecological Sovereignty*.

<sup>30</sup>Douglas, *Purity and Danger*; see: Michael Thompson, *Rubbish Theory: The Creation and Destruction of Value* (1979; repr., London: Pluto Press, 2017); Gay Hawkins and Stephen Muecke eds., *Culture and Waste: The Creation and destruction of Value* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, INC., 2003); Wang Min'an, "On Rubbish," *Theory, Culture & Society* 28, no. 7-8 (2011); John Scanlan, *On Garbage* (London: Reaktion Books Ltd., 2005); and Sarah K. Harrison, *Waste Matters: Urban Margins in Contemporary Literature* (Oxon: Routledge 2017). See also discussion in Sarah A. Moore, "Garbage matters: concepts in new geographies of waste," *Progress in Human Geography* 36, no. 6 (2012).

sciences that are beyond the scope of this study.<sup>31</sup> This research uses sovereign power as an analytical starting point, limiting the debate into two predominant schools: political ecology and environmental justice.

Political ecology and environmental justice – rooted in the study of the global south and the United States, respectively – have emerged as two separate fields. Although considerable cross-fertilisation exists, scholars have emphasised how political ecology explores processes and environmental justice has focused on patterns of exposure.<sup>32</sup> This work is situated at the crossroads between these two, drawing on waste as constructive in political ecology and the empirically rich studies in the environmental justice literature while also filling the research gap on sovereign power, contested politics, and regulation, which has been argued to be limited across political ecology and environmental justice.<sup>33</sup>

The state and power are understood differently in these disciplines. In political ecology, it is localised in different scales, from actor-oriented power theories that have unpacked

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<sup>31</sup>Sociology and cultural studies include: Gay Hawkins, *The Ethics of Waste: How We Relate to Rubbish* (Lanham, Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc, 2006); Scanlan, *On Garbage*; and Hawkins and Muecke eds., *Culture and Waste*. On the other hand, technical and practical know-how studies include Robert J. Nicholls, Richard P. Beaven, Anne Stringfellow, Daniel Monfort, Gonéri Le Cozannet, Thomas Wahl, Julia Gebert, Matthew Wadey, Arne Arns, Kate L. Spencer, Debra Reinhart, Timo Heimovaara, Víctor M. Santos, Alejandra R. Enríquez, and Samantha Cope, “Coastal Landfills and Rising sea levels: A challenge for the 21<sup>st</sup> century,” *Policy and practice reviews* (2021); and James H. Brand and Kate L. Spencer, “Will flooding or erosion of historic landfills result in a significant release of soluble contaminants to the coastal zone?” *Sci Total Environ.* (2020).

<sup>32</sup>See discussions in: Ryan Holifield, “Environmental Justice and Political Ecology,” in *The Routledge Handbook of Political Ecology*, ed. Tom Perreault, Gavin Bridge, and James McCarthy (Oxon: Routledge, 2015); Malini Ranganathan & Carolina Balazs, “Water marginalization at the urban fringe: environmental justice and urban political ecology across the North–South divide,” *Urban Geography* 36, no. 3 (2015); and Ian R. Cook and Erik Swyngedouw, “Cities, Social Cohesion and the Environment: Towards a Future Research Agenda,” *Urban Studies* 49, no. 9 (2012).

<sup>33</sup>See: Hanne Svarstad and Tor A. Benjaminsen, “Reading radical environmental justice through a political ecology lens,” *Geoforum* 108 (2020), 6-7; Alex Loftus, “Political ecology II: Whither the state?,” *Progress in Human Geography* 44, no. 1 (2020); Morgan Robertson, “Environmental governance: political ecology and the state,” in *The Routledge Handbook of Political Ecology*, ed. Tom Perreault, Gavin Bridge, and James McCarthy (Oxon: Routledge, 2015); and Lindsey Dillon, “Race, Waste, and Space: Brownfield Redevelopment and Environmental Justice at the Hunters Point,” *Antipode* 46, no.5 (2013) 1209.

relational powers between the facilitators and recipients of environmental intervention<sup>34</sup>, to Marxist frameworks that explore class relations under capitalist structures.<sup>35</sup> In the last decades, political ecologists have further engaged with poststructuralist writings, especially Foucauldian approaches.<sup>36</sup> In environmental justice, on the other hand, the scholarship has been centred around frameworks that have emerged from the study of American ecological contexts.<sup>37</sup> Significantly, as argued by Dillon, “the articulation of race and toxic waste in particular has been explored by environmental justice scholars” but has notably excluded “waste as an analytical category.”<sup>38</sup> Yet a second generation of environmental justice scholars have increasingly focused on adopting critical theories and decoloniality.<sup>39</sup> However, what these approaches have in common is that they are limited in the exploration of sovereignties and the regulation of life in CUS.

The subfield of urban political ecology (UPE) provides additional insight, particularly on how urban dynamics play out in this project. UPE is centred around the uneven production of socio-ecological processes within the *urban metabolism* – the dynamic formation of urban spaces.<sup>40</sup> This has shaped UPE’s research agenda which focuses on how power relations

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<sup>34</sup>See: Piers Blaikie and Harold Brookfield, *Land Degradation and Society* (Oxon: Routledge, 1987); Robbins, *Political Ecology*, 231-243; and Noel Castree, “False Antithesis? Marxism, Nature and Actor-Networks,” *Antipode* (2002).

<sup>35</sup>Smith, *Uneven Development*; and Michael Watts, *Silent Violence: Food, Famine and Peasantry in Northern Nigeria* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983).

<sup>36</sup>Such as: Karen Bakker, *Privatizing Water: Governance Failure and the World’s Urban Water Crisis* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2010); and Arun Agrawal, *Environmentality: Technologies of Government and the Making of Subjects* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005).

<sup>37</sup>Laura Pulido, *Environmentalism and Economic Justice: Two Chicano Struggles in the Southwest* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1996); Pellow, *Garbage Wars*; Bullard, “Solid Waste Sites”; and David Schlosberg, *Defining Environmental Justice: Theories, Movements, and Nature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

<sup>38</sup>Dillon, “Race, Waste, and Space,” 1209.

<sup>39</sup>Ryan Holifield, Michael Porter and Gordon Walker, “Spaces of Environmental Justice: Frameworks for Critical Engagement,” *Antipode* 41, no. 4 (2009); David Schlosberg and Romand Coles, “The new environmentalism of everyday life: Sustainability, material flows and movements,” *Contemporary Political Theory* 15, no. 2 (2016); Carl A. Zimring, *Clean and White: A History of Environmental Racism in the United States* (New York: NYU Press, 2015); and Glyn Williams and Emma Mawdsly, “Postcolonial environmental justice: Government and governance in India,” *Geoforum* 37 (2006).

<sup>40</sup>Nik Heynen, “Urban political ecology I: The urban century,” *Progress in Human Geography* 38, no. 4

have shaped urban changes and inequalities. The formulation of a *UPE of waste* has slowly emerged from the subdiscipline emphasising the power of flows of waste in everyday practices and micro-contexts in the global south.<sup>41</sup> The power relationship between the informal recycling sector and the city administration in Addis Ababa is explored by Camilla L. Bjerkli, in particular “how power is distributed within a given context” when “local government is interested in a modern and high-tech solid waste system that has no place for the existing informal actors.”<sup>42</sup> Similarly, a study on waste in Medinipur found that “power is wielded in complex ways, both through formal procedures and informal relational mechanisms” and that “waste becomes enrolled in complex multi-scalar networks of power relationships between state and municipal officials, councillors and the electorate, waste workers, unions and households.”<sup>43</sup> The emphasis on waste in urban processes is repeatedly reflected on in Chapters 3 and 4 on waste politics and governing, but has its limitations in unpacking the role of sovereign power and regulation of *others* in CUS.

In contrast with political ecology, the environmental justice literature provides additional insights into the regulation of *others*, having emerged in the United States in the 1980s with the civil rights movement and its struggle against hazardous waste.<sup>44</sup> Since then, the scholar-

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(2014); Rodger Keil, “Progress report – urban political ecology,” *Urban Geography* 26, no.7 (2005); Jochen Monstadt, “Conceptualising the political ecology of urban infrastructures: Insights from technology and urban studies,” *Environment and Planning A* 41 (2009); and Matthew Gandy, “Rethinking urban metabolism: Water, space and the modern city,” *City* 8, no. 3 (2004).

<sup>41</sup> Camilla Louise Bjerkli, “Power in waste: Conflicting agendas in planning for integrated solid waste management in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia,” *Norsk Geografisk Tidsskrift* 61, no. 1 (2015); Natasha Cornea, Rene’ Ve’ron, and Anna Zimmer, “Clean city politics: An urban political ecology of solid waste in West Bengal,” *Environment and Planning A* 49, no. 4 (2017); Julian S Yates and Jutta Gutbertlet, “Reclaiming and recirculating urban natures: integrated organic waste management in Diadema, Brazil,” *Environment and Planning A* 43 (2011); and Jeramia Njeru, “The urban political ecology of plastic bag waste problem in Nairobi, Kenya,” *Geoforum* 37 (2006).

<sup>42</sup> Bjerkli, “Power in waste,” 20-25.

<sup>43</sup> Cornea, Ve’ron, and Zimmer, “Clean city politics,” 739-40.

<sup>44</sup> The national study *Toxic Wastes and Race in the United States* (1987) by the United Church of Christ Commission for Racial Justice identified a strong link between race and hazardous waste dumping, spearheading future research into environmental injustice.

ship has expanded beyond the United States. It now includes a literature on Black Americans, Latino, and Native American people (including both the global scale and global south), focusing on how marginalised communities are exposed to various environmental challenges, with a distinct focus on race and class inequalities but also other groups such as immigrants and refugees.<sup>45</sup> *Environmental racism* – the unequal distribution of ecological challenges based on race and class – has been central to understanding structures and inequalities. For scholars like Dillon, “race has historically been central to signifying the waste-ability of urban space.”<sup>46</sup> The exposure of patterns of socio-ecological inequalities and the role of urban contestation is shaping these contexts and thus facilitating discussions of inequalities in CUS.<sup>47</sup> In the context of Chicago, David N. Pellow finds that *environmental racism* unfolds in “ways more complex, more disturbing, and more unsettling than most written accounts” that have often focused on “corporations and the state” by arguing “many times our own community leaders, our own neighbours, and even environmentalists are deeply implicated in creating these problems.”<sup>48</sup> This enables a greater understanding of sectarian politics and how political leaders are influenced by politics and governing and become part of the political ordering.

Beyond the main strengths of these disciplines, different research foci on waste have emerged that engage with the state and power.<sup>49</sup> *Globalisation* and *capitalism* have been a sig-

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<sup>45</sup>Pellow, *Garbage Wars*; David Schlosberg, “Reconceiving environmental justice: Global movements and political theories,” *Environmental Politics* 13, no. 3 (2004); Gordon Walker, *Environmental Justice: Concepts, Theories and Politics* (New York: Routledge, 2012); and Ryder Stacia, Kathryn Powlen, Melinda Laituri, Stephanie A. Malin, Joshua Sbicca, and Dimitris Stevis, eds. *Environmental Justice in the Anthropocene: From (un)Just Presents to Just Futures* (Milton: Taylor & Francis Group, 2021).

<sup>46</sup>Dillon, “Race, Waste, and Space,” 1209.

<sup>47</sup>Fanar Haddad suggests that processes such as sectarianisation could be understood through frames of racialisation. However, the processes differ insofar that it reduces the role of religion, and as sectarian processes are more regularly interlinked with questions of sovereignty. Fanar Haddad, *Understanding ‘Sectarianism’: Sunni-Shi’a Relations in the Modern Arab World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), see also: Rogers Brubaker, “Ethnicity, race and nationalism,” *Annual Review of Sociology* 35 (2009); and Chris Gilligan, *Northern Ireland and the Crisis of Anti-Racism: Rethinking Racism and Sectarianism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2017).

<sup>48</sup>Pellow, *Garbage Wars*, 3.

<sup>49</sup>These research foci are often interrelated with the literature on infrastructure. I have omitted an extensive

nificant focus, displaying the unequal impacts in the global south and on the local scale.<sup>50</sup> In an edited collection by Christoph Lindner and Miriam Meissner globalisation is seen as a part of urban spaces that produces waste, excess, and abandonment in cities such as Beirut, Detroit, Hong Kong, and Naples.<sup>51</sup> Another main focus is the role of *neoliberalism* and waste.<sup>52</sup> Mike Davis has explored how urbanisation is interrelated with neoliberal politics in urban spaces, and further notes how “living in shit” in megacities is “one of the most profound of social divides.”<sup>53</sup> Other scholars have more specifically focused on the ways that waste workers are shaped by social differences led by neoliberal policies.<sup>54</sup> Working on social divides and waste in Cape Town, Faranak Miraftab found that neoliberalism “perpetuated apartheid’s legacy” through the casualisation of waste collection.<sup>55</sup> Also exploring the role of the state, Patricia Strach, Kathleen Sullivan, and Elizabeth Pérez-Chiqués detail how *corruption* shapes waste management in American cities, finding that “corrupt regimes chose garbage collection and disposal strategies that would, first and foremost, benefit themselves.”<sup>56</sup> Finally, *post-colonialism* and *settler colonialism* have been at the centre of analysis on the politics of

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discussion on infrastructure in this research as waste studies encompasses much more, having particular socio-political and material outcomes, relating to the humans-as-waste and ecological crisis respectively.

<sup>50</sup>Christoph Lindner and Miriam Meissner, eds. *Global Garbage: Urban Imaginaries of Waste, Excess, and Abandonment* (London: Taylor & Francis Group, 2015), ProQuest Ebook Central; David Naguib Pellow, *Resisting Global Toxins: Transnational Movements for Environmental Justice* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2007).

<sup>51</sup>Lindner and Meissner, *Global Garbage*.

<sup>52</sup>Mike Davis, *Planet of Slums* (London: Verso, 2007); Frank Miraftab, “Neoliberalism and Casualisation of Public Sector Services: The Case of Waste Collection Services in Cape Town, South Africa,” *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 28, no. 4 (2004); Nadia Y. Kim, *Refusing Death: Immigrant Women and the Fight for Environmental Justice in LA* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2021); and Hannes Baumann, “The Causes, Nature, and Effect of the Current Crisis of Lebanese Capitalism,” *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics* 25, no. 1 (2019).

<sup>53</sup>Davis, *Planet of Slums*, 137-8.

<sup>54</sup>Miraftab, “Neoliberalism and casualisation,”; Rosalind Fredricks, *Garbage Citizenship: Vital Infrastructures of Labour in Dakar, Senegal* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2018).

<sup>55</sup>Miraftab, “Neoliberalism and casualisation,” 875

<sup>56</sup>Patricia Strach, Kathleen S. Sullivan, and Elizabeth Pérez-Chiqués, “The Garbage Problem: Corruption, Innovation and Capacity in Four American Cities, 1890-1940,” *Studies in American Political Development* 33, no. 2 (2019); and Patricia Strach and Kathleen S. Sullivan, *The Politics of Trash: How Government Used Corruption to Clean Cities 1890-1929* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2023).



waste.<sup>57</sup> Sophia Stamatopoulou-Robbins trace settler colonialism in Palestine utilising the concept of *waste siege*, which is about “waste and waste management in the absence of a state. More precisely, it is about waste in the absence of an indigenous state (Palestine) but in the hostile military presence of another state (Israel).”<sup>58</sup> This particular analysis is extremely powerful; however, this approach becomes unaccommodating in cases of CUS where a series of sectarian agents coexist across territorial divides. Whilst the lenses of globalisation, neoliberalism, corruption, and colonialism are crucial in unpacking waste, this research goes a step beyond these dynamics by examining how sovereign power regulates the socio-political and material ordering of waste and its impact on CUS.

Another research foci and critical approach includes the study of waste that emphasised the role of *humans-as-waste*, including conceptualisations like *disposable people*<sup>59</sup> and *wasted humans*,<sup>60</sup> focusing on how human beings are made redundant in contexts like modernity, capitalism, and globalisation. For example, Kevin Bales explored how modern slavery is a part of the global economy, establishing groups of people who are disposable within a capitalist system.<sup>61</sup> With capitalism as a starting point, Michelle Yates explores “the capitalist mode of production that allow for the theoretical leap to the human-as-waste,” thus enabling “a logic of human disposability.”<sup>62</sup> Humans-as-waste has been theorised through similar analytical frames that have often included the modes of modernity and capitalism. The conceptualisa-

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<sup>57</sup> Warwick Anderson, “Crap on the map, or postcolonial waste,” *Postcolonial Studies* 13, no. 2 (2010); Joshua D. Esty, “Excremental Postcolonialism,” *Comparative Literature* 40 (1999); and Sophia Stamatopoulou-Robbins, *Waste Siege: The Life of Infrastructure in Palestine* (Redwood City: Stanford University Press, 2019).

<sup>58</sup> Stamatopoulou-Robbins, *Waste Siege*, 3.

<sup>59</sup> Kevin Bales, *Ending Slavery: How We Free Today's Slaves* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), ProQuest Ebook Central.

<sup>60</sup> Zygmunt Bauman, *Wasted Lives: Modernity and Its Outcasts* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2003), ProQuest Ebook Central.

<sup>61</sup> Bales, *Ending Slavery*.

<sup>62</sup> Michelle Yates, “The Human-As-Waste, the Labor Theory of Value and Disposability in Contemporary Capitalism,” *Antipode* 43, no. 5 (2011), 1691; see also John Beck, *Dirty Wars: Landscape, Power, and Waste in Western American Literature* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2009), ProQuest Ebook Central.

tion of *wasted humans* by sociologist Zygmunt Bauman (perhaps the most influential thinker on this topic), influenced by Agamben's bare life, has been an established feature in the global politics of waste.<sup>63</sup> However, the philosophical idea of *wasted humans* – the human rejects of modernity like job seekers and refugees – is rooted within globalisation and capitalism, and emphasises that “nation-states may no longer preside over the drawing of blueprints and exercise the ownership right of *utere et abutere* (use and misuse) over the sites of order-building, but they still claim the foundational, constitutive prerogative of sovereignty: their right of exemption”<sup>64</sup> [italics in original]. Exploring these ideas further in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, Henry A. Giroux conceptualises the *biopolitics of disposability* by arguing “that neoliberalism, privatization, and militarism have become the dominant biopolitics of the mid-twentieth-century social state [...] has produced a new and dangerous version of biopolitics.”<sup>65</sup> Bauman and Giroux conceptually diverge from bare life and sovereign power through the expansion of global politics and neoliberalism, providing critical insight into the power relations and political structures that coexist amid sovereign power structures. In the analysis of contested politics, the writings of Bauman and Giroux could further shed light on the transformation of sovereign power away from the ideals of Weberian and Westphalian state sovereignty an onto nested and contested sovereignties. As explored in this thesis, sovereignties gain and navigate such forces of globalism and neoliberalism, facilitating the regulation and control of human life and urban geographies at the micro-scale.

Scholars in UPE and environmental justice have also explored biopolitics within the context of *humans-as-waste*. One article by Matthew Gandy stands out in UPE, exploring how Agamben's notions of power and dispersed sources of power may be used to understand the

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<sup>63</sup>Bauman, *Wasted Lives*; see: Fiona Allon, Ruth Barcan, and Karma Eddison-Cogan, eds. *The Temporalities of Waste: Out of Sight, Out of Time* (Milton: Taylor & Francis Group, 2020), ProQuest Ebook Central.

<sup>64</sup>Bauman, *Wasted Lives*, 33.

<sup>65</sup>Henry A Giroux, “Reading Hurricane Katarina: Race, Class, and the Biopolitics of Disposability,” *College Literature* 33, no.3 (2006), 181.

role of health and hygiene in cities. It ultimately concludes however that “the contemporary city has shifted from concentrated and visible manifestations of state power (governmental bureaucracies, police services and so on) to a diffuse set of networks dominated by capital (corporate lobbies, financial derivatives and other dispersed and ultra-mobile elements).”<sup>66</sup> In environmental justice, Nadia Y. Kim reformulates the writings of Foucault, Achille Mbembe and Giroux – emphasising on balancing make live and make die – into *bioneglect* and explores how “Asian and Latin@ immigrants activists navigate their lucid awareness and experience of being slowly and quietly killed.”<sup>67</sup> Whilst these examinations of structures and human-as-waste are compelling in exploring the darker side of capitalism, modernity, and globalisation, the role of sovereignty and the state, in which this thesis seeks to unpack, remains crucial in analysing the material and socio-political order-building of waste as this may produce *humans-as-waste* that are excluded and abandoned from political projects by the state.

The conceptualisation of *humans-as-waste* has also been contextualised within racialised geographies and postcolonial politics. Writing on forced displacement in apartheid South Africa in the late 1960s, Rev. Cosmas Desmond sought to “complete the picture, grotesque and tragic as it is, by showing what has been happening to the silent thousands, whole communities, who have been removed out of sight,” thus explaining how “black spots” became *discarded people* within apartheid.<sup>68</sup> As if explaining Hannah Arendt’s *the banality of evil*, Desmond further explains that “[t]here are many who, while being opposed to the government, seem quite content to take advantage of the benefits accruing to Whites from the

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<sup>66</sup>Matthew Gandy “Zones of indistinction: Bio-political contestations in the urban arena” *Cultural Geographies* 13 (2006), 497.

<sup>67</sup>Kim, *Refusing Death*, 27.

<sup>68</sup>Cosmas Desmond, *The Discarded People: An Account of African Resettlement in South Africa* (Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1971), 16. See also: Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* (1963; repr., New York: Penguin Books, 2006).

practice from apartheid.”<sup>69</sup> More recently, and drawing on anti-colonial thinkers like Franz Fanon and Aimé Césaire, Mbembe argues that power is translated into “the capacity to define who matters and who does not, who is *disposable* and who is not”<sup>70</sup> [italics in original]. The groups of *others* within this context are the group of people who are disposable in a regime’s political project.

In the context of racialised geographies, Agamben’s writings are also utilised by Eirik Saethre who studies the *sociality of exception*, including social relationships that were formed “by the common experiences of living in a segregated community, coping with economic marginalization, and being inherently vulnerable.”<sup>71</sup> Saethre critically explores the precarious roles of Ashkali and Romani Scavengers living in an informal settlement outside of Belgrade but does not focus on the formal and informal mechanisms the state utilises in establishing the political exclusion of *others* or how waste is directly implicated in this political ordering through factors such as landfilling.

Overall, the literature on discard studies, especially political ecology and environmental justice, is powerful in featuring the material and socio-political aspects of waste. It provides insight into class relations, power dynamics and marginalised communities as a result of material waste politics. These are often interconnected within the research foci of capitalism, neoliberalism, corruption, postcolonialism and settler colonialism. Drawing on political ecology, this research particularly emphasises process, material, and socio-spatial understandings of waste that lead to urban inequalities. It further draws on environmental justice to facilitate a deeper understanding of CUS through environmental racism. Yet, these approaches fall short in exploring sovereign power and regulation. Sovereign power, political contes-

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<sup>69</sup>Desmond, *The Discarded People*, 15.

<sup>70</sup>Achille Mbembe, *Necropolitics*, trans. Steven Corcoran (Durham: Duke University Press, 2019), 80.

<sup>71</sup>Eirik Saethre, *Wastelands: Recycled Commodities and the Perpetual Displacement of Ashkali and Romani Scavengers* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2020), 37, ProQuest Ebook Central.

tation, and regulation is deeply connected to the socio-political aspects of and the literature on *humans-as-waste*, which provides additional insight into Agamben's conceptualisation of bare life. For example, Bauman and Giroux crucially explores the disposability of human beings through globalisation and neoliberalism, while Desmond and Mbembe emphasise disposability due to racialised geographies and postcolonial politics.<sup>72</sup> As such, this literature provide insight into the power relations this research draw on. This research emphasises the role of sovereign power in regulating and controlling people and the environment through the politics of waste. Drawing on these, this research establishes the conceptual framework *the biopolitics of waste in CUS* (unpacked in Chapter 1).

### 0.2.3 NOTE ON AGENCY AND RESISTANCE

The most severe criticism of bare life and humans-as-waste conceptualisations regards the role of *agency* and the possibilities to respond to the power of the state and other factors such as globalisation, modernity, and neoliberalism.<sup>73</sup> Agamben's work on agency has been argued to create a linear and one-sided theorisation of power,<sup>74</sup> and suggests sovereign power enables the regulation and abandonment of entire categories of people. This conceptualisation however should not exclude the ability for agency to emerge within these structures. It displays the ability for states to politically exclude and regulate groups of *others* who does not fit into the political project – a group often perceived as a threat and utilised as a scapegoat. Within

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<sup>72</sup>See: Bauman, *Wasted Lives*; Giroux, "Reading Hurricane Katarina"; Desmond, *The Discarded People*; and Mbembe, *Necropolitics*.

<sup>73</sup>Are J. Knudsen, "Camp, ghetto, zinco, slum: Lebanon's transitional zones of emplacement," *Humanity: An International Journal of Human Rights, Humanitarianism, and Development* 3 (2016); and Richard Baily, "Up against the wall: Bare life and Resistance in Australian immigration detention," *Law and Critique* 20 (2009); Gillian Wylie, "Human waste? Reading Bauman's *Wasted Lives* in the context of Ireland's globalisation," in *Enacting Globalization: Multidisciplinary Perspectives on International Integration*, ed. Louis Brennan (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014); and Kathleen M. Millar, *Reclaiming the Discarded: Life and Labor on Rio's Garbage Dump* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2018), ProQuest Ebook Central.

<sup>74</sup>Knudsen, "Camp, ghetto, zinco, slum"; and Baily, "Up against the wall."

these contexts, agency emerges by *others* on various scales seeking to shed light on their condition and reclaim their political rights, explored by various scholars like Patricia Owens and Diane Enns and outlined in Chapter 1.<sup>75</sup>

Regarding humans-as-waste conceptualisations, critics have had similar reservations and responses regarding agency.<sup>76</sup> Michael Denning argues that these metaphors “can lead us to imagine that there really are disposable people, not simply that they are disposable in the eyes of state and market.”<sup>77</sup> Thereby reinforcing derogatory language around groups of *others* – due to profession or the specific narratives of communities. This research emphasises the role of processes, the power of the state, and the power of agency within these contexts, to avoid these narratives.

The more-than-human is not excluded from this note on agency, see Chapter 1. Like Joseph Pugliese, I deploy the categorisation of other-than-human/more-than-human rather than non-human as

“the category of the nonhuman is visibly and conceptually marked by the negative prefix *non-* that functions to define its other (animal, rocks, water, or plants) through a series of tacit or explicit deficits (they do not have language, emotion, culture, and so on) [...] The adjective *more* affirms the way that more-than-human exceed human qualities and conceptual parameters [italics in original].”<sup>78</sup>

Whilst sovereign power and its impact on people is the main focal point of this research, ex-

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<sup>75</sup>Patricia Owens, “Reclaiming ‘bare life’?: Against Agamben on refugees,” *International Relations* 23, no. 4 (2009); Diane Enns, “Bare life and the Occupied Body,” *Theory and Event* 7, no. 3 (2004); Kim, *Refusing Death*.

<sup>76</sup>Wylie, “Human waste?”

<sup>77</sup>Michael Denning, “Wageless life,” *New Left Review* 66 (2010).

<sup>78</sup>Joseph Pugliese, *Biopolitics of the More-Than-Human: Forensic Ecologies of Violence* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2020).

tended notions of agency cannot be ignored in the Anthropocene as “waste rather silently [...] moves us towards a state whereby our only solution for dealing with the toxicity our relentless consumption and planetary depletion generates is by producing permanently temporary waste deposits for imagined futures to resolve.”<sup>79</sup> In the book *Vibrant Matter*, Jane Bennett explores “the assemblages of agency” in order to unpack the power of human and nonhuman, including “*Thing Power*: the curious ability of inanimate things to animate, to act, to produce effects dramatic and subtle.”<sup>80</sup> Waste is a material that impacts spaces across the world. Not only is one of the most significant challenges to earth’s ecological systems, but it also impacts governing and politics on local scales. For example, waste reacts to abandonment through toxicity and the creation of hostile environments as seen in Chapter 4. As such, extended conceptualisations of agency and the literature of new materialism in discard studies expand the discussion on Agamben’s biopolitics and allow for a complex and holistic analysis of the assemblages of waste politics in Beirut.

### 0.3 INTERSECTIONAL DEBATES IN BEIRUT

Biopolitics has had a clear impact on Beirut. The mechanisms implemented by the political leadership have been wielded to both formally and informally regulate life there. A clear example of this is the continual introduction of refugee regulation that serves to politically exclude and marginalise since the French mandate.<sup>81</sup> While the role of governmental actors in regulating and marginalising ascriptive identities such as refugees, migrant workers, and gender has been well studied,<sup>82</sup> the impact of waste on people and urban spaces has been rel-

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<sup>79</sup>Maya J. Hird, “Waste, Environmental Politics and Dis/Engaged Publics,” *Theory, Culture and Society* 34, no.2-3 (2017), 189.

<sup>80</sup>Bennett, *Vibrant Matter*, 6.

<sup>81</sup>See in Mona Fawaz and Isabelle Peillen, *Urban Slums Report: The Case of Lebanon, Beirut* (Lebanon: Understanding Slums, 2003), 9, [https://www.ucl.ac.uk/dpu-projects/Global\\_Report/pdfs/Beirut.pdf](https://www.ucl.ac.uk/dpu-projects/Global_Report/pdfs/Beirut.pdf).

<sup>82</sup>See: Adam Ramadan and Sara Fregonese, “Hybrid Sovereignty and the State of Exception in the Palestinian Refugee Camps in Lebanon,” *Annals of the American Association of Geographers* 107, no. 4 (2017); Martin,

atively understudied. It is a fundamental contributor to the political exclusion of communities and an important mechanism used by sovereign powers to control political life. Furthermore, in recent years there has been an increasing focus on waste and intersectional topics of sovereignty, political exclusion, and CUS,<sup>83</sup> the literature has begun to note points of intersectionality, there is still much more to be explored in this arena.<sup>84</sup> As such, this will be a main focus of this research, especially in emphasising the interface between the academic debates. The themes of *waste, sovereign power, others, and CUS* form a core aspect of this research, and have been continually evaluated and re-evaluated to create an empirically informed research process that inspired the development of the conceptual framework outlined in the next chapter. These themes have been carefully selected using *thematic analysis* – an analytical method of organising, coding, and interpreting qualitative data.

This section is comprised of five sub-sections that aim to conceptualise and contextualise the themes in the case of Beirut and outline the main research questions and claims to originality that have emerged from key debates. *Waste, sovereign power, and others* are the primary categories, with *CUS* being used to describe spaces and conditions where these relationships have emerged in particular ways. With this aim in mind, it provides a brief exploration of each theme and a partial literature review that seeks to unpack key interfaces and debates outlining *the Waste-Sovereign Power-Others Research Gap in Beirut*.

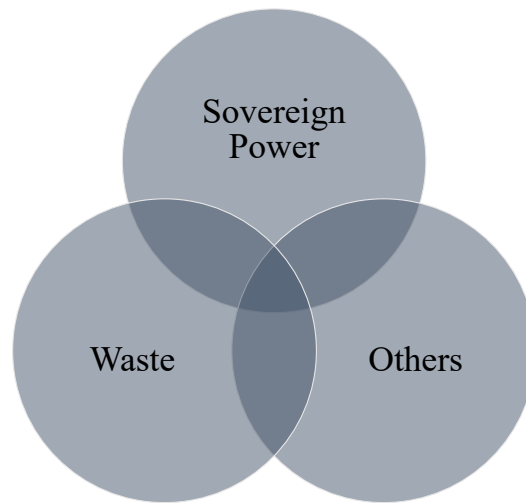
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“From spaces of exception to campscapes”; Mikdashi, *Sextarainism*; and John Nagle, “‘Where the State Freaks out’: Gentrification, queerspaces and activism in postwar Beirut,” *Urban Studies* 59, no.5 (2021).

<sup>83</sup>This includes a series of sources like edited books such as Alan Mikhail (ed.) *Water on Sand: Environmental Histories of the Middle East and North Africa* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012); William R. Thompson and Leila Zakhirova, *Climate change in the Middle East and North Africa* (Oxon: Routledge, 2022); such as *Jadaliyya: Environment*, <https://www.jadaliyya.com/AboutUs>; and special issues such as POMPEPS Studies 46, *Environmental Politics in the Middle East and North Africa*, [https://pomeps.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/POMEPS\\_Studies\\_46\\_Web-FINAL.pdf](https://pomeps.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/POMEPS_Studies_46_Web-FINAL.pdf).

<sup>84</sup>Such as Stamatopoulou-Robbins, *Waste Siege*; Karim Makdisi, “The Rise and Decline of Environmentalism in Lebanon,” in *Water on Sand: Environmental Histories of the Middle East and North Africa*, ed. Alan Mikhail (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), and Eric Verdeil, “Infrastructure crisis in Beirut and the struggle to (not) reform the Lebanese state,” *the Arab Studies Journal* 29, no.1 (2018).





**Figure 1:** Sovereign Power, Waste and Others Research Gap in Beirut

The themes have been studied in the context of Beirut across various disciplines, including political science, anthropology, human geography, and cultural studies, thus creating methodologically and empirically rich work that has informed this research.<sup>85</sup> This research navigates some of these contributions, enabling a greater understating of the relationship between *waste*, *sovereign power*, and *others* in Beirut.

### 0.3.1 WASTE

The ordering of waste by sovereignties is at the centre of this research. However, waste includes a diverse set of categories (mining waste, wastewater, hazardous waste, solid waste etc.), with this research focusing on municipal solid waste (MSW). MSW includes aspects like collection, recycling, and landfilling; however, as seen in the case of Beirut, waste streams are of-

<sup>85</sup>Examples of this broad literature include Bassel F. Salloukh, Rabie Barakat, Jinan S., Al-Habbal, Lara W. Khattab, and Shoghig Mikaelian, *Politics of Sectarianism in Postwar Lebanon* (London: Pluto Press. Accessed February 1, 2015), ProQuest Ebook Central; Kristin V. Monroe, *The Insecure City: Space, Power, and Mobility in Beirut* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2016), Project MUSE; Hiba Bou Akar, *For the War yet to Come: Planning Beirut's Frontiers* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2018), ProQuest Ebook Central; and Judith Naeff, *Precarious Imaginaries of Beirut: A City's Suspended Now* (Cham: Springer International Publishing AG, 2017), ProQuest Ebook Central.

ten interconnected, leading to secondary discussions of mismanagement of excess construction and demolition waste (CDW), hazardous and medical waste resulting during conflict and political crisis. Consequently, MSW is a multidimensional problem in Beirut with a series of interconnected challenges that are further discussed in Chapters 2, 3, and 4 and that broadly encompass:

- *Population and consumption growth* have resulted in higher waste quantities in postwar Lebanon.<sup>86</sup>
- *Waste work* is shaped by systems of marginalisation and exploitation. It has largely been performed formally by foreign nationals through an abusive migration system (municipal solid waste) or informally through refugees (recyclers), but with increasing numbers of Lebanese citizens becoming a part of the sector since the acceleration of ongoing political and socio-economic crisis in 2019.<sup>87</sup>
- *Geographical and spatial constraints* shape disposal availabilities. High population density in a small mountainous country and sectarian geographies of opposition establishes a set of challenges.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>86</sup>MOE/UNDP/ECODIT, *State and Trends of the Lebanese Environment* (Beirut: Wide Expertise Group, 2011), 269, <https://www.undp.org/lebanon/publications/state-trends-lebanese-environment>. Of note, population data in Lebanon is limited due to hostilities over sectarian distribution and power-sharing. Numbers are also challenging to come by due to fluctuating numbers of refugees (predominantly from Syria and Palestine) and more recent emigration from Lebanon due to the political and socio-economic crisis.

<sup>87</sup>Jonathan Danger, David Wood, and Jacob Boswall, *Cleaning up: The Shady Industries that Exploit Lebanon's Kafala Workers* (Beirut: Triangle, 2020), <https://www.thinktriangle.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Cleaning-Up-The-Shady-Industries-That-Exploit-Lebanons-Kafala-Workers-1.pdf>; and Nadim Farajalla, Ayah Badran, Jad Taha El Baba, Yasmina Choueiri, Rana El Hajj, Mona Fawaz, and Ali Chalak, *The Role of Informal Systems in Urban Sustainability and Resilience: A Review* (Beirut: the Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs, 2017).

<sup>88</sup>MOE/UNHCR/UNICEF/UNDP, *Lebanon State of the Environment and Future Outlook: Turning The Crises into Opportunity* (2021), 357, <https://www.undp.org/lebanon/publications/lebanon-state-environment-and-future-outlook-turning-crises-opportunities>.

- *Political and economic instability* have impacted MSW infrastructures since the end of the civil war, including aspects such as corruption and the division of the public pie.<sup>89</sup>
- *Conflicts* (such as the 1975-1990 Civil War and the 2006 July War) and *disasters* (like the 2020 Beirut Explosion) have interrupted solid waste management systems through the increase of solid waste or destruction of facilities.<sup>90</sup>

In addition to the numerous reports that have explored these challenges, a growing number of academic research have been published on the state, urban spaces, and social movements related to solid waste management.<sup>91</sup> A considerable number of these focus on the protests during the 2015 waste crisis, with particular attention to the non-sectarian and anti-establishment nature of the social movement and the eventual end of the protests.<sup>92</sup> For example, Carmen Geha details how the social movement mobilised, strategised, and framed the issue.<sup>93</sup> This literature has for the most part explored social networks and activism in the Lebanese context and has not engaged with literature on waste as a *power-tool* for movements, including the seminal work of Sarah A. Moore.<sup>94</sup> Significantly, it is not the aim of this thesis

<sup>89</sup>Ibid; Leenders, *Spoils of Truce*; Baumann, "The Causes, Nature, and Effect."

<sup>90</sup>S. Sadek and M. El-Fadel, "The Normandy Landfill: A Case Study in Solid Waste Management," *Journal of Natural Resources and Life Sciences Education* 29, no. 1 (2000); Sari A. Acra and Sari M. Acra, "Commentary: Impact of war on the household environment and domestic activities: Vital lessons from the civil war in Lebanon," *Journal of Public Health Policy* 27, no.2 (2006); UNEP, *Lebanon: Post-Conflict Environmental Assessment* (Nairobi, United Nations Environmental Programme, 2007), 98-109.

<sup>91</sup>Such as the crucial MOE/UNHCR/UNICEF/UNDP, *Lebanon State of the Environment*.

<sup>92</sup>See: Marie-Noelle AbiYaghi, Myriam Catusse, and Miriam Younes, "From *isat an-nizam at-ta'ifi* to the garbage crisis movement and antisectarian movements," in *Lebanon Facing the Arab Uprisings: Constraints and Adaption*, eds. Rosita Di Peri and Daniel Meier (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), ProQuest Ebook Central; Stephen Deets, "Consociationalism, Clientelism, and Local Politics in Beirut: Between Civic and Sectarian Identities," *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics* 24, no.2 (2018); Marwan M. Kraidy, "Trashing the sectarian system? Lebanon's 'You Stink' movement and the making of affective publics," *Communication and the Public* 1, no.1 (2016); and Anne Kristine Ronn, "The development and negotiations of frames during non-sectarian mobilizations in Lebanon," *The Review of Faith & International Affairs* 18, no.1 (2020).

<sup>93</sup>Carmen Geha, "Politics of a garbage crisis: social networks, narratives, and frames of Lebanon's 2015 protests and their aftermath," *Social Movement Studies* 18, no.1 (2019).

<sup>94</sup>Sarah A. Moore, "The Excess of Modernity: Garbage Politics in Oaxaca, Mexico," *The Professional Geographer* 61, no.4 (2009).

to explore the social movements that have emerged in the last decades but rather to unpack how groups of others resist the socio-political ordering by the state, see Chapter 3.

Leading up to the 2015 waste crisis, scholars like Reinhoud Leenders and Eric Verdeil exposed macro structures by analysing the sectarian politics, neoliberalism, and corruption in creating ineffective waste management in postwar Beirut.<sup>95</sup> These largely contribute to the broader literature on infrastructures and public services in Beirut, including the works of Joanne Randa Nucho and Melani Cammett, who explores how the public services are shaped by sectarian politics.<sup>96</sup> Particularly influential, Nucho re-examines sectarian politics and its impact on everyday politics and essential services like electricity and roadworks.<sup>97</sup> Whilst this thesis draws on this literature – especially in unpacking sectarian politics and the state – it is noteworthy that the *politics of waste* should be viewed as distinct from this literature for two main reasons. First, waste is not only a material but also a socio-political construct, with a substantial literature grounded in Douglas’s understanding of dirt.<sup>98</sup> Secondly, the ecological impact of waste has specific outcomes for people and environment which has extensively been explored in the literature on environmental justice and political ecology. As a result, the literature on infrastructures and public services are a part of the secondary debates that enables a greater discussion on state organisation, but that cannot be equated with the study of waste politics.

From the ‘bottom up’, scholars like Elizabeth Saleh and Steven Seidman have investigated the peculiarities of informal workers and interlinkages with the *Kafala system* – a legal

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<sup>95</sup>Verdeil, “Infrastructure crisis in Beirut;” and Leenders, *Spoils of Truce*. For more recent analysis, see Baumann, “The Causes, Nature, and Effect”; Deets, “Consociationalism, Clientelism, and Local Politics”; and Andrew Arsan, *Lebanon: A Country in Fragments* (London: C. Hurst & Co., 2018).

<sup>96</sup>Nucho, *Everyday Sectarianism*; and Melani Cammett, *Compassionate Communalism: Welfare and Sectarianism in Lebanon* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2014), ProQuest Ebook Central.

<sup>97</sup>Nucho, *Everyday Sectarianism*.

<sup>98</sup>Douglas’s book *Purity and Danger* has been used across disciplines to unpack the social, political and cultural aspects of waste and are also even regularly used in discussions on the materiality of waste. See Joshua Reno, “Waste and waste management,” *Annual Review of Anthropology* 44 (2015), 557.

‘low-skilled’ migration system that fosters the abuse and exclusion of workers.<sup>99</sup> In particular, Saleh partially explores the state-waste-other research gap by exploring how the state has expanded the Kafala system for all foreign nationals, including Syrian migrant workers and refugees, after the start of the Syrian crisis.<sup>100</sup> This research expands on this in the context of the waste management system in Beirut and departs by developing a conceptual framework that explores how sovereign power facilitates a political ordering of waste. Thus, moving away from research foci like neoliberal policies and corruption and instead focusing on how the state – and political leaders – have the ability to control and regulate people and urban regions.

Finally, scholars studying waste in Beirut have contributed to cultural studies. Judith Naeff explores how aspects such as sectarianism, geopolitics, and postwar reconstruction have implicated “cultural objects”, highlighting how “ruins, debris, dumps and squander” have assembled a “real and imagined urban geography that is marked by disposability.”<sup>101</sup> Similarly, Christine Mady analysed “the role of walls as urban objects and as a spatiotemporal resistance tactic” during the 2015 waste crisis by studying “everyday practices, perceptions, and actions in Beirut’s urban open spaces.”<sup>102</sup> Finally, Blake Atwood explores “media waste” and “the politics of invisibility” that shape Beirut’s waste structures.<sup>103</sup> The culture studies literature is intimately connected with discussions in this research on waste, which often cross into debates on the state and political exclusion. However, the sole aim of this research differs by

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<sup>99</sup>Elizabeth Saleh, “The master cockroach: Scrap metal and Syrian labour in Beirut’s informal economy,” *Contemporary Levant* 1, no. 2 (2016); and Steven Seidman, “The politics of cosmopolitan Beirut: From the stranger to the other,” *Theory, Culture & Society* 29, no. 2 (2012).

<sup>100</sup>Saleh, “The master cockroach,” 103.

<sup>101</sup>Naeff, *Precarious Imaginaries of Beirut*, 88.

<sup>102</sup>Christine Mady, “The imaginaries of Beirut’s “invisible” solid waste: Exploring walls as temporal pauses amidst the Beirut garbage crisis,” in *The Temporalities of Waste: Out of Sight, Out of Time*, eds. Fiona Allon, Ruth Barcan, and Karma Eddison-Corgan (Milton: Taylor & Francis Group, 2010), 89, ProQuest Ebook Central.

<sup>103</sup>Atwood “A city by the sea.”

exploring the *politics* and not the cultural aspects of waste. Beyond the cultural materiality of waste there has been little discussions on the ecological impacts beyond that of the key reports.<sup>104</sup> This research seeks to fill this literature gap by exploring how sovereignties organises the socio-political and material ordering of waste, emphasising the impact on *others* and their environment.

### 0.3.2 SOVEREIGN POWER

The concept of the *sovereign power* in Beirut and in the broader Middle East has been a highly debated topic among scholars.<sup>105</sup> The idea of the sovereign state is rooted within western philosophy which itself is rooted in the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648, that established principles of non-interference and executive sovereignty, and the writings of Max Weber on political organisation and the monopoly of violence in a specific territory.<sup>106</sup> This ideal-type typology of the state has been subjected to much criticism in the Middle Eastern context however. The state is not seen as a single entity that exercises an ultimate monopoly over the legitimate use of force due to the plurality of agents within the political system.<sup>107</sup> As a result, an abundance of theoretical approaches have sought to address the complex composition of sovereignties and power, as further explored in Chapter 1.

Significantly, state sovereignty should be understood as a *process*, and as argued by Charles Tripp, with “always-unfinished and contested” performance.<sup>108</sup> Historical processes, including the collapse of the Ottoman Empire in the 1920s, the establishment of European man-

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<sup>104</sup>Such as MOE/UNHCR/UNICEF/UNDP, *Lebanon State of the Environment*.

<sup>105</sup>Scholars such as Migdal; Raymond Hinnebusch; Nazih N. Ayubi; Fred Halliday; Sami Zubaida; Charles Tripp; and Adham Saouli.

<sup>106</sup>Weber, *Max Weber's Complete Writings*, 369.

<sup>107</sup>As explored in Philip S. Khoury and Joseph Kostiner (eds), *Tribes and State Formation in the Middle East* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 6.

<sup>108</sup>Charles Tripp, “The state as an always-unfinished performance: Improvisation and Performativity in the Face of Crisis,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* (2018), 337.

dates across the region, and postcolonial political projects, have shaped states in the Middle East.<sup>109</sup> As argued by scholars like Roger Owen, states have emerged through European notions of the state through colonialisation inheriting political structures “without any great concern as to whether it made sense in what was obviously a different historical and cultural environment.”<sup>110</sup> Yet, as noted by Nazih N Ayubi states “succeeded in preserving their newly established ‘states’, although not without cultural and social agony, while the state machines have themselves expanded most remarkably in size and in functional scope.”<sup>111</sup> Today, states across the region have adopted extreme versatility amid contestations and political change.

In this research, the state is taken to be a political system that is shaped and reshaped by *nested* agents competing and collaborating between various institutions and modes of governing. As such, this thesis draws heavily on *nestedness* in the state, thus acknowledging that power is dispersed and situated within higher forms of *sovereignty* (see Chapter 1).<sup>112</sup> Notably, nested political agents are referred to in this research using the term political leadership and political leader – *zu'ama* and *za'im* in Arabic - to encompass the role of political agents and networks as further discussed in Chapter 2. In a narrow definition, the *zu'ama* is limited to specific family ties and feudal traditional patron-client relationships – including economic, social, and political exchanges for political support – as explored by Arnold Hottinger.<sup>113</sup> The term has been revived in a broader political and contemporary meaning in the last decades however by scholars such as Andrew Arsan, Hannes Baumann, and Nizar

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<sup>109</sup>see also Adham Saouli, “States and state-building in the Middle East,” in *The Routledge Handbook to the Middle East and North African State and State Systems*, eds. Raymond Hinnebusch and Jasmine Gani (Milton: Taylor and Francis, 2019), 41-42; Sami Zubaida, *Beyond Islam: A New Understanding of the Middle East* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2011), Chapter 2.

<sup>110</sup>Roger Owen, *State, Power and Politics in the Making of the Middle East* (Oxon: Routledge, 2004), 2.

<sup>111</sup>Nazih N Ayubi, *Over-Stating the Arab State: Politics and Society in the Middle East* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2009), 4.

<sup>112</sup>Humphrey, “Sovereignty”.

<sup>113</sup>Arnold Hottinger, “Zu'ama in Historical Perspective,” in *Politics in Lebanon*, ed. Leonard Binder (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1966).

Hamzeh.<sup>114</sup> For example, Andrew Arsan argues that

“distinctions among *zu’ama* are not always as clear cut as their public image suggest. What is more, though scholarly representations of the ideal-type of the *za’im* have stayed static over the last fifty years or so, the fortunes of various leaders have waxed and waned, moving with the shifting currents of war, reconstruction and regional growth.”<sup>115</sup>

As such, the political leadership should be conceptualised as a highly versatile group that are able to face diverse challenges to survive. As noted by Tom Najem in the context of post-war Lebanon: “they [the *zu’ama*] did not want to overturn the old dynasties or open up the political system more generally. They simply wanted to found their own dynasties.”<sup>116</sup> These structures continue to be adjusted within the context of the anti-establishment movements and ongoing socio-economic and political crises described in Chapter 2. This research uses this broad definition of the *political leadership* because it signals adaptability amid political obstacles and the survival of the political system. The political leadership has further been researched through *class*, *elite* and *sectarian* lenses. These terms often fall short of highlighting their political role or the specific Lebanese context of the political leadership. As noted by Hannes Baumann, the term *upper class* falls short of describing the political leadership in Lebanon as the category does not include other identity markers such as sect and family.

<sup>117</sup> In addition, not all political leaders in Lebanon are historically established within the upper class; examples include Amal Movement and Hezbollah where the social standing of the

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<sup>114</sup> Arsan, *Lebanon*; Hannes Baumann, “The ‘new contractor bourgeoisie’ in Lebanese politics: Hariri, Mikati and Fares,” in *Lebanon: After the Cedar Revolution*, eds. Are Knudsen and Michael Kerr (London: Hurst, 2012); and A. Nisar Hamzeh, “Clientelism, Lebanon: Roots and Trends,” *Middle Eastern Studies* 37, no.3. (2001).

<sup>115</sup> Arsan, *Lebanon*, 157-158.

<sup>116</sup> Tom Najem, *Lebanon: The Politics of a Penetrated Society* (Oxon: Routledge, 2012), 16.

<sup>117</sup> Baumann, “The ‘new contractor bourgeoisie’ in Lebanese politics,” 129.



Shi'ite families weakened in the late 1950s.<sup>118</sup> The term *political elite* – defined by their quality distinction from other groups – on the other hand, does not take into account factors such as sect, patron-client relations and internal contestation. Finally, the term *sectarian leaders* is problematic as the term could be used interchangeably with religious leaders. What is at stake in this research is the role of the state and political leadership, which is further discussed in Chapter 2.

A series of specific research foci have emerged within the context of Beirut from the conceptualisation of the state and political leadership. I have broadly divided these into three secondary categories in my discussions on the state: *power-sharing*, *sectarianism*, and the *political economy*. In postwar Lebanon power-sharing has been explored to unpack questions of representation and conflict resolution.<sup>119</sup> Power-sharing has emerged as an academic field with the aim of ending armed conflict and mitigating tensions between main groups. This literature is based on the typology of “consociational democracy” conceptualised by Arend Lijphart, Hans Daalder, John McGarry, and Brennan O’Leary, which argues for the representation of all major segments of society in government.<sup>120</sup> Yet, the political ideal-system of consociationalism is widely criticised by scholars who argue that it empowers elites, crys-

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<sup>118</sup>Harel Chorev, “Power, tradition and challenge: The resilience of the elite Shi’ite families in Lebanon,” *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 40, no. 3 (2013), 305.

<sup>119</sup>Tamirace Fakhoury, “Debating Lebanon’s power-sharing model: An opportunity or an impasse for democratization studies in the Middle East?” *The Arab Studies Journal* 22, no. 1 (2014); Bassel Salloukh and Renko A. Verheij, “Transforming power-sharing: From corporate to hybrid consociationalism in postwar Lebanon,” *Middle East Law and Governance* 9, no. 1 (2017); Brenda Seaver, “The regional sources of power-sharing failure: The case of Lebanon,” *Political Science Quarterly* 115, no.2 (2000); and Amada Rizkallah, “The paradox of power-sharing: Stability and fragility in postwar Lebanon,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 40, no. 2 (2017).

<sup>120</sup>Arend Lijphart, *Democracy in Plural Societies: A Comparative Exploration* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977); Arend Lijphart, “Constitutional design for divided societies,” *Journal of Democracy* 15, no.2 (2004); Hans Daalder, “On the origins of the consociational democracy model,” *Acta Politica* 19 (1984); John McGarry and Brendan O’Leary, *The Northern Ireland Conflict: Consociational Engagements* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); and John McGarry and Brendan O’Leary, “Iraq’s constitution of 2005: Liberal consociation as political prescription,” *International Journal of Constitutional Law* 5, no. 4 (2007).

talises divisions, and neglects groups of *others*.<sup>121</sup> In the Lebanese context, power-sharing has been argued to have hindered institutional reform, empowered the political leadership, manifested patron-client relationship, enabled the emergence of non-state/hybrid actors, and facilitated spaces for geopolitical interference.<sup>122</sup> Whilst inspiring a burgeoning of literature that is crucial in contextualising the state and power relations in Lebanon, this thesis does not aim to contribute to debates on power-sharing and consociationalism but rather explores nested power structures and their ability to regulate people and environments in CUS.

In Lebanon debates on power-sharing are often accompanied by discussions of sectarianism. The literary debate on *sectarianism* – a concept often used to describe the role of sectarian identities and its impact on difference and violence in Middle East – has often shaped the discussion on the state, with recent scholarly work moving beyond the pure debates on *primordialism* (sectarian identities are fixed and historically rooted),<sup>123</sup> *instrumentalism* (sectarian identities are manipulated by the elite),<sup>124</sup> and *constructivism* (sectarian identities are socially and politically constructed).<sup>125</sup> In addition, *institutionalism* has explored how sectar-

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<sup>121</sup> Donald L. Horowitz, “Ethnic power sharing: Three big problems,” *Journal of Democracy* 25, no. 2 (2014); Brian Barry, “The consociational model and its dangers,” *European Journal of Political Research* 3, no. 4 (1975); Mathew Charles Wilson, “A closer look at the limits of consociationalism,” *Comparative political studies* 53, no. 5 (2019); and Toby Dodge, “Iraq’s informal consociationalism and its problems,” *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism* 20, no.2 (2020).

<sup>122</sup> Matthijs Bogaards, “Formal and informal consociational institutions: A comparison of the national pact and the Taif Agreement in Lebanon,” *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics* 25, no. 1 (2019); and Tamirace Fakhoury, “Power-sharing after the Arab Spring? Insights from Lebanon’s Political Transition,” *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics* 25, no. 1 (2019).

<sup>123</sup> For a discussion on approaches to ethnicity, conflict and approaches to identity see: Ashutosh Varshney, “Ethnicity and Ethnic Conflict,” in the *Oxford Handbook of Comparative Politics*, eds. Charles Boix and Susan C. Stokes (Stokes: Oxford University Press, 2009). Scholars have criticised primordialism at length see: Toby Dodge, “Bourdieu goes to Baghdad: Explaining hybrid political identities in Iraq,” *Sociology Lens* 31, no. 1 (2018), 26; and Hannes Baumann, “Social protest and the political economy of sectarianism in Lebanon,” *Global Discourse* 6, no. 4 (2016), 634.

<sup>124</sup> As single use theory instrumentalism has been criticised as “the evil politician/dictator explanation” Fred-eric Wehrey, *Beyond Sunni and Shia: The Roots of Sectarianism and Socio-Political Conflict in Iraq* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 25. However, others such as Melani Cammett have utilised instrumentalism together with constructivist approaches, see “Lebanon, the sectarian identity test lab,” *The Century Foundation*, April 10, 2019, <https://tcf.org/content/report/lebanon-sectarian-identity-test-lab/>.

<sup>125</sup> See: Raymond Hinnebusch, “Identity and state formation in multi-sectarian societies: Between national-

ian politics have manifested within the state, with Bassel F. Salloukh arguing that “the sectarian elite deploy their institutional, material and coercive capabilities to contain and sabotage resistance.”<sup>126</sup> In the last decade, scholars have explored third-way approaches based on new and mixed theoretical frameworks of sectarianism, including the conceptual writings of Foucault, Agamben, and Pierre Bourdieu.<sup>127</sup> This thesis does not contribute to this debate on sectarianism, but does seek to engage with the writings of Agamben relating to political exclusion and sectarian politics as seen in Chapter 1. It further considers power assemblages in the state and political leadership within the context of sectarian politics, and their impact on politics and governing in Chapters 3 and 4.

Finally, the Lebanese state and the political economy have been explored by scholars studying the region, often tangentially with power-sharing and sectarianism. The economy in Lebanon is closely knit with the state and the political leadership, with Hannes Baumann arguing that “sectarianism in Lebanon is grounded in a highly unequal political economy marked by the concentration of wealth and incomes at the top and dependency of the majority of the population on resources controlled by politicians.”<sup>128</sup> Scholars have also explored how the postwar system has led to rampant corruption by the elite or how they have utilised neoliberal policies to grow their wealth and power.<sup>129</sup> Taken together the scholarship on power-sharing, sectarianism, and the political economy displays invaluable knowledge on the Lebanese state and the political leadership. Following Agamben’s reading on biopolitics,

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ism and sectarianism in Syria,” *Nations and Nationalism* 26, no. 1 (2020).

<sup>126</sup>Bassel F. Salloukh, “The Architecture of Sectarianization in Lebanon,” in *Sectarianization: Mapping the New Politics of the Middle East*, ed. Nader Hashemi and Danny Postel (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 217, ProQuest Ebook Central.

<sup>127</sup>Jamil Mouawad and Hannes Baumann, “Wayn al-dawala? Locating the Lebanese state in social theory,” *Arab Studies Journal* XXV, no.1 (2017); Sarghali, Mabon and Ruished, eds., *States of Exception or Exceptional States*; Mabon, *Houses Built on Sand*; Dodge, “Bourdieu goes to Baghdad”; and Martyn Egan and Paul Tabar, “Bourdieu in Beirut: Wasta, the state and social production in Lebanon,” *Middle East Critique* 25, no.3 (2016).

<sup>128</sup>Baumann, “Social protest and the political economy,” 646.

<sup>129</sup>Leenders, *Spoils of Truce*.

this research contributes to these debates by explicitly exploring how the political leadership utilises these structures to maintain their power and regulate *others* through waste structures.

### 0.3.3 OTHERS

In this research, *others* describe people who are socio-politically and legally excluded within political projects – relating to the condition of *bare life* as explored in Chapter 1.<sup>130</sup> Historically these processes have often been understood as citizenship and non-citizenship binaries, often focusing on refugees and migrants with the denial of citizenship and rights being a powerful tool for regimes to regulate groups of people such as Black Americans, Aboriginals, and Palestinians.<sup>131</sup> In the Middle East, political projects have been underpinned by concerns around regime survival, sectarian narratives, and fears around external manipulation of domestic events, thereby establishing the regulation of citizenship as a political tool.<sup>132</sup> Citizenship alone does not guarantee socio-political and legal inclusion however. Exploring the “myth of full citizenship”, Elizabeth Cohen argues, “citizenship does not make a citizenry equal [...] citizenship imposes burdens, often without the consent of those upon whom the burdens are imposed [...] and of broader relevance, is the fact that contemporary practices of citizenship are as much, and possibly more, associated with forms of security and predictability than with sameness and equality.”<sup>133</sup> Exclusion from rights emerges with an emphasis

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<sup>130</sup>Agamben, *Homo Sacer*.

<sup>131</sup>See: Svirsky and Bignall eds, *Agamben and Colonialism*; Hafmann and Korf, “Agamben in the Ogaden,” Lentin ed., *Thinking Palestine*; Muldon, “The Sovereign Exceptions,”; and Rifkin, “Indigenizing Agamben.”

<sup>132</sup>Keiko Sakai and Kota Suechika, “Sectarian fault lines in the Middle East: Sources of conflicts or communal bonds,” in *Routledge Handbook of Middle East Politics*, ed. Larbi Sadiki (Oxon: Routledge, 2020).

<sup>133</sup>Elizabeth F. Cohen, *Semi-Citizenship in Demographic Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012): 12. The literature on legal and political rights has prompted conceptualisations of citizenship as a *multi-layered construct* with different layers from the local to the global and includes proliferations like ecological and urban citizenship defining people’s rights. A discussion of extended citizenship is beyond the scope of this thesis as the focus is on the regulation and exclusion of *others*. See: Nira Yuval-Davis, “The ‘multi-layered citizen’: Citizenship in the age of ‘globalization,’” *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 1, no.1 (1999); and Rainer Baubock, “Reinventing Urban Citizenship,” *Citizenship Studies* 7, no. 2 (2003).

on sectarian politics and unequal economic and socio-ecological processes. Specifically, in Beirut, the political exclusion of *others* is no simple category. It is situated within the political system – among the 18 recognised sects and other identity groups. Legally it includes groups of *others*, such as refugees and migrant workers, that are excluded from Lebanese citizenship, but also *sectarian others* that are marginalised within the legal systems, such as the Electoral Law and Personal Status Law.<sup>134</sup> In recent years these discussions have also included the legal peculiarities of movement activists within social movements after the Arab Uprising.<sup>135</sup> I organise this literature and debates into three research foci: *non-sectarian others*, *sectarian others*, and *movement activists*.<sup>136</sup>

Political exclusion has more widely been explored in the context of *non-sectarian others*, predominantly refugees and migrant workers but also increasing focus on women. For refugees, Beirut has been described as a safe haven and a place of coexistence but also of political and social exclusion and occasional violence.<sup>137</sup> Scholars such as Sari Hanafi and Taylor Long, Adam Ramadan, Nora Stel, Dina Martin, and myself have noted the precariousness and legal exception of Palestinian and Syrian refugees living in formal and informal camps in Lebanon, drawing on Agamben's conceptualisation of biopolitics.<sup>138</sup> In camps refugees

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<sup>134</sup>Souheil al-Natour, "The legal status of Palestinians in Lebanon," *Journal of Refugee Studies* 10, no. 3 (1997); Saleh, "The master cockroach"; Imad Salamey and Rhys Payne, "Parliamentary consociationalism in Lebanon: equal citizenry vs. quoted confessionality," *The Journal of Legislative Studies* 14, no. 4 (2008); and Nelia Hyndman-Rizk, "A question of personal status: The Lebanese women's movement and civil marriage reform," *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies* 15, no. 2 (2019).

<sup>135</sup>Carmen Geha, "Co-optation, counter-narratives, and repression."

<sup>136</sup>I seek to make a distinction between the conceptual and contextual to provide room for further research outside of Beirut where other ascriptive identities take president. Notably, scholars studying power-sharing agreements have categorised *others* in different ways. I have adopted an approach similar to Timofey Agarin, Allison McCulloch and Cera Murtagh that use the categories ethnic others, ethnic-rejecting others, and issue-oriented others, but note that these categories are not fixed, in "Others in deeply divided societies: A research agenda," *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics* 24, no. 3 (2018); and also Nenad Stojanovic, "Political marginalisation of "Others" in consociational regimes," *Zeitschrift für Vergleichende Politikwissenschaft* 12 (2018).

<sup>137</sup>Fawwaz Trabulsi, *A History of Modern Lebanon*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (London: Pluto Press, 2007), 239-240.

<sup>138</sup>Sari Hanafi and Taylor Long, "Governments, governmentalities, and the state of exception in the Palestinian refugee camps of Lebanon," *Journal of Refugee Studies* (2010); Ramadan, "Destroying Nahr el-Bared"; Martin, "From spaces of exception to campsapes"; Nora Stel, *Hybrid Political Order and the Politics of Un-*

have bared witness to extreme violence by armed groups<sup>139</sup> and violent displays of power by the Lebanese state in order to regulate the lives of refugees.<sup>140</sup> These spaces of exception have not been limited to formal and informal camps but overlap with urban spaces, thus including citizens that are excluded “through social and economic discourses and practises[...] separating Lebanese lives that are worth living from those deserving the sovereign’s abandonment.”<sup>141</sup> The refugee camps have been explored at length within the literature, emphasising informal and hybrid institutions<sup>142</sup> and the refugee activism that emerges in these spaces.<sup>143</sup> Whilst this current research only enables a limited analysis of the experiences of refugees and camps in the context of urban spaces and waste work, it draws on some of this literature and agrees with Martin, who argues that “bare life in Beirut [...] is applied to other categories of people including Lebanese citizens.”<sup>144</sup>

In contrast research on migrant workers in Beirut has been relatively limited, with only a few NGOs having explored these issues in detail.<sup>145</sup> Migrant workers in Lebanon are subjected to the Kafala sponsorship system which has led to a system of abuse and marginalisation.<sup>146</sup> As argued by Sumayya Kassmali and others, this system should be understood in relation to race and intersectional factors like “gender, linguistic and cultural differences and

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*ccertainty* (Oxon: Routledge, 2020); and Ana Kumarasamy, “Sovereign power in an icy climate: An exploration of violence, environmental challenges and displacement in the Bekaa Valley, Lebanon,” in *States of Exception or Exceptional States: Law, Politics and Giorgio Agamben in the Middle East*, eds. Sanaa Al Sarghali, Simon Mabon and Adel Ruished (London: I.B.Tauris, 2022).

<sup>139</sup>Hanafi and Long, “Governments, governmentalities, and the state of exception”; and Ramadan, “Destroying Nahr el-Bared.”

<sup>140</sup>Stel, *Hybrid Political Order*.

<sup>141</sup>Martin, “From spaces of exception to campscales”, 10.

<sup>142</sup>Sari Hanafi, “UNRWA as a ‘phantom sovereign’: Governance practices in Lebanon,” in *UNRWA and Palestinian Refugees*, eds. Sari Hanafi, Leila Hilal, Lex Takkenberg (Oxon: Routledge, 2014).

<sup>143</sup>Stel 2016 and Alex Mahoudeau “Who is responsible about our lives?": “Failing” governance and mobilizations in the Palestinian refugee camps of Beirut,” *Journal of Urban Affairs* (2019).

<sup>144</sup>Martin, “From spaces of exception to campscales”, 16.

<sup>145</sup>Including the Legal Agenda, LEADERS, Human Rights Watch, and Triangle.

<sup>146</sup>Steven Seidmann, “The politics of cosmopolitan Beirut: From the stranger to the other,” *Theory, Culture and Society* 29, no. 2 (2012).

socioeconomic status” that have led to the construction of “new hierarchies” between foreign nationals in Lebanon.<sup>147</sup> Similarly, as argued by Elizabeth Saleh, since the outbreak of the Syrian civil war, social hierarchies, racialisation, and legal peculiarities have increasingly included Syrian nationals – refugees and migrant workers.<sup>148</sup> This research expands on this literature in Chapter 3 with a specific focus on waste workers.

Others, like Maya Mikdashi have explored how the system has produced gender inequality within the sectarian system in Lebanon – or ‘sectarianism’ which outlines how “state power articulates, disarticulates, and manages sexual differences bureaucratically, ideologically, and legally.”<sup>149</sup> Scholars have explored the political exclusion of *sectarian others* since the Ottoman Empire (explored in Chapter 4) albeit in limited ways compared to inter-sectarian conflict and violence.<sup>150</sup> These discussions have often centred around power-sharing and consociationalism, emphasising the types of division and grievances that led to the civil war (1975-1990).<sup>151</sup> Today, most scholars agree that the civil war cannot be reduced to a Christian and Muslim divide and included the emergence of various groups with different political underpinnings.<sup>152</sup> Moreover, that the civil war was rooted in a complex set of issues including urban expansion and socio-economic inequalities.<sup>153</sup> Today, exclusion within the sectarian system has emphasised the continuation of inequality within the power-

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<sup>147</sup>Sumayya Kassmali “Understanding race and domestic labor in Lebanon,” *Middle East Report Online* (2021), <https://merip.org/2021/07/understanding-race-and-migrant-domestic-labor-in-lebanon/>.

<sup>148</sup>Saleh, “The master cockroach.”

<sup>149</sup>Mikdashi, *Sextarianism*, 9, 3.

<sup>150</sup>See: Samir Khalaf, *Civil and Uncivil Violence in Lebanon: A History of the Internationalization of Communal Conflict* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002); John Calame and Esther Charlesworth, *Divided Cities: Belfast, Beirut, Jerusalem, Mostar and Nicosia* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009); Scott A. Bollens, *City and Soul: Epic Cultures and Urban Faultlines* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2012); and many more.

<sup>151</sup>Trabolusi, *A History of Modern Lebanon*, 110-112; Elizabeth Picard, *Lebanon: A Shattered Country* (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1996).

<sup>152</sup>For example in Najem, *Lebanon*, 34; and Trabolusi, *A History of Modern Lebanon*.

<sup>153</sup>Trabolusi, *A History of Modern Lebanon*, 160-165; and Sara Fregonese, *War and the City: Urban Geopolitics in Lebanon* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2020), 68-76.

sharing system and, for example, the implications for the electoral Law.<sup>154</sup>

Finally, *others* have actively engaged and resisted political exclusion, as seen during the Arab Uprisings, 2015 waste protests, and 2019 Uprisings.<sup>155</sup> The precarious situation of movement activists in Beirut have recently been explored by scholars including Carmen Geha and John Nagle.<sup>156</sup> Since the Arab Uprising, movement activists in the 2015 waste movement and the 2019 Thawra movement have experienced acts of violent repression and criminalisation by the state.<sup>157</sup> This research investigates aspects of this literature, emphasising how waste activists face repression and violence by sovereign agents in CUS.

#### 0.3.4 CONTESTED URBAN SPACES (CUS)

The political exclusion and marginalisation of others in Beirut is intimately connected to the nature of urban spaces and urban regions. The terms *urban spaces* and *urban region(s)* are used here as a starting point to describe spatial and geographical locations that reflect demographic changes that have emerged in the last centuries. Urban spaces are constructed through networks and multidimensional processes and should not be restricted to the term *city* or single-factor explanations of change like urbanisation and globalisation.<sup>158</sup> From an interpretivist position, I, like other scholars “reject the logic of casual interference and in-

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<sup>154</sup>Salamey and Payne, “Parliamentary consociationalism in Lebanon”; Trabolusi, *A History of Modern Lebanon*, 172.

<sup>155</sup>See: Carmen Geha, “Co-optation, counter-narratives, and repression: Protesting Lebanon’s Sectarian power-sharing regime,” *Middle East Journal* 73, no. 1 (2019); Daniel T.L Shek, “Protests in Hong Kong (2019–2020): a Perspective Based on Quality of Life and Well-Being,” *Applied Research Quality Life* 15 (2020); and Neil DeVotta, “Sri Lanka’s Agony,” *Journal of Democracy* 33 no. 3 (2022).

<sup>156</sup>Geha, “Co-optation, counter-narratives, and repression”; and Nagle, “‘Where the State Freaks out’,” 960–962.

<sup>157</sup>Ibid.

<sup>158</sup>Roger Keil, “Transnational Urban Political Ecology: Health and Infrastructure in the Unbounded City,” in *The New Blackwell Companion to the City*, eds. Gary Bridge and Sophie Watson (Chichester: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2011), 716. See also discussion Neil Brenner, “The Urban Question: Reflections on Henri Lefebvre, Urban Theory and the Politics of scale,” *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 24 (2000); and Bruce Braun, “Environmental issues: writing a more-than-human urban geography,” *Progress in Human Geography* 29, no. 5 (2005).



stead seek to understand the meaning of political phenomena.”<sup>159</sup> As a result, I understand *urban spaces* as the product of spatial and material expressions that are themselves a product of interactions and struggles that are never finished and always under construction, from the configurations of power to socio-ecological composition.<sup>160</sup> Echoing urban scholar Neil Brenner, urbanisation has produced an uneven fabric that stretches across the world and “cannot be grasped adequately through traditional concepts such as cityness, metropolitan, or urban/rural binarisms.”<sup>161</sup> The term *urban region* better encompasses the fluidity of the urban, expanding beyond traditional municipal boundaries and including other settlement typologies like the suburban and even the rural.<sup>162</sup> Within this paradigm then I use *Beirut* to describe the urban region or specify the municipality (see Map 2), even though these terms are by no means fixed categorisations as urban regions change across time and space.

The term *contested urban spaces* (CUS) is interconnected with sovereignties in urban spaces. These sovereignties change across space and time and may result in institutional, territorial, and spatial struggles, reaching the point in which they can destabilise the political system resulting in the possibility of violence and conflict therein.<sup>164</sup> Along with uneven

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<sup>159</sup>Christopher Lamont and Mieczyslaw P. Boduszynski, *Research Methods in Politics & International Relations* (Los Angeles: Sage, 2020), 98.

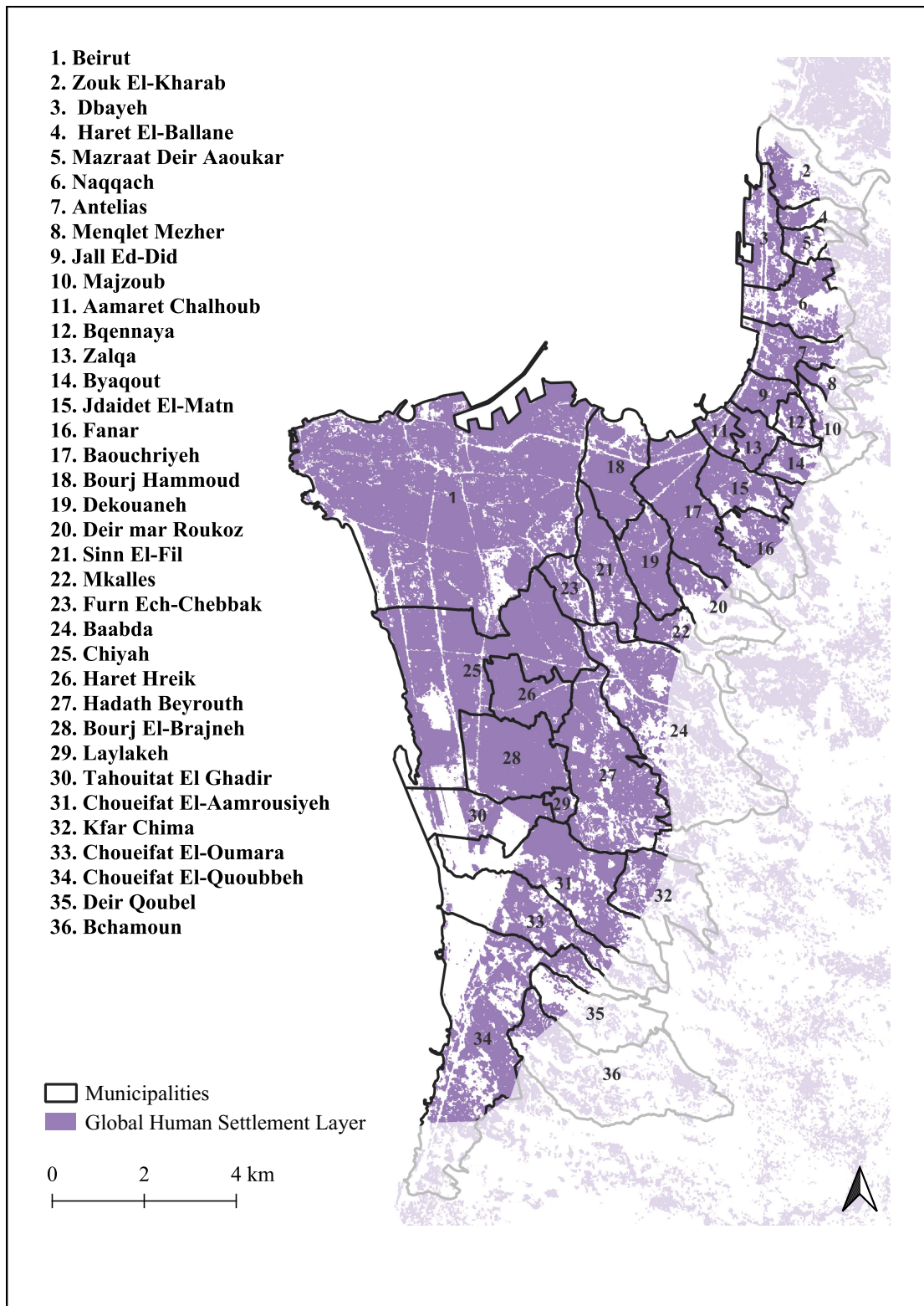
<sup>160</sup>Massey discusses how space is never finished being constructed in *For Space*, 9-11.

<sup>161</sup>Notably, discussions of planetary urbanisation is well beyond the scope of this project; however, I like many other environmental scholars argue that an urban analysis remains appropriate in the Anthropocene as what is at stake is not only climate change but the human destruction of the earth’s ecological systems. Brenner, “Theses on Urbanization,” 90; see also, Braun, “Environmental issues”; and Hillary Angelo and David Wachsmuth, “Urbanizing Urban Political Ecology: A critique of methodological cityism,” *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* (2014).

<sup>162</sup>The suburban is increasingly becoming a part of urban studies in Lebanon, see: Akar, *For the War yet to Come*; Nucho, *Everyday Sectarianism*.

<sup>163</sup>Derived from open source map data: Martino Pesaresi and Politis Panagiotis, GHS-BUILT-S R2023A - GHS built-up surface grid 2018, derived from Sentinel2 composite and Landsat, multitemporal (1975-2030) European Commission, Joint Research Centre(JRC) (2023), <https://ghsl.jrc.ec.europa.eu/download.php?ds=bu>; and OCHA Middle East and North Africa, *Lebanon - Subnational Administrative Boundaries*, derived from CDR data, Open Street Map, and Lebanese Arab Institute (2023), <https://data.humdata.org/dataset/cod-ab-lbn>.

<sup>164</sup>Class is often inseparable within sectarian politics and is part of these ascriptive factors. A burgeoning of literature has focused the interconnectedness between neoliberalism and sectarian politics, including Ophélie



Map 2: Map of the Urban Region of Beirut, Including Key Municipalities<sup>63</sup>

and accelerating economic and socio-ecological inequalities, overlapping and pluralistic challenges have emerged. Political exclusion of *others* parallels with processes like sectarian politics, globalisation, urbanisation, and postcolonialism – establishing a system of abandonment.<sup>165</sup> This complex system of abandonment has emerged across urban spaces; however, multiple sovereignties brings another layer into the analysis of *others*.

A substantial literature labelled *divided cities* has sought to analyse these processes; however, I avoid this term for the following reasons: First, *divided* has changed to reflect the implications of colonial legacies and bring negative “Huntingtonian connotations”.<sup>166</sup> Secondly, a *city* is never completely divided but is shaped by spaces of contestation. The seminal work of Jennifer Robinson promotes the treatment of cities as *ordinary*, seeking to de-compartmentalise academic theorisations.<sup>167</sup> As a middle ground, Rokem suggests they should be used together as a way of ‘diversifying and re-inventing our thinking’ and ‘moving away from *ideal types* or *urban models*.’<sup>168</sup> While categorisations such as “divided”, “fragmented”, “polarised”, and “parallel” have all been used to describe Beirut,<sup>169</sup> the aim is not to contribute to these categorisations as this thesis explores CUS to explain the emergence of

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Véron, “Neoliberalising the Divided City,” *Political Geography* 89 (2021); Lara W. Khattab, “The Genealogy of Social and Political Mobilization in Lebanon under a neoliberal sectarian regime (2009-2019),” *Globalizations* (2022); and Hisham Ashkar, “The role of laws and regulations: The view from Beirut,” *City* 22, no. 3 (2018).

<sup>165</sup>Kempfen, “Divided cities in the 21st century,” 22-26; and Gaffikin and Morrissey, *Planning in Divided Cities*, 80.

<sup>166</sup>See: Marco Allegra, Anna Casaglia and Jonathan Rokem, “The political geographies of urban polarization: A critical review of research on divided cities,” *Geography Compass* 6, no. 9 (2012), 563.

<sup>167</sup>Jennifer Robinson, *Ordinary Cities: Between Modernity and Development* (Oxon: Routledge, 2006), ProQuest Ebook Central. Other scholars are also cautious with universalist claims, for example: Yifachel argues that it has a tendency “to silence other logics and writings on urban development” and that “there cannot, and should not, be a ‘correct’ perspective within which to analyse the nature of urban regions.” Oren Yiftachel, “The Aleph—Jerusalem as critical learning,” *City* 20, no. 3 (2016), 485.

<sup>168</sup>Jonathan Rokem, “Beyond incommensurability: Jerusalem and Stockholm from an ordinary cities perspective,” *City* 20, no. 3 (2016), 480, 473.

<sup>169</sup>See: Calame and Esther Charlesworth, *Divided Cities*; Roger Owen, “The Lebanese crisis: Fragmentation or reconciliation?” *Third World Quarterly* 6, no. 4 (1984); Ralf Brand and Sara Fregonese, *The Radicals’ City: Urban Environment, Polarisation, Cobesion* (Oxon: Routledge, 2013); Franck Mermier, “The frontiers of Beirut: Some anthropological observations,” *Mediterranean Politics* 18, no. 3 (2013), 384-386.

specific spaces in Beirut. CUS describe *spaces* within regions like Beirut whilst acknowledging that other processes are at play, such as urbanisation, globalisation, and socio-ecological inequalities. Finally, the term *divided city* is used interchangeably with segregated cities, thus diminishing the clarity of the concept. The term contestation describes sectarian cleavages, differentiating it from class and social struggles. Finally, the literature on “divided cities” is shaped by a series of approaches, theories, and disciplines, with scholars often using the term without elaboration of what this entails.<sup>170</sup> Others study these structures without reference to the term,<sup>171</sup> making it more appropriate to speak of a corpus on CUS.

At the heart of the CUS corpus are power structures and territory. In Beirut, scholars have explored the implications of sectarian politics on institutional and territorial struggles, predominantly focusing on Hezbollah and the southern suburbs.<sup>172</sup> This includes questions about how urban planning and policy strategies have led to urban inequalities. Exploring planning in Beirut, Hiba Bou Akar explores planning as “lacework” including “repeated layers of negotiation and conflict. It is shaped by channelled markets, zoning mutations, neo-liberal government policies, outdated voting laws and the activities of religious-political organizations both inside and outside the government.”<sup>173</sup> Although recognising that urban spaces consist of various levels of governing, this research is particularly interested in how sovereignties has politically and legally constructed these spaces through the socio-political and material ordering of waste.

Overall, the themes of *waste*, *sovereign power*, *others*, and *CUS* include interrelated literature that contextualises the case of Beirut. While these themes individually and their partial

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<sup>170</sup>See for example, Christina Themistoceleous, “Conflict and unification in the multilingual landscape of a divided city: the case of Nicosia’s border,” *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development* 40, no. 2 (2019).

<sup>171</sup>See: Mabon, *Houses Built on Sand*, Chapter 5; Fregonese, *War and the City*; Akar, *For the War yet to Come*.

<sup>172</sup>Hourani, “Post-conflict reconstruction”; and Fregonese, *War and the City*.

<sup>173</sup>Akar, *For the War yet to Come*, 64.

links have been explored within the broader literature, there is a lack of comprehensive and cohesive understanding of their full interconnectedness. For example, the literature on *waste* has predominantly focused on social movements and cultural studies but has also intersected with scholarship on the state, political sectarianism, and political economy. Yet, this intersection between waste and state rarely explores the implications of political exclusion. At the same time, the literatures on sovereign power, others, and CUS are a part of different literary debates but rarely engages with the ordering of waste. The literature on infrastructures provides crucial insight here but does not sufficiently encompass the *politics of waste*, including its socio-political structures and ecological implications. Further, throughout this section a series of secondary debates have been acknowledged, such as infrastructures, sectarianism, and the political economy. These works are crucial to situating this research within the case study of Beirut.

This research seeks to fill *the Waste, Sovereign Power, and Others Research Gap in Beirut* emerging from the absence and partial engagement with these interfaces; and absence of conceptual framework to analyse these links. This discussion on these themes is crucial and has facilitated the development of the conceptual framework, *the biopolitical machinery of waste*, outlined in the following chapter (Chapter 1). The conceptual synthesis draws heavily on the literature emerging from Beirut in addition to Agamben's conceptualisation on biopolitics and the broader corpus on the politics of waste. Such inductive approach to studying the intersecting challenges enables the analysis of sovereign power and the politics in Beirut, emphasising the implications for people and the environment in Chapter 2, 3, and 4.

#### 0.4 METHODOLOGY

The aim of this thesis is to develop a conceptual approach to understanding the role of sovereign power and waste in CUS, using the case study of Beirut. Critically, the development of a conceptual framework seeks to highlight “why the topic one wishes to study matters, and why the means proposed to study it is appropriate and rigorous.”<sup>174</sup> It is built around the research questions and research gaps that is outlined at the start of this thesis. The role of the conceptual framework is to effectively capture and address these questions and gaps through the methodology and research design outlined in this section.

The research design decisions were influenced by ontological and epistemological considerations, relating to *the study of being* and *the study of knowledge*, respectively. The ontological positioning was based on anti-foundationalism, which posits that the world is socially constructed by people whose views are “shaped by social, political and cultural processes.”<sup>175</sup> Further an interpretivist epistemology was adopted, recognising that knowledge is always context-based and that researchers exploring social phenomena can never be completely objective.

The evaluation criteria for interpretivist research proposed by Peregrine Schwartz-Shea were adopted to ensure a high degree of rigour and trustworthiness in the research, including *thick-description*, *reflexivity*, and *intertextuality*.<sup>176</sup> *Thick-description* involved providing detailed accounts of social phenomena, while *reflexivity* involved reflecting on the self and the impact of the researcher on the research project. *Intertextuality* emphasised the multidimen-

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<sup>174</sup>Sharon M. Ravitch and Matthew Riggan, *Reason & Rigor: How Conceptual Frameworks Guide Research* (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, Inc, 2017), 5.

<sup>175</sup>David March, Selen E. Ercan, and Paul Furlong, A skin not a sweater: Ontology and epistemology in political science,” in *Theory and Methods in Political Science*, eds. Vivien Lowndes, David March, and Garry Stoker (London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2017), 183, ProQuest Ebook Central.

<sup>176</sup>Peregrine Schwartz-Shea, “Judging Quality: Evaluative Criteria and Epistemic Communities,” in *Interpretation and Method: Empirical Research Methods and the Interpretive Turn*, eds. Dvora Yanow and Peregrine Schwartz-Shea (Oxon: Routledge, 2013), 130-134, ProQuest Ebook Central.

sionality of research, including the use of multiple data and analytical methods. Following this ethos, the research design was based on qualitative methods including “data collection techniques and data analysis strategies that rely on the collection and interpretation of political phenomena, entities, or events by making use of non-numerical data,”<sup>177</sup> including *documentary* and *geospatial data* which was analysed using *documentary*, *thematic*, and *spatial analysis* methods. Together, this research design supports the development of the conceptual framework (Chapter 1) and its application to the case study of Beirut (Chapter 2, 3 and 4). The development of the research design was not without foundational methodological challenges relating to the development of a holistic framework.

#### 0.4.1 METHODOLOGICAL CHALLENGES

The development of a holistic framework has included a series of methodological challenges. The methodological background of Agamben’s conceptualisations and critical approaches in discard studies is particularly contradictory. As further discussed in Chapter 1, Agamben’s work centres around marginalisation and governance structures, often neglecting human agency, while literature in discard studies has frequently emphasised the role of agency and increasingly more-than-human approaches. By exploring such contrasting approaches, opportunities emerge, however, highlighting the contribution conceptualisations of sovereign power have in discard studies, and vice versa. By exploring such contrasting approaches, this research has expanded our understanding of the relationship between sovereign power and the politics of waste in CUS.

Understanding this relationship has also required further interdisciplinary integrations. Discard studies showcase such challenges by including a wide range of research aims and methodological approaches. As explored in Section 0.2.2, conceptualisations in the environ-

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<sup>177</sup>Lamont and Boduszynski, *Research Methods*, 100.

mental justice literature are developed from the American context, while in political ecology literature have utilised political theory such as Marxist and Foucauldian approaches. These contesting methods were overcome by emphasising critical approaches to the increasing cross-fertilisation between the literature on this topic. This research draws on both these, balancing the significance of the case study and the conceptualisations underpinnings.

The intersecting thematic areas have additionally captured a complex socio-political and ecological system, posing a challenge for data collection and management. As further explored below, thematic analysis and organisation have made navigating and making links between such complex, complementary, and contrasting literatures possible.

The conceptual framework has critically enabled analysis on different scales, focusing on polity, politics, and governing, creating a challenge between the depth and breadth of the analysis. Responding to this challenge, a single case-study design has been used to ensure the creation of a robust analysis that does not oversimplify or overlook context-specific issues and dynamics.

#### 0.4.2 SINGLE-CASE STUDY RESEARCH DESIGN

This research followed a single-case study design that included a “focus on a single individual, group, community, event, policy arena or institution, and study in depth, perhaps over an extended period of time.”<sup>178</sup> This allowed for an in-depth analysis of urban formations – waste, state, others, and CUS – in Beirut, making up an analysis of “a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context.”<sup>179</sup>

Such a research design provides multiple benefits. First, and as noted by Helen Simons, it “can document multiple perspectives, explore contested viewpoints, demonstrate the in-

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<sup>178</sup> Peter Burnham, Karin Gilland Lutz, Wyn Grant, and Zig Layton-Henry, *Research Methods in Politics*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (London: red Globe Press, 2008), 63, ProQuest Ebook Central.

<sup>179</sup> Robert K. Yin, *Case Study Design: Design and Methods*, 5<sup>th</sup> ed. (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2013), 13.



fluence of key actors and interpretations between them in telling a story [...] It can explain how and why things happen.”<sup>180</sup> The detailed, particular and in depth nature of the research design has allowed the thorough study of the case. Secondly, it is versatile given that it is not restricted to a particular method or set of methodologies. I opted to apply a qualitative analysis, and in particular a mixed method approach using documentary and geospatial data in order to form a story of waste, the state, and *others* in postwar Beirut.<sup>181</sup> Thirdly, the case study design has additional versatility in that it can easily adapt to unforeseen changes in the research process as described in the next section.<sup>182</sup> Perhaps most importantly, an in-depth analysis can generate conceptual and theoretical insight on topics that has relatively limited research.<sup>183</sup> As noted in the introduction the interface between waste, state and *other* in CUS is one such topic and, as such, a detailed account of Beirut has been accompanied with a strong conceptual dimension throughout the thesis.

There are a series of challenges to this research design, however. A common criticism is that a researcher cannot generalise by drawing on one case study.<sup>184</sup> A series of writers on case study research refutes this claim by arguing that the aims with these studies are to unpack *particularity*.<sup>185</sup> Particularity should be unpacked in relation to generalisation as it “reveals both the *unique* and the *universal* and the *unity* of that understanding.”<sup>186</sup> Another highly refuted claim is that in-depth case studies make it difficult to generate theories and in addi-

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<sup>180</sup>Helen Simons, *Case Study Research in Practice* (London: SAGE Publications, 2009), 23, ProQuest Ebook Central.

<sup>181</sup>Helen Simons, “Case Study Research: In-Depth Understanding in Context,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Qualitative Research*, ed. Patricia Leavy (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 457, ProQuest Ebook Central.

<sup>182</sup>Simons, “Case Study Research,” 458.

<sup>183</sup>Dimiter Toshkow, “Research design,” in *Theory and Methods in Political Science*, eds. Vivien Lowndes, David March, and Garry Stoker (London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2017), 235, ProQuest Ebook Central.

<sup>184</sup>Burnham, Lutz, Grant, and Layton-Henry, *Research Methods in Politics*, 64.

<sup>185</sup>Bent Flyvbjerg “Five misunderstandings about case-study research,” in *Qualitative Research Practice*, eds. Clive Seale, David Silverman, Jaber f. Gubrum, and Giampietro Gobo (London: SAGE Publications, 2006), 393, ProQuest Ebook Central.

<sup>186</sup>Helen Simons, “The Paradox of Case Study,” *Cambridge Journal of Education* (1996), 239.

tion that these are less valuable than theoretical knowledge.<sup>187</sup> A case study design enables theory building from “the ground up, from the data” and allows for researchers to “make sense of the data to tell a coherent story.”<sup>188</sup> On the latter point, Bent Flyvbjerg critically argues that “*Predictive theories and universals cannot be found in the study of human affairs. Concrete, context-dependent knowledge is therefore more valuable than the vain search for predictive theories and universals*”<sup>189</sup> [italics in original]. Notably, the aim of this thesis is to establish a conceptual framework that underscores a holistic approach to complex, intersecting, and pluralistic challenges related to sovereign power and waste in Beirut. A single-case study approach provides a great arena for understanding such challenges. While a comparative study would be valuable in exploring such issues, it is beyond the scope of this thesis and would require further research. Further and as noted in the conclusion, this work can still provide considerable conceptual insight into other cases in CUS.

#### WHY BEIRUT?

Beirut was chosen as a case study after reviewing a series of options for studying urban contestation. First and foremost a list of cases that exhibit a dynamic, complex interface between governance, contestation, and environmental challenge were identified. Such cases provide spaces where sovereign power includes the environment into which mechanisms of power and regulation, especially in CUS, can thrive if unchecked. Of these, cases that were involved with active conflict and intermittent violence were ruled out. Such factors would introduce extra complexity that could serve to obfuscate the relationship between the state and waste management in the CUS. Further, cases where only limited data on environmental challenges was available were ruled out. Within these constraints Beirut became an obvious choice, given

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<sup>187</sup>See in Simons, *Case Study Research in Practice*, 168.

<sup>188</sup>Simons, *Case Study Research in Practice*, 168.

<sup>189</sup>Flyvbjerg “Five misunderstandings,” 393.

the broad discussions of waste management in the aftermath of the 2015 waste crisis and mass demonstrations. At the time most work only explored the movements, but not the broader politics of waste. Further, Beirut was preferentially chosen as this a region in which I have a keen interest. As argued by Dimiter Thoshkow: “We select a case study, because it is, well, the case we want to study. And that is fine, so long as we do not intend to generalise the findings based on that one case to others.” Notably the aim of this study is not generalisation but to explore the complexities of these issues in the context of Beirut.

Beirut remained the primary choice for a case study even during the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic which hindered the gathering of primary data including field interviews as had originally been planned, as substantial academic literature and ever-increasing reporting by various NGO’s and think tanks exist for the region. It was critical in informing and testing the theoretical framework.

#### 0.4.3 REFLEXIVITY AND POSITIONALITY

The main goal of certain academic research is to say something critical about the world that we live in and to highlight issues or promote change. This raises ontological questions about the ability for researchers to stay objective, which is one of the main criticisms of qualitative research and case study research design more specifically. From an anti-foundationalist standpoint, the world is subjective to a researcher’s understanding meaning that no observer can be objective. As such, researchers should strive to be objective but more importantly they should be sure to document subjective and possible biases. In interpretivist research reflecting on these features have become a component of any research design – emanating that knowledge is socially and discursively constructed – and that therefore the researchers are a part of both creating and shaping knowledge. Awareness of positionality – “the aspects of identity in terms of race, class, gender, caste, sexuality and other attributes that are markers of

*relational* positions in society”<sup>190</sup> – are crucial as it can unravel how a researcher’s identity impacts various stages from the start to the end of the process. My positionality has driven this project, particularly in my decision to include a section on migrant workers, yet the project has been approached through researcher reflexivity – the self-awareness and reflection over the impact of the researcher on the research project.<sup>191</sup> As noted by Tara M. Franks being reflexive

“allows researchers to see how their imagination is at play, how they project ideas onto others, how they situate /position themselves within historical contexts and modern society, and how to identify the factors involving one’s research practices. [...] The dedicated practice of self-reflection is often a messy one, time consuming, and demanding, as we engage our minds and hands in a series of self-observations and subsequent written texts.”<sup>192</sup>

The process of reflexivity was crucial and fundamental in this research. My research interests and my positionality overlapped on several points. I have always been acutely aware of identity politics growing up as a multiracial individual in Norway and a child of a Tamil refugee from Sri Lanka. It has fostered a keen interest in identity politics as multidimensional involving a series of intersectional factors such as ethnicity, race, and religion, and its implications for political exclusion and conflicts around the world.

One of my greatest strengths that points to my subjectivity is my father’s background. Like many other refugees he came to Norway alone as a teen and has worked a series of jobs, including cleaning, in order to make a better future for his family. Due to his ethnicity and

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<sup>190</sup>Elizabeth Chacko, “Positionality and praxis: Fieldwork experiences in praxis in rural India,” *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography* 25, no. 1 (2004), 52.

<sup>191</sup>Jenifer Esposito and Venus Evans-Winters, *Introduction to Intersectional Qualitative Research* (Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, 2022), 10.

<sup>192</sup>Tara M. Franks, “Purpose, practice, and (discovery) process: When self-reflection is the method,” *Qualitative Inquiry* 22, no. 1 (2016), 49.

work he has experienced racism and stigmatisation, which are key topics of exploration in this thesis. Perhaps one of the most striking lessons I take with me from my father's experiences is that the topic of low-skilled work like cleaning is to be treated like a *taboo* subject unlike topics such as racism and injustice which are often discussed at great lengths among friends and family. In this context, the stigma of *dirt* goes deeper than of race and ethnicity; therefore, I consider these categories to be separate although deeply intersectional. Notably, I do not wish to draw parallels between my father's story and that of Sri Lankan workers in Lebanon, as each story is different and because there are considerable differences like the destination and reasons for migrating – workers from Sri Lanka in Lebanon comes from different ethnic, religious, and political backgrounds migrating due to poverty and socio-economic injustices. It gives me insight into some of these dynamics, although from an extremely privileged perspective.

#### 0.4.4 RESEARCH PROCESS

This research process could be best described as a *mixed method research labyrinth* as opposed to a clear cut (and often unattainable) linear research model with specific stages.<sup>193</sup> A *research labyrinth* is best described as “a confusing and haphazard process involving frustrations and setbacks as well as opportunities for inspirations and success.”<sup>194</sup> This is made more complex by the mixed methods approach and combining different methods, including document analysis, thematic analysis, and spatial analysis. Furthermore, the research was evaluated and re-evaluated at different stages due to bureaucratic and socio-political considerations.

The research originally intended to include field work in Beirut, including participant observations and interviews in Beirut. Preparations were made to travel to Beirut in July

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<sup>193</sup>See in Burnham, et al., *Research Methods in Politics*.

<sup>194</sup>Burnham, et al., *Research Methods in Politics*, 53.

2019, including a 6-week intensive program in elementary Arabic at the Lebanese American University and acquiring ethics approval for the planned research. This timeline was first challenged by COVID-19 and the introduction of travel and other restrictions that intermittently lasted on a regional level until the start of 2021.<sup>195</sup> Additionally, the political situation in Beirut further deteriorated in the period after 2019, including severe COVID-19 restrictions, the 2020 Beirut explosion, and escalating economic recession, resulting in the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) advising against all but essential travel between November 2021 and December 2022.<sup>196</sup> Although travel to Lebanon could have been possible during this period with planning and a revised risk assessment, the research aim and critical questions asked in this research pose another risk for travel and conducting field work. Another option would have been to include online interviews, however, faced with these challenges, the research design was re-evaluated (as outlined above) emphasising the conceptual contribution of this research capitalising on the wide-ranging literature on biopolitics and empirically rich work on Beirut.

With the conceptual contribution and application in mind and having already completed a significant amount of documentary data collection, the research process was strengthened to emphasise this approach. Document-based data may be considered in two main categories: primary sources (from the observer of the data) and secondary sources (created by somebody who was not present).<sup>197</sup> The primary sources used in this thesis included official documents

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<sup>195</sup>The national non-essential travel ban lasted until 6 July 2020 with other minor travel restrictions remained until 18<sup>th</sup> March 2022. On a regional level, Lancaster remained at the highest alert level (Tier 3) for large parts in the remainder of 2020.

<sup>196</sup>“Britain advises against all but essential travels,” World, Reuters, last modified November 16, 2021, <https://www.reuters.com/world/britain-advises-against-all-essential-travel-lebanon-2021-11-16/>; Jamie Prentis, “UK removes travel warnings for much of Lebanon,” The National News, December 20, 2022, <https://www.thenationalnews.com/mena/lebanon/2022/12/20/uk-removes-travel-warnings-for-much-of-lebanon/>.

<sup>197</sup>Lamont and Boduszynski, *Research Methods*, 101-102. The classification of documentary data varies within the scholarship. Another categorisation is: “‘primary sources’ consist of evidence that was part the event in question and that was intended for internal or restricted circulation only, ‘secondar sources’ include

(such as the contractual data for landfilling in Beirut by the Council for Development and Reconstruction [CDR]),<sup>198</sup> historical documents and organisational documents (such as the appraisal and implementation documents by the World Bank on the *Beirut Critical Environment Recovery, Restoration and Waste Management Program*). Secondary resources included an array of sources including news articles, journal articles, and books. Furthermore, the data sources were analysed and organised using document and thematic analysis. Specifically, as explored below, thematic analysis was a powerful tool for dealing with complex and intersecting literatures, enabling the creation of the conceptual framework and its application in Beirut. Furthermore, geospatial data was used to emphasise the application in Beirut, showcasing and contextualising the expansion of the urban region and the extreme impacts of SWM, especially landfilling, on the urban composition and environment. Together, these data sources and methods of analysis supports the inductive development of the conceptual framework (Chapter 1) and its application (Chapter 2, 3 and 4).

#### 0.4.5 DOCUMENTARY DATA AND THEMATIC ANALYSIS

The use of documents has clear advantages, including effectiveness, availability, and coverage.<sup>199</sup> There are some challenges to document selection, however. John Scott explores four criteria relating to documentary data: authenticity, credibility, representativeness, and meaning.<sup>200</sup> In terms of authenticity, the whole document should be original or of high quality

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material circulated at the time or soon after and that was available to the public at the time of the event in question; 'tertiary sources' consist of all later work in the public domain offering a reconstruction." Burnham, et al., *Research Methods in Politics*, 187-188.

<sup>198</sup>The CDR was established in 1977 by resident Elias Sarkis and Prime Minister Salim al-Hoss during a break in the early years of the civil war. The institution was granted far reaching powers and "created with corporate status, enjoying financial and administrative independence." See in Decree 5. 1.

<sup>199</sup>Glenn A. Bowen, "Document analysis as a qualitative research method," *Qualitative Research Journal* 9, no. 2 (2009), 31.

<sup>200</sup>John Scott, *A Matter of Record: Documentary Sources in Social Research* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990), Chapter 2.

and most significantly it should be clear who has written the text. Secondly, Scott argues that the credibility and accuracy of the author should be reflected on. Thirdly, researchers should consider if the data is representative of the population, and especially what data is unavailable to them. Finally, the researcher should understand the meaning of the text in terms of language, written form, and context of the document. Based on these criteria a series of documents have been excluded. These include texts with no clear authorship and non-English texts. I focused exclusively on English texts, and therefore excluded Arabic and French documents. This created a series of obstacles as certain government documents are only released in Arabic, somewhat diminishing the sample size and being a considerable point of criticism. Even after their exclusion however, a substantial literature on these topics remained for the conceptual explorations and application in this project, such that the data available captured a *thick description* that includes “sufficient descriptive detail – of event, setting, person or interaction.”<sup>201</sup>

A significant challenge however relates to representation and author bias as “documents should not be seen as objective insights.”<sup>202</sup> Particularly with contestation in mind, the experiences and histories of authors differ depending on their specific background. As widely noted, the Lebanese Ministry for Education has not been able to create a unitary history textbook on the civil war as “it was decided that the teaching of history was too complicated to be redesigned.”<sup>203</sup> With this challenge in mind, this research attempts to include a diverse set of documents but is also shaped by individual decisions.

Data selection was also shaped by the holistic approach, intersecting themes, and pluralistic challenges. Such research required thorough organisation and the careful analysis of con-

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<sup>201</sup>Schwartz-Shea, “Judging Quality,” 132.

<sup>202</sup>Aimee Grant, *Doing Excellent Social Research with Documents: Practical Examples and Guidance for Qualitative Researchers* (Oxon: Routledge, 2018), 19, ProQuest Ebook Central.

<sup>203</sup>Rida Blaik Hourani, “A Call for Unitary History Textbook Design in a Post-Conflict Era: The Case of Lebanon,” *The History Teacher* 50, no. 2 (2017), 257.



testing approaches and methodologies by authors. The main analytical methods to overcome these challenges are *document* and *thematic analysis*. Document analysis included a systematic exploration of documents “in order to elicit meaning, gain understanding, and develop empirical knowledge.”<sup>204</sup> This process included superficial and thorough examination and interpretation. This analysis followed an *interpretive epistemology*, involving “a keen interest in understanding the texts themselves – their content and meaning – and at the same time situating them in relation to other texts and to their wider context.”<sup>205</sup> Document analysis was particularly helpful as it effectively covered material and the complexity of biopolitical processes in Beirut across time and spaces.

Thematic analysis was critical to coding and organise data as this research works with intersecting topics and debates.<sup>206</sup> Themes are produced from codes and subcodes that are categorisations of the data material. The data analysis is flexible as it can be utilised independently of epistemological and theoretical background, but at the same time has a very specific process.

Thematic analysis can be deductive and/or inductive, with deductive approaches including premade codes whilst inductive codes are data driven.<sup>207</sup> This thesis leveraged both approaches, starting with general themes that were evolved using a data driven strategy. As an example, the initial research proposal started with the exploration of displacement but changed to *other* as the project progressed, encompassing all people who are politically excluded from

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<sup>204</sup>Data selection was also shaped by the holistic approach, intersecting themes, and pluralistic challenges. Such research required thorough organisation and the careful analysis of contesting approaches and methodologies by authors. Bowen, “Document analysis,” 27.

<sup>205</sup>Kristin Asdal and Hilde Reinertsen, *Doing Document Analysis: Doing a Practice-Oriented Method* (London: SAGE Publications, 2022), 86.

<sup>206</sup>Thematic analysis is used above thematic framework analysis, as the aim is conceptual and not based on a specific previous theory or framework. The thematic framework approach is often criticised for limiting the research because it forces themes into specific boundaries. Although the utilisation of Agamben’s writings provide for conceptualisations of sovereign power and life it does not in itself constitute a framework.

<sup>207</sup>Jenifer Fereday and Eimear Muir-Cocharane, “Demonstrating rigor using thematic analysis,” *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* (2006), 82.

the state's political project (as seen in Chapter 1). A subset of the themes remained consistent throughout, even after rounds of re-evaluation – the *state* as a starting point was briefly swapped with non-state and hybridity before being reinstated as sovereign power. The reason for this change was related to the exposure of the plurality of agents within Lebanese politics, and subsequent focus on power relations as opposed to actors. The thematic analysis was also influenced by the research process. The theme *waste* arose for example as an opportunity for conceptual analysis from obstacles in conducting field work.

Braun and Clarke explored a step-by-step guide to thematic analysis which this research followed, albeit non-linearly.<sup>208</sup> A researcher starts by grasping an overview of the topic, ideas, and data, followed by the generation of initial codes with the coded data being fragments of the themes. After the accumulation of codes, the researcher explores and analyse these to form themes with “some initial codes may go on to form main themes, whereas others may form sub-themes, and others still may be discarded.”<sup>209</sup> Codes such as political leadership, power-sharing, and regime survival became sub-codes whilst others like consociationalism and neoliberalism were removed. ATLAS.TI was used to organise documents and generate the codes that informed the themes. After this process the themes were reviewed, named, defined, and written-up. A thematic analysis gives the researcher a good idea on how the themes fit together and what story they tell. It is also crucial in identifying aspects informing the conceptual framework and relationship between processes. The themes in this research (*waste*, *sovereign power*, *other* and *CUS*) together form an idea of what the research is about and are used throughout the chapters.

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<sup>208</sup>Braun and Clarke, “Using thematic analysis.”

<sup>209</sup>*ibid*, 90.

#### 0.4.6 GEOSPATIAL DATA AND SPATIAL ANALYSIS

Geospatial data was utilised to support document-based research, specifically data from the satellites Landsat 5, 7, and 8 and Sentinel 2 that cover changes after 1980 and 2015, respectively. This data is the product of a remote sensing (RS) – that “involves the collection of surface data from a distance”<sup>210</sup> – by a satellite and that produces different bands from the reflections of the earth such as colour (blue, green and red) but also infrared bands (which are not used in this thesis). Such data has been successfully utilised across several application domains including urbanisation, land degradation, and deforestation.<sup>211</sup> In this research, the data displayed the implications of *land change* in Beirut as a result of state intervention and conflict, especially relating to the development of coastal dump sites and landfills (see Chapter 4). The data processing for understanding land change involved pre-processing and analytical methods including spatial analysis contextualised by document analysis.

The data was retrieved from the United States Geological Survey (USGS) and the European Space Agency (ESA), see Appendix 1. Scenes were selected with consideration of the metadata of Landsat data sets with open-source information made available by the USGS and ESA, such as cloud coverage. For example, only data that included scenes with less than 10 per cent cloud score were retrieved.<sup>212</sup> In addition data was selected on a seasonal basis so the

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<sup>210</sup>Eduardo S. Brondízio and Rinku Roy Chowdhury, “Spatiotemporal Methodologies in Environmental Anthropology: Geographic Information Systems, Remote Sensing, Landscape Changes, and Local Knowledge,” in *Environmental Social Sciences: Methods and Research Design*, eds. Ismael Vaccaro, Eric Alden Smith, and Shankar Aswani (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 267.

<sup>211</sup>O.R. Abd El-Kawy, J.K. Rød, H.A. Ismail and A.S. Suliman, “Land use and land cover change detection in the western Nile delta of Egypt using remote sensing data,” *Applied Geography* 31, no.2 (2011); Hassan, Z., Shabbir, Zahra Hassan, Rabia Shabbir, Sheikh Saeed Ahmad, Amir Haider Malik, Neelam Aziz, Amna Butt and Sumra Erum, “Dynamics of land use and land cover change (LULCC) using geospatial techniques: a case study of Islamabad Pakistan,” *SpringerPlus* 5 (2016); Mitiku Badasa Moisa, Indale Niguse Dejene, Lachisa Busha Hinkosa and Dessalegn Obsi Gemedo, “Land use/land cover change analysis using geospatial techniques: a case of Geba watershed, western Ethiopia,” *SN Appl. Sci.* 4 (2022).

<sup>212</sup>Giovanna Trianni, Gianni Lisini, Emanuele Angiuli, E. A. Moreno, Piercarlo Dondi, Alessandro Gaggia, and Paolo Gamba, “Scaling up to National/Regional Urban Extent Mapping Using Landsat Data,” *Journal of Selected Topics in Applied Earth Observations and Remote Sensing* 8, no. 7 (2015), 3711.

seasonal conditions would be as similar as possible.

Pre-processing was performed using QGIS version 3.28 Firenze, an opensource geographic information system (GIS) that “involve hardware, software, database systems, and methods for the storage, representation, processing, integration and the analysis of diverse spatial data and their attributes.”<sup>213</sup> The Landsat data was imported into the software and each band was examined to ensure there were no image distortions, cross-referencing coordinates, and that the right image projection and scale is used in order to fit the specific surface (geometry correction).<sup>214</sup> Pre-processing also included building a virtual raster that combined the colour bands into full colour images.

These processed images were utilised in this research to contextualise space and place in Beirut. As noted by Doreen Massey, however, the notion of *space* and *the spatial* has led to “much head-scratching, much theorising, much changing of mind.”<sup>215</sup> In this research, it takes different forms as analytical method (spatial analysis) and as a part of the theoretical framework (space). Spatial analysis deals with a subsection of space exploring concepts such as territory and geographic location through data like RS and drawn maps.<sup>216</sup> Spatial analysis seek visualise patterns and create meaning out of geospatial data, often together with other forms of data. Importantly, spatial analysis differs from a series of interconnected concepts. It differs from space which is not limited to geographical location and is a “product of interrelations” and “sphere of possibility of the existence of multiplicity” that is “always under construction.”<sup>217</sup> Yet these concepts are not mutually exclusive. Space and spatial analysis were both utilised in this thesis to explore abandonment and regulation by the state. Space depicts

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<sup>213</sup>Brondízio and Chowdhury, “Spatiotemporal Methodologies,” 267.

<sup>214</sup>See, Brondízio and Chowdhury, “Spatiotemporal Methodologies,” 275-281.

<sup>215</sup>Doreen Massey, “New Directions of Space,” in *Social Relations and Spatial Structures*, eds. Derek Gregory and John Urry (London: Palgrave, 1985).

<sup>216</sup>Kevin R. Cox, “Concepts of space, understanding in human geography and spatial analysis,” *Urban Geography* 16, no. 4 (1995).

<sup>217</sup>Massey, *For space*, 9.

how dynamics and interrelations play out between the state and others, whilst spatial analysis depicts the geographic locations of these dynamics and interrelations. Moreover, the notion of *place* as noted by Gieryn is distinctive from “geographic and cartographic metaphors” as “place is filled up by people, practices, objects, and representations” but also a “geographic location” and “material form.”<sup>218</sup> It also differs from space in that it is not situated within a place. A place thus depicts the meanings of geographical locations, such as *the camp* that represent a geographic location and the regulation of political life (see Chapter 1). The significance of GIS in this research locates the interplay between these dynamics of geographic location and politics. Finally, the notion of *distance* is heavily used in relation to geographic location and mathematical equation but should not be treated as a fixed metric as it includes the social and political ideas of proximity, connection, and access.<sup>219</sup> Concepts such as connectedness and access challenge the idea of distance in Beirut – a relatively small geographical space it is shaped by social networks and boundaries that prevent people from accessing and connecting with urban spaces. Significantly, geographical distance does not conflate with socio-political distance as they are relations that are constructed across space and time.<sup>220</sup>

Spatial analysis and the use of GIS varies and depends on research aim. It “may constitute the simple mapping and visualisation of location and patterns, or the cartographic modelling of single variables. Alternatively, they may involve more complex analysis.”<sup>221</sup> It is important to note that “using GIS will not in itself turn a poor project into a good one, nor will it add any real authority to the results.”<sup>222</sup> The contribution of RS in this research is its ability to

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<sup>218</sup>Gieryn, “A space for place in Sociology,” *Annual Review of Sociology* 26 (2000), 466.

<sup>219</sup>John R. Logan, “Making a place for space: Spatial thinking in social science,” *Annual Review of Sociology* 38, np. 1 (2012), 511-518.

<sup>220</sup>The mapping of identity politics is beyond the scope of this research. It would not be appropriate with my research aim in mind, seeing that it focuses on biopolitics and not the sectarian difference between groups. This type of mapping is also highly problematic due to the implications of territory and groups ownership.

<sup>221</sup>Rob Kitchin and Nick Tate, *Conducting Research in Human Geography: Theory, Methodology and Practice* (Oxon: Routledge, 2000), 168, ProQuest Ebook Central.

<sup>222</sup>David Martin, “Geographical information systems and spatial analysis,” in *Methods in Human Geography:*

present changing patterns on maps as seen in Chapter 4. The main spatial analysis of this research evolves around detecting *land change* in relation to state intervention and conflict. RS has regularly been used in detecting land change across the world.<sup>223</sup> In this research, the spatial analysis is explored in the context of the documentary data, aiming to contextualise other parts of the analysis. As argued by John L. Logan, in the context of mapping, “[t]he most powerful spatial tool is the simplest – creation of a map that allows visualisation of a spatial pattern.”<sup>224</sup> The overarching picture thus rely on the ability of the researcher to make meaning of the data through the combination of the geospatial and the documentary data.

Maps and RS data are “effective sources of communication because they exploit the mind’s ability see relationships in physical structures, providing a clear understanding of a complex environment.”<sup>225</sup> At the same time, spatial analysis in the context has limitations as it could not be understood without documentary data. Maps are created with a performative purpose with limited information that represent simplistic power relations. The analysis of geographic location needs to be understood within the context of socio-political understandings of space, place, and distance.

Consequently, this research primarily uses documentary data, including primary and secondary sources, which provides clear advantages, including availability and coverage.<sup>226</sup> Additionally, this research uses geospatial data retrieved from the USGS, including satellite images from Landsat 5 and Landsat 8. Spatial data visualises context, material forms and geographic location, and their changes across time, yet have limitations in exploring factors

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*A guide for students doing a research project: A guide for students doing a research project*, eds. Robin Flowerdew and David Martin (Harlow: Pearson Education Limited, 2008), 271, ProQuest Ebook Central.

<sup>223</sup>El-Kawy et al., “Land use and land cover”; Hassan et al. “Dynamics of land use and land”; Moisa et al. “Land use/land cover change analysis.”

<sup>224</sup>Logan, “Making a place for space,” 509.

<sup>225</sup>Kitchin and Tate, *Conducting Research in Human Geography*, 157.

<sup>226</sup>Bowen, “Document analysis.”

such as distance, which is supplemented with documentary data.<sup>227</sup> The integration of document, thematic and spatial analysis of documentary and geospatial data employed in this research has contributed to understanding the complex processes, providing a foundation for the subsequent chapters to present the findings and analysis. Moving forward, future research on this topic should include field work and an exploration of other case studies to adopt a comparative approach.

## 0.5 THESIS OUTLINE

By analysing sovereign power and the politics of waste in Beirut, this thesis answers the overarching research question: *How does the political ordering and organisation of waste impact people and the environment in CUS, and vice versa?* To unpack such holistic and pluralistic challenges, Chapter 1 develops a conceptual framework relating to the main research streams: biopolitics, the politics of waste, and CUS. These research streams are further explored through three units of analysis: polity, politics, and governing. These units of analysis are interrelated with streams that enable the development of the conceptual framework: *the biopolitical machinery of waste in CUS*.

Chapter 1 explores this conceptual framework in detail, highlighting the key concepts and the original objectives of the thesis. The *polity* unit showcases how nested and contesting sovereignties operate formally and informally to establish spaces of exception to regulate and control groups of *others* through the ordering of waste. The *politics* unit enables an analysis of how groups of *others* are politically excluded, marginalised, and stripped from political life through the socio-political ordering of waste, resulting in contestation and resistance. Finally, the *governing* unit explores how regulation and control by sovereignties are physically manifested through waste, impacting people, places, ecosystems and even the Anthropocene.

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<sup>227</sup>Logan, "Making a place for space."

These units of analysis emphasise existing conceptual relationships, possible drawbacks, primary objectives, and the claims to originality in the framework, including the abandonment of places, ecosystems, and the Anthropocene, and additionally, the expansion into the inclusion of more-than-human agency.

The following three chapters apply and test the conceptual framework using the case study of Beirut. Chapter 2 explores formal and informal manifestations of power, including legal frameworks, clientelism, and legal impunity that protects the establishment, including the state and the political leaders. Waste is captured within this system, resulting in a prolonged waste crisis ruled by an emergency decree that has devastating implications for people and ecosystems. The chapter showcases how spaces of exception are manifested through SWM, enabling the control and regulation in urban spaces. Furthermore, such mechanisms transform waste into a “killing machine” that slowly and silently kills groups of *others* through relentless waste crises and leads to ecological crises.

Chapter 3 analyses the impact on people, highlighting how the politics of waste enable marginalisation and political exclusion, resulting in contestation and resistance to escape these conditions. These intersecting processes are highlighted in the case of waste workers, waste-impacted communities, and waste activism. Waste workers experience political exclusion due to intersectional factors, including legal status, racialisation, and professional “taint” rooted in the Kafala system. In waste-impacted communities, the unequal distribution of waste burdens establishes marginalisation but also contestation through sectarian politics. The final section of Chapter 3 considers resistance by waste activists against marginalisation and contestation. It showcases how people can establish public realms amidst the continuous waste crisis, while displaying how resistance is met with violent oppression and criminalisation by sovereignties thus demonstrating the intersecting processes of marginalisation, contestation and resistance.



Chapter 4 investigates the physical manifestation and localisation of the material ordering of waste, which have led to sacrifice zones across Beirut. Sacrifice zones are highlighted by processes of territorial stigmatisation, violent segregation, postwar reconstruction, and urban decay, which have intersected with the ongoing waste crisis. The deteriorating waste infrastructures, including the coastal dumpsites and landfills infrastructures, are exacerbated by excessive construction and demolition waste (C&D) due to conflict and the insufficient handling of toxic materials. The waste crisis poses considerable threat to human health and ecosystems, having slow and silent effects such as toxic flows but also unexpected and dramatic effects such as flooding. However, localisation alone falls short of providing a holistic analysis of the pluralistic challenges that arise from regulation and control through waste, which negatively impacts people and their environments. The ideas of the more-than-human and especially the *afterlife of waste* in Beirut illustrate that waste is more than a passive material but can change the trajectory of urban spaces and geographies, causing extensive ecological crisis.

The conclusion synthesises the main findings and original objectives of the thesis. It features how biopolitics, the politics of waste, and CUS can be used to unpack the holistic and pluralistic challenges in Beirut. It also highlights the limitations of the research, possibilities for future research, and policy implications.

# 1

## The Biopolitics of Waste in CUS

PEOPLE IN URBAN REGIONS AROUND THE GLOBE FACE POLITICAL CONTESTATION, HAZARDOUS WASTE, AND THE EFFORTS TO REGULATE AND CONTROL THESE CHALLENGES. As formulated in the introduction, these challenges are highly intersectional, yet no theoretical and conceptual framework adequately deals with this interface. A series of conceptual approaches have explored segments of this interface – such as political ecology and environ-

mental justice approaches to the politics of waste,<sup>1</sup> or non-state and hybrid approaches to the state in CUS<sup>2</sup> – but these have limitations in investigating mechanisms of regulation and control. Given the absence of a single comprehensive conceptual approach, this chapter develops a framework drawing on the current segmented literature, showcasing the critiques and expansion of Agamben’s conceptualisations through the integration of discard studies. This conceptual synthesis consists of three intersectional research streams– biopolitics, CUS, and the politics of waste – explored across three units of analysis: polity, politics, and governing (Table 1.1).

**Table 1.1:** The Biopolitical Machinery of Waste in CUS.

<b>Intersectional Research Streams</b>				
<b>Units of Analysis</b>		<b>Biopolitics</b>	<b>CUS</b>	<b>The Politics of Waste</b>
	<b>Polity</b>	Space of Exception	Nested Sovereignties	The Biopolitical Machinery of Waste
	<b>Politics</b>	Bare Life	Sectarian Politics	Socio-Political Ordering of Waste
	<b>Governing</b>	The Camp	Territory and Urban Geography	Material Ordering of Waste

Firstly, Agamben’s writings on biopolitics are central to structuring the conceptual framework. It facilitates an analysis of sovereign regulation and control of life across time and space. It also enables a critical evaluation of limitations and the expansion of key conceptualisations, especially relating to the implications of the political and material ordering of waste by sovereignties in CUS. As discussed throughout this chapter, I utilise Agamben’s ideas on *the state of exception*, *bare life*, and *the camp* to unpack the role of sovereign power in shaping socio-ecological processes, using the political ordering (of waste, people, and territory) as a starting point. In short, the *state of exception* is a condition that enables the sovereign to con-

<sup>1</sup> For example: Bjerkli, “Power in waste”; and Pellow, *Garbage Wars*.

<sup>2</sup> Davis, “Non-State Armed Actors”; and Fregonese, “Beyond the ‘weak state’.”

trol and distinguish between political life and life stripped from its political meaning – *bare life*.<sup>3</sup> *The camp* represents the physical manifestation of these processes and the “subsequent space in which bare life and the judicial rule enter into a threshold of indistinction [...] which every form of life and every rule can be virtually taken.”<sup>4</sup> Such an exploration of biopolitics is key to exposing the machinery around sovereign power and its political ordering.

How CUS conditions the processes of regulation and contestation is a second major aspect in constructing the framework. Regulation and contestation by sovereignties and sectarian politics configure urban regions through ascriptive identities such as race, religion, sect, tribe, and class.<sup>5</sup> Scholars have particularly highlighted the implications of regulation in the Middle East and beyond.<sup>6</sup> This research expands on this research by highlighting how the plurality of agents, postcolonial contexts, and waste becomes entangled within processes of regulation and control. Sectarian politics adds another level of complexity to the research problem and should, therefore, be a part of the conceptual framework and units of analysis - polity, politics and governing. First, the plurality of sovereignty includes a discussion on *nested sovereignties* speaking to the scaling and rescaling of power in the state and the ability of these political agents to *formally* and *informally* operate within this structure.<sup>7</sup> Secondly, sectarian politics results in multiple forms of political exclusion of urban dwellers, such as marginalisation, contestation, and resistance. Finally, these politics shape conceptualisations of territorialities, place, and geographical location that change across space and time.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>Agamben, *Homo Sacer*, 32.

<sup>4</sup>*ibid*, 174-175.

<sup>5</sup>See: Sara Fregonese, “Urban Geopolitics 8 Years on. Hybrid Sovereignties, the Everyday, and Geographies of Peace,” *Geography Compass* 6 (2012); Oren Yiftachel and Haim Yacobi, “Urban Ethnocracy: Ethnicization and the Production of Space in an Israeli ‘Mixed City,’” *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 21, no.6 (2003); Gaffikin and Morrissey, *Planning in Divided Cities*.

<sup>6</sup>See: Ramadan, “Destroying Nahr el-Bared”; Martin, “From spaces of exception to campsapes”; Mabon, *Houses Built on Sand*; Nagle, “The biopolitics of victim construction”; and Mikdashi, *Sextarianism*.

<sup>7</sup>See: Humphrey, “Sovereignty”; and Davis, “Non-State Armed Actors.”

<sup>8</sup>Yiftachel and Yacobi, “Urban Ethnocracy”; and Ramadan, “Destroying Nahr el-Bared.”

How biopolitical processes in CUS links to the politics of waste forms the final foundational aspect of the framework, as waste remains a critical socio-political and ecological challenge. Drawing from a wide-ranging corpus on waste and the other intersectional research streams, I produce three themes reflecting the levels of analysis - polity, politics and governing: *the biopolitical machinery of waste*, *the socio-political ordering of waste*, and *the material ordering of waste*. Critically, these categories expand Agamben's work and its critique by not only including the abandonment of people but also geographical locations and the Anthropocene as the toxicity of waste leads to planetary crisis. The primary category, the biopolitical machinery of waste, regards state mechanisms that facilitate the control and organisation of waste, drawing on the literature on the state across political ecology and environmental justice.<sup>9</sup> The latter categories unpack the socio-political and material organisation of waste. *The socio-political ordering of waste* reveals how waste is enshrined in spatial patterns of political exclusion by the state, facilitated by a discussion on humans-as-waste.<sup>10</sup> Contrastingly, *the material ordering of waste* explores the physical implications of waste within geographical locations, focusing on *sacrificial zones* and the role of the more-than-human.<sup>11</sup> These categories combined unpack how sovereign power impact people and their environment through waste.

Throughout this exploratory process on biopolitics, CUS, and the politics of waste, critiques and expansions on agency and resistance have especially materialised. Scholars have long argued that Agamben's writing reflects a linear and one-sided theorisation of power.<sup>12</sup> As a result, the inclusion of the conceptualisations of agency and resistance has become com-

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<sup>9</sup>Such as Cornea, Ve'ron, and Zimmer, "Clean city politics"; Dillon, "Race, Waste, and Space"; and Pellow, *Garbage Wars*.

<sup>10</sup>See the seminal works of Bauman, *Wasted Lives* and Giroux, "Reading Hurricane Katarina."

<sup>11</sup>Bullard, *Dumping in Dixie*; Thom Davies, "Slow violence and toxic geographies: 'Out of sight' to whom?," *Environment and Planning C: Politics and Space* 40, no.2 (2022); and Myra J. Hird, "Knowing Waste: Towards an Inhuman Epistemology," *Social Epistemology* 26, no.3-4 (2012).

<sup>12</sup>Knudsen, "Camp, ghetto, zinco, slum"; and Baily, "Up against the wall."

monplace, led by scholars such as Patricia Owens and Diane Enns.<sup>13</sup> Significantly, I argue that more-than-human forces are also a part of these structures. The inclusion of more-than-human agency adds to the critique of agency in *bare life*, expanding the conceptual framework beyond the restrictions of Agamben's biopolitics. Drawing from the works of Jane Bennett, Joshua Reno, and Myra J. Hird, I advocate that there is room for a discussion on these forces beyond Agamben's biopolitics.<sup>14</sup> The inquiry into human resistance and more-than-human forces are elevated within the sections on politics and governing, respectively, representing the socio-political and material ordering of waste.

Together, these intersectional research streams form the three units of analysis – polity, politics and governing, – and ultimately lay the foundation for the conceptual synthesis – *the biopolitical machinery of waste in CUS* – as outlined below:

- Polity: Nested and contesting sovereignties operate formally and informally to establish spaces of exception in order to regulate and control groups of others by stripping life from political meaning. Sovereignties include the politics of waste within this process resulting in the marginalisation of people and ecological crises, establishing the biopolitical machinery of waste.
- Politics: Groups of *others* are politically excluded and stripped from political life amid sectarian politics (bare life). People seek to escape these conditions through various forms of resistance against sovereign power that can result in contestation and violence. The socio-political ordering of waste reveals how the organisation of waste is implicated in these spatial patterns of marginalisation, contestation, and resistance.
- Governing: Control and regulation by sovereign power is physically manifested in

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<sup>13</sup>Owens, "Reclaiming 'bare life'?" and Enns, "Bare life."

<sup>14</sup>Bennett, *Vibrant Matter*; Myra J. Hird, "Knowing Waste"; and Reno, "Waste and waste management."

places, territories, and urban geographies. The *camp* symbolises a metaphysical possibility that enables conditions of bare life and the manifestations of these structures in geographic locations. The material ordering of waste contributes to these structures through the unequal distribution of waste burdens by sovereignties that facilitate the abandonment of people, places, ecosystems, and the Anthropocene. Furthermore, the more-than-human agency of material waste may bring about unknown challenges for sovereign power, people, and the environment.

The following sections – Polity, Politics, and Governing – discuss biopolitics, CUS, and the politics of waste, respectively. They emphasise existing conceptual relationships, possible drawbacks, primary objectives, and the claims to originality in the framework, including the abandonment of places, ecosystems, and the Anthropocene, and additionally, the expansion into the inclusion of more-than-human agency. The framework developed by this process adequately addresses the overarching research question: *How does the political ordering and organisation of waste impact CUS, and vice versa?* The first section – *Polity* - explores how nested and contesting sovereignties operate formally and informally to establish spaces of exception to regulate and control groups of *others* through waste. The second section – *Politics* – outlines how groups of others are politically excluded, marginalised, and stripped from political life through waste, leading to efforts to escape this condition through contestation and resistance. The final section – *Governing* – delves into how regulation and control by sovereignties is physically manifested, impacting people, places, ecosystems and even the Anthropocene.

## 1.1 POLITY

The state of exception unveils the processes of sovereign power and its organisation of human life.<sup>15</sup> Ultimately, Agamben's writings are concerned with the regulation and control of people who are excluded from the political system – creating a process of inclusion through exclusion. Fundamental to this is the sovereign's ability to decide what people are politically excluded and subjected to regulation. However, Agamben's writings alone are inadequate to explore how processes of regulation and control have emerged through the ordering of waste in CUS.

First, the plurality of agents and post-colonial legacies does pose a challenge to the ideal types of Westphalian and Weberian sovereignty that Agamben bases his analysis on.<sup>16</sup> Sub-section 1.1.2 outlines this limitation, highlights critiques of alternative solutions, and expands by including *nested sovereignties* within this framework.

Secondly, the literature in discard studies has neglected the role of sovereign power and the state. Sub-section 1.1.3 explores how the organisation of waste is entangled in spaces of exception, turning the ordering of waste into a “killing machine” by sovereignties. As a result, the work of Agamben expands the current literature in discard studies. Conversely, the often-mundane politics of waste further situates the work of Agamben into everyday politics, showcasing the complexities of regulation and control.

This section critiques and expands the conceptual debates around states of exception and waste. However, first, it explores a series of foundational political debates, such as the roots of sovereignty, emergency legislation, and abandonment.

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<sup>15</sup>Agamben, *State of Exception*; and Agamben, *Homo Sacer*.

<sup>16</sup>See: Khoury and Kostiner, *Tribes and State Formation in the Middle East*.



### 1.1.1 THE STATE OF EXCEPTION

Agamben's conceptualisation of the state of exception is grounded on Carl Schmitt's work on the exception and sovereignty. The exception is outlined by Schmitt as a moment of temporary decision by the sovereign in extreme conditions, with the sovereign famously being identified as "he who decides on the exception."<sup>17</sup> For Schmitt, the ability to exercise power and authority of law during exceptional moments is the crucial decisive moment that makes sovereign power.<sup>18</sup> The point of departure for Agamben is that the state of exception could no longer be treated as a temporary and exceptional decision but rather "a paradigm of government".<sup>19</sup> The state of exception is not simply emergency law or the suspension of law but rather the ability of the sovereign to regulate and control human life and groups of people while *regular* laws are in place, thereby including "the exception itself within the judicial order."<sup>20</sup> This conceptualisation is reinforced by Agamben's reading of Walter Benjamin who clearly articulates that the "tradition of the oppressed teaches us that the 'state of emergency' in which we live is not the exception but the rule."<sup>21</sup> Exploring the changes to emergency legislation, Benjamin suggests that legal measures have moved beyond military emergencies and are becoming the norm, thus blurring the relationship between violence and law.<sup>22</sup> Drawing from this, Agamben argues that the state of exception is "a legal civil war that allows for the physical elimination not only of politically adversaries, but of entire categories of citizens who for some reason cannot be integrated into a political system."<sup>23</sup> Human life is thus located at

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<sup>17</sup>Carl Schmitt, *Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty*, ed. by George Schwab (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 5.

<sup>18</sup>See also discussion in Thomas Blom Hansen and Finn Stepputat, *Sovereign Bodies: Citizens, Migrants, and States in the Postcolonial World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 20.

<sup>19</sup>Agamben, *State of Exception*, Chapter 1.

<sup>20</sup>ibid, 26.

<sup>21</sup>Walter Benjamin, *Edited Writings, volume 4: 1938-1940*, eds. Howard Eiland and Michael W Jennings (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003), 392.

<sup>22</sup>Benjamin, *Edited Writings*, 392-393.

<sup>23</sup>Agamben, *State of Exception*, 6.

the forefront of these discussions by exploring how the indistinction between violence and law enable sovereign power to control and regulate life.

When the state of exception becomes the rule, bare life emerges as human life is stripped from *bios* (political quality life) to *zoe* (biological life).<sup>24</sup> Bare life, as is further explored in the next section on politics, is embodied in Agamben's writings on the Roman figure *homo sacer* – a man who no longer enjoys the rights of the ordinary citizen and can be killed without consequence.<sup>25</sup> Furthermore, the politics of inclusion through exclusion draws on Jean-Luc Nancy's ideas on abandonment and power, with Agamben arguing that life is caught in the sovereign ban; the abandoned being-outside (abandoned) and yet belonging (being bound) to the law.<sup>26</sup> The abandoned are thus both outside and inside the juridical system. Therefore, bare life should be understood as “a product of the machine and not something that preexists it.”<sup>27</sup>

The *biopolitical machine* establishes the political system of exclusion through inclusion in the state of exception. The state of exception blurs violence and law, anomie and *nomos*. In anomie spaces, “what is at stake is the force of law without law,”<sup>28</sup> whilst *nomos* is a Greek concept encompassing the territorial and judicial. Agamben's reading on *nomos* is shaped by Schmitt's *The Nomos of the Earth*, where Schmitt links the “localization (*ortung*) and ordering (*ordnung*).”<sup>29</sup> Linking localisation and ordering, the camp is the physical manifestation of the state of exception, which Agamben explores through Hannah Arendt's analysis of totalitarianism, violence, and the concentration camps.<sup>30</sup> Whilst *the camp* is further discussed

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<sup>24</sup>Agamben, *Homo Sacer*.

<sup>25</sup>ibid, 8.

<sup>26</sup>ibid, 28.

<sup>27</sup>Agamben, *State of Exception*, 86.

<sup>28</sup>ibid, 39.

<sup>29</sup>Agamben, *Homo Sacer*, 19.

<sup>30</sup>Agamben, *Homo Sacer*, 3-4; see also: Hannah Arendt, *The origin of Totalitarianism* (Orlando: A Harvest Book, 1968); and Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 2ed. (1958; repr. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1999).

in the section on governing, these factors are significant segments that make up the state of exception. At the centre of Agamben's idea is that when anomie and nomos are "bound and blurred together [...] the juridico-political system transforms itself into a killing machine."<sup>31</sup> Such blurriness emphasise how the biopolitical machine and the processes of state of exception and bare life becomes localised.

In the state of exception, a series of indistinct relationships have emerged. Violence and law become entangled through the marginalisation of groups of others. The marginalisation of others is shaped by inclusion through exclusion and the depoliticisation of human life. This process is realised by the biopolitical machine that blurs anomie and nomos. Henceforward, the state of exception marks a zone of indistinction between inclusion and exclusion, law and violence, *bios* and *zoe*, nomos and anomie.

This research draws on a spatial approach to states of exception – spaces of exception – formulated by scholars such as Claudio Minca and Derek Gregory.<sup>32</sup> The emphasis on space departs for an absolute understanding of the concept, thereby dissolving boundaries with geographical location.<sup>33</sup> Space is the product of "interrelations" that change over time and are not necessarily linked with geographical location.<sup>34</sup> As such, the production of spaces of exception is not absolute in specific countries or urban geographies but rather emerges through various processes.<sup>35</sup> Notably, this does not mean that geographical location is irrelevant, as displayed in the last section on the camp, but that there is a further needed to explore the relationship between space and geographical location.

The conceptualisation of spaces of exception have highlighted the process of inclusion

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<sup>31</sup> Agamben, *State of Exception*, 86.

<sup>32</sup> Claudio Minca, "Space of Exception," *International Encyclopedia of Geography: People, the Earth, Environment and Technology* (2017); and Derek Gregory, "The black flag: guantánamo bay and the space of exception," *Geografiska Annaler: Series B, Human Geography* 88, no. 4 (2006).

<sup>33</sup> Claudio Minca, "Space of Exception," 2.

<sup>34</sup> Massey, *For Space*, 9-10.

<sup>35</sup> Gregory, "The black flag."

through exclusion, establishing bare life, and the possible physical localisation of such structures. These dynamics are critical to consider the regulation of people by sovereign power. However, as explored below the production of spaces of exception in CUS are shaped by a series of additional dynamics due to nested and contested sovereignties.

#### 1.1.2 SPACES OF EXCEPTION AND NESTED SOVEREIGNTIES

These conceptual underpinnings of spaces of exception have a series of implications when applied in CUS. Yet, a discussion between the state of exception and CUS displays a symbiotic relationship that facilitates a broader understanding of regulation and control in Beirut. This discussion also addresses scholars like Sinnerbrink, who critique Agamben's work for its tensions "between the ontological and ontic levels of analysis" that produces a "marked loss of specificity."<sup>36</sup> Discussions on the space of exception and sovereign power in CUS clarify some key relationships and processes.

Drawing on this, I locate spaces of exception within the discussions on sovereign power in CUS. Theorisations of "weak", "fragile", and "failing" sovereignty have shaped this literature, which has emerged from what scholars have seen as the inability of states to uphold Weberian and Westphalian ideal-types of sovereignty, such as the monopoly of violence and territorial boundaries.<sup>37</sup> In the last decades, these theorisations have been rejected by schol-

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<sup>36</sup>Robert Sinnerbrink, "From *machenschaft* to biopolitics: A genealogical critique of biopower," *Critical Horizons* 6, no.1 (2005), 258. See also Andreas Kalyvas, "The sovereign weaver: Beyond the camp," in *Politics, Metaphysics, and Death: Essays on Giorgio Agamben's Homo Sacer*, ed. Andrew Norris (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), 115. As noted in Agamben's defence, however, the work on biopolitics seeks to investigate extreme possibilities and paradigms and does not constitute a theoretical framework as such, although his writings have been seminal in facilitating analysis of regulation and control across the world. See, Richard Ek, "Giorgio Agamben and spatialities of the Camp: An introduction," *Geografiska Annaler* 88 B, no.4 (2006), 372.

<sup>37</sup>Notably, spaces of exception have been applied across cases with CUS to unpack processes of regulation and control.<sup>38</sup> These examples often display how others are marginalised and exposed to violence by settler-colonial states, like in the case of the Palestinian occupation.<sup>39</sup> More sparingly, scholars have focused on how political agents establish sovereignty amid other complex cases of CUS through the state of exception, including cases like India, Sri Lanka, and Iraq.<sup>40</sup> For example, Stephen D. Krasner and Carlos Pascual, "Addressing State

ars who argue that they lack the theoretical sophistication to unpack political systems, the plurality of agents and post-colonial processes in the Middle East (and the broader Global South).<sup>41</sup> Moreover, scholars have even argued that these conceptualisations negatively impact policy implications like the military intervention against failed states post 9/11.<sup>42</sup> In response, scholarly debates sought to highlight alternative theoretical frameworks to unpack the theoretical limitations of western ideal-type sovereignty.<sup>43</sup> The debates shifted towards focusing on operations inside and outside the state, including “state and non-state” and “formal and informal actors”.<sup>44</sup> However, a key issue with these theorisations is the distinction of being either inside or outside the state, which additionally raises questions of who is more legitimate.<sup>45</sup> Practically, it challenges the fluidity of many agents that can be regarded as both state and non-state. As noted by Nora Stel “what is at stake is not mapping who or what is inside or outside the state, but rather the shifting overlap and dynamic co-construction of different forms of political authority by a variety of governance actors.”<sup>46</sup>

The concept of hybridity sought to address these limitations. In a hybrid political system, the state shares responsibility with non-state actors, and their roles become blurred and cross-

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Failure,” *Foreign Affairs* 84, no. 4 (2005); and Robert I Rotberg, ed. *State Failure and State Weakness in a Time of Terror* (Brookings Institution Press, 2003), <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7864/j.ctvbd8j54>.

<sup>41</sup>Davis, “Non-State Armed Actors”; Sassen, *Territory, Authority, Rights*; and Boege, Brown, Clements, and Nolan, *On Hybrid Political Orders and Emergency States*.

<sup>42</sup>In Noam Chomsky’s critique of the concept, Chomsky criticised the American militarisation of failed states and questioned what it means to be a failed state by exploring the American health system. In *Failed States: The Abuse of Power and the Assault on Democracy* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, LLC, 2006).

<sup>43</sup>Examples include *negative sovereignty* and *sovereign excess* in Robert H. Jackson, “Negative Sovereignty in Sub-Saharan Africa,” *Review of International Studies* 12, no. 4 (1986); and James D. Sidaway, “Sovereign excesses? Portraying postcolonial sovereigntyscapes,” *Political Geography* 22, no. 2 (2003).

<sup>44</sup>Daphne Josselin and William Wallace, ed. *Non-state actors in World Politics* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001); Erica Chenoweth, and Adria Lawrence, ed. *Rethinking Violence: States and Non-State Actors in Conflict* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2010) ProQuest Ebook Central; Davis, “Non-State Armed Actors.”

<sup>45</sup>The hybridity literature has written extensively about these issues, see Wallis, Kent, Forsyth, Dinnen, and Bose, *Hybridity on the Ground in Peacebuilding and Development*; and Boege, Brown, Clements, and Nolan, *On Hybrid Political Orders and Emergency States*, 16-17.

<sup>46</sup>Stel, *Hybrid Political Orders*, 10.

contaminated to the extent that they are indistinguishable.<sup>47</sup> Using this theoretical framework, scholars have unpacked the implications of this for urban environments, institutions, and geopolitics.<sup>48</sup> The concept of hybridity has been used with Agamben's conceptualisation of spaces of exception. Adam Ramadan and Sara Fregonese utilise the concepts of hybrid sovereignty and the state of exception to unpack Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon as "spaces of exception characterized by hybrid sovereignties" representing "arrangements of sovereignty between state and a range of nonstate actors and armed groups."<sup>49</sup> Similarly, Stel analyses Lebanon's "hybrid political order" by exploring non-state and state as mutually constitutive in refugee governance.<sup>50</sup> These accounts display the regulation and control of groups of refugees amidst hybrid sovereignties.

The concept of hybridity has yet to emerge without criticism and policy implications.<sup>51</sup> Practically, scholars are concerned about the policy implications of 'hybridity' and remain sceptical of its instrumentalisation by political leaders.<sup>52</sup> It can overlook power dynamics by

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<sup>47</sup>See, Fregonese, "Beyond the 'weak state'"; Hourani, "Post-conflict reconstruction"; and Stel, *Hybrid Political Orders*. Others such as Thanassis Cambanis, Dina Esfandiary, Sima Ghaddar, Michael W. Hanna, Aron Lound, and Renad Mansour, *Hybrid Actors: Armed Groups and State Fragmentation in the Middle East* (The Century Foundation, 2019) simply use hybridity when discussing how actors "depend on state sponsorship and benefit from the tools and prerogatives of state power, but at the same time enjoy the flexibility that comes with not being the state." In addition, other such as Gokhan Bacik, *Hybrid Sovereignty in the Arab Middle East: The Case of Kuwait, Jordan and Iraq* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008) utilises in terms of relationships between western and traditional orderings with hybrid orders being a mix of these.

<sup>48</sup>Stel, *Hybrid Political Order*; Hourani, "Post-conflict reconstruction"; Fregonese, *War and the City*.

<sup>49</sup>Ramadan and Fregonese, "Hybrid Sovereignty and the State of exception," 949-950.

<sup>50</sup>Stel, *Hybrid Political Order*, 32-33.

<sup>51</sup>See: Charles T. Hunt, "Hybridity Revisited: Relational Approaches to Peacebuilding in Complex Sociopolitical Orders," in *Hybridity on the Ground in Peacebuilding and Development: Critical Conversations*, edited by Joanne Wallis, Lia Kent, Maranda Forsyth, Sinclair Dinnen, and Srinjoy Bose (Acton: ANU Press, 2018); Thania Paffenholz, "Unpacking the local turn in peacebuilding: a critical assessment towards an agenda for future research," *Third World Quarterly* 36, no. 5 (2015); Jenny H. Peterson, "A conceptual unpacking of hybridity: Accounting for notions of power, politics and progress in analysis of aid-driven interfaces," *Journal of Peacebuilding & Development* 7, no. 2 (2012).

<sup>52</sup>Paffenholz, "Unpacking the local turn in peacebuilding"; Roger Mac Ginty and Oliver Richmond, "The Local Turn in Peace Building: A Critical Agenda for Peace," *Third World Quarterly* 34, no. 5 (2013); Geroid Millar, "Disaggregating hybridity: Why hybrid institutions do not produce predictable experiences of peace," *Journal of Peace Research* 51, no. 4 (2014).

romanticising agents deemed by international and regional levels to be local, thus actually neglecting local and everyday experiences.<sup>53</sup> Perhaps the most pressing criticism is that the concept has sought to move away from the Weberian understandings of sovereignty and from binaries to study interfaces, interactions, and dissolution but also use these to explain what hybridity is and remains bound to western centred structures.<sup>54</sup> Scholars have also noted that hybridity models often reflect the categories it seeks to avoid, falling back on problematic binaries and power dynamics or resulting in conceptual vagueness.<sup>55</sup> It reduces “the specific character of what is being mixed” and can work to “disguise social inequality and exploitation” within the political ordering.<sup>56</sup> As such, hybridity has limited abilities to expose horizontal and vertical power relations between agents.

Whilst hybrid sovereignty is powerful in outlining the blurry relationship between state and non-state, formal and informal, public and private, it neglects hierarchical structures and state power within these contexts. To overcome this deficiency, this research utilises the concept of *nested sovereignties* to unpack power relations and political ordering, thus acknowledging power hierarchies and unequal power.<sup>57</sup> As argued by Audra Simpson, “sovereignty may exist within sovereignty. One does not entirely negate the other, but they necessary stand in terrific tension and pose serious jurisdictional and normative challenges to each other: Whose citizen are you? What authority do you answer to? One challenges the very legitimacy of the other.”<sup>58</sup> Nested sovereignties thus address the significance of hierarchical structures.

The concept of nested sovereignties is speaking to scholarship focusing on sovereignties

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<sup>53</sup>Hunt, “Hybridity Revisited,” 55.

<sup>54</sup>Alberto Moreiras, “Hybridity and double consciousness,” *Cultural Studies*, 13:3 (1999).

<sup>55</sup>Jenny H. Peterson, “A conceptual unpacking of hybridity: Accounting for notions of power, politics and progress in analysis of aid-driven interfaces,” *Journal of Peacebuilding & Development* 7, no. 2 (2012), 13.

<sup>56</sup>Arid Dirlik, “Bringing history back in: Diasporas, hybridities, place and histories,” *Review of Education, Pedagogy, and Cultural Studies* 21, no. 2 (1999), 109.

<sup>57</sup>Humphrey, “Sovereignty.”

<sup>58</sup>Simpson, *Mohawk Interruptus*, 10.

on a “variety of territorial scales”, including the local, national, and geopolitical.<sup>59</sup> For example, Simpson details how indigenous sovereignty prevails within and apart from settler governance.<sup>60</sup> In this vein, this research echoes Diane Davis who argues that “*traditional institutions of national sovereignty and power of the nation-state still exist and must be reckoned with* [italics in original],”<sup>61</sup> In Chapter 2, I argue that in Beirut sovereignties are hierarchically dispersed through the Taif Agreement which officially ended the civil war in 1989.

This thesis further draws on Humphrey’s articulation of *nested* sovereignties and *biopolitics* to unpack how “localized forms of sovereignty [...] retain a domain within which control over life and death is operational” by drawing “attention to the actualities of relations within the ways of live that exist under conditions of sovereignty.”<sup>62</sup> Humphrey reflects on the dispersed power in the Russian city of Ulan-Ude, thus displaying how various scales of sovereignties have control over life and death.

Power in nested sovereignties is operated formally and informally by political leaders. Political leaders utilise formal institutions and legal measures to regulate and control groups of others, such as refugee legislation and environmental emergency legislation.<sup>63</sup> Simultaneously, political leaders also engage in informal strategies that facilitate activities such as patron-client relationships and corruption.<sup>64</sup> In the context of communal violence in India, Hansen argues that the central challenge is “to understand how de facto sovereign power – the right to kill, punish and discipline with impunity [...] not formally but in practice.”<sup>65</sup> In this way, political leaders are able to pursue sovereign power informally. Together this

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<sup>59</sup>Davis, “Non-state armed actors,” 229.

<sup>60</sup>Simpson, *Mohawk Interruptus*.

<sup>61</sup>Davis, “Non-state armed actors,” 229.

<sup>62</sup>Humphrey, “Sovereignty,” 420.

<sup>63</sup>See examples in Hanafi and Long, “Governments, governmentalities, and the state of exception,” 111-12; and Smith, *Against Ecological Sovereignty*, 126-127.

<sup>64</sup>Stephen Deets, “Consociationalism, Clientelism, and Local Politics in Beirut: Between Civic and Sectarian Identities,” *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics* 24, no. 2 (2018); and Leenders, *Spoils of Truce*.

<sup>65</sup>Hansen, “Sovereigns beyond the state,” 141.



structure and the operations by nested sovereignties make up the biopolitical machinery in CUS.

Within nested sovereignties these operations include contestation and blurriness of state/nonstate boundaries. Yet, I argue that there is a crucial difference between nested and hybrid approaches. Hybrid analysis for example has often been limited to armed groups, such as Hezbollah, and emphasises how they work outside the state. This can lead to instrumentalisation by political leaders on topics such as contestation and geopolitics. Conversely, an analysis on nested sovereignties acknowledges that political leaders operate formally and informally within the state but that they are bound to higher sovereignties. Chapter 2 displays how political leaders (including Hezbollah's political leader Hassan Nasrallah) are enforcing formal and informal strategies for regulation and control to ensure the state's and political system's survival.

Given these differences, I propose that the concept of nested sovereignties is better equipped to unpack the hierarchical power dynamics between agents. It acknowledges that power is dispersed within the state – between political leaders and institutions – and reaffirms that sovereignties exist on multiple scales – from the macro to the micro contexts but making clear that sovereignties are nested within higher forms of sovereignties. Moreover, these sovereignties regulate and control groups of *others* that cannot be integrated into the political system.

The production of spaces of exception are shaped by a series of factors in CUS. Sovereignties pursue various political projects that seek to regulate and control political life. These may align or contrast with state sovereignty, but often remain nested within higher sovereignties such as a political power structure, as explored in the case of Beirut and the manifestation of the postwar power-sharing system in Chapter 2. Furthermore, as explored in the following section, waste is a part of this biopolitical machinery, establishing conditions that further the

regulation of political life by sovereignties.

### 1.1.3 THE BIOPOLITICAL MACHINERY OF WASTE IN CUS

The biopolitical machinery is critical to understanding the politics of waste. Whilst scholars such as Bauman and Giroux have been quick to explore the ways that globalisation and neoliberalism have produced politics of waste,<sup>66</sup> little attention has been given to how sovereign power utilise the ordering of waste to regulate and control of groups of others and the environment. This section explores this issue. Specifically, it explores how the organisation of waste is entangled in spaces of exception, thereby setting up structures that have the implications on others and urban geographies in the subsequent Politics and Governing sections in this chapter.

Sovereignty and the state have been the subject of much study. State power has been explored as a mere facilitator of capitalism, contributing to pollution in the marginalisation of communities (and potential ally or neutral arbitrator for environmental justice activists in the United States),<sup>67</sup> more recent scholarship has sought to further situate the state power within processes of abandonment on par with capitalism.<sup>68</sup> In the US context, Laura Pulido argues that “the state is deeply invested in not solving the environmental racism gap because it would be too costly and disruptive to industry, the larger political system, and the state itself.”<sup>69</sup> This research expands on this contribution highlighting the active role of states in creating hostile environments.

How sovereign power establishes hostile environments are central to this discussion, and

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<sup>66</sup>Bauman, *Wasted Lives*; Giroux, “Reading Hurricane Katarina.”

<sup>67</sup>Smith, *Uneven Development*; and Pellow, *Garbage Wars*.

<sup>68</sup>Laura Pulido, “Geographies of race and ethnicity II: Environmental racism, racial capitalism and state-sanctioned violence.” *Progress in Human Geography* 41, no. 4 (2017); Pavithra Vasudevan, “An Intimate Inventory of Race and Waste,” *Antipode*, 53 (2021); Kim, *Refusing Death*; Dillon, “Race, Waste, and Space.”

<sup>69</sup>Pulido, “Geographies of race and ethnicity II,” 529.

scholarship has gone some way in exploring these intersecting challenges in the political ecology literature.<sup>70</sup> Critically, this thesis draws on Mick Smith, who argues that sovereign power manufactures processes that contribute to ecological crises.<sup>71</sup> Smith argues,

*“Isn’t there now a real, and devastatingly ironic, possibility that the idea of an ecological crisis, so long and so vehemently denied by every state, will find itself recuperated, by the very powers implicated in bringing that crisis about, as the latest and the most comprehensive justification for a political state of emergency.”*

(Italics in original)<sup>72</sup>

Smith links environmental challenges with the emergency powers that result in “potentially disastrous technological, ‘even’ militaristic fixes”.<sup>73</sup> This research expands on this literature by emphasising how sovereignties regulate and control of people, places, and ecosystems directly through the political ordering of waste.

In CUS, spaces of exceptions are utilised by nested and contesting sovereignties to regulate and control others through the politics of waste. I situate the biopolitical machinery of waste within formal and informal operations. Sovereignties formally organise waste around people and urban spaces by implementing executive decisions. Formal organisation is shaped by contestation and negotiations between sovereign actors, including decisions such as labour laws, land use, and waste processing.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>70</sup>Smith, *Against Ecological Sovereignty*; Gandy “Zones of indistinction”; Kim, *Refusing Death*.

<sup>71</sup>Smith, *Against Ecological Sovereignty*, 15.

<sup>72</sup>ibid, 127.

<sup>73</sup>A key critique of Smith is that he draws on western centred literature that falls short in unpacking the implications of these structures across space and time; See: Smith, “Against ecological sovereignty,” 110.

<sup>74</sup>Regulation and control, additionally, have particular implications in postcolonial and settler colonial contexts. See: Melanie Samson, “Rescaling the State, Restructuring Social Relations,” *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 10, no. 1 (2008), 21; Stephen Campbell, “Migrant Waste Collectors in Thailand’s Informal Economy: Mapping Class Relations.” *European Journal of East Asian Studies* 17, no. 2 (2018); and Lerner, *Sacrifice Zones*, 6.

Sovereignities also organise the politics of waste informally through power relations and legal impunity, strengthening the political system and the establishment while often fostering corruption. In CUS, sectarian politics and clientelism relations establish access to public goods and exclude groups of *others*.<sup>75</sup> Moreover, legal impunity fosters exclusion and marginalisation as people remain discarded by the state and are unprotected from the toxicity of waste and become exposed to death.<sup>76</sup> For example, the critical work on silent and slow violence in environmental studies have sought to capture the processes in which people are exposed to waste.<sup>77</sup>

The formal and informal structures unveil spaces of exception in which the politics of waste becomes entangled within sovereign power and its organisation of human life. The ordering of waste enables the regulation and control of others – creating processes of inclusion through exclusion – and ecological crisis through factors such as labour laws and land use decisions. The ordering of waste “transforms itself into a killing machine” in urban spaces, which slowly and silently kills groups of others.<sup>78</sup> The following sections – Politics and Governing – explores the interrelated implications of this system on groups of *others* and the localisation of such dynamics and impact on ecosystems by spaces of exception. Especially, political exclusion and marginalisation are critical to considering these complex challenges as groups of *others* are marginalised and exposed to hostile environments.

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<sup>75</sup>Eric Verdil, “Infrastructure crisis in Beirut”; Leenders, *Spoils of Truce*; Nucho, *Everyday Sectarianism*; and Cammett, *Compassionate Sectarianism*.

<sup>76</sup>See discussion on legal impunity in Pulido, “Geographies of race and ethnicity II,” 529.

<sup>77</sup>Rob Nixon, *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011), ProQuest Ebook Central; and Watts, *Silent Violence*.

<sup>78</sup>Agamben, *State of Exception*, 86. See also: Nixon, *Slow Violence*; and Watts, *Silent Violence*.

## 1.2 POLITICS

Human beings are situated at the forefront of politics within spaces of exception as they are regulated and controlled. The entrapment of having no protection from the law (abandonment) and yet experiencing regulation by the law (being bound) is argued by Agamben to be embodied within *homo sacer*.<sup>79</sup> In Roman Law, *homo sacer* refers to a man who has been banned and exiled and that can be killed without consequence and therefore does not share the rights as a citizen.<sup>80</sup> Agamben draws on this figure to unpack contemporary biopolitics by exploring how human beings are stripped of political rights – from *bios* (political quality life) to *zoe* (biological life) – thereby conceptualising bare life.<sup>81</sup>

The most prominent critique of Agamben by scholars is the conceptualisation of bare life, which is the dismissal of the role of agency, as seen in sub-section 1.2.1. This critique is integrated into the conceptual framework in order to understand the complexities around political life and the socio-political ordering of waste in Beirut, emphasising how human beings reject being thus. Similarly, the literature in discard studies that has focused on conceptualisations of *human-as-waste*, including *discarded people* and *wasted lives*, have had similar reservations and responses regarding agency.<sup>82</sup> As a result, the conceptual framework expands on the work of Agamben and *human-as-waste* conceptualisations by highlighting the various roles of agency within these processes, including violent resistance and sectarian politics, but also how social movements that have “forge public realms” against such challenges.<sup>83</sup> This holistic approach to understanding political life is critical in order to capture how people reject regulation by sovereignties through waste.

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<sup>79</sup>Agamben, *Homo Sacer*, 59.

<sup>80</sup>ibid, 8.

<sup>81</sup>ibid, 8.

<sup>82</sup>Wylie, “Human waste?”; and Denning, “Wageless life.”

<sup>83</sup>Owens, “Reclaiming ‘bare life?’” 569.

### 1.2.1 BARE LIFE

The marginalisation of people into bare life has inspired considerable literature,<sup>84</sup> with the concept being heavily utilised to unpack processes relating to groups of *others* like refugees, prisoners, and homeless people in contexts across the world.<sup>85</sup> This utilisation has highlighted the political exclusion *others* face, emphasising the legal implications of inclusion through exclusion. For example, Bülent Diken argues that “the refugee is excluded from the domain of the law but remains subjected to it. Thus, the life of the refugee is strictly regulated and restricted by the law, which applies even to his or her private life.”<sup>86</sup> More specifically, in Lebanese refugee camps, Hanafi and Long argue that

“[t]he Palestinian has no voice in the legal formulation of his or her status and no say in either the Lebanese or Palestinian political process which affect him or her [...] The concrete walls, barbed wire, and army checkpoints which surround each camp mark both the physical and juridical limits of the Lebanese state’s concerns regarding their prosperity and happiness – indeed, the very lives – of Palestinians.”<sup>87</sup>

This thus highlights one of the ways that refugees are experiencing inclusion through exclusion in Lebanon. Bare life however has been criticised however for neglecting agency and dismissing people’s ability to shape their own spaces, especially regarding refugees, migrant

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<sup>84</sup>For example: Svirsky and Bignall *Agamben and Colonialism*; Ramadan, “Destroying Nahr el-Bared”; Rifkin, “Indigenizing Agamben”; and Gregory, “The black flag.”

<sup>85</sup>Diken, “From Refugee Camps to Gated Communities”; Jenkins, “Bare Life: Asylum-Seekers”; Downey, “Zones of Indestinction”; Dooling, “Ecological Gentrification”; Rajarshi Dasgupta, “Geneva Camp, Dhaka: ‘Bihari’ Refugees, State of Exception, and Camouflage,” *Journal of Borderlands Studies* (2023); Aidan Mosse, “‘There is no difference between citizens and non-citizens anymore’: Violent Xenophobia, Citizenship and the Politics of Belonging in Post-Apartheid South Africa,” *Journal of Southern African Studies* 36, no.3 (2010).

<sup>86</sup>Diken, “From Refugee Camps to Gated Communities,” 84.

<sup>87</sup>Hanafi and Long, “Governance, governmentalities, and the state of exception,” 15.

workers, and prisoners.<sup>88</sup> For example, Are J. Knudsen argues that refugees in Lebanese camps are marginalised but “that they are not without agency, individually or collectively. Camps come in many shapes and forms and are transformed by humanitarian actors, state agencies and residents.”<sup>89</sup> Similarly, writing on migrants in Europe, William Walters argues that “Agamben’s line of thinking seems to lead us away from a dynamic, agnostic account of power relations, and instead foster a rather one-sided and flattened conception of migrant subjects [...] Only occasionally are they granted the capacity to act, and then in desperate ways.”<sup>90</sup> This research as a result seeks to include agency in the discussions on sovereign power and political life.

Agamben argues that homo sacer’s “entire existence is reducing bare life stripped of every right by virtue of the fact that everyone can kill him without committing homicide; he can save himself only in perpetual fight or a foreign land.”<sup>91</sup> Through the perpetual fight, people can resist bare life, albeit in limited ways. Scholars have sought to shed light on how human beings display agency in bare life.<sup>92</sup> In the context of refugees in Tanzania, Simon Turner emphasises how refugees “are constantly working on constructing their own political subjectivities” amid regulation by the state and humanitarian agencies.<sup>93</sup> I similarly highlight how groups of others in Beirut attempt to resist regulation and control by multiple agents in Chapter 3. Patricia Owens goes beyond this still and argues that their reduction to bare life goes too far, and that “while much of the literature on so-called ‘biopolitics’ is illuminating

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<sup>88</sup>Mosselson, “‘There is no difference’”; Knudsen, “Camp, ghetto, zinco, slum”; and Baily, “Up against the wall”.

<sup>89</sup>Knudsen “Camp, Ghetto, Zinco, Slum,” 443. See also, Hanafi and Long, “Governance, governmentalities, and the state of exception.”

<sup>90</sup>William Walters, “Acts of demonstration: Mapping the territory of (non-)citizenship,” in *Acts of Citizenship*, ed. Engin F. Isin and Greg M. Nielsen (London: Zed Books, 2008), 187.

<sup>91</sup>Agamben, *Homo Sacer*, 183.

<sup>92</sup>Owens, “Reclaiming ‘bare life?’”; and Enns, “Bare life.”

<sup>93</sup>Simon Turner, “Suspended Spaces – contesting Sovereignties in a Refugee Camp,” in *Sovereign Bodies: Citizens, Migrants, and States in the Postcolonial World*, ed. Thomas Blom Hansen and Finn Stepputat (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 255.

and productive, we need not accept all aspects of Agamben's view of what happens when bare 'life' is placed at the centre of politics."<sup>94</sup> Owens further applies Hannah Arendt's writings on refugee populations to argue that reclaiming bare life "will be wholly dependent on the ability to forge a public realm grounded in the appropriate distinction between nature and political artifice, between human life and the political world."<sup>95</sup> Through a series of political activities, refugees – even those reduced to bare life – can forge public realms.

The resistance to bare life is explored by Diane Enns in the context of Palestinian occupation through Foucault's writing on the Iranian revolution and collective will – where the "soul of the uprising" was born out of a desire for regime change, – and argues that "desperation is a powerful force and not only negative [...] we must acknowledge not only its emancipatory potential, but its roots in the very sovereign power that seeks to quell it."<sup>96</sup> As further noted by Enns, resistance in the extreme form of suicide bombing is "a desperate refusal of bare life to the condition of being occupied, as well as the most horrific, and counter-productive example of violent retribution."<sup>97</sup> Although extreme, this example explains the most severe attempts to resist bare life and the implications for further contestation.

Bare life is at the forefront of sovereign regulation, yet it is not all-encompassing. Agency and emancipatory politics may emerge within these structures from people seeking to escape these conditions. In Chapter 3, the case of Beirut displays these understandings of agency by analysing the forms of resistance resulting from political exclusion and marginalisation. These dynamics are further shaped on the specific set of challenges in CUS implicated with sectarian politics as explored below.

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<sup>94</sup> Owens, "Reclaiming 'bare life'?" 569.

<sup>95</sup> *ibid*, 569.

<sup>96</sup> Enns, "Bare life." See also: Michel Foucault, "Iran: The spirit of a world without spirit" in *Politics, Philosophy, Culture: Interviews and Other Writings, 1977-1984*, ed. Lawrence D. Kritzman (New York: Routledge, 1988).

<sup>97</sup> Enns, "Bare life."



### 1.2.2 BARE LIFE AND SECTARIAN POLITICS

In CUS the marginalisation of *others* is not only related to the categories of refugees, migrant workers, and homeless people but also the political exclusion of sectarian *others*. Sectarian politics brings another layer into the analysis of *others*. In Lebanon, sectarian politics has been described as “modern constitutive Foucauldian socioeconomic and political power that produces and reproduces sectarian subjects and modes of political subjectification and mobilization through a dispersed ensemble of institutional, clientelist, and discursive practices.”<sup>98</sup> In other postcolonial contexts scholars have sought to unpack how people are excluded from political projects, such as in the case of the revocation of citizenship in Bahrain and the denial of political rights in Palestine, thereby producing bare life.<sup>99</sup> In the case of Jerusalem, Oren Yiftachel and Haim Yacobi specifically explore how regimes linked with dominating groups establish “hierarchies of urban citizenship”, producing patterns of “segregation and inequality” in urban spaces.<sup>100</sup> As outlined in Chapter 3, the state has historically marginalised groups of *others* in Beirut, including the exclusion of Muslims during the French Mandate (1923-1946).

The marginalisation of others becomes more unambiguous as more agents attempt to exclude others from the political project. Complex arrangements of abandonment have emerged due to the distribution of sovereignties in CUS. When power is nested, the political exclusion of *others* arises through unequal power distribution between groups that may be situated differently within the hierarchies of the state.<sup>101</sup> Through the formal and informal structures, political leaders have various access to public services which are distributed un-

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<sup>98</sup>Salloukh, Barakat, Al-Habbal, Khattab, and Mikaelian, *Politics of Sectarianism in Postwar Lebanon*, 3.

<sup>99</sup>See: Mabon, *Houses Built on Sand*, 67-69; Lentin ed., *Thinking Palestine*.

<sup>100</sup>Yiftachel and Yacobi, “Urban Ethnocracy,” 677.

<sup>101</sup>Yiftachel and Yacobi, “Urban Ethnocracy”; Nucho, *Everyday Sectarianism*, 14-17; Sawalha, *Reconstructing Beirut*, Chapter 6.

evenly based on factors such as sect, class and nationality, creating inequality across groups of *others*.<sup>102</sup> Researching Iraq and Lebanon, Eduardo Wassim Aboultaif criticised the dominant hegemonic status over minorities. Aboultaif argues that exclusion from the security sector and government resources allow majority groups more significant control over the population.<sup>103</sup> In addition to being unevenly distributed by the political leaders, goods are utilised to uphold specific clientelist relationships and to enrich the political leadership itself.<sup>104</sup> Together, these factors display the complexity of political exclusion in CUS.

In attempts to escape the condition of bare life, contestation occurs with sectarian politics. Agamben's writings on civil war – stasis – give a great insight into the politics that lead to these processes of contestation.<sup>105</sup> Through the utilisation of *The Divided City: On Memory and Forgetting in Ancient Athens* by Nicole Loraux, a historian of ancient Greece, Agamben conceptualises *stasis* into conflict in contemporary society.<sup>106</sup> Although emerging as a concept of civil war, it highlights accounts of partisanship, fraction and sedition, as conceptualised by Loraux.<sup>107</sup> For Loraux, stasis emerges from the tension and distinction between *polis* (the political city) and *oikos* (the domestic space of the family) in ancient Greece, arguing that the *oikos* becomes politicised whilst the *polis* dwindles into submission.<sup>108</sup> In contrast, Agamben goes one step further, stipulating that it is the zone of indistinction between these

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<sup>102</sup>Nucho, *Everyday Sectarianism*; Verdil, “Infrastructure crisis”; Daniel Corstange, *The Price of a Vote in the Middle East: Clientelism and Communal Politics in Lebanon and Yemen* (Columbia: Cambridge University Press, 2016), ProQuest Ebook Central.

<sup>103</sup>Eduardo Wassim Aboultaif, “Revisiting the semi-consociational model: Democratic failure in prewar Lebanon and post-invasion Iraq,” *International Political Science Review* 41, no. 1 (2020).

<sup>104</sup>Leenders, *Spoils of Truce*; Baumann, “The Causes, Nature, and Effect.”

<sup>105</sup>Giorgio Agamben, *Stasis: Civil war as A political Paradigm* (Edinburg: Edinburg University Press, 2015).

<sup>106</sup>Notably, the purpose of this thesis is not to unpack the implications of geopolitics such as civil war, violent conflict, and the militarization of urban spaces. Others such as Stephen Graham, “Remember Fallujah: Demonising Place, Constructing Atrocity,” *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 23, No.1 (2005); Stephen Graham, *Cities under Siege: The New Military Urbanism* (London: Verso Books, 2011); and Ramadan, “Destroying Nahr el-Bared”; Foregone, *War and the City*.

<sup>107</sup>Nicole Loraux, *The Divided City: On Memory and Forgetting in Ancient Athens* (1997; repr., New York: Zone Books, 2006), 10.

<sup>108</sup>Loraux, *The Divided City*.

concepts that enables stasis.<sup>109</sup> Agamben argues:

“When the tension toward the *oikos* prevails and the city seem to want to transform itself into a family (albeit of a particular kind), then civil war functions as a threshold in which family relationships are repoliticised; when it is instead the tension toward the *polis* that prevails and the family bond appears to weaken, then stasis intervenes to recodify the family relationships in political terms.”<sup>110</sup>

In CUS, sectarian politics and the state are linked through a blurry relationship – as “*the house is exceeded in the city and the city is depoliticized in the family.*” (Italics in original)<sup>111</sup> In the context of postwar Iraq, Mabon and Kumarasamy draw on Agamben’s conceptualisation of stasis to unpack the prosecution of Sunnis and the emergence of Da’ish.<sup>112</sup> In this research, the indistinction between *oikos* and *polis* enables analysis of the persistence of sectarian politics and its impact on contestation (and intermittent violence) between groups. The zone of indistinction also explains how the sectarian politics are enshrined in the state whilst the state abandons entire categories of *others*. In this way, I argue that the process of stasis should be utilised to understand violent contestation rather than civil war. In Chapter 3 I outline some of the sectarian dynamics between groups in Beirut that are shaped across time and space.

Contestation also occurs between the state and others. Extreme expressions of sovereign power and retaliation by the state take form as *necropolitics* – power over death<sup>113</sup> – as opposed to biopolitics – regulation of life.<sup>114</sup> Whilst the focal point of this research centres around control and regulation, necropolitics and Mbembe’s writings give a great insight into

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<sup>109</sup> Agamben, *Stasis*.

<sup>110</sup> *ibid*, 23.

<sup>111</sup> *ibid*, 12.

<sup>112</sup> Simon Mabon and Ana Kumarasamy, “Da’ish, Stasis and Bare Life in Iraq,” in *Iraq after ISIS: The Challenges of Post-War Recovery*, eds. Jacob Eriksson and Ahmed Khaleel (Cham: Palgrave Pivot, 2019).

<sup>113</sup> Mbembe, *Necropolitics*.

<sup>114</sup> Agamben, *Homo Sacer*.

the politics that lead to contestation. Drawing on anti-colonial thinkers like Franz Fanon and Aimé Césaire, Mbembe unpacks how “the ultimate expression of sovereignty largely resides in the power and capacity to dictate who is able to live and who must die.”<sup>115</sup> This follows Deluze and Guattari’s exploration of *war machines* – which are “made up of segments of armed men that split up or merge with one another.”<sup>116</sup> Although war machines are primarily considered opposite to the state,<sup>117</sup> Mbembe argues that “[t]he state may, of its own doing, transform itself into a war machine. It may, moreover, appropriate for itself an existing war machine or help to create one.”<sup>118</sup> Chapter 3 draws on this to outline how the political establishment employed formal and informal war machines in order to curb resistance in Beirut during anti-establishment protests since the Arab Uprisings. Similarly, writing on these dynamics in the Middle East amid sectarian politics, Mabon details “the emergence of necropolitics and mobilisation of the war machines in a final attempt to exert sovereign power and ensure regime survival.”<sup>119</sup>

While necropolitics gives a great insight into the politics that lead to political contestation and direct violence and its power over death, it has limitations in exploring everyday spaces of CUS in which life is regulated and could be exposed to death but not actively persuaded as power over death. Furthermore, amid resistance and state regulation, extreme violence is also performed between groups of *others* that may be nested within the state sovereignties. Sectarian politics and nested sovereignties can blur political projects by the state and political leaders’ ambitions. In Lebanon, armed clashes emerge between sectarian groups that have political leaders nested within the political system for example. Most recently this has played

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<sup>115</sup>Mbembe, *Necropolitics*, 66.

<sup>116</sup>In Mbembe, *Necropolitics*, 85.

<sup>117</sup>Agamben, *Stasis*.

<sup>118</sup>Mbembe, *Necropolitics*, 85.

<sup>119</sup>Simon Mabon, *Houses Built on Sand: Violence, Sectarianism and Revolution in the Middle East* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2020), 195.

out between Hezbollah and Lebanese Forces in Beirut as seen in Chapter 3. Within the context of necropolitics, this means employing the *war machine* in order to regulate groups of other that does not fit into the political project.

Political rights are not only carved through sectarian politics and necropolitics however. They also include emancipatory politics and agency drawing on the ability of *others* to “forge public realms”.<sup>120</sup> Emancipatory politics are shaped by *the right to the city* as conceptualised by Henri Lefebvre and David Harvey.<sup>121</sup> The right to the city is more than having access to urban spaces but also the ability to contribute and produce in ways that meet the needs of inhabitants. Juxtaposed to bare life, this emanates the politics of the good life, which includes the ability to participate in politics – not simply live but live well.<sup>122</sup> The right to the city thus establishes urban spaces as a site for emancipatory politics and agency. Scholars writing on the right to the city often further reflect on identity politics, including *the right to be different* and not having to subscribe to homogenising powers.<sup>123</sup> The right to difference is, as argued by Dikeç, not a “right to *be* different” but a “right to resist/struggle” – that enables engagement with urban politics and belonging to an urban political identity.<sup>124</sup> As argued by David Harvey, the right to struggle is “one of the most precious rights of urban dwellers”, but it can also lead to “marginalization and exclusions, sometimes boiling over into violent confrontations.”<sup>125</sup> Indeed, urban spaces are considered the locus for establishing rights and

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<sup>120</sup>Owens, “Reclaiming ‘bare life?’” 569.

<sup>121</sup>See: David Harvey, “The Right to the City” in *Divided Cities: The Oxford Amnesty Lectures 2003*, edited by Richard Scholar (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), ProQuest Ebook Central; David Harvey “The Right to the City,” *New left review* 53 (2008), <https://newleftreview.org/issues/ii53/articles/david-harvey-the-right-to-the-city>; and Henri Lefebvre, *Writing on Cities* (1996 repr., Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2000).

<sup>122</sup>See: Aristotle in Agamben, *Homo Sacer*, 2.

<sup>123</sup>See: Henri Lefebvre, *The Survival of Capitalism: Reproduction of the Relations of Production* (London: Allison & Busby, 1976), 35.

<sup>124</sup>Mustafa Dikeç, “Justice and the Spatial Imagination,” *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space* 33, no. 10 (2001), 1790.

<sup>125</sup>Harvey, “The Right to the City,” 86.

yet the politics of exclusion and inclusion characterise urban spaces.

Exploring the mechanisms of the right to the city in CUS, Frank Gaffikin and Mike Morrissey suggests that

“enclaves can: defy the established identity of the host city; challenge social cohesion; generate a contested politics around social exclusion, legal citizenship, and the right to the city; *and mobilise new ethno-spaces of diversity, imprinted by both resistance to, and engagement with, formal city authority* [Italics in original].”<sup>126</sup>

Moreover, coexistence and the development of shared spaces beyond sectarian politics are often overlooked in CUS.<sup>127</sup> Echoing Doreen Massey, space is “a possibility of the existence of multiplicity” and “a sphere in which different trajectories coexist.”<sup>128</sup> Chapter 3 presents how Beirut especially has historically been a place where inhabitants have enacted their urban rights amid regulation and contestation, emphasising how contemporary movement activists utilise these spaces. Still, movement activists are regularly exposed to repression. Since the Arab Uprising, anti-establishment movement activists across the world have gained increasing attention from scholars. They more recently focus on movements in Sri Lanka, Hong Kong, Iraq, Ecuador, and Lebanon,<sup>129</sup> but also international movements such as BLM and Extinction Rebellion and their relations with the state.<sup>130</sup> Sovereign power exposes move-

<sup>126</sup>Gaffikin and Morrissey, *Planning in Divided Cities*, 45.

<sup>127</sup>In recent years scholars have sought to explore these processes in different ways. Historic analysis: Dominic Bryan and Sean J. Connolly, *Civic Identity and Public Space: Belfast Since 1780* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2019), ProQuest Ebook Central. Social movements: John Nagle, *Social Movements in Violently Divided Societies: Constructing Conflict and Peacebuilding* (Oxon: Routledge, 2016) ProQuest Ebook Central.

<sup>128</sup>Massey, *For Space*, 9.

<sup>129</sup>Geha, “Co-optation, counter-narratives, and repression”; Shek, “Protests in Hong Kong”; DeVotta, “Sri Lanka’s Agony”.

<sup>130</sup>For example: Mike Slaven and James Heydon, “Crisis, deliberation, and Extinction Rebellion,” *Critical Studies on Security* 8, no. 1 (2020).

ment activists to repression and violence as a means of regime survival.<sup>131</sup> In Beirut, Geha argues that political leadership has met protestors through “co-optation, counter-narratives, and repression” to maintain power.<sup>132</sup> In these ways, urban spaces include a series of processes that both include and exclude groups of others that do not fit into the political projects of sovereignties.

The political exclusion of *others* in CUS are shaped by sovereignties facilitated through sectarian politics. Such politics has led to complex arrangements of urban politics leading to the exclusion of any non-dominant groups. In order to escape these conditions, this process is intrinsically intertwined with different forms of contestation and resistance that includes bursts of sectarian violence, necropolitics, and conversely the ability to forge public realms and facilitate emancipatory politics by movement activists. Furthermore, these complex arrangements

### 1.2.3 THE SOCIO-POLITICAL ORDERING OF WASTE IN CUS

So far this section has explored how sovereign power has broadly facilitated processes of marginalisation, contestation, and resistance. These processes are intrinsically intertwined with the politics of waste however, which further entangle these structures and power relations. The socio-political ordering of waste is rooted in the many ways that the sovereign power organise and control waste, emphasising its contribution to producing social-political boundaries.<sup>133</sup> Scholars such as Bauman and Giroux have drawn on Agamben’s writings to unpack how human beings become disposable amidst globalisation and neoliberal political systems.<sup>134</sup> In contrast this research focuses on how human beings are reduced to bare

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<sup>131</sup>Shek, “Protests in Hong Kong”; DeVotta, “Sri Lanka’s Agony”.

<sup>132</sup>Geha, “Co-optation, Counter-Narratives, and Repression”.

<sup>133</sup>Douglas, *Purity and Danger*; Scanlan, *On Garbage*; Hawkins, *The Ethics of Waste*.

<sup>134</sup>Bauman, *Wasted Lives*; Giroux, “Reading Hurricane Katarina.”

life and how they become disposable in the state's political project through the ordering of waste, thereby linking the material and socio-political whilst emphasising the latter. This follows Mbembe's argument that power is translated into "the capacity to define who matters and who does not, who is *disposable* and who is not [italics in original]."<sup>135</sup>

The organisation and regulation of waste by the state produces an array of dynamics in CUS. A burgeoning literature has explored the socio-political manifestations of waste often focusing on three different foci that are central for the framing of the conceptual framework: waste work, waste-impacted communities, and waste activism. Although remarkably different, these groups are impacted by similar processes facilitated by the state, including marginalisation, contestation, and resistance. These processes are explored in this section and analysed in Chapter 3 with the aim to understand the processes of *the socio-political ordering of waste*.

The process of collecting, disposing, and recycling of waste are shaped by layers of socio-political inequality, sectarian politics, and resistance to these structures. This is not exceptional politics. As Jo Beall notes "[a]ll over the world waste workers are stigmatized and are likely to be from marginalized groups such as ethnic or religious minorities or rural migrants,"<sup>136</sup> which further underscores the interrelated relationship between waste, *others*, and political exclusion. The state is a key part of shaping the lives of waste collectors and recyclers through the formal and informal activities of institutions and political leaders. Workers are regulated and controlled through factors such as labour and migration policies. Research has even noted how access to urban areas has historically been restricted to some informal workers, including the criminalisation of informal collectors in Buenos Aires before 2002.<sup>137</sup> Today, forms of regulation and control remain frequently interlinked with other forms of social

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<sup>135</sup>Mbembe, *Necropolitics*, 80.

<sup>136</sup>Jo Beall, "Dealing with dirt and the disorder of development: Managing rubbish in urban Pakistan," *Oxford Development Studies* 34, no. 1 (2006), 83.

<sup>137</sup>Rita Whitson, "Geographies of waste and scavenging in Buenos Aires," *Antipode* 43, no. 4 (2011), 1405.



and political exclusions related to ethnicity, nationality, class, race, sect, and gender.<sup>138</sup> At the same time, workers in the industry are subjected to exploitation and legal transgressions by employers, middlemen, corporations, and the state, who often don't face any repercussions for any violations of factors like minimum wage and safety equipment.<sup>139</sup> Such marginalisation and political exclusion, facilitated by the state and other political actors, display how waste is entangled with *bare life*.

This process is often challenged by workers who have used waste as a tool for protests to achieve better working conditions.<sup>140</sup> The critical work of Moore argued that “marginalized populations are able to leverage this difference between our expectations of cleanliness and urban order and actually excising material conditions in cities to demand their rights to the city.”<sup>141</sup> Rosalind Fredricks conceptualises *garbage citizenship* which “reflect on the possibility for building more just infrastructures,” through protests and everyday practices amid the injustices of uneven infrastructures.<sup>142</sup> Using the case of Dakar, Fredricks further argues using the disposability of people are met with “strategies of refusal that validate labor that has been stigmatized and degraded [...] Through their strikes and trash revolts, they have forced a collective reckoning with labour insecurity and uneven urban services.”<sup>143</sup> The idea of *garbage citizenship* challenges and expands the bleak conceptualisations of *bare life* and *wasted lives*, highlighting the ability of waste workers to forge public realms.

In CUS, I situate the link between waste, contestation, and sectarian politics in the

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<sup>138</sup>Whitson, “Geographies of waste”; and Samson, “Rescaling the state.”

<sup>139</sup>Pulido, “Geographies of race and ethnicity II,”; Pellow, *Garbage Wars*.

<sup>140</sup>Moore, “The Excess of Modernity”; Fredricks, *Garbage Citizenship*.

<sup>141</sup>Moore, “The Excess of Modernity,” 427.

<sup>142</sup>Fredricks, *Garbage Citizenship*, 26.

<sup>143</sup>ibid, 150.

broader literature on infrastructures, including transport links,<sup>144</sup> electricity,<sup>146</sup> and water systems,<sup>147</sup> which has explored how infrastructures are influenced by segregation, marginalisation, and patron-client relationships. These relationships broadly correspond with Pellow's argument that waste is not only facilitated by the state and industry but also by political and community leaders that, I argue, are often nested within the state and political system.<sup>148</sup> These relationships are often not straightforward, however. In the context of water and electricity in Yemen and Lebanon for example, Daniel Corstange suggests that access to urban infrastructures often depends on the position of the communities by arguing that dominating and large communities "receive modest material payoffs" compared to smaller competitive communities.<sup>149</sup> Similarly, Melani Cammett argues that class weakens networks and overall access to public services, specifically healthcare.<sup>150</sup> These cases of infrastructural organisation showcase how waste may be used in CUS to regulate and control groups of *others*.

Communities often challenge the marginalisation and political exclusion of others resulting from waste. In CUS, these forms of resistance become part of struggles over sovereign power and territory. By resisting SWM decisions, sectarian communities are expressing their right to the city. However, resistance is often dependent on the agency of the community. The "environmental justice gap" highlight this disparity between communities, as exemplified between white and non-white communities and their ability to shape environmental

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<sup>144</sup>The impact of the organisation and regulation of waste is not limited to the people involved in management of waste but also extends to communities that are disproportionately affected by unequal distribution of the environmental burdens of waste, including pollution and landfills. The distribution of waste, as seen in the environmental justice literature, has been deeply interconnected with racialised geographies and marginalised communities but also includes groups of *others* in CUS.<sup>145</sup> Rokhem and Vaughan "segregation, mobility and encounters in Jerusalem"; Nucho, *Everyday Sectarianism*, 115-126.

<sup>146</sup>Verdiel, "infrastructure crisis in Beirut."

<sup>147</sup>Corstange, *The Price of a Vote*.

<sup>148</sup>See: Pellow, *Garbage Wars*.

<sup>149</sup>Corstange, *The Price of a Vote*, 10-15.

<sup>150</sup>Melani Cammett, "Partisan Activism and Access to Welfare in Lebanon," *Stud Comp Int Dev.* 46, no. 1 (2011).

campaigns and lawsuits in the US.<sup>151</sup> Such gaps also exist in CUS between groups and further showcases how political leaders are shaping sectarian politics and everyday life. In Chapter 3, I display how sectarian communities struggle against decisions on SWM by utilising sectarian networks but also how political leaders are utilising sectarian politics to facilitate the unequal distribution of waste and minimise resistance through patron-client relationships.

Complex political struggles by workers and communities may converge with movement activists that also reject political structures, even though they are often rooted within different scales, topics, and motivations. Around the world, environmental movement activists are shaped by loose “institutional networks of organisations of varying degrees of formality, as well as individuals or groups with no organisational affiliation, that engage in collective action motivated by shared identity or environmental issues.”<sup>154</sup> Concerning solid waste, these movements have broadly mobilised around health and environmental risks due to toxicity and pollution resulting from mismanagement or limited regulations.<sup>155</sup> This includes mass mobilisation and targeted lawsuits and other activities to engage with the state and individual corporations.<sup>156</sup> All forms of resistance against the socio-political ordering of waste by the state – be it from waste workers, communities, or movement activists – are exposed to conditions of regulation and control. Environmental activists “have been repressed or even killed by the state or private agents as well as direct attacks on free speech and the criminalization of environmental movements.”<sup>157</sup> This can include both visible and invisible forms of

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<sup>151</sup>Communities often challenge the marginalisation and political exclusion of *others* resulting from waste.<sup>152</sup> In CUS, these forms of resistance become part of struggles over sovereign power and territory. By resisting SWM decisions, sectarian communities are expressing their *right to the city*.<sup>153</sup> However, resistance is often dependent on the agency of the community. The Pulido, “Geographies of race and ethnicity II,” 525.

<sup>154</sup>Christopher Rootes, “Environmental movements, waste and waste infrastructures: an introduction,” *Environmental Politics* 18, no.6 (2009), 818.

<sup>155</sup>Rootes, “Environmental movements.”

<sup>156</sup>Pulido, “Geographies of race and ethnicity II,” 526.

<sup>157</sup>Elia Apostolopoulou and Jose A. Cortes-Vazquez (eds.), *The Right to Nature, Social Movements, Environmental Justice and Neoliberal Natures* (Oxon: Routledge, 2019), ProQuest Ebook Central, 304; see also: Mary Menton and Philippe Le Billon (eds.), *Environmental Defenders: Deadly Struggles for Life and Territory*

violence perpetrated by the state, as seen in the case of an urban development project in Kerala where “physical and ideological manifestations of power” disregarded inhabitants’ fundamental rights to citizenship.<sup>158</sup> The repression of agency highlights the importance of understanding marginalisation and political exclusion as processes to ensure the continuation of sovereign power and control. Conversely, these processes also showcase the importance of including agency as a way of resisting being thus into the conceptual framework in order to enable a holistic analysis of the implications of the ordering of waste by sovereignties. In Chapter 3, I explore how waste workers, sectarian communities, and movement activists have struggled against the socio-political ordering of waste in Beirut and how efforts to resist these structures have led to further regulation and control by nested sovereignties, thereby reinforcing bare life and the disposability of people.

### 1.3 GOVERNING

Bare life, contestation, and resistance does not only play out in an array of spaces but are also bound to *ortung* – localisation. The camp is presented by Agamben as the ultimate biopolitical space, exposing a space in which everyone can be reduced to bare life and in addition the localisation of the state of exception.<sup>159</sup> Agamben argues that “whoever entered the camp moved into a zone of indistinction between inside and outside, exception and the rule, licit and illicit, in which the very concepts of subjective right and judicial prosecution no longer makes sense.”<sup>160</sup> As such, the camp marks a zone of indistinction between *bios* and *zoe*, *polis*

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(London: Routledge: 2021), ProQuest Ebook Central.

<sup>158</sup>Chitra Karunakaran Prasanna, “Manifestations of violence: Case study of Moolampilly eviction for a development project in Kerala,” in *Environmental Defenders: Deadly Struggles for Life and Territory*, eds. Mary Menton and Philippe Le Billon (Oxon: Routledge: 2021), 134; see also Nick Middeldorp and Philippe Le Billon, “Deadly environmental governance: Authoritarianism, eco-populism, and the repression of environmental and Land defenders,” *Annals of the American Association of Geographers* 109, no.2 (2019), 327.

<sup>159</sup>Agamben, *Homo Sacer*, 19.

<sup>160</sup>*ibid*, 170.

and *oikos*, law and violence, which enable the biopolitical machinery of the state. As such, the camp underscores the inclusion of life through its exclusion.

The camp is also two-dimensional, including the global ordering of spaces of exception and the localisation of the camp; for example, Claudio Minca utilises Agamben's writings on the camp to unpack the "new geographies" manifested through the war on terror, focusing on the binary of paradigm (of global politics) and localisation (such as Guantanamo Bay or refugee camps).<sup>161</sup> These two dimensions of the camp are central to the conceptual framework in order to understand the paradigm of contemporary politics and the impacts on geographies.

The localisation of the camp is a particularly powerful tool to unpack spaces of exception in relation to political geography, territory, and sovereignties in CUS. However, localisation alone falls short of providing a holistic analysis of the pluralistic challenges that arise from regulation and control through waste, which negatively impacts people and their environments.

This conceptual framework highlights the impact on the material in space and place, thereby expanding Agamben's work through the inclusion of discussions from discard studies. First, the incorporation of *sacrifice zones* in sub-section 1.3.3, which has traditionally highlighted the relationship between social marginalisation and ecological damages amid neoliberal forces and state regulation, enables an analysis of the regulation and control of groups of *others* and their environment through the material ordering of waste.

Secondly, the conceptual framework additionally includes *more-than-human* agency, expanding on debates in the *politics* section. The *more-than-human* underscores that materiality is not passive but situated within the structures of sovereign power and regulation, thereby

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<sup>161</sup>Claudio Minca, "Agamben's geographies of modernity," *Political geography* 26 (2007), 80; see also Mabon, *Houses Built on Sand*, 33.

becoming a critical part of the assemblages of agency within this conceptual framework. The inclusion of the *more-than human* is critical to analyse and unpack the holistic implications of toxic waste on people, ecosystems, and even the Anthropocene, as the toxicity of waste leads to planetary crisis.<sup>162</sup> The *afterlife of waste*, as conceptualised by Joshua Reno, should be understood as a force that can change the trajectory of urban spaces and geographies that can cause unexpected, dramatic, and subtle effects.<sup>163</sup> The incorporation of *sacrifice zones* and *more-than-human* agency showcases the limitations of Agamben's work in exploring how sovereignties regulate and control life through the material ordering of waste.

### 1.3.1 THE CAMP

One of Agamben's central arguments is that the camp becomes the paradigm of governments seeking to regulate life. This argument has been criticised by scholars who argue that the comparison between modern camps and concentration camps is too severe.<sup>164</sup> On this I concur with Bülent Diken and Carsten Bagge Laustsen who specify that their position "is not that contemporary society is characterised by the cruelty of the concentration camps although camp-like structures such as detention centres are quickly spreading" and also emphasise that "there is no more camp (as exception): all society today is organised according to the logic of the camp."<sup>165</sup> The very logic of the camp as a paradigm underscores that these structures – inclusion through exclusion and indistinction between friend and enemy – are no longer seen as an exception but rather the rule.

Regularly, the localisation of the camp is used to unpack spaces such as refugee camps across the world. For example, Turner uses the writings on bare life and the camp to analyse

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<sup>162</sup>See: Hird, "Waste, Environmental Politics and Dis/Engaged Publics."

<sup>163</sup>Reno, "Waste and waste management."

<sup>164</sup>Sinnerbrink, "From *machenschaft* to biopolitics"; Kalyvas, "The sovereign weaver."

<sup>165</sup>Bülent Diken and Carsten Bagge Laustsen, "The camp," *Geografiska Annaler: Series B* 88, no. 4 (2006), 451.

the conditions in Lukole refugee camp in north-western Tanzania, acknowledging the role of the Tanzanian state and the UNHCR in producing regulated “apolitical beings” within camp spaces.<sup>166</sup> Differently, in the context of Lebanon, Adam Ramadan argues that Palestinian refugee camps “function as spaces in which the rule of law is suspended, where Lebanese police and military forces do not enter, and they separate more than half of the Palestinian refugee population from the rest of the Lebanese national body.”<sup>167</sup> As a result, refugee lives and homes became abandoned because homes could be destroyed without sanction or legal redress.<sup>168</sup> In these contexts, the camp has been used in order to localise the spaces of exception.

Aiming to situate Agamben’s writings in environmental politics, however, Mick Smith notes that it is “not even clear what claim sovereignty over nature would entail in Agamben’s terms, since nature (lacking a political dimension of its own) can’t so be reduced.”<sup>169</sup> As a result, Smith explores how states use environmental crises to establish a state of emergency and situate discussions on the more-than-human parallel to this discussion.<sup>173</sup> Yet, this position neglects the moments of more-than-human forces that are not only perpetuated and controlled by the state or utilised for human resistance against these power structures but

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<sup>166</sup>Turner, “Suspended Spaces,” 255.

<sup>167</sup>Ramadan, “Destroying Nahr el-Bared,” 157.

<sup>168</sup>Ramadan, “Destroying Nahr el-Bared.”

<sup>169</sup>One of the most significant challenges to localising spaces of exception is the ways it often portrays spaces of exception within specific territorial boundaries divided by physical walls. In the case of Beirut, Martin challenges regular uses of the camp by arguing that the space of exception goes beyond that of the established Palestinian refugee camps and also includes all people living around these spaces – as friend and enemy become indistinguishable, and all life is stripped from quality life.<sup>170</sup> This thesis draws on Martin’s argument by arguing that localising the space of exception is loosely knit with territory and place but also add that these processes emerge through human and more-than-human construction and interrelations. Within the physical localisation of the camp, there is a need to unpack more-than-human forces as a potential challenge to the state ordering of these spaces. The more-than-human draws on new materialist scholars such as Jane Bennett and Stacy Alaimo, often interrelated to political ecology and environmental justice scholarship.<sup>171</sup> Furthermore, it emphasises the role of agency assemblages beyond sovereign power and human resistance by including physical substance.<sup>172</sup> Smith, “Against ecological sovereignty: Agamben, politics, and globalisation,” *Environmental Politics* 18, no. 1 (2009), 109.

<sup>173</sup>Smith, *Against Ecological Sovereignty*.

are part of these assemblages and may even challenge these power structures. This conceptual framework includes new materialist understandings of more-than-human as it enables a holistic understanding of the implications of the material in space and place.

The more-than-human has been understood in the context of militarised violence from a Foucauldian perspective. Joseph Pugliese “attempt to listen to the voices of the rubble in Gaza, a lemon tree in occupied East Jerusalem, the ants of Guantánamo, and in the wake of a drone missile strike, the leaves and rocks that fuse with human and animal flesh in a field in Yemen” thereby unpacking how “more-than-human entities bear witness to the destruction they are compelled to endure, and they offer their own evidentiary testimony to the violence that has transpired.”<sup>174</sup> In this way, the more-than-human is also enlisted within processes of regulation, control and violence, which this conceptual framework seeks to highlight.

The more-than-human is also interlinked with environmental politics. Alaimo explores how environmental justice movements are interlinked with “material, often toxic flows of particular places,”<sup>175</sup> thereby seeking to rethink agency beyond the sphere of the human body. In this vein, Alaimo conceptualises this as *trans-corporeal materiality* in which “social power and material/geographic agency intra-act.”<sup>176</sup> Going one step further, Bennett conceptualises how *thing-power* may have “laudable” implications for human beings.<sup>177</sup> Bennett seeks to “promote acknowledgement, respect, and sometimes fear of materiality of the thing and to articulate ways in which human beings and thinghood overlap.”<sup>178</sup> Drawing on Baruch Spinoza’s book *Ethics*, Bennett uses the ideas on the relationships of the many human and non-human “modes” as a point of departure to include thing-power.<sup>179</sup> Draw-

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<sup>174</sup>Pugliese, *Biopolitics of the More-Than-Human*, 14, 34.

<sup>175</sup>Alaimo, *Bodily Natures*, 62.

<sup>176</sup>ibid, 63.

<sup>177</sup>Jane Bennett, “The force of things, steps toward an ecology of matter,” *Political Theory* 32, no.3 (2004), 348.

<sup>178</sup>Bennett, “The force of things,” 349.

<sup>179</sup>Bennett, “The force of things,” 349, see also: Baruch Spinoza, *Ethics* (New York: Hackett, 1992).



ing on Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari in a similar vein on humanity located in a “matter-movement”, Bennett argues “that thing-power, as a kind of agency, is *the property of an assemblage*. Thing-power materialism is a (necessarily speculative) onto-theory that presumes that matter has the inclination to make connections and form networks of relations with varying degrees of stability.”<sup>180</sup> Consequently, this conceptual framework underscores that materiality is not passive. It is simply situated within the structures of sovereign power and human resistance and is a critical part of the assemblages of agency in this research.

At first the more-than-human seems to pose an ontological challenge, as seen in the introduction. In this vein, Bennett fleshes out the debate between so called “naïve materialists” and “body materialists”.<sup>181</sup> The “naïve materialists” are based around the writings of roman poet Lucretius and realist quest for the thing itself, whilst “body materialists” on the other hand, like Theodor Adorno, insist that things are always already humanised objects. I hold with Adorno, that things are constructed around subjectivity and social, cultural, and political formations. Yet, as noted by Bennett “humans do indeed encounter things only in a mediated way, there nonetheless remains something to be said for the naivete of naïve realism. A moment of naivete is, I think, indispensable for any discernment of thing-power, if there is to be any chance of acknowledging the force of matter.”<sup>182</sup> The acknowledgement of the possibility and moments of more-than-human forces enhances the boarder understanding between agency assemblages, sovereign power, and its localisation.

However, there may be a danger in including moments of more-than-human forces in these calculations. The fear is that it may be utilised by political leaders who argue that environmental crises are unavoidable and unmanageable when it is perpetuated by the state.

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<sup>180</sup>Bennett, “The force of things,” 349, see also: Gilles Deluze and Felix Guattari, *A thousand Plateaus* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987).

<sup>181</sup>See: Bennett, “The force of things,” 356-357.

<sup>182</sup>Bennett, “The force of things,” 357.

However, bringing this feature in is crucial to unpacking more-than-human forces and the localised camp. Drawing on this, Chapter 4 includes an exploration of the more-than-human within the localisation of Agamben's notion of the camp.

### 1.3.2 THE CAMP, TERRITORY, AND URBAN GEOGRAPHY

Amid the assemblages of agency, including human resistance and more-than-human forces, the localisation of the camp materialises through sovereign decision which takes different forms in CUS. In CUS, these structures are interrelated with concepts such as place and territory, which are central aspects to understanding *governing* in the conceptual framework.

*Place* reflects geographic location within social contexts, and as argued by Thomas F. Gieryn, it “sustains difference and hierarchy both by routinizing daily rounds in ways that exclude and segregate categories of people, and by embodying in visible and tangible ways the cultural meanings variously ascribed to them.”<sup>183</sup> Moreover, places and political exclusion are often related to stigmatisation and the production of negative labelling and stereotypes that can impact urban regions,<sup>184</sup> like the periphery and suburbs – often labelled and explored through informal and illegal settlements in the global south.<sup>185</sup> Writing on this topic, Mustafa Dikeç argues that there are two issues with the labelling of the suburbs; first, the focus on the ‘suburb’ creates misperceptions that spaces are in ‘crisis mode’ and that the rest of the urban region is ‘fine’; and secondly, that this reinforces inequalities within urban spaces.<sup>186</sup> In this vein, the idea of place is situated within stigmatisation and inequality

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<sup>183</sup>Thomas F. Gieryn, “A Space for Place in Sociology,” 474.

<sup>184</sup>The social context of urban spaces is largely beyond the scope of this research as it focuses on the implications of state regulation; however, is included to the degree that it is interrelated. See, Bruce Link and Jo Phelan, “Conceptualizing stigma,” *Annual Review of Sociology* 27 (2001); and Loïc Wacquant, “Territorial Stigmatization in the Age of Advanced Marginality,” *Thesis Eleven* 91, no. 1 (2007).

<sup>185</sup>Books such as *Planet of Slums* by Mike Davis has faced critiques around the negative and apocalyptic representations of slums around the world.

<sup>186</sup>Mustafa Dikeç, “Police, Politics, and the Right to the City,” *GeoJournal* 58, no. 2/3 (2002), 94.

of geographical locations.

In addition, *territory* is highly relevant to localisation and should be explored in the context of nested sovereignties, as discussed above. As a social construction, territory reflects the manifestation of power onto place. In the early literature on urban contestation in regions such as Berlin, Jerusalem, Beirut, and Nicosia, scholars focused on the role of territory, including partition, duality, and demarcation lines.<sup>187</sup> A subsequent critique of this approach, formulated by Amin and Graham, warns of “the danger of overemphasising particular spaces, senses of time and partial representations within the city.”<sup>188</sup> Likewise, Anderson explores the disadvantages of focusing on territory as it can “easily become over-simplification’ and ‘can be a blunt and crudely distorting instrument.”<sup>189</sup> This caution relating to the emphasis on the physical and geographic location has shaped the ongoing debates; yet, territory containing spatial, temporal, and geographical attributes is critical for understanding how sovereignties impact people and the environment through the waste.

In the context of nested sovereignties, territories may overlap, corresponding to different scales of power and making up territorialities. Within sectarian politics, groups are able to establish and exclude *others* from territories through formal measures, including legislation and urban planning. This can be understood as “making an urban place as ‘ethnic’ and simultaneously classifying it as ‘illegal’,”<sup>190</sup> as seen in Jerusalem, thus establishing zones in which individuals face inclusion through exclusion. Zones of abandonment are established and facilitated through state-sanctioned urban planning projects like the roadworks in Bourj

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<sup>187</sup>N Kliot and Y. Mansfeld, “Case studies of conflict and territorial organisation,” *Planning in Progress* 53 (1999).

<sup>188</sup>Ash Amin and Stephen Graham, “The ordinary city,” *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 22, no. 4 (1997), 416.

<sup>189</sup>James Anderson, “Democracy, territoriality and ethno-national conflict: A framework for studying ethnographically divided cities,” *Divided Cities/ Contested States*, Working Paper no. 18 (2010), 7.

<sup>190</sup>Yiftachel and Yacobi, “Urban ethnocracy,” 677.

Hammoud, Beirut.<sup>191</sup> However, groups of *others* can also capture urban planning as they seek to strengthen patron-client relationships and legitimise their claim to neighbourhoods, as seen in the case of electricity in post-invasion Baghdad.<sup>192</sup> These strategies seek to regulate and control human beings and establish hierarchies of territorialities and are therefore central to the conceptual framework.

The role of territorialities enables the exploration of the production of informal urban inequalities by the state. As argued by Henri Lefebvre, the state deploys a series of strategies to employ hierarchised social relations and “imposes the reproduction of the relations of domination.”<sup>193</sup> Sociologist Loïc Wacquant’s writings are relevant here as he derives the concept of *territorial stigmatisation* through his comparison between the black American ghetto and the French working-class *banlieue* to analyse the othering of marginalised groups, including their geographical places.<sup>194</sup> Drawing on the writings of Wacquant and Agamben, Simon Mabon and Staci Strobl explore these structures within the context of the camp to unpack Bahraini exclusionary politics since the Arab Uprising exploring the impact on segregation of Shi’a communities.<sup>195</sup> In this way, Wacquant’s conceptualisation of *territorial stigmatisation* enables an analysis between the localisation of the camp and everyday sectarian politics.

Because the physical and geographical location shapes the conceptualisation of place and territoriality, the more-than-human must be considered. The more-than-human is part of socio-ecological processes in urban spaces and may shape and even challenge sovereign power. As noted by Gabriel, the more-than-human “are more than the backdrop or land-

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<sup>191</sup> As seen in: Nucho, *Everyday Sectarianism*.

<sup>192</sup> As seen in Christiana Parreira, “Power politics: Armed non-state actors and the capture of public electricity in post-invasion Baghdad,” *Journal of Peace Research* 58, no. 4 (2021).

<sup>193</sup> Henri Lefebvre, *State, Space, World*, eds. Neil Brenner and Stuart Elden (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), 244.

<sup>194</sup> Wacquant “Territorial stigmatization.”

<sup>195</sup> Notably Simon Mabon and Staci Strobl, utilise the term sacrifice zones which is borrowed from the environmental justice literature. In “Sacrifice zones and bare life in Bahrain,” in Raihan Ismail and Aidan Parkes (eds) volume under review.

scape through which humans move but actors that mediate urban relations and can change their trajectory.”<sup>196</sup> For example, Katie M. Meehan shows how water flows in Tijuana, Mexico “both coexist with and limit state power” and moves beyond infrastructure as a power tool to the idea “that objects-in-themselves are wellsprings of power.”<sup>197</sup> As such, the more-than-human is a critical aspect that impacts place and territoriality.

The analysis of place and territorialities are also crucial in unpacking urban spaces and are central to this conceptual framework. However, as noted by Frank Gaffikin and Mike Morrissey, “space is a primary category, with territory and place as two of its outcomes.”<sup>198</sup> Territory and place are situated within the spaces of social relations, and as such social relations reach beyond that of geographical and physical location. Echoing this, scholars have emphasised the limitations of place and territorialities.<sup>199</sup> Wacquant traces the “dissolution of place” as territorial boundaries of marginalised communities become blurred through urban mobilities, thereby establishing new spatial forms of *territorial stigmatisation*.<sup>200</sup> Similarly, Massey explores the role of mobility and its implications for ideas of place.<sup>201</sup> Interlinkages between space, place and territorialities are critical to highlight how sovereignties regulate and control people and the environment through the material ordering of waste.

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<sup>196</sup>Nate Gabriel, “Urban Political Ecology: Environmental Imaginary, Governance, and the Non-human,” *Geography Compass* 8, no. 1 (2014), 45; see also Marion Ernwein, “Bringing Urban Parks to Life: The More-Than-Human Politics of Urban Ecological Work,” *Annals of the American Association of Geographers* 111, no. 2 (2021).

<sup>197</sup>Katie Meehan, “Tool-Power: Water infrastructure as wellsprings of state power,” *Geoforum* 57 (2013), 216.

<sup>198</sup>Gaffikin and Morrissey, *Planning in Divided Cities*, 96-97.

<sup>199</sup>See: Charles W. J. Withers, “Place and the ‘Spatial Turn’ in Geography and in History,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 70, no. 4 (2009); and Mimi Sheller, “From spatial turn to mobilities turn,” *Current Sociology* 65, no. 4 (2017).

<sup>200</sup>Wacquant, “Territorial stigmatization,” 69.

<sup>201</sup>Doreen Massey, *Space, Place, and Gender* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1994).

### 1.3.3 THE MATERIAL ORDERING OF WASTE IN CUS

The geographical localisation of regulation and control enables a discussion on the material ordering of waste, which is critical for the composition of the conceptual framework. Emerging in the environmental justice literature, the concept of *sacrifice zones* explores the social marginalisation and ecological damages in urban spaces.<sup>202</sup> A *sacrifice zone*, as argued by Steve Lerner, is “the result of many deeply rooted inequalities in our society” that is in addition related to “unwise (or biased) land use decisions dictated by local or state officials.”<sup>203</sup> The concept has predominantly been utilised to unpack how neoliberal forces and state regulation impact territory and place, including a series of strategies such as legal framework, stigmatisation, threats, community compensation, and bribery.<sup>204</sup> This process results from corporations and state designation of some communities as “less valuable” and worth sacrificing for the “higher value areas”.

In the seminal work *Dumping in Dixie: Race, Class and Environmental Quality*, Robert D. Bullard highlights how marginalised black communities in the Deep South are impacted by toxic waste by exploring the disproportionate burdens of waste management facilities such as municipal landfills, incinerators, and transfer stations, and how these distributions establish *sacrifice zones*.<sup>205</sup> Bullard further elaborates on how these *sacrifice zones* are shaped by “colonial mentality”, “unequal protection”, and “environmental apartheid.”<sup>206</sup> More recently, drawing on the implications of toxic pollution in Louisiana by minority communities, Thom Davies argues that populations and geographies are rendered exposed to slow violence

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<sup>202</sup>Recently, the term has also emerged cross disciplines in political ecology and even been used beyond the realms of environmental politics. See respectively: Vanesa Castan Broto and Martin Sanzana Calvet, “Sacrificial zones and the construction of urban energy landscapes,” *Journal of Political Ecology* 27. no.1 (2020); and Chris Hedges and Joe Scro, *Days of Destruction, Days of Revolt* (New York: Nation Books, 2014).

<sup>203</sup>Lerner, *Sacrifice zones*, 6.

<sup>204</sup>Lerner, *Sacrifice zones*; Bullard, *Dumping in Dixie*; Davies, “Slow violence and toxic geographies.”

<sup>205</sup>Bullard, *Dumping in Dixie*.

<sup>206</sup>Ibid, 110.

and sacrifice.<sup>207</sup> The conceptualisation of toxic waste and sacrifice zones establishes a link with the political ordering of human life and geographical location – political life and the camp.

Like other discussions in environmental justice, these discussions have predominantly been centred around neoliberal politics with communities and the state as secondary actors.

Peter C. Little seeks to remedy this by exploring the role of micropolitics, arguing:

“It is easy to caricature the ‘sacrifice zone’ as an extension of neoliberal rationality, an iteration of capitalist colonization and decolonization, but rendering the living in a sacrifice zone as simply a sacrificed population misses something. This caricature misses the actually existing social production of and experience with economic sacrifice.”<sup>208</sup>

In contrast to micropolitics, I argue that the addition of Agamben’s writings on sovereign power, bare life, and the localisation of the camp enables further analysis of these processes beyond the study of neoliberal politics as sovereignties manufacture sacrifice zones as a way of regulating others.<sup>209</sup> A handful of scholars have cautiously sought to make this link.<sup>210</sup>

In the case of waste management in Campania, Italy, Marco Armiero and Giacomo D’Alisa

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<sup>207</sup>Davies, “Slow violence and toxic geographies.”

<sup>208</sup>Peter C. Little, “On the micropolitics and edges of survival in a technocapital sacrifice zone,” *Capitalism Nature Socialism* 28, no. 4 (2017), 75.

<sup>209</sup>Notably, there is a conflict between the conceptualisation of sacrifice in environmental politics and Agamben’s writings. In environmental politics, people and geographical location are sacrificed for higher valued areas and corporate greed, whilst for Agamben life that is stripped from its political meaning “may be killed but sacrificed.” For Agamben, the ritual of sacrifice is to be “celebrated”, which does not include the killing of homo scarer. Following conceptual distinction, *sacrifice zones* are better described as *abandoned* than sacrificed.

<sup>210</sup>Marcelo Lopes de Souza explores the link but argues against the use of Agamben and Mbembe is too extreme, and the structures are a matter of indifference. Mabon and Strobl explores sacrifice zones in its extended non environmental context, focusing on urban spaces. Marco Armiero and Giacomo D’Alisa explore emergency powers but does not explicitly use Agamben’s conceptualisations. See: Marcelo Lopes de Souza, “‘Sacrifice zone’: The environment–territory–place of disposable lives,” *Community Development Journal* 56, no. 2 (2021); Marco Armiero and Giacomo D’Alisa, “Rights of Resistance: The Garbage Struggles for Environmental Justice in Campania, Italy,” *Capitalism Nature Socialism* 23, no. 4 (2012); Mabon and Strob “Sacrifice zones and bare life.”

alludes to states of exception by arguing that the emergency regime has “granted legal justification for the environmental injustice” and “has effectively silenced opposition, enabled the illegal disposal of toxic waste to continue, and hidden, if not the complicity, then at least the inefficiency of local governments.”<sup>211</sup> More specifically, Lindsay Shade utilises spaces of exception, arguing: “The usage of the sacrifice zone as an analytical device allows a reading of how some natures and bodies may be subject to different rules and violence in the national project of living well,” but emphasises that “these sacrifice zones are always spaces of contestation” thus acknowledging the limitations of agency in Agamben’s writings.<sup>212</sup> This conceptual framework draws and expand on these accounts, emphasising that both people and geographic location are abandoned by sovereign power.

While the idea of sacrifice zones further enables a greater understanding of how the state abandons people and geographic locations through waste management systems, it excludes however an analysis of the more-than-human. The scholarship on waste has included a tendency to “imagine waste relations exclusively in terms of privileged human violations of or instrumental plans for a passive nature.”<sup>213</sup> Scholars like Sophia Stamatopoulou-Robbins have settled on “waste as an enabler” that can “facilitate flows, circulations, and distributions of people, goods, and ideas.”<sup>214</sup> However, in the last decade, scholarship in discard studies has focused more closely on the *afterlife of waste*, including scholars such as Joshua Reno, Myra J. Hird, and Lucy Bell, drawing the writings in the *more-than-human* scholarship.<sup>215</sup> The *afterlife of waste* focuses on the vitality of matter after it has been rejected by people;

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<sup>211</sup> Armiero and D’Alisa, “Rights of Resistance,” 58.

<sup>212</sup> Lindsay Shade, “Sustainable development or sacrifice zone? Politics below the surface in post-neoliberal Ecuador,” *The Extractive Industries and Society* 2, no. 4 (2015), 776.

<sup>213</sup> Reno, “Waste and waste management,” 558.

<sup>214</sup> Stamatopoulou-Robbins, *Waste Siege*, 23. See also: Millar, *Reclaiming the Discarded*; and Smith, “Against ecological sovereignty.”

<sup>215</sup> Reno, “Waste and waste management”; Hird, “Knowing waste”; Lucy Bell, “Place, people and processes in waste theory: a global South critique,” *Cultural Studies* 33, no. 1 (2019).



thereby “emphasizing the distinctive thingness of material objects.”<sup>216</sup> As a critical threat to the world’s ecological systems, it has never been more important to unpack waste in the context of *thing-power*.<sup>217</sup> Bringing together sacrifice zones with the afterlife of waste enables a deeper understanding of *the biopolitical machinery of waste*. Moreover, the *afterlife of waste* may bring about unknown challenges for sovereign power, people, and ecological systems.

There are many things that we are yet to discover about the treatment of waste. At the very extreme, Reno uses the example of how the Pacific Garbage Patch exposed how “hidden and unmanaged circulation” may lead to an “environmental crisis,”<sup>218</sup> thereby exposing the unknown implications of more-than-human forces. Further unpacking the knowledge on waste, Myra J. Hird, is concerned with pinpointing what is indeterminate about waste.<sup>219</sup> Using the example of landfills – as the most common way of disposing waste and a temporary solution with a limited lifetime – Hird argues

“landfills are a site within which multitudes of bacteria collaborate with human debris and geological forces in creating entities, some of which we know to have consequences for (human) animal and plant health, and other entities—contaminants of emerging concern—that have yet to be identified, and whose management is therefore virtual.”<sup>220</sup>

This underscores the temporalities of landfill sites, which with “[s]uccessful landfill design and aftercare, in engineering terms, extends to perhaps one hundred years, a mere moment in geological and bacterial time.”<sup>221</sup> Taken together with the active mismanagement of waste

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<sup>216</sup>Joshua Ozias Reno, “Toward a new theory of waste: From a ‘matter out of place’ to signs of life,” *Theory, Culture & Society* (2014), 5.

<sup>217</sup>Bennett, “The force of things,” 348.

<sup>218</sup>Reno, “Waste and waste management,” 565.

<sup>219</sup>Hird, “Knowing waste.”

<sup>220</sup>*ibid*, 458.

<sup>221</sup>Reno, “Waste and waste management,” 565.

across the world, the future implications of spillage and leakage remain unknown and a great challenge to ecological systems. I further argue that the force of waste may also directly impact and even challenge sovereignty, including how the scavenging birds in Costa Brava landfill led to the closure of Beirut's only commercial airport thereby restricting access to the country (see Chapter 4) and that consequently the combination of the abandonment by the state and (un)known impacts of waste management is a particularly potent mix, which results in sacrifice zones where people and ecological systems are exposed to harm.<sup>222</sup> As such, the inclusion of the more-than-human, particularly *the afterlife of waste*, is a critical part of the conceptual framework as it enables an analysis of the holistic and intersectional implications of the ordering of waste by sovereignties.

#### 1.4 CONCLUSION

Questions around sovereign power are central to understanding the impact of waste and contestation in urban spaces. This chapter has formulated a conceptual framework that enables an analysis of these relationships. While scholars have partially constructed links across various disciplines like political ecology, environmental justice, refugee studies, and urban studies, this framework aims to unify them. For example, Humphrey conceptualised how nested sovereignties are able to regulate and control human life, emphasising hierarchies of sovereignty.<sup>223</sup> In contrast, Smith explored how sovereign power manufactured processes that could lead to ecological crises followed by emergency legislation.<sup>224</sup> These wide-ranging pieces of literature have enabled a synthesis consisting of three different but intersectional research streams (biopolitics, CUS, and the politics of waste) explored across three units of analysis: polity, politics, and governing.

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<sup>222</sup>Costa Brava Landfill is also called Ghadir Landfill.

<sup>223</sup>Humphrey, "Sovereignty."

<sup>224</sup>Smith, *Against Ecological Sovereignty*.

The units of analysis outline the conceptual framework, highlighting the contribution and expansion discard studies make to Agamben's biopolitics, thereby creating a holistic framework that can tackle the pluralistic and intersectional challenges of waste in CUS. In CUS, people and their environments are regulated and controlled by sovereignties through the ordering of waste. The conceptual framework investigated this across three levels of analysis that highlighted and expanded upon Agamben's work.

**The first section – *polity* – conceptualised how contested and nested sovereignties can formally and informally regulate and control political life through waste.** The section illustrated how the state of exception and ideal types of Westphalian and Weberian sovereignty were inadequate to understand the plurality of agents and postcolonial legacies that exist in CUS. The inclusion of nested sovereignties expands on the critique of Agamben, like Sinnerbrink, who has argued that concepts such as spaces of exception have lacked specificity.<sup>225</sup> Nested sovereignties emphasise the role of assemblies of power and hierarchies of political leaders and institutions that operate formally and informally to manifest power and control.<sup>226</sup> This includes the (socio-political and material) ordering of waste, which enables further marginalisation of others and waste crises. This approach to waste differs from other accounts that prioritise factors such as globalisation and neoliberalism.<sup>227</sup> This discussion expanded the literature on sovereignties and the state in discard studies, displaying how the ordering of waste can be turned into a “killing machine”. It prioritises the relationship between sovereign power, nestedness, and waste, exposing a distinct set of mechanisms.

**The second section – *politics* – considered how groups of *others* are politically excluded, marginalised, and stripped from political life through the socio-political ordering of waste, resulting in contestation and resistance that emerges from efforts to escape**

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<sup>225</sup>Sinnerbrink, “From *machenschaft* to biopolitics”; and Kalyvas, “The sovereign weaver.”

<sup>226</sup>Simpson, *Mohawk Interruptus*; Humphrey, “Sovereignty.”

<sup>227</sup>Bauman, *Wasted Lives*; Giroux, “Reading Hurricane Katarina.”

**these conditions.** This section expanded on Agamben's work and humans-as-waste conceptualisations by including and elevating the role of agency. Agency is critical to unpack the implications of regulation and control. Amid marginalisation and political exclusion, waste workers and waste-impacted communities resist, and waste activism emerges. Yet, as noted in recent scholarship, environmental activism may lead to further regulation and control by the state and its agents.<sup>228</sup> This synthesis draws on wide-ranging debates to expose the spatial ordering of waste and others living in CUS.

**The final section – *governing* – demonstrated how regulation and control by sovereignties is physically manifested through waste and sacrifice zones that impact people, places, ecosystems and even the Anthropocene.** The conceptual framework expands on the localisation of the *camp* by including the impact of the *more-than-human* and the *afterlife of waste*, which is critical to investigating the pluralistic challenges that arise from the material ordering of waste.

Together these three units of analysis provide a holistic approach to analysis challenges around waste and sovereign power in CUS. I apply this conceptual framework to the case study on Beirut. They follow the structure of the framework itself - polity, politics, and governing - unpacking biopolitics in CUS and the biopolitics of waste in CUS. The polity section (Chapter 2) outlines the connection between the state of exception, nested sovereignties, and the biopolitical machinery of waste. The politics section (Chapter 3) focuses on the interconnectedness of bare life and stasis, sectarian politics and the socio-political ordering of waste. The final section on governing (Chapter 4) outlines the camp, territorial politics, and the material ordering of waste.

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<sup>228</sup>Middeldorp and Le Billon, "Deadly environmental governance."

# 2

## Polity

ON THE 17TH OF JULY 2015, Beirut experienced growing heaps of waste on the streets of its neighbourhoods. The solid waste crisis prominently showcased the ineffectiveness of the state apparatus and a lack of accountability. It unleashed the #YouStink campaign that marked the start of a series of protests that lasted until mid-October that year.<sup>1</sup> While a mul-

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<sup>1</sup>For the social movement see: AbiYaghi, Catusse, and Younes, “From *isat an-nizam at-ta’ifi*””; Deets, “Consociationalism, Clientelism, and Local Politics in Beirut”; and Kraidy, “Trashing the sectarian system?”

titude of factors (including rapid population growth and urban expansion, dwindling land suitable for landfilling, and the disposal of waste and debris resulting from various conflicts, disasters, and reconstruction efforts) compounded the highly visible and putrid 2015 crisis,<sup>2</sup> it was primarily caused by the political leadership's structural and political mismanagement of solid waste since the end of the civil war in 1989.<sup>3</sup> These failings of the state and political leadership have been central to facilitating hazardous environments and urban inequalities mismanagements, and unevenly distributed waste burdens for over 25 years.

This chapter explores how nested sovereignties establish spaces of exception that enable the regulation of life and the establishment's survival, focusing on how waste in Beirut has become a part of this biopolitical machinery. It argues that nested sovereignties create spaces of exception through the formal and informal organisation and control of waste, which results in the marginalisation of people and ecological crises. Through this, it lays the foundation for exploring the implications of the biopolitical machinery in Beirut on people and urban spaces in subsequent chapters. Further, the chapter builds upon the current corpus on spaces of exception and waste. It focuses on the formal and informal power structures that enable regulation. Previous research on this link is limited, and often only highlights capitalism and neoliberal politics.<sup>4</sup> Here the link is contextualised by emphasising how the state utilises aspects like legal frameworks and legal impunity to enable regulation and manifest power relations. In addition, these factors are explored in the context of nested sovereignties, which denotes the role of sectarian politics in producing these systems. This analysis is split into three sections.

The first section situates debates on sovereign power in Lebanon, emphasising how

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<sup>2</sup>See: MOE/UNHCR/UNICEF/UNDP, *Lebanon State of the Environment and Future Outlook*, 355-361.

<sup>3</sup>Ziad Abu-Rish, "Garbage Politics," *Middle East Reptot* 277 (2015).

<sup>4</sup>See: Matthew Gandy "Zones of indistinction"; Kim, *Refusing Death*; Giroux, "Reading Hurricane Katrina"; and Bauman, *Wasted Lives*.

sovereignties become nested in the state and acknowledging the role of the Taif Agreement (1989) and National Pact (1943) in establishing the sectarian system. It explores how nested sovereignties implicate the ordering of waste by unpacking its institutional setup in Beirut. For example, the political leadership in the Council of Ministers (CoM) has exercised great control over the waste sector, utilising the Council for Development and Reconstruction (CDR) to implement activities such as sweeping, collection, and landfilling at the cost of local authorities.

The second section explores how legal frameworks are utilised to manifest inclusion through exclusion. I draw on Nagle's writing on state amnesty after the civil war and Mabon's exploration of the response to the Arab Uprisings to explore the ways the political leadership establishes inclusion through exclusion, which empowers the state and facilitates the regulation of others.<sup>5</sup> Formal waste structures have established a space of exception in SWM. This space emerged after the 1997 waste crisis with emergency decrees that have continued in different forms for over 25 years, rendering groups of others and ecological systems disposable to the state.

Finally, the third section highlights how these mechanisms are reinforced through informal strategies, including patron-client networks and legal impunity for political leaders. Specifically, it explores how contracting of SWM is captured in this system and has devastating outcomes for service provision, inhabitants, and urban spaces but manifesting the role of the political leadership in postwar Beirut.

## 2.1 NESTED SOVEREIGNTIES

The state and sovereignty, as noted in the introduction, have been highly debated in Lebanon and the Middle East. This has resulted in a series of approaches, focusing on how to unpack

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<sup>5</sup>See: Nagle, "The biopolitics of victim construction," and Mabon, *Houses Built on Sand*.

sectarian politics and nationalism in postcolonial contests, including weak sovereignty and hybrid sovereignties.<sup>6</sup> This section seeks to navigate such debates and identify power relations within the Lebanese state, facilitating a context-specific analysis of biopolitical processes.

Historically, sovereignty has been considered weak in Lebanon.<sup>7</sup> For example, Benjamin Miller – drawing on Westphalian and Weberian ideas of sovereignty – argues that Lebanon falls into a category of failed states because of a disconnection between identity and territory, the inclusion of violent and armed groups, and external intervention.<sup>8</sup> Similarly, Boaz Atzili argues that Lebanon is a weak state because it has become host to violent non-state actors such as Hezbollah and the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO).<sup>9</sup> This conceptualisation of sovereignty has largely been refuted by scholars, and has led to new ideas of sovereignty that emphasise the multiplicity of actors such as “sovereign excess” and “sovereigntyscapes”.<sup>10</sup> This research draws on these accounts but emphasise the hierarchies and nestedness of sovereignties.

In Lebanon, discussions on hybrid sovereignty have become the dominant response to the weak sovereignty narrative, featuring scholars such as Fregonese, Ramadan, and Najib B. Hourani.<sup>11</sup> In the context of Beirut, Fregonese argues:

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<sup>6</sup>See: Boaz Atzili, “State weakness and “vacuum of power” in Lebanon,” *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 33, no. 8 (2010); Waleed Hazbun, “Assembling security in a ‘weak state:’ the contentious politics of plural governance in Lebanon since 2005,” *Third World Quarterly* 37, no. 6 (2016); Fregonese, “Beyond the ‘weak state’”; and Ramadan and Fregonese, “Hybrid sovereignty and the state of exception.”

<sup>7</sup>See: Atzili, “State weakness and “vacuum of power””; Hazbun, “Assembling security in a ‘weak state’”; Fouad Makhzoumi, “Lebanon’s crisis of Sovereignty,” *Survival* 52, no. 2 (2010); and Benjamin Miller, “Between the revisionist and the frontier state: Regional variations in state war-propensity,” *Review of International Studies* 35 (2009).

<sup>8</sup>Miller, “Between the revisionist and the frontier state,” 100.

<sup>9</sup>Atzili, “State weakness,” 777.

<sup>10</sup>Furthermore, these conceptualisations have focused on multiple actors, but not been explored specifically in the Lebanese context, perhaps due to the prominent role of hybrid sovereignties. See: James D. Sidaway, “Sovereign excesses? Portraying postcolonial sovereigntyscapes,” *Political Geography* 22, no. 2 (2003); John Agnew, “Sovereignty regimes: Territoriality and state authority in contemporary world politics,” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 95, no. 2 (2005); and Robert H. Jackson, *Quasi-states: Sovereignty, International Relations and the Third* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

<sup>11</sup>Fregonese, “Beyond the ‘weak state’”; Ramadan and Fregonese, “Hybrid sovereignty and the state of ex-



“Epistemologies of hybridity allow the reposition of sovereignty. Rather than a ‘weak state’ lacking sovereignty, we should see Lebanon as a constellation of hybrid sovereignties. These epistemologies highlight the intimate connections between state and nonstate, and the role of urban space as coconstructive of sovereignty.”<sup>12</sup>

The concept of hybrid sovereignty includes different entities controlling territories, such as Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon and Hezbollah’s territorial control in Haret Hreik in the southern suburb of Beirut.<sup>13</sup> The concept of hybridity (as discussed in Chapter 1) is not without criticism and policy implications, like instrumentalisation, which is seen with Lebanese Forces’ critique of Hezbollah in the recent election.<sup>14</sup> In the context of Beirut, I further suggest – like other critics such as Paffenholz and Hunt of hybridity – that the emphasis on hybridity may essentialise relationships, which are often based on the analysis of instances of sectarian violence that change across time and space.<sup>15</sup> Notably, the application of hybrid sovereignty in Lebanon emerged around the start of the Arab Uprising and therefore did not consider the advancement of sectarian politics after the rise of ISIS in 2014.<sup>16</sup> Nor has it addressed the political changes after the Arab Uprisings and the ability of the state apparatus to withstand pressure from movement activists, including the garbage crisis (2015) and the Thawra movement (2019-2020). Additionally, the literature using hybridity has the tendency to emphasise what is outside the state, like in Hourani’s analysis of postwar reconstruction in Haret Hreik or Fregonese’s analysis of the 2008 May clashes.<sup>17</sup> It is not my aim

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ception”; and Hourani, “Post-conflict reconstruction.”

<sup>12</sup>Fregonese, *War and the City*, 130.

<sup>13</sup>ibid

<sup>14</sup>See: Adan Nasser, “Lebanese Forces Party confronts post-election challenges,” Carnegie, August 25, 2022, <https://carnegieendowment.org/sada/87756>.

<sup>15</sup>Paffenholz, “Unpacking the local turn in peacebuilding”; and Hunt, “Hybridity Revisited.”

<sup>16</sup>Bassel F. Salloukh, “War, memory, confessional imaginaries and political contestation,” *Middle East Critique* 28, no. 3 (2019), 341.

<sup>17</sup>Hourani, “Post-conflict reconstruction”; and Fregonese, *War and the City*.

however to completely disregard the complex relationship between state and non-state, in which Fregonese's analysis is invaluable, but rather to further emphasise hierarchical structures within the political ordering of the state. Consequently, I argue that sovereignty in Beirut after 1990 is best described as *nested sovereignties* with some spatial exceptions,<sup>18</sup> and is defined "as the sum of communal and political party leaders using national and local institutions, networks, and resources to provide and facilitate access to public services, secure people's dignity, and act as power brokers and protectors for their constituencies."<sup>19</sup> Not a series of rogue or independent actors, but rather the sum of the political leaders that work within the state apparatus as a means to remake life for good or bad, to include or exclude.<sup>20</sup> This echoes Simpson's argument that "sovereignty may exist within sovereignty."<sup>21</sup>

A constructive way of analysing sovereignties is found through Humphrey's understanding evaluation of Agamben, localised forms of sovereignty and space. Humphrey argues;

"Although nested within higher sovereignties, these localized forms of sovereignty nevertheless retain a domain within which control over life and death is operational. Although such domains may be "exclusions" in terms of a central state, they may nevertheless construct the quasi-judicial terms in which exclusions can be made from their own body."<sup>22</sup>

Through this logic, we find localised sovereignties – the individual political leader – working within the broader hierarchical structure of nested sovereignties. The idea of nested sovereignties may also unpack "the closing off of a community [...] amid geopolitical struc-

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<sup>18</sup>For example: Hezbollah during the 2008 clashes (Fregonese, *War and the City*), Palestinian Refugee camps (Stel, *Hybrid Political Order*).

<sup>19</sup>Sami Hermez, "When the state is (n)ever present: on cynicism and political mobilisation in Lebanon," *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 21, no. 3 (2015), 508.

<sup>20</sup>Arsan, *Lebanon*, 154.

<sup>21</sup>Simpson, *Mohawk Interruptus*, 10.

<sup>22</sup>Humphrey, "Sovereignty," 420

tures,” as noted by Mabon, who explores the impact on urban life in Hezbollah-controlled areas of southern suburbs by

“demonstrating the importance of the group’s leader Hassan Nasrallah, but also Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini and other prominent Shi’a figures. Symbols that adorn the streets demonstrate this loyalty to the Shi’a – and by extension, Iranian cause – from the posters and banners, to the graffiti sprayed across the walls; it is a space of Shi’a influence where ideas and beliefs have travelled.”<sup>23</sup>

In this way, Mabon utilises the idea of localised sovereignties as a part of broader geopolitical and sectarian politics. Whilst Mabon’s work explores the relationship between geopolitics and its impact on sectarian and everyday politics, I seek to unpack the relationship between the Lebanese state and political leaders. As further explored in this chapter, actors like Hezbollah have a significant – and consistent – stake in the survival of the establishment and political leadership in Lebanon, which should not be overlooked.

#### 2.1.1 THE TAIF AGREEMENT

The contemporary political system and the current role of the political leadership in Lebanon are traced back to the Taif Agreement. Instead of addressing divisions brought on by the militias, the peace agreement in 1989 – the Taif Agreement – reinforced sectarianism and difference between groups. Even though the Taif Agreement addressed previously unequal representation between Christians and Muslims, it largely ignored the emerging inter-sectarian conflicts that had developed during the civil war.<sup>24</sup> In short, it “failed to provide for the emergence of a new political class to formulate policy for the rebuilding of the country on new

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<sup>23</sup>Simon Mabon, “The world is a garden: Nomos, sovereignty, and the (contested) ordering of life,” *Review of International Studies* 45, no. 5 (2019), 888.

<sup>24</sup>See: Bassel F. Salloukh, “Taif and the Lebanese State: The Political Economy of a Very Sectarian Public Sector,” *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics* 25, no. 1 (2019).

foundations [...] leaving unresolved the vital issue of intra-confessional relations, especially at the level of the “street.”<sup>25</sup> It established “the allotment state” and the role of the political leadership as representatives of the sectarian groups.<sup>26</sup> Additionally, Khalaf recognises the processes that have reinforced “kinship, confessional and communal loyalties”, describing it as the “retribalization” of Lebanon.<sup>27</sup> Concepts such as “the allotment state” and “retribalization” make clear how sectarian politics and networks have manifested themselves within political space in Beirut. These conceptualisations fall short however in accounting for the implications for political contestation and the political exclusion of *others* outside the sectarian system.

According to Agamben, the *apparatus* is the established network between elements such as the law, institutions, buildings and police measures. It has a strategic function and is always located in a power relation.<sup>28</sup> The state apparatus in Lebanon is best defined as the sum of political leaders – the group of individuals with the power above anyone else to influence their subjects – that controls the complex established networks that make up the apparatus. At the same time regulation is fundamental in the apparatus and “without which it cannot function as an apparatus of governance, but rather reduced to a mere exercise of violence.”<sup>29</sup> As such, the state is tightly knit to the resolutions of the political leaders and the regulation of others.

The Taif Agreement established the current state apparatus by redistributing governmental representation to reflect the “new demographic and political realities,”<sup>30</sup> but it also man-

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<sup>25</sup>Christine Asmar, Maroun Kisirwani, and Robert Springborg, “Clash of politics or civilizations: Sectarianism among youth in Lebanon,” *Arab Studies Quarterly* 21, no. 4 (1999), 36.

<sup>26</sup>Leenders, *Spoils of Truce*, 140.

<sup>27</sup>Khalaf, *Civil and Uncivil Violence in Lebanon*, 262-3.

<sup>28</sup>Agamben, Giorgio. *What is an apparatus? And Other Essays* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009), 3.

<sup>29</sup>Agamben, *What is an apparatus*, 19.

<sup>30</sup>Salamey and Payne, “Parliamentary consociationalism in Lebanon.”

ifested a religious and sect-based system comprising patron-client relationships. Although the Taif Agreement formally reinstated similar structures as the National Pact of 1943,<sup>31</sup> substantive informal changes in the apparatus's characteristics resulted from the changing geopolitical realities and deep-seated inequalities within Lebanon.

The Taif Agreement further changed the confessional balance in the state. The National Pact – which emerged with Lebanon's independence from the French Mandate in 1943 – emphasised the role of Maronites, Sunnis and Druze among the 15 recognised communities, with 6:5 Christian-Muslim representation.<sup>32</sup> The Taif Agreement changed this system – granting Muslim leaders more power in government and creating equal representation between Christians and Muslims – which was set temporarily until a non-religious representative could be elected.<sup>33</sup> It shifted the executive power away from the Maronite President, placing it with the Council of Ministers (CoM) which is made up by different sects and the head of the council, the Sunni Prime Minister. At the same time, the Taif Agreement strengthened Parliamentary oversight over the CoM, empowering the Shi'a Speaker of Parliament. Among other powers, the CoM could no longer dissolve parliament and the Speaker could ignore bills from the CoM.<sup>34</sup> As such, the Sunni Prime Minister and Shi'a Speaker of Parliament came to enjoy a more equal power. This change in strategic function and the power relation thus created a tightly knit yet politically divided leadership. The political composition and contestation between political leaders transformed postwar politics. The modifications within the *apparatus* did not consider the changing geopolitical realities after the Iranian Revolution in 1979 and unresolved Shi'a grievances after the civil war. The increasing contestations

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<sup>31</sup>Bogaards, "Formal and informal consociational institutions," 36.

<sup>32</sup>Samir Kassir, *Beirut* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), 445.

<sup>33</sup>Constitute, *Lebanon's constitution of 1929 with amendments through 2004* (Oxford University Press, 2004), 6.

<sup>34</sup>See discussions in Salloukh, Barakat, Al-Habbal, Khattab, and Mikaelian, *Politics of Sectarianism*, 21-22; and Najem, *Lebanon*, 60-63.

between Sunni and Shi'a manifested with the end of the Syrian occupation of Lebanon and the assassination of Sunni Prime Minister Rafic Hariri in 2005.<sup>35</sup> The sectarian polarisation resulted in polarising cross-religious coalitions along the March 8<sup>th</sup> and March 14<sup>th</sup> alliances that emerged in 2005, representing the Shi'a and Sunni division, respectively.<sup>36</sup>

Notably while political alliances have changed since, sectarian polarisation has remained within the political leadership. The implications of this political system however is that the CoM has enjoyed considerable power, especially when the Future Movement (and the Hariri family) allies have been in power. Conversely, when power has been situated with Hezbollah and its allies, stalemates and contestation have emerged within the CoM, as seen later in this chapter with the waste management contracts in 2011 and 2015.

Political contestations change across space and time however. The aftermath of the Beirut Explosion and the compounding crisis have re-politicised the hostile relationship between predominantly Christian Lebanese Forces and Shi'a parties (Hezbollah and Amal Movement). In October 2021, protestors took to the streets of Beirut after Nabih Berri and Hassan Nasrallah – leaders of Amal Movement and Hezbollah respectively, – accused the leader of the Beirut investigation, Judge Tarek Bitar, of biases and singling out political leaders. The protest led to clashes in the neighbourhoods surrounding the courts and live ammunition being fired and killing six people. This was the deadliest clash in Beirut since 2008.<sup>37</sup> It caused further dispute between the groups, with Hezbollah and Amal Movement accusing the Lebanese Forces of starting the shooting. The 2022 election witnessed the continuation

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<sup>35</sup>Are J. Knudsen and Michael Kerr, *Lebanon: After the Cedar Revolution* (London: Hurst, 2012).

<sup>36</sup>At the time, March 8 included parties like Hezbollah (Shi'a), Amal (Shi'a), Free Patriotic Movement (Maronite), Tashnaq (Armenian Orthodox). March 14 included parties such as Future Movement (Sunni), Lebanese Forces (Maronite), Kataeb party (Maronite). March 8 and March 14 have been explored through various fault lines, pro-Syrian and anti-Syrian occupation, pro-Iranian and pro-Saudi Arabi, pro-Hezbollah and anti-Hezbollah.

<sup>37</sup>Martin Chulov, "Six dead as Beirut gripped by worst street violence in 13 years," Lebanon, the Guardian, October 14, 2021, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/oct/14/gunfire-beirut-protest-judge-leading-port-blast-inquiry>.

of this hostile relationship, as seen with Lebanese Forces' anti-Hezbollah rhetoric.<sup>38</sup> Instead of resolving divisions brought on by systematic marginalisation and the suppression of sectarian militias during the civil war, the Taif Agreement reinforced sectarianism and segregation between groups, establishing sovereignties. As such it provided little scope for peacebuilding, establishing a political system that reflected the competition and collusion between political leaders. Imad Salamey and Rhys Payne, noted that “[t]he sectarian blocks tend to focus less on addressing national needs and reform than on safeguarding their perspective share of the public pie with regard to one another.”<sup>39</sup>

Moreover, the redistribution of power has ensured that the *troika* – the President (Maronite), Prime Minister (Sunni), and Speaker of Parliament (Shi'a) – has the power to bypass the parliament and negotiate in private to get consensus and distribute the public pie.<sup>40</sup> This is exemplified through the distribution of public sector posts among the political leadership. The so-called ‘first grade positions’ are linked to *Article 95, section B* in the Constitution, stipulating equal distribution between Christians and Muslims.<sup>41</sup> In practice, this has been applied throughout the sector, contrary to the stipulations in the Taif Agreement, and posts are allocated on a sectarian basis. The allocation of public sector posts also means that political connections exceed technical knowledge with little transparency on how this is done. For example, Micael Aoun (the leader of the Free Patriotic Movement) nominated the position of the Minister of Energy and Water for his son-in-law Gibran Bassil in 2009.<sup>42</sup> In this way,

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<sup>38</sup>David Gritten, “Lebanon election: Hezbollah and allies lose parliamentary majority,” BBC, May 17, 2022, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-61463884>.

<sup>39</sup>Salamey and Payne, “Parliamentary consociationalism in Lebanon,” 467.

<sup>40</sup>Tarek Saad Ragab, “The crisis of cultural identity in rehabilitating historic Beirut-downtown,” *Cities* 28, no. 1 (2011), 108.

<sup>41</sup>See: Salloukh “Taif and the Lebanese state,” 44.

<sup>42</sup>In addition, Gibran Bassil has been sanctioned by the US government his role at the “forefront of corruption in Lebanon,” citing corruption during his time as Minister of Energy and Water. In: “Treasury targets corruption in Lebanon,” Press Release, U.S. Department of the Treasury, last modified November 6, 2020, <https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/sm1177>.

public sector posts have been distributed among the political leadership.

The sectarian division of the state apparatus has led to the distribution and parcelling up of the public sector through negotiations between political leaders. As argued by Ragab, “(w)hat is interesting about this bargain system is that the members of the Troika divided between themselves the state apparatus and each member became the major decision maker for his designated share of the state apparatus.”<sup>43</sup> In the security sector, for example, this includes Shi’a control over the Parliamentary Police, Sunni influence over the Lebanese Military Intelligence (LMI), and Maronite control over the Lebanese Armed Force (LAF).<sup>44</sup> This is exemplified in reconstruction through Sunni control over the Council for Development and Reconstruction (CDR), Druze control over the Ministry of the Displaced (MoD), and Shi’a authority over the Council of the South (COS).<sup>45</sup> Yet, this system has also facilitated “frequent and quite bitter instances of deadlock among the Troika members.”<sup>46</sup> This is exemplified through the distribution of government contracts, such as SWM – which caused the prolonged and extensive waste accumulation in 2015 before later being divided among patrons of the political leadership. The extensive division of public sector posts and contracts has manifested sectarian differences in the political system and corruption. In addition, the distribution of the public pie has manifested a political system in which “sovereignties may exist within sovereignties”,<sup>47</sup> which in Lebanon is illustrated by how political leaders are nested within the postwar politics of the Taif Agreement.

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<sup>43</sup>Ragab, “The crisis of cultural identity,” 108.

<sup>44</sup>Emphasis on the distinction between the party LF and the forces LAF. See: Geha, “Co-optation, counter-narratives, and repression,” 27.

<sup>45</sup>See discussion in Salloukh, Barakat, Al-Habbal, Khattab, and Mikaelian, *Politics of Sectarianism in Postwar Lebanon*, 45-46.

<sup>46</sup>Najem, *Lebanon*, 63.

<sup>47</sup>Simpson, *Mohawk Interruptus*, 10.



### 2.1.1.2 THE ORDERING OF WASTE

Nested sovereignties have had a major role in shaping waste in Beirut. A series of political leaders are involved in SWM in Beirut, nesting in a series of central authorities that shape service provision. Relationships between agents are often complex, shaped by indistinct roles, disagreements, and competition that has changed across space and time. The system has hindered functional and sustainable waste management, leading to policy analysis emphasising “poor governance” and “political indecisions”.<sup>48</sup> As is explored in this section, this analysis is often unhelpful as members of the political leadership take distinct measures to manipulate waste structures thereby controlling people and urban spaces.

**CENTRAL AUTHORITIES** The primary organisation of waste takes place at the central levels of government, which for over two decades bypassed *Decree No.118*, 1977 which stipulated the role of local authorities in organising waste. The postwar centralisation of waste politics was shaped by the political leadership and attempts to get a slice of the public pie. These struggles have taken shape within arenas including the CoM and the CDR while minimising the role of authorities such as the Ministry of the Environment (MoE). The aftermath of the 2015 Waste Crisis has seen efforts to decentralise this system, yet the system persists due to the delay in implementing new *Integrated Solid Waste Management Law No.80*, 2018 (ISWML).<sup>49</sup>

The ISWML called for the installation of two new institutions: the National Solid Waste Coordination Committee (NSWCC) and the National Solid Waste Management Authority

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<sup>48</sup>As seen in MOE/UNHCR/UNICEF/UNDP, *Lebanon State of the Environment and Future Outlook*, 359.

<sup>49</sup>Notably, the ISWML has been under extreme scrutiny. The Waste management Coalition argues: “it provides a skeleton of basic concepts and addresses practices that deal with the least favoured and most dangerous waste disposal options similarly and with relative laxity. [...] this could easily allow the adoption of less desirable solutions to solve only visible parts of the problem, while health, environmental, and economic concerns are ignored.” In Zeina Abla, “A Wasted Waste Law,” *The Lebanese Center for Policy Studies*, November 1, 2018, <https://www.lcps-lebanon.org/featuredArticle.php?id=191>.

(NSWMA), in charge of planning/coordination and implementation respectively. The former was suspended after the resignation of Saad Hariri in 2019 and the latter is yet to be established.<sup>50</sup> As a result, SWM continues to be shaped by the structures established after the civil war.

With increasing executive powers in postwar Lebanon, the CoM has acquired the ability to shape the politics of waste through decrees, especially during the escalation of the waste crises in 1997 and 2016 but also during contested matters such as the location of landfills. These powers include bypassing local authorities and granting other authorities' responsibility over SWM, such as the CDR in Beirut and Mount Lebanon (BML) and the Office for the Ministry of State for Administrative Reform (OMSAR), which operates outside of BML. As a result, clientelist structures were strengthened – such as the relationship between former prime minister Rafik Hariri and the leader of CDR – but with the implication that indistinct roles emerged between various institutions.<sup>51</sup> For example, the planning is shaped by MOE, CDR, and local initiatives; implementation is performed by CDR, OMSAR, and local initiatives, while mentoring is undertaken by MOE, CDR, OMSAR and local initiatives.<sup>52</sup> Through its executive powers, the CoM has established a political system that speaks to the sectarian power-sharing system and strengthens clientelism.

Notably, legal texts on SWM in Lebanon includes *laws* that are drafted and reviewed by the Parliamentary Committee for the Environment and ratified by parliament, and legal *decrees, decisions* and circulars that are issued by the CoM and the MoE (see Appendix 2). The legal frameworks on waste management in Lebanon go back to 1920, however most texts are

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<sup>50</sup>Jacob Boswall, *Lebanon: The State of Waste* (Beirut: Heinrich Boll Stiftung, 2019), 22-23, [https://lb.boell.org/sites/default/files/2019-12/lebanon\\_the\\_state\\_of\\_waste\\_1.pdf](https://lb.boell.org/sites/default/files/2019-12/lebanon_the_state_of_waste_1.pdf); MOE/UNHCR/UNICEF/UNDP, *Lebanon State of the Environment and Future Outlook*, 374-378.

<sup>51</sup>Leenders, *Spoils of Truce*.

<sup>52</sup>Local initiatives include municipality, Union of Municipalities (UOM) and private initiatives. See: MOE/UNHCR/UNICEF/UNDP, *Lebanon State of the Environment and Future Outlook*, 376.

described as “old and outdated” with little “modern environmental principles” or “up-to-date knowledge with respect to solid waste management services and technologies.”<sup>53</sup> Despite significant contestation in the Lebanese Parliament, a series of laws regarding environmental protection have been introduced including the *Integrated Solid Waste Management Law No. 80, 2018* (ISWML), the *Code of Water Law No. 77, 2018* and the *Air Quality Protection Law No. 78, 2018*.<sup>54</sup> Legal frameworks are also made by CoM and MoE when they are deemed necessary. The CoM play an active role as the executive body, but also in creating legal decrees thus blurring some of traditional separations of powers. For example “the CoM has the authority to approve a decree without the parliament being directly involved [...] Besides decrees, there are also ministerial decisions that require a single minister’s approval.”<sup>55</sup> The extensive power of the CoM has particularly impacted the structure, the management, and the control of waste, thereby impacting people and ecological systems through its increasing power after the Taif Agreement.

In postwar Lebanon, the CoM granted the CDR exceptional power and influence over the reconstruction of Beirut including the sweeping, collection, and landfilling of wastes in BML from 1994. The CDR was established by President Elias Sarkis and Prime Minister Salim al-Hoss through *Decree No.5, 1977* as a means to circumvent “both political disputes in the national institutions and the inefficiency of Lebanon’s bureaucracies.”<sup>56</sup> The original idea with the CDR was that its role would diminish as the municipalities re-established and

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<sup>53</sup>ELRAD with Envirotech and Tebodin, *Legal Framework for Solid Waste Management in Lebanon* (Lebanon: The World Bank, 2004), 21.

<sup>54</sup>Notably, these laws were a condition of the Conférence Economique Pour le Développement, par les Réformes et avec les Entreprises (CEDRE) programme, which was backed by foreign investors seeking to improve infrastructures in Lebanon. The programme failed due to the inability to implement all conditions. See: CDR, “Capital investment program: CEDRE,” 2018, <http://www.cdr.gov.lb/study/cedre/cedrelist.pdf>.

<sup>55</sup>Hana A. El-Ghali and Noor Baalbaki, *Perspectives on Policy-Making: Insights into the Role of the Parliament in Lebanon* (Beirut: Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs, 2017), 10, [https://scholarworks.aub.edu.lb/bitstream/handle/10938/21231/20161701\\_wfd.pdf?sequence=1](https://scholarworks.aub.edu.lb/bitstream/handle/10938/21231/20161701_wfd.pdf?sequence=1).

<sup>56</sup>Najem, *Lebanon*, 87.

became more robust; however, the institutional powers of the CDR manifested even after attempts to abolish the institution in the 1980s.<sup>57</sup> To this day, the CDR operates independently but is working directly with the CoM and the prime minister. Significantly, the CDR came under the control of Prime Minister Rafic Hariri (and his CoM) after the civil war – displaying the impact of nested sovereignties and its implications for central authorities. As explained by Hannes Baumann, “the billionaire contractor was looking for an institutional vehicle to control government spending on reconstruction. The CDR was to be this vehicle.”<sup>58</sup> On the 7th of December 1991 substantial amendments were made to Decree No.5 to facilitate reconstruction projects through Law 117 which authorised the establishment of real estate companies, like Solidere which Hariri himself partially invested in (see Chapter 4).<sup>59</sup> Hariri’s involvement displays how “sovereignties may exist within sovereignties” as CDR organised urban spaces in Beirut.

Waste legally became a part of the reconstruction agenda and new investments through *Decree No.5665*, 1994, which enabled the necessary funding for waste collection facilities and infrastructure during reconstruction. Through this process, the CDR initially awarded contracts to *Sukleen* for waste collection and sweeping (1994) and later to *Sukomi* for waste processing and landfilling (1998), both a part of the Averda Group (formerly the Sukkar Engineering Group).<sup>60</sup> *Sukleen* was initially awarded a three-year contract for waste collection in the Governate of Beirut only, with the CDR paying for the first year and the municipality of Beirut for the remaining years, however, when the contract was up for renewal the city council “gave in to heavy pressure from the CDR and agreed to the contract,” despite increasing costs and reports that the work could be made more effective following reorganisation of the

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<sup>57</sup>Tom Najem, “Horizon 2000: Economic viability and political realities,” *Mediterranean Politics* 3 no. 1 (1998), 40.

<sup>58</sup>Baumann, *Citizen Hariri*, 63.

<sup>59</sup>See discussion on Law 117 in Leenders, *Spoils of Truce*, 58-64.

<sup>60</sup>MOE/UNDP/ECODIT, *State and Trends of the Lebanese Environment*, 261-270.

sector.<sup>61</sup> The contracts awarded for SWM in Beirut continued largely unchanged until 2017; however, not without political contestation. The director of the CDR changed numerous times at the turn of the century but has remained almost unchanged since 2004 “which hampers the entry of firms connected to other elites.”<sup>62</sup> As explored throughout the subsequent chapters, the CoM and CDR organisation of waste have resulted in the ongoing waste crises that have implications for waste workers, waste exposed communities, and ecological systems.

The organisation of sweeping, collection, and landfilling are further facilitated through governmental agencies, such as Ministry of Labour (MoL) and MoE, that further enable the biopolitical machinery of waste and the implications for people and urban spaces. For example, before the escalation of the compounding crises in 2020, the waste sector in BML primarily employed migrant workers through the Kafala system from countries such as Bangladesh and India. Increasingly, this includes Syrian nationals working in the industry who are exposed to similar exploitative conditions since the start of the Syrian civil war in 2011.<sup>63</sup> The Kafala system is a deeply racialised system that has fostered the abuse of “low-skilled” migrant workers subjected to regulation. Through the inclusion of non-Lebanese workers in the Kafala system after the civil war, there is no longer a sense of clientelist obligation as the *other* remains outside of the sectarian system and with limited political rights.<sup>64</sup> The sectarian system also prevents the rights of migrant workers as “many Lebanese worry that granting more rights to migrant workers will be a precursor to extending citizenship, which could eventually alter the country’s demographic (and political) landscape.”<sup>65</sup> As such, the racialised Kafala

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<sup>61</sup>Leenders, *Spoils of Truce*, 34.

<sup>62</sup>Mounir Mahmalat, Sami Atallah, and Wassim Maktabi, *Public Infrastructure Procurement in Post-Conflict Power-Sharing Arrangements* (London: International Growth Centre, 2021), 19.

<sup>63</sup>See Chapter 3 and also for a discussion on Syrian nationals and the Kafala system: Saleh, “The master cockroach.”

<sup>64</sup>See in Ray Jureidini, “In the shadows of family life: Towards a history of domestic service in Lebanon,” *Journal of Middle East Women’s Studies* 5, no. 3 (2009), 74.

<sup>65</sup>Danger et al., *Cleaning up*, 3.

system is based on the demographic balance and apprehension between groups fostering a system of exploitation and marginalisation.

Furthermore, waste workers are subjected to regulations by the MoL and General Security which provides work permits and legal residency. These come at a high cost to the migrant workers, resulting in the collection of 15.3 and 25 million USD in permits in 2019 for the MoL and General Security respectively.<sup>66</sup> Echoing Pulido's writing on the US, the political leadership is "deeply invested in not solving the environmental racism gap because this would be too costly and disruptive to industry."<sup>67</sup> The Kafala system has established a system of inclusion through exclusion which benefits the political leadership at the cost of vulnerable waste workers.

As further explored in Chapter 3, waste workers also become legally tied to employer sponsorship – termination of the contract is complex and could lead to illegal status or detention.<sup>68</sup> This system further strengthens the power dynamics of the employers, which often have legal impunity for *labour law* violations such as exceeding the maximum working hours of 12 hours a day and withholding insurance.<sup>69</sup> Due to the lack of enforcement by the MoL – resulting from limited funding and lack of political backing to improve conditions for waste workers – the legal peculiarities of workers have ensured a system in which people are exposed to exploitation and marginalisation.

The lack of enforcement also shapes the MoE's ability to control the environmental implications of waste sector. The MoE has a mandate through *Law No.444, 2002*, which covers

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<sup>66</sup>Jonathan Danger, *Maze of Abuse: Lebanon's Cynical Violation of Blue Collar Migrants* (Beirut: Tringle, 2021).

<sup>67</sup>Pulido, "Geographies of race and ethnicity II," 529.

<sup>68</sup>See: Danger, Wood, and Boswall, *Cleaning up*; Danger, *Maze of Abuse*; and LEADERS, *The Labour Sector in Lebanon: Legal Frameworks, Challenges, and Opportunities* (2019), <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/69776>.

<sup>69</sup>LEADERS, *The Labour Sector in Lebanon*, 15.

“all policy oversight and guidance relating to environmental protection in Lebanon.”<sup>70</sup> However, challenges in effectively creating MoE decrees and enforcing these have been significant. The MoE was established following *Law No.216*, 1993 with only three staff members but have overall struggled with a series of obstacles including staff shortages and financial constraints. *Decree No.2275*, 2009 stipulates that 215 staff are needed in MoE in order to fulfil expected tasks, however, by 2017 the MoE has no more than 90.<sup>71</sup> Furthermore, the MoE budget is one of the lowest of the ministries in Lebanon and is insufficient to meet the demands of environmental governance in Lebanon. A recent United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) report notes that “MoE annual budget steadily increased during the period of 2010 until 2018, reaching LBP 14 Billion (USD 9.3 million) in 2017 and 2018 but decreased by 12.9% in 2019 to reach LBP 12.3 billion (USD 8.2 million) and LBP 8.9 billion in 2020 (less than USD 1 million at the current exchange market rate [in 2020]).”<sup>72</sup> This low budget highlights one of the largest obstacles in order to protect communities and ecological systems from waste. The low budget, along with the lack of staff is a further component in enabling the marginalisation of communities due to the unequal distribution of waste. Combined, they foster the unequal distribution of waste burdens on communities outside or marginalised within the sectarian power-sharing system – establishing sacrifice zones.<sup>73</sup> This is showcased by the exposure of Armenian residents with proximity to the Bourj Hammoud dump, as is explored later in this chapter.

The ordering of waste by central authorities is shaped by various calculations in mind, centred around the endurance and prosperity of establishment and the political leaders.

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<sup>70</sup>MOE/UNHCR/UNICEF/UNDP, *Lebanon State of the Environment and Future Outlook*, 23.

<sup>71</sup>Lamia Mansour, Manal Moussallem, and Ahmad Osman, *Support to reform – Environmental Governance, Beirut, Lebanon* (Hamburg: GFA Consulting Group GmbH, 2017), 7, [https://www.pseau.org/outils/ouvrages/ministry\\_of\\_environment\\_use\\_of\\_treated\\_wastewater\\_for\\_lebanon\\_2015.pdf](https://www.pseau.org/outils/ouvrages/ministry_of_environment_use_of_treated_wastewater_for_lebanon_2015.pdf).

<sup>72</sup>MOE/UNHCR/UNICEF/UNDP, *Lebanon State of the Environment and Future Outlook*, 24.

<sup>73</sup>See: Lerner, *Sacrifice zones*; Bullard, *Dumping in Dixie*.

Through high-value contracts, the exploitation of waste workers, and the distribution of waste burdens, the political leadership has facilitated a system shaped around clientelism and sectarian politics at the expense of people and ecological systems.

**LOCAL AUTHORITIES** The 2015 waste crisis prompted the decentralisation of SWM in BML. On the 9<sup>th</sup> of September 2015, the CoM approved a plan to decentralise SWM (*Decision No. 1*, 2015) and give back municipalities the authority to treat waste. It was done so, however, without discussing solutions to institutional, structural, and financial barriers.<sup>74</sup> This was later formalised in ISWML.

Other significant challenges with decentralisation are seen beyond BML – where SWM are organised by municipalities and UoM. Lebanon is comprised of approximately 1058 municipalities, which are responsible for organising public projects such as SWM according to *Decree No. 118*, 1977.<sup>75</sup> Due to the significant number, many of the municipalities are unable to perform their SWM duty. As noted in the regional administration and decentralisation report, “70% [of municipalities] have a registered population of less than 4000” and “almost 400 municipalities do not have a single employee”, thus posing a significant structural, administrative, and financial constraint on their ability to meet the needs of inhabitants.<sup>76</sup> Consequently, numerous municipalities have formed unions which themselves have become key stakeholders in enhancing public services. Unions “are better staffed and have more access to funds” to help municipalities provide public projects that benefit some or all members of that union through greater collaboration with “institutions, NGO’s and the public sector”.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>74</sup>“Lebanon rubbish crisis: Cabinet agrees to resume waste proposal,” News, BBC, last modified September 9, 2015, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-34203165>.

<sup>75</sup>Rising from 985 municipalities in 2012, see: Sami Atallah and Rania Abi-Habib, *The Role of Regional Administrations in the Context of Decentralization* (Beirut: The Lebanese Center for Policy Studies, 2012), [http://www.lcps-decentralization.com/files/refer/1347614622-the\\_role\\_of\\_regional\\_administrations.pdf](http://www.lcps-decentralization.com/files/refer/1347614622-the_role_of_regional_administrations.pdf).

<sup>76</sup>Atallah and Kallas, *The Role of Regional Administrations*, 4.

<sup>77</sup>UNESCO/UN-Habitat/AUB, *Inclusive and Sustainable Cities; Municipalities Good Practices in Lebanon*



Nevertheless, overlapping responsibilities have resulted in conflicts between municipalities and UoM.<sup>78</sup> As such, post-2015 decentralisation of SWM carries a series of constraints, including financial and organisational challenges, as seen across Lebanon.

Municipalities and UoM have historically had a limited role in BML due to CDR control compared to other parts of Lebanon. However, in 2015 protestors were demanding the restoration of municipal control. Studying local impacts of the crisis, Hannah Leonardsson found that the municipality of Bourj Hammoud were “confronted by the public expectation that they solve an issue the national government had removed from their list of responsibility.”<sup>79</sup> Despite lacking the authority to do so, the municipality took action to resolve the local crisis. Yet, Leonardsson concludes that “the lack of municipal autonomy and resources to handle waste, the municipal solution to the waste crisis was no better than previous solutions, creating a local landfill for the municipality’s waste.”<sup>80</sup> This further highlight that the overlapping levels of responsibilities, financial constraints, and lack of technical knowledge remain significant challenges in SWM in BML.

Before 2015 SWM was funded directly from the Independent Municipal Fund, an independent trust established by the government. However, as noted in a recent report municipal and UoM resources are irregular, low and heavily reliant on four primary sources – local taxes, the Independent Municipal Fund, telecommunications and the banking sector.<sup>81</sup> This results in the SWM payments being automatically deducted from the local allocation of the Independent Municipal Fund by 40 per cent each year.<sup>82</sup> The automatic deduction was heavily critiqued as municipalities and UoM had no control over the funds or the service pro-

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(Beirut: 2017), 14.

<sup>78</sup>Atallah and Kallas, *The Role of Regional Administrations* 7.

<sup>79</sup>Hanna Leonardsson, “Vertical relationships and local peacebuilding in Lebanon: The case of responsive waste management,” *Journal of Peacebuilding and Development* 15, no. 2 (2020), 227.

<sup>80</sup>Leonardsson, “Vertical Relationships,” 227.

<sup>81</sup>Atallah and Kallas, *The Role of Regional Administrations*.

<sup>82</sup>ibid, 15

vision. Today, SWM contracts are paid for directly through municipality funds, rather than the Independent Municipal Fund. While most contracts are still issued by the CDR, they do so in greater collaboration and with direct payments from municipalities. However, as noted by Fouad Gehad Marei in 2019, only 70% of municipalities in Mount Lebanon were involved in SWM, with just 18% managing their own waste, compared to national averages of 87% and 46%, respectively. Moreover, in 5% of Mount Lebanon the CDR is the main “entity for managing solid waste.”<sup>83</sup> With the economic crisis, decentralisation continues to be absent with minor exceptions.

Noteworthy, the Municipality of Beirut in 2018, independently of the CDR, agreed to a contract for waste collection and installation of bins with RAMCO worth USD 70 million over five years with a possible extension over two years – paid with municipal funds.<sup>84</sup> The remaining areas of the former BML was in 2017 divided into two service areas in BML north (Maten and Kesserwan) and south (Baabda, Chouf and Aley), with contracts still issued from the CDR by RAMCO and City Blu, respectively (see Appendix 3).

The financial status of local authorities creates additional challenges for SWM. The central government can spend Independent Municipal Fund revenues and CoM has the power to change the distribution and timings of the transfers. In addition, allowances are several years behind with municipalities and UoM struggling to pay during the ongoing financial crisis.<sup>85</sup> Consequently, local authorities have been tasked with the responsibility of SWM at

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<sup>83</sup>Fouad Gehad Marei, *Are Municipalities in Lebanon Delivering? Survey Results on Solid Waste Management, Public Safety, and Citizen Outreach at the Local Level* (Democracy Reporting International, 2019), 14, <https://beta.democracy-reporting.org/en/office/lebanon/publications/survey-results-are-municipalities-in-lebanon-delivering>.

<sup>84</sup>Frederica Marsi, “Ramco to Collect Beirut Municipal Waste,” *The Daily Star*, 16 October, 2017, <https://www.pressreader.com/lebanon/the-daily-star-lebanon/20170916/281556585996169>.

<sup>85</sup>“Waste Collection Company Ramco Asks State to Launch Tender for Its Replacement,” *L’Orient Today*, December 1, 2021, <https://today.lorientlejour.com/article/1283342/waste-collection-company-ramco-asks-state-to-launch-tender-for-its-replacement.html>; Mansour, Moussallem, and Osman, *Support to Reforms*, 23.

a time when there is little money available to do complete decentralisation reforms. Since the start of the crisis, the companies responsible for collection have intermittently stopped collection due to the financial losses incurred by payments in the devalued Lebanese Lira. Although waste collection often resumes shortly after, the financial crisis is making it increasingly difficult for municipalities and UoM to fulfil their payment obligations for contracts, further hindering system decentralisation.<sup>86</sup>

Furthermore, the ISWML stipulated administrative decentralisation by legally delegating key service provision to municipalities and unions of municipalities. It is also included in *Article 9* of the ISWML, which states that the system does not exclude the role of central authority and emphasises that central authority can step in when local authorities fail and that they continue to “ensure the efficient allocation of resources through the implementation of central projects where necessary.”<sup>87</sup> As a result, it is likely that municipalities will get involved in simple tasks such as waste collection and sometimes treatment and sorting, whilst central government and the CDR may take on large-scale projects such as landfilling. This undermines the process of decentralisation, providing the political leadership with a way to regain access to high-value contracts without the legal responsibility.

The municipalities also lack technical guidance and sufficient institutional frameworks of SWM to take on circular waste solutions. These initiatives often rely on interventions by mayors, civil society and private initiatives rather than collaboration with central government agencies or specialised units.<sup>88</sup> In this context, a recent report identifies the emergence of

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<sup>86</sup>“Lebanon’s Environment and Interior Ministers Discussed ‘Possible Solution’ to Garbage Collection Impasse,” *L’Orient Today*, December 3, 2021, <https://today.lorientlejour.com/article/1283594/lebanons-environment-and-interior-ministers-discussed-possible-solution-to-garbage-collection-impasse.html>.

<sup>87</sup>Law Number 80: Integrated Solid Waste Management, [https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/supporting\\_resources/iswm\\_law\\_80\\_october2018\\_english.pdf](https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/supporting_resources/iswm_law_80_october2018_english.pdf)

<sup>88</sup>Marei, *Are Municipalities in Lebanon Delivering?*, 2; Elias Azzi, “Waste Management Systems in Lebanon: The Benefits of a Waste Crisis for Improvement of Practices,” (KTH Royal Institute of Technology, 2017), 40, <https://kth.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:1139992/FULLTEXT01.pdf>.

*new waste capitalism* since 2015 that includes “complex technologies and treatments methods” that have led to “ambitious expenditures” and an inability to sustain current projects due to “financial and operational” obstacles.<sup>89</sup> In this way, unsupported and unregulated decentralisation will likely lead to new challenges for Municipalities.

The sectarian power-sharing system has enabled central authorities to control and organise SWM in a way that strengthens the power of the political leaders. Although legal decentralisation is taking place, the political structures remain through the financial and technical restraints experienced by municipalities during the ongoing economic crisis. As such, the “deliberate depression” and “economic coercion” is not only impacting people and the Thawra Movement, but also limiting municipalities and decentralisation efforts which would weaken the political leadership.

## 2.2 FORMAL POWER STRUCTURES

Despite political contestations and competition the political leadership has manifested itself as a collective force that together makes up the political establishment, facilitated through various formalised structures. According to Agamben, sovereign power is derived from “he who decides on the exception.”<sup>90</sup> In Lebanon, the political leadership decides on the exception(s) and the suspension of the judicial order through the utilisation of the *apparatus*. The permanent state of exception is best described by the “motto of Taif – No Victor, no vanquished.”<sup>91</sup> After the civil war, Nagle argues that the state of exception was deployed by the former warlords through Law 84 (passed in 1991), thus creating a system of state amnesia where 8000 militia fighters were integrated into the state apparatus.<sup>92</sup> Although the general

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<sup>89</sup>Jihad Farah, Rasha Ghaddar, Elie Nasr, Rita Nasr, Hanan Wehbe, and Eric Verdeil, *Solid Waste Management in Lebanon: Lessons for Decentralisation* (Democracy Reporting International, 2019), 1.

<sup>90</sup>Agamben, *State of Exception*, 1.

<sup>91</sup>Nagle “The biopolitics of victim construction,” 10.

<sup>92</sup>ibid

amnesty acquitted crimes of “a political nature”, including large-scale crimes against humanity, it excluded assassination attempts on religious figures, political leaders and diplomats,<sup>93</sup> thereby protecting “the lives of leaders but not the victims of their crimes. The accountability of leaders for their mass crimes, it was argued, risked political instability.”<sup>94</sup> The Taif Agreement embedded a new sectarian dimension, safeguarding the political leadership from prosecution.

General amnesty has been granted several times since Lebanon’s independence. Amnesty is issued through the president, who can issue individual *pardons*, or the parliament, which can give general amnesty to groups of people. According to Muhamad Mugarby, general amnesty has become a regularity and is more than a “one-time exception to the rule.”<sup>95</sup> Between 1949 and 2005, general amnesty was issued to seven groups of people for reasons ranging from drug-related crimes to crimes of political nature and acts of rebellion.<sup>96</sup> The latter includes the general amnesty in 1991, which was widely criticised and described by the Human Rights Committee in 1996 to be preventing “the appropriate investigation and punishment of the perpetrators of past human rights violations, undermine efforts to establish respect for human rights and constitute an impediment to efforts undertaken to consolidate democracy.”<sup>97</sup> As such, exceptional politics has become ingrained within the state apparatus. What makes the general amnesty exceptional as a permanent state of emergency is the continuation and scale, which allowed for the survival of the political leadership.

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<sup>93</sup>Iolanda Jaquemet, “Fighting amnesia: Ways to uncover the truth about Lebanon’s missing,” *International Journal of Transitional Justice* 3, no. 1 (2009), 73.

<sup>94</sup>Michael Humphery, “The special tribunal for Lebanon: emergency law, trauma and justice,” *Arab Studies Quarterly* 33, no. 1 (2011), 17.

<sup>95</sup>Muhamad Mugarby, “The syndrome of one-time exceptions and the drive to establish the proposed Hariri court,” *Mediterranean Politics* 13, no. 2 (2008), 171.

<sup>96</sup>For a full list of general amnesties between 1949-2005 – see Mugarby, “The syndrome of one-time exceptions,” 176-77.

<sup>97</sup>Amnesty International, *Lebanon: Human Rights Developments and Violations* (1997), <https://www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/164000/mde180191997en.pdf>.

Amid the protests in 2019, parliament attempted to discuss a new amnesty law which would allow politicians to escape prosecution for corruption, and the possibility of establishing a separate court for financial crimes.<sup>98</sup> However, the session was postponed after protestors blocked the entrance to the Lebanese parliament.<sup>99</sup> A step forward, the impact by movement activists displayed the political shift after the Arab Uprising which was further represented in the 2022 Elections with the increasing numbers of independent candidates seeking political change. However, the amnesty law displays continuous efforts by the political leadership to safeguard the establishment.

Amnesty laws are only one way in which the political leadership formally manifests its power however. The economic crisis has highlighted how political leaders have enriched themselves whilst passing on the cost to inhabitants. For over three years, the economic crisis has caused the extreme rise in poverty. It has been labelled one of the most severe financial crises in the world since the mid-1800s.<sup>100</sup> The crisis is deeply connected with the political leadership. The World Bank emphasises the role of the state, arguing that the economic crisis is

“a result of (i) a lack of political consensus over effective policy measures; and (ii) political consensus in defense of a bankrupt economic system, which benefited a few for so long. While social pain was inevitable with the bursting of the bubble, it has been unnecessarily painful: triple digit inflation rates; hoarding of essential goods; comprehensive power supply blackouts and water supply

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<sup>98</sup>Aya Majzoub, “Problematic bills on Lebanon parliament’s agenda: The two bills should amended or withdrawn,” Human Rights Watch, November 19, 2019, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2019/11/19/problematic-bills-lebanon-parliaments-agenda>.

<sup>99</sup>Leila Molana-Allen, “Protestors celebrate as Lebanon parliament session postponed,” Aljazeera, November 19, 2019, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/11/19/protesters-celebrate-as-lebanon-parliament-session-postponed>.

<sup>100</sup>World Bank, *Lebanon Public Finance Review: Ponzi Finance?* (Washington: World Bank, 2022), 2, <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/0d0ca056-f041-5a8f-95f5-276225248b7e/content>.

shortages across the country; collapse of education, health, and other basic services.”<sup>101</sup>

Going one step further Mansour and Khatib explored the crisis in the context of the Thwara movement, arguing that the economic deterioration was part of “a new tactic: *economic coercion* [italics in original],” resulting in “concerns about political rights and the social contract” being overridden “by concerns about individual livelihoods, with the consequence that protests dwindled in size all over the country.”<sup>102</sup> As such, the economic crisis became an informal tool to control and regulate inhabitants, but it is also rooted within legal frameworks in Lebanon.

At the centre of this Lebanon’s Banking Secrecy Law, which has been in place since 1956, which has been worked to consolidate power around structures such as corruption, clientelism, and tax evasion. As such, the Banking Secrecy Law is just another exception that facilitates the power of the political leadership. Seen as a critical obstacle to recovery and financial stability, the IMF made the amendment to the law a prerequisite of the financial rescue programme in 2022.<sup>103</sup> Before leaving office, President Aoun approved an amended law which, according to critics, was formulated to limit the impact of the changes.<sup>104</sup> For example, the law only provides access to judges during trials but not prosecutors and investigating judges, and any violation of the banking secrecy laws remains punishable by law that could lead to prison.<sup>105</sup> In essence, this means that banking secrecy prevails without sub-

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<sup>101</sup>World Bank, *Lebanon Public Finance Review: Ponzi Finance*, 2.

<sup>102</sup>Renad Mansour and Lina Khatib, Where is the ‘state’ in Iraq and Lebanon: Power relations and social control,” *Middle East and North Africa Programme*, Research Paper (2021) 26, <https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/default/files/2021-04/2021-04-21-where-is-the-state-iraq-lebanon-mansour-khatib.pdf>.

<sup>103</sup>“IMF chief says Lebanon hasn’t implemented prior actions for financing programme,” Finance, Reuters, last modified, October 13, 2022, <https://www.reuters.com/business/finance/imf-chief-says-lebanon-hasnt-implemented-prior-actions-financing-programme-2022-10-13/>.

<sup>104</sup>“Lebanon banking secrecy law retains problems – IMF,” Middle East, Reuters, last modified September 1, 2022, <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/imf-says-key-deficiencies-remain-lebanon-banking-secrecy-law-assessment-seen-by-2022-09-01/>.

<sup>105</sup>Kulluna Irada, “Banking secrecy: A round is won, but the shift has not taken place,” Opinion, Lori-

stantial change, further enabling the political system and economic decline. Moreover, the economic crisis displays the constellation of informal (bank-political leadership relationship) and formal (Banking Secrecy Law) forces, which persist amid calls for change.

Beyond “the deliberate depression”,<sup>106</sup> formalised systems of repression have been utilised to regulate and control resistance to the sectarian system. As noted by Carmen Geha, repression “has roots in the era of Syrian tutelage, when violent attacks on protestors and local opposition were common.”<sup>107</sup> Since 2005, the repression of movement activists has been shaped by direct violence and arrests. A Legal Agenda report on the Thawra Movement found that Lebanese authorities “weaponised criminal law and powers of detention to suppress the popular uprising [...] these efforts sought to break people’s will to protest, and to discourage them from exercising their rights to engage in civil disobedience.”<sup>108</sup> The report further emphasised how arrests were made by the LAF and the Internal Security Forces (ISF) in the categories of: obstructing freedom of movement, resisting security forces, vandalism (of for example banks and governmental buildings), and critiquing public officials.<sup>109</sup> The establishment has utilised the arrest and criminalisation of movement activists to control political life and ensure its survival.

In recent years, Lebanon’s defamation laws have particularly been used against journalists and movement activists, who could face one year in prison for defamation against public officials and two years for the president or flag.<sup>110</sup> The increasing use of the defamation laws

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ent Today, November 8, 2022, <https://today.lorientlejour.com/article/1317347/banking-secrecy-around-is-won-but-the-shift-has-not-taken-place.html>.

<sup>106</sup>World Bank, *Lebanon Economic Monitor, Fall 2020: The Deliberate Depression* (Washington: World Bank, 2020).

<sup>107</sup>Geha, “Co-optation, counter-narratives, and repression,” 27.

<sup>108</sup>Ghida Frangieh, Nour Haidar, and Sarah Wansa, “How Lebanese authorities weaponized arrests to suppress the right to protest,” *The Legal Agenda*, June 3, 2021, <https://english.legal-agenda.com/how-lebanese-authorities-weaponized-arrests-to-suppress-the-right-to-protest/>.

<sup>109</sup>Frangieh, Haidar, and Wansa, “How Lebanese authorities weaponized arrests.”

<sup>110</sup>Human Rights Watch, “*There is a Price to Pay*”: *The Criminalization of Peaceful Speech in Lebanon* (United States of America: Human Rights Watch, 2019), 2, [https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/report\\_](https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/report_)



has had a severe impact on free speech in Lebanon and is used as a strategy of intimidation, with the ISF investigating over 3 599 cases relating to “defamation, libel, and slander” between January 2015 and May 2019.<sup>111</sup> After the start of the Thawra Movement these investigations increased, including the detention and integration of 18 children on two separate occasions between October 2019 and March 2020 “for tearing down posters of politicians and the president.”<sup>112</sup> Defamation laws are another way the political leadership seeks to regulate political life amid political change.

These strategies continued even after the mass demonstrations in 2019, for example, through the arrest and questioning of the family members of victims of the 2020 Beirut Explosion. In January 2023, 13 people were arrested for throwing rocks and burning tyres outside the Beirut Justice Building;<sup>113</sup> notably due to the slow investigation into the explosion stopped in October 2021 amid contestation in the political leadership. Evidence largely displayed that senior political leaders had knowledge about the unsafe storage of ammonium nitrate which cause the explosion,<sup>114</sup> although the formal investigation of the explosion and holding officials accountable has been blocked multiple times since.<sup>115</sup> Criminalisation has been a part of the broader network of legal frameworks, such as the Amnesty Law and Banking Secrecy Law, which have ensured the endurance, thriving, and survival of the establishment.

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pdf/lebanon1119\_web.pdf.

<sup>111</sup>Human Rights Watch, “*There is a Price to Pay*”, 2.

<sup>112</sup>“Lebanon: Spate of free speech prosecutions,” Human Rights Watch, last modified Mach 12, 2020, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/03/12/lebanon-spate-free-speech-prosecutions>.

<sup>113</sup>“Lebanon blast relatives questioned by police after protest ,” News, Aljazeera, last modified January 16, 2023,

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/1/16/lebanon-blast-relatives-questioned-by-police-after-protest>.

<sup>114</sup>“Lebanon: Evidence implicates officials in Beirut blast,” Human Rights Watch, August 7 2021, <https://www.hrw.org/video-photos/interactive/2021/08/02/lebanon-evidence-implicates-officials-beirut-blast-targeted>.

<sup>115</sup>“Infographic: How big was the Beirut explosion?” Aljazeera, News, August 4, 2022, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/8/4/infographic-how-big-was-the-beirut-explosion>.

### 2.2.1 FORMAL WASTE STRUCTURES

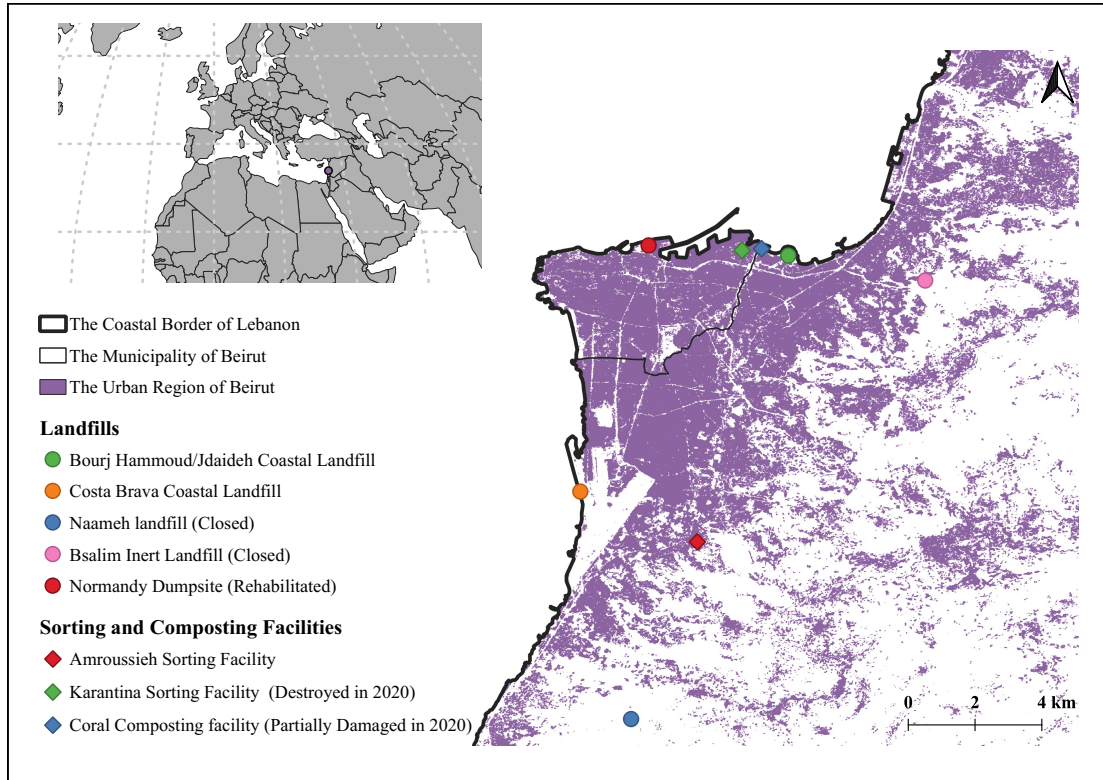
SWM is a further critical example of how formal power structures, especially their use of legal frameworks, have been used to regulate and control people and the environment (as seen in Table 2.1). Since 1997, SWM has been under CoM emergency legislation. However, more than 25 years of extended measures echoes a space of exception where normal laws do not apply. The CoM has gained the ability to decide – through decisions and decrees – what people and urban spaces are subjected to hostile environments created by waste.

**Table 2.1:** Selected Legal Frameworks on Waste

<b>Legal Text, No.</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Description</b>
CoM, Decree No. 118	30th of June 1977	Municipal Law – holds local authorities responsible for municipal waste collection and disposal.
CoM Decree No. 5665	21st of March 1994	Approves the funding of execution of the reconstruction of BCD, including the necessary waste collection facilities and infrastructures.
CoM Decision No. 58	2nd of January 1997	Emergency legislation for the waste crisis in BML.
CoM Decision No.1	12th of March 2016	Emergency decision to establish temporary landfills in Bourj Ham-moud/Jdeideh, Ghadir and a third landfill serving Alley and Chouf. The latter never being implemented, the current wastes being received in Ghadir landfill.

In Beirut, spaces of exception originated from the aftermath of the civil war and the inclusion of necessary waste infrastructures into reconstruction processes (see Map 2.1). As noted by various scholars, the reconstruction of Beirut focused on the Beirut Central District (BCD) – a space of luxury real estate developments and high-end consumption to en-

rich the political leadership – thereby excluding most of the urban region.<sup>116</sup> SWM echoed these processes by establishing sacrifice zones to benefit the reconstruction of BCD.



Map 2.1: Urban Region and Key Waste Management Sites in 2023

During the civil war, two main dumping sites developed: Normandy (BCD) and Bourj Hammoud. The reconstruction of the BCD included the land reclamation of the Normandy dump, which resulted in more waste piling up at the Bourj Hammoud site. As explained in a policy report, the dump was “taking the shape of a mountain in the middle of the sea” and had “reached 650 meters in length, 350 meters in width and 72 meters in height. Its estimated volume was 5 million cubic meters made up by 40% municipal waste and 60% con-

<sup>116</sup>J. Sakr-Tierney, “Real estate, banking and war: The construction and reconstruction of Beirut” *Cities* 69 (2017); Daniel Genberg, “Borders and boundaries in post-war Beirut,” in *Urban Ethnic Encounters: The Spatial Consequences*, eds. Freek Colombijn and Aygen Erdentug (London: Routledge, 2002); and Graig Larkin, *Memory and Conflict in Lebanon: Remembering and Forgetting the Past* (Oxon: Routledge, 2012).

struction waste.”<sup>117</sup> The unequal reconstruction and the disproportionate accumulation of waste in the northern suburbs led to protests by residents (primarily Armenian) demanding change.<sup>118</sup> The waste crisis that unfolded led to greater and more direct involvement by the central government in SWM. The ‘emergency plan’ for SWM was created by former Minister of Environment Akram Chehayeb and ratified through COM *Decision No.58, 1997* and provided the SWM framework for BML excluding Jbel.<sup>119</sup> This emergency plan would last almost two decades and marks the systemic regulation of SWM, including landfills and waste collection measures, that benefited the political leadership at the cost of the quality of life for residents and waste workers.

Initially, emergency measures for SWM in BML included refurbishing two non-functioning incineration plants in Amroussieh and Karantina, located in the southern and northern suburbs, respectively. However, protests from nearby residents who were concerned about the impact of these plants on their health and the environment caused delays and eventually led to the closure of the Kaarantina incinerator and the abandonment of the Amroussieh project after the MoE banned incineration in 1997.<sup>120</sup> Waste was then diverted to a site along the Maramel/Airport Road as a temporary solution, accumulating waste on streets in the southern suburbs.<sup>121</sup> Between the waste mountain and the old incinerators, the protests by the inhabitants in the northern and southern suburbs challenged the postwar reconstruction ethos focusing on BCD, resulting in a political crisis.

In August 1997, the Naameh site, located 16 km south of Beirut, was chosen as the emer-

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<sup>117</sup>Nazih El Jor, *Policies and Institutional Assessment of Solid Waste Management in Lebanon* (Blue Plan regional Activity Centre, 2000), 40, <https://planbleu.org/wp-content/uploads/2000/12/waste1bn.pdf>.

<sup>118</sup>El Jor, *Policies and Institutional*, 40.

<sup>119</sup>MOE/UNDP/ECODIT, *State and Trends of the Lebanese Environment*, 273.

<sup>120</sup>El Jor, *Policies and Institutional*, 25.

<sup>121</sup>Joelle Boutros, “Garbage Crisis in Lebanon – 1997: Same Policy, Repeated History,” *The Legal Agenda*, last modified October 16, 2015, <https://english.legal-agenda.com/garbage-crisis-in-lebanon-1997-same-policy-repeated-history/>.

gency landfilling site for BML despite protests from residents. The so-called waste emergency measures included: sorting facilities in Karantina and Amroussieh, composting at the Coral facility, temporary storage of bulky items at a site next to the Bourj Hammoud site, disposal of SWM at Naameh and the disposal of inert and bulky items at Bsalim landfill. In real terms, however, the plan only amounted to two changes: the service expansion by Sukleen into Mount Lebanon and the establishment of Naameh landfill – Beirut’s only sanitary landfill until 2016. Through emergency legislation by the CoM, the waste crisis was relocated from Beirut’s suburbs – and their proximity to the reconstruction of BCD – to Naameh, increasing the distance between the accumulation of waste and the BCD. As noted by Bauman: “Waste is the dark, shameful secret of all production. Preferably it would remain a secret.”<sup>122</sup> Despite protests from residents around Naameh the landfill remained ‘out of sight’ for the political leadership and inhabitants of Beirut enabling the survival of the establishment.

Naameh landfill reached its initial planned capacity in 2001 and was expanded several times while awaiting a new national waste strategy.<sup>123</sup> Landfilling has always been a controversial issue in Lebanon however due to sectarian politics and territorialisation, as well as public opposition to site selection due to previous experience with unregulated dumpsites. For example, a master plan for waste management across Lebanon was drafted by the MoE and CDR in 2005, but the plan was never implemented due to the lack of environmental impact assessment clearance and “objections from some communities regarding foreseen site locations.”<sup>124</sup> Despite subsequent efforts to develop new national waste strategies, including plans for waste incineration in 2010 and a new national plan in 2013, decisions were never implemented due to pressure from groups including Saad Hariri and CDR networks.<sup>125</sup> Sec-

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<sup>122</sup>Bauman, *Wasted Lives*, 27.

<sup>123</sup>MOE/UNDP/ECODIT, *State and Trends of the Lebanese Environment*, 277.

<sup>124</sup>Mansour, Moussallem, and Osman, *Support to Reforms*, 12.

<sup>125</sup>ibid, 12-16.

tarian politics thus effectively prevented a new strategy, establishing Naameh landfill as the region's sacrifice zone and its inhabitants as disposable to the state apparatus – until 2015.

In the summer of 2015, coinciding with the end of Sukleen's contract for waste collection, residents and activists blocked the road to the Naameh landfill due to disagreements in the political leadership around the sectarian distribution of high-value contracts.<sup>126</sup> Waste remained on the streets in BML through the hot summer months, leading to large-scale demonstrations between August and September demanding that the crisis should be resolved and calling for accountability. The long-term crisis that the political leadership had brought about created – what Smith argued – “*the latest and the most comprehensive justification for a political state of emergency*” (Italics in original).<sup>127</sup> Protestors were met with excessive force by security forces, using direct violence such as rubber bullets, tear gas and water cannons.<sup>128</sup> Furthermore, “politicians united in portraying the protestors as a danger to civil peace. The counter-narrative was conveyed as a threat that continued mobilization would destabilize Lebanon's security.”<sup>129</sup> In the name of national security the political leadership ignored protesters demands. Waste remained on the streets until a consensus was formed between political leaders, leading to renewed contracts with Sukleen in the Beirut for an extended period while a new bidding process took place. The protests ultimately ended with violent repression and a strategy of ignoring the movements demands. As explained by Stephen Deets, the movement

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<sup>126</sup>“Naameh landfill closure deadline expires, protestors stage sit-in,” Conflict Incident Report, Civil Society Knowledge Centre, accessed March 15, 2021, <https://civilsociety-centre.org/sir/naameh-landfill-closure-deadline-expires-protestors-stage-sit>; Karim Mostafa, “Something is rotten in the state of Lebanon,” Aljazeera, July 28, 2015, <https://www.aljazeera.com/gallery/2015/7/28/something-is-rotten-in-the-state-of-lebanon>.

<sup>127</sup>Smith, *Against Ecological Sovereignty*, xvi.

<sup>128</sup>“Lebanon: Security forces using excessive force against protestors must be held to account,” Amnesty International, August 29, 2015, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2015/08/lebanon-security-forces-using-excessive-force-against-protestors-must-be-held-to-account/>.

<sup>129</sup>Geha, “Politics of a Garbage Crisis,” 86.

“failed because the protestors had no credible leverage over the politicians and many protestors themselves came to believe that they were wasting their time. Despite collective frames, identity as urban citizens, and cross-sectarian networks, there was no way to effectively sanction the political elite short of more revolutionary action, an option that had virtually no support, and so the state did not respond.”<sup>130</sup>

Like recent notes on the “deliberate depression” and “economic coercion”;<sup>131</sup> the political leadership facilitated the conditions and the longevity of the 2015 waste crisis, outlasting the movement activists but also exposing people and ecological systems to uncontrolled waste flows. As further explored at the end of Chapter 3, political life was stripped from movement activists through formal and informal strategies by the political leadership.

The spaces of exception that were carved out in 1997 continued with superficial structural changes, leading to devastating impacts for people and the environment. In March 2016 the CoM established two ‘temporary’ coastal landfills in Bourj Hammoud/Jdeideh and Costa Brava. These are all currently under expansion having already reached their planned capacity in 2018. All landfills are temporary spaces that need monitoring and improvements. This is a challenge for governments globally. Coastal landfills are particularly problematic as they are exposed to flooding and erosion – exacerbated by sea level rise and climate change – which could lead the release of liquids and materials.<sup>132</sup> The mismanagement of coastal landfills then has disastrous effects for people and ecological systems, rendering the places sacrifice zones as explored in Chapter 4. In addition, the coastal landfills reinstated the marginalisation of the communities in the eastern and southern suburbs that had previously been exposed to the mismanagement of waste in 1997. As such, formal power structures – especially CoM

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<sup>130</sup>Deets, “Consociationalism, Clientelism, and Local Politics,” 145.

<sup>131</sup>World Bank, *Lebanon Economic Monitor*; and Mansour and Khatib, *Where is the ‘state’*, 26.

<sup>132</sup>Nicholls et al., “Coastal Landfills and Rising sea levels.”

decisions and decrees – continues to control and organise waste, rendering people and ecological systems disposable to the state.

### 2.3 INFORMAL POWER STRUCTURES

In addition to legal frameworks, the political leadership regulates and controls using informal structures. This process is facilitated by *wasta* – ‘if I help you, then you are obliged to help me later’.<sup>133</sup> Historically, *wasta* was used as a substitute for governmental institutions and to maintain social networks and patron-client relationships.<sup>134</sup> After the civil war however, these mechanisms morphed into structures controlled and maintained by the political leadership and shaped through patron-client networks. Political leaders increase their political power and gain financially through the distribution of government contracts and public sector posts. As a part of the postwar structures, Bassel F. Salloukh argues “a more balanced consociational power-sharing agreement led to a bigger, more clientelist, more corrupt, less autonomous public sector, one preoccupied by predatory rentier practices along sectarian lines.”<sup>135</sup> Hence, the political leadership exercises great control over the interconnected public and private sectors thus blurring the lines of what is inside and outside the state – deciding the spaces of exception.

In the state apparatus these relationships are formed by “sweetheart deals among be-friended or connected businessmen and politicians.”<sup>136</sup> Such deals are exemplified by the construction of the coastal road from Beirut to the south, where contracts were awarded to Geneco – owned by Hariri’s brother Shafiq – and Ittihad – heavily invested by Randa Berri,

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<sup>133</sup>Deets, “Consociationalism, clientelism, and local politics,” 138.

<sup>134</sup>ibid, 137.

<sup>135</sup>Salloukh, “Taif and the Lebanese State,” 43.

<sup>136</sup>Reinoud Leenders, “Nobody having too much to answer for: Laissez-faire, networks and postwar reconstruction in Lebanon,” In *Networks of privilege in the Middle East: The politics of economic reform revisited*, ed. Steven Heydemann (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 177.



the wife of parliamentary speaker Nabih Berri.<sup>137</sup> These examples display how the political leadership enriches family members and acquaintances through contracts. Over time, the legal impunity around public sector posts and contracts has had severe ramifications on the Lebanese economy resulting in the ongoing economic crisis.<sup>138</sup> While the extensive corruption of political leaders in Lebanon has been studied by Leenders and Baumann,<sup>139</sup> acts of corruption must also be unpacked as part of the political strategy to empower the establishment and create hostile environments for urban residents.

Public office and contracts became part of patron-client networks fostering sectarian inequality and hollowing out public provisions. As argued by Andrew Arsan on power sources, “prime amongst these are welfare. For all either provide – if they have the means – their supporters with alternatives to deficient state services, or act as funders and brokers, ensuring supporters’ access to healthcare and education and helping to subsidise private school or hospital fees.”<sup>140</sup> However, as noted by Cammett, class networks weaken access to these services regardless of sectarian affiliation thereby establishing several modes of exclusion.<sup>141</sup> As such, the shortcomings in the public sector exposed the inhabitants in Beirut to increasing reliance on their political leader, establishing increasing sectarian and class relations. Inhabitants are further exposed through patronage structures, such as granting rights in return for political support and votes, but also including public services and other benefits such as employment and cash.<sup>142</sup> As noted by Cammett, these structures further class divisions and further establish sectarian and class inequality.<sup>143</sup> In these ways, the political leadership informally

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<sup>137</sup>Najem, “Horizon 2000,” 52.

<sup>138</sup>World Bank, *Lebanon Public Finance Review: Ponzi Finance*.

<sup>139</sup>Leenders, *Spoils of Truce*; Baumann, *Citizen Hariri*.

<sup>140</sup>Arsan, *Lebanon*, 160.

<sup>141</sup>Melani Cammett, “Partisan Activism and Access to Welfare in Lebanon,” *Stud Comp Int Dev.* 46, no. 1 (2011).

<sup>142</sup>See: Corstange, *The Price of a Vote*; Cammett, *Compassionate Sectarianism*; Leenders, *Spoils of Truce*.

<sup>143</sup>See: Cammett, *Compassionate Communalism*.

regulates people in Beirut.

Spaces of exception are further created by the political leadership using their followers to counter political opposition. This tactic has been used both between groups and leaders and between political leaders and movement activists. The former is exemplified through the 2008 Beirut clashes when Nasrallah invoked his followers to respond to the March 14 led Government which had “outlawed Hezbollah’s private communications network for violating Lebanon’s sovereignty.”<sup>144</sup> Similarly, Hezbollah and the Amal Movement called on their supporters when Judge Bitar accused a series of senior members of the political leadership of being responsible for the explosive ammonium nitrate fertiliser that led to the 2020 Beirut explosion.<sup>145</sup> The latter emerged during demonstrations where followers of political leaders attacked movement activists, seeking to delegitimise the social movements.<sup>146</sup> After the 2019 demonstrations a Legal Agenda report found that the majority of violence (88 %) was caused by state authorities (such as ISF, LAF, LMI, and Parliamentary Police) whilst followers of political leaders were responsible for a much smaller number of incidents (11 %). These included groups of members from the Amal Movement and Hezbollah, and also Progressive Socialist Party (Druze), The Free Patriotic Movement (Maronite), the Future Movement (Sunni), and Lebanese Forces (Maronite).<sup>147</sup> Although fewer in number, violence committed by members of political parties has worked to undermine and disrupt peaceful movement activists and legitimise the use of force by state authorities,<sup>148</sup> and thus are effectively used to counter anti-

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<sup>144</sup>Fregonese, *War and the City*, 131.

<sup>145</sup>Chulov, “Six dead.”

<sup>146</sup>See: Geha, “Co-optation, counter-narratives, and repression”; AbiYaghi, Catusse, and Younes, “From isat an-nizam at-ta’ifi.”

<sup>147</sup>Nour Haidar, “A popular uprising met with violence and torture: Crimes against protestors during Lebanon’s Uprising,” *The Legal Agenda*, February 18, 2021, <https://english.legal-agenda.com/a-popular-uprising-met-with-violence-and-torture-crimes-against-protesters-during-lebanons-uprising/>.

<sup>148</sup>Leila Molana-Allen, “Lebanon: Protestors cautious after clashes with sectarian groups,” *News, Aljazeera*, November 27, 2019, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/11/27/lebanon-protesters-cautious-after-clashes-with-sectarian-groups>.

establishment movements. As emphasised earlier and argued by Hansen, sovereign power should also be understood through “the right to kill, punish and discipline with impunity [...] not formally but in practice.”<sup>149</sup> The informal structures that have emerged in Lebanon display how the political leadership has utilised public provisions to manifest their power whilst regulating others.

### 2.3.1 INFORMAL WASTE STRUCTURES

SWM are also subjected to informal organisation by political leaders through *wasta*. For example, the CDR initially issued tenders for the operation of Amrousiyeh and Karantina incinerators (1993-1996) and later for waste collection (1994-2018) and landfilling (1997-2016), which were all fulfilled by the Averda Group. The Founder of Averda, Maysarah Sukkar, was a former business partner of Rafic Hariri in Saudi Arabia.<sup>150</sup> The relationship between Averda and the Hariri family has been the subject of ongoing debate, with accusations of donations directly to the Future Movement.<sup>151</sup>

The SWN contract renewal was issued without competitive bidding raising further questions regarding the relationship. In 2010, prime minister Saad Hariri warned the CoM of the repercussions of not renewing the contract, and when a new government was formed under prime minister Najib Mikati in 2011 attempts were made to cancel the agreement with Sukleen.<sup>152</sup> A recent report emphasised the role of “CDR networks and their political protégés” above “the broader political elite” when capturing higher value projects.<sup>153</sup> Hence, the CDR is primarily put together through *wasta* in the board meetings as the six members have veto

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<sup>149</sup>Hansen, “Sovereigns beyond the state,” 141.

<sup>150</sup>Abu-Rish, “Garbage Politics”; Verdeil, “Infrastructure Crises in Beirut.”

<sup>151</sup>Fabrice Balanche, “The reconstruction of Lebanon or the racketeering rule,” in *Lebanon: After the Cedar Revolution*, eds. Are Knudsen and Michael Kerr (London: Hurst, 2012), 150; Rola El-Hsseini, *Pax Syriana: Elite Politics in Postwar Lebanon* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2012), 118.

<sup>152</sup>Balanche, “The reconstruction of Lebanon,” 151.

<sup>153</sup>Mahmalat, Atallah, and Maktabi, *Public Infrastructure Procurement*, 1.

powers, and all have to be present for decisions.<sup>154</sup>

The contracts issued in the aftermath of the 2015 waste crisis show similar patterns of *wasta*. The contracts for sanitary landfilling were awarded to *Khoury Contracting Company* (Bourj Hammoud and Jdaideh) and *Al-Jihad for Commerce & Contracting* (Ghadir) owned by Dany Khoury and Jihad Al-Arab respectively. According to the New York Times, Khoury is “close to the family of President Michel Aoun”, and Al-Arab is “the brother of an aide to the recently ousted prime minister, Saad Hariri.”<sup>155</sup> These connections to the political leadership emphasise similar patterns but with one difference; the public pie is now distributed between two political leaders and their associates. Khoury and Al-Arab have been sanctioned by the US Department of the Treasury, and no longer have access to their property in the US due to their corruption and contribution to “the breakdown of good governance and the rule of law in Lebanon.”<sup>156</sup> This action by the US government signals broader changes in American politics that call for accountability in Lebanon since the 2015 protests. Notably, the US Treasury cites accusations against Khoury and his company regarding the “dumping of toxic waste and refuse into the Mediterranean Sea, poisoning fisheries, and polluting Lebanon’s beaches, all while failing to remedy the garbage crisis.”<sup>157</sup> The sanctions display the external pressure to dismantle systematic corruption and environmental destruction. However, within the sectarian power-sharing system political leaders and their protégés have legal impunity – enabling a space of exception.

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<sup>154</sup>Mahmalat, Atallah, and Maktabi, *Public Infrastructure Procurement*, 19.

<sup>155</sup>Vivian Yee and Hawaida Saad, “To make sense of Lebanon’s protests, follow the garbage” The New York Times, December 3, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/12/03/world/middleeast/lebanon-protests-corruption.html>.

<sup>156</sup>“Treasury targets two businessmen and one member of parliament for undermining the rule of law in Lebanon,” Press Release, Department of the Treasury, last modified October 28, 2021, <https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/jy0440>; see also “US sanctions two Lebanese businessmen a lawmaker for corruption,” News, Aljazeera, last modified October 28, 2021, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/10/28/us-sanctions-two-lebanese-businessmen-a-lawmaker-for-corruption>.

<sup>157</sup>“Treasury targets two businessmen and one member of parliament,” Department of the Treasury.

Contracts for collection, on the other hand, were won by two joint ventures, *Ramco Trading and Contracting sal/Atlas-B*(RAMCO) and *Mouawad-Edde-Soriko SAL* (City Blu), with lesser-known owners but that has previously been contracted by the CDR in the reconstruction of Beirut.<sup>158</sup> The list of companies that can bid on CDR contracts remains short, and there are various restrictions for new companies to enter this process.<sup>159</sup> A recent Lebanese Center for Policy Studies (LCPS) report found that resource allocation from the CDR is subjected to increasing “warranted concerns on the level of fairness in the tendering process” as “60 % of total CDR spending – or \$ 1.9 billion - was granted to only 10 companies.”<sup>160</sup> Furthermore, in the Municipality of Beirut the tendering process caused concerns due to the lack of transparency in how RAMCO was awarded the contract.<sup>161</sup> In this context, Jamil Mouawad draws similarities to the CDR and argues that the process “attests to how the state is “hollowed out” to the advantage of private interest, which in turn serve society at an exorbitantly high financial and environmental cost.”<sup>162</sup> This exemplifies the relationship between political leaders and companies.

The tendering of contracts demonstrates the powers of individuals in the state apparatus. Whilst relationships and networks are the driving forces behind the allocation of these resources, questions around the costs of these transactions display the limits of accountability within the apparatus. From sanitation to roadworks, a recent report found that limited re-

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<sup>158</sup>Ramco, *Ramco Company Profile: Shaping a Better Future*, (Beirut: Ramco, 2019) <https://www.ramcoeng.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/RAMCO-Profile.pdf>; Mouawad-Edde, *Catalogue* (Beirut: Mouawad-Edde, 2019), <https://www.mouawad-edde.com/catalogue.pdf>.

<sup>159</sup>See: Mahmalat, Atallah, and Maktabi, *Public Infrastructure Procurement*, 18.

<sup>160</sup>Sami Atallah, Ishac Diwan, Jamal Ibrahim Haidar, and Wassim Maktabi, *Public Resource Allocation in Lebanon: How Uncompetitive is CDR's Procurement Process* (Beirut: Lebanese Center for Policy Studies, 2020), 2, [https://api.lcps-lebanon.org/content/uploads/files/1595575975-cdr\\_article\\_july2020.pdf](https://api.lcps-lebanon.org/content/uploads/files/1595575975-cdr_article_july2020.pdf).

<sup>161</sup>Ramco, *Ramco Company Profile*; Kareem Chehayeb, “State of decay: How rubbish became Lebanon’s latest dumpster fire,” News, Aljazeera, November 17, 2021, <https://www.aljazeera.com/economy/2021/11/17/state-of-decay-how-garbage-became-lebanons-latest-dumpster-fire>.

<sup>162</sup>Jamil Mouawad, “Unpacking Lebanon’s Resilience: Undermining State Institutions and Consolidating the System?” *LAI Working Papers* 17, no. 29 (2017), 8, <https://www.iai.it/sites/default/files/iaiwpl729.pdf>.

turns on investments in Lebanon are common as “higher share of investment is misallocated and wasted without improving the quality of the infrastructure.”<sup>163</sup> According to several sources, the cost of SWM in BML is one of the highest in the Middle East and middle-income countries.<sup>164</sup> Matt Nash, however, suggests by breaking down the costs that “[t]he figure is “high” simply because it covers the full waste lifecycle – collection, treatment and disposal” but criticises that there is no evidence that Averda’s “profit margins in Lebanon are in line with industry averages.”<sup>165</sup> Further, there is little evidence to suggest that SWM has not been a lucrative business before the 2015 waste crisis.

A critical disadvantage of SWM contracting is that the estimated cost is based partly on the weight of the waste to be disposed of and the area it is to be collected from. As noted already in a 2000 report on SWM in Lebanon, payment based on weight “discourages resource recovery (scavenging) from the containers” and “provides incentives for the contractor to increase weights by adding heavy soils or heavy construction materials.”<sup>166</sup> The latest example is the report in 2019 that “Al-Arab’s company added water to garbage containers to inflate their billable weight.”<sup>167</sup> Yet, corruption by political leaders and companies are shaped by impunity in Lebanon thereby ensuring the enrichment and survival of the establishment.

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<sup>163</sup>Daniel Garrote Sanchez, *Combating Corruption, a Necessary Step Toward Improving Infrastructure* (Beirut: Lebanese Center for Policy Studies, 2018), 9, [https://www.lcps-lebanon.org/publications/1540907457-policy\\_brief\\_32.pdf](https://www.lcps-lebanon.org/publications/1540907457-policy_brief_32.pdf).

<sup>164</sup>Sherif Arif and Fadi Doumani, Lebanon: Cost of environmental degradation due to solid waste management practices in Beirut and Mount Lebanon (Tunis: Giz SWEEP-Net, 2014), 27, [https://www.retech-germany.net/fileadmin/retech/03\\_themen/themen\\_internationale\\_zusammenarbeit/CASWD\\_LEBANON.pdf](https://www.retech-germany.net/fileadmin/retech/03_themen/themen_internationale_zusammenarbeit/CASWD_LEBANON.pdf); “Lebanon: Huge cost of inaction in trash crisis,” Human Rights Watch, June 9, 2020, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/06/09/lebanon-huge-cost-inaction-trash-crisis>.

<sup>165</sup>Matt Nash, “Dissecting a waste empire,” *Executive Magazine*, January 15, 2016, <https://www.executive-magazine.com/economics-policy/dissecting-a-waste-empire>.

<sup>166</sup>El Jor, *Policies and institutional*, 42.

<sup>167</sup>“Treasury targets two businessmen and one member of parliament,” Department of the Treasury; see also Yee and Saad, “To make sense of Lebanon’s protests, follow the garbage.”

## 2.4 CONCLUSION

This chapter has considered the primary question, “To what extent is waste conditioned by competing claims to sovereign power?” and the secondary question, “How is sovereign power structured in Beirut?”. It has been argued that nested and contested sovereignties have established spaces of exception by organising and regulating waste. Drawing on the writings of Humphrey and Simpson on nested sovereignties, I argue that the political leadership is nested within the state through the Taif Agreement, which manifested contestation between groups and enabled the division of the public sector. In this context, political leaders have shaped the political ordering of waste, for instance, through the relationship between CoM and CDR. These processes and relationships have established a racialised SWM system and fostered the unequal distribution of waste burdens. Echoing Pulido’s writing on the US, the establishment has no reason to challenge marginalisation and exploitation due to the financial and sectarian benefits of exposing others to unregulated waste.<sup>168</sup>

This exploration has illuminated how nested and contested sovereignties have wielded authority over people and the environment through formal and informal mechanisms. The analysis of sovereignties and spaces of exception unpacks the biopolitical machinery which regulates and controls political life and manifests the survival of the political system. Formally, the political leadership wields legal frameworks including Amnesty, Banking Secrecy, and Defamation Laws, to manifest its power and control others while ensuring its own impunity. In SWM, this includes CoM decisions and decrees, which determine what people and urban spaces are disposable to the state and can be subjected to the hostile environments created by waste.

Informal waste structures further reinforce these processes – facilitated through patron-

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<sup>168</sup>Pulido, “Geographies of race and ethnicity II,” 529.

client relationships and legal impunity – empowering the corruption of the political leaders and their protégés. The tendering process for SWM contracts, for example, displayed the close relationship between company’s owners and political leaders such as with *Khoury Contracting Company* and *Al-Jihad for Commerce & Contracting*. They further highlight how legal impunity in Lebanon has ensured these relationships amid international pressure from the US Treasury.

This unit of analysis – polity – has explored the role of nested sovereignties and their ability to create spaces of exception, enabling the control and regulation of people and urban spaces. This chapter has validated and expanded upon Agamben's conceptualisation of spaces of exception. First, through nested and contested sovereignties, which expand on the knowledge gap made by the plurality of agents and postcolonial contexts. Secondly, by illustrating how waste enables control and regulation of *others* and the destruction of their environments. Biopolitical mechanisms are explored through legal frameworks and impunity in SWM, which contributes to marginalisation of urban inequalities. Moreover, the political ordering of waste has assembled a “killing machine” slowly and silently killing groups of *others* through relentless waste crises.<sup>169</sup> As a result, this chapter has built the foundation to explore the implications of waste on people and ecological crises in Chapters 3 and 4 through the lenses of politics and governance, respectively. The next unit of analysis – politics – will unpack the impact of these processes on groups of *others*, including marginalisation, contestation, and resistance to these structures.

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<sup>169</sup>Agamben, *State of Exception*, 86. See also: Rob Nixon, *Slow Violence*; and Watts, *Silent Violence*.



# 3

## Politics

ON MAY 12TH, 2020, a dramatic confrontation occurred between striking waste workers and security forces at a RAMCO operations site in Beirut.<sup>1</sup> The waste workers, predominantly Bangladeshi and Indian migrant workers, were demanding better working conditions and payment in US dollars due to the extreme devaluation of the Lebanese Lira. This halted

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<sup>1</sup>Laure Ayoub, “Foreign workers revolt against the “Republic’s contractor” in Lebanon,” *The Legal Agenda*, April 21, 2021, <https://english.legal-agenda.com/foreign-workers-revolt-against-the-republics-contractor-in-lebanon/>.

waste collection in parts of the city. Despite the fear of repercussions, including loss of income, reputation, and deportation, the strike continued with at least 250 people until the confrontation in May.<sup>2</sup> The government response to the strike was violent, with human rights organisations condemning their actions and highlighting the lack of formal union representation for workers in Beirut.<sup>3</sup> The incident exemplifies efforts to control and regulate waste management and migrant workers in Beirut, and more broadly, efforts to regulate urban spaces which is the focus of this chapter. Drawing from Chapter 2 that focused on formal and informal power structures, this analyses the impact of the socio-political ordering of waste on people. It further argues that the biopolitical machinery of waste – set out by nested sovereignties – is used to regulate and control human beings, resulting in contestation and resistance to escape this condition. Through this, it empirically tests the politics section of the theoretical framework developed in Chapter 1.

This chapter has three main sections highlighting the intersectional and co-constructive processes of marginalisation, contestation, and resistance shaped by sovereign power in Beirut. Sovereign power impacts the socio-political ordering of waste which spans across arenas. The first section examines how the state has marginalised and politically excluded people, reducing them to bare life as a means of regulation and control. This is showcased by waste workers, predominantly performed by refugees and migrant workers in Beirut. Waste workers experience political exclusion and marginalisation due to intersectional factors including legal status and profession, and yet resist being even further marginalisation amid the worsening crisis in Lebanon.

Following this, the second section focuses on contestation and highlights the impact of

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<sup>2</sup>Timour Azhari, “Long marginalised, migrant workers in Lebanon strike over pay,” *Aljazeera Economy*, May 19, 2020, <https://www.aljazeera.com/economy/2020/5/19/long-marginalised-migrant-workers-in-lebanon-strike-over-pay>.

<sup>3</sup>Ayoub, “Foreign workers revolt.”

sectarian politics on the politics of waste. The significance of sectarian politics has resulted from a zone of indistinction when *oikos* (the family) is politicised, and the *polis* (the city) is depoliticised, which ultimately “recodify the family relationships in political terms.”<sup>4</sup> Consequently, sectarian politics not only shapes the distribution of environmental burdens that disproportionately impact communities, including waste infrastructures such as landfilling and dumpsites, leading to exclusion, contestation, and resistance, but is also shaped by political leaders that seek to further sectarian agendas within waste-impacted communities. An example of this the Maronite Kataeb party which have staged a series protest outside Bourj Hammoud landfill.

The final section unpacks resistance against marginalisation and contestation, showcasing how inhabitants forge public realms to resist political exclusion and sectarian politics.<sup>5</sup> In recent years, anti-establishment and non-sectarian movement activism has emerged in Beirut, reflecting the ability to forge public realms by movement activists. Waste activism is a part of this resistance, as demonstrated by the large-scale waste protests in 2015 which called for the removal of waste and accountability from political leaders. However, this resistance was met with violent repression and criminalisation by the state and political leadership, which seek to regulate and control political opposition.

Overall, this chapter provides a critical analysis of the socio-political ordering of waste in Beirut and its impact on marginalised communities while highlighting the contestation and resistance that emerges as a result.

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<sup>4</sup>Agamben, *Stasis*, 23.

<sup>5</sup>See: Owens, “Reclaiming ‘bare life’?”

### 3.1 MARGINALISATION

The processes of marginalisation have been at the forefront of politics in Beirut. Over time various authorities have formally and informally regulated and controlled groups of others, restricting their political and legal rights based on factors such as sect, race, gender, and class. This includes an array of different groups of others, such as refugees, migrants, LGBTQ+, and feminists, which have changed across time and space. Focusing on refugees and migrants, this section will unpack the processes of marginalisation and inclusion through exclusion by unpacking mechanisms of exclusion. According to Agamben's writings on bare life, this process includes the absence of protection (abandonment) and regulation by the law (being bound) – establishing inclusion through exclusion.<sup>6</sup> Through this lens, this chapter gains insight into the changing dynamics of marginalisation Beirut's political landscape.

Sectarian politics have fostered inclusion through exclusion by emphasising power relations and distributions between groups. Since the Ottoman Sultanate, scholars have explored these issues dynamics; for example, Leila T Fawaz explores how the growing numbers of Christian refugees and a lack of justice after the 1860 civil war in Mount Lebanon led to the “growth of mistrust” between communities, although the conflict remained outside Beirut.<sup>7</sup> In addition, as argued by Ussama Makdisi, Ottoman reform in 1939 and the growing European presence reorganised politics according to “privileged religious communities rather than elite status as the basis for any project of modernization, citizenship, and civilization.”<sup>8</sup> These accounts denote sectarian politics as a part of “a modern story”, which is shaped by

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<sup>6</sup>Agamben, *Homo Sacer*, 59.

<sup>7</sup>Leila T. Fawaz, “The city and the mountain: Beirut's political radius in the nineteenth century as revealed in the crisis of 1960,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 16, no. 4 (1984), 494.

<sup>8</sup>The Ottoman reforms in 1939 – often called the Tanzimat reforms – were introduced in order to modernise the sultanate. This included increasing rights to Christian minorities, which have often been dismissed by scholars as a reform to win European diplomatic support. See: Ussama Makdisi, *Culture of Sectarianism: Community, History, and Violence in Nineteenth-century Ottoman Lebanon* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 6-7.

colonialist, orientalist and nationalist paradigms, leading to contestation and inequality between groups.<sup>9</sup> The reorganisation of politics in Beirut along these lines contributed to the politics of exclusion as a method of regulating sectarian power relations.

During the French mandate (1921-1943) and the independence years (1943-1975), rapid urbanisation fuelled these inequalities along sectarian lines. The Mandate period was exacerbated by politics favouring the Maronite Christian community and other wealthy Christians from the Greek Catholic and Greek Orthodox communities;<sup>10</sup> later, the Maronite President distributed these same dynamics through its veto powers in the National Pact, which lasted to the end of the civil war in 1990.<sup>11</sup> These politics shaped the dynamics that led to the civil war.

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, urbanisation was shaped by several streams of refugees and migrants experiencing various degrees of political exclusion. Notably, the first refugee camp Karantina was established in 1922 with the arrival of 10 500 Armenian refugees who had survived the Ottoman genocide.<sup>12</sup> After some years, Armenian refugees were able to resettle further east in Bourj Hammoud. This former agricultural district quickly transformed into a “densely residential and workshop area, built through the negotiations of French Mandate officials, Armenian town associations, and Lebanese elites.”<sup>13</sup> Although living in impoverished conditions, Armenian refugees claimed some *rights to the city* through these negotiations – becoming naturalised and gaining full political rights and recognition as one of Lebanon’s

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<sup>9</sup>See in Makdisi, *Culture of Sectarianism*, 2; Jens Hanssen, *Find de Siecle Beirut: The Making of an Ottoman Provincial capital* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 265; and Fawaz, “The city and the mountain,” 494.

<sup>10</sup>Ragab, “The crisis of cultural identity,” 108.

<sup>11</sup>Najem, *Lebanon*.

<sup>12</sup>Karantina (also called Quarantina) is situated east of the urban centre. The area is historically significant as it relates to the port area and quarantine rules related to Cholera and other diseases during the Ottoman Sultanate. Disease outbreaks displayed the increasing inequalities during the Ottoman rule as the rich fled the city as poorer inhabitants stayed behind. See: Fawaz and Peillen, *Urban Slums Report*: 9; and Hanssen, *Find de Siecle Beirut*, 118-127.

<sup>13</sup>Nucho, *Everyday Sectarianism*, 9.

sects, improving their socio-economic conditions. A political move by French authorities in 1924, neutralisation was based on the “convergence of interests”, strengthening the colonialist power internally and showcasing the end of Ottoman rule.<sup>14</sup> Neutralisation granted Armenians more legal rights, like the ability to own property and vote. Political exclusion is more than the absence of citizenship; it also includes informal power structures. As noted by scholars studying Armenians the community face political marginalisation within the sectarian system; for example, Armenians formally have more rights than they did under the National Pact but, in practice, have received fewer public sector posts than allocated under Taif.<sup>15</sup> In this way informal structures are preventing and controlling the impact of Armenian representatives in government. Furthermore, as noted by Nucho, large-scale infrastructure has led to marginalisation in Bourj Hammoud – a majority Armenian neighbourhood in Beirut; for example, through the construction of a highway bridge approved by the CDR and the Tashnag leadership, which runs above street level next to inhabitants’ homes leading to extreme air and noise pollution.<sup>16</sup> As such, informal structures are used to marginalise and organise neighbourhoods.

In contrast the situation for Palestinian refugees was strikingly different. Lebanon is not a signatory of the 1951 Refugee Convention that outlines the legal obligations of states to protect them, and as such refugees in Lebanon have been labelled ‘guests’ or ‘displaced’ rather than refugees thus excluding them from legal citizenship.<sup>17</sup> As many as 100,000 refugees arrived in Lebanon in the aftermath of the 1948 Arab-Israel war, causing political tension

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<sup>14</sup>See: Nicola Migliorino, *(Re)constructing Armenia in Lebanon and Syria: Ethno-Cultural Diversity and the State in the Aftermath of a Refugee Crisis* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2008), 52-55.

<sup>15</sup>In addition, Armenian politics is also highly contested including various parties with a broad range of policies, such as Tashnag, Hnchag and Ramgavar. See: Migliorino, *(Re)constructing Armenia*, 182-186.

<sup>16</sup>Nucho, *Everyday Sectarianism*, 118-123.

<sup>17</sup>See discussion in: Maja Janmyr, “No country of asylum: ‘legitimising’ Lebanon’s rejection of the 1951 refugee convention,” *International Journal of Refugee Law* 29, no. 3 (2017).

between Christians and Muslims around the demographic balance.<sup>18</sup> Following these concerns, most Palestinian refugees were not granted any political rights as opposed to Armenian refugees (with the exception of some refugees, mostly Christian), leaving many in long-term encampments and limbo between the Israeli and Lebanese governments.<sup>19</sup> As such, Palestinians were legally restricted from a series of social and political activities. As further explored in Chapter 4, the refugee camps became segregated spaces governed by Lebanese security forces before 1967, the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) between 1967 and 1987, and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) after 1987.<sup>20</sup> Today, Palestinian refugees' lives continue to be regulated and controlled through a series of legislations, such as their legal restriction to work in 36 professions, the inability to own land, and limitations to access to education and health services.<sup>21</sup> Researching Palestinian refugee camps, Alex Mahoudeau explores how the camps are governed by a series of agents in addition to the UNRWA, including international organisations and local networks, which work in a myriad of ways to improve the conditions in refugee camps.<sup>22</sup> In the absence of the Lebanese state, these agents establish spaces where quality life may emerge, albeit in areas where critical public services and infrastructures are missing.<sup>23</sup>

Since 2011, Syrian refugees have been met with increasing hostility. Before the Syrian civil war, the border between Lebanon and Syria remained fluid due to the historical lack

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<sup>18</sup>Amnesty International, "Palestinian refugees in Lebanon: Long-standing suffering," *Reliefweb, Amnesty*, March 17, 2006, <https://reliefweb.int/report/lebanon/palestinian-refugees-lebanon-long-standing-suffering#:~:text=In%201949%2C%20the%20number%20of,to%20return%20to%20their%20homes.>

<sup>19</sup>Knudsen, "Camp, Ghetto, Zinco, Slum," 445.

<sup>20</sup>Ramadan, "Destroying Nahr al-Bared," 158.

<sup>21</sup>Jad Chaaban, Nisreen Salti, Hala Ghattas, Alexander Irani, Tala Ismail and Lara Batlouni, *Survey on the socioeconomic status of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, 2015* (Beirut: American University of Beirut and UNRWA, 2016), [https://www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/content/resources/survey\\_on\\_the\\_economic\\_status\\_of\\_palestine\\_refugees\\_in\\_lebanon\\_2015.pdf](https://www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/content/resources/survey_on_the_economic_status_of_palestine_refugees_in_lebanon_2015.pdf).

<sup>22</sup>Mahoudeau, "Who is responsible about our lives?"

<sup>23</sup>Ibid.

of a formal border and the occupation of Lebanon after the civil war. Before 2011, Syrians often migrated and gained employment through social networks and were able to gain a 6-month residency permit through a bilateral agreement with Syria, although employers or Syrians rarely went through these procedures, and public officials never enforced them.<sup>24</sup> At the start of the Syrian civil war the ethos of openness continued, although the government prohibited the establishment of formal refugee camps. In 2015, the open policy ended for Syrian and Palestinian refugees arriving from Syria with increasing restrictions limiting the legal residency pathways to either employment with a UNHCR registration certificate or increasingly through the exploitative Kafala sponsorship system (see below).<sup>25</sup>

In efforts to regulate and control, the state has introduced stringent measures that have facilitated the marginalisation and exploitation of refugees. Refugees are impacted by several government agencies, notably the Ministry of Interior (that regulates the border), the Ministry of Defence (detention), and the MoL (work permits and regulates the sectors that Syrians are permitted to work).<sup>26</sup> For example, government agencies have multiplied their efforts to return refugees voluntarily, with little information given to refugees about the political situation in Syria. In addition, refugees who re-entered Lebanon illegally after April 2019

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<sup>24</sup>LEADERS, *The Labour Sector in Lebanon*, 33. See also John T. Chalcraft, *The Invisible Cage: Syrian Migrant Workers in Lebanon* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008).

<sup>25</sup>The UNHCR registration certificate was suspended in May 2015, leading to many refugees not being registered. Therefore, it is unknown how many refugees from Syria reside in Lebanon. In addition, all Syrians must pay an annual fee of 200 dollars to the Ministry of Interior and General Security, with the exception of children who can renew their application for free. A Syrian refugee can also enter on a courtesy permit if the wife or mother is Lebanese, or through property ownership, student visa, tenancy, work permit (outside of the sponsorship system) etc. See, UNICEF, UNHCR and WFP, *Vulnerable assessment of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon, 2021* (Lebanon, 2021), <https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000136288/download/>; Human Rights Watch, “*I Just Want to be Treated Like a Person*”: How Lebanon’s Residency Rules Facilitate Abuse of Syrian Refugees (United States, 2016), 9-14, [https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/report\\_pdf/lebanon0116web.pdf](https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/report_pdf/lebanon0116web.pdf); and Human Rights Watch, “*Our Lives Are Like Death*”: Syrian Refugee Returns from Lebanon and Jordan (United States, 2021), [https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/media\\_2021/10/syria1021\\_web.pdf](https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/media_2021/10/syria1021_web.pdf).

<sup>26</sup>LEADERS, *The Labour Sector in Lebanon*, 34.



have been subjected to arrest and deportation.<sup>27</sup> The latter has largely been suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic but restarted in April 2023, with humanitarian agencies stressing the risk of prosecution and torture by the Syrian government.<sup>28</sup> However, as explained by Human Rights Watch, the regulation of refugees in Lebanon is not only a matter of legal exclusion but also a series of ad-hoc measures – such as curfews, checkpoints, and raids – influenced by power dynamics and the political interests of political leaders.<sup>29</sup> In these ways, the state and political leaders are establishing hostile environments for refugees in Lebanon, establishing systems of inclusion through exclusion.

Contrastingly, migrant workers from the region have historically faced other structures of marginalisation and political exclusion. Since the 1950s and 1960s, Beirut experienced increasing urbanisation from Bekaa and South Lebanon, and also from Syria and the Levant.<sup>30</sup> Due to capitalist reforms across Lebanon, Nasr notes that before 1975,

“40 per cent of Lebanon’s entire rural population, including 50 percent of the Beka’a and 65 percent of the south Lebanon, had been driven out of their homes and off their lands [...] A very large dispossessed population was desperate to find jobs and housing in the miserable slums of Beirut.”<sup>31</sup>

In Syria people faced similar agricultural reforms,<sup>32</sup> resulting in increasing numbers of mi-

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<sup>27</sup>Human Rights Watch, *Our lives are like death*, 74.

<sup>28</sup>“Lebanon: Authorities must halt the unlawful deportation of Syrian refugees” *Amnesty International*, April 24, 2023, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2023/04/lebanon-authorities-must-halt-unlawful-deportations-of-syrian-refugees/>.

<sup>29</sup>See discussion of various ad-hoc measures in Human Rights Watch, *Our lives are like death*.

<sup>30</sup>Fuad I. Khuri, *From Village to Suburb: Order and Change in Greater Beirut* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1975), 193; and Chalcraft, *The Invisible Cage*.

<sup>31</sup>Salim Nasr, “New social realities and post-war Lebanon: Issues for reconstruction,” in *Recovering Beirut: Urban Design and Post-War Reconstruction*, ed. Samir Khalaf and Philips S. Khoury (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1993), 10.

<sup>32</sup>Ziad Keilany, “Land Reform in Syria,” *Middle East Studies* 16, no. 3 (1980); and Raymond Hinnebusch, “The Ba’th’s Agrarian Revolution (1963-2000),” in *Agriculture and Reform in Syria*, ed. Raymond Hinnebusch (Fife: University of St Andrews Centre for Syrian Studies, 2011).

grant workers arriving in Beirut to work in manufacturing and construction and across Lebanon to work in the reformed agrarian sector. Before the civil war, it is estimated that the Lebanese labour market relied on 200,000 to 600,000 Syrian workers.<sup>33</sup> The rapidly changing urban environments led to increasing marginalisation, manifesting the conditions that led to the civil war. This in turn culminated in a series of challenges for urban migrants. For example, Lebanese migrants were marginalised within the electoral system, preventing them from officially participating in urban politics in Beirut. Most voters in mixed neighbourhoods or the suburbs voted in their districts of origin, despite having lived, worked, and paid taxes for decades in Municipal Beirut.<sup>34</sup> As noted by Ziad Abu-Rish, “it is legally possible to change one’s place of registration. In practice, it is extremely difficult for most people to do so because of bureaucratic obstacles and political corruption.”<sup>35</sup> As such, Lebanese migrants were informally prevented from participating in the political system in Beirut.

As a result of the lack of representation, a series of solidarity networks and neighbourhood associations emerged. However, as noted by Fawaz, these associations were often comprised of senior and well-connected men who acted as representatives in consultation with municipal officials and later through negotiations with local militias during the civil war.<sup>36</sup> Although they represented a minority of the community, neighbourhood associations held a key role in negotiating urban spaces for migrant workers, facilitating the absence of governance in the suburbs, whilst highlighting the sectarian politics and politicisation of kinship in Beirut before the civil war.

In the aftermath of the civil war, migrant workers arrived from countries including

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<sup>33</sup>LEADERS, *Dignity at Stake: Challenges to Accessing Decent Work in Lebanon* (2019), 1, <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/69774>.

<sup>34</sup>Khuri, *From Village to Suburb*, 193; Trabolusi, *A history of Modern Lebanon*, 172.

<sup>35</sup>Ziad Abu-Rish, “Municipal Politics in Lebanon,” *Middle East Report* 280 (2016), <https://merip.org/2016/10/municipal-politics-in-lebanon/>, see also: Mona Fawaz, “Neoliberal urbanity and the right to the city: a view from Beirut’s periphery,” *Development and Change* 40 no. 5 (2009), 835.

<sup>36</sup>Fawaz, “Neoliberal Urbanity,” 835-837.

Bangladesh, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, and Kenya to work for the reconstruction of Beirut. Within the booming post-civil war economy, the Kafala system developed into similar structures that are found across the Middle East.<sup>37</sup> As noted in Chapter 3, non-Lebanese migrant workers resolved clientelist obligations and facilitated aspects like low pay and poor working conditions.<sup>38</sup> Relatively new, the system developed into a wide-scale phenomenon during the early start of the reconstruction of Beirut in the 1990s, although domestic migrant workers arrived in Lebanon from the region and beyond as early as the 1970s.<sup>39</sup> An estimated 200,000 people from Asia and Africa worked within the system, although the numbers have dropped significantly due to the economic crisis.<sup>40</sup>

The legal situation of migrant workers provides ample scope for the employer to exploit the workers, for example by withholding passports and other travel documents or not granting permission to change sponsor or employment. As such, migrant workers are shaped by inclusion through exclusion, having minimal rights but are regulated and controlled through legal frameworks set out by central authorities such as the MoL and also employers who exercise great power. As noted by Bridget Anderson in their study on domestic workers, “the fact that employers are citizens and the workers are non-citizens formalizes their unequal power relations – even outside of the employment relationship, workers and their employees are not equal before the law.”<sup>41</sup> As such, various formal and informal power structures strip political rights from the migrant workers.

Increasingly, Syrian migrant workers are part of this system, albeit on different terms. For

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<sup>37</sup>Kali Robinson, “What is the Kafala system?” *Council on Foreign Relations*, November 18, 2022, <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/what-kafala-system>.

<sup>38</sup>See in Jureidini, “In the shadows of family life,” 74.

<sup>39</sup>Nayla Moukarbel, *Sri Lankan Housemaids in Lebanon: A Case of ‘Symbolic violence’ and ‘Everyday Forms of Resistance’* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2009).

<sup>40</sup>LEADERS, *Dignity at Stake*, 1.

<sup>41</sup>Bridget Andersen, *Doing the Dirty Work: The Global Politics of Domestic Labour* (London: Zed Books, 2000), 193.

example, a pledge to a Syrian family is not related to a specific work contract but is bound to their sponsor for legal residency, work permit, accommodation, etc.<sup>42</sup> Notably, any complaint towards the sponsor could lead to the withdrawal of sponsorship, the loss of legal status and the risk of detention.<sup>43</sup> As such, Syrian nationals (including migrants and refugees) are facing increasing legal peculiarities and regulations.

To work legally, foreign nationals, including migrant workers and refugees, under the Kafala system, pay extortionate sums related to their sponsorship.<sup>44</sup> As estimated by Triangle, migrant workers from Bangladesh and India pay a minimum fee of \$4000 to the broker, while in principle the employer pays other expenses such as \$1000 to the government housing bank to guarantee for taxes and other costs. Lack of regulation however means that many workers pay this themselves or face losing legal status.<sup>45</sup> Similarly, refugees have to pay \$200 to renew their application with the Ministry of Interior and General Security every year, and in addition often have to pay a fee to the sponsor for as much as \$1000.<sup>46</sup> These sums of money result in large numbers of illegal residents. According to a recent report, only 16% of Syrian refugees in Lebanon held a legal residency leading to increased vulnerability.<sup>47</sup> The lack of legal status exposes foreign nationals to extreme forms of employer exploitation and the risk of being detained and deported by government agencies.

The politics of exclusion of foreign workers and refugees goes beyond legal exclusion and is interrelated to social and political structures in Lebanon. The political leadership shapes and facilitates discrimination, racism and xenophobia. In 2017 Foreign Minister Gebran Basil, son-in-law of President Michel Aoun, received backlash after tweeting, “we are racist

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<sup>42</sup>LEADERS, *Dignity at Stake*, 22.

<sup>43</sup>Human Rights Watch, “*I Just Want to be Treated Like a Person*”, 19.

<sup>44</sup>This excludes Palestinian refugees, who have a different agreement with the state. See: LEADERS, *The Labour Sector in Lebanon*, 28.

<sup>45</sup>Danger, *Maze of Abuse*, 3.

<sup>46</sup>Human Rights Watch, “*I Just Want to be Treated Like a Person*”, 19.

<sup>47</sup>UNICEF, UNHCR and WFP, *Vulnerable assessment of Syrian Refugees*, 161.

in our national identity”, referring to the refusal to naturalise refugees and displaying how it is socially acceptable among the political leaders to discriminate against refugees.<sup>48</sup> In recent years, refugees have been increasingly being blamed for the country’s deteriorating situation.

In addition, the ongoing economic crisis and COVID-19 restrictions have had disproportionate effects on the inhabitants of Beirut. Low-income families (now including more than 82 per cent of the population in Lebanon), including refugees and migrant workers are taking the hardest hit of the crisis.<sup>49</sup> Overall, public services are in decline, with increased poverty and unemployment rates affecting access to services that usually require private subsidies, such as electricity, water and education. The ongoing electricity crisis, for example, has led to electricity only being delivered for one or two hours a day, in addition to complete blackouts that can last for days.<sup>50</sup> With rising costs and fuel shortages, many cannot afford the fuel to run private generators. Migrant workers from countries such as Sri Lanka, Ethiopia, Philippines, Bangladesh and Kenya are among those experiencing critical conditions in Beirut. The employers and the racialised Kafala system deemed these workers expendable during the crisis, exposing the migrant workers to increasing vulnerabilities and possible exploitation.<sup>51</sup> In addition, the political exclusion and lack of legal protections in Lebanon have led to the ongoing crisis and homelessness, with increasing numbers relying on local organisations to survive.<sup>52</sup>

Further to the reduction in public services, the economic crisis and COVID-19 pandemic

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<sup>48</sup>Halim Shebaya, “Lebanon has a racism problem,” *Aljazeera*, October 21, 2017, <https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2017/10/21/lebanon-has-a-racism-problem>.

<sup>49</sup>ESCWA, *Multidimensional poverty in Lebanon (2019-2021)* (Policy Brief, 2021), [https://www.unescwa.org/sites/default/files/news/docs/21-00634-\\_multidimensional\\_poverty\\_in\\_lebanon\\_policy\\_brief\\_-\\_en.pdf](https://www.unescwa.org/sites/default/files/news/docs/21-00634-_multidimensional_poverty_in_lebanon_policy_brief_-_en.pdf).

<sup>50</sup>“Lebanon left without power as grid shuts down,” *BBC*, Middle East, October 9, 2021, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-58856914>.

<sup>51</sup>Kassamali, “Understanding Race.”

<sup>52</sup>Gasia Ohanes, “Lebanon’s Anti-Racism Movement is a lifeline for vulnerable migrant workers during coronavirus,” *the New Arab*, April 30, 2020, <https://english.alaraby.co.uk/features/lebanons-anti-racism-movement-lifeline-vulnerable-migrant-workers>.

have resulted in significant economic strain for refugees. A recent Reuters report found that Lebanese banks lost as much as \$250 million in humanitarian aid intended for refugees through unfavourable exchange rates. A significant portion of the 2020 \$400 million UN assistance programme that would provide food, education and the weather proving of shelters was lost for example.<sup>53</sup> In addition, many refugees have lost their seasonal work due to the COVID-19 pandemic and economic crisis, with a quarter of these refugees living in Beirut. With the rising costs, as many as 88 per cent of Syrian refugees live in extreme poverty due to ongoing events and cannot cover basic needs, like food, medicine, or rent.<sup>54</sup> In addition to these critical conditions, refugees are increasingly targeted by racism and discrimination which is further facilitated by the political leadership. The political exclusion and ‘scape-goating’ of Syrian and Palestinian refugees during the economic crisis and COVID-19 are yet another manifestation of marginalisation and othering in Beirut.

Beirut is shaped by the marginalisation of refugees and migrant workers. They are bound within legal frameworks such as residency and employment but are also abandoned by the law through a series of formal and informal power structures shaped by discrimination, racialisation, and xenophobia. However, amid these challenges, refugees and migrant workers are forging public realms and rejecting these political structures through activities by neighbourhood associations and movement activism.

### 3.1.1 WASTE WORKERS AND WASTE PICKERS

“Rubbish collectors are the unsung heroes of modernity. Day in and day out, they refresh and make salient again the borderline between normality and pathology, health and illness, the desirable and repulsive, the accepted and the

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<sup>53</sup>Timour Azhari, “Insight – Lebanese banks swallow at least \$250m in U.N. aid,” *Reuters*, June 17, 2021, <https://news.trust.org/item/20210617094247-a5d9z>.

<sup>54</sup>UNICEF, UNHCR and WFP, *Vulnerable assessment of Syrian Refugees*, 81.

rejected, *the comme il faut* and *comme il ne faut pas*, the inside and outside of the human universe.” (italics in original)<sup>55</sup>

Despite their crucial role in maintaining urban environments, waste workers in Beirut often face intersectional political, social, and legal exclusions; for example, waste workers deal not only with the social taints of their work and racialised structures but also legal exclusion from the Kafala system.<sup>56</sup> As a result, waste workers simultaneously lack protection from the law (abandonment) and are regulated by the law (being bound), leading to systemic marginalisation and exploitation.

Waste work is shaped by formalised work performed by these workers, including tasks such as collection, sweeping, and sorting that are organised by companies, which are contracted by the CDR and the MoB. It is also linked with informal work. Informal recycling emerges in the absence of circular waste solutions and provides a means to make a living. The formal and informal sector have predominantly consisted of migrant workers and refugees subjected to the Kafala system, with an increasing proportion of Lebanese citizens since the start of the economic crisis in 2019.<sup>57</sup>

Since the end of the civil war, the formal SWM sector in BML has employed migrant workers through the Kafala system from countries such as Bangladesh and India, in addition to an increasing number of Syrian and Lebanese workers. Migrant workers in this sector are classified as unskilled manual labour that is regulated by Lebanese labour law (which domestic workers are excluded from) but are subjected to the Kafala system, which has facilitated the

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<sup>55</sup>Bauman, *Wasted life*, 28.

<sup>56</sup>See: Sumayya Kassamali, “The Kafala System as Racialized Servitude,” *Racial Formations in Africa and the Middle East: A Transregional Approach*, *POMEPS Studies* 44 (2021); Ray Jureidini and Said Fares Hassan, “The Islamic Principle of Kafala as Applied to Migrant Workers: Traditional Continuity and Reform,” in *Migration and Islamic Ethics: Issues of Residency, Naturalisation, and Citizenship*, ed. Ray Jureidini and Said Fares Hanssan (Leiden: Brill, 2020); and Elizabeth Frantz, *Exporting Subsistence: Sri Lankan Women’s Migration for Domestic Work in Jordan* (London School of Economic and Political Science: PhD Thesis, 2021), 97–103.

<sup>57</sup>Associated Press, “Lebanon’s poorest scavenge through trash to survive,” VOA news, January 22, 2022, <https://www.voanews.com/a/lebanon-s-poorest-scavenge-through-trash-to-survive/6407215.html>.

systematic “abuse and deception” of migrant workers “from the recruitment stage until they leave Lebanon,” including the recruitment networks and the violations of the labour law.<sup>58</sup> The exploitation and marginalisation of migrant workers highlights the broader discussions on social inequality and sectarian politics discussed in this chapter.

The waste sector is shaped by institutionalised racism and marginalisation. As argued by Glen Kreiner et al., the political exclusion of waste workers is twofold through the *physical taints* associated with “tangibly offensive things such as garbage or death” (such as waste collectors, street sweepers, cleaners and so on) that are not necessarily inherent in the work itself but rather people’s subjective standards of ‘cleanliness’ and ‘purity’.<sup>59</sup> Racism is interwoven into the core of the Kafala system as it relies on differential treatment of race and ‘purity’, being the binary between dirty and clean, inside and outside. As noted in a recent report on the Kafala system, “ethnic stereotypes and prejudice based on the colour of the worker’s skin” acts as a “colour scale” that influences the recruitment costs, “often completely overlooking individual qualities such as skill or individual experience.”<sup>60</sup> This “produces the Lebanese citizen in proximity to “whiteness” as a form of social power, at the same time as it produces the African or Asian migrant in proximity to “blackness” as a form of social marginalisation.”<sup>61</sup> As such, the Kafala system and SWM sector produce the *other* as a legal status and a hierarchy of race.

In recent years, the conditions for waste workers have further deteriorated with the continual socio-political and economic crises in Lebanon. In 2020, RAMCO employed around 400 workers including 250 Bangladeshi nationals in addition to some Indian workers and

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<sup>58</sup>Danger, *Maze of abuse*, 2-3; see also LEADERS, *The Labour Sector in Lebanon*, 36.

<sup>59</sup>Glenn E. Kreiner, Blake E. Ashforth, and David M. Sluss, “Identity dynamics in occupational dirty work: Integrating social identity and system justification perspectives,” *Organization Science* 17, no. 5 (2006), 620.

<sup>60</sup>Danger et al., *Cleaning up*, 4.

<sup>61</sup>Kassmali “Understanding race.”



100 Lebanese workers.<sup>62</sup> Similarly, City Blu employed 1200 workers (800 for collection and 400 for sweeping) with over 70 per cent being migrant workers.<sup>63</sup> However, the workforce composition completely changed with a series of events. During the ongoing crisis migrant workers in the waste sector started getting paid in Lebanese Lira, a currency that lost 82 per cent of its value against the US dollar between 2019 and 2021, despite contracts specifying payments in US dollars<sup>64</sup> – thereby diminishing the remittances that the workers could send to their families.<sup>65</sup> The payment change came after the state started paying RAMCO (and City Blu) in Lebanese Lira in addition to owing the company money for past work, resulting in the company passing on the cost to migrant workers.<sup>66</sup> As noted in the introduction, these conditions led to the strikes at a RAMCO operation site which in turn resulted in violent clashes between riot police and waste workers. The incident displayed how the workers were left unprotected from contract violations and subjected to disproportionate violence by riot police. Furthermore, as noted in a Legal Agenda report only a few migrant workers remaining with RAMCO after the violent clashes.<sup>67</sup> The resistance by workers resulted in their unemployment as RAMCO were unable to pay the workers in dollars leading to repatriation. However, repatriation schemes were shaped by the COVID-19 pandemic and continue to be impacted by the economic crisis resulting in workers awaiting possibilities to return to their

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<sup>62</sup>Gasia Ohanes, “Lebanon’s unseen Bangladeshi migrant workers revolt for basic rights,” *the New Arab*, Analysis, May 20, 2020, <https://english.alaraby.co.uk/analysis/revolt-lebanons-marginalised-bangladeshi-migrant-workers>.

<sup>63</sup>Sunniva Rose, “Lebanon’s problem piles up as covid and cash crisis hit waste collection,” *the National*, Business, July 17, 2020, <https://www.pressreader.com/uae/the-national-news/20200717/281582357936361>; and Mouawad-Edde, *Catalogue*, 154-156.

<sup>64</sup>“ESCWA: 2 Arab Currencies lost more than 80% of their purchasing power between 2019 and 2021,” *ESCWA*, Press release, February, 2, 2022, <https://www.unescwa.org/news/escwa-2-arab-currencies-lost-more-80-their-purchasing-power-between-2019-and-2021>.

<sup>65</sup>Emily Lewis, “Garbage collection companies caught in the middle as bank threatens to seize assets,” *L’Orient Today*, Trash Crisis, October 27, 2020, <https://today.lorientlejour.com/article/1238407/garbage-collection-companies-caught-in-the-middle-as-bank-threatens-to-seize-assets.html>; and Ohanes, “Lebanon’s unseen Bangladeshi migrant workers.”

<sup>66</sup>Ayoub, “Foreign workers revolt.”

<sup>67</sup>ibid

country of origin.<sup>68</sup> The ongoing crisis impacted City Blu similarly, with migrant workers also striking in July 2020 to demand payments in US dollars; however, the strikes ended with workers returning to work.<sup>69</sup>

Amid the repression of waste workers the strikes have created spaces of resistance that have previously been restricted. Significantly, the strikes with City Blu resumed almost two years after the first strike action amid the persisting economic crisis, with waste workers halting the collection of waste as a result of banking withdrawal limits.<sup>70</sup> The work resumed shortly after when the company secured an increased withdrawal limit, which enabled workers to withdraw their salaries.<sup>71</sup> Drawing on the writings of Moore: “marginalized populations are able to leverage this difference between our expectations of cleanliness and urban order and actually excising material conditions in cities to demand their rights to the city.”<sup>72</sup> The persistent resistance of waste workers in Beirut is showcasing how workers are rejecting marginalisation.

In the absence of adequate formal SWM collection and sorting, Lebanon relies on waste pickers and the informal economy. As noted in a recent SWM report, informal actors in Lebanon constitute 5-15 per cent of the SWM system.<sup>73</sup> The informal waste economy captures and capitalises on the failures of formalised waste systems. Notably, one of the most profitable recycling opportunities includes scrap metal – including copper, iron, and alu-

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<sup>68</sup>“Lebanon: 10,00 migrant workers have demanded repatriation due to salary collapse,” *Business & Human Rights Resource Centre*, October 8, 2020, <https://www.business-humanrights.org/en/latest-news/lebanon-10000-migrant-workers-have-demanded-repatriation-due-to-salary-collapse/>; Ohanes, “Lebanon’s unseen Bangladeshi migrant workers.”

<sup>69</sup>Rose, “Lebanon’s problem piles.”

<sup>70</sup>Wael Taleb, “City Blu strikes responsible for trash pileup on Beirut streets,” *L’Orient Today*, Trash Crisis, April 04, 2022, <https://today.lorientlejour.com/article/1295788/city-blu-strike-responsible-for-trash-pile-up-on-beirut-streets.html>.

<sup>71</sup>“City Blu resumes trash collection in Beirut,” *L’Orient Today*, Trash Crisis, April 8, 2022, <https://today.lorientlejour.com/article/1296306/city-blu-resumes-trash-collection-in-beirut.html>.

<sup>72</sup>Moore, “The Excess of Modernity,” 427.

<sup>73</sup>Farah et al., *Solid Waste Management in Lebanon*, 31.

minium – which is one of Lebanon’s largest industries, <sup>74</sup> whilst other less profitable forms for recycling opportunities include paper, plastic and glass. Waste pickers utilise the profitability in order to make a living – as noted by Millar in the case of Rio’s main dumpsite – informal waste work is connected to “the good life” and “life projects”.<sup>75</sup> In the same way, recycling in Beirut is more than abandonment but includes everyday rejections of bare life, as explored by Elizabeth Saleh.<sup>76</sup> There has been a broader push by academic scholarship to understand waste pickers as vital members of waste processing. Waste pickers have significant value for the environment and employment and thus there is a need to highlight their contributions and broader socio-economic value.<sup>77</sup> Waste pickers are a crucial part of the economy, especially in the absence of a circular economy.

Informal waste workers often face difficult conditions and little to no legal protection. In Beirut, self-employment in the informal economy has been shaped by urban migrants and the region’s expansion, including both Lebanese and foreign nationals. The waste pickers include increasing numbers of Lebanese nationals due to the economic crisis but are predominantly shaped by Syrians and Palestinians (including children) that collect and sell recyclables.<sup>78</sup> As noted by Saleh, the distinction between Syrian migrant workers and refugees are not always clear, with some workers residing in Lebanon before the civil war but unable

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<sup>74</sup>“Lebanon,” OEC, accessed September 12, 2022 <https://oec.world/en/profile/country/lbn?compareExports0=comparisonOption1&depthSelector1=HS4Depth>.

<sup>75</sup>Millar, *Reclaiming the Discarded*, 8.

<sup>76</sup>Saleh, “The master cockroach.”

<sup>77</sup>Derek Yu, Derick Blaauw and Rinie Schenck, “Waste pickers in informal self-employment: Over-worked and on the breadline,” *Development Southern Africa* 37, no.6 (2020); and Yujiro Hayami, A. K. Dikshit and S. N. Mishra, “Waste pickers and collectors in Delhi: Poverty and environment in an urban informal sector,” *The Journal of Development Studies* 42, no.1 (2006).

<sup>78</sup>FXB Centre for Health and Human Rights, *Running Out of Time: Survival of Syrian Refugee Children in Lebanon* (Harvard, 2014), 37, <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Running%20Out%20of%20Time.pdf>.

Furthermore, a recent report found that 4 per cent of ‘street-based children’ worked within waste picking in Lebanon. See: Consultation and research Institute, “Children living and working on the streets in Lebanon: Profile and magnitude” (ILO, UNICEF, and SCI, 2015), [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---arabstates/---ro-beirut/documents/publication/wcms\\_344799.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---arabstates/---ro-beirut/documents/publication/wcms_344799.pdf).

to return to Syria due to political situation and conscription.<sup>79</sup> The legal status of Syrians has changed significantly since the Syrian civil war. Due to the non-citizenship status of many workers, racial politics, and the low pay involved, waste pickers face significant challenges. For example, although obtaining residency and work permits is technically possible, the process can be challenging and expensive.<sup>80</sup> In addition, waste pickers in Lebanon are subject to inclusion through exclusion due to their legal peculiarities of being employed in the informal economy and not being included within the labour law, which enables protection and rights.

Like formal waste workers, waste pickers around the world experience stigma due to their work of processing discarded and unwanted materials.<sup>81</sup> In Lebanon, this is further intertwined with racism and xenophobia. As noted by Saleh in the context of Beirut, where the use of the word cockroach is used to describe waste pickers:

“the metaphorical use of the cockroach to describe Syrians who were not merely living and working in the area but also reproducing was as much about disgust as it was about anxieties concerning their rapidly changing neighbourhood—social reproduction is, after all, also reproduction of a population.”<sup>82</sup>

The socio-economic crisis has further exacerbated structures of discrimination. As previously noted, some political leaders blame the economic crisis on refugees – a crisis facilitated by decades of corruption and regulation by these same political leaders. Despite the misperceptions about the impact of the impact Syrian refugees on the informal economy a recent report noted that Syrian involvement in the informal sector had only increased by 10 per cent to 44 per cent after the refugee crisis.<sup>83</sup> Yet, the MoL in 2019, led by the former min-

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<sup>79</sup>Saleh, “The master cockroach,” 98.

<sup>80</sup>See: Human Rights Watch, “*I Just Want to be Treated Like a Person*”.

<sup>81</sup>See for example: Yu et al. “Waste pickers.” and Hayami et al., “Waste pickers.”

<sup>82</sup>Saleh, “The master cockroach,” 94.

<sup>83</sup>LEADERS, *Dignity at Stake*, 9.

ister Kamil Abu Suleiman, carried out a series of inspections in the southern suburbs and beyond, cracking down on informal labour and citing their “competition” with Lebanese citizens.<sup>84</sup> The inspections resulted in a series of smaller protests taking place across refugee camps in Lebanon, with Syrian and Palestinian refugees resisting the inequalities set out by the political leadership.<sup>85</sup> Further unpacked in the last section of this chapter, inhabitants are increasingly able to forge public realms rejecting regulation and control, a mood fostered by the Thawra movement.

The socio-economic conditions have further impacted waste pickers who have started to enter the formal landfills, Bourj Hammoud/Jdeideh and Costa Brava, something that was unthinkable before the crisis. Historically waste pickers have had access to informal dumps in Beirut; for example, in the aftermath of the 2006 July War pickers had access to the demolition waste at Costa Brava dumpsite.<sup>86</sup> Clearly the open access to the landfills pose a series of challenges for the safety of waste pickers and effective SWM. In April and September 2022, two Syrian waste pickers died at the Jdeideh landfill because of accidents, one as young as ten years old.<sup>87</sup> The deaths display how the biopolitical machinery of waste has established a system that exposes life to death. In the case of the Syrian waste pickers, the prolonged crisis has created new realities that force them to risk their lives to provide for their families. This waste picking results from the precarious living conditions they find themselves in, with few

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<sup>84</sup>Najia Houssari, “Crackdown on thousands of Syrian refugees with illegal jobs in Lebanon,” Arab News, July 11, 2019, <https://www.arabnews.com/node/1523926/middle-east>; and Hanan Hamdan, “Palestinian reject Lebanon’s move to regulate foreign labor,” Al-Monitor, August 8, 2019, <https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2019/08/lebanon-ministry-labor-foreign-workers-palestinian-refugees.html>.

<sup>85</sup>Houssari, “Crackdown on thousands of Syrian refugees”; and Hamdan, “Palestinian reject.”

<sup>86</sup>The 2006 Costa Brava Dump has also been labelled Ouzai dump. See: UNEP, *Lebanon: Post-Conflict Environmental Assessment* (Nairobi: UNEP, 2007), 101-102, <https://wedocs.unep.org/handle/20.500.11822/26162>.

<sup>87</sup>Richard Salame, “Trash economy: death in landfill highlights need for reform,” *L’Orient Today*, Trash Crisis, September 2, 2022, <https://today.lorientlejour.com/article/1310259/trash-economy-death-in-landfill-highlights-need-for-reform.html>.

other options available to them.<sup>88</sup> As a response to the deaths, caretaker prime minister Najib Mikati ordered additional state security to prevent pickers from accessing the landfills in Beirut. However, as noted by a series of stakeholders in *L'Orient Today*, these measures are argued to be costly and ineffective as waste pickers will continue to find their way into the landfills.<sup>89</sup> The biopolitical implications of these incidents and responses speak to broader concerns on how the states exercise power over others and its implications.

The response by the political leadership emphasises efforts to regulate and control spaces – as opposed to facilitating safe ways to recycle or to improve the conditions of waste pickers. As noted by Schenck et al. studying landfills in South Africa, there is not “a one fits all” solution to managing landfills; however, “recommended that integrated and participatory processes be respectfully facilitated between each municipality, landfill management, BBCs [Buy Back Centres] and waste pickers to work out the best policies and practices to enhance increased recycling opportunities, enhance the dignity of the workers and to benefit all role players.”<sup>90</sup> With the perpetuating economic crisis it is crucial to facilitate structures which protect human beings and acknowledge waste pickers contribution to ensuring urban spaces. Nevertheless, racism, xenophobia, and sectarian politics – perpetuated by the political leadership continues to shape the lives of waste workers.

### 3.2 CONTESTATION

The marginalisation of *others* is deeply interlinked with sectarian politics and efforts to escape these conditions. Scholars studying the Lebanese civil war have highlighted a series of

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<sup>88</sup>Salame, “Trash economy.”

<sup>89</sup>“Trash collection in Beirut and Metn resumes after scavengers banned from Jdeideh landfill,” *L'Orient Today*, Trash Crisis, April 20, 2022, <https://today.lorientlejour.com/article/1297278/trash-collection-in-beirut-resumes-after-scavengers-banned-from-jdeideh-landfill.html>.

<sup>90</sup>Catherina J Schenck, Phillip F Blaauw, Elizabeth C Swart, Jacoba M M Viljoen, and Naome Mudavanhu, “The management of South Africa’s landfills and waste pickers on them: Impacting lives and livelihoods,” *Development Southern Africa* 36, no.1 (2019), 96.

factors that shaped the conflict, such as the post-independence power-sharing agreement, which has empowered the Maronite leadership and have geopolitical implications on ideological and sectarian tensions.<sup>91</sup> Critically, marginalisation and socio-economic inequalities induced contestation between groups of others.<sup>92</sup> Beirut, as is further explored in Chapter 4, was shaped by extreme urbanisation facilitated by refugees and migrants which settled around the urban centre in slums – often labelled by scholars as “the misery belt”.<sup>93</sup> To provide further context, the French planner Michel Ecochard described the area as ‘Beyrouth, sieg de l’injustice sociale’ - Beirut, the place of social injustice.<sup>94</sup> A critical factor, marginalisation, contributed to the escalation of conflicts which resulted in the civil war.

The almost 15-year civil war was not a period of constant and intense conflict between a few groups but rather a complex period characterised by a series of distinct phases and agents, including the interventions by the Syrian armed forces and the Israel invasion in 1978 and 1982 respectively.<sup>95</sup> In this vein, Daniel Genberg suggests that Lebanon’s civil war should be expressed as plural because “there were periods of peace, ceasefires and periods of tranquility.”<sup>96</sup> The start of the civil war, also known as *the two years’ war* (April 1975 to October 1976), for example was largely an urban phenomenon and characterised by intense fighting with high casualties and displacement. Throughout its entirety however militias (more than 90 of which were estimated to be part of the conflicts by the end of the war<sup>97</sup>) exac-

<sup>91</sup>Faten Ghosn and Amal Khoury, “Lebanon after the civil war: peace or the illustration of peace?” *Middle East Journal* 65 no. 3 (2011); Picard, *Lebanon*; and Theodor Hanf, *Coexistence in wartime Lebanon: Decline of a state and rise of a nation* (Oxford: I.B Tauris, 1993).

<sup>92</sup>Recent reviews of the literature have emphasised socio-economic factors, including Fregonese, *War and the City*, 261, and Baumann, “The causes, nature and effect.”

<sup>93</sup>See in Judith Harik, “The public and social services of the Lebanese militias,” *Centre for Lebanese Studies* 14 (1994) and Fawaz and Peillen, *Urban Slums Report*.

<sup>94</sup>See Michel Ecochard in Verdeil, *Beyrouth et ses Urbanistes: Une Ville en Plans* (Beirut: Presses de L’ifpo, 2010), 53.

<sup>95</sup>See: Najem, *Lebanon*, 34; Trabolusi, *A history of Modern Lebanon*.

<sup>96</sup>Genberg, “Borders and boundaries in post-war Beirut,” 82.

<sup>97</sup>Calame and Charlesworth, *Divided cities*, 44.

erbated sectarian and ideological contestations through violent expulsions of adversaries,<sup>98</sup> with certain periods facilitating specific processes of contestation. For example, Downtown Beirut was initially shaped by extreme destruction and urban violence which subsided over time, while process of violent segregation became more localised as time progressed. The significance of kinship within the urban space materialised itself as physical segregation and increasing dependence on the militias. With the progression of the conflict, militias reorganised urban spaces and reinforced patron-client relationships. These processes recodified centuries of shared space, bolstering the militias that later turned into the political leadership. This reorganisation of the urban spaces led to extreme segregation, not simply through the Green Line that divided West and East, Muslim and Christian Beirut, but through complex segregation at the neighbourhood level. As the civil war progressed, it also included a series of intra-sectarian hostilities between “Sunnis and Shi’is, Druze and Shi’is, Kurds and Shi’is, Palestinians and Shi’is, Maronites and Armenians or between Maronites and Maronites.”<sup>99</sup> As noted by Theodor Hanf, these conflicts “were often more bitter than those across the major divides”; for example including the Christian struggles between Kata’ib and Marada or the NLP; and Muslim struggles between Amal and Palestinians or Hezbollah, and between Druze and Mourabitoun.<sup>100</sup> As such, the civil war carved out complex spaces which emphasised kinship that translated on to neighbourhoods – establishing landscapes of sovereignties.

As the civil war progressed these spaces transformed into segregated spaces with their own infrastructures and economies, further manifesting patron-client relationships. In the 1980s, the Lebanese economy collapsed leading to the loss of public employment and increased dependence on the militias and war economy.<sup>101</sup> From this point onwards, newly established

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<sup>98</sup>Nasr, “New social realities and post-war Lebanon,” 68.

<sup>99</sup>Samir Khalaf, “On Entrapment and Escalation of Violence,” *American - Arab Affairs* 24 (1988), 15.

<sup>100</sup>Hanf, *Coexistence in wartime Lebanon*, 328-29.

<sup>101</sup>To see more on the war economy and the economic collapse in the mid 1980s see: Salim Samir “Lebanon’s war: Is the end in sight?” *Middle East Report* 162 (1990).



militias transformed from “neighbourhood youths” to “professional organisations: that paid its members”.<sup>102</sup> This in turn, led to increasing willingness by the militias to sustain the conflict and economic revenues during the war.<sup>103</sup> The militia’s role in organising infrastructures and economic activities further enables spaces of regulation and control during the conflict. The manifestation of this urban segregation and patron-client relationships created the foundations for the contemporary power-sharing system. While patron-client relationships and kinship have historically played a crucial role, the civil war recodified the political system by entrenching these politics into a plurality of sovereignties by militias that segregated, regulated, and controlled urban spaces. Utilising Agamben’s writings on civil war, “*the house is exceeded in the city and the city is depoliticized in the family.*”<sup>104</sup> The end of the civil war made sectarian politics and the state indistinguishable, as the leaders of these militias were integrated into the political leadership through the Taif Agreement – establishing a system of nested sovereignties as seen in Chapter 2.

In postwar Beirut, unresolved contestation and marginalisation continued to shape urban processes. Moreover, the rehabilitation and reconstruction of the urban centre further consolidated sectarian politics and power dynamics by empowering the political leadership. The reconstruction of Beirut was an unequal process, focusing on Downtown Beirut – also called the Beirut Central District (BCD). The process was centred around spatial erasure that transformed urban dynamics. The political leadership – especially including Sunni prime minister Rafic Hariri and his network – utilised the CDR and the private real-estate company Solidere to reconstruct the area.<sup>105</sup> Solidere included ambitious goals, promising “brash

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<sup>102</sup>See: Elizabeth Pichard, “The political economy of civil war in Lebanon,” in *War, Institutions, and Social Change in the Middle East*, ed. Steve Heydemann (California: University of California Press, 2000).

<sup>103</sup>, Atif A. Kubursi, “Reconstructing the economy in Lebanon,” *Arab Studies Quarterly* 21, no. 1 (1999), 78.

<sup>104</sup>Agamben, *Stasis*, 12.

<sup>105</sup>Baumann, *Citizen Hariri*, 65.

new development” and would reinstate the city as “an international centre of finance.”<sup>106</sup> In the early years of the reconstruction the project came to be considered the embodiment of neoliberalism and laissez-faire economy in Lebanon.<sup>107</sup> The project privatised urban spaces and manifested new forms of class divisions in Beirut.

Without a concrete plan, significant heritage and prewar memories were lost due to the excessive use of explosives to clear the area for reconstruction. In the BCD, more than 80 per cent of all buildings had been damaged beyond repair due to the demolition process as opposed to the one-third that had been destroyed during the civil war years.<sup>108</sup> As Saree Makdisi points out, “more irreparable damage has been done to the centre of Beirut by those who claim to be interested in salvaging and rebuilding it than had been done during the course of the preceding fifteen years of shelling and house-to-house combat.”<sup>109</sup> As a result, Solidere was able to produce an artificial space that catered to the political leadership and the rich by erasing previously shared spaces. This spatial erasure of downtown Beirut sparked considerable debates. Solidere was criticised early for providing “no real attempt” at fostering reconciliation and acceptance of the country’s violent past<sup>110</sup> and enabling state-sanctioned *amnesia*.<sup>111</sup> Seeking to unpack ‘spatial erasure’, Khalaf argues that the inhabitants in Lebanon are impacted by fear: “the fear of being marginalized, assimilated, or exiled” and that “those fears which keep the Lebanese apart.”<sup>112</sup> The spatial erasure removes signs of the civil war

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<sup>106</sup>Dominic Perring, “Archaeology and the Post-War Reconstruction of Beirut,” *Conservation and Management of Archaeological sites* 11 no. 3-4 (2009), 299.

<sup>107</sup>Marieje Krijcke and Mona Fawaz, “Exception as the rule: high-end developments in neoliberal Beirut,” *Built Environment* 36, no. 2 (2010), 254-6.

<sup>108</sup>Saree Makdisi, “Laying claim to Beirut: urban narratives and spatial identity in the age of Solidere,” *Critical Inquiry* 23, no.3 (1997), 674.

<sup>109</sup>Makdisi, “Laying claim to Beirut.”

<sup>110</sup>John Nagle, “Ghosts, memory and the right to the divided city: resisting Amnesia in Beirut City Centre,” *Antipode* 49, no. 1 (2017), 156.

<sup>111</sup>Sune Haugbolle, *War and Memory in Lebanon* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 94; Nagle, “Ghosts, memory and the right to the divided city,” 160.

<sup>112</sup>Khalaf, *Civil and Uncivil Violence in Lebanon*, 247.

but also shared spaces and signs of coexistence; for example, by removing the historical souq and building an expensive shopping mall.

The reconstruction also enabled new class relations through the dispossession of people, like IDPs and pre-war right-holders. The eviction of “illegal war-displaced squatters” was done against a small compensation fee, which ranged from \$5,000 - \$7,000, with the intention that war-displaced individuals would return home.<sup>113</sup> However, instead of developing a comprehensive relief and reconstruction plan, the CDR focused on redeveloping the city for “business, tourism and upscale housing.” Many believed that eliminating the presence of IDPs would help “heal the wounds of the war”<sup>114</sup> and that they were an obstacle to the reconstruction agenda as they were “disturbing the social order and making the city dirty and uncivilized.”<sup>115</sup> Shi’a IDP’s were described as invaders or occupiers, rather than refugees.<sup>116</sup> The political exclusion of Shi’a from the BCD fostered the marginalisation and urban segregation which continued to manifest across Beirut.

Similarly, pre-war property rights holders were viewed as an obstacle for reconstruction in BCD through their representation of the souq, which represented shared spaces and transcended class divisions. As exemplified by Hourani: “The pre-war right-holders were represented as economically irrational [...] Solidere backers charged that the ‘pre-modern’ conceptions of property and associated economic practices in the souq prevented modernisation of the city.”<sup>117</sup> As such, pre-war property right holders had their land confiscated by Solidere in return for shares in the company, through Law 117 which legalised dispossession.<sup>118</sup> The expropriation of the property led to much criticism as “owners and tenants joined in

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<sup>113</sup>Hiba Bou Akar, “Contesting Beirut’s Frontiers,” *City and Society* 24, no. 2 (2012), 158.

<sup>114</sup>Aseel Swalha, *Reconstructing Beirut: Memory and Space in a Postwar Arab City* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2010), 111.

<sup>115</sup>Swalha, *Reconstructing Beirut*, 115

<sup>116</sup>Hourani, “Post-conflict reconstruction,” 188

<sup>117</sup>ibid

<sup>118</sup>Leenders, *Spoils of Truce*, 58.

different committees and tried to prevent the reconstruction project through innumerable court proceedings and ongoing public-relation activities,” however, these forms of resistance had disappointing results.<sup>119</sup> The examples of IDPs and property right holders displayed the shifting power dynamics in Lebanon, which enabled political leaders to act with great power and with impunity.

The reconstruction of the BCD facilitated the continuation of the processes of the civil war, enabling the segregation of urban space, dependence on political leaders, and marginalisation of communities amid the absence of a regional and national reconstruction plan. Moreover, these processes resulted in increasing contestation – especially between Sunni and Shi’a – which continued to escalate in the 2000s. On the 14<sup>th</sup> of February 2005, the everyday lives of Beirut’s inhabitants changed once more with the assassination of prime minister Rafik Hariri. Hariri was Lebanon’s longest-serving prime minister and had defined reconstruction of BCD.<sup>120</sup> The assassination triggered a breakdown of Sunni-Shiite relationships and resulted in the Cedar Revolution; tens of thousands of protesters sought to end “injustices caused by the civil war and Syria’s oppressive control over Lebanon.”<sup>121</sup> Subsequently, Hezbollah organised the March 8 demonstration supporting the Syrian military presence with the Future Movement organising a counter-demonstration on March 14 which resulted in the end of the Syrian occupation from Lebanon.<sup>122</sup> The Cedar Revolution escalated post-war contestations in Lebanon.

Other sources of conflict and contestation have worked to further shape urban spaces.

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<sup>119</sup>Heiko Schmid, “Privatized urbanity or a politicized society? Reconstruction in Beirut after the civil war,” *European Planning Studies* 14, no. 3 (2006), 373.

<sup>120</sup>Before his death, Hariri had challenged Syrian hegemony and confronted former supporter president Bashar al-Assad, ending in Hariri’s resignation on the 20<sup>th</sup> of October 2004.

<sup>121</sup>Knudsen and Kerr, *Lebanon*, 4.

<sup>122</sup>March 8 alliance include the parties Shiite Muslim Hezbollah and Amal parties and the Christian Free Patriotic Movement. March 14 alliances include Sunni Muslims, and the Phakange Party and Lebanese Forces (Both Christian).

As explored in Chapter 4 this includes the reconstruction after the 2006 July War between Hezbollah and Israel, which resulted in the destruction of the southern suburbs and “at least 1,109 Lebanese deaths [...] and an estimated 1 million displaced.”<sup>123</sup> Furthermore, contestation was further consolidated during the May 2008 Clashes when armed militias took to the streets of Beirut, observing the worst fighting since the civil war thus enforcing new demarcation lines.<sup>124</sup> However, as noted in Chapter 2, contestations change across space and time. In recent years, conflicts have re-emerged between Lebanese Forces and Hezbollah and Amal in the wake of the Beirut explosion, resulting in the worst incidents of violence since May 2008. Contestation and violence have shaped urban spaces in various ways, resulting in urban segregation and the manifestation of patron-client relationships, which has recodified the role of the political leadership in the state. These processes have impacted all aspects of urban spaces, including SWM discussed below.

### 3.2.1 WASTE-IMPACTED COMMUNITIES

Contestation significantly impacts SWM in Beirut due to aspects such as sectarian politics, conflict, and urban segregation, especially when it comes to processes like landfilling and incineration. Communities in Lebanon have a long history of resistance to SWM structures, as can be seen with the experiences at Naameh landfill – the region’s only operational landfill between 1997-2016. Notably, the landfill raised questions regarding who – or what community – should bear the environmental consequences of SWM.

These forms of contestation emerged during the civil war, recodifying the state in sectarian terms. The Lebanese civil war not only resulted in the breakdown of SWM because of the destruction of infrastructures and the emergence of large-scale waste dumps but also the

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<sup>123</sup>Human Rights Watch, *Why They Died: Civilian Casualties in Lebanon During the 2006 War* (United States, 2007), 4, <https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/lebanon0907.pdf>.

<sup>124</sup>See: Akar, “Contesting Beirut’s Frontiers”; Fregonese, *War and the city*, Chapter 7.

reordering of waste.

The creation of the Green Line in 1976 had implications for waste management, with the primary disposal site and most of the equipment being located in East Beirut.<sup>125</sup> Because the MoB was responsible for collecting waste for both sides it was forced to find new workers and garbage trucks as well as a new disposal site in West Beirut.<sup>126</sup> As a result, a dumpsite in Downtown Beirut was selected adjacent to the sea and the Normandy Hotel – the dumps namesake – where irregular dumping had started already in 1975. During the civil war, the Normandy site received a significant proportion of municipal waste and demolition, which was dumped into the sea.<sup>127</sup> Similarly in East Beirut, the Karantina plant became damaged during the conflict resulting in waste being burned or discarded into the sea at the previously used Bourj Hammoud dump<sup>128</sup> – less than 5 km away from the Normandy dump.<sup>129</sup> Far from developing a sustainable plan, the SWM emergency plan by the MoB displayed efforts to minimise health and urban impacts on inhabitants amid contestation. However, during extensive periods of the civil war, the MoB was completely demobilised, escalating dumping in Normandy and Bourj Hammoud. Furthermore, militias took over waste management utilising “empty lots” where waste was “dumped and burnt.”<sup>130</sup> Exploring public services during the civil war, Judith Harik discusses how militias took over the role of the government agencies in providing public services during the civil war; in waste management, this included the student initiatives under the Lebanese Front in East Beirut, and significantly the introduction of waste collection for the first time in the southern suburbs by Hezbol-

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<sup>125</sup>Composting plant and incineration plants was situated in Karantina, East Beirut and was finished in 1975. See: El Jor, *Policies and Institutional*, 38.

<sup>126</sup>ibid.

<sup>127</sup>Sadek and El-Fadel, “The Normandy Landfill,” 156.

<sup>128</sup>Also called Karantina/Quarantina dump.

<sup>129</sup>Acra and Acra, “Commentary,” 142.

<sup>130</sup>El Jor, *Policies and Institutional*, 38.

lah.<sup>131</sup> The broader shift during the civil war signals the increasing role of militias leaders and patron-client relationships during times of crisis.

After the civil war, SWM continued to be interconnected with sectarian politics. Reconstruction transformed the Normandy site – reclaiming 79,000 square meters of land for the Solidere project (a project partially conducted by *Mouawad-Edde-Soriko SAL* – the owner of City Blu).<sup>132</sup> Moreover, decisions were made to send all the waste to the Bourj Hammoud dump. Between 1991 and 1997, an additional 2.5 million tonnes of solid waste was dumped at the site – more waste than during the entire civil war.<sup>133</sup> This effectively established the conditions that led to the protests around the landfill in 1997.

The crisis in 1997 and the reinstatement of the Bourj Hammoud site in 2016 further display the relationship between SWM and contestation. As noted previously in this chapter, Bourj Hammoud is shaped by the legacy of Armenian refugees and their marginalisation in Lebanese politics. Although other groups like refugees and migrants live in the area it is predominantly settled by Armenians. This is reflected in the Municipality of Bourj Hammoud (MoBH), which predominantly consists of members of the Armenian Tashnag party.<sup>134</sup> The distinctive Armenian heritage of the area has shaped SWM and resistance against further marginalisation. In particular, at the Bourj Hammoud site political parties have actively facilitated resistance against the landfill. In June 1997, the MoE and CoM had advised the closure of the landfill, yet no action was taken until the protest started with encouragement from the Tashnag Party and other Maten deputies.<sup>135</sup> The protests successfully closed the Bourj Hammoud site, resulting in the incineration plans in Amrssoushie and Karantina and later the construction of Naameh landfill.

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<sup>131</sup>Harik, “The public and social services of the Lebanese militias”; 15-27.

<sup>132</sup>Leenders, *Spoils of Truce*, 60.

<sup>133</sup>ELRAD, *Legal Framework*, 47.

<sup>134</sup>Leonardsson, “Vertical relationships,” 224.

<sup>135</sup>Boutros, “Garbage Crisis in Lebanon.”

Similarly, in 2016, the construction of the Bourj Hammoud landfill also resulted in opposition structures and political parties' involvement. The Maronite Kataeb party and its youth wing organised critical protests against the construction of the landfill. The Kataeb party – with has a strong electoral basis in Metn (north of Beirut) – held over a month-long protest, starting in August 2016.<sup>136</sup> The protests halted the construction of the landfill and prevented trucks from entering the site.<sup>137</sup> Notably, the youth wing of the political party was not immune against repression by the state. Like other protests in waste-impacted communities, the Kataeb youth was met by the ISF which injured two students.<sup>138</sup> The incident emerged after the youth attempted to enter the coastal landfill in order to expose the extent of pollution.<sup>139</sup> In this way, the ISF sought to regulate and control the opposition to the construction of the landfill and ensure that waste was removed from the streets in Beirut. The incident demonstrates the complex postwar politics, in which the objectives of the state and its political leaders and their parties do not coincide, emphasising nested sovereignties.

The case of Bourj Hammoud further displays the role of sectarian politics. Whilst many Armenian residents supported the protests in Bourj Hammoud, cross-sectarian mobilisation failed, and the resistance against the landfill remained within sectarian politics in contrast with protests in Beirut in 2015.<sup>140</sup> As explained by Nucho,

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<sup>136</sup>“2014-01 – Waste Management Conflict,” *Civil Society Knowledge Centre*, last updated September, 2018, <https://civilsociety-centre.org/timeliness/4923#event-a-href-sir-kataeb-students-stage-demo-over-trash-crisis-demand-resignation-cdr-headkataeb-students-stage-demo-over-trash-crisis-demand-resignation-of-cdr-head-a>.

<sup>137</sup>Samar Khalil, *Impacting Policies: Waste Management and Advocacy in Lebanon* (Arab Reform Initiative and Heinrich Böll Stiftung, 2022), 6, <https://www.arab-reform.net/publication/impacting-policies-waste-management-and-advocacy-in-lebanon/>.

<sup>138</sup>“Kataeb Students Force Works Suspension at Bourj Hammoud Landfill after scuffle,” *Naharnet*, August 11, 2016, <https://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/214663-kataeb-students-force-works-suspension-at-bourj-hammoud-landfill-after-scuffle>.

<sup>139</sup>“Kataeb youth, police clash at Bourj Hammoud,” *The Daily Star*, 2016, <https://www.thefreelibrary.com/Kataeb+youth%2C+police+clash+at+Burj+Hammoud+landfill-a0461528165>.

<sup>140</sup>Kareem Chehayeb, “Lebanon’s Bourj Hammoud landfill: a disaster waiting to happen,” *The Middle East Eye*, September 27, 2016, <https://www.middleeasteye.net/opinion/lebanons-burj-hammoud-landfill-disaster-waiting-happen>.



“It was far more difficult for Armenians in Bourj Hammoud to join in local protests than it was for them to protest in Beirut because in Bourj Hammoud it would have been regarded as a protest against the Armenian Tashnag party-dominated municipality rather than against the Lebanese “state” and its actors.”<sup>141</sup>

In Bourj Hammoud sectarian politics prevented the mobilisation of local communities due to clientelism. The case displays the role of the political leadership in Beirut and its role in facilitating the mismanagement of SWM. In contrast, the cases of Naameh and Costa Brava have included less visible involvement by political parties. Although political parties have attempted to capture discontent; for example, Walid Jumblatt, the leader of the Progressive Socialist Party (Druze)– with an electoral base in the Chouf (south of Beirut) has been particularly vocal against Naameh landfill.<sup>142</sup> As such, sectarian politics continue to be interconnected with SWM in various ways. Notably however, protests in waste-impacted communities have for the most part centered around residents and environmental activists, including Bourj Hammoud. Environmental activists have been crucial in supporting residents, facilitating protests and recommending long-term solutions. Nevertheless, amid the current extended crisis, most forms of resistance in Lebanon have reduced, with most of the population struggling to survive. In this political climate, many activists continue albeit in more muted ways due to the ongoing crisis, with many focusing on working with and emphasising decentralised solutions to the waste crisis.<sup>143</sup>

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<sup>141</sup>Joanne Randa Nucho, “Garbage Infrastructure, Sanitation, and New Meanings of Citizenship in Lebanon,” *Journal of Interdisciplinary Thought on Contemporary Cultures* 31, no. 1 (2019).

<sup>142</sup>See: “Jumblatt Calls for Resolving Naameh Landfill Issue, Ending Residents Suffering,” <https://m.naharnet.com/stories/en/151910-jumblatt-calls-for-resolving-naameh-landfill-issue-ending-residents-suffering>.

<sup>143</sup>See in Khalil, *Impacting Policies*.

### 3.3 MOVEMENT ACTIVISM

In the aftermath of the civil war, the political leadership ensured the destruction of shared spaces through reconstruction. As explored in this chapter, this was further done through policies that have fostered clientelist frameworks and inequality. However, it is essential to note that shared spaces are critical in fostering peace, multiplicity and equality. In the absence of shared spaces, sectarian spaces have flourished, exacerbating contestation and marginalisation.<sup>144</sup>

Few shared spaces remained after the civil war where “different trajectories coexist”; for example, Hamra – one of Beirut’s only mixed neighbourhoods – became critical, experiencing an economic revival in the absence of shared spaces in the BCD.<sup>145</sup> Another example, the Corniche, marked itself as “the only place where all Beiruters, regardless of their religious or political affiliations, can enjoy a stroll.”<sup>146</sup> No more than a few kilometres long, with initial plans set out by the Ottomans in 1885, the seafront promenade stretches along the seaside from the west of the BCD.<sup>147</sup> Yet, scholars such as Seidmann, Larkin and Genberg have noted how even these spaces are shaped by social exclusion, albeit based on class.<sup>148</sup> Researching the Corniche, Genberg suggests that locals living in the less affluent neighbourhoods adjacent to the promenade would not go there unless for fishing as they “considered the Corniche to be for people from outside.”<sup>149</sup> Therefore, Beirut remains shaped by a series of obstacles in establishing genuinely inclusive and equitable shared spaces. While some spaces managed to survive and maintain their diverse character, they still struggle with exclusionary practices

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<sup>144</sup>Nasr, “New social realities and post-war Lebanon,” 68.

<sup>145</sup>Seidmann, “The politics of Cosmopolitan Beirut,” 7.

<sup>146</sup>Lieven De Cauter, “Towards a phenomenology of civil war: Hobbes meets Benjamin in Beirut,” *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 35, no. 1 (2011), 422.

<sup>147</sup>Genberg, “Borders and boundaries,” 90.

<sup>148</sup>Seidmann, “The politics of Cosmopolitan Beirut”; Larkin, *Memory and Conflict in Lebanon*, 421; Genberg, “Borders and boundaries,” 91.

<sup>149</sup>Genberg, “Borders and boundaries,” 91.

and attitudes that limit their accessibility and usefulness for inhabitants.

Resistance to the sectarian power-sharing system has increased since the Arab uprising, attempting to establish shared spaces between sectarian groups. These movements have emerged due to loose networks of people, activist groups, and organisations that have fostered unity and shared spaces. Furthermore, as outlined by Ibrahim Halawi and Bassel F. Shalloukh, these movements are not a part of the traditional civil society in Lebanon that have been deeply interconnected with sectarian politics.<sup>150</sup> Gradually, spaces have emerged which have challenged the power-sharing system and fostered new spaces.

In the wake of the Arab uprising, protests emerged in Lebanon seeking to mobilise against sectarian politics and the power-sharing system. The protests “largely escaped international media and academic attention,” due to their relatively limited scale that was quickly demobilised and repressed by the political leadership.<sup>151</sup> Yet, scholars have noted how these protests resulted in the beginning of anti-establishment and non-sectarian movements in Lebanon.<sup>152</sup> Emanating from this, the 2015 waste protests – further explored below – highlighted the ineffectiveness of the power-sharing system and challenged the political leadership – forging public realms. The protests significantly facilitated new spaces for non-sectarian candidates in the 2016 Municipal election. The newly formed Beirut Madinati campaigned for “the inhabitants of Beirut and public space” – seeking to challenge the extensive reach of sectarian politics in Lebanon. The movement failed to overcome the deeply rooted “allotment state” in the 2016 election as the political leadership formed an electoral list to fight the political

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<sup>150</sup>Ibrahim Halawi and Bassel F. Salloukh, “Pessimism of the intellect, optimism of the will after the 17th October protests in Lebanon,” *Middle East Law and Governance* 12 (2020), 324. See also Janine A. Clark and Bassel F. Salloukh, “Elite strategies, civil society, and sectarian identities in postwar Lebanon,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 45, no. 4 (2014).

<sup>151</sup>Geha “Co-optation, Counter-Narratives, and repression,” 17.

<sup>152</sup>See: Geha, “Co-optation, counter-narratives, and repression”; AbiYaghi, Catusse, and Younes, “From isat an-nizam at-ta’ifi.”

threat.<sup>153</sup> As noted by Stephen Deets, the creation of “the Unity List” by Saad Hariri was an “olive branch to Amal” displaying that while the parties “can be intense competitors, they can come together to preserve clientelism and prevent secular grassroots activists from winning seats.”<sup>154</sup> Yet, the Beirut Madinati campaign signalled an essential shift in Lebanese politics fostering a non-sectarian electoral space for the 2022 national elections which saw independent – Thawra supporting – candidates gaining 13 seats.<sup>155</sup>

The large-scale demonstrations that started in October 2019 – labelled Thawra – emerged with the escalation of the economic crisis brought on by postwar corruption and inequalities since the civil war. The sectarian power-sharing structure produced a system that has manifested the power of the political leadership at the expense of providing the most basic services, such as electricity and SWM. The movement activists challenged this system calling for the resignation of all the political leaders, chanting “all of them means all of them” in peaceful protest, demanding justice for all inhabitants in Lebanon, regardless of religion, sect and class, and providing an inclusive space for women, refugees, migrant workers, and LGBTQ+ people.<sup>156</sup> As a result, movement activists established shared spaces which enabled *the right to be different* and not having to subscribe to homogenising powers amid social, political and institutionalised forms of everyday regulation.<sup>157</sup>

Unlike previous protests, movement activists were explicitly asking for political and economic change, including “more than two million people to the streets of Beirut and other major cities and regions in a spontaneous and leaderless uprising.”<sup>158</sup> Despite instances of

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<sup>153</sup>With the exception of Hezbollah, which did not participate that year.

<sup>154</sup>See: Deets, “Consociationalism, clientelism, and local politics,” 147.

<sup>155</sup>David Gritten, “Lebanon election: Hezbollah and allies lose parliamentary majority,” BBC, May 17, 2022, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-61463884>.

<sup>156</sup>Halawi and Salloukh, “Pessimism of the intellect,” 324.

<sup>157</sup>See: Lefebvre, *The Survival of Capitalism*, 35.

<sup>158</sup>Jeffrey G. Karam and Sana Tannoury-Karam, “The Lebanese Intifada: Observations and reflections on Revolutionary Times,” *Jadaliyya*, November 10, 2019, <https://www.jadaliyya.com/Details/40218>.

violence, demonstrations were predominantly peaceful with estimates showing that 83 per cent of the protests between October and December 2019 were peaceful,<sup>159</sup> displaying the persistence of movement activists amid hostile environments. As such, inhabitants rejected decades of sectarian politics and urban segregation, forging an unprecedented space where everyone could participate. However, the protestors were met with repression and efforts to delegitimise the protests, with the political leadership responding to various power structures. As explored in Chapter 2, these strategies included the use of state security forces (such as the ISF, LAF, LMI, and Parliamentary Police), the criminalisation of movement activists, and economic coercion, but also informal tactics such as violence by party members and infiltration of the movement. Together these components established the *war machine* of the state – as underscored by Mbembe – consisting of forces which sought to remove any opposition to the state. Furthermore, it also displayed how nested sovereignties came together in order to ensure the survival of the political system and its power.

On countless occasions, state security forces used excessive force against protestors. As documented by a series of organisations like the Legal Agenda, Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, protestors were met with rubber bullets, stun grenades, and tear gas, and also mass arrests and the detention of demonstrators without cause, finding that “the Lebanese state deliberately relied on excessive and, at times, life-threatening use of force and torture to disperse and intimidate protestors exercising their rights to freedom of expression and assembly.”<sup>160</sup> These acts of aggression display how the political leadership utilised necropolitics – power over death<sup>161</sup> – to retaliate to any resistance that challenged the political system, displaying the force of sovereign power in Lebanon and extreme processes of

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<sup>159</sup>“Breaking the Barriers: One Year of Demonstrations,” ACLED, Middle East, October 27, 2020 <https://acleddata.com/2020/10/27/breaking-the-barriers-one-year-of-demonstrations-in-lebanon/>.

<sup>160</sup>Haidar, “A Popular uprising met with violence and torture.”

<sup>161</sup>Mbembe, *Necropolitics*.

regime survival.

These extreme acts of violence by the state have persisted, escalating in the aftermath of the 2020 Beirut port explosion that killed 218 people, injured 7,000, and displaced 300,000 people.<sup>162</sup> On the 5<sup>th</sup> of August, the now-former Prime Minister Hassan Diab declared a two-week state of emergency, granting the military total power as protests emerged over the mishandling of the Port.<sup>163</sup> The violence that followed a few days later comprised of “the ultimate expression of sovereignty” and “the power and capacity to dictate who is able to live and who must die.”<sup>164</sup> Tens of thousands protestors gathered in Downtown Beirut to express their frustration over the political leadership, leading to the extreme use of force, including teargas, rubber bullets, and pellets, to disperse protestors from governmental buildings and the city centre.<sup>165</sup> A report by Human Rights Watch found that during the protest more than 700 people were wounded, by security forces (which included ISF, LAF, and the Parliamentary Police).<sup>166</sup> In response to the accusations over excessive force by Human Rights Watch, the ISF noted that the use of force “adhered strictly to the orders they were given”, while LAF and the Parliamentary Police declined to answer.<sup>167</sup> While violence was committed by both sides, the unproportionate response to protestors highlights the retaliation by the state and the strategies of regime survival.

Three years after the start of the protest movement, Lebanon’s political leadership re-

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<sup>162</sup>“Infographic: How big was the Beirut explosion?” Aljazeera.

<sup>163</sup>Kareem Chehayeb and Megan Specia, “Lebanon’s parliament confirms state of emergency, extending army power,” *the New York Times*, August 13, 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/13/world/middleeast/lebanon-parliament-emergency.html>.

<sup>164</sup>Mbembe, *Necropolitics*, 66.

<sup>165</sup>Timour Azhari, “Protestors raid government buildings as fury grows over Beirut blast,” *Aljazeera*, News, August 8, 2020, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/8/8/protesters-raid-govt-buildings-as-fury-grows-over-beirut-blast>.

<sup>166</sup>Aya Majzoub, “Lebanon police force directs blame for abuse against protestors,” *Human Rights Watch*, September 21, 2020, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/09/21/lebanon-police-force-directs-blame-abuse-against-protesters>.

<sup>167</sup>Majzoub, “Lebanon police force.”

mains in power and has resisted political change. Amid the compounding crisis – accelerated by the pandemic and the 2020 Beirut port explosion – political leaders do not hesitate to repress protestors which often emphasises the deepening impacts of the economic crisis.<sup>168</sup> Yet, the Thawra movement continues to impact politics – although it is less visible – continuing to lay the frameworks for political change, as seen with the 2022 Elections.

### 3.3.1 WASTE ACTIVISM

Waste Activism is deeply connected with anti-establishment and non-sectarian movements after the Arab Uprising. Not simply because of the role of the 2015 waste protests in establishing common grounds, where everyone agreed that something had to be done with the waste crisis, but also because movement activists have created spaces where everyone can participate, including waste workers, as seen at the start of the chapter. As such, waste activism is a space where struggles converge across groups of people – such as migrant workers, refugees, and communities – although they are rooted within different scales, topics and motivations.

In Beirut, waste activism displays more than the rejection of socio-political and cultural conditions, but also the resistance of an entire political system that is based around that people are *disposable* to the state.<sup>169</sup> The waste crisis emerged on the 17<sup>th</sup> of July 2015 as a result of the closure of Naameh landfill and the expiration of the waste contract with Sukleen. Unfolding was a very visible crisis – at least for the affluent neighbourhoods in Beirut that had not previously experienced heaps of rubbish.<sup>170</sup> Responding to the growing piles of waste, a relatively small number of activists started protesting in Martyr’s Square demanding a resolution to the waste crisis.

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<sup>168</sup>“Tear gas, clashes as Lebanese outraged over economic crisis,” Aljazeera, March 22, 2023, <https://www.aljazeera.com/gallery/2023/3/22/photos-tear-gas-clashes-as-lebanese-outraged-over-economic-crisis>.

<sup>169</sup>See: Mbembe, *Necropolitics*, 80.

<sup>170</sup>See: Abu-Rish, “Garbage Politics.”

Initially, the *You Stink* movement sought to remedy what was “out of place” by calling for the waste to be removed from the streets of Beirut but also critiquing the political leadership and their inability to provide public services. Through #YouStink, protestors challenged the political ordering by claiming that the political leadership was “polluted” and “dirty”, thus turning waste into a political tool to express political discontents. The movement gained momentum in solidarity after the 19<sup>th</sup> of August when police used excessive force to disperse peaceful protestors outside of the Grand Serail – the prime minister’s headquarters.<sup>171</sup> Responding to criticism about excessive force, security forces argued that they used “maximum restraint to prevent a riot but that protesters resisted and pushed back.”<sup>172</sup> The violence against protestors escalated the movement, with protests increasing in solidarity and other movements emerging calling for accountability.

Scholars have identified various networks that came together to form the movement, including the initial activists under *You Stink* that wanted measures to handle the waste crisis and the anti-establishment network *We Want Accountability* calling for an end to post-civil war structures, institutions, and leadership.<sup>173</sup> In contrast with *You Stink*, which primarily viewed themselves as a civil society organisation, *We Want Accountability* attempted to mitigate social and political change. In particular, the anti-establishment activists were breaking the post-Taif taboo around the power-sharing system as the only political system to keep peace and order in Lebanon.

In addition, networks emerged along party lines including left-leaning networks, such as the *Change is Coming* (originating from the youth wing of the Lebanese Communist Party)

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<sup>171</sup>“Lebanon: Police violence against protestors,” Human Rights Watch, August 22, 2015, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2015/08/22/lebanon-police-violence-against-protesters>.

<sup>172</sup>“Lebanon: Police violence against protestors,” Human Rights Watch.

<sup>173</sup>Geha, “Politics of a Garbage Crisis,” 84-85; AbiYaghi, Catusse, and Younes, “From *isqat an-nizam at-tafi* to the Garbage Crisis Movement,” 77-78; “Social movement responding to the Lebanese garbage crisis,” *Civil Society Knowledge Centre*, August 2016, <https://civilsociety-centre.org/party/social-movement-responding-lebanese-garbage-crisis>.



and *to the Streets* (including previous members of the Democratic Leftist Movement), which explicitly linked the crisis to class inequalities and the political system.<sup>174</sup> Other smaller networks also developed from university clubs and movements, such as *the People Want* (including feminist and justice networks).<sup>175</sup> Furthermore, a series of established environmental organisations joined the protests, such as the Lebanese Eco Movement (LEM), the Lebanese Associations for Democratic Elections (LADE) and Legal Agenda.<sup>176</sup> In contrast with the other movements, LEM – consisting of a series of environmental NGO’s – had the protection of the environment as the main priority, which prompted sustainable solutions and was even willing to attend meetings with the Minister for Agriculture Akram Chehayeb (who had temporarily taken over the role from the MOE, after the resignation of the Minister of Environment Mohammad Machnouk).<sup>177</sup> During the 2015 waste protests, activists had a broad range of ideas and motivations reflecting various struggles and spaces of multiplicity.

As noted by Carmen Geha, different networks strategically joined together successfully organising as many as 100,000 people around narratives that were aimed at shaming political leaders, making all political leaders accountable, and addressing grievances such as the “call for the resignation of the Minister of Environment or the call for parliamentary elections.”<sup>178</sup> Consequently, waste activists in Beirut recognised that waste is not simply an environmental issue, but a systematic problem which encompasses various groups of people. Yet, waste activism was shaped by political exclusions and marginalisation. The movement included a series of class dynamics; for example, the network *You Stink* addressed the middle

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<sup>174</sup>Lena Herzog, *Nothing but A Demonstration: The Civil Society Movement During the Garbage Crisis in Beirut after July 2015* (Heinrich Boll Stiftung, 2016), <https://lb.boell.org/en/2016/04/08/nothing-demonstration>; and Carole Kerbage, *Politics by Coincidence: The Harak Faces its “Peoples”* (Beirut: Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs, 2016), <http://library.kas.de/GetObject.ashx?GUID=56ed21be-799c-e811-82c0-005056b96343&IDUSER=NotAllowed>.

<sup>175</sup>Ibid.

<sup>176</sup>See in Khalil, *Impacting Policies* and Herzog, *Nothing But A Demonstration*.

<sup>177</sup>Herzog, *Nothing but A Demonstration*, 5.

<sup>178</sup>Geha, “Politics of a Garbage Crisis,” 85-86.

class, and *We Want Accountability* addressed an anti-establishment audience, while groups such as *Change is Coming* and *to the Streets* linked the crisis to class differences and social justice.<sup>179</sup> According to Kerbage, there was a clear distinction between activists, “financially privileged participants focused generally on the issue of garbage collection, whereas it seemed that the discontent of middle-class and poor categories went beyond the trash crisis.”<sup>180</sup> Furthermore, Deets notes the role of class divisions within the movement and the production of separate spaces: middle-class protestors in Martyr’s Square and lower-class protestors outside the UN House.<sup>181</sup> As such, the movement consisted of a series of people with various class backgrounds, causing tensions within the movement.

Protestors from marginalised Shi’a neighbourhoods especially became a source of contestation within the movement. Labelled as “violent infiltrators”, some activists “were almost automatically identified as coming from the poor Shi’a neighbourhood of Khadaq al-Ghamiq” rendering them “suspects in the eyes of a predominant middle class” thus creating mechanisms of “unconscious exclusion/inclusion.”<sup>182</sup> As noted by Kerbage, some activists were not only excluded from the movement due to stereotyping and stigmatisation, but also being excluded by the neighbourhood and Hezbollah.<sup>183</sup> As such, the participants from marginalised communities became excluded due to sectarian and class dynamics. These dynamics display how people from specific neighbourhoods were not welcome in the movement regardless of their motivations.

Due to the different goals and ideologies, collaborations and large-scale protests diminished with no clear end or solution to the issues. Moreover, as noted by Lena Herzog, the

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<sup>179</sup>See: Kerbage, *Politics by Coincidence*, 13. AbiYaghi, Catusse, and Younes, “From *isqat an-nizam at-tafi* to the Garbage Crisis Movement,” 89.

<sup>180</sup>Kerbage, *Politics by Coincidence*, 28.

<sup>181</sup>Deets, “Consociationalism, clientelism, and local politics in Beirut,” 145.

<sup>182</sup>AbiYaghi, Catusse, and Younes, “From *isqat an-nizam at-tafi* to the Garbage Crisis Movement,” 88.

<sup>183</sup>Kerbage, *Politics by Coincidence*, 35.

movement was shaped by mistrust, and all the groups wanted to promote their agenda, with some groups “suspected other groups for not being independent of the system as they had links to existing (non-sectarian) parties.”<sup>184</sup> The political leadership took advantage of these challenges and waited until the movement had lost its momentum.

The political leadership additionally utilised necropolitics as a strategy for regime survival. In response to the protests, the political leadership utilised a series of strategies to control the 2015 protest movement. As noted by Geha, “politicians united in portraying the protestors as a danger to civil peace. The counter narrative was conveyed as a threat that continued mobilization would destabilize Lebanon’s security,”<sup>185</sup> including framing the protestors as drug addicts or infiltrators, thus justifying acts of repression.<sup>186</sup> Through the narrative of keeping the peace, the ISF used water cannons, tear gas, fired rubber bullets and live bullets, and detained protestors.<sup>187</sup> The violent response to protestors signalled escalation by the political leadership, in which the protestors became expendable and could be exposed to violence without consequence.

In addition, the ISF also built a concrete wall that separated the political leadership from the protestors. However, the wall was soon taken down after it was covered in graffiti and ridiculed on social media.<sup>188</sup> Although unsuccessful, the attempt to build a physical wall shows how the regime had attempted to fence in and protect the establishment by excluding the disorderly protestors that challenged the regime.

The protests weakened without a long-term and sustainable solution to the waste problem, with the temporary opening of the Naameh landfill, and later the establishment of Bourj

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<sup>184</sup>Herzog, *Nothing but A Demonstration*, 9.

<sup>185</sup>Geha, “Politics of a Garbage Crisis,” 86.

<sup>186</sup>Abu-Rish, “Garbage Politics.”

<sup>187</sup>“Lebanon: Police violence against protestors,” Human Rights Watch.

<sup>188</sup>Robert Mackey, “Fall of Beirut wall reminds some of Berlin, others of Miley Cyrus,” *the New York Times*, August 25, 2015, <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/08/26/world/middleeast/fall-of-beirut-wall-reminds-some-of-berlin-others-of-miley-cyrus.html>.

Hammoud and Costa Brava landfills in the eastern and southern suburbs, respectively.<sup>189</sup> Even though the protests perished they displayed the power of waste. As argued by Sarah A. Moore “garbage becomes an effective political tool because it exploits the fraught relationship between city managers and urban waste. Modern citizens have come to expect the places they live, work, play, and go to school to be free of garbage—to be ordered and clean.”<sup>190</sup> The waste protests made visible to people the very inefficiencies and disorder of the political leaderships. Moreover, the protests marked broader political changes in Lebanon diverging from the 2005 Cedar Revolution that was forged around sectarian and political affiliation, emanating from the first anti-establishment protests of 2011. This mobilising later paved the way for further anti-establishment and non-sectarian movements Beirut Madinati (2016), the October Revolution (2019-), and the 2022 national elections and further waste activism.

Following the protests, the Waste Management Coalition (WMC) was established in 2017 with the aim of pressuring the government to adopt SWM strategies that protected the environment and public health while promoting recycling and a circular economy.<sup>191</sup> The coalition brought together a diverse group of actors, including activists, experts, NGOs, and community organisations, utilising the networks established in 2015 and emphasising a knowledge base with professional and technical backgrounds.<sup>192</sup> The WMC displays how activists were able to capitalise on the 2015 waste protest by establishing a group that was equipped to further and more specifically challenge the political leadership. By forming a more specialised and sector-specific group, the WMC was able to pursue targeted strategies without relying on mass mobilisation. These strategies included legal challenges to the government’s SWM roadmap, such as the appeals against the expansion of the Costa Brava

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<sup>189</sup>See: “Social movement responding to the Lebanese garbage crisis,” *Civil Society Knowledge Centre*.

<sup>190</sup>Moore, “The excess of Modernity,” 427.

<sup>191</sup>“Our goals,” Waste Management Coalition, visited February 25, 2021, <https://wmclebanon.org/en/home-ar/en/our-goals/>.

<sup>192</sup>“Our goals,” Waste Management Coalition.

Landfill.<sup>193</sup> Although these challenges “did not lead to successful changes”, they sent a message to “government entities that citizens and groups were monitoring their actions and decisions.”<sup>194</sup>

Contrastingly, the WMC was successful in creating pressure on the municipal board in Beirut to oppose the incineration project approved by the CoM in 2018.<sup>195</sup> In Beirut, incineration is not viewed as a viable option due to the health and environmental impacts of limited resources to treat the hazardous ash resulting from incinerators. The WMC convinced members of the Beirut Municipal Council to change their “Yes” vote for incinerators to abstentions, and although the coalition did not convince the majority of the CoM, the project was halted.<sup>196</sup> Consequently, the WMC displays the limitations of advocacy groups in Beirut, but also the increasing opportunities for people to display their rights to the city. Further, in contrast with the waste activists in 2015, members did not face the same forms of violence by the political leadership.<sup>197</sup> This is likely because the group did not pose a challenge to the power of the political leadership, as its role is to make suggestions and monitor the situation. In addition, the organisation lacks funding, and volunteers in an increasingly hostile socio-political environment, making it challenging to advocate for sustainable SWM.

### 3.4 CONCLUSION

This chapter has explored the primary question, “How does the political ordering of waste impact processes of political exclusion in CUS?” and the secondary question, “How do processes of political exclusion materialise in Beirut?”. It has highlighted the impact of nested

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<sup>193</sup>Khalil, *Impacting Policies*, 12.

<sup>194</sup>ibid, 22

<sup>195</sup>USAID, *The Waste Management Coalition in Lebanon: Advocacy Case Study Analysis* (Counterpart International and Beyond Group, 2020), [https://www.counterpart.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Case-Study-4\\_Solid-Waste-Management.pdf](https://www.counterpart.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Case-Study-4_Solid-Waste-Management.pdf).

<sup>196</sup>USAID, *The Waste Management Coalition*, 8.

<sup>197</sup>Khalil, *Impacting Policies*, 16.

sovereignties on the political ordering of people and waste in Beirut. Drawing on the previous chapter on nested sovereignties and sovereign power, this chapter has analysed how the biopolitical machinery of waste is used as a method of regulating human beings, resulting in contestation and resistance in order to escape this condition. Through this, it highlighted the intersectional and co-constructive processes of marginalisation, contestation, and resistance, shaped by sovereign power in Beirut.

The chapter started by exposing how sovereignties marginalise and strip people of political life; in particular, the systematic political exclusion of waste workers is perpetuated through the Kafala system, including legal peculiarities, stigma, and racialisation, which has developed simultaneously with urbanisation, globalisation and sectarianism. Conversely, waste-impacted communities face stigmatisation and marginalisation that is interrelated with contestation and sectarian politics, facilitated through the unequal distribution of environmental burdens. The chapter highlights the multifaced ways that the biopolitical machinery of waste impacts people and groups of others.

In response to these challenges, this chapter explored the development of resistance against marginalisation and contestation with the emergence of movement activists in Beirut. However, efforts to resist political exclusion and marginalisation have resulted in repressed and criminalised by the state and political leaders. Consequently, it challenges simplistic conceptualisations of bare life and human-as-waste by highlighting the various forms of political agency that emerge among people, including protests from migrant waste workers, the long-term resistance by waste-impacted communities, and the spectacular large-scale protests in 2015.

Ultimately, this chapter has argued that waste is a highly political issue. It underscored how the socio-political ordering of waste facilitates political exclusion, marginalisation, and contestation, resulting in various forms of resistance. This holistic approach to understand-

ing political life is critical in order to capture the complex and pluralistic issues around sovereign power and waste in Beirut. The next chapter on governing draws on these processes by exploring the localisation of material waste in urban regions and the implications for human beings and ecosystems.

# 4

## Governing

THE MATERIAL ORDERING OF WASTE HAS BEEN AN EXTREMELY PRESSING ISSUE IN BEIRUT SINCE THE START OF THE CIVIL WAR. Since then, Beirut has experienced the emergence of several *waste mountains* – including the dump sites of Normandy, Bourj Hammoud, and Costa Brava – that have reached heights between 10-40 meters that grew during the civil war and the 2006 July War with Israel.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, due to various political failures *rivers of*

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<sup>1</sup>See: El Jor, *Policies and Institutional*; and UNDP, *Lebanon: Post-conflict Environmental Assessment*.



*waste* have emerged acuminated from mismanagement followed by heavy rains and flooding due to the poorly managed and blocked stormwater systems.<sup>2</sup> Though especially noticeable in the aftermath of the 2015 crisis due to its scale, these events are not new to the broader urban region which have faced decades of socio-economic and infrastructural neglect. Governing is central to the development of these issues, contributing to socio-economic and ecological inequalities across Beirut.

An expanding literature has focused on governing and SWM in Beirut, predominantly detailing how the BCD and the Normandy Dump were reconstructed in the aftermath of the civil war establishing new class divides.<sup>3</sup> Today, SWM in Beirut is centred around the temporary coastal landfills in Bourj Hammoud and Costa Brava, which have a series of implications for human beings and ecosystems. The different trajectories of space are shaped by “an entangled history of toxicity and capital” as noted by filmmaker and commentator Fadi Mansour, highlighting urban inequalities and marginalisation.<sup>4</sup> Despite the growing body of literature on the subject, there has been little attention paid to the role of sovereign power in regulating and controlling the waste, especially beyond corruption.<sup>5</sup> This chapter seeks addresses this gap by exploring the relationship between sovereignties and the material ordering of waste in Beirut, and how it shapes urban spaces. Furthermore, by exploring sovereignties, I analyse how planning and regulation fosters marginalisation and contestation.

Urban planning has established spaces of inequality across Beirut, with some areas benefiting from post-conflict gentrification while others are marginalised and abandoned by the

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<sup>2</sup>See: UNRWA, *Field Infrastructures and Camp Improvement Programme*; Beirut Urban Lab, *Karm el-Zeitoun Urban Snapshot, March 2021* (Beirut: Beirut Urban Lab, 2021), 19, <https://www.acted.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/urban-snapshot-karm-el-zeitoun-2021-06-02-final-1.pdf>; and UNRWA, *Field Infrastructures and Camp Improvement Programme*.

<sup>3</sup>As seen in Sadek and El-Fadel, “The Normandy Landfill”; Makdisi, “Laying claim to Beirut”; Leenders, *Spoils of Truce*; and C. Nagle, “Reconstructing space, re-creating memory.”

<sup>4</sup>Fadi Mansour, “From trash dump to dreamland: an entangled history of toxicity and capital,” *Jadaliyya*, November 13, 2018, <https://www.jadaliyya.com/Details/38158>.

<sup>5</sup>On corruption, see Leenders, *Spoils of Truce*; and Baumann, “The Causes, Nature, and Effect.”

political leadership. For example, Downtown Beirut and Haret Hreik have undergone significant transformations after the civil war and the 2006 July War, facilitated by the CDR and Hezbollah, respectively.<sup>6</sup> These reconstructions have led to class divisions and gentrification, with implications for the broader urban region such as the neighbourhoods of Bourj Hammoud and Sahra Choueifat adjacent to the region's dumpsites. These spaces result from political decisions and the exercise of sovereign power, which establishes and maintains spaces of exception. As explored in Chapter 3, SWM in Beirut has been regulated by a 20-year-long space of exception, set out and maintained by the political leadership. Furthermore, as conceptualised by Agamben, the localisation of these spaces exposes a space in which everyone can be reduced to bare life and exposed to death.<sup>7</sup> This chapter explores these spaces, as the production of sacrifice zones is intimately tied to the ordering of urban spaces and SWM by the political leadership after the civil war.

Planning is not simply a set of top-down regulations but rather encompasses the messy negotiations between people, the more-than-human, and sovereignties.<sup>8</sup> This is emphasised by the various movements that have worked to reorder space since 2011 (see Chapter 3), in addition to the mundane acts of living and using urban spaces.<sup>9</sup> More-than-human negotiations also take place in urban spaces, including “toxic flows of particular places”, and dramatic effects such as the forest fires in Mount Lebanon 2019, which contributed to the start of the 2019 Thawra Movement.<sup>10</sup> While this research focuses on nested sovereignties,

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<sup>6</sup>Hourani, “Post-conflict reconstruction”; Mona Fawaz and Marwan Ghandour, *The Reconstruction of Haret Hreik: Design Options for Improving the Livability of the Neighbourhood* (AUB-RU: Beirut, 2007); Mona Fawaz and Marwan Ghandour, “Spatial erasure: reconstruction projects in Beirut,” *ArteEast Quarterly* (2010).

<sup>7</sup>Agamben, *Homo Sacer*, 19.

<sup>8</sup>Ranganathan and Balazs, “Water marginalization at the urban fringe.”

<sup>9</sup>As explored by scholars such as Akar, *For the War yet to Come*, 63-70, planning takes on myriad forms making up a “lacework of zoning.” Furthermore, planning is also done from the ground up from movement activists as seen in Wael Sinno, “How people reclaimed public spaces in Beirut during the 2019 Lebanese uprising,” *The Journal of Public Spaces* 5, no.1 (2020).

<sup>10</sup>See in Bennett, “The force of things,” 348; and Alaimo, *Bodily Natures*, 63; respectively.

considering the interplay between these negotiations are crucial to locate forms of resistance against the political system.

This chapter has four main sections that explore the processes of territorial stigmatisation, violent segregation, postwar reconstruction, and urban decay. The chapter starts by exploring the relationship between territorialities and nested sovereignties that have emerged amid various processes, such as urbanisation, privatisation, and postcolonialism during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, that have contributed to the stigmatisation of urban places. Territorial stigmatisation is formed by socio-political structures that have deemed places as “dirty” or “filthy”, further exacerbated by the material impacts of the absence of sufficient waste infrastructures set out by political power structures in Beirut.

Secondly, the civil war facilitated violent segregation in urban spaces along sectarian, religious, ideological, and political lines. The destruction of urban fabric during the civil war empowered the war-machine, facilitating the creation of hostile and hazardous environments that have continued to shape Beirut until this day.

Third, urban reconstruction further facilitated urban segregation through the privatisation and gentrification of Downtown Beirut after the civil war and Haret Hreik after the 2006 July War. The cost of this process has not only been rising inequalities across Beirut but also the establishment of sacrifice zones of reconstruction that was shaped by large amounts of CDW and further deterioration.

Finally, the chapter explores the negotiations between people, the more-than-human, and the state after 2011. The 2015 waste movement and Thawra movement in particular are crucial to unpacking the rejection of being, and further highlight the intersection with materialities, such as waste, fires, and toxicity. However, crucially, the state has repressed spaces of resistance and rejection. Amid repression, control and organisation, the political leadership regenerated toxic sacrifice zones by reopening the coastal landfills in Bourj Hammoud and

Costa Brava, that are severely detrimental for human beings and ecosystems. Furthermore, the 2020 Beirut explosion exacerbated these structures by destroying the urban fabric.

#### 4.1 TERRITORIAL STIGMATISATION

Factors like colonial legacy, urbanisation, urban segregation, and gentrification deeply impact urban planning in Beirut. Sovereign power structures have navigated these factors establishing zones of inclusion and exclusion. With sectarian politics in mind, sovereignties shape territorialities around the regime and nationalist narratives, exacerbating processes of marginalisation and contestation explored in Chapter 3.

In the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the legacy of the French Mandate shaped the ordering of urban spaces, along with sectarian politics which favoured the Maronite and broader Christian leadership.<sup>11</sup> The regulation and control of people and urban spaces reflects these dynamics as the state apparatus sought to manifest its power, resulting in the marginalisation of *others* and contestation among groups. The growth of the region further challenged these power dynamics, bringing together people with various backgrounds and agendas. Urbanisation in Beirut was shaped by refugees and migrants, including Armenian, and Syriac refugees in the 1920s, Palestinian refugees in the late 1940s, and urban migrants from Bekaa, South Lebanon and Syria from the 1960s onwards.<sup>12</sup>

Settling on the much cheaper edges of the urban centre, the region quickly expanded into towns, villages, and refugee camps outside the Municipality of Beirut (MoB). Labelled at the time as “the misery belt” and “Beirut’s poverty belt” due to the poor living conditions, the suburbs included illegal settlements, slum areas, and a series of refugee camps located

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<sup>11</sup>Najem, *Lebanon*, 8.

<sup>12</sup>Fawaz and Peillen, *Urban Slums Report*; Chalcraft, *The Invisible Cage*; Nasr, “New social realities and post-war Lebanon.”

to the south and east.<sup>13</sup> In particular, the southern suburbs (also known as al-Dahiya) have been subjected to territorial stigmatisation – following a pattern of marginalisation and localisation set out by scholars such as Wacquant.<sup>14</sup> In contemporary Beirut, these perceptions continue to shape perceptions of urban spaces, although physical manifestations of inequality – like slums – are relatively “limited in scale”.<sup>15</sup> Territorial stigmatisation has changed across time and space, with postwar politics reflecting the manifestation and localisation of sectarian politics, especially in Hezbollah’s stronghold Haret Hreik (southern suburbs).

However, it is crucial to note that physical segregation between groups only came to the forefront at the start of the civil war, with the exception of Palestinian refugee camps. As noted by Martin, settlements in the suburbs were largely filled with Shi’a migrants and Syrian and Palestinian refugees that were “[f]orced to share the same neglected and forgotten urban spaces because of overcrowding, poor sanitation and health conditions, and a scarcity of services such as water and electricity.”<sup>16</sup> As such, urban geographies primarily reflected multiplicity amid patterns of marginalisation and political exclusion.

The suburbs were shaped by informal and formal processes that ordered urban spaces. For example, the relocation of Armenian refugees was facilitated through the state and neighbourhoods committees.<sup>17</sup> As noted by Mona Fawaz, urbanisation patterns often followed “kin and geographic trajectories”, which translated into “the formation of neighbourhood committees” that lobbied towards improving public services with the municipalities.<sup>18</sup> As a result, many areas in the suburbs developed homogeneously due to the role of kinship and

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<sup>13</sup>Fawaz and Peillen, *Urban Slums Report*; and Trabolusi, *A history of Modern Lebanon*, 163.

<sup>14</sup>Al-Dahiya simply means southern suburb in Arabic. The name al-Dahiya is emotionally charged in Lebanon with the discourse characterising it by underdevelopment and squatter settlements. See: Akar, *For the war yet to come*, 17; Wacquant “Territorial stigmatization.”

<sup>15</sup>Fawaz and Peillen, *Urban Slums Report*, 1.

<sup>16</sup>Martin, “From spaces of exception to campscares,” 13.

<sup>17</sup>Nucho, *Everyday Sectarianism*, 9.

<sup>18</sup>Fawaz, “Neoliberal urbanity,” 838.

networks. In contrast, the official Palestinian refugee camps developed into segregated spaces from 1948 to 1967 as they were administered through the biopolitics of “fear and brutality” by the Deuxième Bureau – Lebanon’s internal security services.<sup>19</sup> Even the built environment was tightly regulated, as explored by Nasser Abourahme “Roofs were not allowed, cement was prohibited material, cartographic boundaries were rigorously enforced.”<sup>20</sup> As such, the Palestinian refugee camps reflected the localisation of the exception, in which life was regulated and exposed to death.

Seeking to escape these conditions, contestation and nationalism emerged through the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO), which became central in the developments that led to the civil war in 1975. The politicisation of sectarian politics manifested itself with the 1967 Cairo Accords officially placing the Palestinian refugee camps under the authority of the PLO, thus placing the authority of the camps outside of the control of the Lebanese regime between 1967 and 1987.<sup>21</sup> The camps were operating as a ‘state-within-a-state’ – having self-autonomous status, facilitating physical demarcations and barriers to movements within Beirut.<sup>22</sup> The politicisation of Palestinian identity through the PLO marks the first physical manifestation of *stasis* – in which “kinship” was integrated onto sovereign space and created divisions in the city. This process facilitated spaces for multiple sovereignties and contestation in Beirut. Moreover, the territory was shaped the PLO, reflecting “the war machine” and “the power over death,”<sup>23</sup> seeking to survive amidst regulation leading to violent clashes with Israel during the civil war in the 1980s.

After the expulsion of the PLO in 1982, these physical demarcations remain printed onto

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<sup>19</sup>Ramadan, “Destroying Nahr al-Bared,” 158.

<sup>20</sup>Nasser Abourahme, “Assembling and spilling-over: towards an ‘ethnography of cement’ in a Palestinian refugee camp,” *International Journal of Urban and regional Research* 29, no. 1 (2015), 207.

<sup>21</sup>Trabolusi, *A history of Modern Lebanon*, 155; Ramadan, “Destroying Nahr al-Bared,” 158.

<sup>22</sup>Yezid Sayigh, “Armed struggle and state formation,” *Journal of Palestine Studies* 26, no. 4 (1997), 21.

<sup>23</sup>Mbembe, *Necropolitics*.

space through a complex set of power structures presented with the relationships with the UNRWA, who are officially in charge of the camp, political factions such as Hamas and Fata, and neighbourhoods committees.<sup>24</sup> Following this line of argument, Sari Hanafi argues that the contemporary Palestinian refugee camps in Beirut – Mar Elias, Chatila, and Bourj el-Barajneh – are “closed” spaces in which “the identity and status of camp dwellers are related to the very nature of the camp and to its segregation and isolation as a distinct and enclosed unit.”<sup>25</sup> As such, the political exclusion of camp dwellers defines the everyday life of its inhabitants.

In contemporary Beirut, the refugee camps that remain do not only include displaced Palestinians but have developed into slums for internally displaced persons (IDPs), Syrian refugees, and low-paid expatriates from countries like Sudan, Philippines, Eritrea and Sri Lanka.<sup>26</sup> As previously noted, Syrian refugees were not allowed to set up formal camps across Lebanon (often attributed to the fear of repeating the experiences of Palestinian refugee camps), resulting in the utilisation of informal housing and restrictions for the refugees.<sup>27</sup> Consequently, the refugee camps have become a site of multiplicity for the socially and politically excluded. As such, Palestinian refugee camps are localisation of Agamben’s notion of *the camp*; however, these spaces are not absolute as marginalised populations face various spatial forms of exclusion through inclusion often regardless of place in Beirut, as seen in Chapter 3.

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<sup>24</sup>See: Mahoudeau, “Who is responsible about our lives?” 3-4.

<sup>25</sup>Hanafi, “UNRWA as a ‘phantom sovereign’,” 132.

<sup>26</sup>Knudsen, “Camp, Ghetto, Zinco, Slum,” 450.

<sup>27</sup>See discussion in Kumarasamy, “Sovereign power in an icy climate”; and Stel, *Hybrid Political Orders*.

#### 4.1.1 DETERIORATING WASTE STRUCTURES

Urban stigmatisation has implications for SWM, which does not simply include the large-scale dumps and landfill sites that are explored later in this chapter. Significantly, uncontrolled dumping and pollution are part of the everyday life for many inhabitants, signalling the ongoing slow and silent exposure to toxicity and hostile environments.<sup>28</sup> Notably, waste collection and sweeping in Beirut has never been equal between neighbourhoods, as many neighbourhoods across Beirut lacked SWM and other public services before the civil war.<sup>29</sup>

The aim of this section is not to reproduce binaries between the city and the suburbs, which can be used to simplify the complex relationships in urban spaces, but rather to unpack the production of these spaces facilitated by the political leadership.<sup>30</sup> Seeking to challenge simplistic distinction and valuation of spaces through the study of moral leisure in south Beirut, Mona Harb and Lara Deeb argues that scholarship often depicts Downtown Beirut as “an ordered and clean urban space that is nicely furnished and landscaped, lined with beautifully restored heritage buildings and slickly designed new ones” and in contrast the suburbs as “chaotic, illegal, filthy and scary sections of the city that people should avoid.”<sup>31</sup> Their study underscores the impacts of reconstruction in shaping spaces across Beirut that challenges these simplistic labelling of urban dynamics. As such, territorial stigmatisation – as conceptualised by Wacquant – should be explored as an ongoing process that changes across space and time and therefore it is more appropriate to refer to the specific dynamics at the neighbourhood level.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>28</sup>Nixon, *Slow Violence*; and Watts, *Silent Violence*.

<sup>29</sup>Harik, “The public and social services of the Lebanese militias,” 15-27.

<sup>30</sup>Overamplification is a disadvantage of territory, see Anderson, “Democracy, territoriality and ethno-national conflict,” 7.

<sup>31</sup>Mona Harb and Lara Deeb, “Contesting urban modernity: Moral leisure in south Beirut,” *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 16, no. 6 (2013), 726.

<sup>32</sup>See: Wacquant “Territorial stigmatization.”



The socio-political and material ordering of waste have been crucial to the ordering of urban spaces by the political leadership; for example, since the start of the reconstruction of Downtown Beirut, the area has operated with an exceedingly high standard of waste management to cater to Lebanon's elite and the political leadership. In the context of reconstruction in BCD, Sawalha explores how actors in the political leadership and government agencies planned "to cleanse the city of the "illegal" war squatters", thus arguing that new unequal power relations were produced through a "process of modernisation" that "included cleaning and organising disordered spaces, vacating illegally occupied buildings and generating more power to the private sector."<sup>33</sup> In this way, the production of "clean spaces" has been the prerogative in urban planning by the political leadership. In contrast, Hamra experienced a lack of investment in postwar Lebanon, with communities complaining of "increasing physical and social problems: dirt, theft, crime prostitution, traffic, noise and general 'ugliness'."<sup>34</sup> A UN habitat report from 2020 found that infrastructure (such as roads, electricity, and sanitation networks) are undermaintained and overloaded due to urban changes but that waste was regularly collected by RAMCO between 2 and 12 times a day.<sup>35</sup> The study also found the presence of littering in some streets as well as on street garbage disposal in three areas.<sup>36</sup>

These differences can be partially explored by the significant differences in waste collection and sweeping across Beirut. In Beirut, RAMCO and City Blu collects most of the solid waste with the exception of small pockets and the Palestinian refugee camps and gatherings.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>33</sup>Sawalha, "Placing the war displaced," 115.

<sup>34</sup>Mona Khechen, "The remaking of Ras Beriut: Displacement beyond gentrification," *City* 22, no.3 (2018), 386.

<sup>35</sup>RELIEF Centre and UN-Habitat Lebanon, *Hamra: Neighbourhood Profile, October 2020* (Beirut: UN-Habitat Lebanon, 2020), 65, [https://unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/2020/11/hamraneighbourhoodprofilebeirutlebanonoct2020\\_0\\_1.pdf](https://unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/2020/11/hamraneighbourhoodprofilebeirutlebanonoct2020_0_1.pdf).

<sup>36</sup>UN-Habitat, *Hamra*, 65.

<sup>37</sup>Notably, Beirut is now serviced by an additional 10 private companies, predominantly focusing on recycling, which have emerged in the aftermath of the 2015 waste crisis. See: UN-Habitat and ESCWA, *State of the Lebanese Cities 2021* (Beirut: UN-Habitat Lebanon, 2021), 142, [https://unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/2022/03/un-habitat\\_escwa\\_state\\_of\\_the\\_lebanese\\_cities\\_2021\\_web.pdf](https://unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/2022/03/un-habitat_escwa_state_of_the_lebanese_cities_2021_web.pdf).

Since 1982, UNRWA has overseen public services and the running of the camps, including SWM across Lebanon's official refugee camps. A report from 2012 noted that urban density and demographic pressure from rising numbers cause a substantial public health risk due to limitations in SWM, especially in Shatila and Bourj Barajneh, including "leakage of pollutants and the spread of disease-bearing insects and rodents."<sup>38</sup> Moreover, the report notes that the funding and staff dedicated to SWM are limited, leading to the breakdown of vehicles and "injury and sickness amongst the staff."<sup>39</sup> As such, the camp is a site of inclusion through exclusion that is regulated but also abandoned by the Lebanese state.

Furthermore, the UN-Habitat neighbourhood profiles on "vulnerable cadastres" found that waste collection was usually available to inhabitants but was lacking in some of the cadastres due to the limited collection and infrastructures in the areas of Hay Tamils, Daouk-Ghawash, Maraash, and Nabaa located around the border of the MoB.<sup>40</sup> In most of the areas that UN Habitat surveyed, littering was found in most streets and some numbers of uncontrolled dumpsites had formed in many of the surveyed areas. Furthermore, some areas, such as Karm el-Zeitoun, Hay Tamils, and Maraash, were partially served by private collection companies. For example, a recent report on Karm el-Zeitoun, found that waste collection was partially informally operated "by migrant workers, mainly from Bangladesh [...] who are

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<sup>38</sup>UNRWA, *Field Infrastructures and Camp Improvement Programme: Environmental Health response Plan in the 12 Palestine Refugee Camps in Lebanon (2018-2021)* (Beirut: UNRWA, 2017), 161, [https://www.pseau.org/outils/ouvrages/unrwa\\_environmental\\_health\\_response\\_plan\\_in\\_the\\_12\\_palestine\\_refugee\\_camps\\_in\\_lebanon\\_2018\\_2021\\_with\\_inventory\\_and\\_needs\\_assessment\\_2020.pdf](https://www.pseau.org/outils/ouvrages/unrwa_environmental_health_response_plan_in_the_12_palestine_refugee_camps_in_lebanon_2018_2021_with_inventory_and_needs_assessment_2020.pdf).

<sup>39</sup>UNRWA, *Field Infrastructures*, 166.

<sup>40</sup>"Hay Tamils, WaSH," *UN-Habitat*, accessed October 17, 2022, <https://un-habitat.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=f06dd0a9fd4146788095ff1c4b03ca60>;

"Sabra, WaSH," *UN-Habitat*, accessed October 17, 2022, <https://un-habitat.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=0ed602c1e30a4b4c81957bbed75f894b>;

"Daouk-Ghawash, WaSH" *UN-Habitat*, accessed October 17, 2022, <https://un-habitat.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=c840b6elcee34b7393cccd71994a7c20>;

"Maraash, WaSH," *UN-Habitat*, accessed October 17, 2022, <https://un-habitat.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=247cd0d8c5e14b1797b1946cc878dc8c>; and

"Nabaa, WaSH," *UN-Habitat*, accessed October 17, 2022, <https://un-habitat.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=beae08d64d804ae3b4394a4568c51cde>.

either self-employed or allegedly work for a Lebanese private employer [...] given that garbage trucks cannot enter the neighbourhood due to congestion.”<sup>41</sup> However, due to the high costs of these private services, it is unlikely that these will continue at the same scale.

The lack of waste collection and sweeping has devastating implications for urban areas. The undermaintained and overloaded stormwater networks are a great concern across many neighbourhoods in Beirut.<sup>42</sup> Stormwater systems are aimed at removing excess water from urban spaces through a series of channels and underground pipes. In Beirut, this system is undermaintained and has been severely impacted by the perpetuating and long-standing waste crisis. The insufficient SWM is thus a major cause of flooding (a multidimensional issue) in the streets due to undermaintenance and blockages, causing a severe health risk to people.<sup>43</sup> A recent report, for example, on the neighbourhood of Naaba in MoBH found that 83 per cent of the stormwater system is damaged or malfunctions causing localised flooding during rainfall “in most parts of the neighbourhood”, limits “the access to and from residents, and blocking their means of exit in case of an emergency”, and “have a significant impact on the prevalence of illness among neighbourhoods residents and widespread infections”.<sup>44</sup> As such, SWM causes significant issues beyond pollution enabling flooding across the region and causing implications for daily life. Furthermore, these types of flooding display the interconnection of human and material flows. Conceptualised by Alaimo as *trans-corporeal materiality* in which “social power and material/geographic agency intra-act.”<sup>45</sup> Flooding across Beirut shows the interconnectedness between people, waste, and heavy rainfall, but

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<sup>41</sup> Beirut Urban Lab, *Karm el-Zeitoun Urban Snapshot*, 19.

<sup>42</sup> UN-Habitat, *Naaba Neighborhood Profile, Bourj Hammoud, Lebanon* Beirut: UN-Habitat Lebanon, 2017), 20, [https://unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/documents/2019-08/un-habitat\\_2017.05.08\\_nps\\_nabaa\\_web.pdf](https://unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/documents/2019-08/un-habitat_2017.05.08_nps_nabaa_web.pdf).

<sup>43</sup> Benjamin Reed, “Why does Lebanon flood so badly?” *Executive*, January 15, 2013, <https://www.executive-magazine.com/economics-policy/lebanon-floods-policy>.

<sup>44</sup> UN-Habitat, *Naaba Neighborhood Profile*, 20.

<sup>45</sup> Alaimo, *Bodily Natures*, 63.

also the political leadership which has facilitated the unequal development and reconstruction of Beirut, which is further explored below. Territorial stigmatisation has enabled the establishment of vulnerable neighbourhoods as the sacrifice zone of the political leadership.

Significantly still, stormwater is additionally regularly mixed in with sewage, causing a health hazard for residents. In Lebanon, wastewater systems only cover 60 per cent of households and only 8 per cent is adequately treated.<sup>46</sup> Many households rely on temporary storage (cesspits) and processing (septic-tanks), which “provide the minimal risk of raw sewage leaching directly into the environment and contaminating groundwater sources.”<sup>47</sup> Furthermore, as an extreme example, in the neighbourhoods Hay Tamils and Sabra – located South in MoB – 13 per cent and 10 per cent, respectively “are connected but blocked or not connected to wastewater networks and discharge their sewage into open drains on the street.”<sup>48</sup> This potent mixture of urban processes has in recent years lead to the increase in water-borne diseases including cholera. Cholera has increased in Lebanon with 5,000 cases being reported in 2022, displaying the impacts and degradation of health and sanitation services as a result of the ongoing economic crisis and pressure on services after the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>49</sup> As such, the flows of *trans-corporeal materiality* have extreme implications for inhabitants, implicating various systems such as SWM, stormwater and wastewater.

Furthermore, the shortcomings of wastewater management in the Neighbourhoods of Karantina and Shara Chouifat have led to frequent floodings during winter, leading to exacerbated feelings of abandonment.<sup>50</sup> In Shara Chouifat, Akar found that flooding manifested

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<sup>46</sup>UN-Habitat, *UN-Habitat Lebanon Unions of Municiplaities' Covid-19 Rapid Assessment Report* (Beirut: UN-Habitat Lebanon, 2020), 17, [https://unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/2020/06/un-h\\_uoms\\_covid-19\\_rapid\\_assessment\\_report\\_2020.06.22\\_final.pdf](https://unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/2020/06/un-h_uoms_covid-19_rapid_assessment_report_2020.06.22_final.pdf).

<sup>47</sup>UN-Habitat, *UN-Habitat Lebanon Unions of Municiplaities'*, 17.

<sup>48</sup>“Hay Tamils, WaSH,” *UN-Habitat*; and “Sabra, WaSH,” *UN-Habitat*.

<sup>49</sup>Tala Ramadan, “Feature-Floods in Lebanon Leave Syrian refugees counting their losses,” *Reuters*, Health-care Sector, December 16, 2022, <https://www.reuters.com/article/floods-refugees-lebanon/feature-floods-in-lebanon-leave-syrian-refugees-counting-their-losses-idINL8N325IUE>.

<sup>50</sup>Akar, *For the war yet to come*, 75; and Beirut Urban Lab, *Karantina Urban Snapshot, March 2021* (Beirut:

sectarian tensions as Shi'a residents "in general, saw themselves treated as an unwanted other in their own country", finding themselves displaced by the wastewater floods – some who have "already been twice displaced – first by the civil war and then the reconstruction of the ruined areas of the central city [downtown Beirut]".<sup>51</sup> The reoccurring flooding expose inhabitants to slow and silent violence – which could be prevented by the efficient management – leading to the regeneration of marginalisation for groups of *others*.

As was clearly exposed within this section, territorial stigmatisation has contributed to the marginalisation of neighbourhoods which have become the sacrifice zone for the development and reconstruction in Beirut. Furthermore, these structures are highly interconnected with a series of other urban processes, including the establishment of the war machine, which developed during the civil war, having segregated and consolidated the urban dynamics that play out today.

#### 4.2 VIOLENT SEGREGATION

During the Lebanese civil war, urban spaces were shaped by violent contestation and stasis – the politicisation of kinship and sectarian politics. Politics became deeply interlinked with militias that were broadly formed around sectarian and ideological lines, reinforcing patron-client relationships and segregated territorialities. As the civil war progressed, neighbourhoods became exclusive and often self-sufficient; people could find most goods and services within their areas manifesting segregation through fear of the other.<sup>52</sup> As such, kinship became crucial for survival in Beirut.

Through necropolitics, militias sought to control urban spaces and decide "who is able to

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Beirut Urban Lab, 2021), 9, <https://www.acted.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/urban-snapshot-karantina-2021-06-02-final.pdf>.

<sup>51</sup>Akar, *For the war yet to come*, 76.

<sup>52</sup>Genberg, "Borders and boundaries," 86.

live and who must die.”<sup>53</sup> Inhabitants in Beirut became dependent on their militias for protection from kidnapping, revenge killings and “identity card murders”.<sup>54</sup> At the same time, militias acted like “predators within the communities” seeking to maximize their resources through “means of coercion and administration within the confines of each community.”<sup>55</sup> They also sought to gain control over or destroy physical infrastructure a means of achieving dominance and enforcing power balances through the weaponisation of infrastructure such as water and power stations.<sup>56</sup> Through these processes the militias manifested violent segregation – with few exceptions – that continues to impact urban dynamics to this day.

As a result, violent segregation and displacement shaped much of the civil war period. Around half of Lebanon’s inhabitants were displaced up to several times, with estimated numbers ranging from 790 000<sup>57</sup> to 1 200 000.<sup>58</sup> As argued by Khalaf, many Lebanese

“had that painful task of negotiating, constructing, and reconfirming a fluid and unsettled pattern of spatial identities. No sooner had they suffered the travails of dislocation by taking refuge in one community, than they were again uprooted and compelled to negotiate yet another spatial identity or face the added humiliation of re-entry into their profoundly transformed communities.”<sup>59</sup>

In West Beirut and the southern suburbs, the Christian population diminished from 35 per cent to 5 per cent from 1975 to 1989. Similarly, in East Beirut the Muslim population diminished from 40 per cent to 5 per cent.<sup>60</sup> These numbers display the crucial transformation

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<sup>53</sup>Mbembe, *Necropolitics*, 66.

<sup>54</sup>Lebanese identity cards recorded the sectarian affiliation and names could also give away the persons sectarian affiliation. See: Genberg, “Borders and boundaries,” 83.

<sup>55</sup>Pichard, “The political economy of civil war in Lebanon,” 294.

<sup>56</sup>Verdeil, “Infrastructure crisis in Beirut,” 88.

<sup>57</sup>Hanf, *Coexistence in wartime Lebanon*, 342.

<sup>58</sup>Nasr, “New social realities and post-war Lebanon,” 67.

<sup>59</sup>Khalaf, *Civil and Uncivil Violence in Lebanon*, 243.

<sup>60</sup>Nasr, “New social realities and post-war Lebanon,” 69.

of Beirut during the civil war, although it is notable that segregation extended further than the Green Line between East and West Beirut, but also reflected neighbourhoods; for example, as explored by Akar, the neighbourhoods of Shara Coueifat became largely Shi'a after the civil war as "Christians and many Druze families eventually sold their holdings."<sup>61</sup> As a result, scholars have argued that Beirut became "parcelled out".<sup>62</sup> The conflict was a manifestation of stasis and necropolitics by the militias who sought to (and continue in some degree to) keep power and control in their territorial areas manifesting the politicisation of sectarian politics into territory and space.

#### 4.2.1 THE TOXIC WASTE SCANDAL

In efforts to secure the survival of the militias, and control and regulate their territorial areas, the war machine was funded and strengthened. In September 1987, the ship Radhost docked at the port of Beirut with the first of a series of shipments of toxic waste, which included "15,800 barrels of different sizes and 20 containers of waste". An agreement between the Italian company Ecolife and Lebanese Forces Militia (LFM) – which became the party Lebanese Forces in the aftermath of the civil war – allowed the company to dump barrels of waste at the port in return for 22 million dollars.<sup>63</sup> The toxic waste included "a cocktail of toxins", including "the explosive substance nitrocellulose; outdated adhesives, organophosphate pesticides, solvents as well as outdated medication; oil residues and highly toxic heavy metals like lead, mercury and cadmium; arsenic; chlorinated substances; PCBs, and other substances."<sup>64</sup> In addition, it included "hundreds of barrels" of high concentrations of dioxin,

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<sup>61</sup> Akar, *For the war yet to come*, 65.

<sup>62</sup> See: Franck Mermier, "The frontiers of Beirut: Some anthropological observations," *Mediterranean Politics* 18, no. 3 (2013), 385; and Genberg, "Borders and boundaries," 86.

<sup>63</sup> Fouad Hamdan, *Case One: Toxics From Italy* (Greenpeace Mediterranean, 1996), [http://www.fouadhamdan.org/cms/upload/pdf/ItalianToxicWasteInLebanon\\_FouadHamdan\\_GreenpeaceReport\\_ENGLISH\\_May1996.pdf](http://www.fouadhamdan.org/cms/upload/pdf/ItalianToxicWasteInLebanon_FouadHamdan_GreenpeaceReport_ENGLISH_May1996.pdf).

<sup>64</sup> Hamdan, *Case One*.

which is “highly toxic and can cause cancer, reproductive and developmental problems, damage to the immune system, and can interfere with hormones.”<sup>65</sup> Consequently, this transaction represented more than the symptom of a war economy but represents how militias enabled “power over life” – through the slow and silent violence by toxic waste.

As the LFM controlled the port at the time, it received the toxic waste and facilitated its relocation across Lebanon. As argued by Nils Hagerdal, the group was able to “exercise control of at least some territory where they command de facto sovereignty”, which facilitated the toxic waste transaction and other criminal activities, like smuggling.<sup>66</sup> The case of the toxic waste has a series of implications for SWM in contemporary Beirut, establishing a system in which the survival of the war-machine is placed above the concern over human beings and ecosystems.

By February 1988, the waste dumping was leaked to the media creating a political scandal. However, the clean-up has been another disaster interconnected with formal and informal power structures, including public sector capture, amnesty laws, intimidation, and repression. Although the Italian government retrieved 5,500 barrels after Greenpeace exposed the violation, numerous barrels went missing.<sup>67</sup> As noted by a recent expose by the independent newspaper the Public Source,

“Someone burned about 2,000 barrels in an open-air garbage dump in Bourj Hammoud near the Beirut Port. Someone else destroyed another 1,600 nearby in the semi-industrial Karantina neighborhood. Hundreds of barrels ended up getting dumped in locations across the country, including rivers and streams,

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<sup>65</sup>“Learn about Dioxin,” *United States Environmental Protection Agency*, accessed October 24, <https://www.epa.gov/dioxin/learn-about-dioxin#:~:text=Dioxins%20are%20called%20persistent%20organic,and%20can%20interfere%20with%20hormones>.

<sup>66</sup>Nils Hagerdal, “Toxic waste dumping in conflict zones: Evidence from 1980s Lebanon,” *Mediterranean Politics* 26, no. 1 (2021), 6.

<sup>67</sup>Hamdan, *Case One*, 3.



the Shnan‘ir quarry, and valleys in the Keserwan region [situated north in Mount Lebanon].”<sup>68</sup>

The barrels in Beirut ended up in the areas shaped by territorial stigmatisation and urban destruction during the civil war. The neighbourhood of Karantina and Bourj Hammoud Municipality have both been historically subjected to exclusion from the urban centre.

The Bourj Hammoud dump had expanded throughout the war, becoming the dumping ground for East Beirut in the absence of other SWM facilities. As noted, Bourj Hammoud was a predominantly Armenian municipality since they relocated from Karantina in the 1930s.<sup>69</sup> In addition to some Orthodox and Maronite inhabitants in the area, Shi’a migrant workers and Palestinian refugees started settling in the area from the 1950s onwards until the civil war; however, non-Christian inhabitants were forcefully removed from East Beirut with few remaining in the aftermath of the civil war.<sup>70</sup> Differently, Karantina had a heritage as the quarantine port during the Ottoman rule, “a tangible and contested sanitary measure, which often necessitated military enforcement.”<sup>71</sup> Later, it became a highly contested space that hosted incoming refugees from Armenia (1922) and Palestine (1948-), as well as Shi’a and Syrian migrant workers.<sup>72</sup> As noted by Trabolusi, the area was highly contested and included in national rhetoric with “the Maronite League accusing the state of ‘selling out Lebanon’ ” thereby making “the connection between ‘poor’ and ‘strangers’ ”.<sup>73</sup> During the civil war, Karantina was shaped with extreme violence. The Phalangist militias – which later turned into the Kataeb party – massacred over 1000 inhabitants, including Syr-

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<sup>68</sup>The Public Source, “The “ecological time bombs” unloaded at the Beirut port decades ago,” *The Public Source*, August 4, 2022, <https://thepublicsource.org/ecological-time-bombs-beirut-port>.

<sup>69</sup>Nucho, *Everyday Sectarianism*, 9.

<sup>70</sup>Different sources display different estimates of the forced relocation from East Beirut: 200,000 in Trabolusi, *A history of Modern Lebanon*, 207; 115,000 in Hanf, *Coexistence in wartime Lebanon*, 347.

<sup>71</sup>Also see in Hanssen, *Fin de Siecle Beirut*, 188.

<sup>72</sup>Fawaz and Peillen, *Urban Slums Report*.

<sup>73</sup>Trabolusi, *A history of Modern Lebanon* 148.

ian, Kurdish, Armenian, Palestinian and Lebanese workers, and bulldozed the neighbourhood.<sup>74</sup> The civil war completely changed urban spaces, consolidating contestation between sectarian groups. The burning of toxic waste became another symptom of territorial stigmatisation and urban violence. Furthermore, the localisation of these areas provided de facto sovereignties the ability to decide who could be killed by toxic waste. Consequently, the militias manifested Karantina and Bourj Hammoud as the sacrifice zones of the war machine, empowering the militias.

In the wake of the toxic waste scandal, an investigation started and six people were arrested; however, the charges were dropped, and the state dropped the case. Furthermore, as noted by the Public Source,

“Instead of cleaning up the toxins or holding accountable those who brought them to Lebanon, the Lebanese state conducted a campaign of persecution, intimidation, and gaslighting against anyone who tried to document what the barrels contained. Security forces arrested and interrogated scientists and environmental activists who had publicly spoken or written about the barrels and their toxic contents.”<sup>75</sup>

As such the apparatus was utilised to protect the militias, establishing a system that exposed human beings and ecosystems to death as a way of facilitating the survival of the militias. As noted by Hagerdal, the Lebanese Forces militia “even managed to infiltrate, if not take control over, the Ministry of the Environment after the war ended.”<sup>76</sup> However, when the Amnesty Law passed in 1991 the members of the Lebanese Forces faced immunity. The immunity of

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<sup>74</sup>Fawaz and Peillen, *Urban Slums Report*, 9; and Yassin, “Beirut,” 215.

<sup>75</sup>The Public Source, “The “ecological time bombs”.

<sup>76</sup>Hagerdal, “Toxic waste dumping in conflict zones,” 6.

political leaders displays the starting point of how the political leaders have successfully been prevented from prosecution for environmental crimes after the Taif Agreement.

As further explored throughout this chapter, the case of the toxic waste barrels is significant as the case is deeply connected to the resurrection of the Bourj Hammoud landfill in 2016 and the Beirut Port explosion in 2020, as it directly implicates the political leadership in the creation of toxic spaces and sacrifice zones. The same principles of handling material waste have continued in the aftermath of the civil war and has been further manifested by reconstruction processes.

#### 4.3 POSTWAR RECONSTRUCTION

The end of the civil war marked the recodification of the militia into the political leadership through the Taif Agreement. This political shift had implications for urban geographies and the localisation of *the camp*. Postwar politics continued to be shaped by urban segregation. However, whilst segregation during the civil war was shaped by direct violence along sectarian lines, postwar reconstruction facilitated structural violence and urban dispossession reflecting class and sectarian dynamics.

During reconstruction, the CDR became the main framework for the political leader Rafic Hariri's to facilitate the privately owned reconstruction project Solidere. Established in December 1994, the private real-estate company Solidere extended itself over 1.8 million square meters at the heart of Beirut, and it included ambitious goals that promised "brash new development" and would reinstate the city as "an international centre of finance."<sup>77</sup> In the early years of the reconstruction the project came to be considered the embodiment of neoliberalism and laissez-faire economy in Lebanon.<sup>78</sup> Through the work of Hariri and the

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<sup>77</sup>Swalha, *Reconstructing Beirut*, 28; and Perring, "Archaeology and the Post-War," 299.

<sup>78</sup>Krijeke and Fawaz, "Exception as the rule: high-end developments in neoliberal Beirut," 254-6.

political leadership, the privatisation of space manifested new forms of power and divisions within Beirut.

During reconstruction, the destruction of large areas – including the *souq* – was seen as inevitable, as opposed to the wish to rehabilitate some of the “cosmopolitan” and “French colonial” buildings around the “fashionable” *Place d’Etoile*. Solidere emphasised archaeology and history using slogans such as “Beirut reborn” and “an Ancient City for the Future,” focusing on the preservation of Phoenician and Roman archaeology and “heritage architecture” from the Ottoman Empire and French Merchant Republic.<sup>79</sup> In contrast, Solidere did not prioritise the rehabilitation of old buildings in Martyrs’ Square “because they, allegedly, obstructed the view of the sea” and were removed in order to give way to luxury residential buildings.<sup>80</sup> The selective rehabilitation by Solidere, is criticised by C Nagle:

“the recovery plan and preservation of Lebanon’s ancient monuments signifies a concerted effort to bury and to deny the country’s most recent past. [...] Neither the state nor its private sector seems willing to address openly the memories that undoubtedly loom largest in the minds of Beirut’s citizens.”<sup>81</sup>

Through these processes, Downtown Beirut has developed into a space of inclusion through exclusion. Although the area was seen as “Ground Zero where most of the clashes and destruction had taken place,”<sup>82</sup> the reconstruction completely transformed the area through privatisation, thereby also separating it from the otherwise neglected parts of Beirut.

The privatisation of Downtown Beirut brought with it economic segregation from the rest of the city. Throughout its construction, a series of concerns have been raised due to the neoliberal nature of the project; the city centre increasingly has become a space for elite

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<sup>79</sup>Hourani, “Post-conflict reconstruction,” 187.

<sup>80</sup>Ragab “The crisis of cultural identity,” 111.

<sup>81</sup>Nagle, “Reconstructing space, re-creating memory,” 723.

<sup>82</sup>Ragab “The crisis of cultural identity,” 108.

consumption and neoliberal growth, thus creating financial restrictions on the city centre – described by Genberg as “a downtown for the wealthy, a ‘city’ apart from the rest.”<sup>83</sup> Among other things, the old Beirut souk transformed into a 100,000m<sup>2</sup> retail and leisure complex, costing more than \$300 million.<sup>84</sup>

As a result of the reconstruction project, Solidere, has replaced the Green Line with “an equally dislocating Red Line” based on the economic exclusion and confessional disagreements.<sup>85</sup> The over-emphasis on the reconstruction of the city centre has de-linked other parts of the city that have been excluded in the reconstruction process however. Reconstruction of infrastructure has created spatial and physical barriers. As argued by Scott Bollens:

“Solidere in its city-building has led to an elitist and exclusionary zone. In a city where chaos, disorder and physical degradation are common, maintenance workers in the central district dust off street furniture and lights in the mornings, and privatised, uniformed security personnel are everywhere to protect the private domain and ongoing development projects.”<sup>86</sup>

Further divisions and barriers are noted by Heiko Schmid, who criticised the ring road around BCD as a new physical barrier, “isolating the downtown area from the rest of the city.”<sup>87</sup> In this vein, Larkin argues that ‘young people’ in Beirut have to negotiate these spatial divisions in their everyday life:

“Lebanon’s ‘perceived space’ is a narrow national image represented by the modern, commercial, de-politicised downtown; the dreamscape of urban elites

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<sup>83</sup>Genberg, “Borders and boundaries,” 92.

<sup>84</sup>Nagle, “Ghosts, memory and the right to the divided city,” 154.

<sup>85</sup>Larkin, *Memory and Conflict in Lebanon*, 101.

<sup>86</sup>Scott Bollens, “An Island in Sectarian Seas? Heritage, memory, and identity in post-war redevelopment of Beirut’s Central District,” in *Urban Heritage in Divided Cities: Contested Pasts* (Routledge, 2019), 175.

<sup>87</sup>Schmid, “Privatized urbanity or a politicized society?” 373.

like Rafik Hariri. This is juxtaposed against the reality of ‘conceived space’ still dominated by sectarian ghettos, and entrenched boundaries saturated with political and religious icons of belonging and exclusion.”<sup>88</sup>

The reconstruction of BCD has led to the physical and spatial manifestations of *sectarian politics*. Former demarcations from the civil war were removed and new forms of contestation continue to shape Beirut and its inhabitants. In addition, the recodification of the militia resulted in the manifestations of kinship, facilitating the ‘super za’im Hariri’ - at the heart of Beirut whilst excluding large parts of the population.

Urban segregation continued with the disappearance of common space and memories of coexistence. Notably, the demolition process after the civil war removed all indications of the old souq that had previously brought together inhabitants from all social classes and confessional communities.<sup>89</sup> According to Khalaf, the civil war did not only destroy most common spaces but also dismantled heterogeneous neighbourhoods, thus manifesting the decentralisation of Beirut.<sup>90</sup> Consequently, urban spaces were transformed by different modes of segregation, facilitating marginalisation and contestation between groups. However, reconstruction did not only facilitate urban segregation and territorial stigmatisation but established a sacrifice zone deemed suitable to receive solid waste and construction and demolition waste (CDW). As explored at the end of this section, Bourj Hammoud became the site of sacrifice for the reconstruction of Downtown Beirut.

Across Beirut, the civil war had established urban segregation, with most areas within Beirut shaped by one majority sect.<sup>91</sup> Some of these include Achrafiyeh and Gemmayzeh, which are largely Christian; Tariq El Jedidei and Ras El Nabaa, which is mostly Sunni; and

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<sup>88</sup>Larkin, *Memory and Conflict in Lebanon*, 102.

<sup>89</sup>Hourani, “Post-conflict reconstruction,” 185; and Khalaf, *Civil and Uncivil Violence in Lebanon*, 246.

<sup>90</sup>Khalaf, *Civil and Uncivil Violence in Lebanon*, 246.

<sup>91</sup>Seidmann, “The politics of cosmopolitan Beirut,” 3.

Zoqaq el Blat and Haret Hreik which is predominantly Shiite.<sup>92</sup> Hamra is notably known for having religiously mixed neighbourhoods and being regarded as a space of multiplicity. At the same time, Downtown Beirut became a “mixed space” and “natural meeting place”, albeit with extreme class divisions. Although other mixed neighbourhoods exist, Nasser Yassin found through survey data that these were the least desirable for choosing a place of residence and, in addition, that people prefer homogeneous neighbourhoods for security reasons if they can afford it.<sup>93</sup> As such, urban geographies have continued to be shaped by the political leadership and sectarian politics.

Scholars have argued that political leaders and their parties, such as Hezbollah and Amal, have become significant agents of planning and zoning, representing their communities in matters of reconstruction and development. For Example, Hiba Bou Akar explores *planning as a lacework* in Sahra Choueifat, arguing that it includes “zoning mutations” a mixture of negotiations between forces of sectarian politics and neoliberal policies, resulting in planning “for the war yet to come”.<sup>94</sup> Similarly, Fawaz note how Hezbollah seeks to maintain control over neighbourhoods and their surroundings through their work as “mediators between public agencies and the Shiite community”; however, Fawaz also notes that “[c]ontrol is also not absolute: when unsatisfactory deals are struck between public agencies and the political parties, dwellers sometimes still protest or fail to abide by the agreement.”<sup>95</sup> As such, the political leadership organised urban spaces on various levels, albeit with spaces for resistance.

During the Cedar Revolution, Beirut experienced renewed contestation, as explored in Chapter 3. The assassination of prime minister Rafik Hariri triggered a breakdown of the

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<sup>92</sup>Bollens, *City and Soul in Divided Society*, 161.

<sup>93</sup>Nasser Yassin, “Violent Urbanization and Homogenization of Space and Place,” World Institute for development Economic Research (2010), 212-213.

<sup>94</sup>Akar, *For the War yet to Come*, 64.

<sup>95</sup>Mona Fawaz, Marieke Krijnen, and Daria El Samad, “A property framework for understanding gentrification: Ownership patterns and the transformations of Mar Mikhael,” *City* 22. No. 3 (2018), 846.

Sunni Shi'a collaboration and the start of the Cedar Revolution, in which tens of thousands of protesters sought to end "injustices caused by the civil war and Syria's oppressive control over Lebanon."<sup>96</sup> Subsequently, Hezbollah organised the March 8 demonstration supporting the Syrian military presence but soon after the counter-demonstration organised by Sunni Future Movement labelled March 14 proceeded. The sectarian politics that developed in the aftermath of the Syrian expulsion has since been overtaken by the physical manifestation and localisation of kinship. In this context, the reordering of sectarian disputes and the development of demarcations have further segregated urban geographies.

The political leadership has increasingly utilised necropolitics in order to control and regulate urban spaces. As argued by Bollens, some areas have been "vulnerable to violence and instability," and "ignitable, subject to exploitation and mobilisation by sectarian political leaders" as exemplified in the 2008 clashes.<sup>97</sup> The journalist Tim Llewellyn explained these spaces of contestations as "new lines in the sand" in which the Sunni-Shiite rivalry manifests itself between spaces through the use of "banners, flags, images and slogans."<sup>98</sup> Llewellyn further argued that "a new Green Line" began to develop along the Corniche al Mazraa in January 2006 as "Sunnies on one side and Shi'a on the other threw stones at one another over the heads of the army."<sup>99</sup> Similarly, Bollens describes Corniche al Mazraa as "securitized" including "police, sandbags, armed private security personnel, concrete block barriers, barbed wire, gates and protected entrances."<sup>100</sup> During the May 2008 clashes Beirut experienced heavy battles along the Corniche al Mazraa which spread elsewhere in the mixed Sunni and Shiite areas of the city. Violent clashes contributed to the physical manifestation of *oikos* in ar-

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<sup>96</sup>Knudsen and Kerr, *Lebanon*, 4.

<sup>97</sup>Bollens, *City and Soul in Divided Society* 164.

<sup>98</sup>Tim Llewellyn, *Spirit of the Phoenix and the Story of Lebanon* (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2010) 233.

<sup>99</sup>Llewellyn, *Spirit of the Phoenix*, 233.

<sup>100</sup>Bollens, *City and Soul in Divided Society*, 164.



areas such as Shiite identity in Zoqaq al Blat and contestations along its borders.<sup>101</sup> Similarly, in the vulnerable Sunni neighbourhood Tariq El Jedidei, “people are frightened by poverty and unemployment, but they consider that the danger comes from the Shia-dominated southern suburbs” and young people seek to “protect their quarter from ‘invasion’, like the militias did during the war.”<sup>102</sup> The consolidation of space demonstrates the implications and the stakes of necropolitics in Beirut as political leaders seek to pursue nationalist interests in urban politics.

These demarcations however are not to be confused as a fully militarised “Green Line” with no free movement but rather a part of broader urban demarcations and boundaries that have been developed through stasis. As argued by Cauter in his analysis of public space, “the Green Line divided real space. Today the emphasis is more on mental demarcation lines, as evident in the southern suburbs, controlled by Hezbollah and not the state.”<sup>103</sup> Similarly, Yassin argues that “symbolic boundaries” have been constructed by means of social segregation systems that are built up by intra-group networks and relationships in which “value judgements are used to differentiate between the group’s ‘way of life’ and feed onto the perceived ‘untruthfulness’ of the other.”<sup>104</sup> In the post-2005 environment then demarcations are not fully militarised; they instead work as divisions and segregation between groups.

The 2006 July war between Hezbollah and Israel further exacerbated urban segregation.<sup>105</sup> In the Municipal Haret Hreik – the site of Hezbollah’s headquarters – destruction accounted for 265 residential, commercial and office buildings, with an estimated 20,000 inhabitants losing their homes.<sup>106</sup> The conflict escalated urban segregation in the southern

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<sup>101</sup> Sara Fregonese, “Affective atmospheres, urban geopolitics and conflict (de)escalation in Beirut,” *Political Geography* 61 (2017), 4.

<sup>102</sup> Balanche, “The reconstruction of Lebanon,” 155-156.

<sup>103</sup> Cauter, “Towards a phenomenology of civil war,” 424.

<sup>104</sup> Yassin, “Violent Urbanization,” 209.

<sup>105</sup> Fawaz and Ghandour, *The Reconstruction of Haret Hreik*, 1.

<sup>106</sup> *ibid*

suburbs through uneven reconstruction.

In contrast to the reconstruction in Downtown Beirut, the reconstruction of Haret Hreik aimed at limiting the spatial erasures and dispossession. A non-profit organisation *The Solem Promise Project* (Wa'ad) was established to supervise the reconstruction of Haret Hreik. Although situated under Hezbollah the planning and contracting was “decisively nonsectarian”; it sought to “ensure that the vast majority returned to the neighbourhood and reclaimed their right to the capital city [for Shia inhabitants] and so their full membership in the political community their capital represents.”<sup>107</sup> Still, the reconstruction also included the politics of exclusion through gentrification, as “nothing prevented the owners from immediately selling their newly modernised properties or from increasing rents,”<sup>108</sup> enabling market forces. As such, Mona Fawaz argues that the reconstruction represented “a new geometry or alternative” to neoliberalist models but not “a departure from its precepts.”<sup>109</sup> In this way, reconstruction impacted claims to spaces as Hezbollah’s urban intervention was “necessary for the party’s consolidation of its territory in the city and for fixing the space of this neighbourhood according to its own political calculations.”<sup>110</sup> Through *Wa'ad*, Hezbollah has enabled *stasis* over its territorial base in the southern suburbs – “It is more or less accepted that neither Christians, Sunnis or Druze nor atheist intellectuals enter this part of the city; any non-Shiite has no business here. The southern suburbs have become a no-go area.”<sup>111</sup> Although the reconstruction of Haret Hreik took a visibly different direction than Downtown Beirut, the reconstruction led to increasing urban segregation and reinforced sectarian contestation. Additionally, and as explored below, the reconstruction of Downtown Beirut

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<sup>107</sup>Hourani, “Post-conflict reconstruction,” 192.

<sup>108</sup>ibid, 195

<sup>109</sup>Fawaz, “The politics of property in planning: Hezbollah’s reconstruction of Haret Hreik (Beirut, Lebanon) as case study,” *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 38, no.3 (2014), 923.

<sup>110</sup>Fawaz, “The politics of property in planning,” 923.

<sup>111</sup>Cauter, “Towards a phenomenology of civil war,” 424.

and Haret Hreik resulted in large-scale uncontrolled dumps that established the sacrifice zone of reconstruction.

#### 4.3.1 THE SACRIFICE ZONE OF RECONSTRUCTION

As a result of conflict, large-scale uncontrolled dump sites have not been an unfamiliar sight in Beirut. The civil war and the 2006 July War established the Normandy, Bourj Hammoud and Costa Brava dumps. However, these dumpsites had two different trajectories. Whilst the Normandy dump was integrated into the reconstruction of Downtown Beirut, Bourj Hammoud and Costa Brava became the sacrifice zones of the reconstruction processes.

The Normandy dump expanded significantly after the civil war. Dumping continued until 1994, when Solidere took over the reconstruction of Downtown Beirut. At this point, the dump sites reached 20 meters below the sea-level and over 35 meters above sea level in certain spots.<sup>112</sup> During the initial reconstruction from 1991 to 1998 and despite significant criticism of the plan, rubble from the demolitions in downtown Beirut was used to extend the dump and create a solid barrier between the mixed waste and the sea.<sup>113</sup> Through the use of institutional bodies, including the CoM, CDR and Solidere, prime minister Rafic Hariri transformed urban space, memories and geographies of the old downtown area (as seen in Map 4.1).

Writing on the Normandy dump and transgression, Judith Naeff explores these sites as spaces that “allows rejected objects to linger and transform, thus resisting the temporal ruptures implied by narratives of erasure and rebirth.”<sup>114</sup> In this way, the Normandy dump was transformed into an area of luxury real estate. Since the state could not afford to pay the increased costs of land reclamation by Solidere, the state granted “the company the right to own

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<sup>112</sup>Sadek and El-Fadel, “The Normandy Landfill,” 156.

<sup>113</sup>ibid, 155.

<sup>114</sup>Naeff, *Precarious Imaginaries of Beirut*, 111.

and exploit half of the reclaimed land gained [making up 79,000 square meters of prime real estate]”<sup>115</sup> As argued by Eric Verdeil, the transaction between state and Solidere “validated the profits the developers and their political backers anticipated, when they started dumping in the sea.”<sup>116</sup> The reconstruction of Downtown Beirut facilitated the transformation of the area and the processes rewarded the increased dumping of materials into the sea by developers – enriching the shareholders of Solidere and Hariri’s network, including “Saudi businessmen, Lebanon’s pre-war Bourgeois, and former employees.”<sup>117</sup>

The coastal dumps, while clearly profitable, are hugely problematic for the environment and surrounding ecosystems. They can be highly hazardous and require long-term strategies to ensure that waste does not seep into the ocean. In the case of the Normandy dump it is unclear how waste was treated before the land was reclaimed; one report suggests that “Remediation included attenuation barrier to control leachate, gas extraction and treatment in the excavation face, separation of waste into organic and non-organic fractions, stabilization of the organic fraction through composting, and/or soil thermal de-sorption.”<sup>118</sup> Other reports have suggested that the land still contains high levels of toxicity.<sup>119</sup> This could have severe implications; for example, historic coastal landfills are causing hazardous conditions across Europe – including 1200 coastal locations in the UK alone – and remain expensive to maintain over time as the waste barriers erode, thereby posing a severe threat to health and ecosystems.<sup>120</sup> With the implications of climate change and sea-level rise, these coastal landfills are at risk of further exposing human and oceanic life. This is likely to be the case in

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<sup>115</sup>Leenders, *Spoils of Truce*, 60.

<sup>116</sup>Eric Verdeil, “Seafront reclamation, rubble, and waste: a metabolic reading of lebanese urbanisation,” *The Derivative*, September 16, 2021, <https://thederivative.org/for-rubble-%D8%B1-%D8%AF-%D9%85/>

<sup>117</sup>Baumann, *Citizen Hariri*, 63.

<sup>118</sup>El Jor, *Policies and Institutional*, 9.

<sup>119</sup>R.Y. Nuwayhid, G.M. Ayoub, E.F. Saba and S. Abi-Said “The Solid Waste Management Scene in Greater Beirut,” *Waste Management & Research* 14 (1996), 178; Sadek and El-Fadel, “The Normandy Landfill,” 156; Mansour, “From trash dump to dreamland.”

<sup>120</sup>Nicholls et al., “Coastal landfills and rising sea levels,” 5.



**Map 4.1:** The Reconstruction of Downtown Beirut and Expansion of Bourj Hammoud Dumpsite in 1990 and 2000

Beirut, where coastal landfills already pose a severe hazard.

In contrast, the reconstructions sacrifice zone in Bourj Hammoud developed. Dumpsites, as argued by Judith Naeff, are “important sites because they represent materially as well as conceptually, transgression. Within Beirut’s post-war urban geography, dumpsites can evoke memories of the various transgressions of the civil war of the civil order that took place during the civil war.”<sup>121</sup> However, dumpsites signal more than the transgressions of the past, it signals the ongoing role of the political leadership in organising and manipulating post-conflict spaces and their ability to intensify political and socio-economic inequalities by deciding what inhabitants are included and excluded in urban spaces. Agamben’s conceptualisation of *the camp* is particularly helpful in this regard. The camp is more than a sacrifice zone as it signals the localisation of spaces of exception and bare life. The localisation allows sovereignties the ability to distinguish between quality life and bare life – deciding who can be killed by the toxicity of waste crisis without repercussion.

The dump sites had severe impacts on people and the environment. When dumping stopped at Bourj Hammoud dumpsite, due to waste activism in 1997 as explored in Chapter 2, a policy report noted that the dump “reached 650 meters in length, 350 meters in width and 55 meters in height,” thereby scarring the coast.<sup>122</sup> Between the closure of the site in 1997 and its reopening in 2017, minimal effort was made to limit the contamination and toxicity. The rehabilitation of the site was limited to the installation of a gas venting system and temporary soil cover to “control blowing waste” in 2000.<sup>123</sup> Before the installation of the vents, fires would break as a result of unmanaged methane gas, increasing health risks to the

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<sup>121</sup>Naeff, *Precarious Imaginaries of Beirut*, 120.

<sup>122</sup>El Jor, *Policies and Institutional*, 40.

<sup>123</sup>LDK-ECO, *Support to DG Environment for the Development of the Mediterranean De-Pollution Initiative “Horizon 2020”* (Athens: European Commission, 2006), 117, [https://ec.europa.eu/environment/archives/enlarg/med/pdf/review\\_report08\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/environment/archives/enlarg/med/pdf/review_report08_en.pdf); Sherif Arif and Fadi Doumani, *Cost Assessment of Solid Waste Degradation in Beirut and Mount Lebanon* (Tunis: GiZ SWEEP-net, 2014), 44.

residents around the dump site.<sup>124</sup> The lack of rehabilitation of the waste mountain shows the continuation of Bourj Hammoud as the sacrifice zone.

A place of extreme pollution, including a mix of different types of waste such as solid, C&D, and organic waste, the site is estimated to release an estimated 120,000 tonnes of leachate annually.<sup>125</sup> Without management, leachate – “a contaminated liquid that is generated from water percolating through a solid waste disposal site accumulating contaminants,” – pose a significant challenge to ecological and health impacts, including chemicals such as lead, mercury, and nickel.<sup>126</sup> As a result, a report in 2009 found that the dumpsite was “destroying sea life within a radius of hundred meters.”<sup>127</sup> The toxicity and the visibility of the dumpsite displays the extreme consequences of urban governing and stigmatisation in Beirut.

Furthermore, the traces of the toxic barrels from the civil war were never investigated at Bourj Hammoud, and government agencies halted efforts by activists and researchers. In one case, a group of investigators were escorted to Bourj Hammoud police station, where “police held them for several hours before releasing them.”<sup>128</sup> The repression of activists and scientists has been crucial in establishing the localisation of *the camp*, a space regulated by the political leadership in which all life is exposed to death and human beings are stripped from their political rights.

The 2006 July War produced similarly large-scale dumps and post-conflict attempts at order building. In the summer of 2006, Israel entered a conflict with Hezbollah that had substantial environmental impacts in Lebanon, including a major oil spill and infrastructural

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<sup>124</sup>Boutros, “Garbage Crisis in Lebanon.”

<sup>125</sup>LDK-ECO, *Support to DG Environment*, 117.

<sup>126</sup>Nucholas P Chereminsoff, “Treating contaminated groundwater and leachate,” *Groundwater Remediation and Treatment Technologies* (1997), 260.

<sup>127</sup>Diran Harmandayan, *Bourj Hammoud Brief City Profile* (APEC, 2009), 23, <http://www.bourjhammoud.gov.lb/sites/default/files/public/SBH-REPORT-F-shrunked.pdf>.

<sup>128</sup>The Public Source, “The “ecological time bombs”.

damage.<sup>129</sup> The damage and destruction created by the war generated a substantial amount of waste, including up to 3.5 million cubic meters of demolition waste.<sup>130</sup> The impact of the conflict was concentrated in the Municipality of Haret Hreik in the southern suburbs; the site of Hezbollah headquarters and institutions situated within and around residential areas. Out of a total of 333 destroyed or damaged buildings in Beirut 275 were located in Haret Hreik, an estimated 15 per cent of the buildings in the municipality.<sup>131</sup> The destruction of the area led to the reconstruction through *Wa'ad* and the establishment of a post-conflict sacrifice zone.

Soon after the conflict, the removal of debris and demolition waste started in order to enable reconstruction activities. Notably, the Ministry of Public Works and Transport (MPWT) – responsible for the management of demolition debris – selected a series of sites for dumping, including the Costa Brava site (situated between the sea and the airport, also sometimes labelled Ouazai dump and Ghadir landfill) and two temporary locations within the Municipality of Bourj Al Barajneh (an old dump site used during the civil war and a local football field – with close proximity to a hospital, a mosque and restaurant).<sup>132</sup> The Costa Brava dump became the main site for the demolition waste due to its relatively secluded location. The initiative made by the MPWT was sanctioned by the CDR – responsible for planning and commissioning reconstruction projects - and CoM decision 91/2006 – seeking to sort material at Bourj Al Barajneh and later transport the waste to the Costa Brava dump.<sup>133</sup> Two rubble mountains developed in Costa Brava reaching more than 10 meters

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<sup>129</sup>See: Aseel A. Takshe, Irna Van der Molen and John C. Lovett, “Examining the lack of legal remedies for environmental damage in the 2006 Lebanon-Israel war,” *Environmental Policy and Governance* 22 (2012).

<sup>130</sup>UNDP, *Lebanon Rapid Environmental Assessment for Greening Recovery Reconstruction and Reform, 2006* (Beirut: ELRAD, 2007), xii, <http://www.undp.org.lb/events/docs/DraftReport.pdf>.

<sup>131</sup>Dirk Buda and Delilah H.A. Al-Khudhairi, *Rapid Preliminary Damage Assessment – Beirut and S Lebanon* (JRC and EUSC, 2006), 10, <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/8090711dCC7E7187C12571DC0035466F-eu-1bn-31aug.pdf>.

<sup>132</sup>UNDP, *Lebanon Rapid Environmental Assessment*, 2-11 to 2-13; see also ELRAD, *Legal Framework*, 29.

<sup>133</sup>UNDP, *Lebanon Rapid Environmental Assessment*, 2-4 and 2-33.



each with some material being dumped directly into the sea (see Map 4.2). However, as noted by Croitoru and Saraaf

“Sea encroachment occurred to a minimum extent on the dump sites by the sea. Whenever this encroachment occurred, the bulky nature of the demolition waste gave it a relatively good angle of stability, minimizing the likelihood of its collapse into the sea. Although this invariably damaged the coastal ecosystem, the impact is difficult to quantify monetarily.”<sup>134</sup>

Compared to Bourj Hammoud, the Costa Brava dump was considered less of a hazardous risk due to its bulky and inert composition but posed a significant threat to marine life and biodiversity as well as a health risk for those working on and living adjacent to the site due to dust, smoke, noise and lack of personal protective equipment (PPE).<sup>135</sup>

Like the aftermath of the civil war, the waste was placed out of sight of the area that was to be reconstructed – Haret Hreik. As noted by Judith Naeff, “the Ouzai [Costa Brava] dump serves to reveal through material damage the past act of violence which itself escapes representation. [...] The ruin’s boundaries are porous, but they are still identifiable. Debris, in contrast, is mixed up to such an extent that the former object disappears completely.”<sup>136</sup> However, this significantly undermines the impacts on the neighbourhood. Not only a site of archaeological importance from 5000 BC, but also an area that has traditionally hosted a series of cafes, restaurants and reports from the 1940s onwards.<sup>137</sup> Although posing a significant impact on the inhabitants, the site was made invisible for people passing by car as the

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<sup>134</sup>Leila Croitoru and Maria Saraaf, “Oil spills and waste due to conflict: The case of Lebanon” in *The Cost of Environmental Degradation*, ed. Leila Croitoru and Maria Saraaf (Washington: The World Bank, 2010), 120.

<sup>135</sup>UNDP, *Lebanon: Post-conflict Environmental Assessment*, 104.

<sup>136</sup>Naeff, *Precarious Imaginaries of Beirut*, 104.

<sup>137</sup>Kassir, *Beirut*.



Map 4.2: The Establishment of Costa Brava Dumpsite

highway was higher than the dumpsites. The transgressions and spaces of exception has been shaped by invisibility.

The large-scale dump sites represent the sacrifice zones of reconstruction in Beirut and how the sites have become spaces of repression, regulation, and exposure to environmental harm. After the official closure of the Bourj Hammoud dump in 1997, Naameh landfill – located in an old quarry 15 km south of Beirut and 4 km from the coastline – became BML’s main landfill until 2015, receiving up to 2500 t/day of solid waste out of the incoming 2850 t/day in the area or 51 per cent of Lebanon’s total solid waste.<sup>138</sup> From its beginning, the landfill was controversial becoming even more so every time it expanded. The Naameh landfill reached the originally intended capacity in 2001, receiving 2 million tonnes of waste, and was after that expanded a series of times in 2001, 2006, 2008, 2011, 2014, 2015, and 2016.<sup>139</sup> Intended as a temporary solution to the waste crisis in 1997, inhabitants were awaiting long-term sustainable strategies, but the site continued to be used as the region’s SWM site.

The environmental and health impacts from the landfill were considerable.<sup>140</sup> Due to its location, 2.5 km away from the nearest population center, and with ground water as low as 15 m below ground (the main groundwater table at 250-350 m), the regulation of the site was a primary concern during the design, construction and expansion of the landfill with liners and a leachate collection system initially added as protective layer.<sup>141</sup> However, the landfill could be considered non-sanitary due to extensions not being adequately implemented resulting in inhabitants and NGO’s expressing concerns about seepage.<sup>142</sup> For 17 years, the risk of air,

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<sup>138</sup>Notably these numbers are from 2012 Arif and Fadi, *Cost Assessment of Solid Waste*.

<sup>139</sup>Kamale Zakhem, Giselle Zakhem, Susan Jahjah, Georges Zakhem, and Elsy Ibrahim, “Investigating the evolution of Naameh Landfill and its surrounding vegetation using multisectoral spaceborne imagery,” *Institute for Electrical and Electronics Engineers* (2016), 2.

<sup>140</sup>Boutros, “Garbage Crisis in Lebanon.”

<sup>141</sup>M El-Fadel, E Biu-Zeid, W Chahine, and B Alayli, “Temporal variation of leachate quality from presorted and baled municipal solid waste with high organic and moisture content,” *Waste Management* 22, no. 3 (2002), 272.

<sup>142</sup>Arif and Fadi, *Cost Assessment of Solid Waste*, 42.

water and soil contamination posed a significant challenge to the area – with residents fearing water and air borne diseases, as well as cancer from exposure to toxic materials.<sup>143</sup> Leachate was a significant issue; a recent study found the presence of organic compounds and elevated concentrations of boron, lead and zinc in wells as an indicator of possible contamination.<sup>144</sup> Notably, during its operation the landfill also had considerable methane emissions, having environmental and health impacts, that could have been lowered with improved management.<sup>145</sup> A health study found that “residents living closest to the landfill reported more cases of asthma, skin allergies, extreme fatigue and weakness in hands and feet compared to those farthest from the dumpsite.”<sup>146</sup> The continuous extension of the landfill by the state apparatus has exposed inhabitants around the area to consider environmental and health impacts, creating a sacrifice zone for the region’s waste.

#### 4.4 URBAN DECAY AND ABANDONMENT

The prolonged waste crisis at Naameh and the deadlock between political leaders regarding the allocation of SWM contracts resulted in the waste crisis in 2015. The activists in Beirut were part of growing anti-establishment sentiments, rejecting sectarian and class contestation that had emerged after the civil war. The mass demonstrations in Martyr’s Square were the

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<sup>143</sup>Ghina Chammas, Sammy Kayed, Anwar Al Shami, Wassim Kays, Michele Citton, Mohamad Kalot, Elie Al Marj, Marwan Fakhr, Nadine A. Yehya, Salma N. Talhouk, Mahmoud Al-Hindi, Salah Zein-El-Dine, Hani Tamim e, Issam Lakkis, Majdi Abou Najm, and Najat A. Saliba, “Transdisciplinary interventions for environmental sustainability,” *Waste Management* 107 (2020), 163.

<sup>144</sup>Chammas et al. “Transdisciplinary interventions,” 163; also Michele Citton, Sofie Croonenberg, Anwar El Shami, Ghina Chammas, Sammy Kayed, Najat Aoun Saliba, Majdi Abou Najm, Hani Tamim, Salah Zeineldine, Maha Makki, Mohamad Kalot, Issam Lakkis and Mahmoud Al-Hindi, “Multisource groundwater contamination under data scarcity: the case study of six municipalities in the proximity of the Naameh landfill,” *Water* (2020), 16. The data in the latter study found little evidence to support groundwater contamination by landfilling, however, finds high contamination of lead in wells. Both studies emphasise the threat by untreated wastewater causing bacteriological contamination (including *E. coli*) on water qualities in groundwater and wells; further monitoring of the aquifer, that supply 40 percent of greater Beirut, that lies under the landfill.

<sup>145</sup>Arif and Fadi, *Cost Assessment of Solid Waste*, 46.

<sup>146</sup>Chammas et al. “Transdisciplinary interventions,” 163.

first significant actions since the Cedar Revolution, which intensified sectarian politics. Furthermore, it reordered class divisions in the square. Although internal dynamics persisted, activists challenged the political leadership. Responding to the protests, Solidere's chairman "demanded that protesters leave the centre as they were cheapening it" ending in protesters setting up stalls in the city centre in order to "retake the city," ultimately displaying further limitations and challenges protesters place on exclusionary spaces.<sup>147</sup> Despite Solidere's best effort to form postwar Beirut, Martyrs' Square has since 2011 become a space that enables challenges of the confessional system in Lebanon.

As such, the 2015 garbage crisis was not simply an environmental crisis; it revealed inefficiencies of the political system and resulted in a series of protests. The protests signalled a spatial shift towards cross-confessional social movements. After several months however people were "feeling powerless to affect the politics in their country," with many believing that "garbage was the latest manifestation of a system that had failed."<sup>148</sup> The protests paved the way for changes in the 2016 municipal elections and the 2022 national elections that were seen as a crucial step for challenging the pattern of repression in Lebanon, lobbying to improve environmental and socio-economic issues. Although these elections failed to overcome the postwar power-sharing system, the election showed the possibilities for change with the increase in independent candidates.

The 2015 crisis also opened a space for further activism. Since the 17<sup>th</sup> of October 2019, Lebanon has experienced a series of anti-establishment protests that were sparked by a series of events, including the declining economy and the recent fires in Mount Lebanon that marked the increasing distance between the political leadership and their clients and "the public's growing resentment toward the corrupt sectarian ruling class that abused the county's re-

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<sup>147</sup>Nagle, "Ghosts, memory and the right to the divided city," 165.

<sup>148</sup>Deets, "Consociationalism, clientelism, and local politics in Beirut," 154.

sources for decades and fail to provide even the most basic public services, including electricity, water and garbage disposal.”<sup>149</sup> The protest systematically problematised government failures, the absences of public services, high unemployment rates, and the economic failure in the country but also actively sought to reclaim public space using the hashtag #ReclaimingThePublicSpace. In this vein, the activists “transformed these spaces into collective places of their own” including the public use of the Egg, the Grand Theatre, and Samir Kasir Garden.<sup>150</sup> Furthermore, it displayed more awareness for politically marginalised groups, with the movement creating spaces and seeking rights for feminists, refugees, migrants, and LGBTQ+ people.

Since 2019, urban spaces have been shaped by a series of developments which has severely deteriorated urban spaces, including economic depression, COVID-19, and the 2020 Beirut explosion (with the latter explored below). The ongoing economic crisis has transformed the everyday lives of people. In November 2019, the World Bank warned that the overall poverty rate in Lebanon would increase from 30 to 50 per cent of the inhabitants – at the end of 2021, it had reached 82 per cent.<sup>151</sup> Furthermore, the economic crisis and COVID-19, has had a devastating impact on urban services and infrastructures. The diminished access to water, fuel, electricity, and food is harmful. As noted by a United Nations report on Lebanon, 55 per cent of households were reporting food insecurity, and 30 per cent of children were at risk of malnutrition.<sup>152</sup> Consequently, the compounding conditions have devastating im-

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<sup>149</sup>Jad Melki, Claudia Kozman and Sally Farhat, “Selective exposure during uprisings: A comparative study of new uses in China, Hong Kong, Iran, Iraq and Lebanon,” *International Communication Gazette* (2022), 3.

<sup>150</sup>Sinno, “How people reclaimed public spaces in Beirut,” 199-200.

<sup>151</sup>“World Bank: Lebanon is in the Midst of Economic, Financial, and Social Hardship, Situation Could Get Worse,” *the World Bank*, November 6, 2019, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2019/11/06/world-bank-lebanon-is-in-the-midst-of-economic-financial-and-social-hardship-situation-could-get-worse>; and ESCWA, *Multidimensional poverty in Lebanon*.

<sup>152</sup>United Nations, Lebanon, *2020 UN Lebanon Annual Results Report* (United Nations, Lebanon, 2020), 3, [https://reliefweb.int/report/lebanon/2020-un-lebanon-annual-results-report?gclid=Cj0KCQjwgl0iBhC7ARIsAIeetVAmj\\_3m9EtGJq4d2NGUs724rFji-IJTPIRjAKWowUYu0ZpI5LNPzoaAo6rEALw\\_wcB](https://reliefweb.int/report/lebanon/2020-un-lebanon-annual-results-report?gclid=Cj0KCQjwgl0iBhC7ARIsAIeetVAmj_3m9EtGJq4d2NGUs724rFji-IJTPIRjAKWowUYu0ZpI5LNPzoaAo6rEALw_wcB).

pacts on the people across Lebanon. Moreover, the crisis is further exacerbated by the deadlock after the 2022 National Election. As of January 2023, the parliament failed to elect a new president for the 11<sup>th</sup> time since May 2022.<sup>153</sup> As such, Lebanon is without a President and is run by a caretaker Prime Minister and cabinet until the President can appoint a Prime Minister. Although deadlocks after an election are expected in Lebanon, the implications for people residing in Lebanon are particularly severe, given the compounding crisis and the lack of public services. Moreover, the lack of a mandated government creates a series of obstacles, such as the absence of urban crisis planning and in negotiations with the IMF.<sup>154</sup> In the absence of the state an increasing number of people in Lebanon have become dependent on aid and remittances in order to survive.<sup>155</sup> As a result of the intersectional crisis, the recent years have demonstrated the further regeneration of sacrifice zones facilitated by the political leadership.

#### 4.4.1 THE REGENERATION OF TOXIC SACRIFICE ZONES

The 2015 waste crisis persisted through months of demonstrations and political deadlocks. The CoM sought to solve the crisis through failed attempts at exporting the waste and making plans for incineration. However, on the 12<sup>th</sup> of March 2016 the CoM issued another emergency decree (with amendments a week later 17<sup>th</sup> March 2016), establishing temporary coastal landfills at the previous dumpsites of Bourj Hammoud and Costa Brava (see Map 4.3 and 4.4). The CoM decision mandated the CDR to manage the related bids and requested

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<sup>153</sup>Anna Foster, “Lebanon MPs sit in as 11<sup>th</sup> vote for president fails,” *BBC*, News, January 20, 2023, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-64344481>.

<sup>154</sup>Timour Azhari, “Lebanon could still sign IMF deal despite executive vacuum – PM,” *Reuters*, Middle East, November 10, 2022, <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/lebanon-could-still-sign-imf-deal-despite-executive-vaccum-pm-2022-11-10/>.

<sup>155</sup>USAID, *Understanding remittances as a coping strategy amidst Lebanon’s crisis: Opportunity and challenges for aid actors* (The Lebanon Crisis Analytics Team, 2022), <https://reliefweb.int/report/lebanon/thematic-report-understanding-remittances-coping-strategy-amidst-lebanons-crises-opportunities-and-challenges-aid-actors-november-2022>.

that “the sanitary landfills are established and developed in accordance with scientific and environmental regulations and in coordination with relevant municipalities.”<sup>156</sup> When the tenders for the two sites were accepted by the CDR, by the *Khoury Contracting Company* and *Al-Jihad Group of Commerce and Contracting* for Bourj Hammoud and Costa Brava respectively, the coastal landfills were developed in haste without environmental assessments.<sup>157</sup> This of course then posed a significant challenge to human beings, ecologies, and urban composition.

In contrast, the coastal landfill sites fulfilled a series of criteria set out by sections of the political leadership. As noted by a series of commentators, the sites were already abandoned and polluted by former dump sites.<sup>158</sup> In addition, the contracts were divided between the networks of key political players, including former president Michel Aoun and prime minister Saad Hariri.<sup>159</sup> The division of the high value contracts between members of the political leadership resolved the contestation and deadlock around SWM that contributed to the 2015 waste crisis, as explored in Chapter 2. Moreover, as noted by Verdeil, the land reclamation of the coastal landfills provides possibilities for real estate gains if land values rise, thus driving urban planning strategies.<sup>160</sup> In these ways, the coastal landfills support the land reclamation strategies of the political leadership.

Over five years later, the temporary coastal landfills have re-enforced the sacrifice zones and spaces of exception, which have emerged due to efforts by the political leadership to organise and control urban environments. Moreover, the establishment of the coastal landfills

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<sup>156</sup>Mansour, Moussallem, and Osman, *Support to Reforms*, 21.

<sup>157</sup>Boswall, *Lebanon*, 20; The Public Source, “Merchants of Death,” *the Public Source*, October 11, 2022, <https://thepublicsource.org/toxic-barrels-beirut-port-lebanon>; Khalil, *Impacting Policies*, 12.

<sup>158</sup>Atwood “A city by the sea”; and the Public Source, “Merchants of Death”.

<sup>159</sup>Jad Chaaban, “One year on, Lebanon’s waste management policies still stink,” *The Lebanese Center for Policy Studies*, September 1, 2016, <https://www.lcps-lebanon.org/articles/details/1946/one-year-on-lebanon%E2%80%99s-waste-management-policies-still-stink>.

<sup>160</sup>The municipalities own the reclaimed land, see in Verdeil, “Seafront reclamation”; Harmandayan, *Bourj Hammoud Brief*, 33.





Map 4.3: The Construction and Expansion of Bouj Hammoud Landfill

further marginalises the communities within close proximity to the sites, such as Bourj Hammoud and Shara Chouifat, by exposing inhabitants to silent and slow violence related to the health and environmental implications of waste. As such, the localisation of the coastal landfills in Beirut displays the disposability of human beings and urban spaces. The coastal landfills have further severe implications for the environment. The construction of the landfill in Bourj Hammoud and subsequent expansions of both landfills were initially done without an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), which is required to be done prior to the start of any project by *MoE Decree 8633, 2012*.<sup>161</sup> An EIA shows the impact of the landfills on the environment and how to mitigate these challenges. Although EIAs have been done retrospectively, they have had limitations. For example, in the case of Bourj Hammoud, the Public Source notes that the EIA suggested that “if the contracting company were to come across anything hazardous, they would separate, treat, and dispose of the waste,” but did “not mention the toxic barrels” from the civil war.<sup>162</sup> As a result, the construction of the coastal landfills progressed without transparency and sufficiently addressing the toxic barrels, leading to scientists remaining concerned about the barrels. As noted by the Public Source, “nobody knows what happened to the rest of the toxic barrels that were dumped in Bourj Hammoud and other parts of Lebanon [...] the barrels most likely corroded over time, allowing their contents to seep into Lebanon’s soil and coastal waters — a scenario that could come with grave health risks.”<sup>163</sup> The lack of an adequate EIA then is expected to have unexpected health and environmental implications in the future.

As noted in Chapter 2, the waste mountain in Bourj Hammoud was dismantled directly into the sea and waste disposal started before the construction of the appropriate dikes, lead-

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<sup>161</sup>“Lebanon: Beirut landfill near capacity,” *HRW*, June 25, 2019, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2019/06/25/lebanon-beirut-landfill-near-capacity>; and Khalil, *Impacting Policies*, 3.

<sup>162</sup>The Public Source, “Merchants of Death.”

<sup>163</sup>*ibid*

ing to waste being dumped directly into the sea.<sup>164</sup> Furthermore, the lack of collection of leachate remains a significant issue at both landfills, causing extreme maritime pollution; for example, the Bourj Hammoud landfill has consequences for the nearby areas as the heavy concentrations of hydrogen sulphide emanates from the landfill reaching 51 micrograms per cubic meters which is a relatively dangerous rate that can cause weakened immunity and deterioration of respiratory functions.<sup>165</sup> Furthermore, a recent study found that workers in close proximity to waste dumpsites and burning were more likely to be exposed to “acute health symptoms [...] including astointestinal, respiratory, dermatological and constitutional symptoms.”<sup>166</sup> Another study found that the “prolonged untreated wate disposal [...] threaten the health of Lebanese people, whether at the level of short term diseases or exposure to carcinogens and the potential increasing cancer incidents rates.”<sup>167</sup> Despite these ramifications, the companies with the support from the political leadership continue to operate with impunity at extreme environmental costs.

Beyond the ecological, the coastal landfills have a series of social and cultural implications. As noted by Atwood, the Costa Brava site had ramifications for its namesake – the first women-only beach resort and the only one of its kind in the southern suburbs, marking a historical and spatial loss of for religious women.<sup>168</sup> Similarly, the case of Bourj Hammoud poses a challenge for the cultural heritage of Armenians, especially the distinct food culture, which is negatively impacted by the proximity of the landfill.<sup>169</sup> In this way, the landfills pose

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<sup>164</sup>John Owens, “Trash crisis haunts Lebanon as fishermen suffer,” *Voanews*, Middle East, July 24, 2017, <https://www.voanews.com/a/trash-crisis-haunts-lebanon-fishermen-suffer/3951008.html>.

<sup>165</sup>Beirut Urban Lab, *Karantina Urban Snapshot*, 20.

<sup>166</sup>Rami Z. Morsi, Rawan Safa, Serge F. Baroud, Cherine N. Fawaz, Jad I. Farha, Fadi El-Jardali and Monique Chaaya, “The protracted waste crisis and physical health of workers in Beirut: a comparative cross-sectional study,” *Environmental Health* 16, no. 39 (2017).

<sup>167</sup>Sahar K. Azar and Safa S. Azar, “Waste related pollutions and their potential effect on cancer incidents in Lebanon,” *Journal of Environmental Protection* 7, no. 6 (2016).

<sup>168</sup>Atwood “A city by the sea,” 60-62.

<sup>169</sup>Elza Steferian, “Cultural heritage under threat: Bourj Hammoud’s landfill threatens Lebanon’s ‘Little Armenia’,” *Heirich Boll Stiftung*, November 6, 2018, <https://lb.boell.org/en/2018/11/06/cultural->



Map 4.4: The Construction and Expansion of Costa Brava Landfill

a broader threat to urban environments.

As a result of these hazardous conditions, the coastal landfills have inspired opposition and resistance on various levels. In particular, the expansion of the landfills led to legal opposition, as explored in Chapter 3. Despite this, the CoM expanded the landfills in Costa Brava and Bourj Hammoud in 2019 and 2020, respectively. Furthermore, in Bourj Hammoud the height of the landfill was extended as an emergency measure, with the volume increasing because of the Beirut Port Explosion rising from the initially planned 13.5 meters to 16 meters.<sup>170</sup> As such, the expanded landfills have become visible urban scars and a reminder of the continuous marginalisation of the neighbourhoods through the social constructions of waste despite local activism.

Waste flowing around the coastal landfills also represent *trans-corporeal materiality* between fishermen, waste, and oceanic life. The construction of the Bourj Hammoud landfill has been a great source of discontent for fisherman in the area as the land reclamation has destroyed the fish spawning grounds and polluted the sea, thereby diminishing the fish captured.<sup>171</sup> In February 2017, local fishermen protested the construction by blocking the traffic and preventing *Khoury Contracting Company* trucks from reaching the site.<sup>172</sup> In response to increasing sea pollution, the MoE informed the CDR of the disparities but argued that it was “beyond the ministry’s control.”<sup>173</sup> Furthermore, the *Khoury Contracting Company* compensated the fishermen by 5 million LL (\$3,300) that was shared among hundreds of

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heritage-under-threat-how-burj-hammouds-landfill-threatens-lebanons-little.

<sup>170</sup>Sunniva Rose, “Beirut’s overflowing landfills: why Lebanon is haunted by a rubbish problem,” *The National News*, February 25, 2021, <https://www.thenationalnews.com/mena/lebanon/beirut-s-overflowing-landfills-why-lebanon-is-haunted-by-a-rubbish-problem-1.1172255>.

<sup>171</sup>Rose, “Beirut’s overflowing landfills.”

<sup>172</sup>“Conflict incident report: Lebanon fishermen and activists protest against dumping of waste in sea,” *Civil Society Knowledge Centre*, August 16, 2017, <https://civilsociety-centre.org/sir/lebanon-fishermen-and-activists-protested-against-dumping-waste-sea>.

<sup>173</sup>“Fishermen sound alarm over waste in sea,” *The Daily Star*, 2017, <https://www.thefreelibrary.com/Fishermen+sound+alarm+over+waste+in+sea.-a0508140110>.

fishermen.<sup>174</sup> Today the fishing port is situated between Bourj Hammoud and its expansion in Jdeideh. The relationship with oceanic life and livelihoods displays the *trans-corporeal materiality* of waste.

The *afterlife of waste* then includes the silent and slow long-term impacts, but also the sudden and dramatic ramifications of waste, such as the large amounts of waste that were deposited on beaches across Beirut during the winter storms in 2018 – claimed to have materialised directly from Costa Brava and Bourj Hammoud landfills.<sup>175</sup> As such, understanding *the afterlife of waste* is central in unpacking the creation of these hostile environments.

Furthermore, the coastal landfills of Costa Brava – situated adjacent to Lebanon’s only commercial airport – expose how the more-than-human even has the power to challenge sovereignties. Large numbers of scavenging birds around the landfill have become a reoccurring problem, and have led to the temporary closure of the airport, posing a dangerous problem for air traffic and the surrounding area.<sup>176</sup> As such, the force of waste and scavenging birds in Costa Brava landfill poses direct limitations for territorial sovereignty in Lebanon. The increasing numbers of birds are part of *the afterlife of waste*, which according to Reno, “never ceases but only begets more life.”<sup>177</sup> Notably, the mismanagement of waste is foundational in establishing this problem. Yet, there is something to be said about the implications of more-than-human forces.

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<sup>174</sup>“Fishermen sound alarm over waste in sea,” *The Daily Star*.

<sup>175</sup>Nada Homsy, “A sea of trash on Lebanon’s beaches,” *The New York Times*, January 23, 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/01/23/world/middleeast/trash-lebanon-beach.html> ; <https://www.executive-magazine.com/special-report/a-sea-of-garbage>.

<sup>176</sup>“Beirut Rubbish Dump Birds Shot By Hunters Near Airport,” *BBC*, News, January 14, 2017, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-38624234>; Jamie Prentis, “Seagulls at Beirut’s Airport Symptom of Lebanon’s Crisis,” *The National News*, January 16, 2023, <https://www.thenationalnews.com/mena/lebanon/2023/01/16/seagulls-at-beirut-airport-a-symptom-of-lebanons-crisis/>.

<sup>177</sup>Reno, “Toward a new theory of waste,” 21.

#### 4.4.2 THE BEIRUT EXPLOSION

The Beirut explosion in 2020 is deeply interconnected with the politics of waste due to the toxicity of the compound and the implications on SWM. On August 4<sup>th</sup>, a large amount of ammonium nitrate caught fire and exploded at the port of Beirut, creating the largest non-nuclear explosion that has ever occurred.<sup>178</sup> Ammonium nitrate is a chemical compound that is commonly used as a fertiliser but can also be used as an explosive. The chemical had arrived by the *Rhosus*, a Maldivian-flagged ship, in November 2013 and was subsequently stored at the port for over 6 years awaiting action after the ship was found not to be seaworthy and leaking water due to overloading.<sup>179</sup> The failure to adequately secure the material – with the ammonium nitrate being stored “alongside flammable and hazardous material [...] only hundred meters away from a residential area”<sup>180</sup> – underscores the importance of handling hazardous substances and the potential implications for inhabitants in Beirut.

As noted by a series of commentators, the events leading up to the Beirut explosion was not exceptional and rather followed a pattern of life-threatening toxic waste handling as seen during the civil war.<sup>181</sup> Similarly to the toxic barrels that arrived during the civil war at the port of Beirut, the political leadership has attempted to cover up and simply abandon hazardous compounds at the cost of human life.<sup>182</sup> Detailing the events around the explosion, Human Rights Watch found that “evidence strongly suggest that some government officials foresaw the death that the ammonium nitrate’s presence in the port could result in and tac-

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<sup>178</sup>“Infographic: How big was the Beirut explosion?” Aljazeera.

<sup>179</sup>*Human Rights Watch*, “They killed us from the inside”: *An Investigation into the August 4 Beirut Blast* (United States, 2021), 21-22, [https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/media\\_2021/08/lebanon0821\\_web.pdf](https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/media_2021/08/lebanon0821_web.pdf).

<sup>180</sup>“Lebanon: Evidence implicates Officials in Beirut Blast,” *Human Rights Watch*.

<sup>181</sup>The Public Source, “The “ecological time bombs””; David Enders, “Eight months after the Beirut blast, Lebanon is still a toxic wasteland,” *Vice*, April 13, 2021, <https://www.vice.com/en/article/g5gx39/beirut-blast-lebanon-toxic-waste>.

<sup>182</sup>*ibid.*

itly accepted the risk of the deaths occurring.”<sup>183</sup> Furthermore, they found evidence noting that members of the political leadership knew about the risks, including former president Michel Aoun and prime minister Hassan Diab and various ministries like MPWT, MoF, LAF and the Higher Defence Council (HDC).<sup>184</sup> As a result, the port explosion represents deep-rooted structures that have exposed human beings to death.

The Beirut explosion is shaped by postwar amnesty, lack of accountability, and reinforcement of formal power structures, especially by utilising the country’s judiciary. Over three years later, the inquiries into the explosion have been obstructed and delayed by the political leadership, including over 25 requests by other officials to dismiss the judges involved in the case.<sup>185</sup> For example, in January 2023, Judge Bitar sought to resume the investigation into the explosion and charging several officials, including a prosecutor named Ghassan Oweidat. Oweidat responded by summoning Bitar for the questioning, accusing Bitar of “acting beyond his jurisdiction and imposing a travel ban on him.”<sup>186</sup> As a result, state officials remain unaccountable for the explosion, continuing the politics of impunity and amnesty in the political leadership.

Alongside the immediate violence of the explosion the impact on the urban fabric was severe, destroying or damaging homes and critical public services, including two hospitals and 280 schools. Moreover, the explosion damaged and disrupted supply networks, including electricity, water and sanitation, which have already been impacted by decades of neglect. As noted in a report by Action on Armed Violence (AOAV), the impacts were “relatively

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<sup>183</sup>*Human Rights Watch*, “They killed us from the inside”, 2.

<sup>184</sup>*ibid*

<sup>185</sup>“Lebanon: Judiciary farce in Beirut blast investigation must end,” *Amnesty International*, January 25, 2023, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2023/01/lebanon-judiciary-farce-in-beirut-blast-investigation-must-end/>.

<sup>186</sup>Notably, Oweidat previously recused himself from the case as he is the brother-in-law of the former minister of public works Ghazi Zaiter, who was charged in the case. See: Anna Foster and David Gritten, “Beirut blast: Lebanon prosecutor charges judge leading investigation,” 25 January, 2023, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-64400346>.



limited given the magnitude of the blast and the fact that it occurred in a densely populated city centre” as a result of “ineffective state services [...] which has pushed residents to adopt individual or community-based solutions.”<sup>187</sup> Yet, the explosion severely damaged the city centre with an estimated 80 per cent of infrastructures being damaged or destroyed, thereby completely transforming the urban fabric.<sup>188</sup>

The absence of the central authorities shapes the aftermath of the explosion. One week after the explosion, the CoM and prime minister Hassan Diab resigned, leaving Lebanon without an effective government. Furthermore, while a public commission was formed through Law 194, it only convened once and did not take up its responsibility.<sup>189</sup> Due to the state of emergency, the LAF received increasing powers and “did its best without proper funding or planning expertise”, and at the same time was “deemed illegitimate” as many civil society groups refused to work with them and rejected the militarisation of the processes.<sup>190</sup> Consequently, the aftermath of the explosion is shaped by the abandonment by central authorities and simultaneously increasing discontent that came to the fore during October 2019.

The absence of the central authorities had a series of implications for the relief and recovery, leading to duplicated and disjointed efforts, which have negatively impacted the most vulnerable.<sup>191</sup> The failure to provide a clear plan for renovation and enforcing the rights of tenants led to 163 eviction threats before September 2021, which included “owners increasing rent upon the completion of repairs paid for by NGOs; attempting to confiscate allocated

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<sup>187</sup>Jake Tacchi, *An Anatomy of the Beirut Port Blast* (AOAV, 2021), 12, <https://aoav.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/An-Anatomy-of-The-Beirut-Port-Blast.pdf>.

<sup>188</sup>“Beirut: UNESCO has completed the rehabilitation of the 280 educational institutions damaged by the port explosion,” *UNESCO*, March 28, 2022, <https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/beirut-unesco-has-completed-rehabilitation-280-educational-institutions-damaged-port-explosions>.

<sup>189</sup>Thomas Asher, Bernadette Baird-Zars, Hiba Bou Akar, Mona Fawaz, Mona Harb, Mario Torres, and Serge Yazigi, *Rebuilding Beirut: A Roadmap for an Equitable Post-Disaster Response* (Columbia World Projects and Columbia University, 2023), 20, <https://worldprojects.columbia.edu/sites/default/files/2023-02/Columbia%20World%20Projects%2C%20Rebuilding%20Beirut%20Report%20-%20English%20Version.pdf>.

<sup>190</sup>Asher et al., *Rebuilding Beirut*, 12, 20.

<sup>191</sup>*ibid*, 20.

aid before it reaches tenants; refusing to repair or allow tenants to repair themselves.”<sup>192</sup> In this way, the most vulnerable populations in Beirut were further exposed to displacement and marginalisation.

The aftermath of the explosion also exacerbated Lebanon’s ongoing waste crisis. The explosion resulted in an estimated 800,000-1,000,000 tonnes of CDW and 20,000 tonnes of glass waste within 2 km of the explosion site, excluding the port.<sup>193</sup> The Bakalian site (see Map 4.5) in Karenina re-emerged as a temporary storage and sorting site, having previously been used to store baled waste during the 2015 waste crisis.<sup>194</sup> The lack of a national plan in the aftermath of the Beirut explosion and subsequent abandonment by the political leadership, have resulted in the poor handling of waste, including a series of smaller local dumps and mixed waste at the Bakalian site. Mixed waste has caused further problems as it is difficult to recycle and may include hazardous material such as asbestos, which is also likely to further contaminate the Bakalian site.<sup>195</sup> The Bakalian site was reported to only have received around 150,000 tonnes of CDW and mixed waste, while other waste has been repurposed or recycled, dumped in smaller sites, or found its way to one of Beirut’s landfills.<sup>196</sup> In these ways, large amounts of CDW have placed additional pressures on the ongoing waste crisis.

Local and international actors have primarily shaped the management of CDW in the aftermath of the explosion. Local actors have been actively promoting recycling. One example of this is Arcenciel, which has, since the civil war, focused on helping marginalised com-

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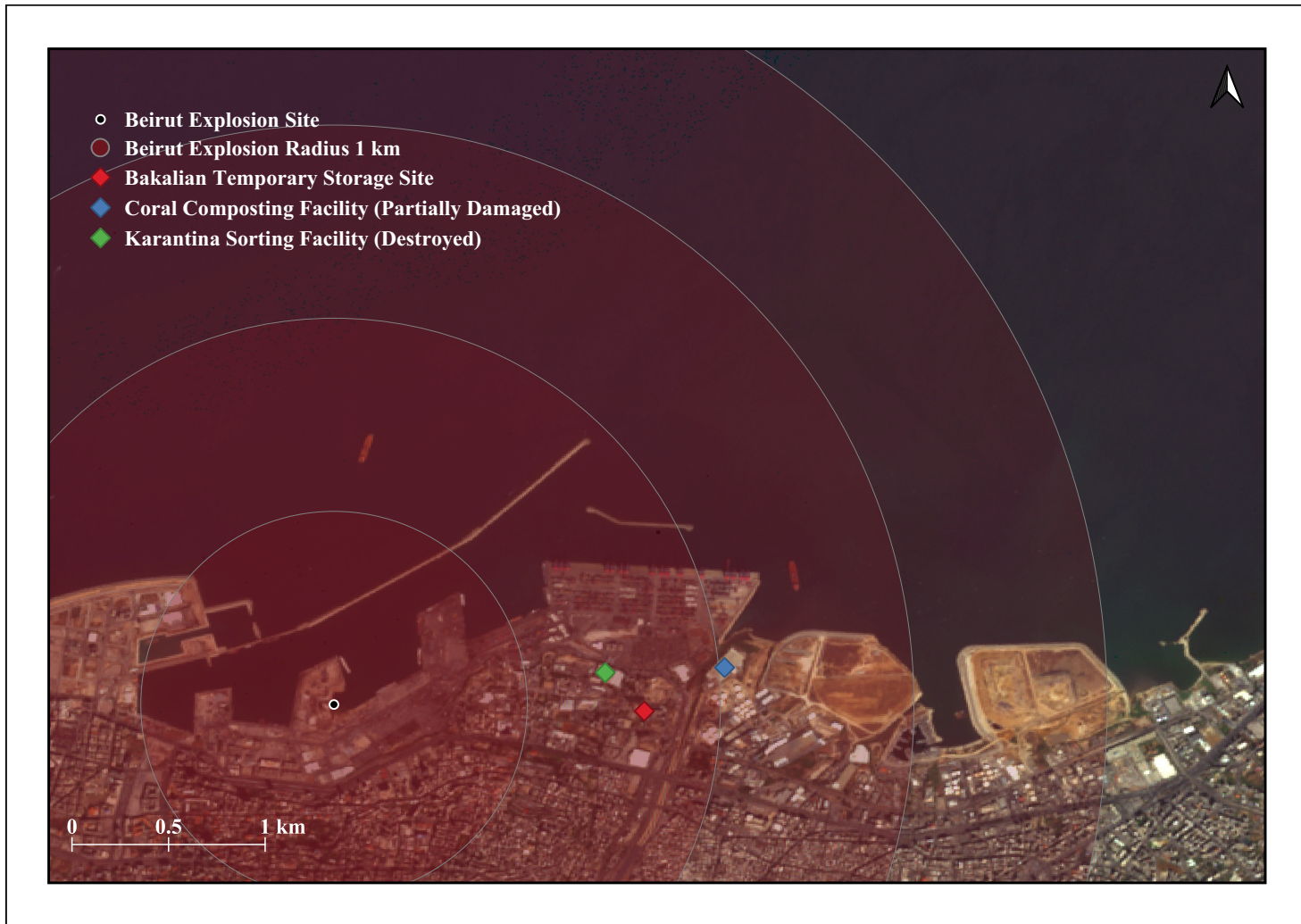
<sup>192</sup>“Housing rights after the Beirut explosion,” *Executive*, August 10, 2021, <https://www.executive-magazine.com/last-word-2/housing-rights-after-the-beirut-port-explosion>.

<sup>193</sup>UNDP, *Demolition Waste Assessment: Outside the Port of Beirut* (UNDP Lebanon, 2020), 11, <https://www.undp.org/lebanon/publications/demolition-waste-assessment-outside-port-beirut>.

<sup>194</sup>The World Bank, *Concept Environmental and Social Review Summary Concept Stage* (2021), 4, <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/152191588103501295/pdf/Concept-Environmental-and-Social-Review-Summary-ESRS-Primary-Education-Improvement-Project-P171973.pdf>.

<sup>195</sup>UNDP, *Demolition Waste Assessment*, 22; The World Bank, *Concept Environmental*, 4.

<sup>196</sup>Rose, “Beirut’s overflowing landfills.”



Map 4.5: Beirut Explosion and Critical Waste Management Facilities

munities in Lebanon with an emphasis on sustainability and the environment.<sup>197</sup> In 2020, Arcenciel started a series of projects, including the collection and treatment of over 9,000 tonnes of glass, over 6,000 furniture replacements and repairs, and 521 home renovations in impacted communities.<sup>198</sup> Similarly, another recycling programme Green Glass Recycling Initiative Lebanon (GGRIL) started working with artisanal glass blowers to repurpose and recycle 80 tonnes of glass before September 2020.<sup>199</sup> These examples of recycling display how non-governmental organisations have worked in order to support recovery and additionally limiting the additional stress on landfills and temporary storage sites.

International actors have also been active in relief work and waste management after the explosion. For example, the World Bank granted a 10 million dollar grant to mitigate the environmental and health impacts of the explosion in collaboration with UNEP. This includes facilitating recycling activities at the Bakalian site in Karantina, and rehabilitating destroyed and damaged infrastructure, including the sorting plant at Karantina and the composting facility at Coral, Bourj Hammoud.<sup>200</sup> A report prepared by the World Bank found that the physical damage amounted to 20-25 million dollars and that reconstruction and recovery was estimated to be 75-100 million dollars, resulting from a series of aspects such as the huge quantities of waste streams (including e-wastes and hazardous waste) and loss of maritime

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<sup>197</sup>Arcenciel has been a crucial actor in SWM since 2003 and has been treating 97 per cent of all medical waste in Lebanon, which prior to 2003 were deposited directly in landfills without treatment. See: “How one non-profit group is spearheading recycling in Lebanon,” *UN Environmental Programme*, November 23, 2022, <https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/story/how-one-non-profit-group-spearheading-recycling-lebanon>.

<sup>198</sup>Arcenciel, *Supporting people affected by the Beirut Blast* (2021), <https://www.arcenciel.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/beirut-blast-report.pdf>.

<sup>199</sup>Robert McKelvey, “In Lebanon, blasted Beirut windows turned into traditional glassware,” 22 September, 2020, <https://english.alarabiya.net/features/2020/09/22/In-Lebanon-blasted-Beirut-windows-turned-into-traditional-glassware>.

<sup>200</sup>World Bank Group, *Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment* (Washington: International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, 2020), <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/650091598854062180/pdf/Beirut-Rapid-Damage-and-Needs-Assessment.pdf>.

and coastal ecosystems.<sup>201</sup> In this way, it is international and local agents that are spearheading recovery and relief amid abandonment, the absence of a government, and economic crisis.

#### 4.5 CONCLUSION

This chapter has emphasised answering the primary question, “What role does the material ordering of waste have in CUS?” and the secondary question “To what extent are CUS shaped by sovereign power?” As a result, the chapter has emphasised the impact on *others*, geographies, places, and ecosystems, including the creation of *sacrifice zones* and more-than-human agency.

Beirut has been transformed through a series of processes that are deeply interconnected with the ordering of material waste. The emergence of waste mountains, rivers of waste, and the establishment of sacrifice zones are intimately tied to the exercise of sovereign power and political decisions. The incorporation of *sacrifice zones* into the localisation of the camp is a key contribution to this research that enables an analysis of the regulation and control of groups of *others* and their environment through the material ordering of waste. This ordering has established spaces of inequality, marginalisation, and segregation, with devastating implications for human beings and ecosystems. The role of sovereign power in regulating and controlling waste has received little attention beyond corruption, and this chapter addresses this empirical research gap by exploring how planning and regulation foster marginalisation and contestation.

Despite the top-down regulations, resistance against sovereign power has emerged. The application of the conceptual framework demonstrated the expansion of agency by emphasising the more-than-human and the *afterlife of waste*. The inclusion of such forces is critical to analyse and unpack the holistic implications of toxic waste on groups of others in Beirut,

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<sup>201</sup>World Bank Group, *Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment*, 61.

ecosystems, and planetary crisis. It showcases that waste is more than a passive material but can change the trajectory of urban spaces and geographies, causing extensive political and ecological crises through the emergency closure of Lebanon's main airport and the toxicity of the barrels in Bourj Hammoud.

The chapter has explored the processes of territorial stigmatisation, violent segregation, postwar reconstruction, and urban decay to provide a comprehensive understanding of how waste management has shaped Beirut. However, the issue of waste management remains a complex and multifaceted challenge that requires political will and collective action to address. The holistic analysis of these challenges, enabled by the conceptual framework, provides critical insight into the material in space and place, thereby expanding conceptualisations on the camp and localisation through the inclusion of discussions on sacrifice zones and the more-than-human from discard studies.

# 5

## Conclusion

Postwar Beirut has been shaped by continual waste crisis, facilitated by 25 years of emergency legislation on waste management and the postwar power-sharing system. The political leadership has conditioned the politics of waste through formal and informal regulation, through legal frameworks and clientelist networks, impacting urban spaces and geographies. The ordering of waste has resulted in the political exclusion and marginalisation of *others* and the destruction of ecosystems. In this way, *others* and ecosystems are shaped by abandonment and discarded by sovereignties - which in the case of Beirut includes the political leadership,

sectarian politics, and the power sharing system.

I developed a conceptual framework – *the biopolitical machinery of waste* – to create a holistic approach to understand these complex challenges by synthesising the intersectional research streams of biopolitics, the politics of waste, and CUS. As a result, this thesis has explored the multifaceted ways in which sovereign power regulates and controls people and the environment through waste, resulting in unexpected, dramatic, and subtle impacts.

The construction of this conceptual framework has expanded the literatures exploring these challenges by emphasising a holistic approach to understanding the intersectionality of waste, sovereign power, and others in CUS. This research has highlighted the critique of Agamben’s writings on biopolitics and has subsequently expanded it through the corpus in discard studies and CUS, showcasing how waste is a key instrument in the political machinery of sovereign power that regulates groups of *others* and their environments.

#### 5.1 CLAIMS TO ORIGINALITY

There are considerable theoretical and empirical gaps in this research. This thesis is inductively built to fill these research gaps, including:

- The expansion of Agamben’s writings on biopolitics through discard studies, and vice versa.
- The expansion of discard studies and biopolitics through a discussion of CUS.
- The incorporation of the more-than-human and, by extension, the *afterlife of waste* to the discussions on agency into biopolitics.
- The analysis of the research gap on *sovereign power, waste, and others in Beirut*.



First, I have developed a conceptual synthesis that diverges from other approaches in biopolitics and discard studies, filling a theoretical research gap. This thesis has displayed the significance of sovereign power in regulating and controlling people and the environment through the political ordering of waste. As a result, the inclusion of discard studies has further situated spaces of exception into the often-mundane everyday politics of waste, thereby expanding the narrow scope of the literature. Furthermore, it expands the literature by emphasising the role of the material in space and place, which has previously been limited in the literature. The incorporation of sacrifice zones and localisation especially enables an analysis of the regulation and control of groups of *others* and their environment through the material ordering of waste. Through critical discussions, the research exposes how spaces of regulation have emerged through the politics of waste, including the abandonment of people, places, ecosystems, and even the Anthropocene, as the toxicity of waste leads to planetary crisis.

Conversely, the emphasis on sovereign power has also expanded from research that emphasises capitalism and neoliberalism. The approach differs from urban political ecology, which emphasises the multi-scalar networks of power. Such understandings of power-dynamics are significant in the politics of waste; however, these relationships are not equal. It also diverges from environmental justice literature which often emphasises waste as a purely manageable object. This thesis is situated at the crossroads between disciplines, drawing on waste as constructive in political ecology, the empirically rich studies in the environmental justice literature, and the literature on humans-as-waste, emphasising how people becomes discarded by the sovereignties.

Secondly, the focus on CUS contributes to biopolitics and discard studies by expanding a knowledge gap made by the plurality of agents and postcolonial contexts. The conceptual framework outlines this limitation through the critique of Agamben's use of Westphalia and

Weberian sovereignty and includes the conceptualisation of nested and contested sovereignties. Discard studies, on the other hand, have highlighted socio-economic and racial inequalities; however, they have rarely been explored in contexts shaped by nested and contested sovereignties. This research has drawn on previous discussions in discard studies and emphasises how sovereignties use waste to regulate any non-dominant groups.

Thirdly, and perhaps most importantly, the conceptual framework incorporates the more-than-human and, by extension, the *afterlife of waste* into the discussions on agency in biopolitics. The inclusion of the more-than-human is critical to analyse and unpack the holistic implications of toxic waste on people, ecosystems, and even the Anthropocene, as the toxicity of waste leads to planetary crisis. The conceptual framework critically reflects on new materialism, further reflecting interdisciplinarity in discard studies. This thesis has additionally emphasised the *afterlife of waste* and how it changes the trajectory of urban spaces and may even challenge sovereign power. Critiques of biopolitics have primarily been discussed through human agency. I have argued that the more-than-human are part of these assemblages of agency and should be viewed as more than passive materialism. For example, all landfills are temporal and will need further maintenance over time; following this the coastal landfills of Beirut are a future disaster amid coastal erosion, sea-level rise, and the abandonment by the state, which may cause significant harm in the already polluted Mediterranean Sea. The discussion of the more-than-human, sovereign power, and biopolitics further addresses the theoretical research gap.

Finally, the thesis additionally expands the literature on waste in Beirut and has predominantly used the politics of waste to explore broader political structures and specifically explored neoliberalism and corruption. Bringing together a collection of reports, government documents, and news articles, this thesis has created a holistic approach that explores how the politics of waste is shaped by sovereign power, thereby impacting people and the envi-

ronment. This approach centres around the political system and regulation, contributing to debates on Agamben and biopolitics in the region which has usually been constructed around refugees and gender. The conceptual approach in this research highlights the role of sovereignties in shaping the politics of waste, emphasising how waste is used as method to regulate and control people and urban spaces.

Understanding the role of nested and contested sovereignties in organising waste is critical to this conceptual framework and provides an insight into the politics of waste in CUS. As outlined in the introduction, the research on waste rarely focuses on the implications of these structures on the ordering of waste, consequently this thesis has drawn on the extensive literature on environmental racism and urban inequalities. This thesis has shown that nested and contesting sovereignties have led to the capture of high-valued waste contracts, exacerbated the waste crisis, and distributed the waste burdens among groups of others. Focusing on the politics of waste in CUS expands on the knowledge of waste and intersectional challenges in a postcolonial context.

## 5.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The claims to originality have emerged through the main research question: “*How does the political ordering and organisation of waste impact people and the environment in CUS, and vice versa?*”. This question is critical as waste in CUS may be used to regulate and control any non-dominant group through the establishment of a hostile environment. If unchecked, these mechanisms of sovereign power thrive leading to processes such as political exclusion, marginalisation, suppression, and segregation through the socio-political and material ordering of waste. To answer this overarching research question, I developed the conceptual framework *the biopolitical machinery of waste in CUS* that facilitated an analysis of this par-

ticular set of pluralistic challenges in Chapter 1.

Chapter 1 developed the conceptual synthesis of three intersectional research streams—biopolitics, CUS, and the politics of waste – explored across three units of analysis: polity, politics, and governing. The synthesis enabled a holistic approach to understanding the pluralistic challenges of the ordering of waste by sovereignties in CUS by expanding Agamben’s work on biopolitics through discard studies and the literature on CUS. This line of inquiry led to additional primary and secondary questions that are centred around three units of analysis polity, politics and governing. These units of analysis provided a holistic approach to understanding sovereign power and the politics of waste in CUS.

#### 5.2.1 POLITY

The first unit considered the primary question “To what extent is waste conditioned by competing claims to sovereign power?” and secondary question “How is sovereign power structured in Beirut?”. The conceptual and empirical exploration emphasised that competing sovereignties are nested and are shaped by hierarchies and unequal power relations. Furthermore, that these sovereignties formally and informally regulate and control people and the environment through waste – establishing spaces of exception that bind and abandon human life to the law.

In chapter 2, the case of Beirut displays how sovereignties are empowered by the post-war power-sharing system and sectarian politics after the Taif Agreement. It shows exactly how sovereign power is nested and contested, emphasising the impotence of these conceptualisations in discussions of sovereign power and showcasing how political leaders exploit this structure to regulate people and urban spaces formally and informally. Spaces of exception emerge as the political leadership regulates human life that cannot be integrated into the political system, including refugees, migrant workers, movement activists, and any non-

dominant groups. The power-sharing agreement and sectarian politics additionally allow for the political leadership to capture public sector posts and facilitate the distribution (and duplications) of the public sector, which results in the marginalisation of groups of *others* and ecological crises.

Waste is captured within this system of public sector capture and space of exception. The CoM has exercised great control over waste management in Beirut through emergency legislation and impunity, which has enabled the distribution of high-value public sector contracts to political networks and conversely the distribution of environmental waste burdens, such as landfilling. Contestation relating to the distribution of these contracts continue to exacerbate this crisis amid efforts to decentralise. Consequently, this chapter validates the conceptual expansion of Agamben's spaces of exception by demonstrating the political ordering of waste enables the control and regulation in urban spaces. As a result, biopolitical machinery has been transformed into a "killing machine" that slowly and silently kills groups of *others* through waste.

### 5.2.2 POLITICS

The second unit explored the primary question "How does the political ordering of waste impact processes of political exclusion in CUS?" and secondary question "How do processes of political exclusion materialise in Beirut?". Political exclusion and marginalisation, and the processes of contestation and resistance that emerged from seeking to escape these conditions are interrelated to the ordering of waste. In CUS, complex arrangements of abandonment have emerged including any non-dominating group that can be reduced to bare life through waste politics.

In Chapter 3, the case of Beirut demonstrated the complexity of these processes, including the negative impacts on waste workers and waste-impacted communities. Importantly,

the political exclusion and marginalisation of these groups of *others* has materialised alongside the wider exclusion of *others* resulting from colonialism, urbanisation, globalisation, and sectarianism. The chapter displayed how waste workers have experienced systematic political exclusion due to intersectional factors, including legal status, racialisation, and professional “taint” rooted in the Kafala system and the broader political system. The Kafala system embodies an informal and informal space of exception in which human life is subjected to the law and yet abandoned. Differently, waste-impacted communities are shaped by stigmatisation and the unequal distribution of waste burdens. Contestations prevail within these communities as political leaders shape the narratives around waste, fostering *stasis*. As a result, the case of Beirut underscores the multifaceted ways that waste impacts lives and communities in urban spaces.

In response to these conditions, different forms of waste activism have advanced, seeking to reorder the politics of waste in Beirut, including protests from migrant waste workers, the long-term resistance by waste-impacted communities, and the large-scale protests during the summer of 2015. However, these efforts have been met with repression and criminalisation by the state and political leadership to discourage political change.

Overall, this chapter showcased how the socio-political ordering of waste has facilitated the political exclusion and marginalisation of *others* in Beirut. Understanding the process of bare life is critical to these dynamics as human beings are stripped of political rights by sovereignties. These complex processes are highlighted in the case of waste workers, waste-impacted communities, and waste activism. As a result, the chapter demonstrates the limitations on the work of Agamben and *human-as-waste* conceptualisations by highlighting the various roles of agency within these processes, including violent resistance and sectarian politics, but also how social movements that have “forge public realms” against such challenges. This holistic approach to understanding political life is critical in order to capture the

complex ways people reject regulation by sovereignties through waste.

### 5.2.3 GOVERNING

The third unit emphasised answering the primary question “What role does the material ordering of waste have in CUS?” and the secondary question “To what extent are CUS shaped by sovereign power?”. The material ordering of waste shapes urban geographies through the localisation of sacrifice zones by sovereignties. Such ordering has led to severe implications for people and the environment.

In Chapter 4 I investigated the physical manifestations of the politics of waste and impacts on people, places, ecosystems, and the Anthropocene. The case study of Beirut demonstrated how sovereignties have manifested sacrifice zones and camp spaces through the distribution of waste burdens and the processes of territorial stigmatisation, violent segregation, postwar reconstruction, and urban decay. These sacrifice zones are shaped by unexpected, dramatic, and subtle effects of waste that have severe impacts for people and ecosystems; for example, pollution has resulted in flooding due to waste blockages in undermaintained stormwater systems and landfills that facilitate toxic flows and coastal pollution. Furthermore, the waste crisis has been manifested by the uneven distribution of waste infrastructures, such as collection and landfilling, exacerbated by excessive construction and demolition waste (C&D) due to conflict and the insufficient handling of toxic materials. The incorporation of *sacrifice zones* into the localisation of the camp in the conceptual framework facilitates an analysis of the regulation and control of groups of *others* and their environment through the material ordering of waste.

Localisation alone, however, falls short of providing a holistic analysis of the pluralistic challenges that arise from regulation and control through waste, which negatively impacts people and their environments. The ideas of the more-than-human and especially the *after-*

*life of waste* in Beirut illustrate that waste is more than a passive material but can change the trajectory of urban spaces and geographies, causing extensive ecological crises.

Overall, Chapter 4 argued that the material ordering of waste by sovereignties has led to the construction of sacrifice zones and more-than-human resistance, exposing spaces in which any non-dominating group can be exposed to death and where waste can cause unexpected, dramatic, and subtle effects.

Together, three units of analysis – polity, politics, and governing – applied across chapters 2-4 have unpacked a holistic approach and understanding to tackle the pluralistic and intersectional challenges of waste in CUS. As explored below, the analysis emerging from the conceptual framework of *the biopolitical machinery of waste in CUS* has implications for policy in Beirut.

### 5.3 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Beirut is facing escalating urban decay and ecological crisis. This dire situation has been organised and regulated by the postwar power-sharing system and sectarian politics utilised by the political leadership to ensure the survival of the regime. The compounding crisis has been further exacerbated by the deliberate depression and implications of COVID-19 and the 2020 Beirut explosion. Despite the gravity of the situation, governing is shaped by abandonment by the political leadership and political contestation. The political deadlock after the 2022 election and the absence of an electorally mandated government have only served to deepen the crisis, with the political leadership engaging in political contestation above urban recovery. The ongoing crisis presents a significant challenge with the increasing deterioration of the region's public services and infrastructures, which severely impacts the everyday life of inhabitants.



Given the ongoing crisis, the lack of accountability and increasing distance between inhabitants and the political leadership, the continual waste crisis – including the implications on people and ecosystems - will likely be exacerbated and recovery of the waste sector will become more demanding. Specifically, in regard to waste management in Beirut:

- Environmental laws should be enforced, and waste crimes should be prosecuted.
- The ISWML should be revised to address mechanisms that leads to waste minimisation, including waste prevention, recycling, and treatment. It should also include a national strategy that considers efforts to decentralise and additionally be appropriate to the local conditions across Lebanon.
- The recovery of the waste management sector should include local ownership over projects, while privatisation of the sector could exacerbate class dynamics. The decentralisation of waste management should continue, including the scaling of successful projects by municipalities. Municipalities should be further supported in cost recovery and know-how guidance, in addition to monitoring.
- The waste management sector should be more closely monitored, and independent experts should be allowed access to landfills and other sites. The NSWMA should be established (according to ISWML No.80, 2018) to supervise, implement and monitor SWM projects. Monitoring should be conducted by several instances to ensure accountability.
- As one of the most poorly funded ministries, the MoE needs further financial and institutional support effectively fulfil its mandate, including monitoring, research, and awareness campaigns.

- International standards on handling hazardous materials should be upheld and a more vigorous monitoring system is required to do this.

While several policy implications have emerged from this research, they are unlikely to succeed unless the political leadership are able to compromise. The last year has displayed that even the several demands set out by the IMF have stalled and not been implemented – for example, the amendment of banking secrecy was not accepted as sufficient by the IMF, – leading to the delay in a deal that would result in 3 billion dollars of financial bailout.<sup>1</sup> This is a critical challenge in suggesting and implementing any policy in Lebanon.

This research also has broader policy implications beyond Beirut. There is a greater need to understand the complex challenges around the politics of waste in CUS and potential waste crisis that exist across the globe. A more comprehensive understanding intersecting and pluralistic challenges around waste crisis especially related to sovereign power, would lead to a shift that more closely considers future human and ecological crises perpetuated by waste.

#### 5.4 LIMITATIONS AND FURTHER RESEARCH

The conceptual framework has limitations, however. It has highlighted sovereign power and CUS above other political dynamics such as capitalism, neoliberalism, and multi-actor networks. As such, it may not always be appropriate depending on the area of focus. The work of Agamben has often been critiqued because of its neglect of agency, this research has sought to remedy this by highlighting human agency and the more-than-human thereby broadening the scope of the conceptual framework.

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<sup>1</sup>Richard Salame, “Deadlock or shadow plan: why isn’t there movement towards a IMF deal?” April 27, 2023, <https://today.lorientlejour.com/article/1335807/deadlock-or-shadow-plan-why-isnt-there-movement-towards-an-imf-deal.html>.

The research was additionally shaped by a series of methodological challenges and obstacles. Future research would seek to remedy these shortcomings. Fieldwork would provide invaluable additional knowledge and further contextualise the complexities in CUS, this could include interviews with government agencies and waste activists, in addition to interviewing inhabitants in waste-impacted communities. The politics of waste are shaped by a series of agents and having further knowledge of these would establish better understanding of their relationship. Fieldwork would also facilitate observation of urban geographies which could further highlight the more-than-human negotiations within these structures.

The research could also be expanded by further exploring different types of waste. This research has focused on solid waste, however, the interplay with toxic wastes and C&D have been particularly valuable, displaying how waste is intersectional and complex including different aspects of life. Further exploring wastewater and sanitation could further elaborate sovereign power and the human health impacts of this study. Conversely, mining waste could further highlight the destructions of ecosystems, and additionally facilitate a greater discussion between sovereign power, neoliberalism, and capitalism. These cases would further highlight power dynamics and the intersectionality of waste.

This research would also be extended through the application of the conceptual framework – *the biopolitical machinery of waste* in CUS - in other case studies thereby testing out the validity of the framework in other contexts. Examples of possible comparative studies could include other expanding urban spaces in the region such as Barash in Iraq, but also other urban regions in the global south, including Hyderabad, India, Agbogbloshie, Ghana, and additionally Belfast, Northern Ireland. Not only would this provide insight into other postcolonial contexts and CUS, such an application of the framework to these diverse contexts would also highlight deficiencies. The case of Hyderabad – a mixed religious city – would expand and challenge the conceptual framework through the inclusion of different

relations, especially the caste system in India, which would contribute to making the framework more vigorous. The case of Agbogbloshie (one of the world's largest E-waste sites) would further highlight urban segregation and religious politics, while southern Ghana is predominantly Christian many of the informal waste workers at the e-waste site are Muslim migrants from northern Ghana.<sup>2</sup> However, the e-waste site would challenge and expand the interplay between sovereign power in Ghana and the international recycling regime. Finally, the case of Belfast would be an interesting test case of CUS. The initial study of Belfast displays how waste management has been upheld during conflict; however, other dynamics are at play, including the issue of illegal dumping and corruption, and socio-political structures of waste relating to the marginalisation of other.

Further research should also include additional explorations on the afterlife of waste. If unchecked with continual globalisation and urbanisation, waste crises will increasingly impact others and ecosystems through pollution and toxicity. Furthermore, the unequal distribution of waste burdens from the global (including the export of wastes from the global north to the global south) to the local will continue to shape and impact people and urban spaces, contributing to marginalisation, contestation, and resistance. Further research on the impacts in CUS would be critical, as these contexts have been largely neglected in the scholarship on waste.

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<sup>2</sup>Interviews in Agbogbloshie, Ghana during visit April 2012.

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## Satellite Data

Table A.1: Satellite Data

<b>Map</b>	<b>Satellite - DD/MM/YYYY</b>	<b>Acquisition Date</b>
Map 4.3 / Map 4.4	Sentinel-2 - 27/09/2022.	January 28, 2023.
Map 4.3 / Map 4.4	Sentinel-2 - 18/10/2017.	January 28, 2023.

Continued on next page

Table A.1: Satellite Data (Continued)

Map 4.3 / Map 4.4	Sentinel-2 – 28/11/2015.	January 28, 2023.
Map 4.2	Landsat 8 – 30/09/2014.	January 28, 2023.
Map 4.1	Landsat 7 – 28/10/2000.	January 28, 2023.
Map 4.1	Landsat 7 – 9/10/1990.	January 28, 2023.

# B

## Selected SWM Legal Frameworks

Table B.1: Selected legal frameworks<sup>1</sup>

Legal Framework, No.	Date	Description
<i>Decision No. 188</i>	19/04/1920	Forbids the open dumping of solid waste.

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Table B.1: Selected legal frameworks<sup>2</sup> (Continued)

<i>Decree No. 7975</i>	05/05/1931	Residential sanitation – It is forbidden to throw waste next to residential areas.
<i>Decree No. 8735</i>	23/08/1974	Public sanitation – the terms for solid waste collection and disposal. Municipalities should use closed containers that are closed, residents and shop owners must have leak proof bags or containers. Municipality is also responsible for the appropriate collection schedule.
<i>Decree No. 118</i>	30/07/1977	Municipal Act – holds local authorities responsible for municipal waste collection and disposal.
<i>Law No. 64</i>	8/12/1988	The regulation of the production and disposal of toxic materials, including penalties such as fines/prison sentence.
<i>Law 216</i>	02/04/1993	The creation of the MOE – Providing them with the ability to limit pollution and supervise SWM.

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Table B.1: Selected legal frameworks<sup>2</sup> (Continued)

<i>Decree No. 5665</i>	21/03/1994	Approving, the CDRs ability to include waste collection into the reconstruction of the BCD.
<i>COM Decision No. 58,</i>	2/01/1997	Emergency legislation for the waste crisis in BML
<i>Law 667</i>	1997	MOE
<i>Decree No. 9093; Law no. 280</i>	15/11/2002; 30/04/2014	Financial incentives by the IMF for municipals to host SWM facilities and receive waste from other municipals (not implemented); Municipals near Naameh benefit from a larger share of IMF.
<i>Law No. 444</i>	08/08/2002	Public or private entities should not undertake activities that lead to pollution (harmful and disturbing smells, including the maritime environment).
<i>Decree No. 13389</i>	18/08/2004	Medical institutions responsible for their own medical wastes, that should be treated before disposal.

Continued on next page

Table B.1: Selected legal frameworks<sup>3</sup> (Continued)

<i>Law 690</i>	2005	Covers all policy, oversight and guidance relating to environmental protection in Lebanon
<i>Decree 2275</i>	2009	Enacting law 690
<i>Law 251</i>	2014	Environmental crimes and prosecution of a series of offences, including see page – 28 state of the environment 2020
<i>COM Decision No.1</i>	09/09/2015	Decentralisation of waste management duties
<i>Decree 3989</i>	2016	Environmental police officer – however exams not yet set.
<i>MOE Circular No. 7/1</i>	16/09/2017	Guidelines relating to the sorting and recycling of waste and the role of local authorities.
<i>Law No. 80</i>	10/10/2018	The ISWM law, reduce waste accumulation, polluters pay and adopting decentralisation.

<sup>3</sup>Information from: ELRAD with Envirotech and Tebodin, *Legal Framework for Solid Waste Management in Lebanon* (Lebanon: The World Bank, 2004); El Jor, Nazih. *Policies and Institutional Assessment of Solid Waste Management in Lebanon* (Blue Plan regional Activity Centre, 2000), 40, <https://planbleu.org/wp-content/uploads/2000/12/waste1bn.pdf>; MOE/UNHCR/UNICEF/UNDP, *Lebanon State of the Environment and Future Outlook: Turning The Crises into Opportunity* (2021), <https://www.undp.org/lebanon/publications/lebanon-state-environment-and-future-outlook-turning-crises-opportunities>.



## CDR Contracts

Table C.1: CDR Contracts<sup>1</sup>

<b>Contract Number – dd/mm/yyyy</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Duration</b>	<b>Contractor</b>	<b>Value</b>
13248 -15/01/1992	Consultant – Operation of Amroussieh incinerator	One year and six months	Dar Al-Handasah Nazih Taleb Partners	USD 27,304 (the CDR)
13249 – 15/01/1992	Consultant – Operation of Amroussieh incinerator	One year and six months	Dar Al-Handasah Nazih Taleb Partners	USD 35,040 (the CDR)
13275 – 07/03/1992	Consultant – Postwar Damage Assessment: Solid Waste	One Year and six months	CREED	USD 176,707
13276 – 07/03/1992	Consultant – Postwar Damage Assessment: Solid Waste	One Year and six months	CREED	USD 154,640
10168 – 01/07/1992	Operation of Amroussieh incinerator, destroyed 1997	One year 01/07/1992- 01/07/1993	Sukleen	USD 1,752,000 (the CDR)

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Table C.1: CDR Contracts<sup>2</sup> (Continued)

10296 – 28/05/1993	Operation of Amroussieh incinerator	01/04/1993- 16/02/2001	Sukleen	USD 9,155,728 (the World Bank and the CDR)
10331 – 06/11/1993	Rehabilitation of Karantina Compost Plant – Electromechanical rehab	07/01/1994- 16/02/1996	OTV SA	USD 4,793,269 (the World bank and the CDR)
10239 – 06/11/1993	Rehabilitation of Karantina Compost Plant – Civil Works Rehab	31/01/1994- 16/02/1996	OTV SA	USD 905,108 (the World Bank and the CDR)
13359 – 25/11/1993	Consultant – Rehabilitation of Karantina Compost Plant	31/01/1994- 31/10/1995	CREED	USD 406,556 (the World Bank)
13358 – 25/11/1993	Consultant – Major Disposal Sites	22/01/1994- 01/11/1998	CREED	USD 1,526,000 (the World Bank)
10344 – 26/11/1993	Collection Vehicles and Equipment	01/01/1994- 01/03/1995	Dallah' Bin Ladin + Al Mabani (Joint Venture)	USD 910,670 (the World Bank)

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Table C.1: CDR Contracts<sup>2</sup> (Continued)

10381 – 22/12/1993	Commission Amroussieh Incineration Equipment	22/12/1993- 21/07/1994	Sukleen	USD 602,000 (the World Bank)
10373 – 21/01/1994	Collection Vehicles and Equipment	15/03/1994- 13/01/1996	Galion – Abillamaa	USD 5,717,465 (the World Bank)
10393 – 10/03/1994	Operation of Karantina Compost Plant	17/02/1996- 16/02/2001	Sukleen	USD 5,430,359 (The World Bank and the CDR)
10391 – 10/03/1994	Garbage Collection and sweeping in Greater Beirut	01/07/1994- 31/12/1995	Sukleen	USD 24,204,104 (the CDR and the world bank)
13462 – 21/11/1994	Consultant – EIA Solid Waste Sites	10/11/1994- 10/11/1995	LIBANCONSULT	USD 150,282 (Japan)
13532 – 23/12/1994	Consultant – Upgrade Master Plan	01/07/1994- 01/12/1996	CREED – LIBANCONSULT (Joint Venture)	USD 142,698 (the World Bank)

Continued on next page

Table C.1: CDR Contracts<sup>2</sup> (Continued)

10615 – 24/12/1994	Garbage Collection in Chouf	02/12/1994- 24/12/1997	Terri Pour le Commerce et L'Entreprise	USD 2,456,031 (the CDR and the World Bank)
16144 – 27/02/1995	Consultant – Operation of Qarantina Compost Plant	27/02/1995- 27/02/1996	Apave Liban SARL	USD 25,950 (the CDR)
13541 – 16/03/1995	Consultant – Garbage Collection in Beirut and Chouf.	16/03/1996- 03/06/2024	DG Jones Partners Middle East Limited SAL	USD 18,900,324 (the CDR and the Municipal Fund)
13542 – 16/03/1995	Consultant – Garbage Collection in Chouf	16/03/1996- 03/06/2024	DG Jones Partners Middle East Limited SAL	USD 465,104
13587 – 11/12/1995	Consultant – EIA, Amroussieh Incinerator	01/01/1996- 20/10/1996	LIBANCONSULT	USD 26,300 (Japan)
13608 – 11/12/1995	Consultant – EIA, Major Disposal Sites	09/01/1996- 20/10/1996	LIBANCONSULT	USD 97,000 (Japan)

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Table C.1: CDR Contracts<sup>2</sup> (Continued)

10394 – 17/02/1996	Rehabilitation of Karantina Compost Plant – Work on Plant	17/02/1996- 01/11/1997	Sukleen	USD 1,921,500 (N/A)
13586 – 10/06/1996	Consultant - Sweeping, collection and landfilling – design and supervision	10/06/1996- 10/06/1997	LIBANCONSULT	USD 162,000 (CDR)
10944 – 04/11/1996	Collection Vehicles and Equipment - Management for Spare Parts	20/06/2001- 20/06/2002	Carrosserie Abillama s.a.l	USD 71,407 (the CDR and the Municipal Fund)
11049 – 22/05/1997	Solid waste Treatment Emergency Programme – Greater Beirut	22/05/1997- 21/05/1998	Sukomi	USD 34,131,611 (the Municipal Fund)
13952 – 22/07/1997	Consultant - Solid waste Treatment Emergency Programme – Greater Beirut	22/07/1997- 22/07/1998	LACECO	USD 141,500 (the CDR)

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Table C.1: CDR Contracts<sup>2</sup> (Continued)

11109 – 19/01/1998	Operation of Naameh and Bsalim Landfill	19/01/1998- 18/02/2008	Sukomi	USD 221,390,726 (the Municipal Fund and the CDR)
13890 – 23/03/1998	Supervision - Operation of Naameh and Bsalim Landfill	23/03/1998- 22/03/2008	LACECO	USD 10,892,669 (the Municipal Fund)
14031 – 14/05/1998	Technical assistance for major sites SWEMP Project	14/05/1998- 01/11/2001	DEVCO (Ireland)/DCI	USD 1,344,216 (the World Bank)
11165 – 01/06/1998	Solid waste Treatment Emergency Programme – Grater Beirut	01/06/1998- 31/05/2008	Sukomi	USD 283,788,929 (the Municipal Fund and the CDR)
14011 – 16/06/1998	Supervision – Solid waste Treatment Emergency Programme	16/06/1998- 17/07/2015	LACECO	USD 12,532,169 (the Municipal Fund and the CDR)

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Table C.1: CDR Contracts<sup>2</sup> (Continued)

14091 – 02/12/1999	Feasibility for Gas Extraction and the Rehabilitation of Bourj Hammoud	16/12/1999-02/11/2000	SWECO International	USD 193,511 (Sweden and the CDR)
10382 – No date	Qarantina and Amrousseih Plants Rehabilitation	-	Sukleen	USD 7,422 (the World Bank)
11206 – 14/02/2001	Consultant - Bourj Hammoud Emergency Restroration plan	-	Unknown	USD 50 000
14679 – 29/11/2001	Consultant - Bourj Hammoud Landfill Gas Optimisation Project	29/11/2001-31/05/2002	Envirotech	USD 64,000
10392 – 26/05/2002	Garbage Collection and Sweeping – Greater Beirut	01/01/2000-26/04/2007	Sukleen	USD 358,819,102 (the Municipal fund and the CDR)

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Table C.1: CDR Contracts<sup>2</sup> (Continued)

15367 – 18/09/2003	Consultant – Audit of Invoices of Contracts Between CDR and Averda (1/04/2002 and June 30/06/2003)	-	PriceWater-HouseCoopers	USD 85,000
16540 – 03/05/2007	Consultant - Solid Waste Treatment in Beirut	03/05/2007- 18/05/2016	LACECO	USD 20,489,993 (the Municipal Fund)
16612 – 07/06/2007	Consultant – Operation and maintenance of solid waste treatment plants	07/06/2007- 06/07/2017	LACECO	USD 22,105,925 (the municipal Fund)
16446 – 09/08/2007	Operation of Landfills in Greater Beirut	09/08/2007- 18/05/2016	Sukomi	USD 463,290,581 (the Municipal Fund)
16493- 30/08/2007	Operation and Maintenance of Solid Waste Treatment Plants in Greater Beirut	30/08/2007- 31/12/2016	Sukomi	USD 507,667,927 (the Municipal Fund)

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Table C.1: CDR Contracts<sup>2</sup> (Continued)

16419 – 08/08/2007	Collection of Solid Waste and Sweeping in Greater Beirut	08/08/2007- 30/04/2018	Sukleen	USD 546,505,329 (Municipal Fund)
18413 – 02/03/2015	Consultant – Naameh Landfill Gas Management (waste to energy)	02/03/2015- 02/04/2015 (CDR)	Mott-Mcdonald	USD 118,960 (CDR)
19215 – 24/06/2015	Consultant – Naameh Assistance for Evaluation of the Power Generation from Gasses	11/03/2015- 11/05/2015	Mott-Mcdonald	USD 47,584 (CDR)
19275 – 04/11/2015	Construction – Landfill Gas Management – Naameh.	01/01/2016- 06/01/2018	Sukomi	USD 11,341,350 (CDR)
19439 – 07/01/2016	Supervision – Naameh Naameh Landfill Gas Management	07/01/2016- 06/01/2018	Mott-Mcdonald	USD 549,593 (CDR)

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Table C.1: CDR Contracts<sup>2</sup> (Continued)

19682 – 22/07/2016	Construction and Operation of Sanitary Landfilling in Costa Brava Landfill	01/09/2016-31/08/2024	Al Jihad for Contracting Trading SAL	USD 223,108,531 (Municipal Fund)
19687 – 03/08/2016	Construction and Operation of Sanitary Landfilling in Bourj Hammoud	01/10/2016-25/11/2021	Khoury Contracting Co. Sarl	USD 158,308,947 (Municipal Fund)
19697 – 16/08/2016	Consultant – Construction and Operation of Sanitary Landfilling in Costa Brava	01/08/2016-31/08/2024	Dar Al Handasah Taleb /SES	USD 1,671,332 (Municipal Fund)
19702- 05/09/2016	Consultant – Construction and Operation of Sanitary Landfilling in Bourj Hammoud	01/09/2016-25/10/2021	Rafik Sami El Khoury partners SAL	USD 635,234 (Municipal Fund)

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Table C.1: CDR Contracts<sup>2</sup> (Continued)

19706 – 23/09/2016	Construction and Operation of Treatment Plants – Sorting Karantina and Amroussieh	01/11/2016-30/10/2021	Al Jihad for Commerce contracting – Soriko Sal (Joint Venture)	USD 141,325,092
19749 -29/11/2016	Consultant – EIA, Bourj Hammoud and Jdaideh Landfill	29/11/2016-15/03/2017	LIBANCONSULTAGM SAL	USD 1,260,174 (Municipal Fund)
1975 – 02/12/2016	Consultant – Technical Services for the Construction of Costa Brava Landfill	02/12/2016-31/08/2024	SOCOTEC LIBAN	USD 532,040 (Municipal Fund)
19751 05/12/2016	Consultant – Technical Services for the Construction of Bourj Hammoud and Jdaideh Landfills	05/12/2016-23/11/2021	APRAVE LIBAN SARL	USD 333,745 (Municipal Fund)
19765 – 14/12/2016	Garbage Collection – Greater Beirut in Metn and Kesserwan	01/02/2017-31/01/2024	J.V. Ramco Trading and Contracting sal/Atlas-B	USD 85,441,181 (Municipal Fund)

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Table C.1: CDR Contracts<sup>2</sup> (Continued)

19768 – 14/12/2016	Consultant – EIA, Costa Brava Landfill	14/12/2016- 14/12/2017	Rafik Sami El Khoury partners SAL	USD 1,353,338 (Municipal Fund)
19772 – 03/01/2017	Garbage Collection – Greater Beirut in Baabda, Aley and Chouf Casas	01/03/2017- 31/12/2021	Mouawad-Edde-Soriko SAL (Joint Venture)	USD 127,914,349 (Municipal Fund)
19774 – 12/01/2017	Transportation of Waste Collected by Other Parties from the Karantina to Saida Treatment Plant.	12/01/2017- 30/06/2021	Al Jihad for Contracting Trading SAL	USD 8,385,865 (Municipal Fund)
19942 – 07/07/2017	Supervision – SWM in MoB and Mount Lebanon	07/07/2017- 31/08/2021	LECECO	USD 3,348,756 (Municipal Fund)
20028 – 04/12/2017	Reconciliation Contract	18/03/2016- 08/09/2016	Sukomi	USD 3,300,00 (Municipal Fund)

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Table C.1: CDR Contracts<sup>2</sup> (Continued)

20056 – 08/12/2017	Public Cleaning Services in Metn and Kesserwan	08/12/2017- 31/12/2021	J.V. Ramco Trading and Contracting sal/Atlas-B	USD 16,218,697 (Municipal Fund)
20055 – 11/12/2017	Public Cleaning Services in Baabda, Aley and Chouf	11/12/2017- 31/12/2021	Mouawad-Edde-Soriko SAL (Joint Venture)	USD 32,076,712 (Municipal Fund)
20067 – 18/01/2018	Consultant - Environmental Management Plan for Bourj Hammoud and Jdaideh Sanitary Landfills	18/01/2018- 18/07/2018	LIBANCONSULTAGM SAL	USD 52,195 (Municipal Fund)
20029 – 19/02/2018	Reconciliation contract	18/07/2015- 08/09/2015	Sukleen	USD 1,760,000 (Municipal Fund)
20453 – 08/04/2019	Consultant, EIA	08/04/2019- 28/02/2020	Mores SARL	USD 53,323 (Municipal Fund)

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Table C.1: CDR Contracts<sup>3</sup> (Continued)

20470 – 15/05/2019	Construction Works and Operation of Services of Composting with Bio Drying at Costa Brava	01/07/2019- 30/06/2023	Al Jihad for Contracting Trading SAL	USD 39,473,508 (Municipal Fund)
20573 – 12/11/2019	Consultant – EIA, Increased Capacity of Bourj Hammoud and Jdaideh Sanitary Landfills	12/11/2019- 31/12/2019	LIBANCONSULTAGM SAL	USD 94,350 CDR
20666 – 28/07/2020	Consultant - The closure of Balim Landfill	28/07/2020- 28/09/2020	LECECO	USD 45,000
20750 – 07/04/2021	Consultant – Closure of Naameh	07/04/2021- 07/05/2021	LECECO	USD 95,522 No Money – No works

366

<sup>3</sup>Information collated from CDR's official website, see: "Projects: Signed Contracts," CDR, May 4, 2022, <https://www.cdr.gov.lb/en-US/Projects.aspx>.