Erasmus University College

Taming the Predators? Beirut Madinati and the quest for social accountability in Lebanon

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Overview

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لائحة للانتخابات البلدية ٢٠١٦

1/ Context & Origins
2/ Performance & Achievements
3/ Legacy & Aftermath
4/ Lessons & Prospects
5/ Social Accountability?

1. Context and Origins

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Presidential void (April 2014 - October 2016)

Parliamentary extensions (May 2013, Nov. 2014, Aug. 2017)

Regional dynamics (SYR conflict, Saudi vs Iran)

2016 municipalities = first voters consultation since 2009
→ Municipal elections as crucial site for political praxis

Lebanon's postwar paradox (sectarianism reproduced; Clark & Salloukh 2013)

→ RQ: How does BM confirm/challenge this elite sabotage?

Sowing the seeds…

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Citizen activism in Lebanon has long, pre-war history

Postwar reconstruction triggered several new issues

المفكرة القانونية
THE LEGAL AGENDA

YEF
منتدى الشباب الإقتصادي
Youth Economic Forum

Immediate predecessors...

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State officials as shopkeepers...

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http://www.sakkera.com/

Sakker El Dekkene (Uncensored Version)

2. Performance and Achievements

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A/ Performance

Media savvy communication style (conventional & digital)

Campaign characteristics:

- local, political forum (not CSO)
- ordinary citizens, anti-establishment
- 10 points program (technocratic, socio-economic focus)
- transparency (cf. budget)
- gender equity (12-12 parity)
- governance accountability (citizen participation)

Greenery and public infrastructure

Waste recycling

Public transport and mobility

Costs of living

2. Performance and Achievements

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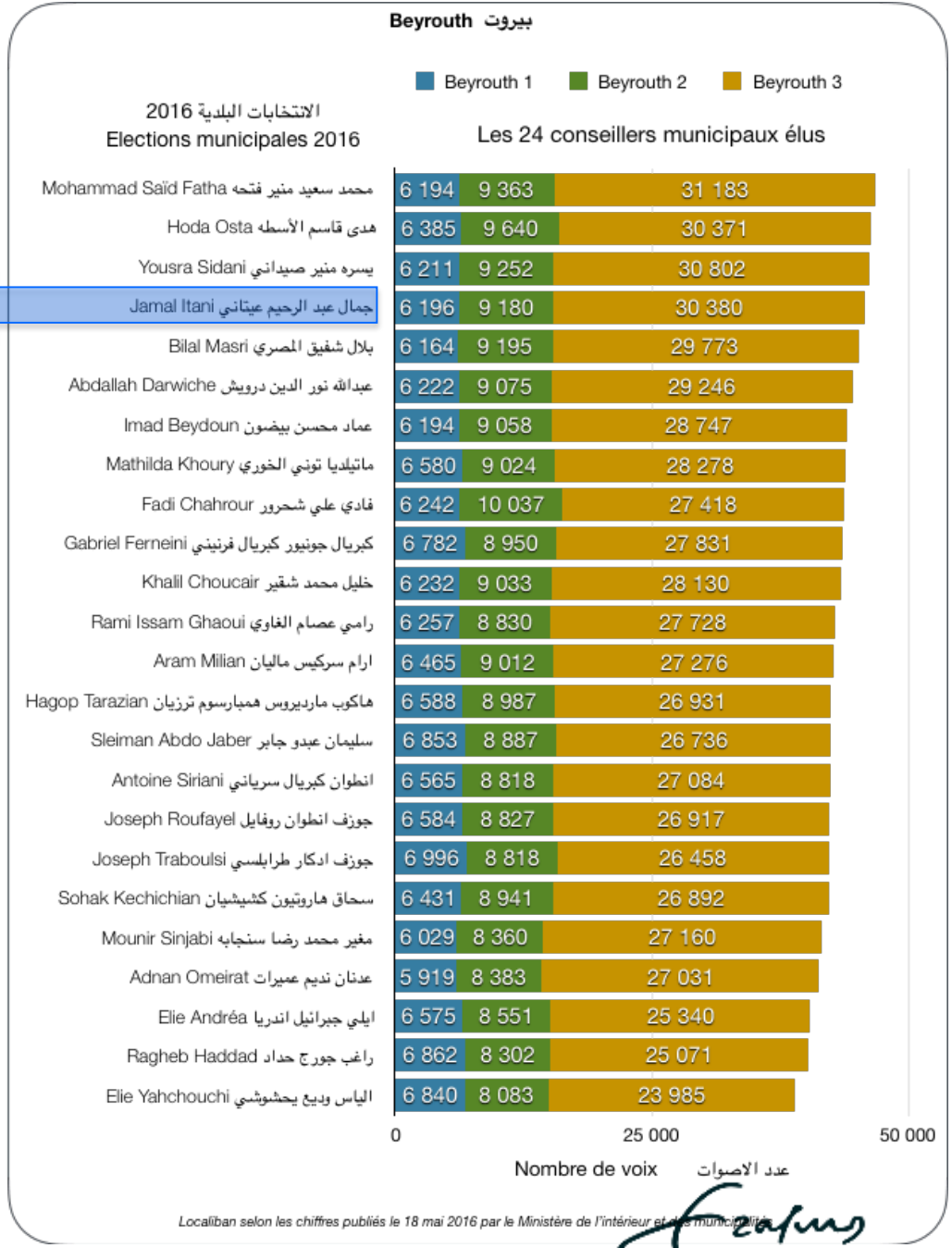
B/ Achievements

- Electoral outcome: ca. 32% of votes but 0 seats
- Breakthrough (*kharq*) did not materialize
- Stickiness of clientelist sectarianism
- BM's Rhetorical Restraint

+ Trendsetting alternative political practice
+ Hold predatory elites accountable
+ Forced realignment of rival elites
+ Sweep of Beirut I

How to get elected...



Source: Localiban 2016

Abstention rate

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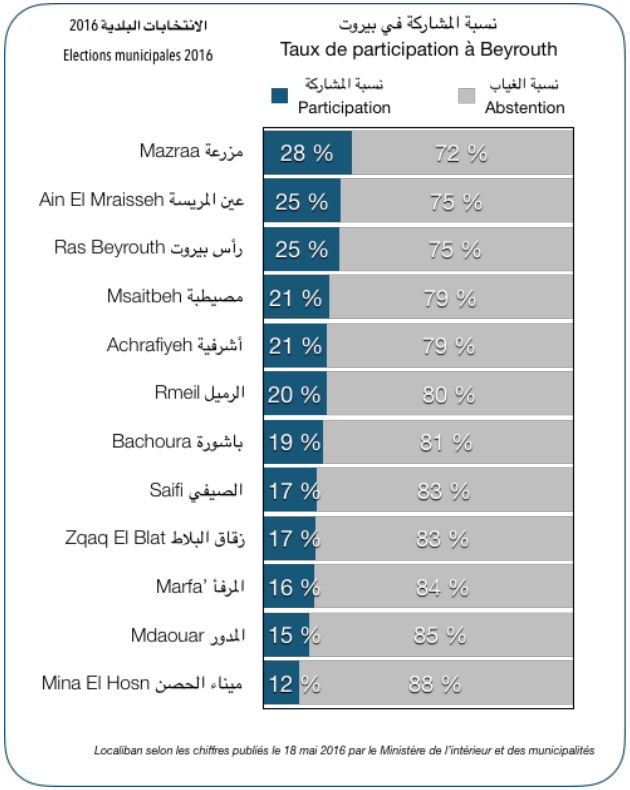
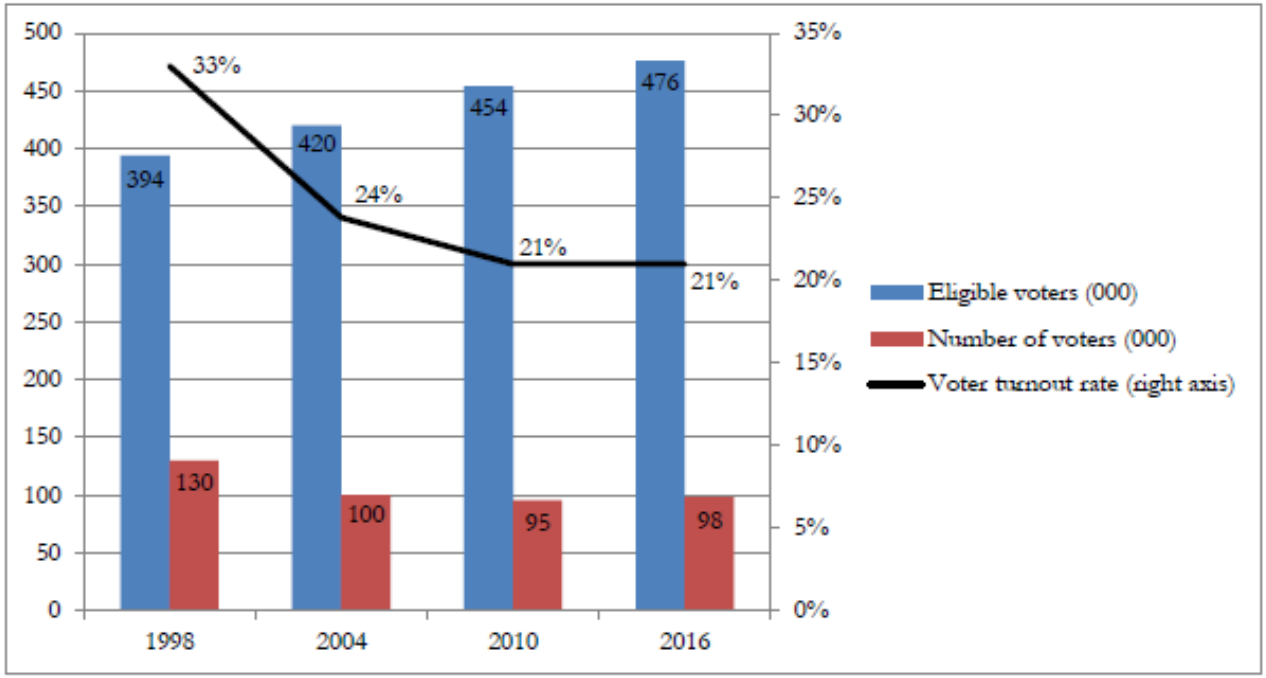


Source: Localiban 2016

Figure 1: Voter turnout in Beirut's municipal elections, 1998-2016



Data sources: Local newspapers archives; 111101 Project (Fabrika – Naji Zahar)

Source: Chaaban et al 2016

3. Legacy and Aftermath

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A/ Legacy

Shift in campaigning style (positive, transparent, inclusive)
Outsider's aspiration to executive power
Change in narrative and practice

Concessions to political custom: too many?
Outreach to lower middle class?
Epistemological rupture?
Lovable losers?

3. Legacy and Aftermath

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B/ Aftermath

Emulation: two examples

Opposition politics pays (Rifi, Kataeb,...)

3. Legacy and Aftermath

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B/ Aftermath

Emulations

Post-electoral fragmentation within BM

→ core vs opportunists?

Follow-Up dilemma: prepare 2018 or 2022?

→ GA (Oct. 2016): narrow NO

→ Alt-Municipality as spin-off?

4. Lessons & Prospects

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A/ Practical lessons

Fissures apparent in elite's power networks

Promoting common, public interest

Benefits of cooperation, build-up

Caution: movement in flux...

How to mobilize fragmented polity?

B/ Analytical lessons

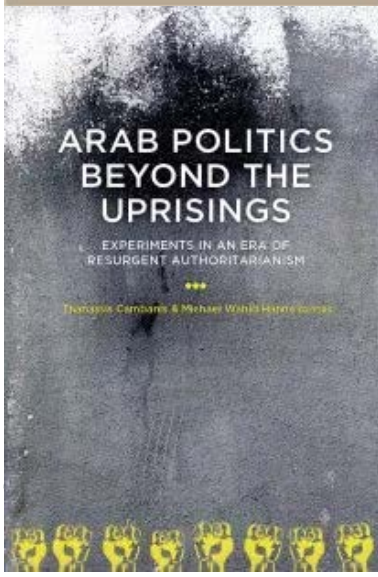
Conceptualizing BM's activism ~~(SM, party, platform,...)~~

→ BM: a party movement?

Political linkage mechanisms (Kitschelt & Wilkinson 2007)

→ programmatic vs clientelist

Post Uprisings Reform Politics (Zollner 2017; Cambanis & Hanna 2017)



4. Lessons & Prospects

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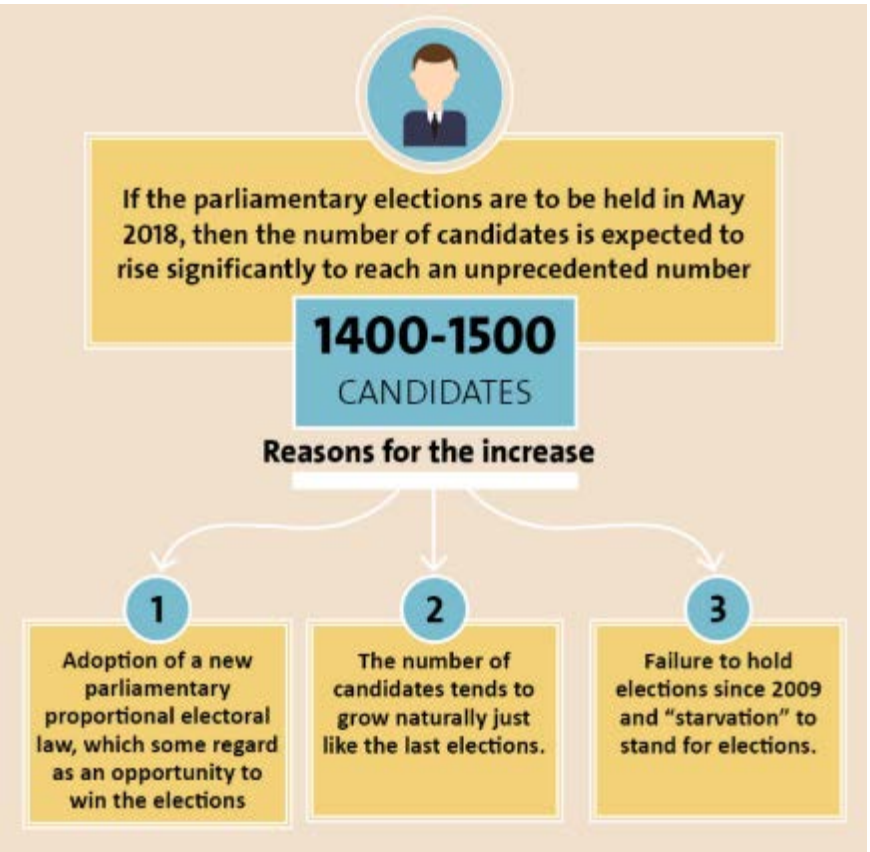
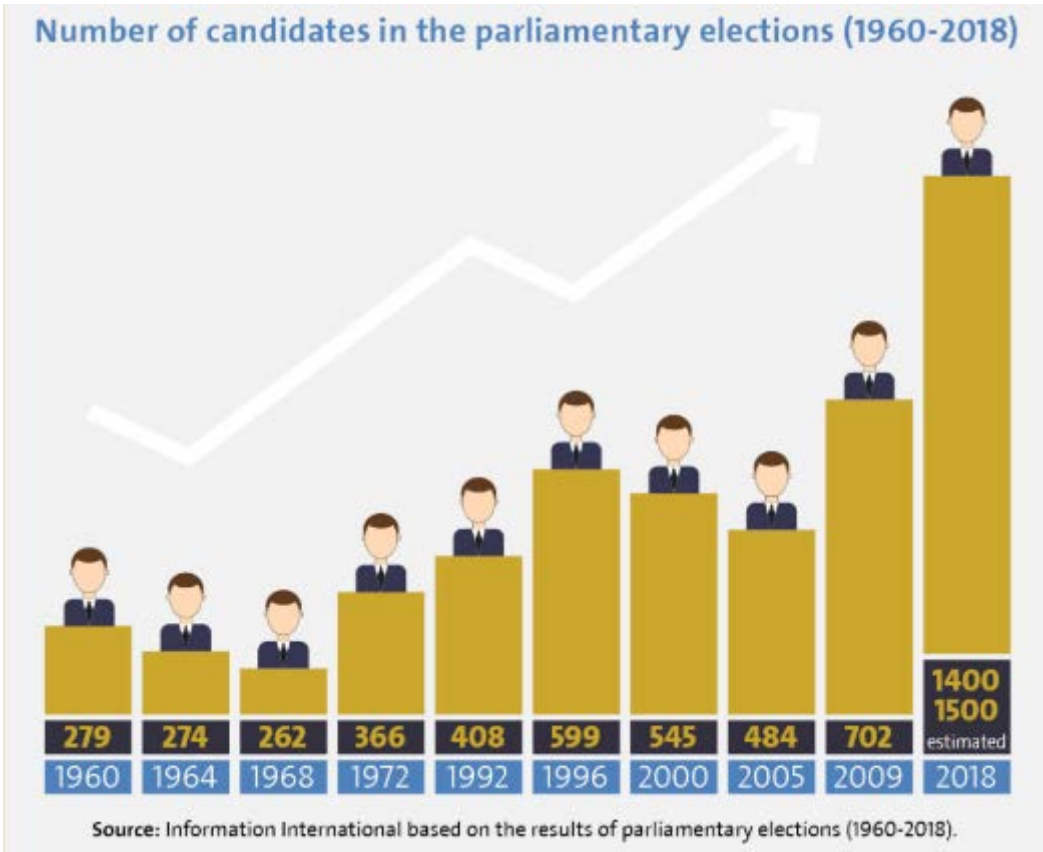
C/ Future prospects

2018 elections: hotly contested

BM as precedent for outsiders

BUT: many obstacles ahead





Prospects for the 2018 elections

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Big Question = effect of new electoral law?

Beirut I (Ashrafiyeh, Rmeil, Saifi, Medawar, al-Marfa)

→ **8 seats:** 3 Armenian Orthodox, 1 Arm. Catholic, 1 Maronite, 1 Greek Orth., 1 Greek Cath., 1 minorities

Beirut II (Mazraa, Musaytbeh, Ras Beirut, Ain Mreisseh, Mina al-Hosn, Zuqaq al-Blat, Bashoura)

→ **11 seats:** 6 Sunni, 2 Shia, 1 Druze, 1 Gr. Orth., 1 Evangelicals

Example of Ibrahim Mneimneh
(might consider running solo)

Other splinter groups to launch bid? (e.g. Massirat Watan)

5. Social Accountability?

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BM and the struggle for SA in Lebanon

BM as political emancipation of Lebanese activists

BM = result of decades of previous efforts (*tarākumāt*)

BM = significant step in re-appropriating public affairs

BM needs political mutation and/or maturity for electoral success

BM in confronting elite tactics

→ BM confirms central role of sectarian elites

→ BM circumvented elite strategies by promoting accountability

→ BM's inclusive, program-based governance as tool of resistance

→ BM opposed common citizenship to confessional belonging

THANK YOU

بدّي
مدينتي
عجبتني الصورة!
بدّي طلعا ع فيسبوك
بدّي نزلا عل كمبيوتر
بدّي أعمل وحده جديدة >

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