



UNIVERSITAT DE  
BARCELONA

## European Union Development Assistance Strategies, Policies, Deliverables, and Relevance: Case Study Jordan and Lebanon

Maher Sharif Mustafa Dudeen

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EUROPEAN UNION DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE STRATEGIES, POLICIES,  
DELIVERABLES, AND RELEVANCE: CASE STUDY JORDAN AND LEBANON

Estratègies, polítiques, resultats i rellevància de l'assistència al desenvolupament de la  
Unió Europea: estudi de cas de Jordània i el Líban

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## DEDICATION

To the great soul of my father, to the ever-present prayers of my mother, to Dana, my wife and life companion, my strength in moments of weakness, and to my esteemed supervisor, Professor Norbert Bilbeny Garcia.

In the presence of these individuals, all my circumstances were shaped.

This achievement would not have been possible without them.

I am nothing but the sum of hearts that loved me, souls that believed in me, and minds that inspired me to become.

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## RESUM

Aquesta tesi examina les polítiques d'ajuda al desenvolupament de la Unió Europea (UE) —polítiques, econòmiques i de drets humans— a Jordània i el Líban. S'hi analitzen les formes en què s'han formulat i implementat aquestes polítiques de desenvolupament, s'examina si són coherents amb els principis de seguretat humana i desenvolupament sostenible, i es revalua la seva importància en diversos contextos polítics.

Mitjançant un enfocament qualitatiu i explicatiu, derivat de la teoria de la modernització i dels enfocaments de desenvolupament basats en els drets, la tesi pretén aclarir quines formes d'"ajuda" ofereix la UE, com s'estructuren i s'entrellacen amb els sistemes de governança locals, i com es tradueixen en resultats de desenvolupament diferents. Jordània i el Líban es comparen com a estudis de cas a causa de la seva vulnerabilitat geopolítica, les seves tendències econòmiques fràgils i la seva dependència de l'ajuda exterior.

Les dades primàries s'han obtingut a través d'una anàlisi qualitativa del contingut de documents oficials de la UE i del Comitè d'Ajuda al Desenvolupament (CAD), mentre que les dades secundàries inclouen publicacions acadèmiques, informes de política i materials d'arxiu provinents de la Comissió Europea i de fonts de l'OCDE. La tesi també introdueix un model que combina una anàlisi comparativa dels temes de condicionalitat de l'ajuda, la capacitat governamental i els drets de desenvolupament. Els resultats revelen que l'ajuda de la UE ha estat rellevant en àmbits com la governança, el reforç de la societat civil i la gestió dels refugiats.

A Jordània, l'assistència de la UE ha donat suport a un cert creixement moderat, a la formació de capital humà i a una modernització lenta a través de l'educació i reformes orientades a l'exportació. Jordània continua sent un país molt dependent de l'ajuda i amb un entorn de seguretat inestable. En canvi, el cas del Líban no ha estat coherent quant als resultats de desenvolupament: la reconstrucció postbèl·lica, la dependència d'una economia basada en serveis i un alt deute públic han estat obstacles per a una modernització sostenible. L'ajuda de la UE no sempre ha abordat eficaçment els problemes estructurals de governança ni la inestabilitat macroeconòmica de llarg termini, especialment en el cas del Líban, que en els darrers anys ha patit una greu crisi fiscal i inflació. La tesi s'inspira en les teories de Jürgen Habermas i Seyla Benhabib, i qüestiona

els elements instrumentalistes i tecnocràtics del discurs de desenvolupament de la UE. L'enfocament de Habermas sobre la racionalitat comunicativa afavoreix una modernització inclusiva i basada en el diàleg, mentre que el federalisme cosmopolita de Benhabib recorda l'obligació moral envers els drets que superen les fronteres nacionals —fet especialment rellevant per a estats com Jordània i el Líban que acullen grans poblacions refugiades. Les conclusions suggereixen que les arquitectures de l'ajuda de la UE són institucionalment complexes, però el seu impacte concret varia i és contingent. L'eficàcia de l'ajuda europea depèn en gran mesura de la bona governança dels estats receptors, del seu context polític i econòmic, i del grau de localització dels projectes de desenvolupament. Aquesta tesi aporta valor tant a la teoria com a la pràctica del desenvolupament en posar l'accent en la confluència entre modernització, sobirania i ètica global. Fa una crida per a un desenvolupament més participatiu, per a un enfocament en les reformes estructurals i per a estratègies d'ajuda sensibles al context cultural, que contribueixin a crear una resiliència duradora en lloc d'una estabilitat política de curt termini.

- **PARAULES CLAU:**

Unió Europea, assistència al desenvolupament, drets humans, Jordània, Líban, modernització, governança, resiliència, Habermas, Benhabib

## ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the EU's development aid policies – political, economic, and human rights – in Jordan and Lebanon. It explores how the EU's development policies have been formulated and implemented, examines whether they correspond to the principles of human security and sustainable development, and reassesses their importance in various political contexts. Adopting a qualitative explanatory mode derived from modernization theory and right-based development plans, this thesis seeks to shed light on the available forms of the EU's aid, how these aids are constructed and enmeshed within local governance systems, and how they are translated into different developmental outcomes. Jordan and Lebanon are compared as case studies for their geopolitical vulnerability, fragile economic trends, and donor dependency. Also, this thesis pursued five sub-objectives; (1) Exploring the EU development assistance to support the development all over the globe, (2) Focusing on the EU assistance to Jordan and Lebanon as a case study, (3) Exploring the key issues that govern EU assistance, its deliverables, and its relevance in different political contexts and systems, (4) Exploring how development aid priorities are defined and spent, and (5) Exploring the EU benefits supporting the stability of human security concept in Jordan and Lebanon.

The primary data is generated through the qualitative content analysis of official EU and Development Assistance Committee (DAC) documents, and secondary data comprises academic publications, policy briefs, and archival materials drawn from European Commission and OECD sources. The thesis also introduces a model that combines the themes of the comparative analysis of aid conditionality, governmental capacity, and development rights.

The results revealed that the EU's aid has proved its relevance in fields such as governance, capacity building for civil society, and refugee management. In Jordan, the EU's assistance has backed some modest growth, human capital, and slow-moving modernization via education and export-oriented reform. Also, Jordan is highly aid-dependent, with an unchanged and precarious security environment. The case of Lebanon, however, has not been consistent with the development results. After the war, post-war reconstruction, service-oriented economy dependency, and high public debt have been obstacles to sustainable modernization. The EU's assistance has not always effectively

tackled structural governance issues and multiyear macroeconomic instability, as for Lebanon, which has been experiencing severe fiscal crisis and inflation in recent years.

The thesis is informed by the theories of Jürgen Habermas and Seyla Benhabib, and seeks to contest the instrumentalist and technocratic elements of the EU development discourse. Habermas's account of communicative rationality privileges an inclusive and dialogical modernization. At the same time, Benhabib's cosmopolitan federalism reminds us of a moral obligation to rights beyond national boundaries, pertinent given that refugee states like Jordan and Lebanon are hosting refugees. The findings suggest that the EU's aid architectures are institutionally complex, but their tangible influence varies and is contingent. The effectiveness of the EU's aid is mainly contingent on the recipient state's good governance, political-economy landscape, and the degree of source localization in developmental projects. This thesis adds value to development theory and practice by emphasizing the conjunction of modernization, sovereignty, and global ethics. It calls for participatory development to be stepped up, for attention to be given to structural reforms, and for culturally sensitive approaches to aid help create lasting resilience, rather than short-term political stability.

- **Keywords:**

European Union, development assistance, human rights, Jordan, Lebanon, modernization, governance, resilience, Habermas, Benhabib

## INTRODUCTION

The world witnessed three important declarations that changed the human rights track and called for democracy and the right to development. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) 1948<sup>1</sup>, which called for the protection of the principal rights of humans all over the globe. In addition, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) 1966<sup>2</sup>, calling for the protection of political, cultural, and social rights, announced in The Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The international community witnesses a wide development and carries new international variables in which distances fade and relations overlap. Since the end of World War II, the international community has witnessed the emergence of great international political and economic blocs that aim to strengthen the relations between member states to reach economic integration.

Many European cities experienced devastating effects after World War II, and the old banking and commercial system was in chaos. On June 1, 1944, a group of economists met in the United Nations Financial and Banking Conference in the city of "Bretton Woods" to discuss the instructions of the new international financing system and to rebuild the countries and cities destroyed after the war. The meeting resulted in the creation of two financial institutions: the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) (Igwe, 2018).

In Europe, the European countries established the Organization for European Economic Cooperation (OEEC) in 1948 to manage the US funds to reconstruct the war remnants (Jackson, 2005). In 1950, six European countries had enrolled in a trade union entitled "Coal and Steel Community": France, Germany, Belgium, Italy, Luxembourg,

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<sup>1</sup> The UDHR was drafted by representatives of different countries and adopted by the UN General Assembly through its resolution 217A

<sup>2</sup>The ICCPR and ICESCR are two multilateral treaties adopted by the UN General Assembly in December 1966 by its resolution 2200A (XXI). The ICCPR entered into force in March 1976 and commits the treaty parties to respect the individuals' political rights, including freedom of assembly, freedom of religion, freedom of speech, the right to life, electoral rights, and the right to due process and fair trial. The ICESCR commits the parties to grant all individuals economic, social, and cultural rights

and the Netherlands. Seven years later, the European countries had signed two treaties: the European Economic Community (EEC) treaty and the European Atomic Energy Community (EAEC) (The Treaty of Rome 1957) (Patel, 2019).

In 1960, the OECD created the Development Assistance Committee (DAC), which is responsible for coordinating donor policies from the member states. Later, the committee expanded its scope to reach non-member states. In addition, DAC became an international hub that collaborates with the World Bank, provides a monitoring process, and includes over 30 developing countries (OECD/DAC, 2006).

This thesis aims to explore the European Union donors to secure political assistance in the Arab World. Furthermore, the thesis sheds light on the role of EU donors in supporting the stability of human security in Jordan and Lebanon.

## **PART ONE**

### **1. Statement of the problem**

Jordan and Lebanon are two substantial countries in the Arab region. Both countries face constant challenges due to regional conflicts, socio-economic pressures, internal governance limitations, and refugee crises. In response, the EU has been an essential development and political partner by providing key assistance to foster institutional reforms, democratic governance, socio-political resilience, and the rule of law. The EU engagement in Jordan and Lebanon has expanded over the last decades, especially in response to the region's instability after the Syrian conflict. Moreover, the EU has increasingly emphasized human security, including social inclusion, support for civil society, crisis response, and education (Anholt & Sinatti, 2020).

Based on the recommendations of previous studies, the EU needs to create a long-term commitment to achieve democracy in the Arab world (Ziadeh, 2011). In response, the EU had launched the "Programming of the European Neighborhood Instrument (ENI) - 2014-2020" to provide single support to Jordan and Lebanon over the period (2017-2020), including supporting socio-economic development, supporting the rule of law, and upgrading the wider management and preventing extremist violence.

The proposal of the European Commission about the EU expenditures on development cooperation for the period 2014-2020 highlighted some elements to improve the effectiveness and coherence of the EU development policy. The proposal included five main points, all focused on expanding the cooperation in development. The fifth point focuses on spending further efforts to enhance the donors' cooperation and coordination to improve the EU development policy, which stresses creating institutional and political recommendations to enhance the EU's support for the developing countries (Munoz, 2012).

The EU has made a significant effort to promote security and stability in the Middle East through donor aid and political assistance; however, the strategic impact of this support, its effectiveness, and the extent to which the EU assistance has translated into critical political stability and human security in Jordan and Lebanon remain insufficiently assessed. This thesis aims to critically investigate the EU's political assistance to Jordan and Lebanon, and to examine the broader role of EU donors in strengthening the human security concept in both countries. Also, this thesis aims to evaluate the EU initiatives'

alignment with political realities and local needs, define the gap between policy objectives and outcomes, and explain the effectiveness of external support in fostering human development, governance, and stability in the fragile Middle East countries.

## **1.1 Objectives of the Study**

### **1.1.1. General Objective**

This thesis aims to explore the EU political assistance in Jordan and Lebanon, and to shed light on the role of the EU's donors in supporting the stability of the human security concept in Jordan and Lebanon.

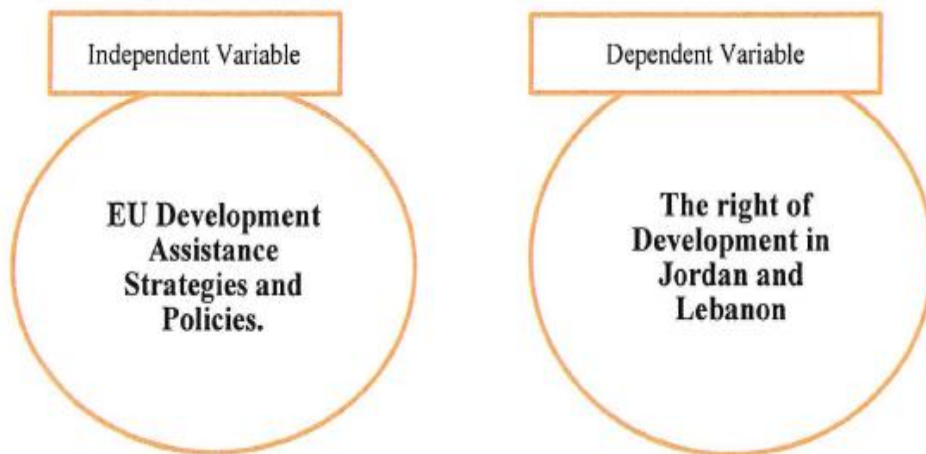
### **1.1.2. Specific Objectives**

This thesis focuses on the following points:

- To explore the EU's development assistance to support global development, particularly the EU's assistance to Jordan and Lebanon.
- Explore the key issues governing the EU's assistance, its deliverables, and its relevance in different political contexts and systems.
- To explore how development aid priorities are defined and spent.
- To explore the EU's benefits in supporting the stability of the human security concept in Jordan and Lebanon.

## **1.2. Methodology**

This explanatory, qualitative thesis attempts to investigate the linkage, if any, between the strategies of European Union (EU) development assistance and the attainment of the right to development in Jordan and Lebanon. The research design is based on a conceptual framework with EU Development Assistance Strategies and Policies and right to development in Jordan and Lebanon being the independent and dependent variables, respectively (see Figure 1). This structure mirrors the thesis main hypothesis: that the EU's strategic frameworks for development cooperation significantly shape human development outcomes in the recipient states.



*Figure 1 Thesis Variables*

Data collection was done through secondary and primary sources to meet the aims of the thesis. Secondary data consists of peer-reviewed articles, doctoral dissertations, policy reports, and publications from official bodies such as the European Commission, the Organization for European Economic Cooperation (OECD), and the Development Assistance Committee (DAC). These materials are Key in forming Theoretical and contextual framework of the thesis. They give an overview of the trajectories of the EU's development strategies, and how such have been materialized as a component of the much wider official narrative of international development cooperation, especially in relation to countries in the Arab region.

Thus, primary data collection comprised of a qualitative analysis of official EU and DAC reports. A critical review of those reports should allow for an analysis of the architecture, priorities and results of the sector in which EU funded intervention targeted particularly in the area of governance, human rights and social development.

Synthesis of findings within Jordan and Lebanon followed a comparative analysis model using a thematic analysis strategy to provide a basis of understanding for the delivery of EU assistance in varying political and institutional contexts. The analysis examined key dimensions including aid conditionality, local governance capacity, alignment with development rights, and perceived effectiveness from donor and recipient perspectives.

### **1.3. Justifications**

In the past two decades, the EU has launched two key strategies to promote the MENA countries: the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP) and the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP). The EMP was launched in 1995 to promote trade and bilateral cooperation between the EU and Mediterranean partners, including Jordan and Lebanon. The EMP sought to support political dialogue to achieve peace and stability, promote the shared financial and economic partnership, and encourage human and cultural exchange between civil societies and cultures. Likewise, the ENP has served as the main framework for EU-MENA relations, combining human rights benchmarks with development aid and political engagement (Wouters et al, 2016). Similarly, the EMP policy is based on "constructive engagement" and soft conditionality. However, in practice—especially in Lebanon and Jordan—it has proven partial, uneven, and subordinate to geopolitical priorities.

The relevance of this research stems from the need to better understanding how the EU's best practices and guiding ethics are incorporated into EU assistance, how the EU's development assistance aims to achieve further political stability that respect human rights and the development right in the host countries, how do the host countries handle the sovereignty when the assistance is pushing for political modernization and independence, and how does donor development assistance aim to promote sustainability.

The primary objective of the research is to provide a detailed investigation of the EU development assistance to Jordan and Lebanon, its deliverables, relevance, and how this is viewed in different political contexts and political systems as a comparative study. This thesis provides and supports policymakers and researchers by identifying and collecting data from official resources and previous studies. Furthermore, the present thesis serves as a reference for readers and writers interested in implementing the development rights in the Arab World through EU development instruments in cooperation with the World Bank and international organizations.

Most importantly, the present thesis stresses the important role of the EU's development policies in supporting the Arab world and protecting human security, covering financing initiatives for judicial independence, anti-corruption campaigns, and safeguarding the underprivileged groups. By tying political and economic cooperation to human rights

standards, the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) has been a vital tool in advancing human rights in Jordan and Lebanon (Wouters et al, 2016).

#### **1.4. Research Gaps**

Analyses demonstrate that development co-operation by the EU in Jordan and Lebanon covers modernization, human rights, economic reform, and resilience of refugees, sustainability, and digitalization. However, challenges remain in governance-literate impact inhibition, stakeholder exclusion, and the mismatch of universal models with culturally unique settings. Incorporating Habermas's (1990) communicative rationality introduces a critical contrast to the technocratic approach to aid, implying deliberative and inclusive ideals. Benhabib's book "The Rights of Others: Aliens, Residents, and Citizens" (2004) appeals to cosmopolitan rights, accentuating the normative challenge of migration-induced aid and shifting the debate toward a recognition of an inclusive political membership.

#### **1.5. Summary of Part One**

Part One sets up Development Rights and the EU's Development Policy by outlining its historical and theoretical roots in the development rights discourse and the EU's development aid, starting with global events that identified political, social and economic rights as the focus of global policy: Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and the ICCPR and the ICESCR (1966). It examines how the economic institutions that emerged after WWII, including the IMF and IBRD, and the European integration frameworks of OEEC, EEC, and DAC, created a foundation for present-day development cooperation.

The background and problem definition focus on the changing EU development strategy, notably towards the Arab world, regarding coherence, long-term commitment, and human security. The chapter also sets out the goal of this thesis: to critically examine the EU's development assistance strategies, outputs, and their relevance based on Jordan and Lebanon as case studies.

Four key areas of investigation direct the inquiry: EU best practice, the political dimension of aid, sovereignty, and sustainability. The research is set to investigate how

EU assistance enhances development, security, and political transition in various governance environments.

The value of the thesis is that it enriches debate in both the academic and policy fields about EU aid, particularly in the way in which development policy interacts with political systems and human rights in the fragile Arab states. The chapter explains a qualitative, explanatory research design. Primary and secondary sources, and comparative thematic analysis. An ethical concern characterizes it and comprises contextualized descriptions of EU assistance.

Finally, the chapter presents the review (Modernization Theory, Rights-based Approaches, Aid Effectiveness, Refugee Dynamics, Governance, Energy Security, and Digital Development). It points to key gaps in comparative auditing, in-depth evaluation, local ownership, and rights conditionality.

## SECOND PART

### 2. The EU's Development Models

Theoretical debates around the EU's development models shall consider the issue of scaling aid to Jordan and Lebanon, and this thesis considers in particular the modernization, post-development, and rights-based governance paradigms. The modernization theory emerged in the 1950s and 1960s to understand social and economic development issues, and to establish policies that aim at social and economic development in poorer countries (Gwynne, 2009). The modernization theory, widely influential in development policy, has been criticized for Western biases and linear conceptions of social development. Analysts such as Shilliam (2010) and Goorha (2010) cite its deterministic rhetoric and cultural prejudices. Also, Eisenstadt (2010) suggests that it varies in practice, and it is important to explore the differentiated methods that modernity is being played out in various cultural locations – a critically important point when analyzing the EU's localized strategies in the MENA region.

In the latter regard, Habermas (1990) helps take a fresh look at the philosophical origins of modernity. In *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*<sup>3</sup>, he considers how French poststructuralist criticisms of Enlightenment reason (especially Foucault's and Derrida's) upset the cognitive basis of developmentalist thinking. Instead of rejecting modernity completely, Habermas later claims some words for a "determinate negation" of subject-centered reason in communicative rationality, providing a path towards an inclusive, dialogical form of modernization. His conversation with French theory suggests that modernization does not have to be the exclusive domain of instrumental rationality, but may encompass pluralist, participatory discourses pertinent to the EU development narratives.

Habermas comprehends the modernity from the wider social theoretical perspective instead of considering it as rise of societies. The Modernization theory relies on

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<sup>3</sup> ) *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity: Twelve Lectures* book by the author Jürgen Habermas in 1985. The book addressed the philosophical and historical challenges of modernity and discussed the future of modernity through moving discourse into practice.

democratization and rationalization of society, utilizing communicative actions, validity claims, and mutual dialogue instead of instrumental and strategic reasoning. Habermas argued that the potential of modernity is inherent in humans; this potential is threatened by systems' dominance, such as the state and market bureaucracy. Habermas's theoretical work has received significant attention in the Western political and social discourse. In "*Between Fact and Norms*", Habermas offered a reconstruction of the philosophy drawn in his book "*Theory of Communicative Action (1981)*", which provided an understanding of the theory of constitution that reflects on democracy and civil society, and provides a reconstruction of a new political paradigm, as well as reconsidering the political theory and law philosophy. *Theory of Communicative Action (1981)* sought to find a method to ground social sciences in language theory, which is a critical project that reconstructs the concept of reason, proposing that "human action and understanding can be fruitfully analysed as having a linguistic structure". Meanwhile, every utterance depends on the prediction of freedom from unnecessary domination. Habermas perceives modernity as an "Unfinished Project" stemming from the Enlightenment reason promise and the development of systematic logic over communicative actions. Habermas distinguished between modernity and modernization, stating that modernity indicates "the cultural condition of self-reflexive, forward-looking progress", while modernization indicates "the distorted social and economic processes of capitalism and bureaucracy".

Benhabib (2004), in her book "*The Rights of Others: Aliens, Residents, and Citizens*," criticized the limitations imposed by the traditional democratic systems, especially how these systems build "Outsiders" and then seek to reconcile the global norms with the current legal and political structures of the states. She argued that the "Enlightenment project of modernity" involves valuable norms of individual autonomy and universalism; however, this project shall be reconstructed instead of being abandoned to deal better with exclusion and inclusion issues worldwide. Moreover, Benhabib argued that the global moral framework for treating and addressing refugees, immigrants, and asylum-seekers, and argued that human rights norms limit state sovereignty.

By contrast, development theory has faced severe criticism in the post-development period. Some scholars say limiting development to economic liberalization is narrow (Unger, 2010; Mergel, 2012; Islam, 2018). Likewise, Salameh (2019) explains that

discourse on modernization hides imperial interests, which indicates ideological drivers for the EU's aid. Ishikawa (2002) and Yasin (2007) presented case studies. They showed that Western-influenced pedagogies conflict with cultural identities in places like Japan and Russia-lessons that mirror the socio-political contexts of Jordan and Lebanon.

### **2.1. The EU's Development Aid and Economic Reform Routes**

The distributional economic consequences of the EU policies in the region are further empirically documented. Although the EU support reinforced infrastructure and improved vocational training in Jordan (Al-Lozi & Al-Qadi, 2012), the sustainability of these developments is widely questionable. Similarly, Rabadi (2019) and Fedelino (1999) looked at the EU-Jordan Association Agreement and the Euro-Med partnership. They found modest success in trade, but none in economic transformation.

In this regard, Dardour and Diabat (2024) revealed that the EU provides financial support to Jordan through "The European Neighborhood Policy (ENP)"; however, there were no significant positive outcomes. Although Jordan has implemented reform programs and plans, the national debt 2019 increased to 92.4% of the GDP. In addition, there were no improvements in the EU-Jordanian trade, leading to a trade deficit of 2,900 million euros in 2021. On the political level, the EU-Jordanian partnership has led to limited results, as Jordan was ranked 118th on the world Democracy Index in 2020, 129th out of 180 countries on the Journalism Independence Index in 2021, and on the Corruption Perception Index, Jordan was ranked 58<sup>th</sup> in 2020.

Bassanini *et al.* (2001), O'Brien & Santos (2019), and Idris (2016) focus on the impact of foreign aid on macroeconomic stability and structural reform. Other econometric analysis by Khader & Badran (2014) and Abdul-Khalek (2005) highlights the effects of these aids on GDP growth, capital, and labor productivity. Dagher & Nehme (2023) suggest a model of growth driven by exports for Lebanon. However, problems such as rent-seeking and poor fiscal management (World Bank, 2023; Dessus & Ghaleb, 2006) may reduce the impact of the EU's aid. Likewise, Yiew (2018) claimed that foreign aid initially has a negative effect on the receiving countries' growth, and these aids would positively affect the economic growth over time. Moreover, it is important to strengthen the legal framework of the receiving countries, while overdependence on foreign aid might

negatively affect growth. These results indicate that development aid could fail to generate structural change without governance reform and transparency.

### **2.1.1. The EU Human Rights Commitments and Conditionality**

For micro-financial assistance, the EU's aid policy conditions on respecting the rule of law, human rights, and the mechanisms of effective democracy (European Union, 2020, art 2). However, Benhabib (2004) continues this debate by considering how political membership and state sovereignty are being reshaped in an era of global migration.

In *The Rights of Others*<sup>4</sup>, Benhabib appeals for porous boundaries that mediate between the rights of refugees and asylum seekers and those of democratic self-determination. Her argument for cosmopolitan federalism, based on Kantian universality, starkly contrasts static conceptions of state-based aid governance and privileges moral obligations that the EU is loath to use but intermittently applies in this case.

The EU applies a human rights-based development approach to its relations worldwide and the internal cooperation between the EU member states. This conditionality approach was rooted in the EU's foundational principles, including respecting democracy, human dignity and rights, the rule of law, and equality. This approach is integrated into all EU development cooperation, policies, migration, and trade. Patterson (2024) criticizes the hollowness of the EU's human rights-based development, while Çamur (2017) and Beukes & Fourie (1988) reveal global hypocrisy as it relates to the enforcement of civil, political, and socio-economic rights.

In the same vein, Hussain (2014), Tahir (2011), and Mahzabin (2023) examine the tension between international rights norms and Islamic law, emphasizing the significance of cultural norms. Hussain (2014) argued about the applicability and scope of applying the

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<sup>4</sup>) *The Right of Others* by the author Seyla Benhabib in 2000 examined the political community boundaries by investigating practices and political membership principles.

ICESCR<sup>5</sup> and claimed that although this treaty was internationally recognized and ratified, this treaty has legal obligations on the treaty members and offers comprehensive framework to promote their social, economic, and cultural rights. However, the ICESCR encountered challenges and criticism, as this treaty might not be applied in all societies and to all cultures, and various traditions and cultural norms might interpret these rights and their practice.

In this regard, Toubat (2018) presented a critical analysis on the freedom of expression in Jordan and reported although the national and international organizations govern the freedom of expression, this right is problematic in Jordan due to the imposed legal provisions that prevents the journalists and individuals from publishing or commenting information; thus, Jordan has limited freedom of expression due to unclear legal frameworks. In Lebanon, Mourad & Farhat (2020) argued that gender inclusion in specific fields, including employment, education, gender gap, vulnerable employment, and enrollment in parliamentary life, in addition to protecting international human rights and the national civil and political rights, are the main drivers towards economic development gains. Meckled-Garcia (2018) takes this further, considering the relationship of rights-based duties to distributive justice and assistance tactics.

### **2.1.2. Refugees, Migration, and Humanitarian Assistance**

The EU has provided constant and significant support for Jordan and Lebanon to deal with the Syrian crisis, as both countries have received a large number of Syrian refugees who fled after the civil war in 2011. Jordan received over 650,000, and Lebanon hosted 1.5 million Syrian refugees (UNHCR, 2017).

In February 2016, Jordan signed a new approach to deal with the Syrian refugees, in which Jordan has committed to providing legal employment and integration in the labor market and providing access to education for the Syrian refugees (Barbelet, Hagen-Zanker, and Mansour-Ille, 2018). Al Hussein (2023) and Lenner and Turner (2019)

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<sup>5</sup>) International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) adopted by the UN GA on December 16, 1966, by resolution no. (2200A – XXI). This multilateral treaty commits its parties to advancing all individuals' social, economic, and cultural rights.

criticized the Jordan Compact, claiming that this policy was ineffective in reaching the outlined goals and targets due to the “disregard by its signatories of Syrian refugees’ aspirations and the limited capacities of absorption of a largely informal private sector” (p.36). Smith (2020), Almasri (2021), and Aleassa (2023) criticize the Jordan Compact, claiming that the policy has led to a prioritization of state-based mechanisms over refugee-based alternatives.

Lebanon did not ratify the 1951<sup>6</sup> Convention and its 1967 protocol, instead, Lebanon has regulated ad-hoc agreements with some international organizations, such as the UNHCR, to regulate their missions in the country. In addition, Lebanon has only one law for asylum seekers, Order 319 of 1962, which regulates the foreign nationals' rights and obligations in the country. Janmyr (2017) examines Lebanon’s non-ratification of the 1951 Refugee Convention, considering this in terms of politics and law. In addition, Lebanon replaced the open-border policy with strict entry visa and residence regulations to limit the influx of Syrian refugees to Lebanon. In October 2014, the Lebanese government ratified a policy paper regarding the Syrian refugees, the policy demonstrated three main goals: (1) decreasing the number of inward Syrians through limiting their entrance to Lebanon and forcing them to return to Syria, (2) upgrading the security laws and regulations on Syrians, (3) facilitating the burdens of national and local authorities.

Furthermore, Lebanon had signed a cooperation framework with the EU (The Lebanon Compact) in 2016 to address the challenges imposed due to the Syrian refugees' influx. This framework focused on fostering the living conditions for the vulnerable Lebanese and Syrian refugees, governance, and strengthening the economy of Lebanon. Fakhoury (2020b) evaluated the contradictions and tensions encountered in implementing the Lebanon Compact of 2016, and reported that polarizing Lebanon's institutions and unwillingness to integrate Syrian refugees have made the Lebanon Compact a "Letter of Intent" instead of an action policy. Moreover, the logic that the EU adopted in the governance of Syrian refugees in Lebanon was apart from Lebanese refugee geopolitics;

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<sup>6</sup>) Adopted by the UN GA by the resolution 2198 (XXI) in July 1951, committing the parties to recognize the refugee definition and provide legal rights, assistance, and protection for them.

therefore, the aspired integrations and solutions from the Compact fell within the dynamics of Lebanese asylum regulations and complexities.

### **2.1.3. Governance, Civil Society and Polity Interface**

In recent years, there has been a growing interest in the governance of civil society, which is the process of steering the economy and society through a set of actions to achieve specific common objectives. Civil society has valuable ideas, resources, and experiences that could be deployed to support public governance processes (Torfing, 2020). The governance comprises the formal and informal processes, organizations, and rules by which private and public actors express their interests, make decisions, and implement them (Bojić, Clark, & Urban, 2022).

The complex relationship represented in the interface between polity, civil society, and governance encompasses an interaction and influence between these three elements. The governance comprises the processes and systems that interact with the social movements, advocacy groups, and non-governmental organizations to foster good governance and create public policy. Hence, the power structures and political landscape representing the polity are critical in influencing the governance enactment and the civil society operations (Ullah, 2025).

Governance dynamics are the powerful engine behind the political economy of the EU's aid. Plathner (2013) examines the regime complexity of the EU's migration policy, and Al-Kabariti (2024) investigates the EU's soft power through cultural cooperation in Jordan. Fakhoury & Stel (2023) and Fakoussa & Kabis-Kechrid (2020) advocate for greater capacity-building for civil society for genuine local ownership of aid. One contextual strategy is that of the EU, which Noaksson & Jacobsson (2003) oppose to the more technocratic approach of the OECD: an effort to construct a distinctive identity for European aid. Bin-Armia et al. (2024) and Zarghami (2025) reveal tensions resulting from divergent regulatory—normative logics and economic imperatives in EU legal and economic orders.

#### **2.1.4. Sustainability, Energy, and Infrastructure**

There is increasing emphasis on sustainability and resource governance. Sustainability in the EU's projects and foreign aid includes various policies and initiatives to achieve different aspects of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In addition, the EU aims to include "The European Green Deal", a long-term strategic initiative to achieve economic sustainability. This deal covers other aspects, including atmosphere, energy, agriculture, and the circular economy. Besides, the EU's project is characterized by financing suitability classification, which aims to direct investments and aid towards economic activities that achieve the SDGs.

Salah et al. (2023) emphasize the importance of the EU for developing renewable energy infrastructure and integrating it with the grid. Fathallah (1996) and Telerant (1995) cite water cooperation under the Israel-Jordan peace accord as a role model for peacebuilding based on common environmental resources. Akyüz (2017) calls for incorporating environmental PHR into the EU's aid regimes, which seems particularly appropriate in the light of MENA countries exposed to climate hazards.

#### **2.1.5. Financialization, Innovation, and the Knowledge Economy**

The EU supports development and research by funding innovative programs like Horizon Europe. These programs aim at fostering economic growth and innovation. The EU supported development and research in Jordan through different partnerships and agreements, such as "Supporting Research, Technology Development and Innovation Initiatives and Strategies (SRTD II)" and "Jordan Innovation" programs. Also, the EU has established the Jordanian Innovation Center for the 4<sup>th</sup> Industrial Revolution (InJo4.0), which aims to support the Jordanian industry and foster competitiveness in the world economy. Zarghami (2025) stresses the role of inclusive labor markets and coherent economic policy for delivering on the SDGs, which joins the EU's emphasis on innovation and policy coherence. Digital transformation is a part of the EU's strategies and digital innovation in government. Majdalawi et al. (2015) chronicle Jordan's slow march to e-government, and Ben Hassen (2024) contrasts the movement of Lebanon's economy toward one focused on knowledge, but slowed by political instability and loss of human capital.

## **2.2. Overview of Modernization Theory and Its Relevance to Global Development Trajectories**

This chapter presents the concept of modernization theory and its influence on world development. Modernization theory is presented as a theory of transition from rural to industrial economies, and tackling development disparities. The next chapter presents world economic growth from the 19th and 20th centuries and its consequences on economic growth in different regions. Case studies of Japan and the U.S. illustrate diverse national modernizing routes. The chapter then compares cultural modernity with economic and social modernization, Lebanon and Jordan being referred to as specific cases in the Middle East. It ends by revisiting the central tenets, limitations, and alternative interpretations of the ideology of modernization theory and its relevance in discussions on global development.

Modernization theory, in its third application, has its roots in Western Europe, particularly the 19th Century, and is still a key component of the social scientific understanding of the social evolution of societies in terms of the sub-stage of economic and social development. The theory posits that historically, societies progressed through the following stages: traditional societies, based on the dominance of agriculture, gave rise to agrarian societies, in which the economy was based on the production of food or goods; industrial societies followed these societies; thereafter came societies rooted in the production of services or an exchange economy. Modernization theory developed in the wake of the Second World War; it was employed to address the differences between the wealthiest and poorest nations, positing that the “traditional” societies might “modernize” to the same extent as these societies if only they emulated specific institutional, economic, and cultural models of the West.

Modernization theory is important because it has tried to develop a universal model of how societies become modern. Scholars, including Walt Rostow, suggested that societies shift between particular stages of development, which include traditional society, preconditions for takeoff, takeoff, drive to maturity, and age of high mass consumption (Rostow, 1990). Under this theory, as a nation goes through the phases they get more

economic productive, more technologically innovative, more complex societally, and have improved standards of living as well as more political freedom (Goorha, 2010).

At first, modernization theory was celebrated as an original framework for development policy and global economic expansion. It was especially popular among international institutions and policymakers trying to deal with poverty and underdevelopment of post-colonial countries in the context of the Cold War. The theory's focus on economic development, political stability, and social progress stimulated many Western-sponsored efforts to reproduce these stages, including industrial plants, educational overhauls, and infrastructure construction. However, although modernization theory has profoundly shaped development initiatives, it has also been severely criticized. Critics have contended that modernization theory is inherently Eurocentric and overly deterministic, failing to consider the particular historical, cultural, and geopolitical context undergirding the development path of each society (Portes, 1976).

In addition, the deterministic strand of modernization theory -- whereby all countries supposedly must converge on a single road to "modernity" -- does not allow for a diversity of development paths such as those pursued by Japan and the United States. For example, Japanese modernization took place in a way highly affected by its previous isolationist policies, with significant construction of buildings following different manners than those in the Western World (see Japanese architecture). Similarly, Egyptian society began to move to a more modern structure.

Opponents of modernization theory, including Goorha (2007), maintain that the theory's deterministic context fails to accommodate the multi-layered linkages present today in cross-border development. This also has implications for the interrelation between political, social, and economic processes for development as globalization and connectivity develop. The critical points raised by new approaches to modernity theories are usually taken up by recent variants of modernization theories, which show that endogenous factors like cultural values, systems of government, and institutional capacity deeply affect a society's developmental path. Second, in a more holistic sense, modernization is seen as a counterpart of newer political and economic theories, e.g.,

endogenous growth theories and social choice theories that consider development paths as outcomes dependent on domestic and global forces (Acemoglu et al., 2005).

In recognition of its constraints, modernization theory has evolved to embrace numerous paths to development, transitioning from a single methodology to the more nuanced understanding of the effects that facilitate successful modernization. The theory is also engrafted with some perspectives on institutional economics. It emphasizes that natural, political, and economic institutions that are far more capable of appropriately distributing resources and meeting citizenship demands are necessary preconditions of development (North, 1981). In many respects, this view is now concordant with the notion of the 'credible polity' that has been put forward by more recent authors, who argue strongly that transparent and representative government is an important ingredient in securing economic stability and growth.

However, the legacy of modernization theory is still alive and well in contemporary debate about development, especially in societies having to deal with the challenges of modernity, including environmental sustainability and social inequality. The modernization theory, with the economic divide widening and the urgency to find sustainable avenues to development, still serves as a reference point to policy making in a different, refined role, which acknowledges widely varying approaches that defy the previous, rigid model of inspiration, which proposed the Eurocentric-oriented models in the past. Modernization theory thus recognizes the variety of development paths; in doing so, it presents a point of departure for understanding how countries will make their way through the ambiguities of becoming "modern" in the world.

### **2.2.1. Modernization Emergence and Development**

Modernization is commonly defined as a comprehensive transitional process involving changes across social, cultural, economic, and political structures, whereby societies shift from traditional patterns rooted in customs and charismatic authority toward modern systems characterized by rationality, functional specialization, economic innovation, and institutional complexity (Giddens, 1990). This process extends beyond the economic dimension, encompassing transformations in education, religion, values, and behavioral

patterns, ultimately fostering societies capable of addressing globalization and technological advancement (Habermas, 1984).

The intellectual roots of modernization theory can be traced to 19th- and early 20th-century European social thought. Weber (1978; 1992) emphasized the role of rationality, culture, and values in shaping social and economic transformations, while Parsons (1951) highlighted structural differentiation and social systems, interpreting modernization as a functional and structural mechanism that enhances integration and stability. From an economic standpoint, Rostow (1990) conceptualized modernization as a sequence of stage-traditional society, preconditions for take-off, take-off, maturity, and high mass consumption—whereby transitions are driven by technological innovation, productivity, investment patterns, and institutional change. Each stage, moreover, entails political and social shifts, such as expanded civic participation and stronger institutional frameworks.

Cultural and value changes constitute another critical dimension of modernization. Education, civil society, and social values strengthen human capacities to adapt to transformations, while institutional reforms enhance rule of law, state effectiveness, and resource management (North, 1981; Acemoglu, Johnson & Robinson, 2005). After World War II, modernization theory became central in development debates, serving as a blueprint for Western development policies that emphasized industrialization, education, infrastructure, and political institutions (Eisenstadt, 1999).

Nevertheless, modernization theory has been contested for its Eurocentric assumptions. Critics such as Portes (1976) and Goorha (2010) argue that the model presumes uniformity of developmental pathways, disregarding historical, cultural, and political specificities. Eisenstadt's (1999) notion of “multiple modernities” further challenged the deterministic perspective by demonstrating that societies experience modernization in diverse ways.

In sum, modernization provides an analytical framework for studying the interplay between economy, society, and politics, while also acknowledging the influence of education, technology, and governance on development trajectories. However, its limitations underscore the importance of integrating contextual particularities and governance reforms into any framework aimed at achieving sustainable progress.

### **2.2.2. Max Weber: Rationalization, Culture, and Values in the Context of Modernization**

Max Weber is regarded as one of the key scholars who conceptualized modernization from a cultural and value-based perspective, stressing that economic and social transformations cannot be detached from rationalization processes and the cultural or religious values that underpin social behavior (Weber, 1978). Weber defined rationalization as the transformation of human activity into procedures governed by systematic rules, calculations, and objective standards, independent of emotions or traditions. In this sense, efficiency and productivity become central criteria for institutional and social interaction (Weber, 1946).

Weber's notion of bureaucracy serves as a concrete manifestation of rationalization. He argued that bureaucracy represents the most effective form of social organization for managing increasingly complex societies, as it is grounded in written rules, hierarchical authority, specialized task allocation, and formal monitoring systems (Weber, 1978). Although bureaucracy may be criticized for rigidity, Weber emphasized that it secures organizational discipline and social integration, thereby enabling institutional stability and continuity amidst political, social, and economic pressures. Accordingly, modern institutions in both industrialized and developing contexts can be analyzed as rational mechanisms for managing resources and achieving developmental objectives.

### **2.2.3. Religious Values and Economic Transformation**

Weber's seminal work *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* illustrates the interaction between religious ethics and economic values. He highlighted that Protestant—particularly Calvinist—values promoted hard work, frugality, and professional commitment as moral obligations, thereby fostering the emergence of economic rationality that supported the rise of modern capitalism (Weber, 1992 [1905]). For Weber, this link between culture and economy demonstrates that modernization is not solely the outcome of technological progress or material conditions but rather a multidimensional process in which cultural and value-based transformations intersect with institutional and economic change.

In this perspective, modernization entails more than structural or technological reforms; it involves a reconfiguration of societal values and ethical frameworks that shape both individual behavior and institutional performance. Thus, Weber's analysis underscores that the dynamics of modernization must be studied through the interplay of rationalization, cultural orientations, and institutional development.

#### **2.2.4. Rationalization in Daily Life and Social Transformations**

Weber extended the concept of rationalization beyond the realms of bureaucracy and economy to encompass broader dimensions of daily life, including education, administration, law, and even the arts. Central to this process is what Weber termed the "disenchantment of the world" (*Entzauberung der Welt*), whereby social practices and customs become subject to rational, systematic, and evaluable interpretations (Weber, 1992 [1905]). This transformation laid the foundations of a modern culture capable of adapting to socio-economic changes and positioned societies to respond more effectively to the challenges of globalization and technological innovation (Eisenstadt, 2000).

#### **2.2.5. Modernization and Cultural Values: A Comparative Dimension**

Weber's conceptualization of rationalization and the role of religious values in shaping modernity have been central to understanding European development. However, applying these insights to non-Western contexts requires attention to local cultural and institutional specificities. For instance, in societies such as Jordan or Lebanon, modernization cannot be understood without accounting for religious traditions, social customs, and the role of civil society institutions in shaping trajectories of change (Eisenstadt, 2000). Thus, while Weber offers a framework for analyzing the cultural foundations of modernity, development policies in non-European contexts must integrate indigenous cultural dimensions to provide a comprehensive understanding of modernization.

From a structural-functional perspective, Talcott Parsons contributed significantly to modernization theory. His analysis focused on how societies incorporate economic, cultural, and social transformations into an integrated system that preserves stability (Parsons, 1951). To this end, Parsons developed two key conceptual tools: structural differentiation and pattern variables.

#### **2.2.5.1. Structural Differentiation and Pattern Variables**

According to Parsons, modernization entails the progressive specialization of institutions and social roles in response to the increasing complexity of modern societies. The emergence of differentiated institutions—such as education systems, legal structures, and economic organization enhance efficiency and responsiveness to societal needs (Parsons & Shils, 1951).

The concept of pattern variables further illustrates the value shifts associated with modernization. These include the transition from particularism to universalism, whereby social standards become more inclusive and equitable; from affectivity to affective neutrality, where decisions are made on objective grounds rather than personal emotions; and from ascription to achievement, with evaluations based on competence and performance rather than inherited status (Parsons, 1971). Together, these shifts demonstrate that modernization is not merely technical or economic but also a profound reorganization of social values and behavioral norms.

#### **2.2.5.2. Social System and Social Cohesion**

For Parsons, modernization does not simply imply the erosion of traditional structures but rather the establishment of a cohesive normative system that integrates changing economic and political conditions while maintaining societal stability. He defined the social system as a network of roles, norms, and values that ensures effective coordination and integration of society (Parsons, 1951). This integration, in turn, enables societies to adapt to modernization without sacrificing institutional continuity or social cohesion. Accordingly, understanding developmental trajectories requires attention not only to economic reforms but also to the normative frameworks that sustain social stability.

#### **2.2.5.3. Critiques and Limitations**

Despite the theoretical significance of Parsons' model, it has been subject to considerable critique. Scholars argue that Parsons' emphasis on stability and integration tends to overlook the role of social conflict and the potential for rapid transformations within modern societies (Eisenstadt, 1999). Moreover, the assumption that all societies follow a

linear and uniform path of modernization neglects the historical and cultural specificities of individual contexts, a point repeatedly highlighted in comparative modernization studies (Goorha, 2010). Another limitation concerns the neglect of international political and economic dynamics that shape the capacity of societies, particularly in the Global South, to adapt to modernization processes (Eisenstadt, 2000).

Nevertheless, Parsons provided an important structural bridge in modernization theory by linking the value-oriented transformations emphasized by Weber with the institutional and functional stability required for societal adaptation. While Weber underscored rationalization and cultural values as catalysts of modernity, Parsons articulated how institutional frameworks integrate these values to maintain systemic stability, laying the foundation for subsequent modernization and development theories.

#### **2.2.6. Integrating Weber and Parsons: Toward a Multidimensional Understanding of Modernization**

The integration of Weber's and Parsons' contributions allows for a multidimensional conceptualization of modernization. Weber emphasized rationalization and religious-cultural values as key drivers of economic and social change, arguing that transformations cannot be separated from ethical commitments and cultural traditions (Weber, 1978; 1992). In contrast, Parsons (1951) offered a structural-functional perspective that demonstrated how these transformations are absorbed into social systems capable of maintaining integration and cohesion amidst change.

This integration unfolds along three main axes. First, the cultural and value dimension, rooted in Weber's analysis, highlights how shifts in social ethics—such as the transition from traditionalism to rationalized work ethics—foster modernization, with religious values such as Protestant ethics contributing directly to the emergence of capitalist institutions (Weber, 1992). Second, the structural-functional dimension, as outlined by Parsons, shows how modern institutions such as bureaucracies and education systems function as mechanisms of integration, task allocation, and social stability (Parsons & Shils, 1951). Third, the interaction between these two dimensions underscores modernization as a sequential and comprehensive process in which cultural values are

translated into institutional practices, and institutions, in turn, sustain social roles and economic objectives.

The European experience of the twentieth century provides an illustrative case: Protestant values encouraged economic innovation and work discipline, while bureaucratic institutions ensured the efficiency and sustainability of capitalist development (Eisenstadt, 1999).

### **2.2.7. Critiques and Analytical Flexibility**

While the integration of Weber and Parsons strengthens modernization theory, it also retains important limitations. The emphasis on cohesion and stability tends to understate the impact of social conflicts, class struggles, and sudden transformations that characterize many modernization trajectories (Eisenstadt, 2000). Furthermore, the presumption that all societies can replicate a similar path to modernity diminishes the explanatory power of the theory for non-Western contexts, such as Jordan and Lebanon, where modernization is mediated by distinct historical, cultural, and political conditions (Goorha, 2010).

Nevertheless, combining these perspectives provides a solid framework for developing later theories, such as critiques of modernity and post-modernization theories, including Habermas' work, which expands the social and political dimensions of modernization. The integration of Weber and Parsons offers a multidimensional understanding of modernization, linking cultural and religious values, economic transformations, and the structure of social institutions. This integrated perspective forms a strong foundation for subsequent modernization and development theories and provides a framework for analyzing diverse development trajectories while accounting for the cultural, structural, and functional dimensions of societies.

### **2.2.8. Jürgen Habermas and the Critique of Modernity: Communicative Action and the Public Sphere**

Jürgen Habermas represents a critical advancement in the study of modernity, extending the analysis beyond Weber's cultural-value approach and Parsons' structural-functional framework to emphasize the communicative and deliberative dimensions of society (Habermas, 1984). For Habermas, modernity is not merely a matter of bureaucratic rationalization or institutional differentiation; it is a process that requires rational dialogue among individuals and institutions to ensure legitimacy in social and political decision-making, thereby fostering a more just and cohesive society (Habermas, 1996).

#### **Communicative Action**

Habermas introduces the concept of communicative action as interaction oriented toward mutual understanding and agreement on shared norms, in contrast to administrative or instrumental action, which prioritizes efficiency over consensus (Habermas, 1984). Communicative action emphasizes open dialogue, deliberation, and the co-construction of social norms, enabling societies to resolve conflicts and adopt solutions with moral and social legitimacy. Modern democratic institutions, such as parliaments and local councils, exemplify the practical application of this principle, as they rely on citizen participation to legitimize policymaking processes.

#### **The Public Sphere**

The public sphere, according to Habermas, constitutes a domain where societal issues can be debated freely, without domination by the state or market forces (Habermas, 1989). A functional public sphere is essential for building political legitimacy through dialogue, enhancing democratic accountability by facilitating citizen participation, and promoting sustainable social development via the exchange of knowledge, ideas, and experiences across diverse societal groups.

## **Critique and Analytical Contribution**

Habermas critiques both Weber and Parsons by highlighting overlooked dimensions of modernization. In Weber's case, the focus on rationalization, religious ethics, and bureaucratic institutions neglects communicative processes and democratic legitimacy, rendering certain modernization trajectories socially unsustainable. In Parsons' framework, the emphasis on structural stability underestimates social conflict and civic engagement, potentially perpetuating bureaucratic dominance without meaningful participation (Habermas, 1996).

By integrating the analysis of institutions and cultural values with dialogue and public deliberation, Habermas provides a critical lens for understanding modernization as a multidimensional process. This perspective is particularly relevant for societies facing developmental challenges, such as those in the Arab world, where sustainable modernization requires combining institutional rationalization with active civic participation and a robust public sphere (Goorha, 2010).

### **2.2.9. Global Modernization: Theory and Application**

Modernization theory, especially after World War II, served as a framework for understanding disparities between industrialized and developing countries and identifying potential pathways for traditional societies to reach Western levels of economic, political, and cultural modernity (Goorha, 2010). The theory emphasizes the interplay between institutional structures and social values, viewing modernization as encompassing not only economic growth but also technological innovation, social organization, and the development of political institutions.

### **2.2.10. Rostow's Five Stages Model: Extension and Critiques**

Rostow's model of economic development proposes five sequential stages: traditional society, preconditions for take-off, take-off, drive to maturity, and the age of high mass consumption (Rostow, 1990). The drive to maturity stage is characterized by the

development of advanced industries and the establishment of strong institutional infrastructures, while the age of high mass consumption involves high living standards, an expanded service sector, and broad economic prosperity. The model assumes that countries progress linearly through these stages, with technology, innovation, education, and institutional development serving as primary drivers.

Despite its influence, Rostow's model has faced several critiques. Scholars argue that it is Eurocentric and assumes a single developmental path, limiting its applicability to non-Western societies (Portes, 1976). It also tends to neglect cultural, historical, and political specificities and oversimplifies the impact of external factors, such as colonial legacies, international pressures, and global economic dynamics, which significantly shape development trajectories (Eisenstadt, 2000).

#### **2.2.11. Multiple Paths and Global Applications**

The modernization experiences of various countries illustrate that development trajectories are diverse. Japan, for example, experienced a unique path to modernization influenced by historical isolation and domestic policy choices, which fostered advanced industries and innovative technologies prior to full integration into the Western economic system (Eisenstadt, 2000). In contrast, the United States relied heavily on industrial innovation, institutional gradation, and market leadership, with private sector initiatives driving growth (Eisenstadt, 2000).

In the Arab world, countries such as Egypt, Jordan, and Lebanon followed distinct modernization paths shaped by local cultural, political, and institutional contexts (Fakhoury & Lavenex, 2015). Jordan's approach emphasized state institutions, education, and a rentier-based economy, yet faced challenges in achieving sustainable economic development. Lebanon's modernization was complicated by sectarian diversity and fragmented political structures, which hindered institutional cohesion and economic performance. Egypt pursued gradual industrial modernization, with a focus on education and urban development, but confronted limitations related to centralized governance and economic policy constraints.

Comparative analysis of these cases indicates that while modernization theory provides a useful analytical framework, it must be adapted to local, historical, and cultural conditions. Recognizing multiple pathways allows for a more realistic understanding of development, highlighting the interplay of internal and external factors, institutional arrangements, cultural values, and historical-political circumstances in shaping national modernization trajectories.

#### **2.2.12. High Modernity and Contemporary Critiques**

Contemporary scholarship emphasizes that modernization is no longer a linear or singular process, but rather a multidimensional and multi-path phenomenon. Ernest Gellner highlighted the central role of education and culture, arguing that standardized education and the promotion of a national language foster social cohesion and a collective identity, thereby enhancing a society's capacity to adapt to economic and political changes (Gellner, 1983). In Jordan, for example, national education programs aim to integrate refugees and reshape national identity, demonstrating how cultural and educational initiatives contribute to social stability and modernization<sup>7</sup>.

S. N. Eisenstadt stressed the multiplicity of modernities, noting that each society follows a unique path shaped by historical and cultural contexts (Eisenstadt, 2000). Lebanon, with its diverse sectarian composition, exemplifies the need for flexible, non-linear approaches to modernization, which cannot be directly modeled on Western experiences. Anthony Giddens introduced the concept of high modernity and social reflexivity, emphasizing that societies must continuously recognize the consequences of change and adapt institutions and values in response to emerging challenges (Giddens, 1990). This is evident in Jordan and Lebanon, where technological development and the digital economy necessitate constant reevaluation of development policies.

Niklas Luhmann conceptualized societies as specialized, adaptive, and self-evolving systems, in which institutions interact through complex networks, making modernization an ongoing, interactive process (Luhmann, 1995). Similarly, Ulrich Beck highlighted the

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<sup>7</sup> The Jordanian Ministry of Education has implemented programs targeting refugee integration and national cohesion, including curriculum adjustments and community-based education initiatives (Fakhoury & Lavenex, 2015).

“risk society,” emphasizing that environmental, social, and political crises are integral to contemporary modernization and require adaptive institutional mechanisms for social learning and resilience (Beck, 1992). Environmental policies and social risk management programs in Jordan and Lebanon reflect this reflexive approach to modernity, integrating risk awareness with practical governance<sup>8</sup>.

### **2.2.13 Regional Applications: Jordan and Lebanon**

Modernization in the region faces several intertwined challenges, including integrating refugees, promoting economic development, and maintaining political stability (Fakhoury & Lavenex, 2015). The civil sphere and independent media function as Habermasian deliberative arenas, facilitating citizen participation and reinforcing local democracy (Habermas, 1984). Developmental and educational programs represent practical attempts to integrate communicative action with policy implementation, ensuring that social and economic outcomes are sustainable and aligned with local needs.

These examples confirm that contemporary modernization is inherently complex and diverse. It requires consideration of cultural plurality, historical context, and institutional flexibility, combining Habermas’ communicative action, Luhmann’s adaptive systems, and Giddens’ reflexivity to create a comprehensive framework for understanding modern societies.

### **2.2.14 Conclusion: An Integrated Perspective on Modernization**

The preceding analysis demonstrates that modernization is a multidimensional phenomenon encompassing:

1. The cultural and value dimension: Weber emphasized rationalization, religious values, and cultural frameworks as foundational for social and economic transformation (Weber, 1978).

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<sup>8</sup> Examples include Jordan’s National Climate Change Policy (2013) and Lebanon’s Social Risk Management Programs, which aim to address environmental, social, and economic vulnerabilities through institutional coordination.

2. The structural and functional dimension: Parsons highlighted the importance of cohesive social systems and functional integration for maintaining stability during economic and political transformations (Parsons, 1951).

3. The communicative and critical dimension: Habermas stressed communicative action, rational dialogue, and the public sphere as mechanisms for legitimacy, accountability, and citizen participation in development (Habermas, 1984).

Integration of these dimensions enables a comprehensive understanding of modernization and social development, providing policymakers and researchers with a framework to envision multiple, context-sensitive pathways of modernization that respond to dynamic local and global conditions.

Contemporary applications demonstrate that successful modernization depends on the interaction of effective institutions, cultural values, education and innovation, and active civic participation. In Jordan and Lebanon, these elements manifest through the civil sphere, independent media, and targeted development programs, illustrating how communicative action can be integrated into policy to achieve sustainable social and economic outcomes (Fakhoury & Lavenex, 2015; Goorha, 2010).

### **2.2.15. Contemporary Challenges of Modernity**

Modern societies encounter complex and overlapping challenges that require adaptive and flexible approaches. Ulrich Beck's concept of the "risk society" highlights the prominence of environmental crises, such as climate change, as central concerns for modernity (Beck, 1992). Concurrently, economic crises and social inequalities demand reflexive policy responses that can address structural vulnerabilities. Additionally, patterns of migration and population displacement necessitate adjustments in institutional frameworks and cultural practices to accommodate demographic shifts<sup>9</sup>. These interconnected challenges illustrate that modernization theory has evolved from a fixed, linear framework into a dynamic analytical tool, capable of examining how internal and external forces interact to shape adaptive modernization pathways (Eisenstadt, 2000).

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<sup>9</sup> Adopted by the UN General Assembly by resolution 2198 (XXI) in July 1951, committing the parties to recognize the refugee definition and provide legal rights, assistance, and protection for them.

### **2.2.16 Theoretical Legacy and Analytical Integration**

The intellectual contributions of Weber, Parsons, and Habermas remain foundational for contemporary modernization studies. Weber's analysis of rationalization and cultural values, Parsons' structural-functional perspective on social cohesion and institutional differentiation, and Habermas' emphasis on communicative action collectively provide a robust framework for understanding the relationships among values, institutions, and dialogue. This integrated perspective demonstrates that sustainable development policies must simultaneously account for cultural specificity, institutional effectiveness, and civic engagement, thereby aligning economic, social, and political dimensions within a complex and changing global environment (Eisenstadt, 2000; Beck, 1992).

### **2.2.17. Global Economic Growth and Modernization from the 19th to the 20th Century**

Historical data on global economic growth highlights the transformative impact of industrialization, urbanization, and technological progress during the 19th and 20th centuries. In Europe and North America, industrialization drove rapid economic expansion, with GDP per capita increasing significantly over the century. For instance, the United Kingdom's GDP per person rose from approximately \$2,000 in 1820 to \$4,000 by 1870 (Maddison Project, 2020). This growth was closely linked to industrial innovations and urban development, in stark contrast to regions that remained predominantly agrarian.

Japan's modernization began later, following the Meiji Restoration of 1868, which initiated rapid industrial and institutional reforms<sup>10</sup>. By 1913, Japan's GDP per capita had risen to around \$1,300 from roughly \$600 at the start of the century, reflecting the successful adaptation of Western technological and industrial paradigms (Maddison Project, 2020). This economic transformation allowed Japan to emerge as a regional power and demonstrated the critical role of state-led modernization policies.

In contrast, many regions in Africa and parts of Asia experienced limited economic growth during this period, often due to the constraints of colonial systems that inhibited

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<sup>10</sup> The Meiji Restoration marked the end of feudal rule in Japan and the beginning of rapid modernization policies, including industrialization, centralized governance, and adoption of Western technologies.

industrial development. For example, India's GDP per capita remained around \$550 for most of the 19th century, illustrating the stagnating effect of colonial economic structures on local development<sup>11</sup> (World Bank, 2021).

These comparative trajectories underscore that modernization and economic growth are deeply contingent on historical, institutional, and technological contexts, highlighting the necessity of contextualized analyses in the study of development.

### **2.2.18 The Growth of the Economy in the 20th Century**

The economy boomed after World War II. The world economy grew significantly in the Middle of the 20th Century. Japan's economy grew quickly after World War II, while Western countries quickly recovered. Between 1950 and 1973, Japan's GDP grew at a fantastic rate of more than 9% yearly. GDP per person rose from roughly \$2,000 to more than \$10,000 (Maddison Project, 2020). During this time, Japan's economy grew quite quickly. It was achievable because modernization programs focused on increasing industrial output, innovation, and growth through exports.

The United States became an economic superpower during this Century. New technologies, more people relocating to cities, and government policies that were advantageous for business helped the economy grow. From 1945 to 1973, the U.S. GDP per person virtually doubled, moving from about \$15,000 to approximately \$30,000. This shows that the economy was doing well and many new ideas and products were being made (World Bank, 2021). The U.S.'s unique path to modernization, which was built on a commitment to capitalism, democracy, and technological advancement, contributed to tremendous growth.

In the 1980s, newly industrialized Asian economies, especially China and South Korea, saw substantial economic shifts. China's market-oriented reforms, which started in 1978, set off a fast process of modernization that would boost its GDP per capita from approximately \$300 in 1980 to more than \$10,000 by the early 21st Century (World Bank, 2021). This move indicated that different governments could use the same methods to

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<sup>11</sup> Colonial policies restricted industrialization and trade in India, reinforcing agrarian-based economies and limiting local economic autonomy.

modernize. For instance, China accepted market ideas while following its path of state-led modernization.

### **2.2.19 Changes in the world economy and a trend toward convergence**

Average GDP throughout the world: The average GDP per person worldwide went up a lot during these two hundred years. The Maddison Project states that the average GDP per person in the world was roughly \$1,100 in 1820. It had expanded to more than \$7,000 by 2000, meaning the world's wealth had grown six times (Maddison Project, 2020). The rise in global wealth indicates how modernity, such as industrialization, technical progress, and urbanization, has transformed things in different parts of the world and their economies.

Even though Western countries and Japan kept growing steadily at initially, it became more and more evident that their economies were converging in the late 20th Century when developing markets started to appear. The traditional modernization paradigm said that only Western-style industrialization could make people rich. This convergence goes against that idea. China and other countries showed that diverse ways of modernizing, like reforms driven by the government and different types of governance, can also significantly impact the economy and society (World Bank, 2021; Acemoglu et al., 2005).

In analyzing this, certain features of economic growth in the world could be seen such as the fact that the process of modernization was not universal and linear. Instead, it is informed by historical, cultural and institutional elements. Data from the Maddison Project and the World Bank depict a jigsaw of differing development paths, which disrupts simple models of global modernization. The results challenge traditional modernization theory and open the door to the new investigation of modernity in more nuanced and pluralistic ways.

## **2.3. Industrialization and Western Modernity**

Quick industrialization and technological advances contributed to the rapid growth of Europe and North America during the 19th Century. The classical modernization theory claimed that the rise of this development was explained by an assumed shift from

"traditional" to "modern" societies, usually viewing Western development as a benchmark (Shilliam, 2010; Goorha, 2010). Nevertheless, as a framework, it was received with sustained criticism and was, in its own right, very Eurocentric and overlooked the role of colonialism in constructing structural inequality (Islam, 2018; Unger, 2010).

Habermas (1990) problematizes this Eurocentric rationality by drawing a map of modern philosophical discourse and demonstrating how modern Western reason, molded in its Enlightened and post-Enlightenment traditions, did produce a paradigm of exclusion. His notion of communicative reason provides an alternative, grounding modernization in intersubjective discourse rather than domination.

### **2.3.1. Japan as an Alternative Modernity**

The modernization of Japan under the Meiji Restoration and post-World War II expansion symbolize what Eisenstadt (2010) understands as “multiple modernities”: different ways of becoming modern, based on indigenous cultural and institutional legacies. (Ishikawa 2002) strengthens this interpretation by demonstrating that Japan's modernization was politically top-down with transformative cultural ties. Traces of these reflections can be found in Habermas’s project of reconstructing historical philosophical turning points, where diversified rather than hegemonic paths of modernization seem still possible.

India and other colonies stagnate, not due to domestic lacks but due to external constraints. In many cases, colonial policies impeded industrialization and dispossessed regions of local economic capacity (Islam, 2018; Unger, 2010). This challenge to the modernization theory assertion that there are exclusively internal causes of underdevelopment originates in oppressor/ oppressed relations between global centers and peripheries. Benhabib (2004) further develops this criticism by estimating the ethical and political aspects of inclusion and exclusion. As sovereignty is challenged by globalization forces, membership and justice issues— once restricted behind national frontiers—are thrust to the forefront of global development dynamics.

Post–World War II America illuminated a modernization ideal based on urbanization, technological innovation, and state-private sector cooperation. Mergel (2012) maintains that modernization lost its normative assurance and instead became a heuristic for

interpreting social and economic changes. Habermas (1990) would see this as the embodiment of instrumental reason in which technological development takes precedence over democratic will-formation, a recurring concern in his discussions with Foucault and Derrida on the limits of philosophy and technocracy.

### **2.3.2. New industrial economies**

The fact that China and South Korea became economic powers in the late 20th Century contradicts the classical European modernization model. China's stunning success with state-commanded capitalism is consistent with Goorha's (2010) argument that there are many roads to modernization, among them authoritarian forms of capitalism. The developments of the recent era exemplify the extent to which modernization depends not only upon governance styles but also policy strategy and global economic ties. The notion of a single road is no longer sustainable.

In the 21st century, global interaction and technology have made economic convergence possible. Nevertheless, as Eisenstadt (2010) and Shilliam (2010) point out, this ostensible convergence occludes continuing geo-cultural asymmetries and uneven access to developmental opportunities. Benhabib's (2004) defense of porosity in frontiers and moral universalism in political membership could then be extended to economic belonging—emphasizing the importance of inclusive development strategies that consider historical injustice and structural marginalization.

Thus, modernization is not some pithy formula or Western model. Moreover, it is everything, as a historically complex and situated process, intersecting the political power, philosophical thought, cultural meaning, and ethical inclusion. Theories of multiple modernities (Eisenstadt, 2010), communicative rationality (Habermas, 1990), and cosmopolitan federalism (Benhabib, 2004) assist in rethinking modernization as a contested, plural, and morally infused process. In the future, we must sort through how Western, Eastern, democratic, and authoritarian modernization trajectories intersect within a changing global order and how those juxtapositions define the meanings and consequences of development in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

## **2.4. Economic Growth in Jordan and Lebanon**

The Jordanian economy grew quite quickly in the early 1990s. Between 1993 and 1995, real GDP at constant basic prices grew by more than 5.2% on average. During this time, many jobs were created, and by the end of 1993, the unemployment rate had dropped below 13%. However, in the second half of the 1990s, economic development started to slow down steadily. There was only a short recovery in 2000 and the first three quarters of 2001. Since then, there have been indicators of a worldwide coordinated recession. The U.S. economy was slowing down, and the global IT downturn became clear in the second half of 2000.

The terrorist events on September 11 made things worse, which led to more deflationary pressures around the world. Jordan's economy almost stopped growing in the fourth quarter of 2001, which was at this time. The available estimates (mostly GDP statistics) show that growth has dramatically slowed down. The Department of Statistics' first estimates shows that real economic growth has slowed significantly when prices are held constant.

Even with these problems, Jordan's economy has bounced back strongly after the Iraq war in 2003, which generated many problems. In 2003, real GDP expanded by 2.8%. It is expected to grow by 4.6% in 2004 and 5.2% in 2005, mainly because the industrial sector is growing. The U.S.-Jordan Free Trade Area agreement, which the U.S. Senate approved in September 2001, has helped this recovery in several ways.

### **Jordan Economic Data Estimates for 2003:**

- GDP (nominal): \$9.95 billion • Annual growth rate: 3.3% in 2003 and 7.2% in the first half of 2004
- GDP per person: \$1,817
- Minerals: Potash and phosphate
- Agriculture: The area is mainly used for growing fruits, vegetables, wheat, olive oil, barley, and olives. Only 5% of the land is now being farmed.
- Industry (24.8% of GDP): This includes mining phosphates, making things, generating energy, water, cement, oil, and building things.

**Business (2003):**

- Exports: \$2.36 billion, which includes phosphates, potash, textiles, clothes, fertilizers, medicines, and food.
- Major markets include the U.S., Iraq, India, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Israel.
- Re-exports: \$0.72 billion. Imports: \$5.74 billion, which includes crude oil and its derivatives, automobiles, machinery, equipment, grains, and fabrics (Abdul-Khalek, 2005). Table 1 shows the Jordan Data Profile.

**Table 1 Jordan Data Profile**

| Year                                                                       | 1999          | 2002          | 2003         |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|
| Population (Total)                                                         | 4.7 million   | 5.2 million   | 5.3 million  |
| Population Growth (Annual %)                                               | 3.1           | 2.7           | 2.6          |
| Labor Force                                                                | 1.15 million  | 1.18 million  | 1.21 million |
| Surface Area (Sq. km)                                                      | 89,210.00     |               |              |
| GNI (current US\$)                                                         | 7.7 billion   | 9.1 billion   | 9.8 billion  |
| GNI per capita                                                             | 1620          | 1760          | 1850         |
| GDP (current US\$)                                                         | 8.1 billion   | 9.4 billion   | 9.9 billion  |
| GDP Growth (annual %)                                                      | 3.1           | 5             | 3.2          |
| GDP implicit price deflator (annual % growth)                              | -0.2          | 1.2           | 1.9          |
| Value added in agriculture (% of GDP)                                      | 2.4           | 2.2           | 2.2          |
| Value added in industry (% of GDP)                                         | 25.8          | 25.9          | 26           |
| Value added in services (% of GDP)                                         | 71.9          | 71.9          | 71.8         |
| Exports of goods and services (% of GDP)                                   | 43.4          | 45.6          | 44.5         |
| Imports of goods and services (% of GDP)                                   | 61.3          | 65.9          | 70.1         |
| Gross capital formation (% of GDP)                                         | 21.6          | 22.8          | 22.7         |
| Trade in goods as a share of GDP (%)                                       | 68.2          | 82.8          | NA           |
| Foreign direct investment, net inflows in reporting country (current US\$) | 158.0 million | 55.9 million  | NA           |
| Present value of debt (current US\$)                                       |               | 7.4 billion   |              |
| Total debt service (% of exports of goods and services)                    | 10            | 8.7           | NA           |
| Short-term debt outstanding (current US\$)                                 | 870.9 million | 535.9 million | NA           |

Source: Abdul-Khalek (2005)

In Lebanon, the civil war from 1975 to 1991 harmed the country's economy. It cut national output in half and disrupted Lebanon's status as a Middle Eastern trade and financial center. After the war, peace allowed the central government to regain control of Beirut, collect taxes again, and access important ports and facilities. A robust banking sector and strong small and medium-sized businesses helped the economy get back on track. Remittances, financial services, exports, and international aid were some of the most important sources of foreign cash. The 1993 Horizon 2000 reconstruction plan resulted in much growth. Real GDP reached its highest levels in 1994 (8%) and 1995 (7%), but it fluctuated in the following years, dropping to negative growth in 1999 and then slowly rising again by 2003.

Inflation fell drastically in the 1990s, going from more than 100% to almost nothing. The government has repaired much of the infrastructure, but it still has problems, like a large national debt because of rebuilding loans, mostly from domestic banks. To deal with the debt, the government cut spending and tried to privatize state-owned businesses and get international financial help, most notably at the Paris II conference in 2002. Even if privatization has not progressed much, international support has helped the government's finances stabilize.

Since 1992, the government has been working to move the economy from a war economy to a stable post-war one. This has included focusing on keeping inflation low, controlling the budget deficit, and ensuring the economy stays stable. There were also efforts to make it easier for private investment to happen, create jobs, and raise productivity and competitiveness. Reconstruction and rehabilitation projects were meant to bring Lebanon back into the world economy and raise the standard of living (Abdul-Khalek, 2005). Table 2 shows the Lebanon Data Profile.

***Table 2 Lebanon Data Profile***

| Indicator                    | 1999           | 2002           | 2003           |
|------------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Population (total)           | 4.3 million    | 4.4 million    | 4.5 million    |
| Population growth (annual %) | 1.4%           | 1.3%           | 1.3%           |
| Labor force                  | 1.5 million    | 1.52 million   | 1.54 million   |
| Surface area (sq. km)        | 10,400         | -              | -              |
| GNI (current US\$)           | \$16.7 billion | \$17.3 billion | \$18.2 billion |
| GNI per capita               | \$3,910        | \$3,900        | \$4,040        |

| Indicator                                               | 1999           | 2002            | 2003           |
|---------------------------------------------------------|----------------|-----------------|----------------|
| GDP (current US\$)                                      | \$16.5 billion | \$18.3 billion  | \$19.0 billion |
| GDP growth (annual %)                                   | 1.0%           | 2.2%            | 2.7%           |
| GDP implicit price deflator (annual % growth)           | 0.2%           | 1.8%            | 1.3%           |
| Value added in agriculture (% of GDP)                   | 11.9%          | 11.7%           | 12.2%          |
| Value added in industry (% of GDP)                      | 22.0%          | 21.0%           | 20.0%          |
| Value added in services (% of GDP)                      | 66.1%          | 67.3%           | 67.7%          |
| Exports of goods and services (% of GDP)                | 11.6%          | 13.1%           | 13.4%          |
| Imports of goods and services (% of GDP)                | 37.5%          | 38.7%           | 39.0%          |
| Gross capital formation (% of GDP)                      | 21.6%          | 17.0%           | 16.7%          |
| Trade in goods as a share of GDP (%)                    | 41.6%          | 43.3%           | NA             |
| Foreign direct investment (net inflows, US\$)           | \$250 million  | \$257.3 million | NA             |
| Present value of debt (current US\$)                    | NA             | \$18.1 billion  | NA             |
| Total debt service (% of exports of goods and services) | 27.4%          | 51.0%           | NA             |
| Short-term debt outstanding (current US\$)              | \$2.2 billion  | \$2.5 billion   | NA             |

Source: Abdul-Khalek (2005)

The following discussion is sustained with the macroeconomic data alongside the theoretical and empirical lessons gleaned from the PREVIOUS studies.

#### **2.4.1. Jordan: Resilience and Volatility in a Reforming Economy**

The economic history of Jordan following the Gulf War of the early 1990s until the 2003 Iraq war can be considered as a cycle: early post-Gulf War recovery, later stagnation, and partial recovery after the 2003 Iraq war. During the early 1990s, real GNP growth averaged more than 5 percent, partly stimulated by public sector investment, employment, and a trade policy that looked outwards. In the late 90s and early 2000s, there was a deceleration due to external shocks (eg, global IT bust and 9/11) and structural infirmities.

Abdul-Khalek (2005) follows this path, showing through growth accounting that capital and labor are two primary growth motivators in Jordan. The article emphasizes the role of factor productivity during the reform years. It verifies that although the industrial sector has been the primary source of post-2003 growth, external imbalances, debt service, and low agricultural land productivity still represent structural limitations.

At the same time, Khader & Badran (2014), who estimated Jordan's aggregate production function, show that Jordan, while operating with constant returns to scale during this era, was in effect weighed down by its dependence on foreign trade and aid so that the country could not achieve its endogenous growth potential.

Moreover, O'Brien & Santos (2019) detail the longer-run limitations of Jordan's growth dynamics, highlighting regional setbacks, including the Arab Spring and Syrian refugee surge. Though these events took place beyond the immediate period under review, the underlying vulnerabilities they allude to - external borrowing, fiscal constraints, and refugee pressures - originate in this earlier time.

Finally, Jordan's U.S. Free Trade Agreement of 2001 and the resulting export surge, particularly textiles and pharmaceuticals, underscore the promise of global market integration. However, as Rabadi (2019) and Almasri (2021) demonstrate, while agreements under the Barcelona Process and through EU partnerships provided avenues to globalize, their gains were uneven. They could be "carved out" depending on sectoral preparedness and domestic reforms.

#### **2.4.2. Lebanon: Reconstruction after the War and the Debt Trap of the Structural Type.**

The story of Lebanon's economic trajectory starting in the 1990s was mainly about the requirements of moving from a war economy to a stable economy based on markets. In the immediate postwar period, the country enjoyed strong economic growth, programmed reconstruction with the Horizon 2000, remittances, and developing a strong banking sector. However, in 1996, growth became erratic, and in 1999 it went negative. Only in the early 2000s was there a slight rebound.

As Abdul-Khalek (2005) notes, "Lebanon's post-war economic recovery was constrained by its debt-financed construction" reconstruction model. Even though GDP per head exceeded \$4,000 by 2003, structural debt indicators--debt service accounting for 51% or more of exports--betrayed long-term fragility. A complementary insight results similarly from Dagher & Nehme (2023), the latter find that years of fiscal mismanagement,

dependence on local banking finance, and political deadlock culminated on the 2019 collapse of the country's finances.

In addition, the Lebanese 'economic landscape'—heavily dominated by services (which accounted for around 67.7% of its GDP by 2003), poor export potential, and heavy import reliance—reinforces Ben Hassen's (2024) observation on Lebanon's thwarted transition toward a knowledge economy. Human capital remained a critical asset that took the form of strong education and an entrepreneurial class; yet, governance problems, political instability, and brain drain prevented long-term growth potential.

Unger (2010) and Islam (2018) compared the comparisons of Unger (2010) and Islam (2018), offering a more general theoretical framework. Both works argue that the reconstruction of Lebanon was an instance of a process of modernization rooted in a condition of modernity heavily inflected by post-colonial and neoliberal paradigms. The models that were happening were here, and things were focused on infrastructure, macroeconomic stability, not as much on equitable development and long-term productive capabilities.

Fakoussa & Kabis-Kechrid (2020) also emphasize the role of external actors (like the EU and the Gulf states) as Lebanon depended heavily on them for economic survival, a trend they noted elsewhere in the region. Although international conferences like Paris II (2002) provided aid, reforms were piecemeal, and privatization efforts largely floundered.

***Table 3 Comparative Reflection: Jordan and Lebanon***

| Indicator                         | Jordan (2003) | Lebanon (2003) |
|-----------------------------------|---------------|----------------|
| GDP Growth                        | 3.2%          | 2.7%           |
| GDP per Capita                    | \$1,817       | \$4,040        |
| Services (% of GDP)               | 71.8%         | 67.7%          |
| Exports (% of GDP)                | 44.5%         | 13.4%          |
| Imports (% of GDP)                | 70.1%         | 39.0%          |
| Total Debt Service (% of Exports) | 8.7%          | 51.0%          |

This table reinforces key differences. Jordan retained a more export-oriented, industrializing model, with external trade liberalization and less costly debt servicing.

Lebanon, on the other hand, had a service-biased economy and weak export expansion, with high and unsustainable levels of foreign borrowing – a situation consistent with Dessus & Ghaleb (2006) who contend that Lebanon’s monopolistic and anti-competitive frameworks thwarted real investment.

Therefore, the growth experiences of both Jordan and Lebanon, in view of the preserved studies, reflect the multidimensionality of the modernization experience in MENA. Using the Jordanian case, Jordan demonstrates how externally promoted liberalization and conservative reform can produce small, but unpredictable, advances. The Lebanese case illustrates the dangers of post-war reconstruction strategies predicated on consumption, financialization, and debt rather than long-term productive investment.

Eisenstadt (2010) suggests that these are two types of modernity that represent different socio-political formations, institutional capabilities, and external dependences. Political governance, institutional reform demands, and the pathways to modernization – in both states – are an area for future research. A further consideration is the influence of external agents, whether they act as partners or pressures (Janmyr, 2017; Fakhoury & Stel, 2023), in the definition of sustainable economic practices for a post-2020 future.

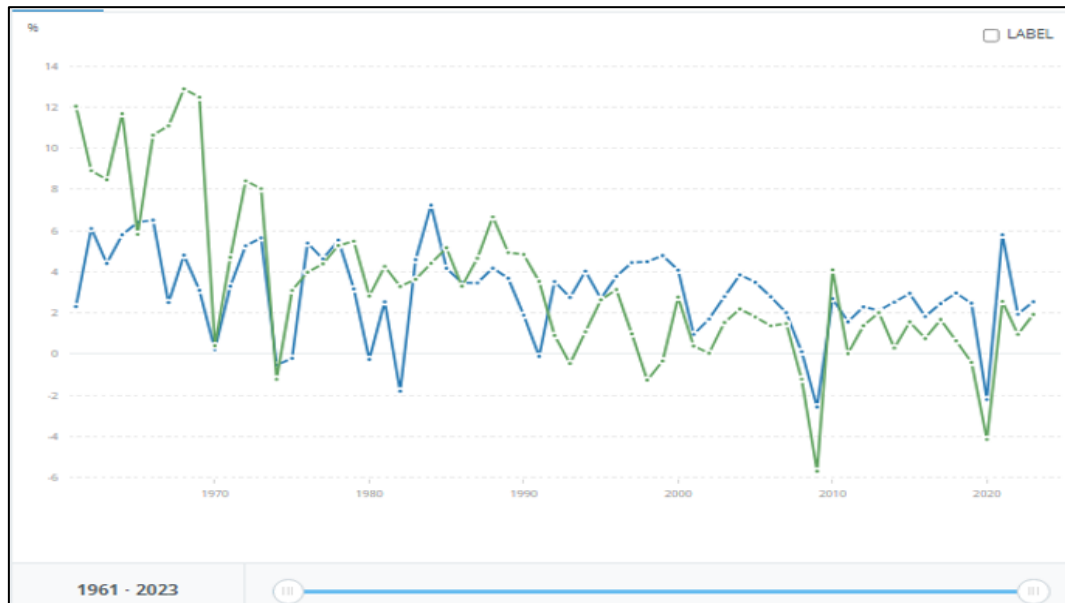
## **2.5. Correlation between modernization and economic growth**

The historical economic data indicate how modernization and growth are linked, and the following points demonstrate the primary data sources:

- World Bank Historical GDP Data: This source includes long-term data on GDP growth, focusing on developments in the global economy and the consequences of modernization since the 1960s (World Bank, 2021).
- The Maddison Project Database provides much data on GDP per capita from the early 1800s to the present. Using this, the economies change over time and in different places and phases of modernization (Maddison Project, 2020).

Figure 2 indicates how modernization processes were connected to economic results, especially in places open to new technology and industry. They also indicate that modernization may happen in many different ways and that the process and effects of modernization and economic growth can be significantly different in different areas and

times. Figure 2 shows a World Bank data visualization that shows how the GDP growth rates of the U.S. and Japan have changed from 1961 to 2023. The graph depicts how the two countries' economies changed over time and how they were alike and different. It depicts significant changes and events in both economies. Figure 2 shows the yearly growth rates of GDP for the U.S. and Japan from 1961 to 2023.



*Figure 2 Annual GDP growth rates of the United States and Japan from 1961 to 2023.*

*Source:*

<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.KD.ZG?locations=US&view=chart>

Thus, it is of the essence to confront long-run GDP estimates from the World Bank (2021) and the Maddison Project (2020) alongside the increasingly developing theoretical interpretations provided by the classical and critical literature. This dual approach undermines teleological and homogeneous understandings of modernization by showing how particular forms of structural change have led to different forms of development at specific time points and locations on the globe.

### **2.5.1. Empirical Regularities: Modernization and Economic Performance**

Cross-sectional data on GDP reveal that past experience of modernization does not lead to one pattern of GDP development. Moreover, examples differ in the United States and Japan. This represented a time of long-term economic expansion for the U.S., the likes of which the nation had not seen since the 1960s and 1970s: 1961 to 2023 were the years of

sustained economic expansion rooted in industrialization, suburbanization, and transition to a service economy. The journey below parallels the 'classical' Western model of modernization, which is presented as a teleological transition away from traditional society and toward a capitalist, democratic, and scientifically advanced modernity (Shilliam, 2010; Goorha, 2010).

Japan represents a non-Western route to modernity. Its post-WW2 economic miracle, based on central planning, technological innovation, and thorough cultural embeddness, fits Eisenstadt's (2010) imagery of 'multiple modernities'. Japan achieved modernisation – but not by copying the Western model, instead by focusing on endogenous capabilities and strategic institutional design.

This diverged sharply in the 1990s -- U.S. growth moved higher and Japan stagnated for an extended period. Modernization, as Mergel (2012) contends, is not an accomplished fact but rather an ongoing historical process driven by demographic transition, institutional stiffness, and technological plateau. Therefore, modernization's fruits are not foreordained, and its road can end, reverse, or stall.

### **2.5.2. Theoretical Background: Growth and Modernization Model**

The model of modernization is based on basic structural elements such as:

- Industrialization and urbanization
- Rising education and human capital
- Infrastructure development
- Institutional rationalization (bureaucracies, markets, legal systems)

There is a strong positive correlation between these and GDP growth, as shown in global data. However, as Goorha (2010) so poignantly emphasizes understanding modernization through a stochastic rather than deterministic perspective—economic and institutional transformations are the outcomes of contingent interplays between structure and agency, not linear stages of development of mindless and inevitable logic.

The variation in development paths—the Japanese state-driven, American market-driven—also buttresses this suggestion. Both experienced growth, but with very different political economies and societal vulnerabilities. Islam (2018) further complicates modernity by emphasizing how modernization, particularly when advanced along liberal lines, tends to draw an apocalyptic vicious cycle of environmental ruin, social injustice, and economic dependence, in a reverse picture of the natural progression to unchecked development. The question is not simply whether there is growth, but in whose interest and at what price.

### **2.5.3. Unequal Modernization: Geographical Variation and Historical Legacy**

There is a big difference in the effects of modernization in the world today. Historical data reveals:

- Western Europe and North America were lucky to have industrialized and colonial accumulation early, so they enjoyed a greater degree of relative institutional stability.
- Japan, and to some extent South Korea and China, in East Asia, is indicative of the 'successful' late modernizing polity that had managed the art of selective appropriation -reinventing the wheel.
- Africa, South Asia and certain regions in Middle East are still overdue or distorted in their modernization paths under these influences, distortions that are based on lingering colonialism, institutional weakness, and global asymmetries (Unger, 2010; Salameh, 2019).

These patterns reflect Habermas (1990) and Benhabib's (2004) criticisms. Habermas provides a philosophical elucidation of modernity, the idea that Western rationalism, without any substantial or other philosophical foundation provision, will deplete itself into instrumentalist domination rather than rational emancipation. His theory of communicative rationality, then, presents an alternative path—based on the reason in discourse and democratic reception—whose end is a modernization that does not rely exclusively on material criteria.

Also, Benhabib (2004) questions how modernization and global integration tend to re-create exclusion, especially when states define political membership restrictively and

neglect the rights of migrants, refugees, and the economically marginal people. Her plea for porous borders and universal morality provides a utopian vision that allows us to question whose development is being served in the global modernization project.

The evidence undermines the notion of modernization as a single, linear propeller of economic expansion. Instead, modernization is shown to be multi-dimensional, historically situated, and morally disputed. Although modernization typically advances infrastructure, techno-science, and institutional rationality, its results are deeply uneven and are driven by political decisions, cultural contexts, and global power dynamics. Theoretical Reflexes The contributions of Eisenstadt (multiple modernities), Habermas (communicative reason), and Benhabib (cosmopolitan federalism and moral boundaries) serve to emphasize that modernization is a moral and philosophical project, as much as it is an economic one. 50, No. 3, Fall 2008) And that means historians and economists alike need to reimagine development beyond GDP growth—in the direction of a more open, reflexive, and sustainable modernity for the 21st Century.

### **Important Notes**

1. After World War II, Japan's economy grew quickly (1960s–1980s): The green line indicates Japan's GDP growth rate in the 1960s and 1970s. It was far higher than the blue line, which shows the United States' GDP growth rate. It was more than 10% in some years. Japan's economic miracle was when the country quickly grew more industrialized, made technological advancements, and saw exports fuel economic growth. In the early 1970s, growth slowed down a lot, which happened simultaneously with the global oil crisis, which damaged Japan's economy because it relied on resources. On the other hand, Japan quickly got back on its feet and grew quickly until the 1980s.
2. Stabilization and Slowdown (1990s): The Japanese economy slowed down a lot in the early 1990s, which was when the bubble in Japanese asset prices burst. Japan's GDP growth stopped during this time, which is called the "Lost Decade," due to deflation and long-term economic challenges. The graph illustrates that Japan's growth rate stuck at zero or dipped below zero in the 1990s and early 2000s. This is a sign of this

stagnation. The U.S., on the other hand, grew steadily throughout the same period, primarily because of technological improvements, especially in the IT field.

3. The Global Financial Crisis (2008): The global financial crisis caused the GDP growth rate in both the U.S. and Japan to drop dramatically between 2008 and 2009. The U.S. had a significant dip, going into negative growth, and Japan also saw a significant decline. This shows how the two economies are connected and how the financial crisis affects the world.
4. Recovery after the crisis and current trends: After the financial crisis, both economies steadily grew better, although their growth rates stayed lower than they were before the crisis, notably in Japan. Japan's economy has not been able to grow swiftly since its population is getting older, and there are problems with how things are set up. Because of this, Japan's average growth rate has been lower than the U.S.'s in the past few years. The U.S. economy has developed steadily but slowly over the past ten years. Policy changes and the global economy's health have caused occasional ups and downs.
5. COVID-19 Pandemic (2020): The COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 led both countries' GDP growth to plummet again. This was because lockdowns and trade problems worldwide had a significant impact on the economy. Both Japan and the U.S. had negative growth, but the U.S. soon recovered in 2021 thanks to substantial fiscal and monetary stimulus. Japan's recovery was not as strong, meaning that consumer spending and economic activity are taking longer to build up than in the U.S. The following points demonstrate some facts about both countries:
  - Japan's economy is more unstable: Japan's GDP growth has higher and lower points that are easier to detect, especially during the economic boom after World War II and the stagnation that followed in the 1990s. Japan's economy needs exports to grow; therefore, it is more affected by changes in the global market.
  - Steady Growth in the U.S.: The U.S. economy is growing more steadily, with fewer major highs and lows. The American economy is relatively stable since it is big, diverse, and focused on domestic consumption.
  - Different Long-Term Trends: The U.S. has maintained a slow but steady rise, while Japan's growth rate has generally declined since the 1990s. This shows how different the two countries are regarding their people and how they are set up. Japan has an

older population and spends less at home, while the U.S. has a younger population and spends more on goods and services.

## 2.6. The connection between modernization and the growth of Jordan and Lebanon's economies

Figure (3) demonstrates how Jordan's and Lebanon's GDP have evolved over time, which shows how modernization and economic growth are linked.

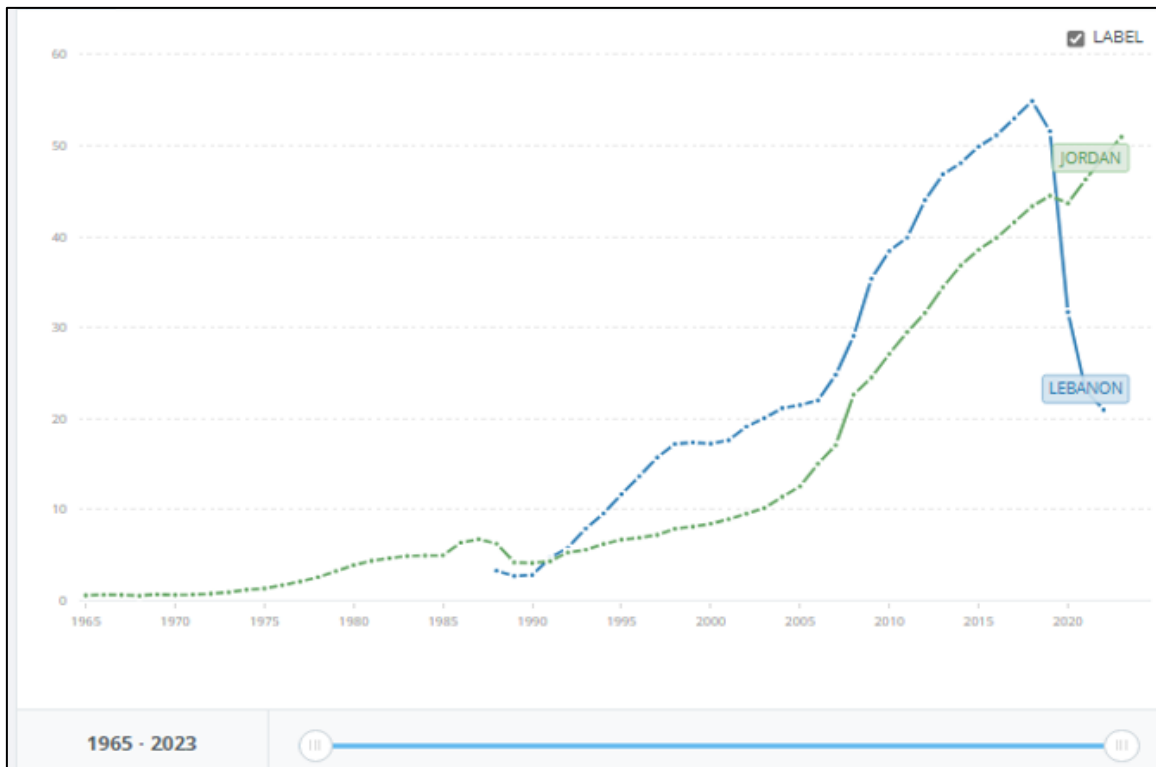


Figure 3 GDP (current US\$) - Lebanon, Jordan: source: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.CD?locations=LB-JO>

### The connection between modernization and the growth of Jordan's economy

Jordan's investments in people, international aid, and a more diverse economy have all helped it become more modern:

- Human Resources: Jordan believes that its skilled workers are one of its most valuable assets. Several Gulf countries want to hire Jordanian workers because they have received much money for school and technical training, which has led to remittances that benefit the GDP through direct inflows and their multiplier effects (Khader & Badran, 2015).

- **Technology and infrastructure:** The purpose of modernization has been to increase output in both agriculture and industry. Jordan also wants to be the region's hub for maintenance and technical work because of its strategic location (Khader & Badran, 2015).
- **Economic Diversification:** Jordan has attempted to diversify its economy by focusing on banking and industrial growth. However, there is still a long way to go before it can be modernized because it depends on money from other countries and the area is stable (Khader & Badran, 2015).

### **2.6.1. Connection between Modernization and Lebanese Economy Growth**

Lebanon has trouble modernizing because the politics are unstable and the economy is weak:

- **Tourism and remittances:** Lebanon's economy mainly depends on tourism and remittances, like Jordan's. However, these factors change constantly and are not enough to keep the economy thriving in the long run. For example, relying on tourism income to boost GDP growth is risky, as past economic shocks have proven (World Bank, 2023).
- **Building infrastructure:** Lebanon has not done a good job of keeping its infrastructure up to date. The ongoing economic problems have hurt public and private investments, which have stopped long-term modernizing efforts (World Bank, 2023).
- **Problems with the economy:** Persistent inflation, currency devaluation, and dependence on foreign financial flows prove that modernization efforts are not working as they should because of fundamental difficulties. Inflation hit 231.3% in 2023, which substantially affected the economy's ability to stay stable and attract investment (World Bank, 2023). Table 3 shows how Jordan and Lebanon are different from each other.

**Table 4 Comparative Insights**

| Factor              | Jordan                                                                  | Lebanon                                                     |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| Economic Stability  | Relative stability with foreign aid dependency (Khader & Badran, 2015). | Severe economic crises; high inflation (World Bank, 2023).  |
| Human Capital       | Strong focus on education and training (Khader & Badran, 2015).         | Brain drain due to economic instability (World Bank, 2023). |
| Role of Remittances | Significant and stable (Khader & Badran, 2015).                         | Essential but volatile (World Bank, 2023).                  |
| Infrastructure      | Moderate progress (Khader & Badran, 2015).                              | Limited due to funding issues (World Bank, 2023).           |
| Tourism             | Growing but not a primary driver (Khader & Badran, 2015).               | Critical but fragile (World Bank, 2023).                    |

Therefore, modernization in Jordan and Lebanon has helped the economy thrive, but not always in the same way. Jordan's relative stability and focus on human capital give it a good start for long-term prosperity, but its reliance on outside help is still a problem (Khader & Badran, 2015). On the other hand, Lebanon's efforts to modernize are being held back by ongoing economic and political problems, which show how important it is to make fundamental changes to ensure long-term growth (World Bank, 2023).

As a researcher examining the comparative relationship between modernization and economic growth, the long-term economic trajectories of Japan and the United States provide a global backdrop for evaluating the more regionally constrained cases of Jordan and Lebanon. Drawing on previous studies and data visualizations, we can trace modernization's opportunities and structural limits across different national contexts.

## **2.7. Two Models of Modernization and Economic Performance: Japan Vs U.S.**

Japan's rapid growth during the 1960s–1980s—the so-called “economic miracle”—reflects a classic case of state-led modernization, as noted in Eisenstadt's (2010) framework of multiple modernity. Japan industrialized, invested in technology, and implemented targeted export-driven policies. This experience contradicts classical modernization theories (e.g., Goorha, 2010) that assumed modernization must follow a Western liberal capitalist model. Japan followed a hybrid path, blending state planning with market mechanisms.

Data in Figure 2 supports that Japan's GDP growth exceeded 10% annually in some years during the 1960s, far outpacing the U.S. This aligns with Ishikawa (2002), who emphasized how Japan's modernization was not synonymous with Westernization—it was filtered through national priorities and cultural frameworks.

### **2.7.1. The “Lost Decade” and Structural Stagnation**

Japan's decline in the 1990s following the burst of its asset bubble illustrates the vulnerability of modernization when key structural problems go unresolved—deflation, demographic aging, and institutional inertia. Mergel (2012) observed that modernization became less a linear path and more a contested, unstable process—a reality Japan embodies post-1990. In contrast, the U.S. maintained moderate and steady growth through innovation (especially in IT), illustrating its adaptive economic structure. This divergence shows how modernization does not guarantee sustained growth, especially in the absence of structural flexibility and demographic vitality.

### **2.7.2. Modernization and Economic Growth in Jordan and Lebanon**

#### **Jordan: Steady but Fragile Gains through Human Capital and Diversification**

Jordan's growth has been modest but relatively stable, benefiting from intentional modernization efforts in education, infrastructure, and economic diversification. As shown in the World Bank data and Khader & Badran (2015), Jordan's focus on human capital investment has created a skilled labor force attractive to Gulf economies, generating stable remittance flows and enhancing GDP through multiplier effects.

Jordan's attempt to modernize technologically and industrially—including its aspirations to become a regional maintenance and technical hub—demonstrates selective modernization, aligned with its comparative advantages and geopolitical constraints. However, as Abdul-Khalek (2005) and Idris (2016) noted, Jordan remains vulnerable due to foreign aid dependency, limited natural resources, and its exposure to regional shocks (e.g., Iraq War, Syrian refugee crisis). This underscores Goorha's (2010) critique: modernization outcomes are shaped by external constraints and internal absorptive capacities.

### ***Lebanon: Structural Fragility despite Early Potential***

In contrast, Lebanon's modernization trajectory has been inconsistent and crisis-prone. While the post-civil war Horizon 2000 plan briefly spurred economic recovery, long-term structural issues—public debt, poor infrastructure, weak institutions—have impeded sustained growth. As highlighted in World Bank (2023) reports and supported by Dagher & Nehme (2023), Lebanon's overreliance on volatile remittances and tourism undermines economic resilience.

Furthermore, infrastructure collapse and the 231.3% inflation rate in 2023 reflect systemic governance failure, echoing Unger's (2010) critique of modernization when it is externally imposed or domestically mismanaged. Lebanon's experience supports Islam's (2018) post-development view that modernization without institutional reform and social equity can exacerbate dependency and instability.

***Table 5 Comparative Summary: Modernization Outcomes Depend on Contextual Factors***

| Country              | Modernization Path                                  | Growth Outcome                               | Key Enablers or Barriers                              |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Japan</b>         | State-led, export-driven, technology-focused        | Rapid growth post-WWII, stagnation post-1990 | Industrial policy, aging population, deflation        |
| <b>United States</b> | Innovation-led, market-oriented, consumption-driven | Steady long-term growth                      | Diverse economy, demographic resilience               |
| <b>Jordan</b>        | Human-capital focused, selective diversification    | Modest, stable growth                        | Remittances, foreign aid, and limited resources       |
| <b>Lebanon</b>       | Post-war reconstruction, services-based             | Fragile and volatile                         | Debt crisis, weak infrastructure, governance failures |

In 2020, after the COVID-19 pandemic, both Japan and the U.S. experienced a sharp GDP drop 2020 due to the pandemic. However, the U.S. recovery was swifter due to aggressive fiscal and monetary policies, while Japan's rebound was slower—affected by sluggish domestic consumption and demographic constraints. This supports the view that economic resilience is not merely about modernization level but also about institutional agility, as emphasized by Bassanini et al. (2001).

Jordan and Lebanon were also hit hard, with Lebanon particularly suffering due to its lack of fiscal buffers and institutional credibility. This highlights the limits of modernization in crisis contexts without strong social contracts and policy responsiveness.

Indeed, modernization is undeniably linked to economic growth—but not unconditionally. The comparative cases of Japan, the U.S., Jordan, and Lebanon show that:

- Modernization pathways vary by cultural, institutional, and geopolitical context (Eisenstadt, 2010).
- Growth can be rapid but unsustainable (Japan), or steady and adaptive (U.S.).
- Small economies like Jordan and Lebanon can benefit from modernization, but only if supported by governance reform, infrastructural investment, and institutional stability (Khader & Badran, 2015; World Bank, 2023).
- For modernization to truly drive sustainable development, it must go beyond economic indicators—it must be inclusive, structurally embedded, and resilient to both global and domestic shocks.

## **2.8. Modernization theory from the 19th Century to now, a focus on Non-EU countries**

Modernization theory became an official thesis subject in the Middle of the 20th Century. However, its roots go back to the 19th Century, when Europe and North America were rapidly industrializing and people were questioning what social and economic progress really meant. Scholars thought that certain social and political circumstances, like individualism, secularism, and political liberties, were important for modernization after seeing Europe's industrial revolution. These observations helped later researchers of modernization build their theories. They said that these Western values may be used as a model for progress around the world.

Japan is an excellent example of modernization that happened outside of Europe. Japan tried to quickly modernize its economy and military during the Meiji Restoration in the late 1800s to fight off Western colonial demands. This was one of the first times that modernity happened outside of Europe. Japan's approach was very selective; it used Western technology and ways of organizing things while keeping its traditional values and social systems. For instance, Japan welcomed industrialization, but it did so under a centralized government that tightly controlled economic and social changes. Japan has a unique political culture and social structure (Inkeles, 1969).

Japan's modernization process kept changing throughout the 20th Century, leading to an economic boom after World War II. Japan became a global economic superpower by focusing on education, new technologies, and strict work ethics. However, this path did not precisely follow classical modernization theorists' steps. The state-led industrial policy and the dedication to keeping social cohesiveness were two things that significantly impacted Japan's modernization, which classical modernization theory did not focus on at first (Quah, 1994).

In contrast, the United States is a different kind of modernization that is marked by quick industrialization, urbanization, and new technologies. The United States was never colonized in the same way Japan was, thus free to create its own institutions and economic systems. A spirit of autonomy and creativity, besides an openness to immigration that brought in many new people, played a significant role in its modernization. However, the U.S. experience also shows some of the problems that come with modernization, like economic inequality and environmental damage. This shows that the classical modernization theory's idea that industrialization always leads to social harmony is untrue (Romer, 1986).

As modernization theory changed in the late 20th Century, it started to include lessons learned from these different national experiences. It became clear that modernization is not a straight line and does not work the same in every society. Globalization, which has made economies more interdependent and cultures more open to each other, has made the classic idea of modernization even more problematic. Barro and Sala-i-Martin (1992) came up with economic convergence ideas that said that even while countries may start out on various pathways to modernization, they might all end up with similar levels of economic success if the necessary conditions are met. Nevertheless, others were skeptical of convergence theory because it became evident that economic growth does not necessarily lead to political or social modernization.

The rise of China and other rising economies have made modernization theory even less helpful in the 21st Century. China's path to modernization goes against a lot of what classical theory says because it mixes fast economic growth with few political liberties. This makes us wonder if modernization always leads to Western-style democracy or if

other forms of government can get the same economic results. China's state-led development model stresses stability, control, and gradual reform. This differs from the Western view that modernization needs liberal democracy and free-market capitalism (Huntington, 1991).

Because of these problems, current scholars have tried to change modernization theory so that it may work with a variety of political and economic systems. For example, Przeworski and Limongi's (1997) study shows that economic growth improves conditions for democracy but does not ensure it. This point of view is similar to endogenous growth theory, which says that local institutions, social capital, and policy decisions are all important factors in defining a country's development path. These kinds of views say that modernization does not just happen on its own; it needs people to make decisions and adapt to their own situations.

In addition, modernization theory has increasingly emphasized how social capital and civic engagement can help with long-term growth. Robert Putnam's work on social capital from 2001 says that communities and governments need networks of trust and cooperation to be strong. This idea significantly affects modernization since it shows that growing the economy is not enough to make real social improvement. Instead, modernization needs a complete approach that looks at the political, economic, and social sides of things.

So, modernization theory has changed a lot since it first came out. It has gone from a strict, Eurocentric model to a more flexible one, considering the many different ways development can happen. Japan and the United States are all good examples of how complicated modernization is and how we need to have a more nuanced view of how the world is developing. Even if traditional modernization theory cannot explain everything, its essential idea—that civilizations can change and become better on purpose—still holds true. As we get farther into the 21st Century, modernization theory will keep changing to fit the facts of globalization, technological change, and cultural variety. It will keep giving us helpful information about how society changes.

Still, Japan and the United States had different paths to modernization, but industrial output and adopting new technologies were key to all three. Data from the OECD,

historical records, and national statistics show how these countries used technology and industry to speed up economic growth and development.

Looking at the modernization theory in the context of non-European empirical cases, we learn that the modernization process was never linear, universal, or uniquely Western. What started out as an idea developed in the context of the 19th-century industrial revolutions in Europe is now coming up against the empirical, theoretical, and normative perspectives of other countries, including Japan, the U.S., and, most recently, China. This ongoing transformation is representative of a worldwide reimagining of how societies develop, on whose terms, and to what effect.

### **2.8.1. Early Non-European Prototypes and Origins of Modernization Theory**

Mid-20th-century modernization theory was premised on the idea that “traditional” societies would, in stages, morph into Western-style modernity, necessarily characterized by secularism, industrialization, individual rights, and liberal democratic forms of governance. As Shilliam (2010) and Goorha (2010) stress, this “classical” model was built around a one-size-fits-all process that emulated Europe and North America.

However, Japan's Meiji-era modernization, which strategically integrated Western science and technology while keeping the social structures Confucian, already violated such an assumption. This case parallels Eisenstadt's (2010) notion of multiple modernities, according to which modernity has unfolded unevenly across civilisations. Japan's top-down industrialization challenged the notion that democracy and free-market capitalism are the only paths to modernization. It also affirms Habermas's (1990) claim that modernity cannot be conceived as the realization of Western reason, but as communicative rationality, considering varied historical options and philosophical traditions.

### **2.8.2. The subtle Modernization Phenomenon in War-Torn Japan that is Different from Classical Theory**

The post-WWII Japanese economic miracle (as documented in Maddison Project data) added another wrinkle to the classic model. Heavy state intervention, export-oriented

policies, and community social planning facilitated the rapid development. Nevertheless, as Quah (1994) and Mergel (2012) note, these transitions have taken place with slight political liberalization that classical theorists have anticipated. Japan's experience confirms Przeworski and Limongi's (1997) assertion that economic development may lead to democracy, but it does not have to.

Additionally, Habermas (1990: 273) might consider Japan's trajectory as an example of a society that did not achieve its modernization by expanding liberal democratic norms but by selectively rationalizing institutions. His larger assault on post-Enlightenment reason is a warning not to confuse modernization with technocratic improvement, emptied of ethical conversation or deliberative legitimacy.

### **2.8.3. United States of America: Innovation, Expansion, and Enduring Inequality**

The U.S. is frequently depicted as the ideal type of modernization theory: high levels of industrialization and liberal democracy, widespread education, and dynamic capitalism. Nevertheless, its history also shows the limitations of the theory. However, while there has been remarkable growth and technological progress, inequality, racism, and environmental damage are still with us. It is also important to note that modernization does not necessarily lead to social equity and solidarity, as Romer (1986) and Shilliam (2010) argue.

This paradox brings us back to Habermas (1990), who exposes the overburdening of modernity by instrumental reason. Intellectual and material development may progress, but societies risk becoming fragmented or morally impoverished without normative reflection on justice, inclusion, and dignity.

### **2.8.4. China and the 21st Century Crisis of Modernization Theory**

China's stunning economic ascent has completely subverted the relationship between modernization and democratization. It has achieved this state-run progress, with vast infrastructure building and the dominating role of an authoritarian government, not through a mimicry of liberal democracies, but through policy and politics based on

authoritarianism. This casts doubt on Huntington's modernization-democracy thesis and challenges Barro and Sala-i-Martin's convergence hypothesis (1992).

To use a well-founded sociological expression, growth might be a necessary condition for the existence of democracy, but it is certainly not a sufficient one (even though, as Przeworski and Limongi maintain (1997), Perosa (1992). China exemplifies this disconnect. Benhabib (2004), moreover, would say that economic growth threatens to leave exclusion from full political membership—either domestically, or as migrant workers or refugees abroad—behind without an inclusive political order and due respect for human rights.

### **2.8.5. Modernization: Pluralism, Context, and Reflexivity Today**

Modernization theory has now evolved prematurely into the following:

1. Institutional pluralism (Eisenstadt, 2010);
2. Design and adaptation of policies on the local level (Zarghami, 2025);
3. Social capital and participatory restoration (Putnam, 2001).

Putnam's work is particularly pertinent: trust networks and participatory institutions are critical for sustainable modernization. GDP growth alone is necessary but not sufficient. As studies in the case of Jordan and Lebanon illustrate (e.g., Khader & Badran, 2015; World Bank, 2023), modernization in the absence of inclusiveness, governance reform, and civic participation can exacerbate, rather than reduce, fragility. Moreover, outcomes are deeply influenced by cultural, institutional, historical factors. Absent ethical and political guidance, modernity can deepen injustice or authoritarianism.

As Habermas insists, modernity must rest on communicative rationality, rather than economic or technical rationality. Benhabib stresses that this border must be permeable, ethical, and global in operation.

Thus, modernization theory's future is context-based, self-reflexive, and critical models of theory that recognize the diversity of the globe, the depth of philosophy, and the normative force of the imperative. Only then does modernization cease being only a means of growth and become a liberation and justice project.

### **2.8.6. Industrial Output and Technological Adoption Rates**

Japan has modernized in many ways, but the most obvious ones are the rapid rise of industry and the employment of new technology, especially after World War II. In the 1950s and 1960s, Japan's industrial output grew at a fantastic rate of around 15% every year. Policies that helped heavy sectors like steel, shipbuilding, and autos made this possible (OECD, 2018). Japan also spent much money on getting technology from Western countries, which was just as vital. By the 1970s, Japan had come up with unique innovations, making it a leader in vehicle and consumer electronics technology. Japan's modernization plan has worked since 1980, when the manufacturing sector comprised more than 35% of the country's GDP (Japan Statistical Yearbook, 1981).

The United States started to modernize in the 1800s when industrial machinery and technology were first used. This led to substantial economic growth. The U.S. made more items than any other country by 1900, accounting for about 24% of the world's industrial production (U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, 1901). After World War II, technology kept improving, and the U.S. was the best in telecommunications, aerospace, and computing. In the 20th Century, manufacturing was always a large part of the U.S. GDP. In 1960, it made up around 28% of the economy (OECD, 2018). New information technology made it easier for people to use technology, which helped the U.S. become a world leader in technology in the 1980s and 1990s (U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2001).

The facts show that each country's modernization was based on its own resources, policies, and place in the world. However, they all needed to increase their industrial output and adopt new technologies. Japan's post-war industrial policy and the U.S.'s early technological leadership all highlight how modernization can operate in different kinds of economies.

## **2.9. Modernity versus Modernization Notion**

To understand these principles, it is important to know the distinction between modernity as a way of life and modernization as a manner of doing things.

## ***1. What it means and how it differs***

Modernity is a way of life and thought substantially different from traditional societies in terms of values, ways of thinking, and social structures. It puts much weight on values like independence, rationality, secularism, and thinking about oneself. Modernity examines the standards of the past and replaces them with new ones where religion, tradition, and authority no longer have the last say (Eisenstadt, 2010).

On the other hand, modernization is the process of converting old social, economic, and political systems into new ones. This process includes industrialization, urbanization, new technologies, and the growing complexity of social and political systems. Modernization usually presents itself clearly when countries move from agrarian to industrial and post-industrial economies. For example, cities increase, labor patterns alter, and new technology spreads.

## ***2. What makes things modern today?***

People frequently consider modernity a time when beliefs and culture shifted to focus on secular values, scientific thinking, and individualism. This modern cultural agenda tells people to question authority and move toward making decisions based on facts and reasonable inquiry (Weber, 1978; Eisenstadt, 2002). The idea of modernity also involves a unique way of looking at life. People see society and the environment as easier to understand and control via human action, rather than being ruled by divine or traditional powers.

Modernity's built-in reflexivity, which means that people and societies always question their underlying values and beliefs, creates a lively culture. This kind of thinking is like Weber's theory of "disenchantment of the world," where logic and empirical knowledge take the place of traditional mysticism (Faubion, 1993). It lets civilizations adapt and progress all the time. Weber's theory indicates a process that replaces the spiritual, magical, and mystical explanation of social order and natural events by logical reasoning, scientific understanding, bureaucratic systems. This shift is considered as the cultural central shift of modernity in the West, and world enchantment through making it controlled by rational understandable process rather than divine or mysterious forces.

### ***3. Steps to Updating***

Modernization is distinct because of economic changes and how things are built. Some of the most important things that may be measured are the rates of urbanization, industrial output, and the adoption of new technologies. For example, the Industrial Revolution in the 1800s caused a tremendous increase in the number of people living in cities in Europe and North America. Many countries changed so that more than half of their inhabitants went to cities. In the 20th and 21st centuries, this has been happening worldwide.

#### ***4. How the rates of urbanization have evolved throughout time:***

- In 1800, about 2% of the world's people lived in cities. Nevertheless, by 1900, when modernization sped up, the number had climbed to about 15%.
- On the other hand, by 2000, more than half of the world's people lived in cities. This shows how modernity has affected how societies work (World Bank, 2021).

These numbers indicate how modernization transforms social structures by transferring people and companies from the country to the city and changing how people live from traditional to modern, city-centered ones.

#### **2.9.1. Different Ways to Modernize: Multiple Modernities**

Literature clarifies that modernization does not lead to a single, uniform end; instead, it creates distinct modernities that reflect different cultural adaptations and socioeconomic structures (Eisenstadt, 2000). This theory highlights how different cultures and historical events affect how people worldwide adapt the fundamental aspects of modernity, such as secular governance, industrialization, and individualism. For instance:

- After the Meiji Restoration, Japan adopted a path of modernization that kept some of its traditional cultural elements while adopting specific Western technology and ways of doing things. This made a blend that is only found in Japan.
- Since the late 20th Century, China's modernization has meant a one-party political structure, changes to the economy, and more people moving to cities. This goes against the common belief in the West that modernization means becoming more democratic. China started implementing more market-oriented changes in the late

1970s, when Deng Xiaoping was in charge. These reforms sped up the rise of cities, industries, and the economy. Today, China is one of the world's largest economies and manufacturing centers.

- Countries in the Middle East have had trouble finding a balance between modernization and heritage. They typically want to preserve their religious and cultural identities while also using new technologies. This might be challenging to do because modern life is usually more secular and focused on the individual.
- Jordan has also changed significantly over the years, notably since the Middle of the 20th Century. Jordan has had challenges such as insufficient natural resources, a growing population, and instability in the area. However, it has made policies to diversify its economy, enhance its infrastructure, and develop its society, which has gradually brought its economy and society up to date.
- Lebanon is a fantastic illustration of multiple modernities, which is when cultures take in and adapt important parts of modernity, such as industrialization, urbanization, and technical advancement, while preserving their own cultural and historical identities (Eisenstadt, 2000). Lebanon's efforts to rebuild after the civil war, especially the Horizon 2000 plan, which combined rebuilding infrastructure with improvements to the economy as a whole, have had a significant impact on the country's path to modernization. Lebanon is unique since it has ancient social institutions and a global financial and service economy. However, it has had its challenges. Nevertheless, tensions remain between Lebanon's religiously varied culture and modernity's secular inclinations. This shows that tradition and progress can work together (World Bank, 2023).

### **2.9.2. Key Parts of Jordan's Modernization:**

#### **1. The economy is becoming more diverse:**

Jordan's efforts to modernize have focused on moving away from agriculture, which has been the country's primary source of income, and toward tourism, industry, banking, and information technology. Jordan has carefully built up businesses that do not utilize as many natural resources, including water and energy, because they do not have many of

them. Tourism and financial services are two important parts of Jordan's economy that contribute significantly to GDP.

## **2. Building up infrastructure and making things in factories:**

Since the 1960s, Jordan has put money into industrial zones. For instance, the Qualified Industrial Zones (QIZs) were set up in the 1990s. These places got foreign investment and growth through exports, especially in the textile and pharmaceutical industries. Jordan has also improved its mechanisms for getting around and talking to people. For instance, it has developed the Aqaba Special Economic Zone (ASEZA) and made the country's roads bigger.

## **3. Education and the development of human capital:**

Education has been one of the most essential components of Jordan's modernization efforts. The government has spent much money on creating colleges and vocational schools, making it more straightforward for people to receive an education, and raising literacy rates. Jordan's focus on education has helped it move toward a knowledge-based economy. Because of this, it has become a regional center for skilled workers, especially in IT, healthcare, and engineering.

## **4. Changes in politics and society:**

Jordan has quietly altered its political system to strengthen institutions and promote stability. Jordan is still a constitutional monarchy, but it has come a long way toward becoming more open politically by holding limited elections and encouraging people to be active in their communities. The government has tried to make society more equitable between men and women by focusing more on women's education and getting them to work, yet there are still challenges.

## **5. Growth of tourism:**

A lot of Jordan's modernization has to do with tourism. Petra and the Dead Sea are two of the most famous historical places in the world. Every year, millions of people come to

see them. Building infrastructure for sustainable tourism has been vital for economic growth since it has created jobs and new ways to make money.

## **6. Renewable Energy Initiatives:**

Jordan has spent money on renewable energy in the last few years to become less dependent on oil and gas from other countries. Renewable businesses have grown a lot because of solar and wind energy projects. Jordan could generate roughly 20% of its energy from renewable sources by 2020. The country hopes to make this ratio higher in the following few years.

## **7. Making society and culture more modern:**

There have been changes in social norms in Jordan, especially in cities. Amman, the capital city, is now a cosmopolitan place with a burgeoning middle class. People are changing their feelings about women's education, business, and the media. People are more interested in their communities because of the internet and the media. This is especially true for young people, who have contributed to modernizing culture.

### **2.9.3. Key Parts of Lebanon's Modernization:**

#### **1. Rebuilding after the war and getting the economy back on track**

Lebanon's efforts to rebuild after the civil war greatly affected how the country became more modern. The Horizon 2000 plan began in 1993 and has rebuilt infrastructure and stabilized the macro economy as its primary goals. This led to much growth in the Middle of the 1990s, with GDP growth reaching its most significant points of 8% in 1994 and 7% in 1995. Rebuilding initiatives concentrated on cities, especially Beirut, to make Lebanon a hub for trade and services again (World Bank, 2023).

#### **2. The economy is centered on services and the financial sector:**

Lebanon has modernized its economy by focusing on the banking and financial sectors, which have been strong despite the weak economy. Remittances and international

deposits have made the banking industry a significant source of foreign capital, which has assisted with modernization efforts (World Bank, 2023).

### **3. Tourism and Cultural Heritage:**

Making the most of Lebanon's cultural and historical endowments has been the basis for modernizing its tourism business. Tourists worldwide come to famous destinations like Byblos and Baalbek, which are excellent for the economy. The country's tourism strategy has focused a lot on improving hospitality services and the country's image worldwide (World Bank, 2023).

### **4. Issues with building infrastructure:**

Much money has gone into reconstructing the country's infrastructure since the war, but modernization has been complex because the country has much debt and relies on domestic banks. Lebanon has struggled with long-term infrastructure growth and meeting modernization needs (World Bank, 2023).

### **5. Giving to Education and the Diaspora:**

The people of Lebanon are exceptionally well-educated, and the country's diaspora helps it become more contemporary by sending money home and sharing what they know. Nevertheless, because the economy is unstable, brain drain has made it challenging to fully employ this resource at home (World Bank, 2023).

### **6. Problems with the big picture:**

Lebanon's attempts to modernize have been significantly hurt by rising inflation, a currency losing value, and an enormous national debt. In 2023, inflation rates reached 231.3%, which shows how hard it is to link modernization to long-term economic growth (World Bank, 2023).

#### **2.9.4. How modernization changes the way society and the economy work**

Modernization has a significant impact on how society works. It shifts economies from ones based on farming to those centered on industry and services, making them more

productive and helping them flourish. The increase in global GDP per capita is one illustration of how modernity has improved the economy:

- The GDP per person worldwide was roughly \$1,100 in 1820 (Maddison Project). It had gone up to nearly \$7,000 by 2000, primarily because of the economic changes that came with modernization (World Bank, 2021).
- In the 20th Century, this transformation was most apparent. Industrialization and technological progress helped the economies of Western countries rise swiftly, followed by those of Asian countries. In the late 1800s, Japan's GDP per person was roughly \$1,300. By the 1970s, it had risen to \$10,000. In the 20th Century, the same thing happened in the United States (World Bank, 2021).

#### **2.9.5. The impact of industrialization on society: people moving to cities and changing employment**

One of the most apparent evidence of how modernization has changed things is that people move from the country to the city. More people moving to cities is linked to both more factory jobs and more demand for industrial goods. This is not the same as the farming economies of countries before modern times. During this shift, the following things often happen:

- Urbanization: From 1800 to 2000, the number of people living in cities in Europe and North America rose quickly because of improvements in technology and industry. By 1950, over 64% of people in the U.S. lived in cities. This significantly increased from 20% of those who lived in cities in 1850. This depicts how society changed as the economy became increasingly focused on cities.
- Transforms in work: study reveals that modernization transforms work. In more developed nations, workers move from agriculture to industry and ultimately to the service sector. Historical data show this change. For example, the share of agricultural jobs in the U.S. dropped from more than 70% in the early 1800s to fewer than 3% by the late 1900s (OECD, 2020).

So, although modernity and modernization are connected, they are not the same thing. There are two separate ways that society progresses throughout time. Modernity is a way of life that values reason, individuality, and secularism. Conversely, modernization occurs when societies change their economies and structures to make them more industrialized and urbanized. The ongoing conflict between modern cultural aspirations and what is possible in terms of modernization has led to diverse outcomes in different parts of the world, indicating how difficult it can be to change society. These developments have affected civilizations, economies, and people's lives. Now, cities thrive, people depend on technology, and varied modernities show the cultural background of each society.

The accumulating evidence confirms that industrial production and technological dissemination are key to the understanding of modernization. However, Westernization is not just an automatic or uniform economic modernization. As the cases of Japan, the U.S, Jordan, and Lebanon show, this is a complex, historically specific evolution affected by cultural significance, institutional forms, and philosophical self-interpretation. This supports the multiple modernities thesis (Eisenstadt, 2000) and encourages casting modernization in sense-of-place-sensitive and interdisciplinary modes.

#### **2.9.6. Modernization as a Result of Industrial Production and Technological Adoption**

From country to country, industrial and technological upheavals are the motors of modernization — but on divided paths:

The post-WWII high growth of Japan, *i.e.*, an over 15% annual industrial output growth rate, resulted from a coherent policy mix and an export orientation, an adaptive institutional design. This experience affirms OECD (2018) and Inkeles (1969) foregrounding the state-centered modernization project. What we learn from Japan here is indigenously driven modernization based on imitation, local science, and engineering capacity. Habermas (1990) would interpret this as a society concerned with “reflexive modernization”, trying to find ways of reconciling inherited traditions with modern institutional rationality.

Romer (1986) noted that the United States took advantage of early industrialization to harness innovation, immigration, and resource abundance. Its model is consistent with the model of classical modernization theory, but the experience of the U.S. with inequality, race relations, and sprawl shows the limits to modernization. For Habermas, instrumental reason was the engine of the U.S. model. However, the refusal to embed communicative reason—open dialogue, civic equality, and democratic will-formation—has stymied a more ethical course of modernity.

The trajectory of a resource-exporter and the uneasy transition from agricultural to post-industrial ‘development’ suggests, in support of Kuznets (1966:51) and Eisenstadt, that modernisation is not linear, phase-bound and patterned by resource endowment and institutional inheritance. It demonstrates how settler colonialism brought together imported models with environmentally and geopolitically local conditions.

These cases further confirm Barro and Sala-i-Martin's (1992) convergence theory: different ways might converge in economic matters, but not in cultural, political, or ethical aspects. The framework, applied to Jordan and Lebanon, reveals a hybrid form of modernization, trapped in structures of constraint, where innovation is as much by virtue of need as by intent:

- Jordan’s modernization-read those foreign investments as QIZs, ASEZA, renewable energies, and digital education-looks like a classic state-based example, one that is consistent with endogenous growth theories (Przeworski & Limongi, 1997). Jordan’s emphasis on sustainability and knowledge is a harbinger of the new face of modernization—post-industrial, post-carbon, and richest in human capital. However, Benhabib (2004) cautions that unless these policies foster political inclusivity and guarantee the rights of the most vulnerable communities (i.e., migrants, women), they can be technocratic rather than transformative.
- Lebanon, meanwhile, has seen partial modernization in finance and services, nurtured by its diaspora and cultural openness. Nevertheless, crumbling infrastructure, unpayable debts, and a total breakdown of the political process – as evidenced by 231% inflation in 2023 – reflect both Goorha's (2010) and Huntington's (1991) caution that modernization without political adaptation is not sustainable and not constructive.

Benhabib's cosmopolitan theory stresses moral universality and shared responsibility — but this has been a vision that Lebanon's fractured political order has found hard to embody.

These cases bring home a central lesson: Innovations and industrialization may drive modernization, but weak institutions and institutionalized political fragmentation can just as effectively impede it.

### **2.9.7. Modernization vs. Modernity: Theoretical Implications**

One theoretical distinction is relevant: that between modernization as structural change and modernity as a normative, intellectual-cultural enterprise. This distinction is reflected in:

1. Weber describes this disenchantment as the transition to rationalized state bureaucracies that enhance control while reducing meaning.
2. Eisenstadt's reflexive modernity: the notion that societies rethink traditions as the forces of the modern buffet them.
3. Faubion's modernity des questionnements: ou la constitution moderne de l'identité à la faveur du regard critique;
4. Habermas's communicative rationality holds that absolute modernity is not merely about being economically or technologically strong but about public reasoning, inclusion, and dialogue.

From this perspective, Jordan has modernised in energy, tourism, and education, but modernity in gender equality, civic pluralism, and the promotion of rights is unfinished. Conversely, Lebanon claims a cosmopolitan cultural heritage and a liberal media landscape but still misses a modernized institution that can provide resilience and fairness.

### **2.9.8. Urbanization and Employment: Structure Changes as Markers of Modernization**

The transition from agrarian to industrial and post-industrial work reflects global modernization trends:

For example, in the U.S., there was an agricultural employment share of 70% 150 years ago, which has now reduced to less than 3% (OECD, 2020).

Urbanization has increased in every region of the world, from two percent in 1800 to more than 50% in 2000 (World Bank, 2021a), lending support to the role of infrastructure in the development of modern society.

Jordan and Lebanon are walking along this way: Amman, for example, has become a tech-savvy regional capital, while Beirut represents dual urban logics — both traditional and hypermodern, culturally rich and resiliently poor.

The different versions of modernization manifest in our cases serve as a stark example of Eisenstadt's (2000) multiple modernity:

- Japan married tradition to industrial rigor;
- The U.S. exemplified innovation-driven expansion;
- China has modernized without a liberal democracy.
- Jordan and Lebanon both have hybrid modernity involving resource scarcity, diasporic networks, and societal fragmentation.
- These modernities are not alternatives, but varied reactions to common global impulses—modernization in the plurality.

Eventually, modernization can be considered as multi-dimensional, non-linear, and context-specific related to the industrial productivity and technology adoption. Although such material conditions as GDP, sectoral productivity, and urban expansion are more easily quantifiable, these need to be considered in conjunction with the depth of the institutions, self-understanding of culture, and civic capacity.

**Key takeaways include:**

- Technology and industrial development are necessary, albeit not sufficient;
- Institutions' cultural reflexivity is necessary to maintain the process of modernization.
- There is no single way, only multiple ways forged by history, culture, and agency;

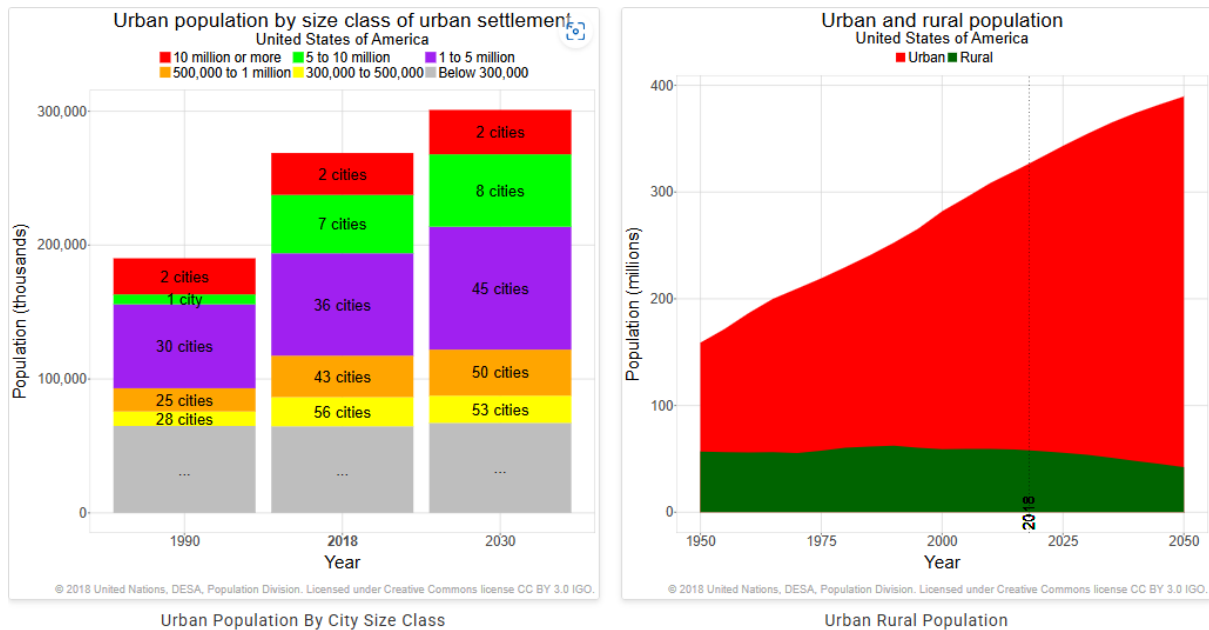
- The ethical modernization has to go hand in hand with communicative rationality (Habermas) and inclusive belonging (Benhabib).

In this comparative perspective, Jordan and Lebanon appear not as peripheral cases but as important launches in a global modernization discourse that is empirical, normative, and acutely conscious of modernity's human, social, and political stakes.

## **2.10. Urbanization as a Proxy for Modernization**

The movement of people from rural to urban areas is a clear sign of modernization. About 3% of the world's population lived in cities in 1800. This number grew to roughly 14% by 1900 and to about 30% by 1950. This change sped up in the second half of the 20th century, and by 2018, it had reached 55% (World Bank, 2019). This migration to cities shows how modernization has changed social structures. People moved to cities to benefit from the opportunities created by industrial growth and technological progress. These changes also made it easier for modern political and economic institutions to emerge, which are important to modern cultural values.

Figure 4 shows several charts and graphs from the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs focusing on population changes and urbanization trends.



*Figure 4 USA population dynamics and urbanization trends. Source: <https://population.un.org/wup/Country-Profiles/>*

**Below is a brief overview of each chart included:**

Overall, these visualizations give a great picture of urbanization trends in America, from the growing population of urban areas by city size class to the population changes in urban versus rural areas. The first graph, under the heading "Urban population by size class of urban settlement", shows how the urban population will be distributed between cities of different sizes in 1990, 2018, and 2030 (projected). The categories included cities with populations of less than 300,000 and megacities, with populations of 10 million or more. It is a clear trend for urbanization expansion.

As of 1990, most of the world's urban population was in cities of between 300,000 and 1 million residents. As of 2018, the number of cities with a population of 1 to 5 million (purple sector) had markedly increased to 43 from just 30 in 1990. The 2030 projection follows this trend, with the number of cities in this category increasing to 45. Also, cities with 5 to 10 million and cities above 10 million are expected to experience growth. The number of cities with 5–10 million populations will increase from 7 in 2018 (Table I), and the two megacities will remain unchanged by 2030. It also suggests a continuing demographic trend of populations homogenizing around bustling urban centers, a

growing urbanization as more people are attracted to or forced to find a life in metropolitan environments.

The second, "Urban and rural population," is a long-term trend from 1950 through 2050. The red shows urban population, which has been steadily increasing, while the rural population (green) has stayed flat or has declined slightly. The climax of this growth came in 2008 when, for the first time, the world's urban population outweighed its rural population, and the gap has only continued to widen since then. Beijing: The urban population is estimated to surpass 400 million by 2050 as the rural population remains on the downslide. We see these changes as part of larger socioeconomic transformations, where agricultural-based economies have become less prevalent and our societies worldwide have become more service and knowledge-oriented – especially in urban centers. These graphs provide insight into the trend of demographic shifts in the United States, fueled by urbanization and the changing nature of modern work and lifestyle.

Figure 4 displays another set of charts from the United Nations Population Dynamics on Japan's urbanization profile. The Visualization summarizes the information on urbanization trends in Japan by comparing city size class distribution and the evolution of the balance between urban and rural populations. The left chart is titled "Urban population by size class of urban settlement" and describes the number of urban settlements in Japan by population size, for 1990, 2018, and 2030 (projected). Moreover, one prominent feature of this chart is the persistent outperformance of two megacities (10 million people or more) in all three years, indicating a short concentration of Japan's urban population within the megacities of Tokyo and Osaka. Meanwhile, we also see a slow but steady rise in cities among the intermediate class, especially those with populations of half a million to a million and those with populations of 300,000 to 500,000, thus demonstrating a moderate growth of mid-sized cities. That increased from 2018, when six cities were in the 500,000 to 1 million range, and up from 4 in 1990. This number will reduce to 5 in 2030. A similar pattern is evident among cities with a population of 300,000 to 500,000, growing from seven in 1990 to 19 in 2018, then falling to 18 in 2030. This indicates that, although urbanization is still intense, there will be a plateauing or slight decline in population growth in these classes shortly.

The right-hand chart, “Urban and rural population,” shows a dramatic and telling change in the structure of Japan's population. Urbanization exploded from 1950 to about 2000, when the urban population (in red) far exceeded the rural population (in green). Nevertheless, after reaching an earlier peak in the early 2000s, Japan's overall population looks to start a gradual decline, which Delmelle attributes to a declining urban population. At the same time, the rural population, which has declined since the 1950s, continues to shrink. A dual challenge facing urban areas — especially the decline of the urban population — reflects Japan’s broader demographic problems, like an aging population, a low birthrate, and negative population growth. Unlike countries with emerging urbanization, such as urban sprawl, urbanization in Japan is mature, so the challenges Japan is now facing are to maintain economic vitality even in a national population decline. These trends indicate critical considerations for future policy, particularly surrounding urban design, geriatric care, and rural revitalization.

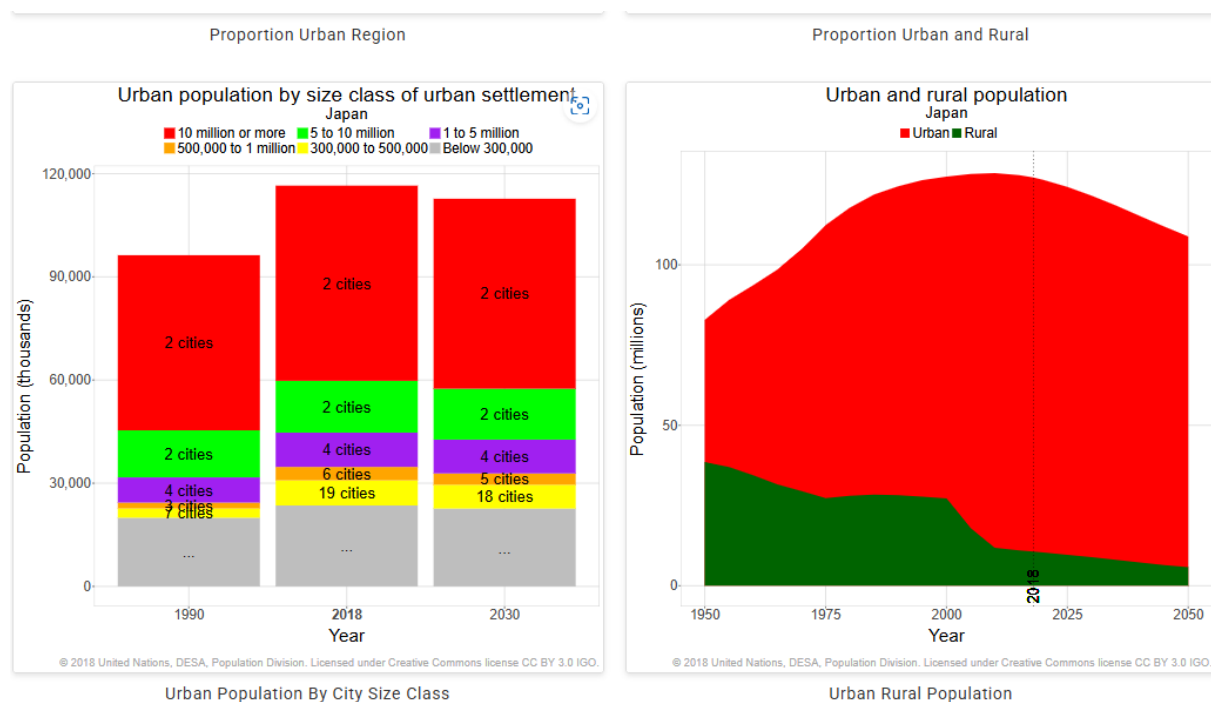


Figure 5 Japan population dynamics and urbanization trends. Source: <https://population.un.org/wup/Country-Profiles/>

### 2.10.1. Jordan population dynamics and urbanization trends

Figure (6) offers a better look at Jordan's urbanization trends, plotting urban settlement size classification and the evolving ratio of urban to rural population from 1950 to 2050.

The first chart, "Urban population by size class of urban settlement," to the left illustrates the changing face of Jordan's cities across three time points: 1990, 2018 , and 2030 (projected). The urban concentration was relatively low in 1990, with only one city between 500,000 and 1 million and one in the range of 300,000 to 500,000. By 2018, the number of settlements with a larger indicator had significantly increased.

One city had expanded to fall into the 1 to 5 million range, presumably referring to Amman, the capital. There were also three cities with populations of 500,000 to one million, and two with populations of 300,000 to 500,000. Almost all of the 2030 estimates also suggest a continuation of metropolitan expansion, resulting in at least five cities having populations of 300,000 and 500,000, and three cities in the range of 500,000 to 1 million. There was one city in the range of 1 to 5 million, which shows that Amman remains the country's primary population and economic center, while the growth of mid-sized cities highlights the expanding role of urbanization across Jordan.

The second chart on the right, titled "Urban and rural population," shows a dramatic rise in Jordan's urban population in recent decades. The urban population (red area) started climbing steadily sometime around 1950, with a dramatic acceleration starting around 1990. In contrast, the green area, representing the rural population, only grew gradually before it plateaued and then gradually declined after about 2005. In 2018, the urban population was obviously more than the rural population, a trend that is predicted to continue until 2050. This pattern is consistent with broad-based rural-to-urban migration spurred by economic opportunity, modernization, and improved access to services in urban centers.

They show that, in general, these maps underline the quick urbanization of Jordan, which has tangible implications for planning, housing, and resource management. Land development in a sustainable way is a challenge that policymakers must pay attention to

avoid urban sprawl and help prevent the decline of many cities and the unsustainability of rural areas.

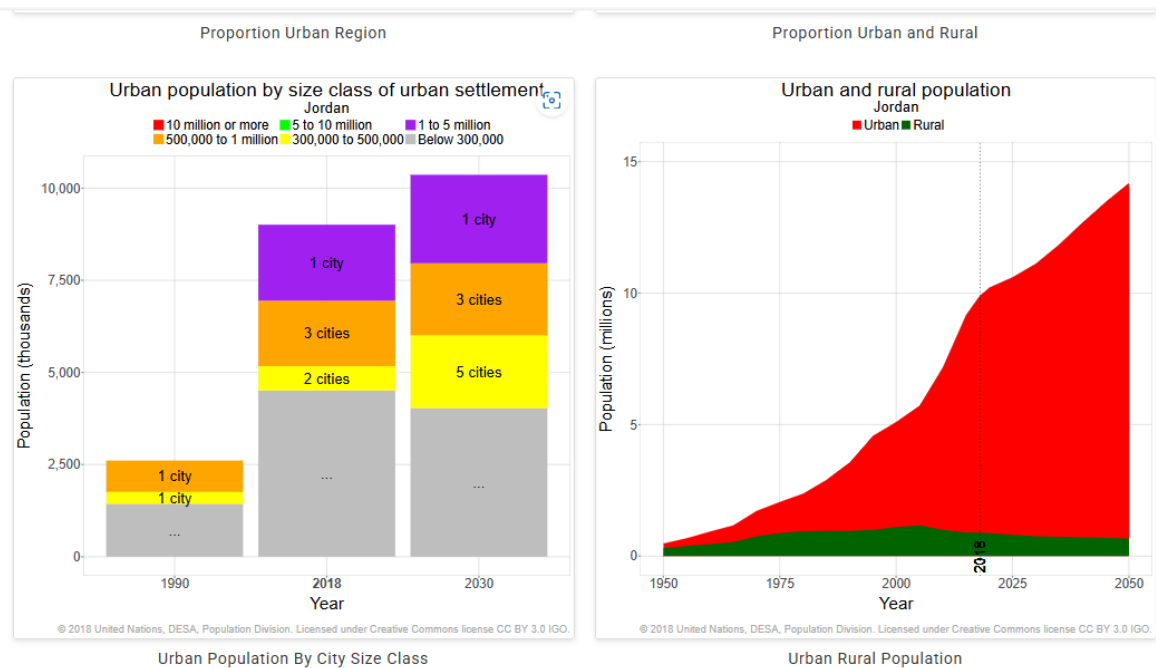


Figure 6 Jordan's urbanization trends

## 2.10.2. Lebanon population dynamics and urbanization trends

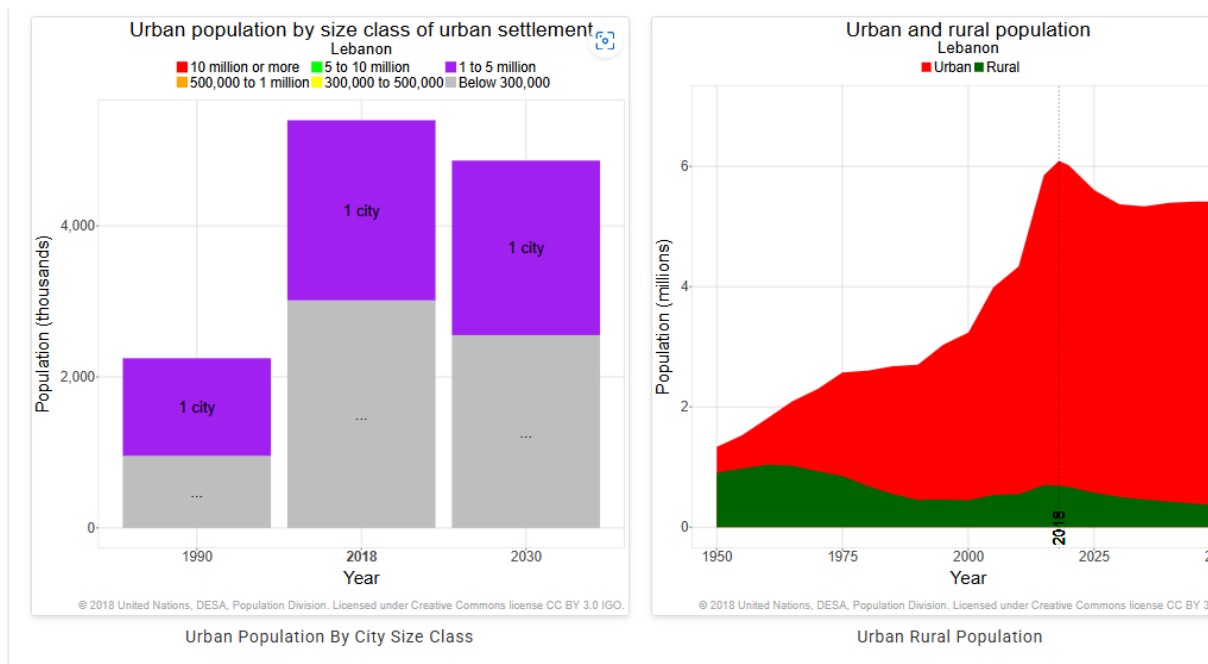
Figure 7 shows how Lebanon's cities have changed over the years. It depicts how the number of people living in cities of different sizes has evolved over time, in addition to how the number of people living in cities and the number of people living in the country have changed from 1950 to 2050. These changes are like wider economic and population changes due to Lebanon's political history, economic growth, and migration patterns.

The first chart, "Urban population by size class of urban settlement," shows numbers from 1990, 2018, and 2030. One crucial thing to know is that each of the three time periods has one huge metropolis with between 1 and 5 million people living in it. This is most likely Beirut, the capital and business hub of Lebanon. There were not many significant cities in Lebanon in 1990, and the ones that were there were mostly poor. Nevertheless, in 2018, cities really started to grow, and the number of people living in them almost doubled. The main reason for this expansion is because Beirut and the territories around it are still developing. By 2030, there should be a slight drop, meaning cities are getting

full or not increasing. People might be leaving, the economy might not be doing well, or fewer babies might be born. There have not been any new huge cities either, thus it is likely that urban life will stay centered in one big metropolis.

The second chart, "Urban and rural population," shows how Lebanon's population has changed over time. From 1950 to the early 2000s, the number of people living in cities (shown in red) steadily grew and then abruptly rocketed up quite quickly. In 2020, it reached its highest point, which was just over 6 million. There could be many reasons for such significant growth, like people relocating around the country, the effects of wars in some areas, and the enormous number of refugees. The number of people living in rural areas (in green) has been going down for a long time, with a small quantity of a rise around 2010. This could have happened because people departed or came back. The rate of urbanization should slow down after 2020, when the number of people living in cities stops growing. This is mainly because of money worries, people moving away, and a lower birth rate.

These photographs show how Lebanon has changed from a rural civilization to a mostly urbanized country. This makes it harder for infrastructure, housing, public services, and social cohesion to work well, especially when the economy and politics are both unstable. Urban planning and regional development plans are essential for ensuring future growth is balanced and lasts.



*Figure 7 Lebanon's urbanization trends*

Nevertheless, though urbanization is often treated as a measurable proxy for modernization, the evidence from both data and literature confirms that it is more than an outcome—it is a dynamic, structural mechanism of modern transformation. Previous studies and theoretical work reveal how urbanization reflects and reinforces modernization while exposing its cultural, institutional, and normative variations.

### 2.10.3. Urbanization as a Fundamental Criterion of Modernization

Development theory widely recognizes urbanization as both a driver and a consequence of modernity. The transition from rural, agricultural societies to urban, industrial (and later post-industrial) formations is central to modernization theory (Eisenstadt, 2000; Weber, 1978). Figures 3–6, representing U.S., Japan, Jordan, and Lebanon trends, demonstrate how modernization occurs through distinct pathways—each shaped by national history, institutional capacity, and geopolitical context. These trajectories reaffirm Eisenstadt’s theory of “multiple modernities”, where modernity unfolds differently across societies, without a single universal model.

#### **2.10.4. Patterns and Implications: Empirical Evidence from the Data**

##### ***Global and Historical Patterns***

World Bank (2019) data confirm a macro-trend: global urbanization rose from 3% in 1800 to over 55% in 2018, driven by industrialization, technological advancement, and service-sector expansion. The UN's data further shows uninterrupted urban population growth since the late 19th century—a structural hallmark of modernization.

##### ***United States (Fig. 4)***

The U.S. exemplifies classical modernization theory: rapid industrialization, rural-to-urban migration, and a strong service economy. Urbanization followed rational and institutional expansion, consistent with Weber's insights on capitalist development and bureaucratic rationality. However, as Habermas (1990) warns, modernization also risks becoming overly instrumental—focused on technical advancement at the expense of social inclusion and democratic discourse.

##### ***Japan (Fig. 5)***

Post-WWII urban expansion in Japan (especially Tokyo and Osaka) reflected state-directed industrialization. Japan's model fused Western technologies with enduring Confucian social structures—an archetype of non-Western modernity. However, aging demographics and urban saturation now challenge sustainability. Habermas's theory of reflexivity becomes relevant: modernization must engage in continuous critical dialogue with tradition and changing social needs.

##### ***Jordan (Fig. 6)***

Amman's urban growth since the 1990s reflects state-driven modernization through service-sector expansion, educational investments, and refugee absorption. This mirrors Faubion's (1993) notion of reflexive modernity, where modernization emerges through adaptive responses to internal and external shocks. The ASEZA initiative and technology-focused development support Przeworski and Limongi's (1997) emphasis on institutions and human capital over mere economic metrics.

### ***Lebanon (Fig. 7)***

Lebanon illustrates modernization's fragility. Beirut's dominance, accelerated by the Horizon 2000 reconstruction plan, represents monocentric urban growth. However, economic collapse, demographic decline, and political paralysis undermine sustainability. This supports Goorha's (2010) warning that without institutional reform, modernization remains unstable. From a normative perspective, Benhabib (2004) reminds us that urban growth must be tied to inclusive citizenship and participatory governance—criteria that Lebanon continues to struggle with.

## **2.11. Synthesis with the previous Studies**

Findings from the Maddison Project, OECD, and World Bank historical GDP data confirm the tight correlation between urbanization and modernization. Japan's postwar boom and the U.S.'s technological dominance both hinged on urban infrastructure. Meanwhile, case studies on Jordan and Lebanon illustrate that strategic state planning, migration pressures, and social resilience shape urban growth. The Horizon 2000 plan in Lebanon exemplifies how post-conflict urban surges can generate short-term modernization without long-term structural support.

### **2.11.1. Key Theoretical Takeaways**

Urbanization serves as a strong empirical proxy for modernization, but it is not identical to it. It reflects more profound social and political transformations, such as:

1. Sectoral employment shifts (agrarian to industrial to service),
2. New forms of governance,
3. Changing values and norms.

This underscores Eisenstadt's (2000) notion of plural modernity:

1. Japan's model is technocratic and culturally hybrid.
2. The U.S. is capitalist and individualistic;
3. Jordan's is state-led and resilient;
4. Lebanon's is diaspora-driven and structurally fragmented;

Habermas argues that each must be judged by its capacity for rational discourse and ethical progress, not merely technical efficiency.

### **2.11.2. Policy and Planning Implications**

For Jordan, the challenge lies in managing accelerated urban growth through sustainable infrastructure, equitable resource distribution, and inclusive development. Projects like ASEZA and energy modernization must integrate social planning to prevent exclusion and fragmentation.

For Lebanon, decentralization of services, fiscal transparency, and political stabilization are vital. Benhabib's (2004) vision of porous but accountable institutions provides a valuable framework for reform, ensuring urban modernization also strengthens political legitimacy and civic inclusion.

This means that urbanization is both a mirror and a motor of modernization. While it provides measurable indicators—population density, infrastructure expansion, service diversification—it must be interpreted within broader cultural, institutional, and ethical frameworks.

The previous studies and case analyses reveal that:

- There is no single path to modernity;
- Urbanization reflects adaptation and agency, not just economic trends;
- Modernization is most successful when it balances growth with equity, tradition with innovation, and infrastructure with inclusion.

In short, when proxied through urbanization, modernization offers a powerful lens to understand how societies transform. Nevertheless, Habermas and Benhabib remind us that accurate modernity also demands a commitment to dialogue, justice, and shared human dignity.

### **2.12. Modernization theory**

Modernization theory, which started in the middle of the 20th century, is a sociopolitical and economic framework that tries to figure out how societies change from traditional, agricultural systems to modern, industrialized ones. It sees development as a straightforward-moving process that civilizations go through to reach particular "modern" goals, such as being more industrialized, urbanized, and democratic. (Goorha, 2010)

### **2.12.1. How Modernization Theory Came About and Grew**

The behavioral revolution in the social sciences significantly impacted the development of modernization theory, which started in the 1950s and 1970s. During this time, there was a greater emphasis on utilizing scientific methods to study social phenomena. This is when modernization theory explained how societies grow, especially those not Western. Walt Rostow and other important researchers came up with staged theories of economic growth, which say that societies go through universal stages, from "traditional" to "modern" (Rostow, 1960; Goorha, 2010). Scholars like Inkeles (1966) and Smith and Inkeles (1966) also stressed how important it was for modernization to happen when people and society changed, such as when new technologies were adopted and social ideals changed. Modernization theorists said these changes would lead to more political stability, economic growth, and social changes (Goorha, 2010).

### **2.12.2. Important Parts of Modernization Theory**

Three main ideas are important to modernization theory:

1. **Economic Growth:** Modernization depends on economic growth, which is marked by industrialization and technical advancements. The theory says that when societies switch to industrial production processes and put more money into businesses, their economies flourish, which lowers poverty and raises the standard of living for everyone. This focus fits with economic development theories that say growth comes from accumulating capital and developing new technologies (Przeworski & Limongi, 1997).
2. **Political Stability:** The idea says that as economies grow more complex, societies will create more complicated systems of government to deal with them. This will lead to political stability. Modernization theorists say that changing from farming to industrial cultures needs stronger political institutions promoting democracy and stable government. Theories that connect economic growth with democratization are a typical example of this change. They say that when the economy modernizes, it develops a middle class that is politically active and wants democratic reforms (Lipset, 1959).
3. **Change in Culture:** People regard modernization as a change in culture and an economic and political process. People often stop believing in traditional values and

start thinking in more "rational" and "scientific" ways. People see things like secular education, city living, and liberal beliefs as signs of modernity. The media, schools, and the rise of information and ideas are generally blamed for this cultural shift. They change people's goals toward modern lifestyles (Lerner, 1958).

People have said bad things about modernization theory since it is Eurocentric and believes that development is predetermined. Western cultures are the most advanced, and all societies should follow the Western modernization model. Some people say that this framework does not take into account the different historical and cultural backgrounds of non-Western cultures and does not give enough weight to the effects of colonialism and global power dynamics on development. Also, critics say that modernization theory pushes a "one size fits all" approach and does not consider the many successful development paths that differ from Western models (Goorha, 2010).

Also, others have criticized the idea for being deterministic, which assumes that economic development would always lead to democratic government. Research has proven that economic prosperity does not always lead to democracy. Some countries that are doing well economically have authoritarian governments that provide good living standards and political stability. This constraint makes it hard to believe that modernization's political forecasts are accurate everywhere, since they may not consider the reality that political outcomes are affected by more complicated, situation-specific circumstances than the theory admits (Goorha, 2010).

Even if many have said bad things about it, modernization theory has helped us comprehend development by showing how changes in politics, culture, and the economy are all connected. Nevertheless, because of its flaws, researchers have developed more complex frameworks, such as dependency theory and world-systems theory, that look at historical contexts and global power structures when studying development pathways.

Problems with Modernization in the USA and World Bank Group DataBank interface in Figure (4) present the Statistical Performance Indicators (SPI) dashboard, which shows data for the U.S. over several years (2016–2022) across three indicators:

- Agriculture Census (Availability Score for the last 20 years): From 2016 to 2022, this indicator always got a score of 1.0. A score of 1.0 usually means that the U.S. has reliable agricultural census data for a period of 20 years, which shows that the agriculture sector is good at collecting data.

- Availability of a Comparable Poverty Headcount Ratio at \$2.15 a Day: This indication also gets a score of 1.0 every year. It means that data on poverty, especially the headcount ratio at the extreme poverty threshold of \$2.15 per day, is available and can be compared over time, which makes this measure of poverty statistics reliable.
- Putting together monetary and financial data: The U.S. routinely compiles and reports monetary and financial statistics, which helps with good economic analysis and policymaking. This indicator has a score of 1.0 over the years. Table 5 shows that these statistical indicators for the United States are stable, which means that data collection and reporting processes in the agricultural, poverty, and financial areas are dependable and consistent. This reliability is essential for making smart choices about social and economic policies and keeping an eye on how the country is doing compared to other countries.

**Table 6 USA Statistical Performance Indicators (SPI) DataBank (worldbank.org)**

| Series Name                                                                                | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Agriculture census (Availability score over 20 years)                                      | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    |
| Availability of Comparable Poverty headcount ratio at \$2.15 a day (5-year moving average) | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    |
| Compilation of monetary and financial statistics                                           | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    |

Last Updated: 11/11/2024

Jordan, on the other hand, is having a hard time modernizing since it does not have enough money, the area is insecure, and it has to cope with many refugees. Jordan also needs to deal with high unemployment, especially among young people, and social and economic inequality if it wants to modernize truly.

**Table 7 Statistical Performance Indicators (SPI) Country: Jordan**

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Agriculture census<br>(Availability score over 20 years)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | 1.0  | 1.0  | 1.0  | 1.0  | 1.0  | 1.0  | 1.0  | 1.0  | 1.0  | 1.0  |
| Availability of Comparable Poverty headcount ratio at \$2.15 a day (5-year moving average)                                                                                                                                                                                                          | 0.5  | 0.5  | 0.0  | 0.0  | 0.0  | 0.0  | 0.0  | 0.0  | 0.0  | 0.0  |
| Availability of Mortality rate, under-5 (per 1,000 live births) data meeting quality standards according to UN IGME (5-year moving average)                                                                                                                                                         | 1.0  | 1.0  | 1.0  | 1.0  | 1.0  | 1.0  | 1.0  | 1.0  | 1.0  | 1.0  |
| Compilation of monetary and financial statistics                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | :    | :    | 0.0  | 0.0  | 0.0  | 1.0  | 1.0  | 1.0  | 1.0  | 1.0  |
| Created from: Statistical Performance Indicators (SPI) Country : Jordan:<br><a href="https://databank.worldbank.org/source/statistical-performance-indicators-(spi)/Type/TABLE/preview/on">https://databank.worldbank.org/source/statistical-performance-indicators-(spi)/Type/TABLE/preview/on</a> |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |

Table (7) presents the World Bank Group DataBank for Statistical Performance Indicators (SPI) for Jordan from 2016 to 2022. It shows three primary statistical indicators whose scores change over time. This illustrates that data is accessible and reliable in many different fields:

- The Agriculture Census (scores range from 0.0 to 1.0) has been available for over 20 years. Because of this difference, Jordan's agricultural data has not always been credible. There have been problems or gaps in doing complete agricultural censuses. Scores dropped from 1.0 in 2016 to 0.5 in 2018 and then to 0.25 in 2022. This suggests that availability or reliability has gone down.
- The Comparable Poverty Headcount Ratio at \$2.15/Day: Jordan has consistent and similar poverty data at the \$2.15-a-day level, as this indicator scores 1.0 from 2016 to 2022. Jordan has a dependable technique to measure extreme poverty because it never changes. This is very important for reducing poverty.

- **Gathering Money and Financial Data:** This indicator has always gotten a score of 1.0, which means that the data gathering is stable and trustworthy. Stability is crucial for setting rules, controlling money, and planning the economy.

The figures show that Jordan has good numbers for poverty and money; however, the numbers from the agriculture census are not always correct. Jordan's statistics and socioeconomic picture would be better if these holes were filled in. The results show what Jordan is good at and what he needs to work on, especially when it comes to learning more about farming.

Table (8) provides SPI for Lebanon 2016–2022 according to the World Bank Group Data Bank. It shows three key statistical measures with fluctuating scores over time to represent the change in data completeness and data consistency across different areas.

**Table 8 Statistical Performance Indicators (SPI) Country: Lebanon**

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Agriculture census (Availability score over 20 years)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | 1.0  | 1.0  | 1.0  | 1.0  | 1.0  | 1.0  | 1.0  | 0.5  | 0.5  | 0.5  |
| Availability of Comparable Poverty headcount ratio at \$2.15 a day (5-year moving average)                                                                                                                                                                                                            | 0.0  | 0.0  | 0.0  | 0.0  | 0.0  | 0.0  | 0.0  | 0.0  | 0.0  | 0.0  |
| Availability of Mortality rate, under-5 (per 1,000 live births) data meeting quality standards according to UN IGME (5-year moving average)                                                                                                                                                           | 1.0  | 0.0  | 0.0  | 0.0  | 0.0  | 0.0  | 0.0  | 0.0  | 0.0  | 0.0  |
| Compilation of monetary and financial statistics                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | :    | :    | 0.0  | 0.0  | 0.0  | 1.0  | 1.0  | 0.0  | 0.0  | 0.0  |
| Created from: Statistical Performance Indicators (SPI). Country : Lebanon:<br><a href="https://databank.worldbank.org/source/statistical-performance-indicators-(spi)/Type/TABLE/preview/on">https://databank.worldbank.org/source/statistical-performance-indicators-(spi)/Type/TABLE/preview/on</a> |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |

Table 8 summarizes the data quality performance of Lebanon during the period from 2016 through 2022, using three important dimensions of performance: availability of census data in agriculture, poverty headcount ratio, and quality of mortality rate data. It also comprises information on compiling of monetary and financial statistics. The indicators

represent Lebanon's capability to collect, handle, and distribute socioeconomic information.

### **Key Observations:**

#### **1. Agricultural Census Data Availability:**

Lebanon consistently scored 1.0 in agricultural census data availability from 2014 to 2020, indicating sustained good agricultural data collection practices over the last 20 years. Nevertheless, in 2021, the mark fell to 0.5, suggesting some difficulties in displaying the same consistency. This decrease might illustrate larger economic and political instabilities that impact institutional capacities.

#### **2. Poverty Headcount Ratio:**

The headcount ratio of poverty using the \$2.15 a day threshold consistently achieved 0.0 in each year. That means there is no comparable data to measure extreme poverty by. The lack of such crucial information deprives Lebanon of the ability to deal with and monitor poverty matters effectively.

#### **3. Mortality Rate Data:**

In 2014, Lebanon achieved data quality for the under-5 mortality rate with a score of 1.0. From 2015, however, this score decreased to 0.0, indicating a lack of quality data on child mortality. The fall sounds alarm bells about Lebanon's ability to monitor and address child health.

#### **4. Compiling the Monetary and Financial Statistics:**

This indicator fluctuates significantly. Although the score for compiling monetary and financial data had improved temporarily in 2019 and again in 2020 (1.0), it fell again to 0.0 in 2021 and 2022, which means fiscal statistical quality was unstable. The fluctuations are believed to be due to Lebanon's financial crisis and the country's poor institutional infrastructure.

The fall in the scores of Lebanon's agricultural and financial data indicates not only a loss of institutional strength but also an indicator of the difficulty of maintaining robust and reliable statistical systems, in light of more generalized governance and resource problems heightened by ongoing political and economic crises. The absence of information on poverty and child mortality exposes critical policy gaps, which have made it difficult for the government to articulate evidence-based interventions for social development. The absence of coherence in monetary and financial data is also an indicator of an unstable economy, particularly as the financial crisis continues to erode the country's economic base, rendering its development potential sluggish in modernization terms. All reform is vital to the sustainability of development and policymaking.

### **2.13. Revisiting the modernization theory via institutional capacity and comparative case studies**

As academics, by setting up the findings with Modernization Theory and the previous studies, we are better equipped to comprehend that modernization takes different forms in different sociopolitical settings. Instead, The World Bank's Statistical Performance Indicators (SPI) offer a quantitative instrument of analyzing institutional capacity, a profound cornerstone of modernization theory, when connected with qualitative research predicated on the theoretical reflections of Eisenstadt, Habermas, and Benhabib, it allows us to see the intricate relationship between economic structure, political endorsement and a cultural adjustment.

Classical modernization theory was based on the simple, three-step process of development from traditional to modern societies, underpinned by:

1. Industrialization and technological evolution (Rostow, 1960);
2. Political modernization: using the complexity of institutions and democratization (Lipset, 1959);
3. Cultural change: change from traditional to rational-secular and humanist values (Lerner, 1958; Inkeles, 1966).

Nevertheless, recent discussions such as those proposed by Eisenstadt (2000) contest such unilinear discourse and advocate for "multiple modernities" driven by history, patterns of

power, and sociocultural vectors. As Habermas (1990) argues, Modernization cannot rely on economic purposiveness or the political complexities that sustain it alone; its procedures must also draw on communicative rationality in which institutions approximate, as it were, the demands of public will, inclusion, and an ethic of dialogue. Benhabib (2004) supplements this by arguing about permeable boundaries and democratic inclusion, particularly in fragmented and post-conflict societies.

### **2.13.1. USA: An Example of Ultimate Modernization**

The U.S. exemplifies late-stage modernization. Its SPI data reflect:

- Complete data coverage for agriculture, poverty (1.0),
- Solid financial and demographic numbers (1.0).
- Institutional stability and policy responsiveness.

These findings are consistent with Goorha (2010) and Rostow (1960), who link late-stage modernization to strong data governance, complete industrial transformation, and political adulthood. Additionally, high urbanization rates (Fig. 3), innovation, and the growth of the services sector confirm the U.S. as an example of classical modernization theory. However, Habermas (1990) reminds us that, in the face of such structural tell-tale signs, America's modernization is not immune to the grip of instrumental rationality, a sphere where efficiency and technology come to replace more substantive democratic participation.

### **2.13.2. Jordan: Modernization under Constraints**

Jordan provides an example of a partial and selective form of modernization. However, SPI scores have crashed (from 1.0 to 0.25) for food security and poverty monitoring, particularly for agricultural data collection. This unevenness underscores:

- Rapid urban expansion (Fig. 5), particularly in Amman;
- Institutional Reforms through ASEZA and Energy Upgradation;
- Chronic youth unemployment, refugee stresses, and resource constraints.

These findings are consistent with Przeworski & Limongi (1997), who contend that economic development may help, but does not guarantee democratic consolidation. Jordan's path resonates with Eisenstadt's idea of multiple modernities, indicating that modernization occurs under variegated local constraints. Rights and civic inclusion also concern Benhabib here; the success of sectors notwithstanding, Jordan has to develop higher levels of political and institutional inclusiveness to complete modernity.

### **2.13.3. Lebanon: Fragmented Institutions, Reactive Urbanization**

Lebanon is a poke in the eye to modernization theory. SPI data shows institutional collapse:

1. Poverty data absent (0.0),
2. Agricultural statistics decreasing (from 1.0 to 0.5),
3. Economic data blood down from 1.0 to 0.0,
4. The lack of mortality information evidences the failure of the health system.

Urbanization in Beirut (Fig. 6) is modernizationist in space, but it is not grounded in the institutional infrastructure that modernization theory presupposes. This gap echoes Goorha's (2010) critique: modernization theory overlooks how elite capture, sectarianism, and the fragility of state legitimacy obstruct genuine institutionalization.

It also demonstrates Benhabib's caution: in the absence of democratic accountability and just rights distribution, modernization can reinforce exclusion. Lebanon's fossilised urban planning, public institutions that no longer work, and disillusioned youth resemble Habermas's complaint about a modernity without deliberative legitimacy – a situation in which the state can no longer mediate between its citizens' demands.

**Table 9 Comparative Insights and Theoretical Reflections**

| Country | Economic Data (SPI)   | Political Stability | Cultural Modernization   | Implications for Theory                                              |
|---------|-----------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| USA     | Strong and consistent | High, democratic    | Urban, rational, liberal | Validates classical assumptions                                      |
| Jordan  | Partial, improving    | Moderate, reformist | Urbanizing, adaptive     | Challenges linearity; shows hybrid modernization                     |
| Lebanon | Weak, declining       | Fragile, fragmented | Urbanized but unstable   | Refutes determinism; supports pluralism and critique of Eurocentrism |

Such comparisons validate Eisenstadt's theory of multiple modernities and emphasize the insights of Habermas and Benhabib. Modernization does not fit neatly in a Western, or sequential, box — it is context specific, institutionally mediated, and ethically fraught.

#### **2.13.4. Policy Implications and Recommendations**

##### **Jordan should:**

- Enhance agricultural and statistical infrastructure;
- Tackle youth unemployment and social equity;
- Promote an inclusive urban planning linking infrastructure and citizenship.

##### **Lebanon should:**

- Recreate data governance and state capacity;
- Maintain the path of decentralization and the limit of anarchic governance in Beirut;
- The key condition for any manageable modernization is a priority on fiscal and political stabilization.

##### **Global modernization models should:**

- Avoid one-size-fits-all frameworks;
- Embrace resilience-based, locally-informed strategies;
- Emphasise democratic inclusion and ethical governance, as Benhabib argues.

Modernization is also a key perspective in the study of social change. Nevertheless, the divergent paths of the U.S., Jordan, and Lebanon show that modernization is not preordained or predestined. It depends on:

- The resilience and adaptability of institutions,
- The moral and involved dimension of government (Habermas)
- And developmental trajectories' cultural and historical specificity (Eisenstadt, Benhabib).

To understand and promote modernization today, scholars and policymakers together must take it as we find it: as a plural, contested, and dynamic process— evidence-based, context-grounded, and animated by a commitment to justice, inclusion, and human dignity.

## **Summary of Part Two**

In this part, we discussed modernization theory and why it matters, and you will find out how the world is expanding. The people who study modernization theory want to know how civilizations moved from being primarily rural to mostly industrialized; this also helps fill in the gaps in growth. Modernization: the quality of living, the economy, the new technologies, the new cities, and the new enterprises.

Japan and the U.S. become versions of the present tense in their respective ways through culture, politics, and money. This chapter introduces the contrast between cultural modernization and social and economic modernity. It offers Jordan and Lebanon from the Middle East as two countries that have succeeded and failed in modernization. Some critics argue that the modernization theory is unduly Eurocentric and deterministic; it has transformed into several ways to produce and stress policy specifics. This chapter discusses the impact of modernization on world development, social change, and the economy. It also discourses on what it cannot do and how it is used in various cultures and eras.

## **PART THREE**

### **The Concern of Human Rights**

International laws and cooperation have taken into account the conditionality of respecting human rights in the beneficiary countries of development aid. The EU's external assistance agendas are among the key drivers that emphasize protecting human rights as a critical principle in the EU's foreign aid programs, including its development relations with Jordan and Lebanon.

Beyond focusing on the normative framework, this chapter also considers the concrete instance of human rights in contexts of armed conflict and occupation, where the legal and ethical challenges for enforcement are to the fore. Both foreign rule and foreign military intervention pose significant challenges to the international human rights regime, particularly concerning extraterritorial obligations.

Engaging with these scenarios, this part seeks to underscore the real-life complexities and obligations that can arise from the actions of states or international actors, such as the EU, in areas affected by conflict, such as the Middle East, in light of the region vis-à-vis their professed human rights commitments. This multidimensional response enables a more profound insight into the processes by which political, civil, and socioeconomic rights are applied, challenged, and advanced in stable and crisis contexts.

#### **3.1. Human Rights and State Obligations in Occupation and Conflict**

Respecting human rights and state obligations is particularly important in an occupation and in conflicts. The laws of armed conflicts govern these issues: international human rights and humanitarian laws. Fundamental rights that shall be respected include the right to life, the right to protection from torture and ill-treatment, the right to a fair trial, the right to human dignity, the right to food, water, healthcare, and shelter, and protection of civilians from arbitrary detention and forced displacement. According to the Geneva Convention (IV)<sup>12</sup>, the obligations of the occupying power, specific obligations from the "occupying power" are assumed, most notably:

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<sup>12</sup> ) Geneva Convention (IV) "Relative to the protection of civilians' persons in time of war of 12 August 1949" commits the treaty parties to ensure and respect the protection of civilians in the

1. Protecting the civilian population: ensuring the safety of civilians in the occupied territory and, in addition, preventing violent acts against civilians, including murder, torture, deportation, and unlawful detention.
2. Respecting local laws: occupying power shall respect the applicable laws in the occupied territory, unless they impede the application of international law or conflict with security.
3. Not settling or changing the demographic composition: transferring the citizens of the occupying state to the occupied territory (such as settlements) is prohibited. Forcible transfer of the population of the occupied territory is prohibited.
4. Ensuring basic services, providing food, medicine, and humanitarian assistance to the population, and maintaining public order and health.

Human rights obligations transcend national boundaries when a state effectively controls a foreign territory. Human rights law's extraterritorial application has caused controversy, especially about armed conflicts. "Human rights law and International Humanitarian Law (IHL)" should be harmonized, according to Modirzadeh (2010), to guard citizens during armed conflicts. One of the main difficulties in implementing human rights law during occupation, though, is that it does not entirely fit the governance structure of the displaced people.

The Geneva Conventions underline that occupation law provides minimum protection for the occupied, without justifying the occupier's government (Modirzadeh, 2010). The guiding principle is increasing awareness of the need to uphold human rights obligations when engaging in military operations outside their borders (Watkin, 2010).

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time of war, armed conflicts, and peace. The convention consists of 159 articles, and includes general provisions, general protection of civilians against war consequences, protected people treatment and status, general treatments for civilians including clothing and food, medical attention and hygiene, religious and physical activities, financial resources and personal property, and disciplinary and penal sanctions.

### **3.1.1. The EU and Human Rights Protection during Armed Conflicts**

The "European Convention of Human Rights" <sup>13</sup> stressed respecting human rights in peace, armed conflict, and wartime, preventing any threat to civilians' lives in war. Article (2.2) states that it is “absolutely necessary: (a) in defense of any person from unlawful violence; (b) in order to effect a lawful arrest or to prevent the escape of a person lawfully detained; (c) in action lawfully taken for the purpose of quelling a riot or insurrection”. Therefore, the EU stresses on the international treaties on human rights in prohibiting the arbitrary life deprivation and protecting the fundamental freedoms. Also, the co Article (6.2) states that “A State may make provision in its law for the death penalty in respect of acts committed in time of war or of imminent threat of war; such penalty shall be applied only in the instances laid down in the law and in accordance with its provisions. The State shall communicate to the Secretary General of the Council of Europe the relevant provisions of that law”.

This article indicates that EU attaches significant importance to the issue of protecting civilians during wars and armed conflicts, and prevents any threat to any of the fundamental human rights. The EU relies on a combination of international laws, international treaties, and the EU's foundational principles in legitimizing the protection of civilians' human rights in war and armed conflicts. During the wars and armed conflicts, the EU leverage from a set of practical, diplomatic, and political tools to protect human rights, including the EU's human rights guidelines that focused on protecting children. Besides, the EU stresses on the commitment to the human rights norms and the IHL, and also engages with non-EU states to support their accountability against human rights violations and to provide aid for humanitarian purposes. The EU human rights guidelines are addressing various context of the human including, but not limited to, the wars and armed conflicts context.

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<sup>13</sup>) All state members in the European Council (46 states) had ratified “European Convention of Human Rights” in the 4<sup>th</sup> of November 1950 in Rome. This convention also called “Convention for Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms”, and consists of (16) protocols. Article (2) of the 6<sup>th</sup> Protocol stressed on respecting the human rights in time of war and stated the penalties of death in time of war.

Ensuring protection of human rights in areas devastated by conflict is one of the main goals of the EU's development aid. The EU's role in upholding international human rights law is highlighted in the cases that involve military interventions. International legal systems hold that although the use of force is sometimes justified under humanitarian reasons, it raises questions about the efficient implementation of human rights law. Specifying the right to life as a fundamental provision, the "European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR)" mandates that states must defend people even in extraterritorial operations (Milanovic, 2011). Cases like *Al-Skeini V. Secretary of State for Defense* (2007), which acknowledged that states have extraterritorial human rights obligations when they exercise effective control over individuals abroad, have strengthened this idea (Ohlin, 2016).

### **3.1.2. Responsibility to Protect (R2P) and Human Rights Concerns**

The UN General Assembly had endorsed the R2P at the world summit in 2005, which is a political global commitment to prevent crimes against humanity, ethnic cleansing, war crime, and genocide. Welsh (2019) stated that R2P includes three main pillars as follows:

1. The state's protection responsibility: each single state shall be in charge to protect its population against crimes against humanity, ethnic cleansing, war crime, and genocide. Paragraph 138 stated that "Each individual State has the responsibility to protect its populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. This responsibility entails the prevention of such crimes, including their incitement, through appropriate and necessary means. We accept that responsibility and will act in accordance with it. The international community should, as appropriate, encourage and help States to exercise this responsibility and support the United Nations in establishing an early warning capability".
2. Capacity building and international assistance: the states shall adhere to assist each other in their responsibilities to protecting their populations.
3. Conclusive and collective response on time: if any state failed to adhere to its protection responsibility, then other states shall conduct a collection action in order to provide protection for that state's population. Paragraph 139 states that "The international community, through the United Nations, also has the responsibility to use appropriate diplomatic, humanitarian and other peaceful means, in accordance

with Chapters VI and VIII of the Charter, to help protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. In this context, we are prepared to take collective action, in a timely and decisive manner, through the Security Council, in accordance with the Charter, including Chapter VII, on a case-by-case basis and in cooperation with relevant regional organizations as appropriate, should peaceful means be inadequate and national authorities manifestly fail to protect their populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity.”

Particularly in humanitarian crises, the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) concept has become important in international human rights law. R2P was especially discussed in Myanmar during Cyclone Nargis, when government rejection of foreign aid sparked debates on whether denial of humanitarian aid violates human rights. Simon (2002) confirmed that the intervention of the UN in the Ivory Coast was positioned to act as a mission for protecting human rights; however, this intervention has geopolitical consequences, as the responsibility to protect is politically motivated and selective sometimes. Humanitarian interventions' arguments emphasize the difficulties in juggling state sovereignty with human rights issues (Roberts, 2002). The EU committed to fostering and implementing the R2P in its political statements and global strategy. Generally, the EU is ambitious to contribute in the international security and take into consideration the human suffering; therefore, the EU is committed to achieve its fulfilment in collective responsibility in cooperation with the UN (Schmidat, 2019).

### **3.1.3. Development Aid and Socioeconomic Rights**

Social rights have become a natural human rights component when the "Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)" and later treaties, including the "International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)", were adopted. Particularly in areas like Jordan and Lebanon, which are experiencing economic uncertainty, the EU's development assistance programs stress advancing socioeconomic rights. Reflecting regional attempts to match human rights standards with local legal

traditions, the Arab Charter on Human Rights (2004)<sup>14</sup> and the Universal Islamic Declaration of Human Rights (1981) recognize these rights as fundamental human rights; the EU's aid programs seek to improve conditions linked with employment, education, and healthcare (Hussain, 2014).

Socialistic rights have historically developed in line with civil and political rights, first only partially acknowledged. The emergence of labor movements in Europe in the late 19th century clarified how urgently social and economic justice should be included in human rights doctrines. The socialist revolution in Soviet Russia, which underlined group welfare over individual political liberties, strengthened this change (Vijapur, 2010).

According to the EU development policy, the EU is considered as the largest development donor worldwide, as it is committed to increase its donation to 0.7% of the gross national income per year at least. International community and organizations are targeting the development and welfare of development countries' economies through the Official Development Assistance (ODA). In the recent years, the ODA remained a significant instrument for foreign aid allocation to foster developing countries prosperity, including social, political, and economic development. However, the outcomes of the ODA is not conclusive and confirmed, and a range of indicators shall be considered including perception, value claims, and interpretations (Jakupiec & Kelly, 2016)

As a researcher of human rights and international law in conflict-affected areas, we find that the evidence presented here is both illuminated and complicated by the rich literature on the extraterritorial application of human rights, EU foreign policy, and the transformative pressure on sovereignty in the post–Cold War order. Drawing from comparative legal cases, development policy, and institutional data (e.g., SPI scores), we observe an evolving consensus that state obligations no longer end at territorial borders, especially in occupation, displacement, and humanitarian crises.

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<sup>14</sup> ) Arab Charter on Human Rights was adopted by the Arab League in its 16<sup>th</sup> meeting held in Tunisia in May 2004. The Arab Charter was built based on the UDHR and the ICESCR, and incorporate Islamic Sharia Provisions in its regulations. The Arab charter includes 53 articles, and guarantee the freedom from cruel treatment and torture, right for fair trial, protecting children and women, and self-determination.

### **3.1.4. Modern conflicts challenge the traditional Westphalian notion of sovereignty.**

Modirzadeh (2010) notes the uneasy coexistence between International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and International Human Rights Law (IHRL), particularly when states exercise effective control over populations beyond their borders. Recent legal scholarship has trended toward harmonization: IHL governs conduct during hostilities, while IHRL ensures minimum standards of protection for all individuals—even those under occupation.

The *Al-Skeini v. UK* (2007) ruling<sup>15</sup>, as explained by Ohlin (2016), established that the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) applies wherever a state exercises effective control, regardless of territorial boundaries. This affirms that accountability for human rights violations travels with power, especially when exercised by Western democracies in overseas military operations.

Watkin (2010) further asserts that human rights norms must shape military practice, contesting the idea of legal vacuums in conflict zones. This shift toward transnational responsibility is critical when assessing cases like Israeli governance over Palestinian territories or U.S. actions in Iraq and Afghanistan. The tension between sovereignty and rights now unfolds in hybrid legal authority, supported by foreign aid and norm diffusion through international partnerships like the EU's engagement with Jordan and Lebanon.

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<sup>15</sup> A decision by the UK house of Lords regarding Case No. (55721/07), which submitted by 6 Iraqi nationals on December 11, 2007 against the UK (Great Britain and North Ireland) by the virtue of article 34 of the “Convention for the protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms”. The UK house of Lords dismissed the case: “The first four applicants appealed against the Divisional Court’s finding that their relatives did not fall within the United Kingdom’s jurisdiction. The Secretary of State also cross-appealed against the finding in relation to the sixth applicant’s son; although he accepted before the Court of Appeal that an Iraqi in the actual custody of British soldiers in a military detention centre in Iraq was within the United Kingdom’s jurisdiction under Article 1 of the Convention, he contended that the Human Rights Act had no extraterritorial effect and that the sixth applicant’s claim was not, therefore, enforceable in the national courts.”

The European Union's approach exemplifies the merging of development assistance and normative governance, especially in regions experiencing protracted displacement and weak state capacity. As highlighted in previous studies:

- In Jordan, EU support focuses on refugee services, employment generation, education reform, and healthcare—all aligned with rights enshrined in the ICESCR and the UDHR.
- In Lebanon, while SPI scores show institutional fragility, the EU's interventions target essential rights: access to clean water, housing, and public health for both refugees and host populations.

This approach reflects the rights-based development paradigm discussed by Hussain (2014) and Vijapur (2010), which is rooted in social justice traditions that consider economic and social rights as fundamental, not subordinate to civil and political ones. The EU's engagement, therefore, extends beyond service delivery into legal and ethical transformation of state practices. Benhabib (2004) contextualizes this as a shift from rigid sovereignty to cosmopolitan federalism—a framework in which moral obligations transcend national borders, particularly in treating displaced or marginalized communities. Her call for porous boundaries is especially relevant to the challenges of Middle Eastern host countries absorbing refugees with inadequate institutional scaffolding.

The Responsibility to Protect (R2P) remains one of the most debated innovations in international legal discourse. While normatively grounded in human rights, its implementation has been selective and politicized. As discussed in previous studies and supported by:

- Simonen (2012), who critiques R2P's strategic instrumentalization in cases like Myanmar or Syria;
- Roberts (2002) questions whether intervention promotes human security or undermines state sovereignty.

This normative ambivalence is particularly acute in the Middle East, where military interventions (e.g., Libya, Iraq, Syria) have produced more instability than security. In response, EU and UN agencies have favored non-military R2P tools—targeted sanctions,

diplomacy, and rights-based development—to uphold protection without forcibly eroding sovereignty.

Habermas's (1990) idea of communicative rationality is instructive: interventions should emerge from deliberation, not imposition. Legal authority must be grounded in legitimacy, not just legality—a principle consistently undermined when global powers act unilaterally or selectively. The cases of Jordan and Lebanon offer rich insights into the application of human rights obligations in real-world fragile contexts:

- Jordan has absorbed over a million Syrian refugees, placing unprecedented strain on resources. SPI data shows relatively stable governance, but systemic challenges—youth unemployment, water scarcity, urban congestion—persist. Nevertheless, the EU's support aligns with human rights obligations, offering targeted aid in line with ICESCR norms.
- Lebanon, once ranked highest in Arab human rights fulfillment, now suffers from political paralysis, institutional decay, and deteriorating data infrastructure (e.g., SPI scores show missing poverty and health indicators). While EU efforts attempt to uphold rights through development programs, the absence of functional governance obstructs implementation.

These examples confirm that while extraterritorial human rights enforcement is emerging, it depends critically on state receptivity, institutional capacity, and political will.

At the heart of this debate lies the dialectic between universalism and sovereignty. As emphasized by Modirzadeh (2010), Ohlin (2016), and Roberts (2002):

- Extraterritorial Obligations increasingly challenge the traditional notion of sovereign exclusivity.
- Human rights do not end at borders, especially when power is exercised across them.
- International humanitarian law alone is insufficient; human rights law is necessary to safeguard dignity and life during occupation and war.
- Aid, norm diffusion, and institutional reform now serve as hybrid governance tools—producing layered systems of responsibility that redefine accountability in global politics.

Habermas (1990) sees this shift as part of a more profound transformation of legal and moral order: from formal state sovereignty to a communicative model of legitimacy,

where human dignity, voice, and inclusion are the cornerstones. Benhabib (2004) furthers this by emphasizing the moral duty of inclusion, especially in an age of forced migration and transnational vulnerability.

This analysis affirms that human rights obligations in the 21<sup>st</sup> century are no longer constrained by geography or a binary peace–war framework. Through the EU's rights-based development, the evolving interpretation of IHL and IHRL, and the shifting contours of sovereignty, a new model of international responsibility is emerging—one in which states, international organizations, and regional actors share cross-border duties in the face of displacement, conflict, and humanitarian need.

However, this realization remains uneven in practice, often hindered by geopolitical interests, fragile institutions, and sovereignty-based resistance. For human rights protections in conflict zones to become more effective, they must be pursued through holistic, context-sensitive, and rule-based frameworks—ones that calibrate universal norms with local realities, guided by justice, inclusion, and ethical governance.

### **3.2. Human Rights and Governance in Jordan and Lebanon**

Jordan and Lebanon ratified the core international human rights instruments, namely the “International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)” and “International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)”. Nevertheless, chronic cycles of political instability, economic hardship, and governance challenges have greatly limited the extent to which these rights are realized. International attention to human rights issues in the Middle East had already escalated following the Arab Spring, resulting in the region's re-evaluation of development aid approaches by the European Union (EU). The establishment of judicial independence and civil society has been recognized as a pillar of EU external policy, with the EU aiming to consolidate such institutions in the Jordanian and Lebanese cases (Chase & Hamzawy, 2013).

One of the most significant human rights challenges in both countries is human trafficking, which has increased due to the persistent refugee crises. Many hundreds of thousands of Syrian and Palestinian refugees live in Jordan and Lebanon, most in conditions that leave them highly vulnerable to forced labor, sexual exploitation, and child trafficking. In Jordan, the number of human trafficking cases reached (214) cases including labor cases that is amount to (171) cases in 2022 (National Center of Human

Rights, 2022)<sup>16</sup>. In 2023, the human trafficking cases was (212) compared to (214) in 2022 (National Center of Human Rights, 2023). Moreover, table (8) below illustrates the cases of human trafficking and labor cases in Jordan in 2022:

**Table 10 Human trafficking and labor cases in Jordan in 2022**

| Type of crime                   | No. of cases | Victims    |            | Perpetrators |        |
|---------------------------------|--------------|------------|------------|--------------|--------|
|                                 |              | Male       | Female     | Male         | Female |
| Sexual Exploitation             | 4            | 0          | 8          | 6            | 4      |
| Sexual Exploitation of children | 2            | 0          | 3 juvenile | 3            | 2      |
| Organ removal (Kidney)          | 18           | 17         | 3          | 47           | 0      |
| Organized begging               | 1            | 1 child    | 0          | 1            | 1      |
| Forced Labor (domestic labor)   | 12           | 0          | 20         | 9            | 9      |
| Forced labor (child labor)      | 6            | 6 juvenile | 0          | 8            | 2      |
| Total                           | 43           | 24         | 34         | 74           | 18     |

Source: The National Center for Human Rights (2023).

In Jordan, for example, the Counter-Trafficking Unit investigated 212 cases that were potentially trafficking in 2023, 14 of which met the legal definition of trafficking, with at least 34 suspects involved. The Ministry of Justice prosecuted 23 cases of suspected traffickers, including 37 defendants, of which 33 were for labor trafficking and four for sex trafficking. The government also convicted 20 people, ranging from three to ten years in prison, and imposed monetary fines. The Ministry of Social Development's Dar Karama shelter also assisted 117 victims and potential victims in 2023, an increase from 97 victims in 2022 (ecoI.net, 2023).

Similarly, in Lebanon, the Directorate General of Security opened investigations into 125 potential trafficking cases in 2023, seven of which were classified as trafficking under the law. A large number of them, though not all, were related to the exploitation of Syrian refugee women and children for labor and sex (U.S. Department of State, 2023). The continued employment of *Kafala* (sponsorship) system in both nations amplifies the

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<sup>16</sup> ) According to the statistics of the Public Security Department - Anti-trafficking Unit. The National Center for Human Rights (2022).

precarity experienced by migrant workers, limiting their movement and facilitating labor exploitation (Mary, 2023).

The figures are specifically regarding those admitting to being in some form of labor trafficking, sex trafficking, or forced marriage per 1,000 people in the Arab States, just over 10 are estimated to be trapped. These numbers reveal the pressing need for legal reforms, enhanced frameworks to protect victims, and international collaboration. The role of the EU in advancing human rights through financial and non-financial aid, including the use of policy processes, remains crucial in the context of these countries (Mary, 2023).

Regarding the freedom of opinion right, the National Center for Human Rights (2023) has recorded some destinations in Jordan based on publications on social media platforms, publishing false news, threat to use force crime, and unlawful assembly. The number of cases that were recorded in 2023 in charge of “Disparaging an official body based on the provisions of Article (191) of the Penal Code” was 367 cases (212 convicted and three were not detained), and for the crime “Insulting based on the provisions of Article (195) of the Penal Code” was (170) (101 were convicted).

Analyzing the state of human rights and governance in Jordan and Lebanon reveals a widening gap between formal commitments to international legal frameworks and the lived realities on the ground—particularly in contexts strained by refugee crises, economic fragility, and limited institutional enforcement. Several critical themes and contradictions emerge from the previous studies and broader scholarship in international law, migration, and rights-based development.

### **3.2.1. Treaty Ratification vs. Meaningful Implementation**

According to the UN in Jordan report (2023)<sup>17</sup>, out of nine international treaties on human rights, Jordan has ratified the following:

1. Convention on the rights of the child (CRC).
2. Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities (CRPD)

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<sup>17</sup>) UN in Jordan – Background Document (June 2021, Rev January 2023). United Nations Human Rights Mechanism, Jordan’s Engagement.

3. Convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women (CEDAW)
4. Convention on the elimination of all forms of radical discrimination (CERD)
5. Convention against torture and other cruel inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment (CAT)
6. International Covenant on economic, social, and cultural rights (ICESCR).
7. International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR).

To ensure that Jordanians have social, economic, political, civil, and cultural rights that are incorporated in the international human rights charters and laws, Jordan has integrated the fundamental human rights in the constitution of 1952. Over time, Jordan engagement and commitment to enhance these rights was established through the ratification of other core international conventions on human rights. Besides, Jordan has established various public governmental bodies and institutions to govern the human rights indirectly and directly (Halaseh et al., 2022).

In the same vein, Lebanon has ratified the ICCPR and most of the international conventions on human rights. In 2000, Lebanon ratified the CAT convention and ratified its protocol in 2008<sup>18</sup>. However, Lebanon did not implement the sixth article of the ICCPR, which indicates that laws shall protect the human right to life and prevent arbitrary deprivation of life. In addition, this article stressed that “In countries which have not abolished the death penalty, sentence of death may be imposed only for the most serious crimes in accordance with the law in force at the time of the commission of the crime and not contrary to the provisions of the present Covenant and to the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. This penalty can only be carried out pursuant to a final judgement rendered by a competent court.” According to Lebanese Center for Human Rights - CLDH (2020), Lebanon abstained from voting on the UN General Assembly resolutions from 2007 to 2018. Besides, the constitution has no explicit article that governs the human right to life.

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<sup>18</sup>) The Lebanese Center for Human Rights (CLDH) (2020). The Civil Right and Liberties: Lebanon’s 3<sup>rd</sup> Cycle UPR Review. Submitted by Alef Act for human rights, Arab NGO network for development, Frontiers Ruwad, Lebanese Center for Human Rights (CLDH), Legal Agenda, Proud Lebanon, and Together against Death Penalty (ECPM) in July 2020.

Chase & Hamzawy (2013) demonstrate, these symbolic gestures often mask deeper problems in enforcement and accountability. As Hussain (2014) explains, this disjuncture arises from:

1. Weak institutional oversight and fragmented legal systems,
2. Politicized judiciary and fragile coalition politics,
3. Limited administrative and financial capacity across ministries.

This supports the claim that human rights law, to be meaningful, must be backed by institutional reform, legal harmonization, and civic engagement—an idea also echoed by Habermas (1990) in his notion of communicative rationality, where rights are realized through participatory processes rooted in legitimacy and discourse, not just legal ratification.

### **3.2.2. Refugee Pressures and Governance Strain**

Although Syrian refugees' influx to Lebanon had led to increase demand on services and goods and fostered the local trade; however, this influx had caused complex negative impacts on Lebanon economy, public services, poverty, and unemployment. According to Lebanese Center for Human Rights - CLDH (2020), Lebanon hosted around 1.5 million refugees from Palestine and Syria. Due to the restrictive residency conditions imposed by Lebanon, over 15 years old Syrian refugees lacked to legal residency. Besides, Lebanon imposed high and unaffordable fees on residency and applied unparalleled policies for residency. Besides, Lebanon deportation policy on the individual who are entering in an illegal manner in 2019. Based on this policy, more than 3,000 Asylum seekers from the Syrian nationality were deported directly to custody of the Syrian government, which makes Lebanon as the first country in the world that deports Asylum seekers to Syria government.

Similarly, Jordan hosted more than 1.3 million Syrians after Syria civil war in 2011; more than 660,000 of them are registered as refugees in the UNHCR organization. The refugees' influx to Jordan has imposed heavy burden on infrastructure and public service. One of the significant issue is the access to education, as Syrian children encountered some challenges to enroll in the schools in Jordan. Moreover, the Jordanian labor market was affected by the Syrian refugees, as there was a significant competition between Syrian and Jordanian labor forces in different sectors such as the informal sector

(Alhawarin et al., 2021). Moreover, the Jordanian government has issued various initiatives and policies to integrate the refugees into the Jordanian labor markets, which created a social and economic challenge (Segnana *et al.*, 2024).

Both Jordan and Lebanon host disproportionately large numbers of refugees, mainly from Syria—a burden that has profoundly shaped governance and the delivery of public goods. As reaffirmed by UNHCR (2024) and World Bank (2023) data, the refugee load exacerbates resource scarcity, fiscal stress, and dependency on foreign aid.

In this context, the EU aid, though significant, often focuses on short-term stabilization rather than long-term structural reform. The International Crisis Group (2021) rightly pointed out that Lebanon's post-Beirut explosion governance crisis was not merely one of capacity but of deep institutional decay and elite capture.

Despite greater political stability in Jordan, Human Rights Watch (2023) documents restrictions on freedom of expression and association—especially during economic unrest. This confirms the persistence of authoritarian resilience alongside external reform agendas, a long-discussed paradox in modernization and democratization literature.

### **3.2.3. Human Trafficking and Structural Exploitation**

The growing reports of human trafficking in Jordan and Lebanon—particularly among refugees and migrant laborers—highlight a deeper failure of state capacity and migrant protection. The kafala system, prevalent across the region, fosters conditions conducive to forced labor and exploitation. Studies like Mary's (2023) and the U.S. State Department TIP reports <sup>19</sup> confirm the structural nature of this abuse. The increase in shelter support in Jordan (Dar Karama rising from 97 in 2022 to 117 in 2023) signals some institutional responsiveness, likely influenced by EU and international pressure to meet human rights benchmarks.

Still, as Simonen (2012) and Roberts (2002) argue in the humanitarian intervention debate, piecemeal legal action without systemic reform is inadequate. Real progress requires:

- Dismantling exploitative labor sponsorship models,

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<sup>19</sup> ) TIP reports are annual reports issued by the U.S. regarding the combat and monitor of human trafficking (Trafficking in Person – TIP), and include human, labor, and sexual trafficking.

- Enabling worker mobility and legal access to redress,
- Building preventive frameworks that are proactive, not reactive.

#### **3.2.4. Lebanon's Institutional Erosion**

The institutional erosion in Lebanon is due to the administrative inefficacy, widespread corruption, economic collapse, and political paralysis. The World Bank executive summary (2013) on the Syrian conflict impact on Lebanon social and economic aspects concluded the following:

1. The Syrian conflict had severe negative impact on Lebanon economy.
2. The Syrian conflict has affected the trade, services, goods, and tourism sectors in Lebanon.
3. Before the Syrian conflict, the public finances in Lebanon was weak, while the refugees' influx to Lebanon over the period (2012-2014) had increased the deficit by (US\$ 2.6 billion).
4. The Syrian refugees' influx to Lebanon increased the demand on education and health sectors, which is straining the health and education systems in Lebanon.

Lebanon is in a particularly precarious state. SPI data and human rights reports show:

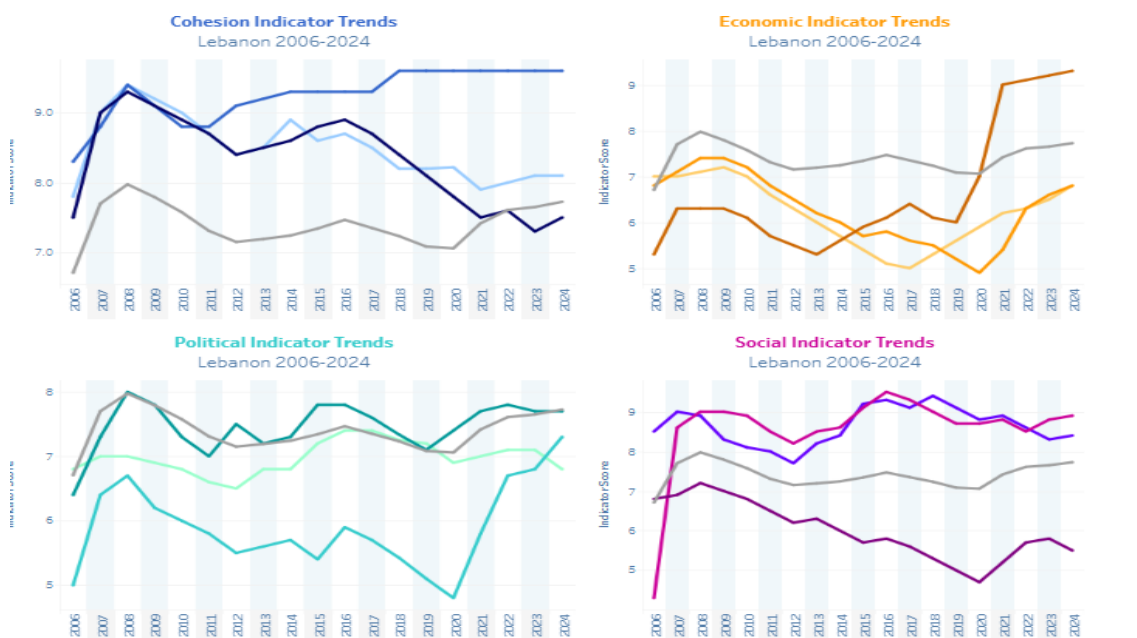
- A collapse in data transparency (e.g., lack of poverty and mortality figures),
- Inability to prosecute or classify most of the 125 reported trafficking cases in 2023,
- Deepening fragility due to economic collapse and political paralysis.

Lebanon exemplifies post-conflict state failure, where legal and administrative structures do not function effectively—corroborating earlier findings in the literature on state fragility and governance vacuums. As Habermas (1990) would frame it, legitimacy is lost not just due to inefficiency, but because of a breakdown in the public sphere, where laws are no longer responsive to citizen needs or participatory discourse.

Brun et al. (2021) reported factsheets on Lebanon outlook over the period (1990-2010), and affirmed that Lebanon had economic challenges before the Syrian conflict as unemployment rate in 2009 reached 6.6% which means that 174, 000 Lebanese were unemployed. Moreover, due to political reasons and wars, as after Israeli-Lebanon war in 2006 the GDP growth percentage record 9.3% and remained steady until 2008 (9.2%).

However, the international development assistance to Lebanon was dropped dramatically due to the geopolitical purposes, and it grew in 2008 to reach (US\$ 1 billion), and fell back again in 2010 by US\$623. Moreover, high dependency on foreign aid led to increase poverty in Lebanon, as high deprivation rate was recorded (>than 1/3) of population are identified poor, which posed critical economic and social challenges.

According to the Fragile States Index of 2019<sup>20</sup>, Lebanon was among the most fragile states worldwide, as it was ranked 40<sup>th</sup> and labeled as “High warning country”. Figure (5) provides trends on cohesion, economic, social, and political indicators for Lebanon over the period 2006-2024.



**Figure 8 Lebanon Indicators 2006-2024 - Source: Fragile States Index**

According to MERISS (2025), Lebanon encounters critical challenges represented in institutional breakdown, economic collapse, Syrian refugees' crisis, and the loss of sovereignty. Regarding the institutional breakdown, Lebanon lacks to independent and credible judiciary, lack to delivery of public services and administrative efficiency, political clientelism, and corruption and weak mechanisms for enforcement. Moreover,

<sup>20</sup> ) Fragile states index (FSI) is an annual report that is supported and published by Think Tank Fund for peace.

unemployment rate among youth reached more than 47%, while the inflation rate reach 231% in 2023, which is among the highest inflation rates worldwide. Besides, the GDP had dropped to more than the half, as the GDP fall from 2019 to 2021 (\$52 billion to \$23.1 respectively).

### **3.2.5. The Call for Structural Reform and Regional Cooperation**

The data and literature converge on the urgent need for legal reform, protection systems, and regional collaboration:

- Plans from UNHCR and EU regional frameworks advocate rights-based governance and holistic migration protection.
- Vijapur (2010) emphasizes integrating socioeconomic rights into national development planning, especially in migrant-receiving states.
- Evidence from the field shows that effective reform requires not just punishment, but prevention, legal migration pathways, and cross-border victim support.

This broader model resonates with Benhabib's framework, where rights protection demands moral universalism, institutional coordination, and normative pluralism—particularly in displacement and transnational vulnerability contexts.

Therefore, the state of human rights in Jordan and Lebanon reveals deep tensions between international obligations and ground-level realities. Formal treaty commitments are undermined by:

- Weak institutions,
- Refugee-driven stress,
- Economic fragility, and
- Systemic labor exploitation.

The results affirm that human rights protection in fragile states must be grounded in legal reform, institutional strengthening, and international cooperation, with a strong role for regional actors like the EU. As the previous studies and theoretical works by Habermas and Benhabib underscore, open, accountable, and inclusive governance is a developmental ideal and the foundation of human rights realization in an increasingly interconnected and fragile world.

### 3.3. The EU's Role in Consolidating Human Rights Systems

The EU remains a central player in advancing human rights and governance reform in both countries through:

- Conditional aid tied to measurable rights progress,
- Technical assistance to strengthen ministries and the rule of law,
- Monitoring mechanisms that empower grassroots actors.

Following the Arab Spring, the EU moved away from supporting authoritarian stability and toward rights-based development (Chase & Hamzawy, 2013). These efforts include:

- Supporting anti-trafficking law enforcement,
- Recommending reforms to break the kafala system,
- Promoting data transparency aligned with the World Bank's SPI framework.

This reflects the cosmopolitan vision of Benhabib, who argues that regional actors like the EU must facilitate transnational rights protections—especially where state capacity is insufficient.

The long-term Syrian refugee crisis has severely stressed both states, altering the institutional landscape and shaping how rights are protected. This aligns with findings from EU development frameworks and previous studies showing demographic shocks weakening core public services, especially in Lebanon, where governance has collapsed. To respond, the EU has linked development aid to governance improvements, including:

- Judicial reform and anti-corruption efforts,
- Support for civil society organizations,
- Strengthening local service delivery systems.

This approach reflects a shift in the EU Neighborhood Policy toward rights-based governance, particularly in fragile contexts. As Benhabib (2004) notes, in conditions where formal sovereignty fails to protect human dignity, transnational frameworks must support plural, porous political belonging and legal accountability models.

External action policies of the EU include human rights issues in their development aid initiatives. This covers financing initiatives for judicial independence, anti-corruption campaigns, and safeguarding underprivileged groups. By tying political and economic cooperation to human rights standards, the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) has been a vital tool in advancing human rights in Jordan and Lebanon (Wouters *et al*, 2016).

The EU has also closely collaborated with foreign agencies, including the United Nations and the International Criminal Court (ICC), to further human rights enforcement systems. Holding offenders responsible for human rights violations has been much aided by the spread of international criminal tribunals. Under international law, the acceptance of war crimes and crimes against humanity emphasizes the worldwide dedication to human rights preservation, especially in areas of conflict (Luban, 2015).

However, the EU encounter several challenges in enforcing human rights as follows:

### ***1. Political Challenges and Selective Application***

Despite the EU's longstanding commitment to human rights in its foreign policy, several political and structural challenges undermine the effectiveness of its development aid in Jordan and Lebanon. In both countries, aid conditionality—linking funding to improvements in human rights—has been criticized for inconsistent application and limited enforcement. Political dynamics, such as alliances and regional security interests, often influence how strictly the EU applies human rights criteria, raising concerns about selectivity and double standards. In Lebanon, for example, despite documented concerns regarding corruption and judicial independence, political compromises often override stronger enforcement mechanisms (Dandashly, 2021).

### ***2. Governance Constraints and Regional Instability***

Entrenched governance issues further hinder meaningful human rights reforms. Jordan maintains a relatively stable political system but restricts freedom of expression and assembly, particularly during economic protests or political unrest (Human Rights Watch, 2023). Conversely, Lebanon suffers from political fragmentation, weak state institutions, and sectarian divisions, which complicate efforts to promote accountability and transparency. These challenges are magnified in times of crisis, such as the 2020 Beirut port explosion and the ongoing financial collapse, which exposed deep governance failures and human rights gaps (International Crisis Group, 2021).

### ***3. Economic and Social Pressures***

The region's economic vulnerabilities directly impact human rights implementation. Jordan hosts over 760,000 registered Syrian refugees (UNHCR, 2024), which places enormous pressure on public services, labor markets, and infrastructure. Lebanon, with a

population of approximately 5.5 million, now hosts an estimated 1.5 million Syrian refugees—one of the highest per capita ratios of refugees in the world (World Bank, 2023). These conditions exacerbate poverty and social inequality, making the realization of socioeconomic rights—such as access to education, healthcare, and employment—especially challenging. EU-funded programs have attempted to fill these gaps, but their impact is limited without structural reforms.

#### ***4. The Role of Civil Society and Future Prospects***

The future effectiveness of EU human rights policies in Jordan and Lebanon will largely depend on the strength of local civil society and the political space available for civic engagement. While the EU has supported NGOs, legal aid clinics, and media freedom initiatives, civil society actors face legal and political obstacles in both countries. For instance, the 2019 amendments to the Associations Law in Jordan increased government oversight of non-governmental organizations, hindering their independence (Freedom House, 2023). Similarly, in Lebanon, many civil society groups operate under financial strain and political pressure, especially when addressing sensitive issues like corruption or sectarian violence.

#### ***5. Towards a Rights-Based, Inclusive Approach***

To achieve sustainable development and democratic resilience, the EU must adopt a more consistent and context-sensitive human rights strategy. This includes integrating human rights benchmarks into all phases of aid programming, ensuring independent monitoring mechanisms, and engaging grassroots organizations. While notable progress has been made in education, judicial training, and refugee protection, long-term success will require structural changes that address the root causes of inequality and repression. By emphasizing political stability, legal accountability, and inclusive development, the EU can reinforce its commitment to human rights in a region where they remain fragile but essential.

As a researcher assessing the EU's potential to shape human rights protection systems in Jordan and Lebanon, the findings highlight the importance of applying a holistic and critical matrix that intersects international law, development studies, political economy,

and theories of post-sovereign governance. The analysis confirms and deepens the themes emphasized in previous studies: selective conditionality, structural governance fragility, civil society containment, and the political realism that often subordinates rights to security and economic concerns.

### **3.3.1. The European Neighborhood Policy (ENP): Means and Limits**

The European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) has been the main framework for EU-MENA relations, combining human rights benchmarks with development aid and political engagement. Wouters et al. (2016) observed that this policy is anchored in “constructive engagement” and soft conditionality. Nevertheless, in practice—especially in Lebanon and Jordan—it has proven partial, uneven, and subordinate to geopolitical priorities.

In Lebanon, deep political fragmentation has limited the EU's approach. As Dandashly (2021) criticizes, this reflects the EU's “double standards”—promoting human rights rhetorically while compromising on enforcement to maintain regional alliances and migration cooperation.

This inconsistency reflects the broader critique by Luban (2015) that international legal institutions are politically embedded and state-contingent, illustrating the gap between normative aspirations and realpolitik in global governance.

### **3.3.2. Civil Society: Between Empowerment and Containment**

The EU's relationship with civil society is one of its most celebrated tools of norm diffusion, yet domestic legal environments often undercut its impact:

- In Jordan, the Associations Law (2019) curtails NGO freedoms—requiring government pre-approval for foreign funding and restricting advocacy.
- Despite a more vibrant civic sector in Lebanon, activists are increasingly targeted when criticizing entrenched elites or sectarian patronage networks.

This resonates with Simonen (2012) and Roberts (2002), who argue that external support often ignores the internal political economy of clientelism, repression, and legal barriers. When unaccompanied by systemic political support, the EU's normative engagement risks instrumentalization or co-option.

## **4. Judicial Reform and Anti-Corruption: Technical Gains, Political Blockages**

While EU funding has improved judicial training and legal aid access, the core problem of political interference in justice remains unresolved:

- In Lebanon, judicial independence is routinely undermined by sectarianism and elite pressure.
- In Jordan, while comparatively stronger, the judiciary remains limited by executive constraints.

Chase & Hamzawy (2013) noted that this reflects the EU's tendency to support "liberal autocracies," prioritizing stability over real legal accountability. This also touches on Habermas's (1990) critique of technocratic modernity, where modernization proceeds without democratic legitimacy or participatory inclusion.

### **3.3.3. Toward a More Inclusive, Rights-Based EU Strategy**

The findings underscore a clear need for a recalibrated EU strategy that is rights-based, context-sensitive, and people-centered. Key components should include:

- Tying technical assistance to verifiable governance reforms, not just treaty ratification;
- Funding independent local actors working on labor rights, anti-trafficking, and legal empowerment;
- Ensuring independent monitoring, rather than relying solely on self-reported state statistics;
- Adopting an intersectional lens—recognizing how rights violations differ across lines of gender, migration status, and socioeconomic class.

These approaches align with Vijapur (2010) and the broader consensus that sustainable human rights promotion must address structural inequality and embedded power asymmetries. As Benhabib (2004) emphasizes, cosmopolitan rights frameworks must go beyond formal sovereignty to uphold moral obligations to the marginalized—especially refugees, informal workers, and civil society actors under threat.

This reveals that the EU's engagement with human rights in Jordan and Lebanon is a product of geopolitical calculations, normative intentions, and domestic constraints. While progress has been made—particularly in refugee protection and civic support—deep structural barriers remain, including authoritarian legalism, elite capture, and institutional decay.

Habermas (1990) reminds us that rights cannot thrive in spaces where legitimacy is absent, and Benhabib (2004) shows us that inclusivity and justice must underpin sovereignty in today's interconnected world. Therefore, for human rights protection in fragile states like Jordan and Lebanon to be meaningful, the EU must pursue transformational, not transactional, engagement—anchored in justice, mutual accountability, and long-term solidarity.

As a researcher, future EU policy must aim to bridge the gap between rhetorical commitments and practical enforcement. Aid must conditionally respond to violations and empower institutions and communities to transform the landscape of rights enforcement.

### **3.4. Concept and Historical Development of Human Rights**

Over millennia of philosophical, legal, and political thought, the idea of human rights has developed to become modern international frameworks aiming at defining and safeguarding fundamental liberties and human dignity. Different fields, cultures, and legal systems define human rights, resulting in both general interpretations and particular legal codifications depending on them.

Human rights originated in ancient philosophical traditions where intellectuals such as Aristotle and Confucius articulated early ideas of justice and moral responsibilities among people in a society (Brems, 2021). Particularly via the writings of John Locke and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, who stressed natural rights as inherent in human existence, the Enlightenment era saw the birth of the modern concept of human rights (Nuhija & Deari, 2020). Emphasizing liberty, equality, and fraternity, these ideas affected important documents, including the French Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen (1789)<sup>21</sup> and the United States Declaration of Independence (1776).

Following World War II, when the world community worked to stop crimes against humanity and genocide, the modern conception of human rights developed. Adoption of

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<sup>21</sup>) The National Constituent Assembly in France issued this declaration in 1789, which is considered as a document that states the civil and human rights. The French Declaration consists of 17 articles, and involved the inalienable and natural rights, including security, oppression resistance, ownership, and freedom.

the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) by the United Nations in 1948 resulted in a foundational document articulating universal human rights principles, so affirming that all people are "born free and equal in dignity and rights" (United Nations, 1949, quoted in Nuhija & Deari, 2020).

Legalistically speaking, human rights are sometimes separated into several generations:

- First-generation rights include civil and political ones, including freedom of religion, speech, and a fair trial.
- Second-generation rights comprise cultural, social, and financial ones, as well as those about labor protections, education, and healthcare.
- Third-generation rights: Collective rights, including those about a healthy environment, peace, and sustainable development (LAW, 2018)

Built on the UDHR by making human rights legally binding for signatory states, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR, 1966) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR, 1966) built on each other. Using legal systems such as the European Court of Human Rights (Nuhija & Deari, 2020; Joseph, 2022; Marston, 1993), the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR, 1950) further established a regional framework for enforcing civil and political rights.

#### Challenges in Defining Human Rights Universally

Scholars and legislators argue the universality of human rights due to cultural, religious, and political differences, even if everyone agrees on human rights values. Some academics contend that Western countries force their ideas of human rights upon other countries, which fuels charges of neocolonialism (LAW, 2018). Others underline that human rights are dynamic and must change to represent different societal values (Datio et al., 2023).

A significant obstacle results from the absence of a generally accepted definition. Patterson (2024) claims that "no single, universally agreed definition of a human rights-based approach" exists, let alone a consensus on its application across many circumstances. The argument over individual vs. collective rights is especially divisive since some legal systems prioritize personal liberties while others stress rights based on communities (Mahzabin, 2022).

### **3.4.1. The Role of the European Union in Human Rights Definition and Promotion**

Human rights have been included in the European Union (EU) foreign policy and development aid programs, especially in areas like Jordan and Lebanon. The 2000 EU Charter of Fundamental Rights offers a legal framework binding member states to uphold human rights in many political, social, and economic spheres (Nuhija & Deari, 2020; Hepple, 2001). Making the charter legally binding (Nuhija & Deari, 2020; Ziller, 2019), the Lisbon Treaty (2009) strengthened the EU's will to uphold human rights even more.

Utilizing the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR), which supports democratic governance, gender equality, and civil society involvement, the EU advances human rights in its development assistance policies (Mahzabin, 2022). However, the efficacy of these policies is hotly contested since some recipient states see them as compromises of national sovereignty (Mahzabin, 2022).

In analyzing this, academically, the concept and development of human rights is a complicated and contested mix of legal, philosophical, cultural, and political dynamics. This evidence is discussed alongside the body of literature regarding the EU's involvement in Jordan and Lebanon. This evidence emphasises the tension between normative aspiration and political practice, universalism and cultural specificity, and formal rights and practical measures.

This research adds to the existing literature that recognizes the multi-civilizational foundations of human rights (see Brems, 2021; NUHijA & Deari, 2020), such as the Western enlightenment values (e.g., Locke, Rousseau, Kant) and non-Western traditions (e.g., Confucianism and Islamic ethics). Philosophical justification in natural law and free law became positivised through the Instrument of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), following the covenants, part of a planetary 'moral metamorphosis'<sup>22</sup> (Marston, 1993) corroborated in Joseph (2022).

This shift from aspirational ethical norms to enforceable legal instruments set the stage for international courts and mechanisms underpinning global human rights frameworks—especially in Europe. However, as Habermas (1990) has shown, the validity of these latter frameworks can only be derived from more than mere legal positivism: from

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<sup>22</sup> ) The transformative and fundamental shift in human values, ethics, and responsibility comprehension to cover the entire world and the correlated systems.

communicative-activeness or deliberative communicative discourse and democratic participation—an observation especially relevant when evaluating externally-induced rights paradigms in fragile states.

### **3.4.2. Legal Typology and the Generational Struggle**

Though using the three generations of human rights is still common in legal scholarship (Joseph, 2022; LAW, 2018), the categorization is increasingly debated as a simplifying and reductionist approach to the interrelation of rights. In Jordan and Lebanon, second and third generation rights (socioeconomic and collective) are often the most important due to their centrality in preserving social stability, development, and post-conflict resilience – a message also expressed in Hussain (2014) and the EU's operational attention on economic and social rights.

This critique resonates with Benhabib's (2004) call for cosmopolitanism, arguing as she does for the invocation of cosmopolitan ethics and practices that would reclaim the indivisibility of rights (see also SassonLeon 2018) and the need to rethink membership, citizenship, and entitlement: over an age of migration, precarity, and overlapping sovereignties.

### **3.4.3 Universalism vs. Cultural Relativism**

The duality between universalism and cultural relativism still lies among the most enduring controversies of the human rights literature. Researchers such as Patterson (2024), Mahzabin (2022), and Datio et al. (2023) underscore the plural readings as expressions of rights in Islamic, postcolonial, and indigenous contexts.

Similarly, the Arab Charter on Human Rights and the Universal Islamic Declaration of Human Rights seek to reconcile global benchmarks with regional and religious legal norms. These endeavors affirm that human rights are not static but situated in cultural and historical contexts, an argument reinforced by Habermas' focus on intercultural translation and Benhabib's call for porous legal boundaries and moral universalism.

The EU has been central to formalising human rights as a policy project and legal obligation, through the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights and the Lisbon Treaty (Ziller, 2019; Hepple, 2001).

Beyond its frontiers, EIDHR has proven to be paramount in enhancing the role of civil society, gender equality, and judicial revision in its partner countries such as Jordan and Lebanon (Chase & Hamzawy, 2013; Wouters et al., 2016).

Mahzabin (2022) and others raise legitimate criticisms about different ways of seeing the conditionality as external sovereignty intrusion—when there is a transnational nature of rights conditionality not locally endorsed, perhaps the architects are correct in seeing it as such; however, apparently, it is more complex than this. This is illustrated in the reluctance of receiving governments to fully implement politically difficult reforms when economic and refugee pressures outweigh normative obligations.

### **3.4.4 Thematic Reflections and Forward-Looking Approaches**

The current complexities of human rights advocacy require real-time, interdisciplinary models. From this study and the extant literature, three forward-looking imperatives can be identified:

#### **1. Conceptual Flexibility**

Human rights concepts must evolve to fulfill emerging realities — digital rights, climate justice, and algorithmic discrimination. Datio et al. (2018) support semantic and legal flexibility to permit rights paradigms to flex without surrendering normative consistency.

#### **2. Operational Coherence**

The EU's selective human rights strand—especially in MENA settings—calls for moving from top-down diplomacy to grassroots engagement. As history from Nigeria and South Africa makes clear, when we do not depoliticize human rights, it causes legitimacy gaps and elite manipulation.

#### **3. Integrated Rights Promotion**

Integrating the sectors is necessary to effectively promote human rights—merging civil and political rights with economic and social entitlements. This is all the more pertinent in fragile or aid-dependent states, where rights enforcement is closely associated with delivering basic services and institutional continuity. Similar arguments have been developed by Benhabib (2004), who emphasizes the necessity of ethical governance and the institutional re-embedding of rights in local contexts.

Thus, the development of human rights is neither linear nor unilateral; just like any philosophical or legal endeavor, it is dialectical with philosophical inspirations and legal aspirations mingling with what is practicable and achievable. International and regional actors—most notably the EU—do a lot to stabilize the architecture of rights protection. However, their contributions are always affected by domestic politics, economic vulnerability, and cultural backlash.

In Jordan and Lebanon, the pledge of human rights is still snagged on issues of governance, inequality, and the geopolitical edge. In the future, the legitimacy and impact of any human rights architecture would be premised on its capacity to mediate universal norms with culturally specific experience, legal obligation with realization, and international leverage with local traction.

Indeed, as Habermas and Benhabib both argue, the prospects of human rights rest not only in enforcement but also in generating public conversation, institutional capacity building, and the ethos of inclusion that will be necessary to convert laws into live social options.

### **3.4.5 Human Rights and State Sovereignty**

Defining human rights presents one of the most recurring conundrums since the conflict exists between state sovereignty and international human rights standards. Although international treaties bind states to defend human rights, some governments oppose outside pressure, contending that human rights should be understood in local cultural and legal environments (LAW, 2018).

The United Nations' Responsibility to Protect (R2P) theory clearly shows this argument since it permits worldwide intervention in cases of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity. Although supporters contend that R2P stops human rights violations, detractors assert that it is frequently used to support military operations motivated by geopolitical considerations instead of real humanitarian concerns (Nuhija & Deari, 2020).

Consequently, the definition of human rights is complex and debatable, influenced by political philosophies, legal traditions, and cultural values. Although international treaties, including the UDHR, ICCPR, and ICESCR, create a framework for human rights, regional adaptations and practical implementation and interpretation remain open

for discussion. The European Union's involvement in human rights promotion using development aid in Jordan and Lebanon reflects this complexity since attempts to enforce universal rights sometimes interact with national sovereignty and cultural diversity. Going forward, a more inclusive and context-sensitive strategy will be required to ensure human rights remain a valuable and efficient instrument for world development and government.

Looking at how human rights, sovereignty, and international development intersect, the contribution reminds us that the tension between universal human rights and state sovereignty is, and remains, one of those challenges in international law, postcolonial governance, and aid governance. Placed within the legal, political, and regional realities of countries like Jordan and Lebanon, this contradiction becomes more than visible; it is also a core aspect of understanding the operationalization of rights in fragile or semi-authoritarian contexts.

#### **3.4.6. Power Sovereignty and the Universality of Rights: A Continuing Tension**

The tension between universal human rights norms and the concept of state sovereignty has become one of the central issues in global governance. As LAW (2018) and Nuhija & Deari (2020) point out, most states claim that human rights should be interpreted in the light of local cultural, religious, and/ or legal traditions—at least in Islamic and postcolonial contexts. The Arab Charter on Human Rights and the Universal Islamic Declaration of Human Rights draw inspiration from regional legal philosophies and are attempts to domesticate global norms.

In practice, this tension has been reflected in Jordan and Lebanon, the two countries examined in this article, as foreign pressure, in particular from actors such as the EU, to promote rights concerning refugees, gender equality, or reform of the judiciary, is seen as undermining national sovereignty or cultural authenticity. This is consistent with Benhabib's (2004) critique of the 'democratic dilemma' – how NAMAs can facilitate universal moral claims without undermining local democratic agency or cultures of self-determination.

### **3.4.7. The Responsibility to Protect (R2P): Panel 2: Between Protection and Power Politics**

Developed in preventing crimes against humanity, the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) doctrine has been criticized for being selectively applied as an instrument of politics. As the findings reveal and as Simonen (2012) demonstrates, in interventions in Myanmar, Ivory Coast, and Syria, R2P has repeatedly served as a smokescreen for strategic or partisan impulses rather than principled humanism.

A similar criticism is raised by Nuhija & Deari (2020), who emphasize that R2P is frequently a contested terrain between global norms and geopolitical realpolitik. This is the case of the Middle East, including countries such as Jordan and Lebanon: rhetoric based on R2P is mainly considered suspect, notably if voiced by Western actors with military and economic stakes in the region. Habermas (1990) focuses on legitimacy through communicative action, which is important, as interventions without discursive justification undermine their normative credibility.

### **3.4.8. EU Development Aid: Conditionality of Rights and Pushback against Sovereigns**

The rights-based approach of the EU, reflected in mechanisms such as the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) and the conditionalities of development aid, aims at including human rights promotion in external relations. Research by Wouters et al. (2016) and Dandashly (2021) draws attention to the EU's encouragement of civil society, the rule of law, and anti-corruption measures in Jordan and Lebanon. However, both governments have repeatedly resisted, invoking national independence and cultural sovereignty.

This is part of a broader trend, in which conditionality linked to aid is considered by many to be neocolonial or ideologically motivated, particularly when political or economic interests (e.g., migration management, regional security) are seen to be given priority over normative coherence. Jordan's constraints on NGOs and Lebanon's sectarian impasse embody how local elites oppose external rights agendas—a kind of what Benhabib refers to as “sovereign defensiveness” in the process of norm diffusion.

### **3.4.9. Rights in Contexts: Situating Rights in Postcolonial and Refugee-Hosting States**

Mahzabin (2022) and Datio et al. (2023) observed that human rights frameworks should be context-responsive, anchored within local legal cultures and communal norms rather than transplanted through one-fits-all templates. This is particularly the case in Jordan and Lebanon, where economic pressures, refugee loads, and weak provision of public services all weigh against the possibility of enacting aspirational rights agendas.

The results establish that human rights should be pragmatically bargained, not idealistically exhibited. Not that right is relative, but to note — as would Habermas — that legitimacy does not derive from the reality of reactive acceptance (the technocratic road). Moreover, as Benhabib emphasizes, global governance results from encounters between universal norms, democratic deliberation, and cultural specificity.

In order to narrow the understanding-implementation gap, international players (notably the EU) need to:

- Realize that postcolonial sensitivities and legal pluralism do not practise moral paternalism.
- Here is the origin of my belief: Apply the international standard of human rights consistently, and not opportunistically (through R2P, for instance);
- Build relationships with domestic civil society rather than working with elite-driven compliance.
- Move from normative pronouncements to inclusive, context-embedded programming as development actors, where empowerment, not conditionality, is the engine of change.

These tactics indicate the shifting scholarly consensus that rights legitimacy does not stem solely from universality, but from participation, transparency, and responsiveness- the building blocks for robust democratic governance.

The results affirm that implementing human rights is a political act, influenced by power distributions, strategic concerns, and underlying cultural controversies. The precarious balance between sovereignty, foreign leverage, and domestic weakness that characterizes Jordan and Lebanon underscores the futility of technocratic or conditional rights promotion.

As the salvaged literature and case evidence infer, the future of human rights work is more likely to be in the form of a participatory, pluralist, and context-sensitive framework that treads the muddy path between norm distributive and national control, between global aspiration and sovereign autonomy.

In this regard, Habermas's legitimacy is based on discourse, and Benhabib's cosmopolitanism is rooted in recognizing democratic difference, which provides important theoretical moorings. Only this kind of balanced, inclusive model can help human rights go from a pledge on paper to being truly practised, and this is especially true in geopolitically complex countries like Jordan and Lebanon.

### **3.5. Types of Human Rights**

Regardless of country, ethnicity, gender, or socioeconomic level, all people share human rights as basic entitlements. Usually based on purpose and scope, these rights ensure individuals' civil, political, economic, social, and cultural well-being. Human rights can be categorized depending on their legal and philosophical underpinnings; Kamruzzaman and Das (2016) claim that they are fundamental in preserving dignity and equality among people.

Over time, legal and political debate has helped classify human rights into several categories. Emphasizing the need for worldwide respect of civil, political, economic, and social rights, the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) set the groundwork for contemporary human rights systems. Later on, the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) expanded on these categories, guaranteeing legal protections and state responsibilities (Meckled-Garcia, 2018). Knowing these rights and their categories enables one to build a structure for evaluating human rights policies and their execution.

#### **3.5.1. Civil and Political Rights**

Mainly emphasizing individual liberties and defenses against government overreach, civil and political rights guarantee that people may enjoy personal liberties and engage in the political process free from unjustifiable intervention. Civil and political rights, according to Kamruzzaman and Das (2016), are fundamental and comprise life, freedom of

expression, the right to a fair trial, and freedom from torture. National constitutions and international treaties, including the ICCPR, often contain these rights, which are sometimes embodied.

Emphasizing the need for civil rights in the framework of criminal procedures, Rakipova, Pidgorodynska, and Melnyk (2023) contend that victims' communication rights in legal processes are crucial for guaranteeing justice. They underline as fundamental elements of human rights protections in legal systems communicative guarantees. Furthermore, these rights let people pursue legal remedies and hold authorities responsible for violations (Rakipova et al., 2023). Indeed, criminal procedures (like fair trials, legal representation, etc.) are part of civil and political rights protected under international frameworks such as the ICCPR.

Civil rights and fundamental liberties like freedom of thought, religion, and privacy are also covered. The European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) holds that these liberties form the pillar of democratic countries, guaranteeing that people may use them without too much constraint (Meckled-Garcia, 2018). Political rights also ensure government involvement, covering the right to vote and run for office (Steer et al., 2008). These liberties are essential for shaping political institutions and governments to be answerable for their deeds.

Civil and political rights are applied differently, depending on where you live. Some authoritarian governments severely restrict these liberties, which results in political imprisonment, censorship, and stifling of dissent. In areas of political unrest where governments defend limits on liberties under the pretext of national security, the erosion of civil liberties has been extensively recorded (Kamruzzaman & Das, 2016)..

**Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights: Foundations, Debates, and Regional Challenges**  
Economic, social, and cultural (ESC) rights are crucial to dignity, equality, and the basis of a humane society. They include rights to education, health care, housing, social security, work, and participation in cultural life. These rights are guaranteed by the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), which obligates states to fulfill these rights gradually according to their available resources (Kamruzzaman & Das, 2016).

The ESC rights are rooted in the European Enlightenment and post-Enlightenment thought. The term's origin is derived from the French philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau,

who in *The Social Contract* argued that freedom requires not just the absence of interference, but a set of conditions for individuals to reach their full potential. Rousseau's emphasis on general will and collective responsibility provided an early foundation for social rights like education and welfare.

The German critics of liberalism, especially Karl Marx, played an important role in this context and pointed out that liberalism was limited in relying on a notion of negative freedom that pretended that the structural inequalities in the economy did not exist. Marx stressed that formal freedoms amount to nothing without material conditions — food, shelter, and work. These critiques were seminal to contemporary understanding that civil liberties cannot fulfil their respective functions unless paired with ESC rights (Meckled-Garcia, 2018).

Within Turkish modernity, the late Ottoman and early Republican intellectual Ziya Gökalp stressed the need for cultural solidarity and national education (*millî terbiye*) as state obligations. His perspective was also reflected in early Turkish social policies, where education and social welfare were imbued with national unity (Mardin, 2019). These different philosophical traditions converge on a single point: that rights must be protected and enabled — a principle now expressed in positive state obligations.

### **3.5.2. The ESC Rights Nature and Complexity**

As explained by Meckled-Garcia (2018), one of the key characteristics of ESC rights is the positive obligations they impose: governments must actively take clear and concrete steps to provide health, education, and welfare services. This starkly contrasts with civil rights, which typically demand that states not interfere (negative obligations). However, critics say that framing ESC rights as “progressive” lets states delay action indefinitely in the name of scarce resources.

The right to health, for example, is not limited to clinical care, but encompasses clean water, nutrition, and a healthy environment — all of which require vast infrastructure and forward-looking planning. This is similar to different aspects of the right to education: making school available and ensuring quality, equity, and cultural relevance.

### **3.5.3. Implementation Gaps: An Illustration from Jordan and Lebanon**

Jordan and Lebanon have ratified the ICESCR, but its implementation remains uneven. In Jordan, access to education and healthcare services has been widened in cities, though serious gaps persist, particularly in rural and refugee communities and among Syrian refugees. UNICEF (2023) established that around 40% of Syrian refugee children in Jordan do not access formalised schooling despite Jordan's provision of free education. In addition, since 2019, Lebanon has experienced an economic collapse that has wiped out decades of ESC progress. According to the World Bank (2023), this has left over 80% of the population living below the poverty line and basic needs—food, electricity, and healthcare—ever more unattainable. While the right to education and social protection are enshrined in the constitution, fiscal constraints and corruption impede institutional capacity. For instance, Lebanon's public education system is ill-resourced to cope with expanding enrollment, particularly among refugee groups (Human Rights Watch, 2022).

### **3.5.4. The Overlooked Importance of Cultural Rights**

Even more so than economic, social, and civil rights, cultural rights are important to ensure dignity for everyone in culturally diverse and pluralistic societies. These are the rights to participate in cultural life, express an identity, visit holy sites, and enjoy the benefits of scientific progress (Rakipova, Pidgorodynska, & Melnyk, 2023). In Lebanon, for example, rights linked to cultural expression are often part of a politicized debate and the country's current disintegration process facing during the last decades, the multicultural nation of the Middle-East divided among its sectarian groups, While in Jordan, the country home of Circassians and Chechens, these minority groups seek inclusion in the broader national narrative. These rights are particularly relevant in refugee contexts, where displaced peoples risk losing linguistic and cultural heritage. Although the normative framework for ESC rights is well established, translating these rights into tangible outcomes in fragile or economically challenged states demands more than international ratification. It requires political will, fair policy design, and continuous investment in human capital. Philosophical traditions remind us that rights must be not just declared but also delivered, and that society's commitment to economic and cultural rights is the real litmus test of its human rights integrity.

### **3.6. Solidarity Rights**

Often known as collective rights, solidarity rights stress group-based entitlements that go beyond personal claims. Among these rights are those to environmental protection, self-determination, and development. According to Kamruzzaman and Das (2016), global inequality can be addressed, and international cooperation can be promoted through solidarity rights. They draw attention to the need for declarations like the Declaration on the Right to Development (DRD), which acknowledges development as a fundamental human right needing group efforts.

Given the differences in the world economy, the right to development becomes especially important. To reach sustainable development and poverty reduction, developing nations sometimes call for more financial and technological support from developed countries (Kamruzzaman & Das, 2016). Emphasizing the interdependence of countries in both social and economic progress, the United Nations has underlined the need for worldwide cooperation in reaching development goals.

Comparably, environmental rights have become more important in recent years as environmental damage and climate change raise increasing worries. Increasingly acknowledged as a human right, the right to a healthy environment calls for governments to enact laws safeguarding natural resources and avoiding environmental damage (Meckled-Garcia, 2018). International agreements reflecting the worldwide dedication to environmental sustainability and human rights protection are the Paris Agreement on Climate Change.

#### **3.6.1. Legal Perspectives on Human Rights Categorization**

Furthermore, categorized depending on their enforceability and implementation systems, human rights are categorized. Human rights debate always revolves around the difference between justiciable and non-justiciable rights. Meckled-Garcia (2018) claims that some rights—including protection from arbitrary detention and freedom of expression—are directly enforceable via legal systems. Conversely, economic rights—such as access to education and healthcare—often call for policy-driven execution and resource allocation. Kamruzzaman and Das (2016) also set apart country-specific from universal human rights. Although international treaties offer a shared norm, every country customizes human rights protections depending on its legal history and political environment. This

fluctuation emphasizes human rights' dynamic character and the need for flexible legal systems.

Still, how human rights are categorized—civil and political, economic and social, and solidarity—helps give their purpose and importance a disciplined perspective. While social and economic rights guarantee fair access to resources, civil and political rights guard individual liberties and legal protections. Conversely, solidarity rights center on group welfare and international cooperation. Legal academics, including Meckled-Garcia (2018) and Rakipova et al. (2023), offer insightful analyses of how these rights are used and the responsibilities they place on governments. Knowing these categories helps to create thorough policies supporting social justice and human dignity, by means of which they can be achieved.

### **3.7. The Economic Rights**

Human rights debate naturally includes economic rights, which cover the rights to work, fair salaries, social security, and access to resources necessary for decent living. Economic rights sometimes get less attention than civil and political rights, even if they are acknowledged in international charters. Based on several points of view—legal, economic, and sociopolitical—this review synthesizes the body of current material on economic rights.

Since the Enlightenment, economic rights have changed quite dramatically. As John Locke's political philosophy demonstrated, classical liberal ideas stressed personal autonomy and property rights (Beukes & Fourie, 1988). Early liberal ideas, on the other hand, concentrated on political liberties and mainly neglected social and economic rights. With socialist ideas, especially Karl Marx's criticism of capitalism, which underlined the necessity of state intervention to guarantee fair access to economic resources, this changed (Beukes & Fourie, 1988).

#### **3.7.1 Economic Rights in International Charters**

Economic rights have lately been increasingly acknowledged in international human rights instruments. Emphasizing fair wages, social security, and an appropriate living level, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) contains clauses for economic rights. Further institutionalizing these rights, the International Covenant on Economic,

Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) committed signatory governments to guarantee economic justice (Beukes & Fourie, 1988). Nevertheless, many nations—including South Africa—have historically prioritized civil and political rights while ignoring economic rights (Beukes & Fourie, 1988).

### **3.7.2 The Role of the State in Economic Rights**

Unlike the libertarian approach that supports little state intervention, economic rights call for active state participation. Socialist traditions contend that only equitable wealth and resource distribution will enable economic freedom (Beukes & Fourie, 1988). Conversely, liberal traditions stress free-market ideas and property rights, frequently leading to economic inequalities (Beukes & Fourie, 1988).

Economic rights interact with development policies, particularly in areas that depend on foreign aid. Particularly in countries like Jordan and Lebanon, the European Union (EU) includes economic rights in its foreign aid policies. Emphasizing job creation, social welfare programs, and economic stabilization as basic in preserving economic rights, EU development aid stresses. Critics counter that economic assistance often comes with restrictions on national sovereignty, hindering the realization of true economic independence (Hamid, 2016).

Long addressing economic rights, religious traditions have. In Islamic finance, Shariah rules—which mandate wealth distribution via zakat (charitable giving) and prohibit exploitative financial practices—closely relate to economic rights (Bin-Armia et al., 2024). Shariah-based economic policies applied in Aceh, Indonesia, show the difficulty of juggling religious demands with financial reality. Though meant to improve economic justice, some policies have resulted in social inequalities and financial inefficiencies (Bin-Armia et al., 2024).

As a researcher, future EU policy must aim to bridge the gap between rhetorical commitments and practical enforcement. Aid must conditionally respond to violations and empower institutions and communities to transform the landscape of rights enforcement.

### **3.7.3 Economic Rights and Gender Equality**

In talks about gender equality, economic rights especially hold great relevance. In many societies, legal and cultural obstacles still restrict women's access to financial resources. Islamic legal systems award women financial independence and property ownership, among other economic rights (Naseem, 2011). However, these rights are sometimes limited by societal conventions and biased legal interpretations (Naseem, 2011). Closing this divide calls for both legislative change and changes in cultural perceptions.

By guaranteeing access to capital and fair financial practices, financial institutions significantly help to preserve economic rights. Still, regulatory systems can either help or impede economic justice. The case of Aceh's Islamic banking reform under Law No. 11 of 2018 shows how financial policies affect economic rights. Though meant to improve Shariah compliance, the law unintentionally lowered market competitiveness, so restricting economic possibilities for underprivileged groups (Bin-Armia et al., 2024).

### **3.7.4 Challenges in Implementing Economic Rights**

Notwithstanding general awareness, economic rights present several difficulties for their execution:

- Many economic rights are outlined in international treaties but lack strong enforcement systems (Beukes & Fourie, 1988).
- Economic Inequality: The continuation of economic inequalities compromises access to fundamental economic rights (Hamid, 2016).
- Policy conflicts result from governments sometimes prioritizing economic growth over fair wealth distribution (Bin-Armia et al., 2024).
- In some areas, traditional and religious rules restrict the realization of economic rights for particular groups, especially women, so cultural and religious constraints are imposed (Naseem, 2011).

Hence, sustainable development and social justice depend on economic rights since they are fundamental. Although national policies and international frameworks help to institutionalize these rights, significant difficulties still exist. Dealing with these calls requires a multifarious strategy combining cultural change, economic policies, and legal reforms. Although the EU's contribution to advancing economic rights via development

aid is important, it should align with the sociopolitical situations of recipient nations such as Jordan and Lebanon.

### **3.7.5 The Political and Civil Rights**

The framework of democratic societies and the defense of personal liberties depend on political and civil rights. These rights guarantee people's involvement in political life and protect their liberties from too strong government intervention (Emerson & Haber, 1953). Often embodied in national constitutions and international treaties, civil rights comprise the right to life, liberty, and security of person, besides the liberties of thought, conscience, religion, speech, and association (Nowak, 2000). Conversely, political rights ensure people's capacity to engage in governance by utilizing voting and running for office (Fredman, 2008).

The difference between economic and social rights and civil and political ones is often hotly contested. Whereas economic and social rights are "positive rights" needing government action, civil and political rights have historically been classified as "negative rights" requiring government non-interference (Bouandel, 1997).

Some academics contend, however, that this difference is vague since the implementation of civil and political rights also requires government expenditure in legal and institutional structures (Alston, 1991). For example, the right to a fair trial calls for independent courts, qualified judges, and legal aid—all of which call for state funds (Hill, 1992). This perspective emphasizes how closely human rights are interdependent and the need for a comprehensive application strategy (Fredman, 2008).

#### **The Concept of Civil Rights**

Civil rights are the guarantees that underlie equal protection under the law and shield people from discriminatory treatment (Steiner, Alston & Goodman, 2008). Among these rights are defense against arbitrary detention, cruel treatment, and torture (Búrca, 2005). Regardless of an individual's background—race, religion, gender, or political belief—civil rights are universal, inalienable, and must be defended (Eide, 2000). Moreover, by preserving court independence and the rule of law, civil rights guarantee access to justice (Foster, 2003).

One important aspect of civil rights is their contribution to advancing equality prior to legislation (Nickel, 1987). Lack of strong civil rights protections sometimes results in

systematic discrimination and exclusion of underprivileged groups. Racial, ethnic, and religious minorities are denied equal access to public services, education, and employment opportunities in many societies, perpetuating cycles of poverty and exclusion (Fredman, 2008). Thus, a working democracy and social stability depend on guarantees of civil rights (Gauri, 2005).

### **3.7.6 Political Rights and Democratic Participation**

Political rights let people participate in their nation's governance either personally or through elected officials (Fredman, 2008). Among these rights are those to vote, freedom of political expression, and the ability to join political parties and groups (Sen, 1999). Essential to democratic government, political rights let people hold governments responsible and impact policy decisions (Feldman, 2002).

The right to free and fair elections is a fundamental political right that guarantees governments get their power from the people's will (Steiner, Alston & Goodman, 2008). To maintain democratic legitimacy, elections have to be open, inclusive, and free from manipulation and fraud (Kenner, 2003). Furthermore, the right to political participation goes beyond voting to include freedom of assembly, so empowering people to plan demonstrations, rallies, and campaigns of advocacy (Fredman, 2008).

However, political rights, especially in authoritarian governments, are sometimes suppressed. Governments might limit political liberties by censorship, electoral fraud, and persecution of political opponents (Sen, 1999). As many nations where people are deprived of the ability to express dissent or challenge government policies show, the denial of political rights compromises democracy and fuels social upheaval (Eide, 2000).

#### **Challenges to Civil and Political Rights**

Civil and political rights enforcement present many difficulties. Government repression—where authoritarian governments limit the liberties of the press, speech, and assembly to uphold control—is one of the main challenges (Foster, 2003). Often justified under the cover of national security, the decline of political rights results in more monitoring, censorship, and restrictions on political activity (Fredman, 2008).

Political rights are further challenged by economic disparity as well. Wealth differences in many developing nations limit political involvement since lower-income groups encounter obstacles to voting and running for office (Alston, 1991). Political campaigns

and the impact of wealthy elites sometimes distort democratic processes in favor of the privileged, lowering political representation for underprivileged groups (Kenner, 2003). Furthermore, wars and conflicts severely affect political and civil rights. Under the cover of preserving order, governments may impose martial law, suspend democratic institutions, and violate human rights during periods of armed conflict (Rousseau, 2019). The restriction of civil liberties during war, including the detention of political dissidents and the repression of free speech, shows how security concerns can compromise fundamental rights (Steiner, Alston & Goodman, 2008).

#### Civil and Political Rights in Jordan and Lebanon

Regarding defending political and civil rights, Jordan and Lebanon show different situations. Constitutional monarchy Jordan has worked to increase political involvement by legislative changes and electoral reforms (World Commission, 2021). Still, limitations on press freedom, political opposition, and restrictions on civil society organizations provide ongoing difficulties (Bouandel, 1997). With laws punishing criticism of the monarchy and state institutions, the government clearly controls political expression (Fredman, 2008).

Greater political liberties are provided by Lebanon, a parliamentary democracy, than by many of its regional counterparts. Still, corruption and sectarian divisions sometimes compromise political rights (Alston, 1991). Though intended to guarantee representation for many religious groups, the power-sharing system in Lebanon has undermined responsibility and helped to cause political inertia (Kenner, 2003). Weak state institutions and the impact of non-governmental entities, including armed militias, also compromise civil rights in Lebanon (Steer, Alston & Goodman, 2008).

#### The Role of International Organizations

The encouragement of civil and political rights depends on international organizations. Using instruments such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the United Nations creates legal frameworks to defend these rights (Nowak, 2000). Using development aid and diplomatic pressure to support democratic governance, the European Union (EU) also includes human rights issues in its foreign policy (Eide, 2000).

By recording abuses, increasing awareness, and pressing governments to follow international standards, non-governmental organizations (NGRs) like Human Rights

Watch and Amnesty International advocate for civil and political rights (Fredman, 2008). These groups support grassroots movements for democratic reform and offer legal aid to victims of violations of their rights (Steiner, Alston & Goodman, 2008).

Still, protecting personal liberties and running democratic societies depend on civil and political rights. These rights include those to life, liberty, freedom of expression, and political engagement. While political rights allow active participation in governance and decision-making procedures, civil rights guard against discrimination and guarantee equality before the law. Government persecution, economic disparity, and armed conflicts are among the difficulties in executing these rights. Jordan and Lebanon represent both advancement and constraints regarding civil and political liberties. Advocacy for these rights and holding governments responsible depend much on international organizations and civil society groups. Working with states, international institutions, and civil society will help ensure that civil and political rights are fully realized, promoting democratic government and social justice.

Analyzing the findings through the lens of both contemporary realities and foundational literature, it becomes evident that human rights—civil, political, economic, social, cultural, and solidarity rights—cannot be adequately understood or implemented without an appreciation of their integrated, evolving, and context-specific nature. Nowhere is this more evident than in weak, aid-reliant states like Jordan and Lebanon, where rights discourse intersects with sovereignty, geopolitical interests, and sociocultural heterogeneity.

### **3.8 Human Rights and the Rule of Law: Civil and Political Rights in Postcolonial States**

Legal justifiability of civil and political rights—often dubbed “first-generation rights”—has long been seen as foundational for democratic governance. Scholars like Nowak (2000) and Fredman (2008) stress that these rights depend not only on their legal codification but on the institutional autonomy and political will to protect them. However, as Foster (2003) and Gauri (2005) point out, reform without legitimacy or civic empowerment is hollow.

Jordan’s cautious constitutional reforms—like those in Tunisia—have not translated into substantive press freedom or political participation (Fredman, 2008; Bouandel, 1997).

Lebanon, meanwhile, while more formally pluralistic, is paralyzed by sectarian clientelism that undermines fair access to political rights (Kenner, 2003). These findings echo Alston's (1991) argument that rights lose meaning when monopolized by identity elites or political factions.

This mirrors Habermas's (1990) central critique of postmodernist relativism: true democratization and rights realization require communicative rationality—a public sphere where legitimacy arises through deliberation, not dominance or fragmentation.

#### Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights: Structural Gaps and Fragile Delivery

ESC rights, often labeled “second-generation,” demand active state involvement and budgetary commitment. The work of Meckled-Garcia (2018) and Kamruzzaman & Das (2016) underscores the false binary between legal and economic rights—they are interdependent and equally binding in theory, even if treated as aspirational in practice.

In both Jordan and Lebanon, the failure to adequately deliver ESC rights—such as education, healthcare, and employment—is directly tied to austerity, refugee burdens, and weak governance. As UNICEF (2023) and Human Rights Watch (2022) report, this failure is particularly stark for refugee populations. The World Bank (2023) confirms that Lebanon's economic collapse has turned ESC rights into unattainable ideals for large population segments.

Echoing Hamid (2016), external aid, particularly EU assistance, may be well-intentioned but counterproductive if conditionalities undermine domestic priorities or enforce neoliberal austerity without building capacity. As Habermas might argue, aid must function dialogically—not unilaterally—to foster shared political legitimacy.

#### Cultural Rights: The Overlooked Axis of Dignity and Identity

Cultural rights—often minimized in global rights discourse—are central to identity, belonging, and peace, especially in multicultural or post-conflict societies. The findings confirm the arguments of Rakipova et al. (2023) that cultural rights are vulnerable in contexts of displacement and marginalization.

In Lebanon, political identity often eclipses cultural diversity, entrenching sectarian privilege. In Jordan, minority groups such as Circassians and Chechens highlight the tension between national narratives and egalitarian cultural recognition. Cultural marginalization, if ignored, undermines national cohesion and trust.

These insights resonate with Benhabib's (2004) defense of porous boundaries and cosmopolitan pluralism, which affirms both the right of states to regulate and the moral obligation to protect cultural identities within democratic frameworks.

#### Solidarity Rights: Development, Peace, and Environmental Justice

Third-generation or solidarity rights—such as the rights to development, peace, and a clean environment—represent the collective dimension of justice in an interconnected world. As Kamruzzaman & Das (2016) and Meckled-Garcia (2018) argue, these rights challenge the Global North to recognize its obligations beyond borders.

In the cases of Jordan and Lebanon, these rights are tied to climate vulnerability, refugee care, and chronic underdevelopment. Nevertheless, as noted, donor strategies often fall short—undermined by strategic interests, short-termism, or insufficient support for institutional reform. Here, Habermas's critique of instrumental reason applies: when solidarity becomes strategy, the ethical core of rights is diluted.

#### Justiciability and Legal Hierarchies: The Enforcement Gap

Echoing Alston (1991) and Fredman (2008), the findings illustrate a persistent hierarchy between “hard” and “soft” rights—with ESC rights relegated to non-justiciable status. Meckled-Garcia (2018) and Rakipova et al. (2023) call this a legal and moral failing, as rights should not be enforced based on their political convenience.

A key challenge in Jordan and Lebanon is the absence of legal mechanisms or constitutional guarantees for enforcing ESC rights. Without institutional empowerment and rights-based budgeting, such rights remain rhetorical rather than practical.

### **3.8.1 Intersectionality: Gender, Religion, and Economic Access**

Gendered discrimination remains a major intersectional obstacle. As Naseem (2011) and Bin-Armia et al. (2024) note, patriarchal interpretations of law and social norms often undercut gender-based legal protections. In religiously influenced legal systems, such as those in Jordan, economic justice is often filtered through religious authority—e.g., Shariah-based banking in Aceh.

Benhabib's (2004) critique of procedural exclusion and her defense of democratic inclusion are especially relevant here: without gendered and cultural voices at the table, rights regimes cannot achieve legitimacy or justice.

The findings affirm a comprehensive and typologically rich understanding of human rights—more sensitive to regional political realities and historical asymmetries than abstract normative prescriptions. For Jordan and Lebanon, sustainable rights reform must involve:

- Bridging normative structures and local application through inclusive deliberation (Habermas, 1990).
- Making all rights enforceable, not selectively applied based on political convenience.
- Recognizing the dignity of cultural and minority identities as part of national cohesion (Benhabib, 2004).
- Structuring aid and development around cooperation, empowerment, and institutional investment—not merely conditionality.

Ultimately, the measure of a human rights regime lies not in its theoretical definitions but in its ability to deliver rights that are experienced equitably, sustainably, and inclusively by all.

### **3.8.2 Treaties Ratified by Jordan and Lebanon in Political-Economic Agreements**

Emphasizing trade liberalization, investment protection, and international norm compliance, Jordan and Lebanon have signed several political-economic agreements with regional and international partners. These treaties cover trade, investment, human rights, and environmental protection, significantly altering both countries' political and economic environments.

## **3.9 Jordan's Political and Economic Treaties**

### **1. Trade Agreements and Economic Integration**

Jordan has signed multiple treaties aimed at advancing trade liberalization and economic cooperation. Establishing a free trade area between Jordan, Egypt, Morocco, and Tunisia, the Aghadir Agreement (2004) helped to ease economic integration with the European Union (EU) (European Commission, 2004). Aiming to boost intra-Arab trade by lowering tariffs and trade barriers, Jordan is also a member of the Greater Arab Free Trade Area

(GAFTA) (1997) (Gafti, & Péridy, 2008), aiming to enhance intra-Arab trade by reducing tariffs and trade barriers (Abedini, & Péridy, 2008).

A pillar of Jordan's economic policy has also been bilateral trade agreements. Approved to remove tariffs and improve trade prospects between the two nations, the Jordan–Canada Free Trade Agreement (2009). Comparably, the Jordan–Singapore Free Trade Agreement (2004) aims to increase bilateral economic cooperation (Enterprise Singapore, 2004).

## **2. Investment Treaties**

To support foreign investment, Jordan has signed many Bilateral Investment Treaties (BITs) with nations including Germany, Italy, and the United Kingdom (UNCTAD, n.d.). These treaties give investors guarantees of equitable treatment, expropriation compensation, and dispute resolution systems.

Key tools encouraging economic cooperation, guaranteeing mutual investment protection, and supporting fair treatment of investors are the Bilateral Investment Treaty (2002) between Jordan and Lebanon.

## **3. International Human Rights and Environmental Treaties**

Jordan's dedication to world standards is shown by the several human rights and environmental agreements it has approved. Various socioeconomic rights are acknowledged and safeguarded by the United Nations in the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (1975). Likewise, Jordan is a member of the United Nations Convention against Corruption (2005) to more successfully prevent and fight corruption (Country Profile: Jordan, September 2006).

Regarding environmental problems, Jordan is a signatory to several treaties covering biodiversity, climate change, hazardous waste, and ozone layer protection (Country Profile: Jordan, September 2006). These accords match Jordan's policies with environmental governance and global sustainability norms.

#### **4. Legal Status of International Treaties in Jordan**

The Jordanian Constitution (1952) leaves open the definition of the rank of international treaties within the national legal system, which results in court interpretation. Nevertheless, when disputes develop, especially concerning human rights and investment agreements, Jordanian courts have confirmed the superiority of international treaties over domestic legislation (TOUBAT, 2018). Treaties influencing citizens' rights or imposing financial obligations on the state must be approved by parliament according to Article 33 of the Constitution (TOUBAT, 2018).

### **3.10 Lebanon's Political and Economic Treaties**

#### **1. Trade Agreements and Economic Integration**

To improve its financial situation, Lebanon has signed many free trade agreements. Establishing a trade framework between Lebanon and EFTA states (Switzerland, Liechtenstein, Norway, and Iceland), the 2004 Free Trade Agreement (EFTA) set the stage. The 2005 Free Trade Agreement between Lebanon and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) strengthened their trade relations even more (UNCTAD, 2004).

Like Jordan, Lebanon is a GAFTA (2005) member hoping to create a regional free trade zone (League of Arab States, 2005). This membership emphasizes Lebanon's dedication to the economic cooperation of Arab countries.

#### **2. Investment Treaties**

Among the several nations, Lebanon has signed Bilateral Investment Treaties (BITs) with Armenia, Austria, and Bahrain. These treaties provide investors with legal protections against expropriation and unfair treatment, thereby shielding their assets. (UNCTAD, 2024)

Furthermore, Lebanon and Jordan have a Bilateral Investment Treaty (2002), which underlines the economic cooperation between the two countries.

#### **3. International Human Rights and Environmental Treaties**

In line with international legal standards, Lebanon has promised different human rights and anti-corruption treaties. Approved to boost legal systems against corruption, the United Nations Convention against Corruption (2009) protects socioeconomic rights and

guarantees Lebanon's adherence to international human rights standards (United Nations, 1993). The International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (1972) guards against injustice.

Furthermore, Lebanon has approved environmental treaties, including the Chemical Weapons Convention (2008) (OPCW, 2008). Furthermore, the Biological Weapons Convention (1975) reaffirms pledges to environmental protection and non-proliferation (Arms Control Association, 2024).

#### **4. Legal Status of International Treaties in Lebanon**

Like Jordan's, Lebanon's attitude toward international treaties is one in which treaties must be included in national law. Particularly in concerns of human rights and investment protection, Lebanese courts acknowledge international treaties as above national laws (TOUBAT, 2018). However, political issues about permanent settlement responsibilities have caused Lebanon to be reluctant to ratify some refugee-related treaties, including the 1951 Refugee Convention (Janmyr, 2017).

### **3.11 Bilateral and Regional Agreements between Jordan and Lebanon**

Several bilateral agreements signed by Jordan and Lebanon aim to improve political and economic ties. Among these are:

- **Bilateral Commercial Agreement:** This agreement lowers tariffs and specifies trade policies, fostering economic cooperation between the two nations (WTI, 2002).

Designed to improve tourism sector cooperation and cultural exchange between Jordan and Lebanon (FAO, 2008), the Tourism Cooperation Agreement

Both Jordan and Lebanon are members of the Great Arab Free Trade Area (GAFTA), so they gain from lower tariffs and trade restrictions throughout the Arab world (Abedini & Péridy, 2008).

Thus, Jordan and Lebanon have actively taken part in international political-economic treaties, promoting trade liberalization, investment protection, and respect of international standards. Jordan has prioritized free trade agreements and investment treaties; Lebanon has sought economic integration with Gulf and European markets. Both nations guarantee congruence with international legal systems when maintaining environmental treaties and

human rights pledges. Their bilateral agreements support their shared political and economic goals by so enhancing economic cooperation.

Findings on the political-economic treaties signed by Jordan and Lebanon provide an overview of the changing political-economic landscape of economic liberalization, foreign investment, human rights obligations, and regional cooperation. When viewed in relation to existing literature and prior research, several themes emerge that help support these agreements and flesh out their meaning and limitations.

### **3.12 Liberalization of Trade and Regional Economic Integration**

The accession of Jordan and Lebanon to integration and trade agreements like the GAFTA, the Aghadir, and the EFTA shows what Abedini and Péridy (2008) referred to as the emergence of a process of intra-Arab economic integration focusing on foreign investment attraction and the modernization of the domestic economy. These protocols, and particularly the Jordan–EU Association Agreement, have been perceived as instruments of economic liberalism and institutional upgrading.

Hamid (2016), though, issued a cautionary note about the neoliberal implications of such treaties, where trade liberalization would be accompanied by social welfare “downward adjustment,” dependency on aid and foreign markets will be solidified and local producers will be further marginalized, rendering national economies more vulnerable to the ravages of globalization—an apt critique in the case of Lebanon’s post-2019 economic disintegration (World Bank, 2023).

### **3.13 Investment Treaties and Economic Sovereignty**

The BITs concluded by both nations with the EU and Gulf countries are consistent with the conclusions of UNCTAD (2024) that BITs are meant to secure investors' willingness to invest by deployment of non-discrimination and dispute settlement. These treaties frequently feature ISDS (Investor-State Dispute Settlement) mechanisms, which set off sovereignty fears. Toubat (2018) indicated that Jordan is where the complexity in the constitution, concerning the precedence of international treaties over domestic laws, could arise, particularly in situations where treaty obligations are at odds with the public interest or fiscal priorities.

This is also consistent with the work of Bin-Armia et al. (2024), who demonstrated in Aceh how financial and investment reform motivated by international commitments can have unintended social and economic impacts when they do not consider local realities sufficiently.

### **3.14 Human Rights and Environmental Obligations in Economic Agreements**

Integrating human rights and environmental provisions in trade agreements is a trend that is increasingly labelled as sustainable development diplomacy, following Meckled-Garcia's (2018) contention that economic rights and environmental rights are associated with broader civil and social entitlements. Jordan and Lebanon's ratification of the ICESCR and UNCAC shows an acceptance of international standards.

However, investigations of Kamruzzaman and Das (2016) and Rakipova et al. (2023) contend that while it is an indication that there is a will to succeed implementation gaps remain due to resource limitations, political opposition and legal inconsistencies—in this regard, the inability of Lebanon to realize socioeconomic rights during its fiscal crisis or the struggles of Jordan to fulfil education and health promises for refugees (UNICEF, 2023).

### **3.15 International Commitments and Domestic Sovereignty in Conflict**

The domestic ratification of international treaties often works as a double-edged sword, a topic reflected on by Law (2018) and Nuhija & Deari (2020), who criticized resistance built on national sovereignty, triggered by the perception of foreign intervention, for example, based on refugee protection treaties or enforcement mechanisms to realize R2P. One such clear-cut case is Lebanon's hesitation to accede to the 1951 Refugee Convention, consistent with Janmyr (2017), who argued that sectarian balance and political instability condition treaty ratification.

Additionally, the engagement of the European Union in supporting democracy promotion and the empowerment of rights enforcement in Jordan and Lebanon, as discussed by Chase & Hamzawy (2013) shows the complexity of this support, and the push and pull of appeals to universal rights and the demands of national level politics, particularly about judicial reform, corruption and civil liberties.

### **3.16 Bilateral Cooperation and Political Signaling**

Bilateral Jordan-Lebanon deals, such as those related to tourism and trade, were showcased as soft diplomacy tools to strengthen regional relations and enable political signaling beyond the economic dividends. The analysis of Steiner, Alston, and Goodman (2008) contributes to emphasizing that such bilateral cooperation may also favour civil and cultural rights, more especially if the tourism agreements entail the protection of cultural heritage and cultural identity.

These results show that the treaties concluded by Jordan and Lebanon evidence a strategic commitment to the global economic order and international norms, but domestic political considerations, legal constraints, and an implementation gap qualify it. Previous research suggests that achieving human rights realization, economic development, or environmental governance may require more than simply ratifying a treaty; it may require developed institutions, social accountability, and context-sensitive solutions. From the African perspective, future regional and international cooperation should rely on inclusive frameworks that go beyond sovereignty and international law and which enable a balancing act of national sovereignty and international treaty obligations so that treaties will satisfy both their economic promises and human rights aspirations.

### **Summary of Part Three**

Part Three presented the concerns of human rights and the conditionality of respecting them to obtain EU development aid, highlighting the complexities and legal obligations that arise when states or international actors such as the EU intervene in conflict-affected areas. This multidimensional perspective provides deeper insight into how political, civil, and socioeconomic rights are applied, challenged, or advanced in both stable and crisis contexts.

The chapter explained the EU's engagement in human rights during armed conflicts according to the European Convention on Human Rights, emphasizing the protection of civilians and prevention of threats to fundamental rights. It also reviewed the EU's Responsibility to Protect (R2P) as a global commitment to prevent genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity, while showing how EU development aid contributes to supporting socioeconomic rights in recipient countries.

Additionally, it examined the human rights situation in Jordan and Lebanon based on national and international reports on issues such as human trafficking, political participation, and treaty implementation. It also outlined major political and economic treaties of both countries, including trade agreements, investment treaties, international human rights and environmental commitments, along with the legal status of these treaties and regional or bilateral agreements between Jordan and Lebanon.

## **PART FOUR**

### **EU Economic strategies assistance under the theory of modernization**

The EU has played an increasingly important and active role within global economic governance, not least in supporting the economic dimensions of sustainable development through more systematic and structured approaches and partnerships. Such interventions typically align with the development narrative that suggests economic and institutional development in developing countries can be accelerated through targeted external assistance, trade liberalization, and the dissemination of knowledge and technology (Bassanini et al., 2001). Reflecting this viewpoint, there is a strong cooperation between the EU and its internal institutions, alongside international organizations like OECD that promotes the development of economic policies directed towards common global development problems while also reinforcing its own geopolitical power (Noaksson & Jacobsson, 2003).

In Czech, the EU's strategic development moved from relief to achieve sustainable development. The transition of the EU's response from emergency humanitarian aid to a resilience-based, multi-instrument approach signals a deliberate change in the approach of its external engagement. We can see this transition in the:

- Humanitarian assistance (via ECHO)
- Bilateral cooperation (under ENI/NDICI)
- Macro-financial assistance (MFA)
- European Union Regional Trust Fund (MADAD)
- EU Compacts and the 3RP

This resonates with Anholt & Sinatti's gloss (2020) on "resilience" as a dual-use concept, for development and security enforcement, enabling the EU to help host countries to the same extent that the EU may subtly contain migration and displacement in the near future.

This part utilizes the analytical lens of modernization theory to evaluate EU aid modalities. This relies on the premise that in low-and middle-income countries, institutional strengthening, economic diversification, and policy coherence are prerequisites for progress (Zarghami, 2025). The role of the EU is less about providing

aid and more about helping those nations develop the capacity and institutional framework to integrate themselves into the market and promote good governance practices reminiscent of the development pathway of OECD nations. These strategies are informed by the view that a structured approach to reform and economic liberalization will bring partner countries in line with benchmarks consistent with the global economy and will thus lead to resilience and growth over the long term and a more politically stable environment.

A key dimension of this strategic approach is the EU's differentiated support to countries behind on region-specific challenges. Jordan and Lebanon, among others, currently benefit from an array of EU economic assistance programs adapted to their specific socio-political contexts. These programs combine concessional financing, trade facilitation, and technical cooperation to build resilience, address refugee pressures, and promote inclusive growth (Aleassa, 2024; Fakoussa & Kabis-Kechrid, 2020a). The EU's engagement in these countries is indicative of a much larger goal for the EU to secure stability in the region through development in accordance with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), most notably SDG 8 and SDG 17, which call for decent work and economic growth and global partnerships, respectively.

This chapter explores the patterns of EU economic policies, their (theoretical) basis, realization, and effects in Jordan and Lebanon. It starts by analyzing EU and OECD countries by contribution, moves through the broader support of developing country nations, and ends with programs and their results on the specific case. This analysis emphasizes the role of modernization theory in shaping EU external economic relations as a continuous guiding paradigm.

#### **4.1. The Role of the EU and OECD Countries in the EU Economic Strategies**

The contributions of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and its members have long fed into developing and implementing EU economic strategies. Not only have both the EU and OECD served as policy designers, as international institutions inscribed in a dense political, economic, and epistemic networks, they have also acted as ideational actors; generating, translating, and diffusing knowledge and recommendations to configure national and regional governance (Krause, 2015). The

cooperation between the two institutions can be understood through the lens of modernization theory, which argues that economic and institutional development follows a linear path where states can catch up through concentrated reforms and equitable integration in global or otherwise established systems.

The OECD has served as a powerhouse of economic knowledge, seeking to shape governance and reform agendas for its member governments through peer review, policy benchmarking, and cross-national statistical analyses. It is not a body that explicitly sets rules in the traditional legal sense, but instead governs through persuasion and expertise and soft law mechanisms (Jacobsson & Vifell, 2003). One of the best-known examples of this can-do orientation is the OECD's Jobs Strategy, introduced in the 1990s. It advocates for deregulated labor markets, flexible wage systems, and investing in human capital, driven by what has been referred to as a "hard economics" (Hemerijck & Visser, 2001).

The OECD's control over the EU is manifested in its alignment of priorities. For example, OECD-derived frameworks on labor flexibility, wage indexation, and tax-benefit systems have become enshrined in EU institutions (CEC, 1999). Indeed, the OECD's analytical departments often are the birthplace of policy frameworks that the EU subsequently repackages and implements. Because of this, scholars have described OECD as a "truth-teller" organization whose expert-driven prescriptions, underpinned by economic orthodoxy, would then be funneled through EU institutional processes to yield strategies with greater political viability (Borrás & Jacobsson, 2004).

#### **4.1.1. The EU as a Practical Political Entity**

In contrast to the OECD, the EU operates in a political context that needs to negotiate a broad range of interests — member states, social partners, and the institutional EU. Therefore, the EU is frequently described as a "political organization" with an instrumental and pragmatic mindset on knowledge. The EU is not just about one-size-fits-all solutions; the EU tailors policy recommendations to the diverse socio-political environments of its members and partner countries (CEC, 2002). Such divergences are especially apparent in the realm of employment policy, where the EU's European Employment Strategy (EES) differs from the OECD's Jobs Strategy in being more

explicitly pro-inclusive, more focused on job quality, and more attuned to soft economic considerations.

Launched in 1997, the EES was a reaction to the limitations of the OECD's prescriptive models. Unlike the OECD, which favours deregulatory labor reforms, the EES integrates social partners and addresses equity concerns, decent work, and sustainable employment growth. These themes resonate with the EU's broad commitment to modernization as a multi-dimensional process of economic efficiency, social cohesion, and democratic legitimacy (Marcussen, 2003).

#### **4.1.2. Divergence and Specialization**

The EU and the OECD have gradually converged over the years in specific policy analysis and development domains, despite their different logics of action. This convergence is not merely because of institutional mimicry; it reflects a strategic division of labor. OECD departments, including DELSA (Directorate for Employment, Labour and Social Affairs), produce analytical pieces that the EU's Directorate-General (DG) for employment eventually translates into EU frameworks. For example, job quality projects in the Ministry of BALSA informed the EU's Lisbon Strategy from the start, and re-emerged in OECD Ministerial meetings, a process scholars have dubbed the "idea-boomerang" (Jacobsson & Vifell, 2003).

This mutual production of knowledge uncovers a deeper layer of interdependence. The OECD provides scientific legitimacy and analytical depth, while the EU provides capacity to implement and political buy-in in addition to regional integration tools. OECD officials have recognized this dynamic and expressed satisfaction that the EU has adopted and operationalized their material to pursue broader global governance objectives (Armingeon & Beyeler, 2003).

#### **4.1.3. Soft Law and Policy Diffusion**

Soft law instruments are also heavily relied on by the OECD and the EU to influence policy. Peer review mechanisms, joint conferences, statistical exchanges, and monitoring tools are indirect but can be instruments of powerful policy harmonization. At its core, the OECD uses multilateral surveillance and benchmarking tools (e.g., the Economic Outlooks and Country Reviews) to provide structure to discussions of national policies (OECD, 2000). In the EU, one can describe using tools such as the Joint Employment Report (JEP) and the National Reform Programs (NRPs) to set national policies in line with EU-wide goals.

These soft governance tools are the essence of the modernization process. Global standards can be adapted to local conditions, and voluntary compliance can be induced by understanding the shortcut of reputation and knowledge translation. OECD "responsibilization" through peer review highlights a contrast with the EU's more political and participatory path to policy reform in this sense.

#### **4.1.4. Markets, Competition, and Epistemic Authority**

It is not without competition between the EU and the OECD. Until this point, the OECD dominated international labor market reform discourse almost entirely. However, the emergence of the EU, as a norm-setting actor in social policy, has threatened this dominance. Some EU officials have claimed that they are now ahead of the OECD regarding agenda-setting on equity, gender, and social inclusion (CEC 1999). On the contrary, OECD representatives seem to insist on being the most demanding economic analysts, and as such, still the ideational authority (Noaksson & Jacobsson, 2003).

This rivalry has affected the internal dynamics of the organization as well. The OECD's Economics Department, which has been criticized for its economic orthodoxy, has been urged to embrace the social and equity aspects symbolized by the EU. With the new Secretary-General in place in 1999, the response of the United Nations began to shift toward integrated socioeconomic strategies. It was an attempt to frame similar demands by the EU for policy frameworks that were consistent with modernization principles, that

is, they had to be framed in such a way that they balanced growth and inclusion, flexibility and protection, and efficiency and equity (Noaksson & Jacobsson, 2003).

#### **4.2. Implications for the Developing World**

Here, OECD and the EU working together is not just an alignment of internal policy but also a policy that directly affects low-income countries. Both institutions also use aid, technical assistance, and trade agreements to promote their policy paradigms. The EU engages with the developing world in a way that indirectly draws them into influencing OECD frameworks, a priority was regulatory reform, education policy, and public financial management. The EU often relies on OECD diagnostics and models to inform external development strategies in these fields (Noaksson & Jacobsson, 2003).

In modernization theory terms, this relationship represents a top-down diffusion of institutional models that, from what we might call OECD-EU best practice, are considered "successful" (Renaud et al., 2022). Especially this transfer of such models is frequently justified through the superiority of technocratic governance and evidence-based policy (despite critical references towards limited adaptability in local contexts; Hemerijck & Visser, 2001; Armingeon & Beyeler, 2003).

Therefore, OECD countries and institutions have multiple and versatile impacts on EU economic strategies. In that sense, the OECD brings together expert knowledge, analytical rigor, and blueprints for policy change grounded in economic orthodoxy. The EU then translates the insights from these reports into politically palatable forms, in line with EU values of coherence, solidarity, and inclusion. Such co-evolution serves a common agenda of modernization that involves structural reforms, the amassing of human capital, and the convergence of institutional practices across Europe and beyond.

Despite notable competition and divergence (understood broadly as differences in epistemological approaches and policy content), the growing alignment between the OECD and EU indicates an increasingly maturing partnership. Moreover, they shape global economic governance by advocating a composite model of modernization in which efficiency and equity matter—an evolution from compartmentalization into the domain of isolationist expertise to one of integrated strategy design and execution.

The analysis of the role of the OECD and the EU member states in shaping EU economic strategies adds a lot to modernization, policy diffusion, and soft governance.

#### **4.2.1. Knowledge-Based Authority as Soft Power: The OECD and the politics of global competition in education**

The OECD's status as an ideational actor and generator of “soft law” is in line with previous research such as Jacobsson and Vifell (2003) and Borrás and Jacobsson (2004), which underscored the institution's influence by way of peer reviews, policy benchmarking, and epistemic authority rather than coercion. This reflects how international financial institutions also stimulate narratives of development which are not extant by grounding them in “best practices,” as seen in the research on EU-Jordan-Lebanon relations.

The OECD's Jobs Strategy, which promotes deregulation and flexible labor markets, embodies the “hard economics” model (Hemerijck & Visser, 2001). This is akin to what some scholars have criticized as economically efficient but socially blind policies, particularly in Lebanon, where state breakdown and economic disparity interfere with these reforms (Dandashly, 2021; World Bank, 2023).

#### **4.2.2. The EU's Pragmatism and the Political Economy of Implementing Policy**

Nevertheless, the EU's approach in its European Employment Strategy (EES), which stresses inclusiveness, the quality of jobs, and participatory governance, more closely relates to the values espoused in the EU's external policy engagements in Jordan and Lebanon, as evidenced by Chase & Hamzawy (2013) and Wouters et al. (2016). For instance, in those countries, EU interventions broadly define modernization in terms of economic rationality and the empowering capacity of civil society, human rights, and institutional robustness.

Owing to this departure from the gestural logic of the OECD, I propose that a multi-dimensional modernization model, as argued by Marcussen (2003), which links growth with social cohesion and democratic legitimacy, has to be learnt in development contexts, where political fragility erodes the reform impact.

The soft governance instruments used by both the OECD and the EU—peer review mechanisms, standard statistical benchmarks, and policy learning platforms, etc.—resonate with similar soft law techniques employed in the ENP and EU assistance systems in Jordan and Lebanon (e.g., Joint Employment Reports, National Reform Programs, and country progress assessments).

These tools are a process of “responsibilization” - the countries should (not must) reform. It is heavily reliant in politically sensitive contexts such as Lebanon, where abandoning persons to conditions which they fear may cause harm, given the fragility of the state and lack of trust in the public and government (Janmyr, 2017; Freedom House, 2023)

#### **4.2.3. Modernization theory and the transfer of institutional models**

The interaction between the OECD and the EU indeed resembles modernization theory's logic, which holds that states can "catch up" through a set of reforms and by paralleling "best practice" cases. This rationale is also found in how EU aid conditionality in Jordan and Lebanon builds a basis for legal, institutional, and human rights reforms within the broader frame of modernization (Mahzabin, 2022; Nuhija & Deari, 2020).

However, as Renaud et al. and Armingeon & Beyeler (2003) have observed, the local adaptability is still behind. Forcing or pushing OECD-informed solutions (tax-benefit reforms, labor markets' flexibilisation) onto countries with widely different institutional capacities and social norms raises opposition in practice, although facilitated by the EU and the UN, who disseminate them (Janmyr, 2017), as illustrated by Lebanon's refusal of refugee conventions despite EU and UN lobbying.

#### **4.2.4. EU–OECD Convergence and the Global South**

In particular, the co-to-ordering of EU and OECD strategies (OECD provides the analytics and the EU the implementation) directly impacts economic governance in the Global South, including the Middle Eastern partner states. This institution promotes what Krause (2015) terms epistemic governance, in which the knowledge production is itself a kind of power.

Concerning employment, education, and fiscal reforms, the EU's reliance on OECD blueprints when formulating its policies in Jordan and Lebanon illustrates how this policy coherence interferes with national sovereignty. It echoes the questions of the legitimacy and agency of the externalized policy prescriptions posed in earlier studies (LAW, 2018; Mahzabin, 2022) of the fairness of such 'development'.

#### **4.2.5. Fairness, Contestation, and the Epistemic Contest**

The increasing contestation over the epistemic authority to define the truth agenda along these dimensions—especially in social inclusion and gender—is similar to the debates in human rights literature about the Western normative overreach and accusations of "policy colonization" (Nuhija & Deari, 2020; LAW, 2018). The EU's attempts to mainstream social objectives (fairness, decent work) contrast with traditional economic orthodoxy of the OECD, although this is also slowly changing.

This shift is indicative of a global move from technocratic approaches to a more holistic approach to strategizing, a core tenet promoted by contemporary international development agendas, such as the SDGs. It also highlights the need for context-sensitive and inclusive policy making—a lesson that various other studies on human rights governance and policy coherence in Jordan and Lebanon have pointed to time and time again.

These results show that the OECD-EU relationship is a fine example of a refined co-production of localization in global economic governance, one where the two institutions clearly perform different, mutually reinforcing tasks – the OECD by offering analytical legitimacy, the EU by exercising operational authority and normative depth. The impact of these approaches in Jordan and Lebanon illustrates more general institutional diffusion and policy transfer processes worldwide, which face the challenge of reconciling modernization objectives with equity, local ownership, and political legitimacy. This theme runs across the previous literature. This dynamic of cooperation and competition is also likely to continue to define macro-economic policies internationally, particularly in aid-dependent and structural adjustment countries, supporting the case for participatory and flexible governance mechanisms.

#### **4.3. The EU Economic Strategies Support for Developing Countries (Focus on Jordan and Lebanon)**

According to Aleassa (2024), it is already clear that the EU has been leaning towards providing a range of strategic partnerships through responding to emerging challenges faced by its immediate neighborhood, which would help promote economic development or stability. This approach is especially notable in its economic engagement with Jordan and Lebanon, the two nations at the heart of the EU's response to the Syrian refugee crisis. To provide immediate humanitarian support and encourage broader structural reforms and long-term socioeconomic resilience, the EP works through frameworks such as the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) and the 2016 EU Compacts. However, while Jordan has largely followed the EU's strategic goals, Lebanon's fractured government and institutional weaknesses have presented significant obstacles to the EU approach.

Now in the Middle East, the EU is implementing that with its engagement with places like Jordan and Lebanon — a shift toward resilience, a concept that focuses on building local capacities, reforming institutions, and containing migration — to support countries in neighboring regions. Anholt and Sinatti (2020) also point out that “resilience” is a concept used by the EU as both a development and security concept, applied to forced displacement contexts so that the EU can manage these contexts while protecting its migration aspirations. I argue that this resilience approach seeks to externalize migration management, using the expectation of donors to attract host countries to retain refugees through financial and technical support.

The paradigm shift in EU policy is reflected in the Compacts signed with Jordan and Lebanon in 2016. These pacts aimed to unite refugee protection with development and trade, incentivizing host nations to grant access to education and legal employment for Syrian refugees. However, Jordan and Lebanon's political and institutional dynamics have led to very different results.

#### **4.4. Jordan: A Key Partner for the United States**

##### **4.4.1. Policy Alignment and Institutional Collaboration**

Jordan has long and constructive relationships with the EU, founded on mutual strategic interests and policy coherence<sup>23</sup>. Jordan is one of the EU's most actively engaged partners in the region, thanks to agreements like the EU-Jordan Association Agreement and the Advanced Status Partnership. The Jordanian government has a centralized decision-making system and an open climate towards external assistance, making it a perfect candidate for introducing EU-style resilience-based strategies (Press and Information Team of the Delegation to Jordan, 2023).

The EU–Jordan Compact, which was signed at the London Conference in 2016, was also a landmark development in this partnership. The Compact linked EU financial and trade assistance to Jordan's promise to incorporate Syrian refugees into its formal economy and school system. The terms of the agreement included the EU's promise of up to 1.9 billion euros in grants and concessional loans, and Jordan's commitment to provide 200,000 work permits to Syrian refugees, expanding their access to public services (Directorate-General for Neighborhood and Enlargement Negotiations, 2022).

##### **4.4.2. Economic and Trade Benefits**

A central driver of the Compact was easing the EU's rules of origin (RoO)<sup>24</sup> that would allow Jordanian products manufactured in selected industrial zones to enter the EU

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<sup>23</sup> ) Jordan – EU relationship is a long-standing robust relationship that was established through signing the “Association Agreement” in 1997, which came into force in 2002. This agreement offers a suitable political dialogue framework to enable developing close political correlations, create a constant trade liberalization of capital, services, and goods. Moreover, this association enhances a balance social and economic relationship between the parties.

<sup>24</sup> ) EU's rules of origin (RoO) is an international trade document that determines the goods' economic nationality; to implement the correct trade policies and preferential tariffs in accordance to trade agreements.

markets with lower local content requirements. The measure aimed to boost Jordan's exports, lure investment, and create jobs for both Jordanians and Syrians.

While this was a slight increase in trade, Jordanian exports to the EU increased from €19.2 million in 2018 to €56 million in 2019, as Jordan endeavored to successfully use trade as a development instrument (Directorate-General for Neighborhood and Enlargement Negotiations, 2022). This all-economic approach of this project was strengthened by the support granted by EU funds via the Economic Resilience Initiative (ERI), with our projects focused on infrastructure, energy, and private sector development.

#### **4.4.3. Integration with the Labor Market and Education**

The most notable result of the Jordan Compact has been in labor market integration. According to the International Labor Organization (ILO, 2019), more than 200,000 work permits have been issued to Syrian refugees since adopting the Compact<sup>25</sup>. This includes employment centers, vocational training programs, and partnerships with the private sector to improve the livelihoods of refugees.

In education, progress has also been substantial. As far back as 2022, over 145,000 Syrian children were enrolled in Jordanian public schools (Directorate-General for Neighborhood and Enlargement Negotiations, 2022). The EU's funding has been instrumental in expanding school infrastructure, training teachers, and enhancing access to formal and non-formal education.

#### **4.4.4. Structure Constraints and Challenges**

These accomplishments aside, some challenges remain. However, Jordan has aligned itself with EU expectations, refugee employment remains dominated by low-skilled sectors, including agriculture and construction, frequently under cumbersome conditions

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<sup>25</sup> ) Jordan compact of 2016 established a policy for granting work permits for the Syrian refugees inside Jordan. In exchange, Jordan benefits from finance and trade support from the EU. The Jordanian Compact of 2016 sought to create legal pathways of employment under international funding for the work permit fees.

(Anholt & Sinatti, 2020). Many Syrian refugees are hesitant to join formal labor markets owing to low wages, adverse working conditions, and legal uncertainties. Gender disparities are also significant, with barriers to employment higher for Syrian women.

#### **4.5. Lebanon: Constraints on Governance and Policy Incoherence**

##### **4.5.1. Simplistic Solutions in a Complex Landscape**

Unlike Jordan, implementing the EU-Lebanon Compact in Lebanon has been complicated<sup>26</sup>. The Compact was similar to Jordan's in its framework of offering financial assistance from the EU in return for including refugees. However, it never took off, primarily because of the fragility and inefficacy of Lebanon's state institutions and its fragmented sectarian system of governance (Fakhoury, 2020).

Lebanon does not have a centralized framework for refugee policy, unlike Jordan. The non-encampment policy and reliance on informal labor markets had weakened the state's ability to regulate or support the employment of Syrian refugees effectively. The government also denied the condition of refugee labor integration to trade benefits, restricting the EU's capacity to use positive conditionality as a policy instrument (Lavenex & Fakhoury, 2021).

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<sup>26</sup> ) Lebanon Compact of 2016 is a conference agreement by donors with support from the EU to foster work opportunities of Syrian refugees in Lebanon. By the virtue of this agreement, Lebanon committed to improve the economic conditions of Syrian refugees in Lebanon, but did not commit to grant work permits or job creation. Lebanon compact encountered various challenges including the growing influx of Syrian refugees to Lebanon, increasing economic and financial instability, inadequate follow up and implementation mechanisms, and hindering the rule of law and human rights.

#### **4.5.2. Economic Crisis and Donor Fatigue**

Lebanon's deepening economic crisis, worsened by the 2020 explosion at the Port of Beirut <sup>27</sup> and the COVID-19 pandemic, has also sapped institutional capacity. As the currency plummeted by more than 90 percent and poverty rates soared, the Lebanese government was unable to provide even a modicum of basic services, let alone execute complex development programs. While the EU supported humanitarian and stabilization purposes in Lebanon, it was reluctant to provide broader forms of budgetary support because of concerns related to corruption and mismanagement (Fakhoury, 2020).

According to Anholt and Sinatti (2020), it must be noted that the EU's resilience discourse presupposes some degree of institutional stability and policy coherence, and those were absent in Lebanon. Consequently, the EU's approach failed to achieve structural transformation or promote any self-reliance for refugees.

#### **4.5.3. Civil Society as Policy Interlocutor**

As the state became largely co-opted, the EU adjusted its emphasis to support civil society and local municipalities in Lebanon. The role of these actors is critical in service delivery, enhancing social cohesion, and implementing EU-funded initiatives. Their efforts were, however, hampered by a lack of coordination, political interference, and the lack of resources (Fakhoury, 2020).

The EU's focus on local governance and NGOs as part of its investment in Lebanon reflects both a pragmatic adaptation to the local political realities and the limits of a resilience-based, one-size-fits-all policy concept. The EU's ability to initiate substantive change is limited without a functioning state apparatus.

The different outcomes of EU Compacts with Jordan and Lebanon give important lessons for the EU's future development strategies. The Compact has shown in Jordan that resilience-based approaches can achieve real impact with the right political will,

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<sup>27</sup> ) On August 24<sup>th</sup> of 2020, the Port of Beirut was exploded and caused 218 casualties and over 7000 injured people from 22 different countries. This major explosion was due to the ignition of 2750 tonnes of ammonium nitrate.

institutional capacity, and a degree of donor coordination. Jordan has registered progress beyond humanitarian assistance and towards a more sustainable development trajectory thanks to the integration of trade, labor, and education initiatives under the EU's consistent support.

Hence, the same strategy failed in Lebanon, hobbled by governance breakdowns, political fragmentation, and economic collapse<sup>28</sup>. The case shows how conditionality and externalization are limited when local partners are unable or unwilling to implement agreed reforms (Lavenex & Fakhoury, 2021).

Therefore, the EU's economic roles in Jordan and Lebanon illustrate the need for context-sensitive development methodology. However, resilience and conditionality can work in stable political environments (Jordan), but they tend to be ineffective in fragile or dysfunctional states (Lebanon). To its external development policy in middle-income countries, the EU should internalize the lessons learned in development cooperation: decisions need to be made concerning the common opinion only after weighing potential risks against expected rewards and solvability, moving on as per those outcomes.

In analyzing this, the cross-sectorial review of the economic strategies of the EU for developing countries – Jordan and Lebanon – elucidates specific issues in international coordination among more and less developed countries, namely conditionality, resilience discourse, and institutional capacity. Based on both the reported results and the relevant previous literature stored, several key findings can be obtained:

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<sup>28</sup> ) The Lebanon Compact of 2016 failed due to the pervasive corruption, deep political divisions, and the disconnections and discrepancy between Lebanon realities and the international support. Despite that the compact offered financial aid for supporting refugees in Lebanon, this aid was insufficient to face the political stalemate, state fragility, and economic collapse, which undermined Lebanon social fabric and infrastructure.

#### **4.6. Resilience as policy framework: the EU's strategic re-orientation in external engagement**

The move of the EU from one-off humanitarian support towards long-term resilience-building in its neighborhood policy mirrors a similar trend in development governance. This is a development, but also a security, story, and framework to manage migration, secure borders, and depopulate EU territory, as underlined in (Anholt & Sinatti, 2020; Fakhoury, 2020). These findings are consistent with those of Law (2018) and Nuhija & Deari (2020) regarding the EU's inclination to externalize its policy preferences using strategic aid conditionality<sup>29</sup>.

The 2016 EU Compacts for Jordan and Lebanon (and the rationale that underpins them) feature this twin-track agenda. They intersect development tools (aid, education, labor integration) with migration control objectives, under the banner of resilience—framing host states as not only aid recipients (with a derivation of conditionality) but also gatekeepers of regional stability.

##### **4.6.1. Jordan: Exemplary Case of a Strategically Aligned Institutional Synergy**

Three interrelated factors explain why Jordan has been able to operationalize the EU Compact<sup>30</sup>:

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<sup>29</sup> ) The EU is using a strategic aid policy and conditionality to foster the preference of its policy, including the good governance and democracy, through connecting the financial aid to achieve particular goals and conditions, and to influence the receiving state's behavior through sanctions and incentives.

<sup>30</sup> ) Jordan compact of 2016 was successful due to clarity of negotiations versus objectives. The main objectives were to address the host communities and refugees needs, and to create new job opportunities and integrate the Syrian refugees into the labor market. Also, securing the support and aid for achieving these goals, and giving access for Syrian refugees to the EU trade benefits were among these goals. The main success factor of Jordan Compact were the ability to establish legal framework regarding the Syrian refugees employment in Jordanian labor market, strong personal correlations, ability to address the host communities and refugees needs, as well as, Jordan facilitated the process of obtaining work permits for Syrian refugees.

1. Policy coherence and centralized governance (Press and Information Team, 2023)
2. Institutional reform-mindedness and coordination with donors
3. Trust-based relationships with Western actors (EU and US) (Directorate-General for Neighborhood, 2022)

This facilitative structural and political setting allowed Jordan to operationalize EU backing – in the form of, inter alia:

- Granting 200,000+ work permits for Syrian refugees (ILO, 2019)
- Providing access to public schooling for over 145,000 Syrian children (DG NEAR, 2022)
- Exports to the EU under preferential rules of origin between 2018 (€19.2M) and 2019 (€56M), growing in absolute value.

These results concur with what Chase & Hamzawy (2013) and Aleassa (2024) have stressed: that EU aid is most efficient where stable institutions and common policy goals characterize partner countries.

#### **4.6.2. Lebanon: The Prison of Fragility and the Constraints of Conditionality**

Lebanon serves as a counterfactual to Jordan. For all of its aspirations, the EU-Lebanon Compact fell<sup>31</sup> flat because of:

- Disjointed governance and sectarian politics (Fakhoury, 2020)
- Weak quality of refugee policy frameworks and lack of centralised governance (Lavenex & Fakhoury, 2021)

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<sup>31</sup> ) The EU-Lebanon Compact of 2016 is an agreement signed between Lebanon and the European Union in 2016. By the virtue of this agreement , Lebanon receive financial aid and commit to provide better employment, residency, and education access for Syrian refugees. Also, Lebanon 2016 compact sought at strengthening the rule of law, governance, and economic growth in Lebanon to decrease the burden imposed due to receiving the Syrian refugees. Lebanon 2016 compact was not binding, encounter political rejection that hinder its efficiency, and lack to mechanisms of strong implementation.

- Collapse of the macro-economy, corruption, and public distrust

This confirms former research claiming that externally-driven conditionality is unrealistic in fragile contexts with non-unitary governance unable to digest and apply paradigm-shifting reform (e.g., Janmyr and Freedom House, 2017, 2023).

In addition, dependence on civil society as an intermediary, though a pragmatic adaptation, was unsuccessful because of its limited capacity, uncertain financing, and political manipulation. As found in Wouters et al. (2016), civil society can complement and enable service delivery, but is no substitute for a strategic state.

#### **4.6.3. Policy Transfer, Economic Sovereignty, and Local Contexts**

The divergent experiences in Jordan and Lebanon also provide broader critiques of other paradigms of modernization theory, which posit that institutional forms can be transferred from the Global North to the Global South via aid, technical assistance, and policy emulation.

In Jordan, the 'fit' with EU values<sup>32</sup> also facilitated the operation of modernizing mechanisms (trade policy, labor policy, educational reform) within 'enabling' structures. The same models had little traction in Lebanon, similar to the lessons of Mahzabin (2022) and Renaud et al. (2022): "best practice" models do not function under institutional incoherence or political instability.

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<sup>32</sup>) The "fit" refers to the alignment with the key EU principles, including democracy, freedom, human dignity, the human rights, and the rule of law. Alignment to these key principles and values requires from the member states to apply these values in their justice solidary, polices, legislations.

#### 4.6.4. Lessons and Future Implications

Jordan and Lebanon, as comparative case points, provide lessons of great importance:

Conditionality only works where there is state capacity and political will. In Jordan, the EU money helped spur reform and foster resilience. In Lebanon, the same conditionality foundered on the rock of governance failure.

In the same vein, *Resilience* cannot be uniformly applied. It is situation-dependent, and there is no one single strategy that would apply. Using universal frameworks (without local flexibility) is likely to result in policy inaction, as demonstrated in both Aleassa (2024) and Fakhoury (2020).

Civil society backing is not a panacea. Although local NGOs may have community-side projects, systemic change is beyond their capacity without institutional partnership. This is also true of the European Union, albeit with a trend toward municipal-level engagement in Lebanon with little structural effect. Assistance should be conditioned on governance reform. Failing to confront corruption, institutional decay, and elite capture, as in Lebanon, external assistance potentially perpetuates dependence rather than enabling local capacity.

Because of the previous studies, the EU's support of the modernization process of Jordan and Lebanon confirms the necessity of adapting the modernization strategies to the political and institutional local situations. Whereas Jordan illustrates resilience and conditionality, creating policy success, Lebanon shows these approaches working poorly in fragile contexts.

In the future, the EU (and all other development actors) needs to operate with more flexible, risk-informed strategies that combine support for structural reform with institution strengthening, trust building, and political economy analysis. It is only when resilience stops when simply a language that transformation can be more than rhetoric, but become a process of inclusive and sustainable change based on local ownership and legitimacy.

#### **4.7. The Types of Assistance Program “Jordan – Lebanon”**

The EU response to the Syrian crisis: a more multifaceted approach to Jordan and Lebanon. Since the start of the Syrian crisis, the EU has adopted a more multifaceted approach to Jordan and Lebanon, shifting from a largely humanitarian-focused engagement towards more resilience and development frameworks. These programs are framed around strategic objectives: strengthening governance, supporting socioeconomic development, and managing forced displacement. The EU response is programmatic in nature, going from humanitarian assistance to bilateral cooperation, to macro-financial assistance, and the EU Compacts and the EU Regional Trust Fund<sup>33</sup> in response to the Syrian crisis (EUTF-MADAD), and more recently, the Global Europe (NDICI)<sup>34</sup> framework. This section explores and contrasts the type and scope of EU assistance in Jordan and Lebanon, distinguishing between the similarities and differences in both design and impact.

##### **4.7.1. Humanitarian Assistance**

The EU has put forward significant humanitarian assistance to meet urgent needs arising from the refugee crisis in both countries. In Jordan, assistance provided through ECHO<sup>35</sup> includes health, education, shelter, water and sanitation, food assistance, and cash-based interventions. Over €404 million in humanitarian funding to support vulnerable refugees and host communities has been provided since 2011 (European Commission, 2023). In 2022 alone, an additional €12.5 million was allocated for that purpose, to support essential services, especially in refugee-hosting areas (Directorate-General for Neighborhood and Enlargement Negotiations, 2022).

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<sup>33</sup> ) The EUTF is a crucial instrument that is used for delivering the pledges of the EU undertaken in the conference held in London regarding the Syrian refugees empowerment and support in 2016.

<sup>34</sup> ) NDICI refers to “Neighborhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument”, which is an international tool used by the EU for achieving and fulfilling the external development policy and cooperation, peace and stability, human rights, and fosters sustainable development.

<sup>35</sup> ) ECHO stands for “European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations” which is a tool used by the EU to provide humanitarian assistance over the last 30 years.

In Lebanon, ECHO has similarly funded immediate relief. However, implementation has been more difficult due to the country's non-encampment policy, which has left many refugees in informal settlements with poor access to basic services. The political sensitivities over Syrian refugees have also complicated the process of coordinated planning and rendered the delivery of humanitarian assistance more dependent than ever on international NGOs and UN agencies.

The EU bilateral cooperation with both countries focuses on structural development and institutional strengthening. This cooperation is articulated in Jordan under the EU–Jordan Partnership Priorities (2016–2027), including governance reform, inclusive growth, and sustainable development (Press and Information Team of the Delegation to Jordan, 2023). Bilateral EU assistance, also provided by instruments such as the European Neighborhood Instrument (ENI) and NDICI, supported educational reform, the judicial sector, energy infrastructure, and the modernization of public services.

Jordan has received over €1.2 billion in bilateral aid since the onset of the Syrian crisis, notably to help the country cope with additional pressures on services and infrastructure and to pursue its own domestic reform agenda (Directorate-General for Neighborhood and Enlargement Negotiations, 2023a).

Bilateral aid, however, is included in the EU–Lebanon Partnership Priorities, but implementation has been uneven in Lebanon. Lebanon's political paralysis, pervasive corruption, and limited state capacity have stymied EU attempts to promote reform and strengthen institutions. The EU has increasingly relied on municipalities and local NGOs to carry out programs focused on education, livelihoods, and public health, particularly in areas with high concentrations of refugees.

#### **4.7.2. Macro-Financial Assistance (MFA)**

Macro-financial assistance (MFA) is a specific type of EU support dedicated to non-EU countries that are experiencing serious balance-of-payment problems, with a view to sustaining their economic stabilization and reform. Jordan has been a key recipient of MFA due to its strong cooperation with the EU and the IMF. Jordan has gotten a few MFA packages over the past decade:

- €180 million (2014) – MFA I
- €200 million (2017) – MFA II
- 2020 – MFA III • €500 million
- €200 million (2021) through the EU’s COVID-19 response

(Directorate-General for Neighborhood and Enlargement Negotiations, 2022)

Such funds have contributed to stabilizing Jordan's economy and supporting reform progress in public finance management, tax policy, labor markets, and investment climate.

In contrast, Lebanon has not secured EU macro-financial assistance following its years of political paralysis and failure to reach an agreement with the International Monetary Fund. (2020) notes that Lebanon's failure to undertake crucial economic reform and its rejection of international oversight have cast doubt on its ability to receive budgetary support or macroeconomic resources from the EU.

#### **4.7.3. The European Union Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian Crisis – MADAD**

In 2014, the EU Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian crisis (known as the MADAD Fund) was established to move from humanitarian aid in the short term to development and resilience interventions in the longer term. Through this fund, more than €2.3 billion was mobilized from the EU between 2015 and 2021, appearing to respond to the countries most impacted by the Syrian conflict, including Lebanon and Jordan (Directorate-General for Neighborhood & Enlargement Negotiations, 2023b).

In Jordan alone, the EUTF-MADAD accounted for over €512 million of funding for projects in education (including Syrian children attending public schools), livelihood (vocational training and job matching), health (supporting public hospitals), and drinking water and wastewater infrastructure (Directorate-General for Neighborhood and Enlargement Negotiations, 2022).

MADAD funding in Lebanon has facilitated school rehabilitation, teacher training, access to health services, and support to municipal capacities. Nonetheless, as underlined

by Lavenex and Fakhoury (2021), Lebanon's divided governance structure meant coordination across ministries was ineffective where EU-financed development programs were concerned.

#### **4.7.4. The EU's Compacts: Linking Refugee Governance to Development**

The EU's Compacts with Jordan and Lebanon — both initiated in 2016 — are novel in their conditionality. The agreements linked financing and political cooperation to the countries' efforts to bolster the access given to refugees to work, education, and public services.

Jordan's Compact has had a measure of success. Pepe Onuz, the EU pledged financial assistance amounting to €2.6 billion (a mixture of grants and concessional loans) and improved access to EU markets through relaxed Rules of Origin. In exchange, Jordan committed to issuing 200,000 work permits to Syrians and to including refugee children in the national education system (Directorate-General for Neighborhood and Enlargement Negotiations, 2022). For Jordan, its centralized governance, robust coordination mechanisms, and international partners' support have also made it easier to implement the Compact.

By contrast, the Lebanon Compact has encountered a major hurdle. While Lebanon is committed to improving the situation of refugees and host communities (Directorate-General for Neighborhood and Enlargement Negotiations, 2017), it has never set binding targets or a coherent policy about refugees and work. Fakhoury (2020) reported that Lebanese state policymakers continued a strategy of strategic ambiguity, allowing international funding to flow in but resisting refugee integration policies out of concern that the Compact would push it to formalize the status of Syrians in the country.

Note that the outcome was a Compact without effective monitoring mechanisms, which led Lavenex and Fakhoury (2021) to declare that the agreement had “limited value as an instrument of migration governance”.

#### **4.7.5. Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP)**

The 3RP is another extensive EU-supported program, co-led by UNHCR and UNDP, with implementation by more than 270 partners. The plan covers both refugee protection and resilience in host communities at the regional level. The EU has provided significant financial support for the 3RP across both countries, with a total contribution of over €1.8 billion since 2015 (Directorate-General for Neighborhood and Enlargement Negotiations, 2023b).

In Jordan, 3RP financing is used for the construction of schools, public health, municipal services, and protection programs. The EU investment under this plan is to complement the national strategies and Compact objectives.

The implementation of the 3RP in Lebanon is primarily dependent on decentralized actors such as NGOs and local governments. Though the plan has fulfilled critical services, including cash assistance and shelter improvements, the continuity of these efforts has been limited, as has national coordination (Fakhoury, 2020).

#### **4.8. The Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI): Global Europe**

The launch of the Neighborhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI), aka Global Europe, signals a consolidation of the EU's external financial instrument toolkit. The NDICI unifies the European Neighborhood Instrument (ENI), European Defense Fund (EDF), and other regional tools to increase efficiency and better respond to the SDGs 2030, with a significant budget of €79.5 billion (2021–2027) (Directorate-General for International Partnerships, 2023).

Jordan and Lebanon are both NDICI priority countries. In Jordan, this has enabled the EU to maintain a long-term engagement focused on green energy, digital transformation, boosting economic inclusion, and governance reform (Directorate-General for Neighborhood and Enlargement Negotiations, 2023a).

Under the NDICI framework, the continuation of support for civil society, social services, and economic recovery programs in Lebanon is also notable in this region, albeit

that implementation is impacted by the country's political crisis and financial instability, which have not been resolved.

Thus, through a series of instruments and sectors, humanitarian relief, macroeconomic support, education, public health, governance, the EU is working together with Jordan and Lebanon. This approach has paid off at the EU level, with Jordan demonstrating strong political will and institutional readiness in assistance areas that comprehensively and conclusively align with EU policy. Lebanon's case, in contrast, highlights the limitations of EU approaches in politically fragmented and institutionally paralyzed contexts.

As the EU moves into the NDICI era, lessons from each will be important in calibrating aid strategies, finding the right balance between conditionality and flexibility, and brokering development cooperation that delivers sustainable and inclusive growth.

An examination of the EU projects for assistance in Jordan and Lebanon (and particularly on Syrian refugees) demonstrates that the success or failure of development cooperation plans is defined by political will, institutional capacity, and governance setting. In the context of the previous, related works stored, namely Fakhoury (2020), Lavenex & Fakhoury (2021), Anholt & Sinatti (2020), and Aleassa (2024), several major threads emerge, such as:

#### **4.8.1. Jordan: Institutional Preparedness and Strategic Synergies**

Jordan is a good example of how political orientation, centralized governance, and 'absorptive' capability in institutions lead to effectiveness in the use of EU instruments:

- More than €1.2 billion of bilateral assistance, particularly support to education, governance, infrastructure, and public finance reform (DG NEAR, 2023a).
- Several MFA packages—\$1.2 billion since 2014—demonstrate confidence in Jordan's reform efforts and collaboration with the IMF.
- The €512M+ MADAD Fund (education, health, and infrastructure) is complementary to Compact objectives and contributes to 3RP targets.

(The EU–Jordan Compact (2016) is an example of “positive conditionality” in which more relaxed Rules of Origin and financial assistance were provided in return for the integration of 200,000 Syrian refugees into the labor force.)

It also highlights a point – raised by Aleassa 14 (2024) and Chase & Hamzawy (2013) – that when EU policy is in sync with domestic development agendas and political will, one can see transformative aid.

#### **4.8.2. The Unitary State and the Fragmented State: Lebanon**

Lebanon, by contrast, shows the constraints of EU assistance when governance is weak and political fragmentation is baked in:

Despite being included in the EU–Lebanon Partnership Priorities and being eligible for MADAD and 3RP funds<sup>36</sup>, the application is limited by:

- Sectarian divisions and ministerial incoherence
- Absence of refugee policy frameworks
- Lack of macroeconomic reform

No MFA packages have been sanctioned, which is emblematic of EU discontent with Lebanon not taking the IMF's advice.

The Lebanon Compact was noncommitting and only a symbolic affirmation, which verifies Fakhoury's (2020) skepticism in the form of a "strategic ambiguity" and exposes Lavenex & Fakhoury's (2021) analysis of its "limited value in terms of migration governance." These findings mirror what Mahzabin (2022) and Renaud et al. have observed about top-down development models: they need a working, accountable state to grow.

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<sup>36</sup> ) 3RP funds stands for “Regional Refugees and Resilience Plan”, which is a strategic platform that includes advocacy, planning, coordination, programming, and fundraising instruments for the partners in development and humanitarian fields to responded to the Syrian refugees’ crisis.

#### **4.8.3. The Role of the EU in “Jordan – Lebanon” Through Their Economic Assistance**

The EU has become one of the most important external actors in the MENA region, especially in terms of economic engagement with Jordan and Lebanon. The EU has vastly increased its assistance to these two countries since the Syrian refugee crisis began in 2011, embedding its aid into a broader political agenda—specifically, regional stability, migration containment, economic development, and institutional reform. Not only did the EU assume the position of a donor with humanitarian relief, macro-financial assistance, and support for governance and conditional development partnerships, but it also became a key political and economic partner.

This section provides a closer look at the EU's role in Jordan and Lebanon via its economic assistance. It assesses how appropriately aid has been framed, implemented, and spent, and provides a critical assessment of its influence on national development, political stability, and EU-MENA relations. Based on surveys of official EU documentation and pertinent academic literature, the analysis illuminates how the EU strategically negotiated the political and institutional circumstances of these two adjacent but disparate countries.

#### **4.8.4. The EU's Strategic Aims in Jordan and Lebanon**

The EU's relations with Jordan and Lebanon relate to its priorities as a significant foreign policy actor in the Southern Neighborhood. This hierarchy of priorities has clearly emerged through instruments such as the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) and the EU Global Strategy (Directorate-General for Neighborhood and Enlargement Negotiations [DG NEAR], 2023a), which have focused on state resilience, border security, human rights, and economic integration. However, these priorities have become reformulated within the context of the Syrian refugee crisis to emphasize supporting host countries in coping with increased refugee populations and building stability in fragile political contexts.

In the case of Jordan and Lebanon, the EU aims to promote economic resilience, reduce the socioeconomic cost of the refugee crisis, and ensure domestic stability. Although the

broad objectives are similar, the EU's approaches are quite different, as a result of the countries' institutional capacities and political contexts.

#### **4.9. The EU in Jordan: Political Cooperation and Institutional Building**

##### **4.9.1. A Model Partnership**

In the context of EU external relations, Jordan is frequently presented as a model partner. Its geopolitical significance, relative stability, and openness to reform have made it a major recipient of European Union assistance. As per the EU–Jordan Cooperation Overview, the EU has offered Jordan since 2011 and above €3.3 billion to date, making Jordan one of the EU's largest beneficiaries (Press and Information Team of the Delegation to Jordan, 2023).

For Jordan, the EU is a provider of financial assistance and actively engaged in policy dialogue, trade integration, and sectoral cooperation. As outlined in the EU–Jordan Partnership Priorities (2016–2027), cooperation between the two parties centers on governance reform, economic modernization, climate commitment, and education (DG NEAR, 2023a).

##### **4.9.2. Economic Resilience via the Jordan Compact**

The 2016 EU–Jordan Compact marks a new milestone in EU-Jordan relations. The Compact reframed aid as a reciprocal commitment and conditioned EU financial and trade benefits on Jordan's integration of Syrian refugees within its labor market and education system. The EU, in return, promised simplified Rules of Origin (RoO)<sup>37</sup> to Jordanian exports and a multi-year funding commitment (DG NEAR, 2022).

This framework is where the EU deployed a so-called self-reliance focus of development, emphasizing job creation and public services. European Commission (2023) reports that more than 200,000 work permits were provided to Syrians through the Compact, and above 145,000 Syrian children were first enrolled in public schools. This

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<sup>37</sup>) RoO is criteria to establish the products' origin/economic nationality (i.e., the manufacturing country), to apply specific trade policy measures and particular customs tariffs.

illustrates how EU assistance both catered to short-term needs and inspired changes in country policies and labor market developments.

#### **4.9.3. Macro-Financial Assistance and Budgetary Help**

Jordan was granted the EU macro-financial assistance (MFA) to stabilize the economy and implement fiscal reform. Jordan has received more than €1 billion in MFA disbursements from 2014 to 2021 (DG NEAR, 2022). These resources helped Jordan implement its IMF reform program, which focused on reducing growing public debt and reforms in tax administration, labor law, and public finance.

Other budget support grants were also released for the education, energy, and water sectors to ensure essential services can cope with the increase in demand from Jordanians and refugees alike. Through such multifaceted engagement, the EU has successfully situated itself in Jordan's national development agenda.

#### **4.9.4. A complex and precarious environment**

The case of Lebanon is a very different context for EU involvement. The country's consociational political system, economic collapse, and absence of a coherent refugee policy have made it more difficult for aid to be delivered. Nevertheless, the EU continues to be Lebanon's largest donor, having provided more than €2 billion since 2011 in humanitarian and development assistance (DG NEAR, 2023b).

Lebanon: The EU's Strategy Adaptation Role. While dysfunction in the Lebanese state has put formal cooperation out of reach, the European bloc has more frequently sought to have its programs put into place through local municipalities, civil society organizations, or international agencies.

#### **4.9.5 The Lebanon Compact: Seeking to Minimize Impact, but Ambiguous on Policy**

The final one, the 2016 EU–Lebanon Compact, tried to replicate the Jordan model by funding refugee integration and strengthening public services in exchange. However, unlike Jordan, Lebanon would not make binding commitments, particularly on refugee

labor market integration (DG NEAR, 2017). The Compact has no monitoring mechanism and no specific targets, limiting its ability as a policy instrument.

Similarly, Fakhoury (2020) reported that the Lebanese state put forward a strategy of “strategic ambiguity” by allowing the international funding and support, permitting the international community (directing a lot of the support directly to refugees) to overlook the inconsistencies between refugees’ needs and how it was doing on inclusion, and together avoiding a formal commitment on integrating refugees in national policies. This limited the EU's leverage and thus the political value of its help.

#### **4.9.6 Support for civil society and municipal governance**

Since the central government in Lebanon was not able to do very much, the EU turned to local governance and civil society. Municipalities received assistance to enhance basic service delivery, and NGOs were funded to carry out projects in health, education, and livelihoods. While this approach helped close immediate gaps, it also fragmented aid efforts and was not sustainable.

As Lavenex and Fakhoury (2021) contend, the EU’s interdependence on sub-national actors indicates both pragmatic adjustments and the extent of its weak control over the national agenda in fragile states. The EU's failure to impose conditions or coordinate national development is reflective of the structural limitations of its role in Lebanon.

### **4.10 European Union Instruments and Their Effects**

#### **4.10.1. The EUTF-MADAD Trust Fund**

The EU Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian Crisis (EUTF-MADAD) has served as a significant vehicle of resilience-based development in both Jordan and Lebanon. It allowed the EU to provide multi-sectoral assistance, focusing on education, livelihoods, and public infrastructure (DG NEAR, 2023b).

In Jordan, more than €512 million is allocated for EUTF-MADAD-funded projects aligned with Compact priorities. They contained school construction, training for teachers, and vocational training centers for refugees and host communities (DG NEAR, 2022).

During the EUTF-MADAD implementation in Lebanon, it supported health and education services; however, the realization was hampered by competition among the ministries and the failure to have a national strategy. Nevertheless, the fund allowed the EU to circumvent government bottlenecks and to deliver funding directly through UN agencies and NGOs.

#### **4.10.2. Humanitarian assistance and the 3RP**

The EU is also a top donor of the UN-led 3RP (Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan) response in both countries. It provides a framework to cover both the humanitarian and development requirements of refugees and host communities. The 3RP is a strategic framework that provides a coherent response to refugee integration in Jordan, complementing the national strategies and the EU bilateral programming.

In Lebanon, 3RP is crucial for sustaining essential services. Cash transfers, WASH (water, sanitation, and hygiene) programs, and community development are funded under the EU's this platform. However, the 3RP's dependency on outside actors isolates the Lebanese government even more from planning (Fakhoury, 2020).

#### **4.10.3. NDICI and a Move toward Integrated Development**

In 2021, the EU established the Neighborhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI), where several streams were consolidated (Directorate-General for International Partnerships, 2023). NDICI intends to bring both development and humanitarian programming under one umbrella, which will allow for a more flexible and responsive approach to addressing this crisis.

Jordan and Lebanon are both NDICI priority countries. NDICI also funds green economy, public sector reform, and digital transformation initiatives in Jordan. In the case of Lebanon, NDICI programming focuses on civil society, social cohesion, and emergency economic recovery (DG NEAR, 2023b).

## **4.11. The Role of the EU as Political and Development Actor**

### **4.11.1. An Actor that is Normative in Jordan**

In Jordan, the EU has been successful in programming a model of governance reform, rights-considerate development, and inclusive economic growth. The World Bank has also influenced policy reforms in such areas as education, labor, and fiscal policy through strategic funding and technical assistance. Jordan's adherence to Compact terms and collaboration with EU bodies are manifestations of a mutual reliance and a shared goal of enduring stability (Press and Information Team of the Delegation to Jordan, 2023).

Adaptability of EU Integration: The EU's ability to integrate trade into a wider support response, including governance and development, provides an insight into not only the EU's role as a regional financial partner but also as a norm-promoting actor. This success is compounded by the lack of strong alternative patrons and Jordan's reliance on foreign funding.

### **4.11.2. A Humanitarian Partner in Lebanon**

In Lebanon, the EU's role is mainly one of a humanitarian and stabilization actor. Its ability to shape national policy is curtailed by sectarian factions, elite resistance, and protracted state fragility. Of course, some of its funding keeps the lights on in terms of basic services and helps reduce social friction, but it is nothing that leads to genuine reform or refugee protection measures.

As Lavenex and Fakhoury (2021) note, the EU's governance-through-resilience strategy assumes at least a minimum of institutional cooperation, which Lebanon does not radiate. Hence, EU action has moved from structural transformation towards risk mitigation and damage control.

Consequently, the EU's economic assistance to Jordan and Lebanon has been instrumental in determining their development trajectories, refugee crisis management, and overall contribution to regional stability. In Jordan, the EU created a strategic partnership based on mutual interests, policy compatibility, and institutional cooperation. Beyond aid delivery, it shapes governance, economic policy, and social services.

In Lebanon, the EU's potential role is restricted by political realities. While financial support has staved off humanitarian collapse, its leverage on national policy has been more limited. However, by adjusting its responses and lending support to local players, the EU continues to be a prominent actor in humanitarian and development work.

Thus, the EU needs to continue adopting a differentiated approach to this challenging neighbor, working with Ukraine where we share interests and managing risks for as long as Russia's behavior requires an assertive EU response. Jordan and Lebanon provide important lessons regarding how external actors can work within complex political realities while promoting inclusive and sustainable development.

In investigating the role of the European Union (EU) in Jordan and Lebanon through economic assistance, and on the basis of the bodies of studies those of Fakhoury (2020), Lavenex & Fakhoury (2021), Anholt & Sinatti (2020), Aleassa (2024), and Chase & Hamzawy (2013)—numerous key conclusions come to light concerning the dual role of the EU as a normative and adaptive actor in the MENA region.

#### **4.11.3. EU Strategic Narratives: The Quest for Political Stability via Economic Aid**

The EU's involvement in the two countries is primarily driven by a normative-political agenda and strongly associated with its European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) and EU Global Strategy. The overarching policy objectives – state resilience, governance reform, migration management, and economic integration – remain constant features in its aid operations (DG NEAR, 2023a).

In both settings, the Syrian refugee crisis served as the trigger for a recalibrated EU approach: a move from reactive humanitarianism to a more strategic development and stabilization approach, a turn, referred to in Anholt & Sinatti's work and as both developmental and security-oriented, also referred to as resilience-based governance (Anholt & Sinatti, 2020).

#### **4.11.4. Jordan: A Model of Normativity and Cooperation**

Politicians generally prefer keeping their voting records secret - their names will appear repeatedly in our data; however, they are not unconstitutionally punished for voting for

these innocuous bills, as their names can be found by other means. Second, the earn-your-keep versus tree-riders balance is also desirable because it makes our results more informative: in the analysis to follow, we will be able to perform mediation tests with hands where the average discount rate of the subsequent hands is predicted by the mix of (tree-riding/player) bills bet by up to three previous anonymous players.

Jordan is seen by the EU as a model partner, receiving more than €3.3bn in assistance since 2011. This relationship is based on geopolitical alignment, centralized structures, and reformist institutions. When considering Jordan's openness to reform and dependency on foreign assistance, external actors can shape policy (Aleassa, 2024; Chase & Hamzawy, 2013).

#### **4.11.5. Conditional Mutual Commitment – The Compact Model**

The EU–Jordan Compact (2016) is the figurehead of this conditional aid approach: in return for access to the EU's markets and aid packages, Jordan pledged to allocate 200,000 work permits to Syrians and school an additional 145,000 refugee children (DG NEAR, 2022).

This mutual structure also embodies the EU's power to influence not only policy content (e.g., labor inclusion, education reform), but also the architecture of policies, in line with Noaksson and Jacobsson's point (2003) on “soft governance through conditionality”.

#### **4.11.6. Budget Support and MFA**

The over €1 billion disbursed Macro-Financial Assistance (MFA) has assisted Jordan's implementation of an IMF-supported fiscal reform, including in taxation, labor law, and public finance. The provision of budget support for priority areas, such as water, energy, and education, reinforces the multi-dimensional development role of the EU. This is in line with Aleassa (2024), pointing out that EU assistance to Jordan is financial and institutionally embedded, touching upon the governance.

#### **4.12. Lebanon: Divisions, Structure, and Humanitarian Containment**

The EU–Lebanon Compact (2016), designed to replicate Jordan’s template, obtained no binding commitments on refugee integration or labor rights. Lebanon strategically exploited its policy of “ambiguity” (Fakhoury, 2020), accepting aid and resisting structural reforms; this rendered the EU’s policy leverage ineffective.

With the central government paralyzed, the EU has decentralized the implementation to the municipalities, NGOs, and the UN agencies. This workaround is a practical necessity, but generates aid fragmentation (a problem also highlighted by Lavenex & Fakhoury, 2021). It also reminds us that "governance-through-resilience" can work only with minimum state cooperation.

##### **4.12.1. EU Instruments of Engagement: How Far and How Not?**

The EU's approach to combining humanitarian and development activities is the EUTF-MADAD Fund (€2.3 billion at the regional level). The fund was an adjunct to Compact goals (education, livelihoods, water systems) in Jordan. In Lebanon, however, MADAD needed to circumvent ministries and operate via international operators based on an intra-governmental standstill.

UNHCR and UNDP are among the co-leaders of the 3RP (Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan), which has worked better in Jordan, where this correlates with national policy, than in Lebanon, where it continues deepening external dependency and exclusion of state institutions of strategic planning, in line with Fakhoury’s (2020) criticism.

##### **4.12.2. NDICI – A Structural Break**

The NDICI is representative of the "structural integration of EU external assistance," which makes it possible to "program more flexibly and more coherently" (DG INTPA, 2023). The NDICI is used in Jordan to promote a green economy, reform governance, and digitalization. In Lebanon, the focus is humanitarian and driven by civil society, a product of a limited governance interface.

The EU is a normative actor in Jordan and has effectively held up governance reform, labor inclusion, and rights-based development. The Compact, NDICI investments, and sectoral reforms are about transforming the EU's values into policy through an institutional partner willing to reform (Chase & Hamzawy, 2013).

In Lebanon, on the other hand, the EU's work is first and foremost a humanitarian and stabilizing effort. Without political leverage, a problem of coordinating donors and elite opposition, the EU's influence is limited to one of damage limitation, rather than a transformative one. As Lavenex and Fakhoury (2021) suggest, resilience alone becomes a containment instrument and no longer a development strategy if there is no cooperation from the state.

The comparative approach supports the results of previous research:

- The impact of EU assistance is very context-specific and depends on governance modes, political will, and state capacity (Aleassa, 2024; Fakhoury, 2020).
- Conditionality (e.g., Compact arrangements) can operate where there is mutual interest or the ability to implement (Jordan), whereas it does not operate with fragmented governance (Lebanon).
- In moving from humanitarian aid to resilience-building, the EU's intent to play a longer-term political and development role is clear, but the power imbalance between the two partners is evident.

Finally, Jordan demonstrates aid synergy, and Lebanon almost succumbs to aid fragility. These parallel experiences are instructive for the EU's overall Southern Neighborhood approach: differentiated engagement, local adaptation, and flexible tools are necessary to realize humanitarian and strategic aims in complex regional contexts concurrently.

## **Summary of Part Four**

Chapter 4 addresses the EU's application of modernization theory to its economic assistance strategies, which are primarily evident in Jordan and Lebanon. Modernization theory posits that in low- and middle-income countries, systematic reforms, economic liberalization, and institutional development, backed by external actors, can help accelerate progress. The EU's mission is more than aid; it signals policy reform, governance improvements, and regional stability.

The EU works closely with the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), which provides analytical frameworks that inform the EU's external strategies. OECD gives policy prescriptions based on liberalizing markets and making jobs more flexible, whereas ME proposes those prescriptions in the context of its political and social inclusion objectives. This alliance underlines a common denominator of global economic governance via horizontal exchange, such as knowledge, soft law, and tailored cooperation.

The EU has established a multi-layered support system in Jordan and Lebanon. With its centralized governance and reformist orientation, Jordan has mainly been able to align with EU goals. Under the EU–Jordan Compact, aid and deep trade preference access to EU markets were offered in return for the integration of Syrian refugees into the education and labor market systems. Lebanon, however, has struggled more due to political fragmentation and institutional weakness, limiting the efficacy of similar strategies.

These include a combination of humanitarian aid, bilateral cooperation, macro-financial assistance (notably in Jordan), and regional programs such as the EUTF-MADAD and 3RP. The tools are focused on resilience, refugee responses, and inclusive growth. Both countries continue to be priority recipients of integrated EU support under the NDICI framework that entered into force.

## **PART FIVE**

### **EU's Economic Support Strategies for Developing Jordan and Lebanon**

The EU has been at the forefront of promoting economic development in the Southern Mediterranean through dedicated strategic partnerships established under the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) and the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership. Jordan and Lebanon have been major recipients of these policies, but the type and degree of benefit have differed because of different political and institutional settings. EU assistance includes macro-financial support for trade facilitation, sectoral reforms, and efforts to build resilience in response to regional crises like the Syrian conflict. The EU's 'strategic complementarity' model is theoretically based on modernization theory, focusing on institutionalization, policy convergence with EU norms, and integration of economies. Jordan has increasingly been moving in the direction of EU goals through consistent economic, governance, and social reforms and assuming ownership of its relationship with the EU. So, in contrast to this, Lebanon has faced more obstacles on account of political divisions and the problem of weak absorptive capacity, which often constrains the EU's influence and long-term sustainability of the interventions.

This chapter examines the degree to which EU economic strategies have assisted Jordan and Lebanon in achieving long-term financial stability, demonstrating Jordan's political-economic transformation through direct EU aid. The examination is based on institutional papers, academic assessments, and policy literature to offer a comparative standpoint about the EU's effectiveness in using aid frameworks in these two scenarios.

#### **5.1. Jordan Economic Implications of Assistance Impact**

In the last five years, Jordan has been keen to achieve modernization and to conduct political and economic reforms. Jordan assigned a *Royal Committee to Modernize the Political System*, to protect the Jordanian citizens' political rights and participation in political parties and elections. His Majesty, King Abdullah II Ibn Al Hussein, has assigned a Royal committee in June 2021 that consists of 92 members and is chaired by the former Prime Minister "Sameer Alrefaie" to provide recommendations and suggested

legal frameworks for developing the political system in Jordan<sup>38</sup>. The King described the current phase as a new and pivotal phase in the country's modernization process toward its second centenary. This is achieved through an integrated democratic model that expresses political will and national interest, reinforcing a unified national identity and the development and modernization process our proud nation is experiencing. In September 2021, the Royal Committee to Modernize the Political System submitted its report, which comprises a reference document: the national vision to modernize the political system in Jordan. The committee's mission is to achieve the following:

1. Draw two new legal drafts for election and political parties.
2. Review the constitution reforms correlated to these drafts and the parliamentary election mechanism.
3. Submit recommendations related to developing the legislation that governs the local management.
4. Enlarge participation in decision making and accommodate the political and legal environment that protects women's and youth's participation<sup>39</sup>.

The committee included a set of principles and conditions as recommendations in the report. These principles, altogether, constitute the incubating environment for building the desired Jordanian democratic model, and it is a comprehensive and integrated national modernization that encompasses economic, administrative, and judicial modernization and development, leading to the modernization of society in its diverse cultural and social contexts. The committee placed comprehensiveness and integration in political modernization within two main pillars. The first pillar is the internal environment of political modernization, including its transformations and processes that affect legislation, institutional structures, and related public freedoms and human rights systems. The second pillar is the broader general environment concerned with economic, administrative, and judicial modernization, leading to society modernization.

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<sup>38</sup> Royal Hashemite Court (2021). Royal Decree on the formation of the Royal Committee to Modernize the Political System. Amman, Jordan.

<sup>39</sup> Royal Committee to Modernize the Political System (2021). Final Report and Recommendations. Amman, Jordan.

The committee, in its recommendations, emphasized that a national identity that integrates and belongs to every citizen is one of the basic conditions for building a national democratic model. It is a central, unifying identity that rejects sub-identities and celebrates the sub-cultures of local communities, cities, villages, and groups. A strong, cohesive identity is a true enrichment of the national democratic model. Also, the committee emphasized that the political modernization system represents a real opportunity to mature the paths of the rule of law at the level of law enforcement and oversight institutions, as well as at the level of society and individuals. Establishing the rule of law is at the forefront of the principles of maturing political modernization, as a mature democracy cannot be imagined without the rule of law.

Regarding the draft of the election law, the committee adopted a mixed electoral system, comprising two levels of representation: the first is national, called the general constituency, and the second is local, called the local constituencies. Also, the committee clarified that Jordan is divided into 18 local constituencies and one general constituency, with the House of Representatives consisting of 138 seats. The committee recommended allocating 41 seats in the House of Representatives for the political parties, and at least two seats for Christians and one seat for the *Sharkas and Chechens*. Moreover, to enhance the participation of youth and women in political life, the law lowered the minimum age for candidacy to 25 years. It stipulated that the list must include at least one young man (or woman) no older than 35, ranked among the top five candidates. The list must also include at least one female candidate ranked among the top three candidates, and at least one female candidate ranked among the next three candidates. The general district will contribute to strengthening national identity and developing collective social and political contexts that Jordanians, both men and women, from all regions can turn around. The general district will also provide a significant opportunity for political parties to develop on a programmatic basis and advance political life to a new level.

### ***Jordan Economic Modernization Vision 2023 – 2033***

This vision revolves around achieving better future for Jordan and Jordanians, and it relies on two strategic pillars: accelerated growth through unleashing the full economic

potential and improving the quality of life for all citizens<sup>40</sup>. Moreover, sustainability is a fundamental pillar of this vision. Through the first pillar, Jordan can achieve accelerated leaps in economic growth and job creation over the next decade, with continued growth in per capita net income. Through the second pillar, Jordan can achieve a tangible improvement in quality of life.

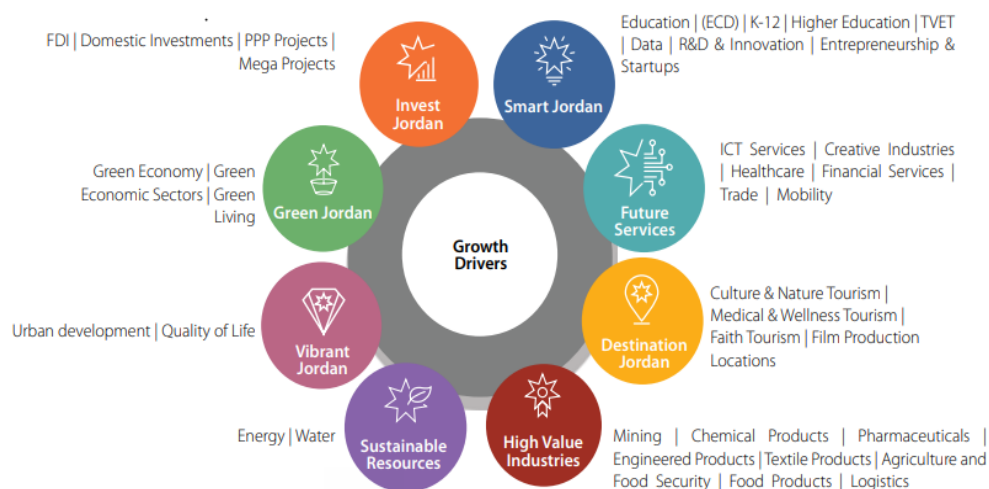
The economic modernization vision aims at achieving the following:

1. Adopt transparency in providing information regarding national goals and priorities.
2. Identifying the fields of competitive and comparative advantage through which Jordan can build on them to foster the growth and create economic opportunities.
3. Unifying the ministries efforts to support the national strategy goals within a clear roadmap.
4. Directing the national planning towards strategic thinking to ensure achieving the national goals better and sustainable manner.
5. Empowering decision and policy making that rely on data and information in a better manner to reduce the random changes.
6. Fostering capacity to follow up and accountability, and allowing the necessary intervention to foster the measurement of performance and process of implementation.

Figure (9) below illustrates the main drivers to unleash the economic modernization in Jordan, including foreign direct investments (FDIs), education, future services, making Jordan as a destination for culture and nature tourism, high value industries, ensure resources sustainability (water and energy), urban development, and ensure green economy and economic sector.

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<sup>40</sup> Government of Jordan (2022). Economic Modernization Vision 2023–2033. Amman, Jordan. Prime Ministry of Jordan (2022). Economic Modernization Vision: Policy Framework.



*Figure 9 Growth drivers to implement the economic modernization vision – Source: Jordan Economic Modernization Vision: Unleashing potential to build the future.*

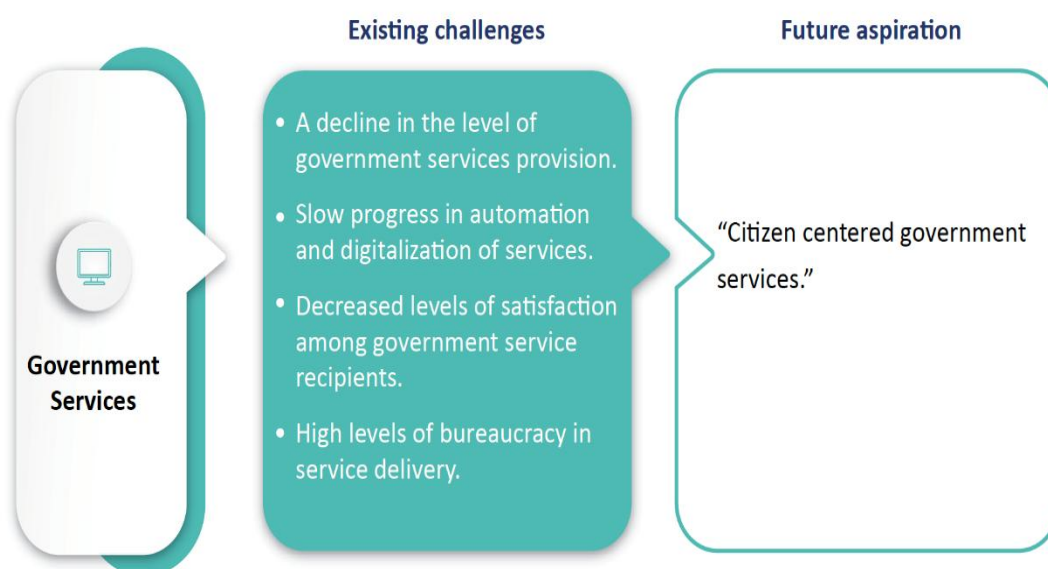
## Public sector modernization

Viewing in-depth analysis of the public administration in Jordan, studying the internal and external challenges that it could encounter, reviewing the international best practices in modernizing the public administration, and through reviewing the *Economic Modernization Vision*, the Jordanian government constructed its plan to build the road map for the vision of Public Administration Modernization. This vision aims at achieve “An empowered and effective public sector that works as a single unit to develop Jordan and achieve the well-being of its citizens.” Figure (9) below illustrates the targeted components of the public sector modernization frame, the existing challenges, and the future aspiration:

2. The mission of the public sector modernization was based on three pillars: Services, Institutions, and Legislation. The government services pillar aims at developing the services provided by the government that satisfy the citizens’ aspirations and needs in a smooth and accessible manner. Furthermore, to provide high-quality government services in simple procedures to the citizens through different channels, including digital channels. According to Figure 9, the modernization committee recorded a

decline in the government services provided to the citizens, while there is slow progress in automating and digitalizing these services. In the future, the committee is aspiring that centralized government services will be launched to provide government services to citizens in simple procedures, and these services will be digitalized.

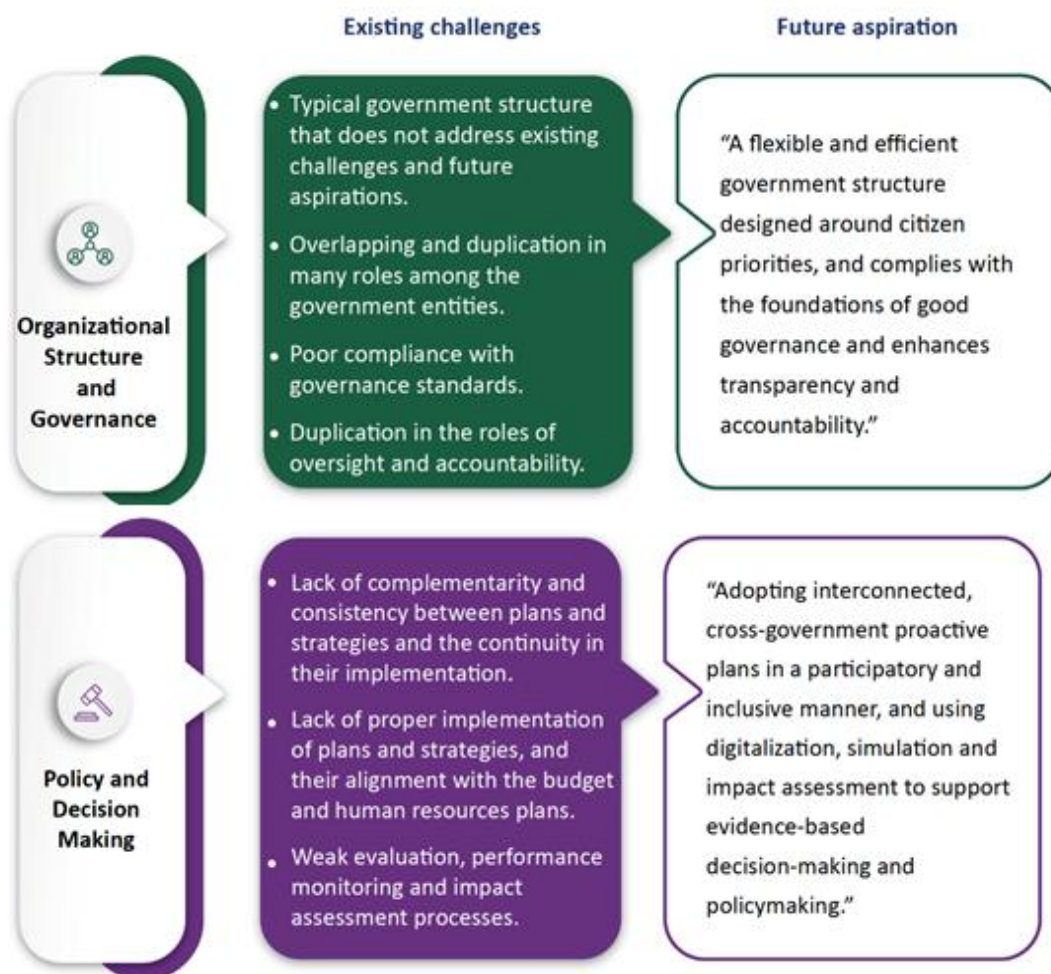
3. Indeed, Jordan has launched the SANAD application in 2020, which is an official application for the Jordanian digital identity and government services. Besides, the ministry of digital economy has launched various government services centers in all Jordanian governorates, through which Jordanian citizens can obtain the government services in a smooth and simplified manner.



*Figure 10 The Services Pillar challenges and Future Aspiration as reported by the Jordanian Public Sector Modernization Vision*

4. The institution pillar sought to foster the effectiveness and efficacy of the Jordanian public sector, including enhancing the institutions governance and legislative compliance, organizational structures, planning mechanisms, decision making and evaluation, managing and developing human resources (capacity building), recruiting the talented and qualified staff, and building the culture of productivity. Figure (10) below illustrates that there is duplication and overlapping in the roles of several government departments in Jordan (i.e. two or more different institutions operating

the same tasks and overlapping outcomes), the current organizational structures are not meeting the requirements of the future goals and aspirations, and poor commitment to the standards of governance. Moreover, the current public sector administration lack to strong tools for monitoring evaluating the staff and projects performance, lack to consistency and complementary between the future goals, strategies, and their implementation, and the lack to strong and adequate ability to implement the strategies and future plans.



*Figure 11: The Institution Pillar challenges and Future Aspiration as reported by the Jordanian Public Sector Modernization Vision*

The EU support to the Jordanian economy has also contributed to strengthening economic resilience, institutional capacity, and the promotion of long-term structural reform. With a variety of instruments – notably through the European Neighborhood Instrument (ENI), Macro-Financial Assistance (MFA), the EU-Jordan Compact and the EUTF-MADAD

trust fund – the EU has supported both public sector reform and private sector dynamics, as follows:

## **5. Trade, Investment, and Market Integration**

The EU–Jordan Association Agreement and the following action plans provided Jordan with greater integration into the world economy. Such agreements helped to liberalize the flow of goods and services and improve the investment atmosphere, harmonizing the Jordanian legislation with EU practice (Rabadi, 2023). Jordanian exports to the EU significantly increased after the E2I relaxation of the Rules of Origin –€19.2 million in 2018, and €56 million in 2019 (Al Nawas, 2020).

This advance was also backed by EU initiatives to modernize Jordan's industrial infrastructure and strengthen the competitive advantage of SMEs—support for private sector innovation and job creation. Investments of the European Union in more than 1,300 Jordanian SMEs to the value of more than €200 million significantly contributed to expanding the private sector and job creation (Press and Information Team of the Delegation to Jordan 2023).

Nevertheless, trade conditionality imposed by the EU has been rather Eurocentric to some extent (Rabadi, 2023). Critics contend that not much space is left for Jordanian priorities in its national economy, as most reforms are tailored in the framework of the Washington Consensus—focusing on privatization, fiscal austerity, and liberalization—without much adjustment in the Jordanian context.

## **6. Public Finance Reform and Macro-Stability**

Jordan's macroeconomic stability has been substantially increased courtesy of the EU macro-financial assistance programs. Based on four AMF packages in the period 2014–2021, €1 billion was provided to Jordan, with the bulk of this support intended to assist in financing the national budget, stabilizing levels of debt, and promoting reforms in taxation, public procurement, and financial transparency (European Commission, 2023; Directorate-General for Neighborhood and Enlargement Negotiations, 2022).

Besides providing macro-financial support, the EU also supported institutional development, governance, and management with the Public Financial Management Strategy and the Public Sector Reform Strategy, with implications on: improvement of tax collection, decrease of expenditures, and increase of transparency in expenditure (IABPAD, 2012). This entailed that aid had also become attached to sectoral reform – in water, in education, in energy management.

## **7. Impacts by Sector: Energy, Water, and Education**

Jordan's energy plan, subsidized by EU money and in line with national sustainability targets<sup>41</sup>, has taken significant steps toward renewable energy. EU and internationally supported solar and wind projects saved 1.5 MtC equivalent of CO<sub>2</sub> in 2018, alone (IRENA, 2021). A \$172 million infrastructure project, the "Green Corridor," increased grid stability and allowed for a transition to renewable energy, as evidenced by the importance of renewable energy for both energy security and economic growth. However, policy fragmentation, regulatory uncertainty, and lack of financial incentives for investments in small-scale RE projects have considerably weakened the success of EU interventions in this area (IRENA, 2021; Khawaja et al., 2021).

For water resources management, the EU funded the reuse of wastewater, public awareness, and infrastructure renovation. These resources were all the more crucial given that Jordan is one of the world's most water-poor countries. In education, EU assistance allowed Jordan to bring more than 145,000 Syrian children into its public schools, train more teachers and children, access non-formal education, enhance early childhood education, and offer more school supplies. This also helped to take the strain off national systems and contribute to SDG 4 (quality education).

## **8. Private Sector and Employment Outcomes**

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<sup>41</sup> ) Jordan plan for national energy concentrates on decreasing the dependence on importing energy through increasing the dependence on generating renewable energy and fostering energy efficiency. This plan aligns with Jordanian vision of 2025 about “Green Growth” through grid development, promoting sustainability, and encouraging green investment.

The private sector constituted yet another sector with priority in EU aid. ENI and NDICI-supported programs were intended to assist in establishing a conducive business climate by facilitating finance, investing in innovation, and reducing regulation. In addition, Fakoussa & Kabis-Kechrid (2020b) revealed that support of the EU also focused on enhancing bankability and creditworthiness for SMEs and startups. Questionnaire evidence suggests that EU grants have contributed to the creation of jobs, the upgrading of worker skills, and the development of new business strategies among recipient firms. However, impacts on productivity and operating costs have appeared less obvious, emphasizing the necessity to continue to align aid design with both the specific needs of the private sector (IABPAD, 2012).

## **5.2. Dependency and Structural Weaknesses**

While EU support is a positive platform, some academics contend that financial help can create welfare rather than sustainability. Abu Dalbough (2012) echoes the concern that the conditionality instruments grounded in EU aid are based more on EU economic interests than those of the recipient countries. A similar complaint is made of the Euro-Mediterranean framework, which emphasizes liberalization of trade and regulatory approximation while securing only minor concessions in agriculture and other sensitive areas. Furthermore, while reforms funded by the EU have managed to keep public deficits and inflation in check, unemployment, particularly amongst the young and women, is high. The ascendancy of low-skilled, informal labor, alongside labor market rigidity, illustrates the constraints of macro interventions in addressing microeconomic constraints.

As such, the EU's economic assistance to Jordan has resulted in both structural change and the development of institutions, as well as some growth generation. The most significant contributions were to public finance reform, SME development, and renewable energy. However, underlying challenges--including aid dependency, implementation obstacles, and social inequality--raise questions about the durability and equity of economic advances. Future improvements should start with more in-depth aid design that is better aligned with national development priorities, a greater focus on

monitoring impact indicators, and a more flexible policy, in order to ensure better prospects of EU strategies' novelty achievement in Jordan.

### **5.3.The political effect of backing**

#### **5.3.1. Support in Jordan and its Political Effects**

The political involvement of the EU in Jordan goes well beyond economic development: it includes governance reforms, democracy building, institutional modernization, and the empowerment of civil society. Being politically situated and thus a stabilizing regional factor, Jordan has become an indispensable partner for the EU in the Southern Neighborhood. Financial instruments such as the European Neighborhood Instrument (ENI) and Macro-Financial Assistance (MFA) are mainly economic resilience instruments, but the conditionality they impose often touches upon political reforms, such as judiciary independence, rule of law, human rights, or participatory governance. This chapter politically evaluates the impact of the EU assistance in Jordan and deals with successes as well as structural constraints.

#### **5.3.2. Framework for the Political Engagement of the EU: Objectives and Instruments**

The EU-Jordan Association Agreement and subsequent Action Plans under the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) have made democratization and rule of law key focal areas. According to Rabadi (2023), the action plans of 2005 and 2010 maximize the emphasis on political reforms, including an independent judiciary, gender equity, freedom of expression, and electoral reform (as cited in European External Action Service 2013). Nevertheless, these changes, not based on binding criteria, have also tended to advance at slow paces or in a purely formal way. One of the EU's frequent tools has been "positive conditionality," which means that financial assistance is dependent on a certain level of progress in political reform. However, Jordan's prospect of accession limits the EU's leverage in comparison to the cases of enlargement (Del Sarto & Schumacher, 2011, as cited in Rabadi, 2023).

### **5.3.3. Governance and Modernization in the Public Sector**

There has been considerable progress in the public sector reform with the support of the EU, including through the Public Sector Modernization Roadmap and the EU's direct budget support. A €10 million EU aid package designed specifically for political modernization and in support of constitutional and legislative reform that meets the recommendations of the Royal Committee for Political Modernization (Jordan Times, 2023, in Aleassa, 2024). In addition, EU assistance under the ENP Action Plan contributed to institutional rationalization as well as to service delivery improvement, by supporting the establishment of monitoring and evaluation units in the ministries (IABPAD, 2012). These reforms led to transparency, accountability, and government adaptability in the policy face to the citizens' requirements.

### **5.3.4. Independence of the judiciary and the rule of law**

The political dialogue with the EU revolves around the judicial reform. The 2010 ENP Action Plan included independence of the judiciary, access to justice, and the fight against corruption (European Commission, 2005, cited in Rabadi, 2023). Donor help has made some structural changes possible, including courtroom renovations and training for lawyers, but the judiciary continues to be under pressure from the executive and lacks autonomy in controversial cases.

The literature on good governance, policy conditionality and conditionality of the rule of law is voluminous (see also Veenendaal, 2009; Hyde-Price, 2001; Crawford, 2007; Schimmelfennig, 2003; Whitman, 2002), and I do not believe that, at this stage, entirely new answers will be added to the debate. For a more radical proposal, Dalbough (2005) contests competitive authoritarian rule and argues that the rule of law is supported, but that political reform lags behind economic cooperation. Quilian and Lavenex 13 in the EU's relations with third countries? The EU has thus attempted to incorporate legal reform in its sectoral strategies—tying access to justice to refugee rights, gender equality, and economic modernization.

### **5.3.5. Civil Society and Political Participation**

The EU sees civil society as an important partner for the promotion of democratic governance. With initiatives like "Support to Civil Society Organizations in Jordan", the EU has increased the involvement of citizens through supporting capacity building for advocacy groups, women's rights organizations, and local associations. According to Lavenex and Fakhoury (2021), in contexts where state institutions have failed to embrace democracy fully, civil society represents an alternative location of EU political involvement. EU-supported cultural initiatives, such as the European Film Festival and the RISE Talent Contest, have also played a role in nurturing pluralism and intercultural dialogue (EEAS, 2020, in Smith & Harrison, 2023). However, donor-dependent civil society is in danger of becoming 'disconnected' from a grassroots base of support in a 'Donor-NGO Complex' with little legitimacy and even less sustainability (Fakoussa & Kabis-Kechrid, 2020b). In addition, the Jordanian government's restrictions on international funding and NGOs have occasionally frustrated EU support for civil society.

### **5.3.6. Press Freedom and Human Rights**

The EU effort to advance human rights in Jordan has made only modest gains. Although EU action plans consistently emphasize freedom of expression and assembly, Jordan is still rated as "partly free" by independent monitoring organizations such as Freedom House and Human Rights Watch. Opposition voices, journalists, and political activists, particularly associated with Hirak, have been arrested and monitored (Freedom House, 2019; HRW, 2019, in Fakoussa & Kabis-Kechrid, 2020b). This stifling climate has undermined the EU's support for democratic standards, revealing a paradox in which Jordan is both a partner and a right of the abuser. The EU has reacted to this by embedding human rights issues in bilateral political dialogues and allocating funds towards projects for human-rights monitoring, yet clearly it has had minimal, if any, effect in curbing autocratization.

### **5.3.7. Political Stability and Regional Cooperation**

Regional stability is one of the EU's primary political interests in Jordan. Jordan's active diplomacy, orientation towards the West, and commitment to the two-state solution to the

Israeli-Palestinian conflict are consistent with EU foreign policy priorities (European Commission, 2022). In exchange for this strategic cooperation, the EU gives significant backing to consolidate the resilience of the Jordanian state. The EU further supports efforts to prevent local conflict in the region, with Jordan as a mediator in conflicts in the vicinity - Iraq and Syria (Rabadi, 2023).

#### **5.3.8. Challenges and Criticisms**

While political reforms have been initiated and supported with EU funding, concerns remain about the extent and inclusiveness of such reforms. Researchers observe that EU schemes seldom bottom-up and lack real involvement from Jordanian political institutions or their constituencies (Rabadi, 2023). In addition, the EU stresses security cooperation and containment of migration, which has occasionally come at the expense of democracy, especially concerning the Syrian refugee crisis. This freedom-security compromise has undermined the EU normative position and prompted scholars to wonder whether the EU's approach can in fact be seen as a type of "authoritarian stabilization" (Anholt & Sinatti, 2020).

The EU's political influence in Jordan, besides what has been said, is multi-dimensional. On the one hand, it has built capacity among institutions, supported electoral and legal reform, and promoted civic participation. On the one hand, its impact is hampered by structural constraints, such as imprecise benchmarks, limited civic space, and a bias toward stability at the expense of democratization. The experience in Jordan underlines the need for more inclusive, measurable, and context-specific political reform agendas. EU strategies in the future should emphasize developing democratic institutions from the bottom up, strengthening civil society at the grassroots level, and ensuring greater accountability. Only such calibrated engagement will enable the EU to meet its twofold objective of acting as a geopolitical power and a normative advocate of democratic governments.

In evaluating the degree of benefit of EU economic strategies in Jordan and Lebanon, the comparative approach raises useful findings that are supported both by empirical evidence and by the extant literature. This conversation is informed by the accumulated studies and critical analyses to interpret the findings, acknowledging not only what works

in EU aid but also the structural, political, and institutional filters that condition and affect it.

### **5.3.9. Divergent Contexts and Absorptive Capacities**

Differentiation, such as that stressed by the EU's strategic framework under the ENP, harmonizes well with modernization theory, described by Fakoussa & Kabis-Kechrid (2020b) and Lavenex & Fakhoury (2021). In this model, Jordan is a prototype of the cooperative partner, with Lebanon as the emblem of the disintegrated low-capacity state in which aid does not work.

Rabadi (2023) and DG NEAR reports). Jordan's institutional receptivity, supported by Rabadi (2023) and DG NEAR reports, enabled EU Programming (ENI, MFA, Jordan Compact) to help mutual development goals – macroeconomic stabilization (MFA, 2014), sector modernization (education, energy, water), and private sector development. By contrast, Transparency Fakhoury (2020) demonstrates how Lebanon's strategic ambiguity – its refusal to commit to structural reforms or to refugee integration – has limited the usefulness of EU aid frameworks, particularly under the Lebanon Compact, which was not anchored by targets.

### **5.3.10. Structural Economic Impact in Jordan**

The benefits of EU orientation for development in Jordan can be observed on two dimensions: economic and political.

- **Export growth:** The loosening of ROR under the EU-Jordan Compact led to a significant increase in exports (19.2 to 56 M€ in 2018 and 2019, respectively), as Al Nawas (2020) stated.
- **SME RESILIENCE:** IABPAD (2012) shows that EU external assistance contributed over €200 million to investments in SME (Press and Information Team, 2023) by increasing employment, affecting entrepreneurial activity.
- **Macro-Stability:** MFA resources (€1B) contributed to funding budget shortfalls, supporting tax policy reform, validating European Commission (2023) statistics, and strengthening public financial management (IABPAD, 2012).

Nevertheless, these advantages were not without dissent. As Abu Dalboun (2012 p.29) states, the hegemony of Washington-Consensus-style reform—privatization, austerity—constrained autonomy of national policy and failed to address youth unemployment or the world of work beyond the formal sector, mirroring Whitman (2002) and Veenendaal (2009) who argue that conditionality-driven models have struggled to 'deepen' beyond a singular focus on economic imperatives.

#### **5.3.11. Sectoral Reforms: Sustainability vs. Fragmentation**

Energy: The EU contributed to Jordan's renewable energy shift, which helped cut emissions and expand grid infrastructure (IRENA, 2021). Still, as Khawaja *et al.* (2021) observed, regulatory blockades and a lack of industry stimulus shackled small RE projects.

Education & Water: With EU assistance, more than 145,000 Syrian refugee children were supported to attend public schools, and water reuse systems were enhanced. Such interventions are in line with SDG targets and emphasize the commitment of the EU to humanitarian-development coherence, as well as its approach to action, as can also be seen in the 3RP framework and NEAR (2023).

In Lebanon, systematic acquisitions were not possible because of a weak central command. As Fakhoury<sup>14</sup> (2020) and Lavenex & Fakhoury (2021) stress, EU initiatives eventually turned to municipalities and CSOs, which in the short term generated some relief but led to fragmented and unsustainable interventions.

#### **5.3.12. Political Aspects: Rule, Reform, and Conditionality**

(Jordan also benefited from EU-supported efforts to modernize the public sector, to reform the judiciary, and to empower civil society). "The EU's role in institutional credibility is also evident, with €10M dedicated to political modernization (Jordan Times, 2023). However, Freedom House (2019) and HRW (2020) indicate that press freedom and civic space continue to be limited, and this freedom-stability trade-off, according to Anholt & Sinatti (2020), is evident.

Lebanon is not exactly a shining example of political reform at the EU's behest. The lack of a monitoring mechanism in the Lebanon Compact and dependence on non-state actors weaken EU leverage. This validates Fakhoury's argument about the Lebanese vague policy and Lavenex's criticism of the EU's reliance on the fragmentation of governance levels.

### **5.3.13. Aid Effectiveness and Strategic Lessons**

The comparative results reinforce theoretical claims that are central:

Theories of modernization are attested in Jordan and are consistent with the theories of modernization, in which institution-building, legal approximation, and market integration have been promoted with EU support (Del Sarto & Schumacher, 2011).

It is in this latter form that Interdependence Theory should make a difference in Lebanon, a context in which the absence of EU conditionally-based leverage tends to keep the EU on the “risk-mitigation” rather than “transformational” side (in line with the governance-through-resilience paradigm as outlined by Lavenex & Fakhoury, 2021).

Critiques of Conditionality Narratives from Crawford (2007) and Schimmelfennig (2003) ring true in both—but perhaps most keenly where political liberalization is suspended, and donor-led civil society wants to disconnect from the grassroots (Fakoussa & Kabis-Kechrid, 2020b).

These results show that the EU's economic policies in Jordan and Lebanon show the asymmetry of aid utilization and the boundaries of normative power in non-accession settings. However, in Lebanon, the factional character of the polity and political sclerosis have limited the EU's influence to emergency stabilisation rather than systemic reform.

Future policy designs should:

- Build in conditionality anchored in the local context and national development priorities.
- Improve monitoring and evaluation systems to be more transparent and accountable.
- Nurture grassroots support for civil society, not over-professionalized.

- Balance stability imperatives against democratization efforts so as not to facilitate “authoritarian stabilization.

This comparative thesis presents promising terrain for further research on external governance, aid dependency, and state capacity in fragile and transition economies.

#### **5.4. Lebanon: The Extent of Benefiting from EU Economic Strategies Support**

Lebanon has enjoyed EU support over the years, notably through the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP), the EU-Lebanon Association Agreement, and more recently the 2016 EU-Lebanon Compact. However, enduring political fragmentation, sectarianism, and institutional weakness in Lebanon have limited the impact of the EU's engagement, particularly if compared to Jordan. Mainly relying on financial and technical assistance, the EU has made significant efforts to support governance, help with refugee integration, and dampen possible socio-economic instability in Lebanon, yet overall progress has been only partial and heavily contingent on specific circumstances.

Lebanon is not like Jordan in that it has a unified national development strategy and central bureaucracy to guide and consolidate reforms; therefore, the absorption and impact of EU aid are circumscribed in Lebanon (Fakhoury, 2020). Further, Lebanon's ongoing economic crisis, contingent on hyperinflation, currency devaluation, and state service collapse, has reshuffled the EU's priorities from structural reform to humanitarian assistance and stabilization (Le Borgne & Jacobs, 2016). However, challenging as they may be, the EU is still among the largest donors to Lebanon and one of the most resilient, with diversified (multi-sector) financing through the EUTF-MADAD as well as bilateral cooperation and the NDICI framework.

##### **5.4.1. The impact of support on the economy**

Lebanon – EU is a long partnership, as the EU has been a significant development partner for Lebanon, especially after the Syrian refugee crisis, the devastating explosion in Beirut port in 2020, and the financial collapse that ensued. EU aid to Lebanon has included infrastructure repair, education and healthcare system relief, private sector stimulation, and humanitarian and development responses. However, the age-old structural obstacles

facing Lebanon, including political fragmentation, corruption, and institutional atrophy, have stymied the extent to which this economic assistance can be practical. The EU support has helped to cushion the economic collapse and to provide basic support; however, the transformative effect is limited given the fragmented nature of the policy environment in Lebanon and the informality of the economic governance infrastructure.

#### **5.4.2. The EU–Lebanon Compact: Conditionality in a Weak State**

In 2016, the EU and Lebanon concluded the EU–Lebanon Compact, which is a strategic framework of a similar format as the Jordan Compact, and in which assistance is conditioned on refugee integration, public service delivery, and economic reform benchmarks. However, in contrast to Jordan, Lebanon rejected attempts to condition concrete access to refugees to labor markets in the EU to avoid any binding statutory promises, allowing for little leverage to be transferred from the EU level to the national level (Fakhoury, 2020). The policy of "strategic ambiguity" by the Lebanese government allowed it to continue to receive the aid without handing over to lasting schemes of refugee integration (to the extent that they were even considered in the first place), which in turn constrained the range of economic planning and policy practices (Fakhoury, 2020). Asnamar and Lavenex argue that the Compact was less practical as a policy instrument because of its "sloppy" targets and lack of enforcement (Fakhoury et al., 2021). With no benchmarks or political desire, the Compact was far more a tool for donor coordination than a policy-driving agreement. EU support ran through parallel pipes – not least municipalities and NGOs – where it could regard implementation even if the central authorities were standing still.

#### **5.4.3. The EUTF-MADAD and the Humanitarian-Development Nexus**

The EU Regional Trust Fund in response to the Syrian Crisis (EUTF-MADAD) mobilized over €2.3 billion across the region, with significant funding shared with Lebanon for resilience activities. These resources contributed to financing education infrastructure, municipal services, livelihoods, and water and sanitation projects in refugee-hosting areas (European Commission, Directorate-General for Neighborhood and Enlargement Negotiations, 2023b). Although these interventions maintained basic service provision for Lebanese and Syrians, development outcomes were limited due to on-the-ground

corruption and weak monitoring systems (Fakhoury, 2020). The EUTF-MADAD's projects were funded to respond to a "sudden crisis," like armoring school buildings or providing health clinics and job training, which supported diffusing sectors; however, the programming was not included in the national planning. Le Borgne and Jacobs (2016) note that the lack of absorptive capacity in Lebanon and its dependence on international donors led to fragmentation in service delivery, as the projects served to react rather than to be a strategy for development.

#### **5.4.4. Infrastructure and Service Delivery**

The EU investments in public infrastructure—which focused on wastewater, water, and electricity—addressed urgent bottlenecks (aggravated by the refugee influx). For example, the refurbishing of wastewater treatment facilities in the Bekaa Valley through EU funding enhanced sanitation for thousands of households, including spontaneous settlements (European Commission, 2023). However, it is unclear whether the long-term benefit of such ventures is as high since Lebanon does not have a national maintenance and sustainability plan. The decline in public services since the financial collapse in 2019 has steered EU backing to crisis stabilization rather than development support. This included short-term cash transfers, discounted fuel for hospitals, and a program in education to make up lost ground. Although necessary, such actions were primarily intended to cushion the fall of the system rather than support systemic economic recovery (STG Policy Brief, 2024).

#### **5.4.5. Private Sector Support and Livelihoods**

The EU has been helping Lebanon's private sector, specifically through the development of SMEs, vocational training, and microcredit. The reasoning was that by boosting private companies, one could relieve unemployment, and in the process, substantially lower the dependence of the refugees themselves. In the framework of MADAD and other bilateral programs, EU-funded projects were encouraging business incubation, digital skills, and startup financing, especially for women and youth (MEDRESET, 2018).

Yet despite this agitation, the private sector proved unable to cope with the economic tremors of capital flight, bank failure, and waning consumer demand. Several SMEs

closed after 2019 because of liquidity crises, devaluation of currency, and fuel shortages. As Smith and Harrison (2023) report, many EU-sponsored entrepreneurship schemes faced low adoption rates, a consequence of the wider macroeconomic turmoil and investors' lack of trust in the Lebanese market. The fragmentation and duplicity of donors also diluted the potential of program synergies. Furthermore, the informal economy – that is believed to account for over 60% of all employment in Lebanon – is not tackled by the EU, which predominantly deals with formal sector development. This incompatibility has hindered the EU's ability to stimulate broad job generation or income creation (Le Borgne & Jacobs, 2016).

#### **5.4.6. Education and Labor Market Mismatches**

BioEnable<sup>42</sup> successfully implemented the time-attendance management system for its 150 staff members in India and some of its overseas branches. BioEnable made its position as a premier solution provider for time attendance and target attendance. 10. SITA provided the organization with a good time-attendance solution. More than 200,000 Syrian children were welcomed into public schools, and EU resources were used to train teachers, extend infrastructure, and provide classroom materials (European Commission, 2023). Nevertheless, the Ministry of Education had no capacity for medium- or long-term planning, and attendance at school was irregular due to low educational standards. Parallel vocational programs aimed at reducing unemployment and the mismatch in the labor market by providing training to the youth. However, these programs did not form part of a national labor strategy or contribute to the development of the private sector. This meant that graduates from EU-funded technical training programs had restricted opportunities for employment in a contracting formal economy (Fakhoury, 2020; MEDRESET, 2018).

Lebanon's economic crisis 2019–2022 dramatically changed the context in which the EU's support occurred. The LBP shed more than 90% of its value, and salaries of state employees were almost wiped out by inflation that exceeded 150% (Karam & Saghie, 2022). In this light, aid from the EU essentially became a humanitarian lifeline, with monies increasingly used for food security, fuel purchase, and healthcare subsidies. EU

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<sup>42</sup> BioEnable is leader supplier in Automation, Identification & Tracking solutions.

support had diminishing development value as donor resources were redirected to short-term relief.

The Euro funds, meanwhile, were further hamstrung by the collapse of Lebanon's banking sector and the government's inability to agree on a recovery plan. More and more aid was being ground outside the state, a reflection of donor mistrust and the absence of means to hold anyone accountable. Such fragmentation carries the potential to widen inequality and decrease trust in both the state and the donor community (Bitar & Ghandour, 2024). Furthermore, EU actors acknowledged the limited success of investing in systemic reform, which invited a strategy operationalization shift towards civil society, local governance, and quick-win stabilization projects (EU Neighborhood Reports, 2023).

#### **5.4.7. Refugee-Centered Economic Approaches**

EU assistance in Lebanon has been dramatically influenced by migration politics. The resilience narrative – which was initially intended to embed refugee assistance within development paradigms – has also become the target of a growing criticism as a strategy of containment. Anholt and Sinatti (2020) claim that the EU's resilience narrative is just another way of expressing that, as part of a "remote control" strategy, member states pay host countries, like Lebanon, to stop refugee movements towards Europe. This logic of containment narrowly defines the bounds of economic inclusion. Lebanon's ad hoc labor policy for Syrians and the absence of formal work and residency permits limit the refugees' contribution to economic recovery. EU refugee livelihood support, therefore, operates in this legal grey area without scale and without sustainability (Turner, 2020; Lavenex & Fakhoury, 2021). In addition, while support to host communities has been provided, it has frequently aggravated tensions, with Lebanese citizens believing that refugees have been receiving the lion's share of aid. This has led to social polarization and challenged the EU's principle of inclusive economic growth (EU Engagement Report, 2023).

#### **5.4.8. Monitoring, Evaluation, and That Old Fragmentation of Aid**

The absence of a central mechanism for the coordination of aid in Lebanon has provided considerable difficulties in measuring results. EU projects frequently run alongside UN

agencies and other donors rather than working as one, duplicating work and wasting money. There is a lack of good data from national bodies, which further contributes to the difficulties in outcome assessment. While EUEU-funded surveillance schemes are in place, not least under NDICI, there has been a lack of effective implementation because of political interference and a lack of capacity. Thus, only a limited number of programs are subject to a thorough impact evaluation resulting in unsystematised new interventions (MEDRESET, 2018). The European Union's attempts to bolster transparency through digital dashboards and tracking projects have contributed, but systemic change is beyond reach without national purchase-in and accountability.

#### **5.4.9. Comparative Lessons and Opportunities**

The comparison of Lebanon with other EU-assisted countries, such as Jordan, demonstrates that institutional capacities and political commitment are central factors that affect the effectiveness of aid. Cathia Ziyad When Jordan managed to translate EU support into policy reform and public investment, Lebanon proved reactive, using aid to plug immediate gaps and losing priority in not catalyzing systemic change (Fakhoury, 2020). However, there are still paths for the EU to reorient its support to Lebanon. Those include investing in decentralization, continuing to scale up digital economy partnerships, improving municipal service delivery, and deepening public-private cooperation around green infrastructure.

The economic contribution of the EU to Lebanon has therefore prevented humanitarian crises, maintained basic services, and sustained the vulnerable communities. However, Lebanon's political floundering, economic meltdown, and institutional weaknesses have severely constrained the long-term development impact of this aid. EU schemes have commonly filled in for the work of the state, not triggered a reform process, and this is representative of the difficulty of carrying through development strategies amidst a long-term crisis.

In the future, the EU should seek to fine-tune its response, investing in closer cooperation with local communities, incentivizing an inclusive economic recovery, and finding a balance between short-term relief and long-term empowerment. Without structural reform and

credible national partners, the EU's economic approach in Lebanon will remain an unfulfilled promise.

## **5.5. The political impact of support**

### **5.5.1. The Political Impact of EU Economic Assistance in Lebanon**

The political effect of European Union (EU) economic aid in Lebanon was significant, but not straightforward, because of the particular political tapestry, governance weaknesses, and regional sensitivities in Lebanon. The EU has sought to promote governance, institutional reform, and state resilience in the framework of the policies of the ENP introduced, and subsequently, the EU–Lebanon Compact. However, political divisions, elite capture, and weak state institutions have frequently blunted the EU's aims, raising important questions about the limits of conditionality and external pressure in fragile countries. EU assistance programs have focused on electoral reform, civil society empowerment, rule of law, and better administration practices. However, real power politics in Lebanon have been circumscribed by systemic corruption, sectarianism, and the resistance of vested interests. Critics say EU aid has frequently helped to maintain an unpalatable status quo, rather than promoting fundamental political change. Despite this, EU actors still view Lebanon as a key strategic partner, which has an important role to play in terms of regional stability and migration management. This part discusses the political impact of the EU (economic) assistance to Lebanon, exposing some of the successes and inconsistencies, as well as missed opportunities, in using aid as a tool for democratization and institution-building.

### **5.5.2. The political influence of EU economic aid in Lebanon**

The EU- as a normative power. In the competition between the regional powers, the European Union (EU) has positioned itself as the leading normative power in the promotion of democracy, rule of law, respect for human rights, and inclusive governance in its neighborhood. The EU has mainly sought to achieve these objectives in Lebanon through political dialogue, technical assistance, and conditional economic assistance. The ultimate purpose has been to contribute to the creation of institutional and political

resilience in a country long marked by confessionalism, elite capture, and policy paralysis (Fakhoury, 2020). The EU political involvement in Lebanon increased in the wake of the Cedar Revolution in 2005, which saw the departure of Syrian forces and an opportunity for political rebalancing. The EU–Lebanon Association Agreement (2006) and European Neighborhood Policy Action Plan (2007) explicitly included the strengthening of democratic institutions, reform of the judiciary, improvement of civil society, and running free and fair elections as objectives (European Commission, 2007). However, the realization of those plans has run against significant structural and political barriers.

### **5.5.3. Conditionality: An Interventionist Instrument in a Fragmented Political System**

Unlike enlargement countries or even some other Southern Neighborhood partners, such as Jordan, Lebanon does not have a central decision-making structure, so that conditionality is not really a mechanism that works. The EU–Lebanon Compact (2016), one of the compacts that linked financial assistance to integration of refugees and government reforms, did not make the targets enforceable with measurable indicators. Lebanon's "strategic ambiguity" has enabled it to receive EU funding without having to account for human rights and institutional reform (Fakhoury, 2020; Lavenex & Fakhoury, 2021). The country's consociational political system reserves power along sectarian lines, ensuring that reform is highly politicized. Consequently, EU demands for clean governance and an independent judiciary are easily subverted by elite interests. The 2019 protest movement – which was ignited by socio-economic frustrations – reflected the failure of external reformist programs to connect with the domestic political context. The EU is playing a marginal role in this climate (Ibid: Bitar & Ghandour, 2024), despite the economic leverage.

### **5.5.4. Civil Society as a Substitute Venue**

Acknowledging the constraints of state-to-state relations, the EU has been targeting and cooperating with civil society players more and more. Since 2011, EU–funded initiatives have been funding NGOs, media, and community-level organizations involved in human rights, governance monitoring, and public accountability (STG Policy Brief, 2024). Projects tels que le programme « EU Support to Transparency and Accountability in

Lebanon » visaient à permettre à la société civile de contrôler l'action des institutions publiques et à encourager la gouvernance participative. Smith and Harrison (2023) argue that the EU's involvement with civil society has acted as an important counterweight to state failure. However, they also warn that donor dependency, project funding, and urban concentration (mainly in Beirut) have restricted the long-term impact and reach of these interventions. EU support for 'professionalized' civil society organizations at the expense of community or people-based movements has often undermined social legitimacy (MEDRESET, 2018).

Nevertheless, despite these constraints, civil society has provided a vital documentation of corruption, challenged the narratives of the elites, and framed the discussion on accountability, particularly following the explosion at the Beirut Port in 2020. EU-funded fora added to the transparency of information and the pressure, but with not enough legal or institutional follow-up.

#### **5.5.5. Rule of Law, Judicial and Anti-Corruption**

The EU has always added its voice to support judicial reform and the rule of law as carriers of its political ambition in Lebanon. Support has taken the form of legal training, computerizing court processes, and assistance to the Lebanese Anti-Corruption Commission (European Union Neighborhood Report, 2023). Nevertheless, Lebanon's judiciary has been politicized, lacks independence, and is subject to interference from sectarian leaders. EU technical aid helped to draft anti-corruption legislation and facilitated the adoption of a national policy on fighting corruption. Nevertheless, implementation remains superficial. Go to: Turner (2020) contends that international donors, including the EU, have accepted the Lebanese elite's symbolic compliance in order to maintain short-term stability and control migration. As a result, anti-corruption measures have found little purchase in Lebanon's entrenched patronage networks.

The 2020 explosion investigation, in addition to the breakdown in the rule of law, also revealed once again the extent of that judgment weakness when politics could not be brought into account. Moreover, while the EU has denounced these actions, neither its financial nor political leverage has resulted in institutional reform. This reveals a key misfit between the EU input and output in the area of the promotion of the rule of law.

### **5.5.6. Electoral Reform and Democratic Participation**

EU assistance to Lebanon's electoral processes has also covered support for voter education, election monitoring, and reform advocacy. The EU EOM that observed both the 2018 and 2022 parliamentary elections published detailed reports and technical recommendations intended to strengthen transparency, fairness, and voter participation (European Commission, 2022). However, the roots of dysfunction in Lebanon's electoral system — sectarian quotas, gerrymandering, and opacity around campaign finance — have not been addressed. Although the EU has backed demands for a single civil personal status law and PR, these have faced opposition from politicians and religious leaders (EU Engagement with Contested Refugee Returns, 2023). However, EU-supported programs that aim to engage youth and women to participate in the electoral processes have not shown impressive outcomes. The latter were not fulfilled, and voter turnout was low in recent polls, pointing to public disillusionment with the political class and the reform process. Still, the EOMs' presence has helped to report abuses and push for the smallest amount of process possible.

### **5.5.7. The Political Objectives, in Motion and Externalization**

One contradiction that has marked the political relationship between the EU and Lebanon is the management of migration. EU assistance has increasingly been linked to Lebanon's ability to suppress the flow of Syrian refugees and to cooperate in preventing their further migration to Europe. Interviews with EU-based officials and diplomats. This has prompted scholars to maintain that the EU's political end-goals in Lebanon favor securitization over democratization (Anholt & Sinatti, 2020). Turner (2020) explained this change as "governance through resilience," whereby the EU funds Lebanon to host refugees but without formalized rights. This has resulted in a bifurcated governance system, in which refugees and vulnerable host communities receive services from international donors outside national institutions. The political consequence is a divided public sector and diminished state authority.

Even though EU officials insist that support for refugees is apolitical and rights-based, Lebanese officials have deployed refugees as a bargaining chip time and time again, threatening mass expulsion from the country to gain more funding or postpone reforms.

How to move forward. This way, EU migration policy in Lebanon, financially costly as it may have been, has been politically ambiguous – reinforcing elite instrumentalism, and postponing discourses on integration policy.

#### **5.5.8. Engaging Locally: Local Governance and Municipalities**

Instead of getting involved with national governments, the EU has been increasingly working with cities. The Municipal Empowerment and Resilience Project (MERP) and similar projects have been financed by the EU to invest in infrastructure, service delivery, and local capacities (MEDRESET, 2018). This federated approach has allowed the EU to achieve more visible results in both refugee-hosting and politically neutral areas. However, local officials often lack the capacity to administer programs and create revenues; they also lack insulation from political meddling. Consequently, even "best-in-class" EU-financed municipal projects (e.g., for street paving and rubbish collection) are still at risk of elite capture and policy discontinuity.

There is also a potential for unequal development to occur, with the regions with better connections to donors doing well, while others remain underdeveloped. The lack of a coherent conception for national decentralisation means that local governance engagement may prove less successful in delivering a wider political reform.

#### **5.5.9. Public Perception and EU Credibility**

Long-lasting crises in Lebanon have influenced how the EU is seen as a political actor. Public opinion remains divided. On the other hand, the EU is recognized as having supported civil society, education, and humanitarian aid. On the other hand, it is often seen as complicit in propping up a corrupt political order with blank cheques. The EU's defense of the status quo has faced growing criticism, notably from youth activists and protest movements. In 2019 surveys, many said they were disillusioned that EU support had not turned into concrete political change (MEDRESET, 2018). However, given the latter's relative neutrality and sustained presence, the EU is one of the most credible international players in Lebanon – especially compared to regional players. This trust is, however, precarious and conditioned upon the EU's ability to prove principled and accountable aid.

## 5.6. Opportunities and Strategic Refocusing

With its constraints, however, the EU can remain a driver for political reforms in Lebanon. New attention to efforts to boost digital governance and enhanced transparency or independence for media are among those EU policy levels at which more obviously political results can be more directly achieved more easily (Smith & Harrison, 2023).

Future EU strategies should prioritize:

- Conditional backing linked to benchmarks of institutional reform.
- Strategic coalitions with new civic movements.
- Clear aid tracking and public transparency.
- Use of diaspora knowledge in governance reform.

What is crucial for the EU is that it should not be pigeonholed as a crisis manager or a gatekeeper for migration. Three, in order to maintain legitimacy, its political work has to be value-driven, people-focused, and about long-term change. The political influence of EU economic assistance in Lebanon is constituted by a complicated dialectic of ambition and constraint. Its impact is, however, constrained by the divided nature of the Lebanese state and domestic elite resistance, as well as geopolitical volatility.

Its initiatives on the rule of law, electoral reform, and participatory governance have had varying results. The most visible and credible channel for the EU has been support to civil society, but sustainability remains an issue there as well. Shifts toward privileging containment and stabilization may, in turn, depoliticize EU assistance even more, hollowing out its transformative aspect. For the EU to become a more active political actor, it will need to recalibrate its approach: navigate a tactical balance between short-term stabilization and structural reform, involve wider social actors, and hold aid delivery to account. Only by doing so in this recalibrated and principled manner can EU political assistance make a meaningful contribution to Lebanon's democratic renewal.

To the researcher, the extent to which EU economic policy has been beneficial for Lebanon, as well as across the economic and political airs, presents a picture of limited efficacy, a problem stemming not from lack of help, but rather from Lebanon's pervasive

political and institutional malfunction. Building upon the extant literature, and in line especially with Fakhoury (2020), Lavenex & Fakhoury (2021), Smith & Harrison (2023), Turner (2020), Anholt & Sinatti (2020), and materials from the European Commission and MEDRESET, this conversation is best structured around five mutually-reinforcing themes.

#### **5.6.1. Institutional Absorptive Capacity and Strategic Ambiguity.**

" Unlike Jordan -- and here is the difference -- since we are dealing with a centralized government and national reform policy in return for EU support and provided they produce tangible results in terms of development, in Lebanon,,,,," it is the opposite. Lebanon's: "strategic ambiguity" In his analysis, Fakhoury (2020) explains that Lebanon's strategic ambiguity actually ensure no real committed is made both on the refugee integration process and structural needs hence removing any EU leverage. This was expressed in the EU-Lebanon Compact that was based on uncertain standards and unenforceable requirements, making it more symbolic than functional (Fakhoury et al, 2021). The EU resilience approach—for state-building purposes—therefore matched to a polity that is fragmented, with elite capture and sectarian governance becoming a norm, unable to realize a substantial transformation.

#### **5.6.2. Economic Repercussions**

The EU has been a major donor—in the form of the Emergency Trust Fund for Africa (EUTF-MADAD), NDICI, and bilateral programmes— providing considerable assistance in the fields of education, wastewater infrastructure, municipal services, and SME development. However, the study highlights that these interventions have only softened the human crisis, not initiated genuine economic recovery. This is in line with the claim by Le Borgne & Jacobs (2016) that Lebanon does not have a national absorption policy, which leads to fragmented provision of services and project-oriented emergency relief, which is not embedded into structural planning. For instance:

Water and wastewater pipeline projects in Bekaa and medical fuel aid to hospitals had instant operational value, but were not sustainable with the absence of a national maintenance policy (European Commission, 2023).

SMEs and microfinance schemes were ignored mainly as a result of the collapse of currency, flight of capital, and pervasive informality, as argued by Smith and Harrison (2023) and MEDRESET (2018). This shows that Lebanon's political-economic system is more reactive rather than reformative in nature — treating aid as a gap-filler rather than a means toward national transformation.

### **5.6.3. Refugee Politics and Migration Containment**

As Turner (2020) and Anholt & Sinatti (2020) contend, the EU shift of emphasis from development to resilience and containment—particularly since 2015—has rendered the policy a form of "remote control migration governance. Lebanon's lack of a refugee labor integration policy exploited this ambiguity in order to secure financing, without assuming the legal commitments it implies; it converted its refugee burden into political capital instead of much-needed reform.

#### **This bifurcated governance has:**

- Established separate refugee (NGOs, donors) and citizens (collapsing state) service delivery, promoting social division.
- Worsening hostility between host and refugee, frustrating EU aims for integrated development (EU Engagement Report, 2023).
- Undermined the development potential of refugee aid by narrowing down its part in labor market recovery or the involvement in the formal economy (Lavenex & Fakhoury, 2021).

### **5.6.4. Political Implications**

Even though the EU's normative power agenda has pursued the promotion of the rule of law, electoral reform, and the strengthening of civil society, the nature of the decision-making institution of Lebanon—a consociational system based on sectarian quotas—has made conditionality ineffective. However, despite technical assistance to electoral observation (EU EOM, 2018 & 2022), sectarian gerrymandering and elite rule remain.

The progress made in terms of judicial independence and anti-corruption legislation has yet to result in implementation, seeing politicized courts and minimal state accountability following the Beirut explosion (Turner, 2020; Bitar & Ghandour, 2024).

Civil society support was a surrogate instrument, and a mixed bag. While providing evidence of corruption and creating opposition movements, its urban focus, donor reliance, and disconnection from mass-based activism scaled back systemic effects (MEDRESET, 2018; Smith & Harrison, 2023).

In short, EU economic aid has often sustained rather than weakened the status quo by moving aid out of dysfunctional institutions rather than reforming them.

*Table 11 The EU's experience in Lebanon offers critical comparative insights*

| Comparative Axis     | Jordan                         | Lebanon                               |
|----------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Governance Structure | Centralized, technocratic      | Fragmented, sectarian, elite-captured |
| Aid Absorption       | Programmatic, policy-driven    | Ad hoc, crisis-focused                |
| Refugee Strategy     | Compact with labor integration | Compact without integration           |
| Political Reform     | Limited, but state-coordinated | Blocked by the power-sharing system   |
| Civil Society Role   | Complementary to the state     | Substitute for the state              |

Accordingly, the EU's strategy needs to be:

- Link money to clear, enforceable reform benchmarks — particularly on decentralization and fighting corruption.
- Support municipalities and local governance, and build capacity and public accountability tools.
- Mobilize grassroots civic actors, not just the professionals at NGOs.
- Do not “over-securitize” the refugee policy and privilege labor inclusion through legal means.
- Institutionalize aid coordination to prevent fragmentation and duplication.

According to the previous studies, and indeed the Lebanese case, international economic strategies rest on the domestic political determinants and the state's capacity. EU aid has staved off a humanitarian collapse, but it has not been a catalyst for either development or reform. Furthermore, without a strategic recalibration that confronts Lebanon's

political economy full-on—nodding to the realist forces, but prioritizing conditionality of governance and reform, and near-term relief that can be channeled to longer-term accountability—the EU's role risks being one of stabilizing, not transforming, the Lebanese state.

## **Summary of Part Five**

The first part of this thesis sets up Development Rights and the EU's Development Policy by outlining its historical and theoretical roots in the development rights discourse and the EU's development aid. It explores global milestones such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), ICCPR and ICESCR (1966), and examines how post-WWII institutions like the IMF, IBRD, and European frameworks (OEEC, EEC, DAC) formed the foundation of modern development cooperation. The study also analyses the evolution of EU development strategy—especially toward the Arab world—in terms of coherence, long-term commitment, and human security, focusing on four key areas: EU best practice, aid's political dimension, sovereignty, and sustainability.

This thesis discusses modernization theory—its relevance, evolution, and criticisms—by exploring how societies shift from rural to industrial systems, impacting quality of life, economy, technology, and urbanization. It contrasts cultural with socio-economic modernization, using Japan, the U.S., Jordan, and Lebanon as case studies of success and challenge. Critics argue that modernization theory is often Eurocentric and deterministic; however, it continues to influence debates on global development, social change, and economic progress while highlighting both its capabilities and limitations across different contexts.

## **PART SIX**

### **Finding a conclusion and thesis**

This thesis represents the culmination of a long research journey that has been grounded in a set of fundamental questions related to the relationship between the European Union and the countries of the Middle East, with particular focus on Jordan and Lebanon, through a theoretical perspective based on the assumptions of modernization and the opportunities and challenges it entails. This study was not merely an academic exercise aimed at compiling data or describing EU programs, but rather a serious attempt to understand the deeper structures of the economic–political relations binding Europe to its southern neighborhood, and to analyze these relations through the lens of modernization theory, which has long occupied a central place in political and social thought.

The main objectives of the study were clearly defined from the very beginning: to examine the extent to which the EU's economic and developmental policies were capable of generating structural transformations in Jordanian and Lebanese societies, and to analyze whether these policies actually contributed to placing these two countries on paths of modernization and sustainable development, or whether, instead, they entrenched patterns of dependency that hinder the construction of independent national trajectories. These objectives were formulated in light of the firm conviction that the European Union, with its political, economic, and institutional weight, constitutes a central actor in the region that cannot be overlooked in any serious study of processes of transformation.

The first dimension of these objectives lay in the deconstruction of the theoretical foundations of the modernization discourse itself: a discourse historically built on a linear assumption that all societies inevitably pass through similar stages, culminating in the Western model of modernity. This theoretical dimension was necessary in order to reveal the contradiction between the proclaimed ambitions of European policies and the explanatory power of this framework in interpreting the complex realities of Jordan and Lebanon.

The second dimension focused on the study of the practical tools and mechanisms employed by the European Union in its neighborhood policy: association agreements, the

European Neighborhood Instrument, financial assistance, economic reforms, and refugee-related programs. The research sought to answer a double-edged question: were these tools genuine means of supporting modernization in its broader developmental sense, or were they primarily instruments for addressing immediate crises and securing stability in line with European interests?

The third dimension revolved around the comparison between Jordan and Lebanon, two cases that are similar in their dependence on external aid and their geographic proximity to Europe, yet different in their political structures and institutional capacities. This comparative perspective made it possible to test modernization assumptions across two distinct contexts, thereby yielding more precise insights into the EU's role and its limitations.

Finally, the fourth dimension reflected the critical ambition of this thesis, which was to interrogate the relationship between discourse and practice. While EU documents consistently emphasize democracy, human rights, and comprehensive development, practice on the ground often narrows these ambitions to calculations of an economic and security nature. The aim here was thus to expose this tension and highlight its implications for local societies.

In order to respond to these objectives, the thesis had to adopt a hybrid methodology that combined theory and practice, qualitative and quantitative approaches, extensive literature review and the close analysis of primary sources.

The first element was theoretical analysis, which involved an in-depth review of the literature on modernization theory, from its classical formulations rooted in Western experience in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, to the critical readings that later emerged in sociological and philosophical thought. Special attention was given to the work of Jürgen Habermas, who emphasized that modernity is not merely an economic–technical process but also a communicative project based on the creation of public spheres for free debate, and to the ideas of Seyla Benhabib, who linked modernity to the concept of transnational justice and human rights in the age of globalization. This theoretical foundation was not treated as a secondary academic detour, but as an analytical lens for understanding EU policies in Jordan and Lebanon.

The second element was comparative analysis. A comparison between Jordan and Lebanon was essential, since both cases are similar in terms of the scale of EU assistance, yet divergent in their political and institutional structures. This comparison drew upon official EU reports, such as those issued by the European Commission and progress reports under the European Neighborhood Policy, as well as Jordanian and Lebanese governmental documents and economic data from international organizations. This approach revealed similarities and differences that allowed for more profound conclusions regarding the impact of EU assistance.

The third element was a critical–interpretive approach. The research did not confine itself to describing policies or presenting statistics, but sought to interrogate the political discourse that underpinned these policies. How does the EU justify its programs in Jordan and Lebanon? What terms dominate its official documents? Is there a gap between discourse and reality? This method made it possible to expose what is often left unspoken—namely, the security and geopolitical dimensions hidden beneath the language of development and modernization.

The fourth element concerned methodological challenges. The study was not without difficulties; obtaining precise data on the impact of EU assistance in Lebanon was complicated due to weak transparency and contradictory statistics among institutions. Moreover, assessing the political impact of aid is inherently problematic, as it cannot be measured solely through quantitative tools. For this reason, the research combined quantitative data—budgets, growth rates, unemployment levels—with qualitative analysis of political discourse, field studies, and elite interviews.

The theoretical background—modernization as a problematic framework—was a conscious choice imposed by the nature of the EU–Middle East relationship, but it also raised significant challenges. Since its inception, modernization theory has been tied to the idea that societies move along a linear trajectory from tradition to modernity, with the Western experience as the model to be followed. Yet the critiques voiced by thinkers such as Habermas and Benhabib exposed the limitations and exclusionary dimensions of this vision.

In the case of Jordan and Lebanon, it was essential to test whether EU policies genuinely reflected this linear assumption or whether they acknowledged the complexities of local realities. The review revealed that European discourse continues to bear a Eurocentric bias, speaking of reform, governance, and development as if they were universal prescriptions ready for application in any context. Reality, however, showed that the success of such policies depends on the ability of local societies to internalize and adapt them to their own circumstances.

Thus, the theoretical framework of this thesis was not simply explanatory, but also a critical tool for revealing the gap between European aspirations and lived realities in Jordan and Lebanon. This background remains present in the analysis of the results in the subsequent parts of the conclusion, where it becomes clear how these theoretical assumptions were reflected in actual policies.

When reflecting on the relationship between Jordan and the European Union in recent decades, it becomes clear that this relationship has not been merely one of financial transfers or temporary economic cooperation, but has instead become one of the pillars of Jordan's developmental and economic policy, particularly since the signing of the Association Agreement in 1997 and its entry into force in the early 2000s. The EU has emerged as a major donor and strategic supporter of Jordan, not only in terms of financing, but also in reshaping economic and social policies within frameworks presented under the labels of modernization and reform within the Jordanian state.

Yet a deeper reading of the reality reveals that this relationship, despite its opportunities, has also been burdened by constraints and contradictions. EU policies, while contributing to a degree of economic and institutional stability, simultaneously imposed strict obligations on Jordan in the areas of liberalization, privatization, and restructuring—measures that negatively affected social justice and overlooked the social dimension of the Jordanian state. Here lies the paradox: the EU appears as a supporter of modernization, but this modernization remained confined to its economic–security dimension, distant from the political and social transformations that form the essence of modernization in its broad sense.

Jordan clearly benefited from European assistance, whether through direct budget support or through specialized programs in education, health, energy, and water. EU documents indicate that Jordan was among the largest recipients of allocations from the European Neighborhood Instrument (ENI) and later from the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI).

This assistance helped ease fiscal pressures, especially during crises such as the 2008 global financial crisis and the influx of Syrian refugees after 2011. It also enabled the development of critical infrastructure such as schools, hospitals, and water networks. However, this support was neither free nor unconditional; it was linked to economic reform programs akin to those mandated by the International Monetary Fund.

Economic liberalization was the most prominent of these conditions, pushing Jordan to open its markets to European trade and investment. This had a positive impact on some export sectors, but at the same time increased the Jordanian economy's dependency on external markets. Privatization was also promoted, affecting strategic sectors such as electricity and telecommunications, which led to the state losing control over vital resources and triggered significant public debate domestically.

At the level of human development, EU assistance contributed to improving some indicators such as school enrollment and healthcare services. Yet it did not address core structural challenges such as high unemployment, especially among youth, and widening income inequality. In some cases, the reforms associated with EU assistance worsened the vulnerability of poorer and middle-class groups, who bore the brunt of subsidy cuts and reduced social spending.

Although EU documents consistently highlight the promotion of democracy and human rights, the actual impact of EU assistance on political transformation in Jordan has been limited. The practical emphasis has consistently been on stability and security rather than political change. For example, the EU–Jordan action plans included provisions for strengthening parliamentary life, enhancing judicial independence, and expanding media freedoms. Yet in practice, these provisions remained secondary to security priorities such as counterterrorism, border control, and refugee management. Democracy in EU

discourse thus appeared more rhetorical than substantive, while stability was the real guiding principle.

Jordan, for its part, has skillfully used this relationship to its advantage by presenting itself as a reliable partner for the EU in a turbulent region. Through this role, it secured significant financial and political support, while avoiding substantial political reforms commensurate with the scale of this support. This situation reveals a form of implicit bargain: the EU secures border stability and effective refugee management, while Jordan secures financial flows to sustain its economy and institutions, without opening the door to political transformations that could destabilize this balance.

European assistance has also had a social impact. It funded projects connected to women's empowerment, youth participation, and civil society engagement. Training and educational programs were also financed to improve workforce skills and align them with market demands. Yet these initiatives, while important, remained limited in scope and impact. In a country of over ten million people, projects targeting thousands—or even tens of thousands—cannot fundamentally alter social structures. Many of these programs were also implemented by NGOs dependent on external funding, often disconnected from national policies, raising concerns about their sustainability.

At the same time, EU assistance strengthened Jordan's ability to manage the refugee file, particularly the presence of over one million Syrians. Funding was provided for camps, municipal support, and improvements in education and healthcare for both refugees and host communities. While vital, this support also positioned Jordan as Europe's "border guardian," with aid linked to its ability to prevent refugee flows northward.

When modernization theory is applied to Jordan, it is evident that EU policies achieved part of their aims: progress in economic and institutional development through investments, infrastructure, and reforms, but limited democratic and social transformation. This demonstrates that EU-driven modernization in Jordan was one-dimensional, privileging economics and security while sidelining the political and social. The outcome was a model of incomplete modernization: institutions modern in form, an economy more open, but without genuine political participation or equitable wealth redistribution.

Jordan's experience with the EU highlights several contradictions: between stability and reform, as aid reinforced stability while reducing pressure for deep political change; between economy and society, as reforms improved some indicators but exacerbated hardship for poorer and middle classes; and between discourse and practice, as the EU spoke of democracy and rights but prioritized security and refugee management.

These contradictions make Jordan a clear example of the limits of modernization theory when externally imposed through conditional mechanisms. Modernization cannot be reduced to an economic–technical process; it is a socio-political project that requires broad popular participation and autonomous national will—elements largely absent in this case.

Between discourse and practice, the European Union speaks of democracy and human rights, yet in reality it focuses on security and refugees. These contradictions make the Jordanian case a clear example of the limits of modernization theory when applied through external conditional mechanisms. Modernization cannot be reduced to a mere economic–technical process; it is a socio-political project that requires broad popular participation and an independent national will, elements that have been largely absent in this experience.

If Jordan's experience with the European Union has been characterized by relative institutional stability and the ability to manage aid within a framework of political steadiness, Lebanon's experience appeared more fragile and complex. Indeed, it can be argued that it revealed the limits of the European role even more clearly. In Lebanon, which has historically suffered from the fragility of its confessional system and political instability, European assistance encountered an environment saturated with challenges, where economic crises are intertwined with sectarian divisions and regional conflicts, making the impact of such aid less visible and more contradictory.

Since the signing of the Association Agreement with the European Union in 2002, Lebanon has represented an important testing ground for European policies in the southern neighborhood. It was expected that this agreement would constitute the beginning of a political–economic modernization trajectory capable of rebuilding state institutions and strengthening the national economy. Yet the reality demonstrated that

these ambitions remained trapped within rhetoric and documents, as Lebanon soon faced a succession of crises: the assassination of Prime Minister Rafik Hariri in 2005 and the subsequent deep political polarization, the 2006 war with Israel, the consequences of the Syrian conflict and the influx of refugees after 2011, and finally the unprecedented financial collapse since 2019.

Although the EU injected billions of euros into the Lebanese economy through various instruments—direct grants, project support, financing via the European Investment Bank—the impact remained limited on the overall economic structure. The Lebanese economy continued to rely primarily on the service sector—banking, tourism, and real estate—without succeeding in building a productive industrial or agricultural base capable of achieving self-sufficiency or competing internationally. The financial crisis that erupted in 2019 revealed the depth of this fragility and Lebanon’s excessive dependence on external capital inflows. EU assistance was part of these inflows, yet it was not translated into genuine structural reforms. Political elites often used these funds to fill short-term fiscal gaps or to sustain patronage networks rather than investing in long-term productive projects. This demonstrates a shortcoming in EU policy, which failed to establish strict mechanisms ensuring that assistance was channeled into sustainable developmental paths.

On the political level, the EU repeatedly declared its support for democracy and institutional reform in Lebanon. However, the reality on the ground was blocked by the entrenched sectarian system that controls the state’s levers. Instead of pushing elites toward structural reforms, aid sometimes became integrated into the networks of sectarian patronage, with projects and programs distributed according to political and confessional affiliations. The EU, through its diplomatic missions and programs, sought to strengthen judicial independence, promote transparency, and combat corruption, yet Lebanon’s overlapping sectarian, economic, and political interests rendered these efforts largely ineffective. In many cases, despite recognizing these challenges, the EU preferred to preserve the status quo under the pretext of maintaining stability, even if such stability was fragile and built on the absence of justice and accountability.

In the social and humanitarian field, Lebanon received the largest share of European assistance, particularly after the Syrian crisis. Hosting more than one million Syrian refugees—nearly a quarter of its population—placed immense strain on infrastructure and public services. The EU responded by financing municipalities, supporting schools and hospitals, and providing direct aid to refugees. These programs were vital to preventing a complete collapse of the service system, yet they simultaneously turned Lebanon into a staging ground for managing the refugee crisis on Europe’s behalf. Continued EU funding was explicitly linked to Lebanon’s ability to prevent refugee flows across the Mediterranean. Humanitarian aid thus became an instrument for achieving a distinctly European political–security goal, rather than a gateway to building sustainable social development.

Perhaps the most striking feature of the Lebanese case is the deep gap between the EU’s discourse and its practice. In discourse, the EU consistently emphasized democracy, the rule of law, anti-corruption, and the empowerment of civil society. In practice, however, serious pressure mechanisms on Lebanese elites to implement genuine reforms were absent, with European engagement limited to partial measures or the support of small-scale initiatives. The popular uprising of 2019 demonstrated Lebanese society’s yearning for real reform and a new mode of governance. Yet instead of seizing this historical moment to support civil forces, the EU chose to continue its “crisis management” approach, providing humanitarian and financial aid without any clear strategic vision for transformation. A crucial opportunity was therefore missed to connect assistance to a genuine modernization project.

A comparison between Jordan and Lebanon highlights significant differences. Jordan enjoys more stable institutions and stronger capacity to manage aid, while Lebanon suffers from weak institutions and sectarian divisions that expose assistance to waste and corruption. In Jordan, aid focused on economic development and fiscal reform, whereas in Lebanon, humanitarian and relief dimensions predominated, especially in light of the refugee crisis and financial collapse. Jordan positioned itself as a strategic partner for Europe in ensuring regional stability and managing refugees, while Lebanon, due to its internal fragility, was unable to play such a role and remained a passive recipient of surrounding crises. In Jordan, partial modernization was achieved in the economy and

institutions, albeit limited politically, while in Lebanon modernization failed almost entirely, as aid did not generate any structural transformation in the economic or political order.

This comparison illustrates that classical linear modernization theory is unable to account for such realities. The EU implicitly assumed that injecting aid and linking it to certain reforms would automatically generate a modernization path akin to the European experience. However, the absence of political and institutional stability in Lebanon rendered such an assumption futile, while in Jordan relative stability permitted partial, though incomplete, progress. One of the central conclusions of this thesis is that modernization is not merely a technical or financial process, but a complex socio-political one requiring strong institutions, national consensus, and political will. External assistance may contribute to this process, but it cannot impose it from the outside, nor can it substitute for internal reforms.

A full reading of the Jordanian and Lebanese experiences in light of EU policies cannot be complete without returning to the theoretical debates raised by prominent thinkers such as Jürgen Habermas and Seyla Benhabib. These two scholars offered critical intellectual tools that illuminate the tension between discourse and practice, between declared ambitions and actual policies. Habermas, through his theory of communicative action and the public sphere, emphasized that modernity is not realized only through economic growth or technical advancement, but also through the creation of arenas for rational debate in which citizens participate freely and equally. Applied to EU aid in Jordan and Lebanon, this reveals that the EU focused heavily on economic and security dimensions, but did not sufficiently invest in strengthening public spaces for democratic dialogue, such as independent media, institutionalized civil society, and broader political participation. The absence of this communicative dimension rendered European modernity in the region closer to an “incomplete project,” one that cannot be realized without linking economic development to democratic–communicative transformation.

Benhabib, on the other hand, underscored that justice in the age of globalization must be “transnational.” Ethical and political responsibility cannot be confined within the borders of the nation-state, but extends to relations between North and South, between donors and

recipients. European aid must therefore be assessed not only as a technical tool but also from the standpoint of justice and recognition. In this framework, the EU's relationship with Jordan and Lebanon oscillates between support and development on one hand, and the reproduction of dependency on the other. The moral question posed by Benhabib thus becomes central: do these policies empower local societies and strengthen their autonomy, or do they place them in the position of dependents reliant on external actors? Returning to Habermas and Benhabib allows this thesis to articulate a key conclusion: modernization cannot be conceived merely as an economic–technical trajectory, but as a communicative–rights-based project requiring citizen participation, respect for transnational justice, and the construction of a genuine partnership between Europe and its southern neighborhood.

From both theoretical and empirical analysis, three key conclusions emerge. First, European aid is as much a security–economic project as it is a developmental one. The Jordanian and Lebanese cases demonstrate that the EU consistently ties the discourse of development and modernization to security priorities such as migration control, counterterrorism, and refugee management. This does not negate the developmental dimension, but it makes it conditional and constrained. Second, there is a persistent gap between discourse and practice. Despite repeated references to democracy and human rights in EU documents, the tangible impact on democratic transformation has remained marginal. In Jordan, reforms did not go beyond the formal level; in Lebanon, they were absent altogether due to sectarian fragmentation. This discrepancy exposes the difference between rhetoric and implementation. Third, modernization remains incomplete. Partial economic modernization was achieved in Jordan, but it did not translate into political or social transformation. In Lebanon, aid failed to produce any sustainable modernization trajectory. Thus, EU assistance has not resulted in comprehensive modernization but rather in incomplete or conditional forms of it.

Future scenarios must therefore be envisioned at several levels. For the European Union, there is a need to rethink the philosophy of aid, transforming it from a tool of crisis management into a long-term development strategy that acknowledges local specificities. The EU must integrate the democratic–communicative dimension by supporting free media, civil society, and public arenas for debate, in line with Habermas' perspective, and

embrace transnational justice, as Benhabib suggests, treating aid not merely as a vehicle for European interests but as an ethical commitment recognizing the rights of local societies.

For Jordan, the priority lies in diversifying the economy and promoting productive sectors capable of generating employment, linking economic reform with political reform to ensure genuine stability, and enhancing governance and transparency to guarantee that aid is directed toward national priorities rather than being absorbed by projects with limited developmental impact.

For Lebanon, the central challenge is to build strong institutions as a prerequisite for any effective aid, establish strict mechanisms to combat corruption and prevent aid from being absorbed into sectarian patronage networks, and invest in youth and civil society forces demanding reform, rather than continuing to deal exclusively with traditional elites.

This thesis began with a central question: does European aid to Jordan and Lebanon contribute to genuine modernization, or is it merely a tool for crisis management? The answer, as the research has shown, is that such aid is dual in nature: it provides essential economic and humanitarian support, yet remains conditioned by political and security interests that undermine its capacity to produce comprehensive modernization.

The most important lesson that emerges is that modernization is not a ready-made formula to be imposed from outside. It is a complex historical–social process requiring domestic political will, strong institutions, and public spaces that enable debate and participation, as Habermas argued. It is also an ethical–political process that transcends borders, demanding that the North engage with the South as an equal partner, as Benhabib emphasized. What the region requires is not simply more funds or programs, but a new vision of Euro–Middle Eastern relations, one based on partnership rather than dependency, on justice rather than domination, and on mutual recognition rather than condescension. Only then can aid be transformed from a tool of crisis management into a driving force for genuine and sustainable modernization.

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