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Where do Lebanese Political Groups Stand on Policy Questions? An Analysis of Electoral Platforms

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The author would like to thank Georgia Dagher for her support in the writing and editing of several sections in this report.

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2

Hassan, N. 2018. 'An Analysis of Party Platforms in the 2018 Parliamentary Election.' Policy Paper. Lebanese Center for Policy Studies.

3

Ibid.

Executive Summary

Most major political parties in Lebanon released electoral platforms ahead of the 2018 parliamentary election but little attention has been paid to their content. In this study, LCPS examines the platforms of six major political parties and three emerging groups. Complementing another study² that analyzed these platforms' scope, depth, and focus, this study examines platform content in a more comprehensive manner in order to determine political groups' positions on major policy issues. In addition to platform content, the report also utilizes data collected in a pre-election survey of some political parties. This study found that political adversaries often do not have conflicting policy prescriptions and, in fact, espouse support for widely-accepted and uncontroversial positions. It also confirms the findings of previous research,³ namely, that major parties appear to avoid commitment to specific policy proposals in their platforms, and instead present documents that allow flexibility on policy positions and allow for contradictions in stances within each political group. The overview of individual platforms offers a snapshot of the approach that each party has adopted, and more generally their apparent ideological and policy orientations. We hope that this analysis will help provide a solid foundation for further research on the positioning of parties and can be useful for activists seeking to influence policy.

Introduction

This report presents and analyzes the content of electoral platforms released by Lebanon's main political parties and the country's most prominent emerging political groups ahead of the May 2018 elections. It aims to map promises made by parties and groups ahead of the election and examine stances on major policy issues.

The report contains two main sections. The first provides an overview of each program, and the second offers issue-based analyses of platform content with a focus on convergence and divergence in visions and stances. The report analyzes programs presented by the Amal Movement, Free Patriotic Movement, Future Movement, Hezbollah, Kataeb, and Lebanese Forces, all established, major political parties with cross-district presences and three or more MPs in the new parliament. Additionally, the report examines platforms presented by the independent, civil society-inspired groups LiBaladi (a new group in the Beirut One district), LiHaqqi (a new group in the Chouf and Aley district of Mount Lebanon), and Sabaa (a two-year-old political party allied with civil society groups).

I Overview of Individual Platforms

This section provides an overview of each party's program, including topics covered, how information is presented, and other key features. Moreover, it aims to briefly explain how each political group approached their electoral platform as a policy document, and which trends or tendencies can be observed in the content.

a The Amal Movement (Amal)

- Party and militia founded in 1974 by Imam Musa Sadr and former Parliament Speaker Hussein al-Husseini. Currently led by MP Nabih Berri, speaker of parliament since 1992
- Third-largest bloc in parliament: 17 MPs, including 11 partisans
- Electoral slogan: Lubnan al-Amal (the Lebanon of hope)
- Main electoral alliances: Hezbollah, non-partisans, FPM

The Amal Movement's platform is the least developed program of all parties, as our analysis of scope and depth has shown.⁴ It was announced during a 14-point speech delivered by party chief and Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri at a press conference launching the party's electoral campaign. The platform includes no thematic sections, apart from the contents of each of the 14 points being focused on a specific matter or topic.

In general, Amal's program focuses on 'national matters', such as the nature of the political system (points 1 and 3), as well as national



⁴ Hassan, N. 2018. 'An Analysis of Party Platforms in the 2018 Parliamentary Election.' Policy Paper. Lebanese Center for Policy Studies.

security and defense (2,4, and 5). In this field, Amal reiterated its support for eliminating political confessionalism and for supporting ‘the resistance’ against Israel and terrorism, a reference to the stated goals of its ally Hezbollah. Many components reference administrative reform, namely reducing the voting age, establishing e-government, enhancing transparency, and reestablishing a ministry for the Lebanese diaspora. Also, a point is dedicated to the oil and gas sector, which the party has placed a special focus on for many years.

The program largely neglects economic issues as it contains only one component related to economic development, which comprises a generic proposal of ‘achieving national development projects in the framework of balanced development.’ Similarly, the party platform mentions—in very general terms—public services and social policies, including those related to rights and freedom.

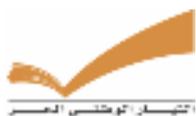
Platform items that Amal presented ahead of the election were therefore less of a policy platform and more a speech outlining the party’s vision and principles. It leaves most issues covered by other parties untouched, and made no controversial statements apart from those endorsing Hezbollah through the ‘Army-People-Resistance’ equation and explicitly comparing other actors’ stances on Iran with that on Israel by stating: ‘Arab brothers: Israel is our enemy and not the Islamic Republic of Iran.’

b The Free Patriotic Movement (FPM)

- Lebanese nationalist party founded by Lebanon’s incumbent President Michel Aoun upon his return in 2005 from forced exile
- Largest party in parliament: Leads ‘Strong Lebanon Bloc’ with 29 MPs, including 18 partisans
- Electoral slogan: ‘We continue’
- Main electoral alliances: Non-partisans, Lebanese Democratic Party, Amal Movement

The FPM’s platform was presented in a 28-page booklet with 18 photos, colored designs, and minimal text. The program comprises five sections, each containing a variety of topics as shown in table 1.

The presentation of the platform’s content is remarkably concise in most policy areas. For example, section 1.1, titled ‘health’, contains four components: ‘Developed and preventive health’, ‘quality hospitalization without discrimination’, ‘a social safety net and old age pensions’, and ‘a continuous fight against drugs’. This model of generic proposals with four to five words each on average is also employed for nearly all sub-sections in this first section, which includes ‘women’, ‘youth’,



'environment', 'energy', 'Syrian displacement', 'decentralization', 'education', and 'sports'. The only exception is section 1.8 titled 'culture', which includes very specific proposals on cultural programs.

The second section of the program, focusing on the economy, offers very little substance on the vision and principles of the party in economic matters, and more details on specific programs in selected sectors. Section 1.2 titled 'economy' offers the following vision.

- *A free economy built on private enterprise as part of an ambitious and developed fiscal vision*
- *Investing natural resources in productive projects to grow the economy*
- *A competitive business environment that is not dominated by monopolies*

Despite this pro-free market economic vision, the FPM's program includes protectionist and populist components. For instance, section 1.1 titled 'finances' promises 'a fairer distribution of wealth', and section 2.3 titled 'productive sectors' includes 'giving advantage to Lebanese products in the local market and moving from import to self-sufficiency'. Moreover, section 2.5 titled 'creating jobs' includes no policy proposal on job creation, and instead focuses on what it calls 'economic protection' and 'social justice', promising to 'support the oppressed classes, the poor, and the marginalized'. The latter, in addition to an item in the 'corruption' section of the program that promises 'limiting the influence of businessmen in politics', are noticeable components given the party's economic vision outlined above. However, no mechanisms or specific actions are proposed to accomplish these goals. For example, tax reform or other policies that would achieve a 'fairer distribution of wealth' are not mentioned. In fact, the FPM's platform makes no reference to tax policy. Import-substitution items are similarly absent, as are trade policies.

Another noticeable feature is the party's focus on Syrian refugees. A full subsection titled 'better life for the citizen' is dedicated to this matter. The subsection titled 'Syrian displacement' promises the 'quick and safe return of displaced Syrians', the 'regulation of Syrian workers' presence and residence', two priorities generally adopted across the political establishment. However, the FPM goes further in specifying two other policies: 'the documentation and monitoring of Syrian births' and 'educating Syrian children on the Syrian curriculum'. Similarly, section 3.1 on 'security' mentioned the need for a 'quick treatment for the Syrian displacement'. This clear focus mirrors a general discourse among FPM officials that warns against the dangers of not resolving what is often referred to as the 'Syrian displacement crisis' in Lebanon.

Table 1 The Free Patriotic Movements platform structure

Platform Section	Sub-sections
1 Ensuring a Better Life for Citizens	1. Health 2. Environment 3. Power 4. Syrian Displacement 5. Decentralization 6. Education 7. Sports 8. Culture 9. Women 10. Youth
2 Sound Management of Funds, the Economy, Productive Sectors and Infrastructure, and Creating Jobs	1. Finance 2. Economy 3. Productive Sectors 3.1. Manufacturing 3.2. Agriculture 3.3. Tourism 4. Infrastructure 4.1. Public works and large projects 4.2. Transport and roads 4.3. Telecom and digital industries 5. Creating jobs
3 Stable Security, Fair and Active Judiciary, and a Practical Crackdown on Corruption	1. Security 2. The Judiciary 3. Combatting Corruption
4 Planning and Implementing E-Government and Communicating with the Lebanese Diaspora	1. Developed Tech Infrastructure for the State 2. Communicating with the Lebanese Diaspora
5 Free and Responsible Media, and Citizens' Right to Access Knowledge and Truth	1. Professional Behavior and Ethics 2. Broadcast, Print, and Media



c **The Future Movement (FM)**

- Economically liberal party founded in 2007 by Saad Hariri, Lebanon's incumbent prime minister
- Second-largest parliamentary bloc: 20 MPs, including 13 partisans
- Electoral Slogan: 'The blue nazar'
- Electoral alliances: Non-partisans, LF, PSP

The Future Movement (FM) presented a 39-point platform divided into four sections: (1) National and political affairs, (2) economic and

social affairs, (3) modern economic affairs and social services provision, and (4) improving infrastructure and public services and protecting the environment.

One noticeable, distinct feature of the FM's platform is the distribution of economic and social policies over two sections, one titled 'economic and social affairs' and the other 'modern economic affairs and social service provision.'

'Economic and social affairs' includes a series of generic goals related to state finances, job creation, the business environment, and labor skills. The first item in the platform, 'reducing unnecessary public expenditures' does not specify whether the party seeks to reduce the deficit through cutting spending, or simply cracking down on the waste of state resources. On monetary policy, the FM does not propose any change, promising to 'continue supporting the policy' of pegging the Lebanese Lira to the U.S. Dollar. On creating jobs, the FM promises 'to enact mechanisms incentivizing companies to create jobs for youth,' while another point focuses on 'providing tax incentives to small and medium enterprises, in addition to the industry and agriculture sectors.' The FM also promises to enact policies that provide technical consultancy and business development support to startups and companies in the creative industry. There is a clear focus on the private sector in the party's economic vision, which includes removing obstacles, involving the private sector in infrastructural projects, and creating special industrial and economic zones, in addition to support and incentives referenced above.

The term 'modern' in the section that follows refers to technology, and specifically to telecommunications technology, to which the first three points of the section were dedicated. The remaining four points deal with combatting poverty, improving healthcare and public education provision, and making housing more accessible to middle income families.

d Hezbollah

- Shia Islamist party and militant group officially founded in 1985⁵
- 'Loyalty to Resistance' parliamentary bloc: Third-largest bloc with 13 MPs, including 12 partisans
- Electoral slogan: 'We protect and build'
- Main electoral alliances: Amal Movement, non-partisans

Hezbollah's political platform was first announced by the party's Secretary-General Hassan Nasrallah in a speech six weeks before the election, and then disseminated through a series of infographics. As



⁵ Hezbollah issued its founding manifesto in 1985.

taken from the transcript of Nasrallah's speech, it comprises a two-page document and contains three sections, titled 'Political Administrative Reform', 'Economic and Fiscal Policies', and 'Social and Development Policies.'

Hezbollah focuses on long-awaited reforms in public administration, public services, and the economy. There is a focus on battling corruption and pushing for reforms in political and other state institutions. The first section is dedicated to these reforms and includes modifications to the current electoral law, lowering the voting age, improving the legislative and oversight performance of parliament, protecting the judiciary's independence, re-introducing the Ministry of Planning, focusing on battling financial and administrative corruption, enacting the decentralization law, passing a new public tenders system, enhancing meritocracy in state employment and digitalizing the state's bureaucracy.

In the economic policies section of the program, the left-leaning nature of the proposed reforms is apparent, and is also made clear by the section introduction, which states the party's vision for the economy:

'We look forward to a state of care and welfare, not a state of collection and control; a state that reduces disparities in society and provides basic social services on transparent and fair bases, and one that adopts an economic system based on labor and production, not on rents and speculation, and raises [Lebanon's] ability to compete [internationally].'

Many components of economic policies are in line with this vision. For instance, the party promises to push for reforming the tax system with the aim of ensuring 'justice,' ending tax evasion, and 'confronting any form of taxation that affects popular groups with limited income, and the poor.' Another proposal entails setting five- and ten-year economic plans for the country 'to increase investment and savings rates, create jobs, and develop the economy.' This is complemented by the promise to offer productive sectors public support through subsidies, protection, and infrastructure development, in addition to 'correcting flaws in the trade balance and trade agreements with foreign states.'

Hezbollah also places a clear focus on public services, promising to work for better electricity, water, and telecom services, in addition to improving public healthcare and education, introducing public transport, protecting public spaces, resolving solid and water waste management issues, enacting old age pensions and resuming compensation for victims of the 2006 Israeli war.

Hezbollah's decision to focus on reform and the improvement of socio-economic conditions is not surprising, especially when viewed against the backdrop of grievances regarding the deterioration of public services and anti-corruption mobilization since the last parliamentary election. More specific insights on the motives behind its program's content would require an in-depth analysis of its target constituencies' geographic, ideological, and class backgrounds.

Notably, the program itself does not contain language on defense or foreign policy, except for one clause on supporting the security forces and the Lebanese Army's military and defense capabilities. Moreover, a clear gap exists in the party's platform regarding rights and freedoms. The platform does not mention civil liberties, culture/art, workers' rights, personal status laws, media, or youth in its program. Moreover, as opposed to the overwhelming majority of parties that mention women's rights and participation, Hezbollah only promises 'to enact laws that ensure the protection of women, who deserve more care and attention'. Also, the program describes drugs as a '[social] lesion', promising to 'combat all aspects' of it, without any proposed change in drug policy. Hence, the Islamist party seems to have avoided any controversial components related to freedoms and rights, and stuck to generic and conservative stances.

d **Kataeb**

- Christian right-wing party founded in 1936 by Pierre Gemayel
- Three MPs in parliament
- Electoral slogan: 'The pulse of change'
- Main electoral alliances: Non-partisans, LF



Kataeb's program is peculiar in its form and content compared to those of other established parties. The platform is an extensive and detailed policy document containing 131 policy items, divided among five sections dealing with sovereignty, democracy, the economy, society, and the environment. Each of these sections contains three to six sub-sections. For instance, the economy section contains the state budget, public debt management, taxes, business environment, infrastructure, and the oil and gas sector. Hence, the length and structure of the program clearly reflects a desire to make it as comprehensive as possible.

In terms of content, the program includes a range of mostly detailed proposals, including amending laws, introducing new decrees and legislation, creating new institutions, and activating existing but dormant institutions or mechanisms. Kataeb is the only established political party to include the decriminalization of homosexuality in

their program, calling in the program's 78th point for 'abrogating all legal provisions that criminalize homosexuality'.

Although relatively comprehensive, the platform still leaves out a major topic that might be sensitive to the party's constituencies or political legacy: Sectarianism and/or the confessional nature of the political system. The component most similar to this topic is 'establishing a senate in which all of Lebanon's historical communities would be represented', which is enumerated in Article 22 of the constitution (following its amendment in 1990 based on the Taif Agreement). However, Article 22 connects the creation of a senate to the election of a parliament without any sectarian quotas, whereas Kataeb's program does not mention the latter. Moreover, the platform does not mention the widely-demanded reform of reducing the voting age, a matter that is often connected to sectarian demographic distribution in Lebanon.

Table 2 Kataeb's platform structure

Platform Section	Sub-section
Sovereignty	Army and Security
	Border
	Foreign Policy
Democracy	Transparency
	Civil State and Constitutional Institutions
	Decentralization
	Public Administration
Economy	State Budget
	Public Debt Management
	Taxes
	Business Environment
	Infrastructure
	Oil and Gas Sector
Society	Human Rights and Public Freedoms
	Healthcare
	Human Dignity and Social Security
	Pluralism and Cultural Wealth
	Educational Policy
Environment	Solid Waste Management
	Urban Planning
	Water Resources Management and Quality Assurance
	Public Maritime, River and Mountain Properties
	Air Quality

e The Lebanese Forces (LF)



- Lebanese nationalist party founded in 1976 as a Christian militia by late president Bashir Gemayel
- Fourth-largest parliamentary bloc, named 'The Strong Republic', with 15 MPs including 11 LF partisans
- Electoral slogan: 'It's time'
- Main electoral alliances: Non-partisans, Kataeb, Future

The Lebanese Forces's (LF) platform comprises a 10-page booklet broken down into 10 sections, each containing a paragraph outlining a vision followed by a set of concise policy statements. The program's 10 sections focus on political vision, administrative reform, and public services. Apart from the 'agriculture and rural development' section, the platform does not offer an economic vision or policies.

Decentralization has been a major focus of the LF. In section 3 of the program 'on enacting the administrative decentralization law', the LF calls for giving local elected authorities 'the widest jurisdictions' and 'financial and administrative independence.' Also notable is their plan to pass a law to create an independent ministry for municipalities 'to enhance municipal work and local development'. This demand was only adopted by the LF and Kataeb.

On education, the LF states that the goal is to 'exit the continuous loops of conflicts among actors in the education sector,' in a possible reference to the struggle over teachers' wages and students' tuition fees. The party's proposed policy offers school children's parents 'the required support and cover in return for the taxes they pay to the state, which allows them to make a free choice on their children's education...' This policy stands out by linking state support of children's education to the taxes paid by their parents.

The environment and women's rights are two issues on which the LF offers remarkably little content, making only one statement on each. Regarding the environment, the LF promises that its parliamentary bloc would prioritize 'programs and ideas' that resolve issues of pollution, green space shortages, and solid waste management by 'ensuring the honest political will to implement these projects and ideas.' Concerning gender equality, the platform offers a general promise to 'continue work started in the previous term to pass laws that eliminate discrimination against Lebanese women,' without any mention of specific laws.

The LF's platform has a unique perspective, as it focuses on a limited number of issues but dedicates a section to each of them. One would expect that this choice implies there is a higher amount of detail in each section. However, this is not the case in the majority of

sections. As our analysis of program depth has revealed, the LF offers only six specific proposals in its program, of which four are on administrative reform (enacting the decentralization law, establishing a ministry for municipalities, passing the e-government law and creating an independent anti-corruption committee), and two on public services (establishing an institution to offer real estate loans to youths to build houses in their hometowns, and passing the LF-proposed universal healthcare law).



f LiBaladi

- Opposition group founded as an electoral campaign ahead of the May 2018 elections
- No MPs in parliament
- Electoral slogan: 'For my country' (Li baladi)
- Electoral alliance: Koullouna Watani
- District: Beirut 1

LiBaladi, a campaign launched in 2018, formed an electoral list in the district of Beirut 1. It was inspired by Beirut's municipal election campaign Beirut Madinati (Beirut My City) and led by a number of its activists. LiBaladi's platform, launched during an event in early March 2018, was uploaded on the group's website under two titles: 'our electoral platform' and 'our stances.' With the exception of topics that are only covered by the 'stances' section, this paper focuses on the content of the 'electoral platform' page, which includes 11 thematic entries with titles shown in table 3.

Table 3 LiBaladi's platform structure

1	Inclusive and Productive Economy
2	Social Welfare and Social Security
3	Universal Mental and Physical Healthcare
4	Free and Quality Education
5	Inclusive Heritage and Culture
6	Sustainable and Productive Environment
7	Dynamic and Inclusive Cities
8	Independent Judiciary
9	Public and Individual Freedoms
10	Transparent and Effective Bureaucracy
11	Incentivizing Infrastructure

Each of the program's 11 sections begins with a general vision on a specific issue and an outline of major policies. This forms the entirety of the content for some topics (such as topics 1, 6, 10, and 11), while other topics also include descriptions of the status quo in each area followed by a detailed action plan to improve it. This made LiBaladi's program—although not the most comprehensive—more detailed than most of its counterparts in terms of legislative and executive actions on a number of specific issues. In that sense, this platform has a significant 'expert' dimension. This echoes a character observed in the platform and discourse of Beirut Madinati, the 2016 electoral campaign for Beirut Municipality in which many of LiBaladi's activists had been involved.

Overall, the platform focuses on reforming state institutions, improving the habitability and sustainability of cities, providing welfare, and investing in people and infrastructure. In ideological terms, the platform seemed to stem from a left-of-center liberal approach, with a commitment to a market economy but a heavy focus on socio-economic rights. In that sense, the group emphasized the need for a high quality provision of free public healthcare and education as well as direct state intervention to ensure the right to housing.

g LiHaqqi

- Opposition group founded as an electoral campaign ahead of the May 2018 elections
- No MPs in parliament
- Electoral slogan: 'For my right' (Li haqqi)
- Electoral alliance: Koullouna Watani
- District: Chouf & Aley (Mount Lebanon 4)



LiHaqqi's platform, uploaded on the campaign's website and printed out as booklets, is a document that states the group's general vision on socioeconomic, civil, and political rights and proposes legislative reforms for their realization. It includes 10 sections, divided among 'rights' rather than sectors: 'civil, fair, and sovereign state'; 'clean environment'; 'universal healthcare'; 'quality education'; 'fair and productive economy'; 'decent work'; 'decent housing'; 'equality, civil rights, and liberties'; 'effective, transparent, and non-sectarian public institutions'; and 'basic public services', as shown in table 4.

The program begins with an introduction outlining the group's vision and hinting at its ideological tendencies, using manifesto-like language. The group claims its purpose is to 'establish a strong, fair and non-sectarian state, which protects its citizens from violence,

exploitation, deprivation, discrimination and any threat that we face, be it political, economic, or environmental.' It describes the campaign as the continuation of struggles by social movements, unions, and activist groups, emphasizing that it makes 'no compromises' on rights and demands, and rejects cronyism and the privatization of public services.

Table 4 LiHaqqi's platform structure

1	Right to a Civil, Fair, and Sovereign State
2	Right to a Clean Environment
3	Right to Universal Healthcare
4	Right to Quality Education
5	Right to a Fair and Productive Economy
6	Right to Decent Work
7	Right to Decent Housing
8	Right to Equality, Civil Rights, and Liberties
9	Right to Effective, Transparent, and Non-Sectarian Public Institutions
10	Right to Basic Public Services

Each of the following 10 sections begins with a paragraph summarizing the group's stance and vision on the issue in question. In these paragraphs, the group seems to present what it sees as the main barrier to the realization of each right. For instance, the section on education begins with the following statement:

'Starting from our belief that knowledge should be a public right and not a commodity, and that quality education is a basic right for every human in Lebanon, we will work on reviving public educational institutions, supporting them and improving their curricula, and confronting any attempt to privatize education, be it motivated by profits or the increase of sectarian divisions and clientelist relations between people and groups in power.'

The platform left out a number of topics, including oil and gas, and culture and arts. Moreover, it placed little emphasis on matters of defense policy.



h Sabaa

- Political party founded in 2016
- One MP in parliament: Paulette Yacoubian
- Electoral slogan: A nation's smile
- Electoral alliance: Koullouna Watani

The recently-established political party announced its political

platform in March 2018, before which it had no manifesto or clear policy orientation. The platform, available on the party's website, is an 84-page booklet containing a comprehensive set of policies and programs that include sections on social, economic, bureaucratic, judicial, cultural, and environmental reform. As shown in table 5, the program is divided among four generic slogans: 'the citizen's happiness', 'the revolution', 'national honor and self-reliance', and 'a workshop of hope'.

Table 5 Sabaa's platform structure

Platform Section	Sub-sections	Number of Lists
The Citizen's Happiness	Health Before Everything	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Social Security ■ Retirement ■ Healthcare
	Many More Jobs	
	Comprehensive Refurbishment of Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Schools ■ Higher Education
	A Country with Legacy, Regenerating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Transport ■ Electricity ■ Internet and Telecoms ■ Water ■ Housing
	Environment is National Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Environment ■ Restoring our Country's Beauty
The Revolution	A Lively Economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Agriculture ■ Industry ■ Oil & Gas
	A Regional Services Hub	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Tourism ■ Trade ■ Banks ■ Culture
	A Business Catalyst	
	We Will Export Technology	
National Honor and Self-Reliance	A Proud Nation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ National Security ■ Patriotism/Nationalism
	A Law that Protects Everyone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Judiciary and Justice ■ Behind Every Great Nation a Woman ■ People with Disabilities
A Workshop of Hope	A State Services the Citizen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Public Bureaucracy Reforms ■ Battling Corruption ■ Public Finances
	Modernizing the Political System is a Necessity	

Sabaa's program can be distinguished from other new groups by its approach. Rather than focusing on introducing and amending laws, Sabaa chose to present a set of detailed projects that would be carried by several bodies of the state's administration with a level of detail that is not mirrored in any other program. For instance, the section dealing with higher education includes a 'media campaign in Lebanon and a number of MENA countries to publicize the Lebanese University', while one of the programs related to electricity is launching a mobile app named 'Social Electricity' that would help consumers minimize energy waste. In other words, the party offers a technocratic vision on governing Lebanon. It might be the only minor political group to do so, because other groups such as LiHaqqi and LiBaladi focus on achieving specific demands through policy and legislation. In line with this approach, Sabaa included detailed budgets to a number of its proposals, and presented the new costs associated with its program as shown in table 6.

Table 6 Costs assigned by Sabaa to its policies

Sector	New spending (millions of USD)
Health	732
Education	612
Army and E-Government + Miscellaneous	490
Business Incentives	446
Service Economy	340
Infrastructure	324
Productive Economy (Agriculture, Industry, Oil and Gas)	222
Environment	98
Technology Sector	54
Job Creation Initiatives	29
Total Spending	3,347

The party also promises a budget surplus of \$4.8 billion in its program based on additional revenues totaling \$8.1 billion. The revenues would be collected primarily by cracking down on tax evasion (\$3.5 billion), penalizing violations of railways and public maritime and riverside properties (\$1.5 billion), privatizing electricity production (\$895 million), taxing tobacco products (\$855 million), and improving the collection of bills and fees (\$597 million), in addition to \$824 million from land value estimations, savings on public debt payments, and revealing and taxing the revenues of private parking lots and electricity generators.

Sabaa's program differed from other new groups' platforms in that it reflects a belief in privatization and public-private partnership, particularly in public service provision. The party mentions plans to privatize electricity production, telecommunication services, the management of Beirut's sea and air ports, and to use the PPP model in various sectors including transportation and the establishment of a new airport.

II Topic-Based Analysis

Electoral platforms, as non-interactive documents, offer parties and groups the freedom to decide what to include and leave out from their discourse, what to focus on in detail, and how to phrase statements to avoid controversy or commitment to specific policies. This is why a separate examination of each platform can offer limited insight on parties' stances on major policy questions. On the other hand, a comparative perspective can put each platform's content in context. To that end, this section compares stances on specific policy issues by extracting the relevant content from all prominent party or new political groups' platforms. Additionally, since these platforms only include what these groups chose to mention, the analysis also uses data collected by LCPS in a pre-election study. The study includes data collected in a survey in which various groups and parties completed a questionnaire answering very specific questions on policy preferences. From among the major parties, the FPM, Amal, and FM decided not to participate, while Hezbollah, the LF, Kataeb, and the PSP⁶ participated by answering most questions and making comments on others. The three emerging groups being analyzed—LiBaladi, Sabaa, and LiHaqqi—also participated. On many of the topics in question, data from this survey will offer better insight on the positions of parties on controversial policy matters when it is not made clear in their platforms.

The section comprises five parts, each dealing with one umbrella policy topic, which are as follows: The economy, political and administrative reform, public services, social policies, and defense and foreign policies. In each section, a number of sub-topics are analyzed, ranging from three sub-topics (in the case of defense and foreign policies) to 12 (in the case of public services). The sub-topics analyzed (such as taxation, decentralization, women's rights, etc.) are based on those mentioned by the platforms of at least half of the established parties⁷ (three or more parties).

⁶ The PSP did not present an electoral platform, and is therefore only mentioned in this study based on its answers to the LCPS survey.

⁷ The category 'established parties' includes all parties that had run for elections in previous rounds, namely: Hezbollah, the FPM, FM, Amal, LF, and PSP.

a **On the Economy**

On the economy, the most covered policy questions concern the productive sectors, taxation, and oil and gas, as shown in table 7, which displays how many established parties and emerging groups⁸ cover each topic.

⁸

Emerging groups include LiBaladi, LiHaqqi, and Sabaa. These groups are newly formed and the 2018 parliamentary election was the first in which they engaged.

Table 7 **Most covered economic topics**

Topic	Established Parties Covering (total = 6)	Emerging Groups Covering (total = 3)
Productive Sectors	5	3
Taxation	4	3
Oil and Gas	5	1
Job Creation	3	2
Trade	3	2
Budget and Fiscal Policies	3	1

Productive sectors: A prominent focus on marketing support and tax incentives

Supporting the productive economic sectors, a widely discussed public policy priority in Lebanon, is the most prominent component of parties' platforms and is mentioned by eight of the nine programs analyzed (all but Amal) as shown in table 9.

A number of common policies appear in the platforms of more than one group, as table 8 shows. Facilitating the export and marketing of local products is referenced in five programs, making it the most frequently mentioned policy. However, it takes a variety of forms: The LF references 'finding markets for agricultural products', Kataeb calls for 'reactivating and providing support to the Lebanese Export Promotion Agency', Sabaa states that it would work to 'create the National Council for Agricultural Exports', and LiHaqqi supports the marketing of Lebanese agricultural products locally and abroad. The FPM's states that the industrial sector should be 'overcoming obstacles to exporting and reducing its cost' and identifying 'new markets through the Lebanese diaspora and encouraging [the latter] to invest'.

Another prominent mechanism to support productive sectors—something directly mentioned by three platforms and indirectly by two others—is tax incentives. The FM promises tax incentives for investments in productive sectors, Kataeb mentions exempting the export of Lebanese products from income tax, and Sabaa states that tax incentives should be focused on companies with research and development activities. LiBaladi and Hezbollah touch on this policy

indirectly, mentioning ‘encouraging local and foreign investments’ and ‘reducing production costs’ respectively.

Import substitution as an industrial policy is relatively absent, except in the FPM’s program, which surprisingly promises not only to ‘give advantage in the local market to Lebanese products’, but also to ‘move from import to self-sufficiency’. LiHaqqi emphasizes the need to amend trade policies to protect ‘local industries with high productive capacities’. Hezbollah touches on the matter indirectly by mentioning ‘protecting’ the productive sectors without offering details.

Another component observed in three programs is providing infrastructure for the development of the productive sectors generally. Hezbollah references this policy without offering any detail as part of its brief component dealing with productive sectors. Meanwhile, the FM and FPM mention building special industrial zones, with the FPM specifying ‘green industrial zones built on sustainable energy and development.’

Other policies, such as investing in research and development, facilitating access to credit, and organizing small farmers in cooperatives, are also touched on in several programs.

Table 8 Policies related to productive sectors that are mentioned in more than one platform

Policy	Programs in which policy is included	Programs in which policy is implied
Facilitating Exports and Marketing	Lebanese Forces - Kataeb - LiHaqqi - Sabaa - FPM	
Offering Tax Incentives	Future - Kataeb - Sabaa - FPM	LiBaladi: ‘Encouraging local and foreign investments’ Hezbollah: ‘Reducing production costs’ FPM: ‘Incentives for the private sector to invest in agro-food industries’
Providing Infrastructure and/or Industrial Zones	Hezbollah - Future - FPM	
Protection of Local Industries	LiHaqqi - FPM	Hezbollah: ‘Offering protection to the productive sectors’
Investing in Research and Development	Sabaa - FPM	
Facilitating Access to Credit	Hezbollah - FPM	LiHaqqi: ‘Direct state intervention to orient investments toward productive sectors’

As table 8 shows, six policies related to the productive sectors are mentioned by more than one group in their platforms. The individual content of each platform in relation to the productive sectors is presented in table 9.

Table 9 Party policies on the productive sectors

Party	Policies
FPM	<p>Manufacturing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ [Fostering] a technological link between industry and universities ■ Establishing green industrial zones ■ Incorporating women in some industries to decrease poverty ■ Modernizing the technology of small- and medium-size manufacturers to create new jobs and eliminate monopolies ■ Favoring Lebanese products in the local market and moving from import to self sufficiency ■ Addressing obstacles facing exports and reducing costs ■ [Finding] new markets through the Lebanese diaspora and incentivizing the diaspora to invest ■ Diversifying and modernizing the Industrial Research Institute ■ Reconnecting Lebanon to the Arab world <p>Agriculture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Ensuring the safety and quality of agricultural and agro-food products ■ Increasing productivity and opening new markets for products ■ Supporting advertising and marketing campaigns abroad ■ Developing cooperatives and creating cooperates for production, manufacturing, and marketing ■ Supporting the productivity, profitability, and sustainability of small farms to reduce poverty and migration to cities ■ Incentivizing the private sector to invest in agro-food industries and offering agricultural credit ■ [Establishing] a mutual fund to protect the agricultural sector against natural disasters ■ [Establishing] public labs and regulation mechanisms to monitor the use of pesticides. ■ Organizing the fishing sector and creating frameworks for fish farming and marine biology <p>Tourism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ [Supporting] sustainable tourism, especially environmental and religious tourism ■ Supporting 'hospitality houses' as a source of income for low-income families ■ Rationalizing touristic productivity and creating jobs

Party	Policies
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Improving touristic infrastructure to attract tourists and diaspora, and enhancing disaster prevention ■ Preserving cultural heritage and adhering to values, traditions, and customs ■ Including the largest number of monuments on the global heritage list and updating the laws to protect cultural and natural tourist sites ■ Attracting tourists of new nationalities such as Chinese and Russians ■ Communicating with the diaspora and encouraging members of the diaspora to act as tourism ambassadors for Lebanon ■ Supporting tourism loans and eliminating entry visas to Lebanon, reducing ticket prices, and breaking the monopoly and speculation of some foreign companies
Future Movement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Creating special industrial zones and enacting tax incentives
Hezbollah	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Offering support, protection, and infrastructure development to the productive sectors, especially agriculture, manufacturing, and tourism ■ Reducing production and credit costs and encouraging banks to offer financial facilities
Kataeb	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Exempting the export of Lebanese products from income tax to incentivize investment in the productive economy ■ Reactivating and providing support to the Lebanese Export Promotion Agency (LEBEX)
Lebanese Forces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Finding markets for agricultural products and enacting a framework that allows the Ministry of Agriculture to monitor the quality of crops in line with international standards
LiBaladi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Supporting productive and alternative sectors and encouraging local and foreign investments in these sectors ■ [According to LiBaladi] any economic development on the level of the state requires a comprehensive economic vision that defines Lebanon's economic role and maintains pace with global and regional developments. The vision should be based on identifying the sectors with the best added value for Lebanon—including alternative manufacturing and digital industries—and should not rely solely on the service sector
LiHaqqi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Reconsidering trade policies by adopting tariff policies that aim to develop local industries with high productive capacities, and amending or terminating any free trade agreements that hurt these sectors ■ Encouraging direct state intervention to orient investments toward productive sectors that create jobs for youth, especially

Party	Policies
	<p>manufacturing, agriculture, and the knowledge economy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Focusing on organizing small farmers in sustainable cooperatives, facilitating their marketing in Lebanon and abroad, and connecting them to agro-food industries
Sabaa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Supporting research and development through tax incentives to the private sector and investment in the Lebanese University Creating a National Council for Agricultural Exports, expanding free trade agreements, improving the skills of farmers, legalizing cannabis production, and focusing on lavender and high-value production

Taxation: Limited commitment to reform, and shyness toward new taxes

Taxation is an economic subject that most groups touch on in their economic programs but the purposes and content vary considerably among programs. Hezbollah, Kataeb, LiHaqqi, and LiBaladi call for progressive reforms to the tax system. Hezbollah and LiHaqqi express support for a tax system favoring the poor, while LiBaladi call for ‘fair and progressive’ taxation (table 10).

Only two groups propose a new tax in their platforms. LiBaladi calls for a new tax on real estate speculation to protect the ‘social value’ of land, while LiHaqqi proposes more generally that there be a focus on ‘properties’ and ‘economic rents’ taxes, in a likely reference to interest on bank deposits and real estate speculation.

The programs of Sabaa, Kataeb, and Hezbollah also focus on combatting tax evasion. Sabaa promises \$3.5 billion in additional state revenues from stopping tax evasion, Hezbollah mentions ‘ending’ evasion without stating how, and Kataeb mentions the establishment of ‘a special office that would be tasked with combatting tax evasion and forging fiscal equality.’

The FPM, FM, and Sabaa only mention tax policy in the context of reducing taxes to encourage investments in productive sectors.

Table 10 Tax policies mentioned in more than one platform

Policy	Parties
Reforming the tax system for fairness	Hezbollah - Kataeb - LiHaqqi
Combatting tax evasion	Kataeb - Sabaa - Hezbollah
New taxes	LiBaladi - LiHaqqi

As table 10 shows, three tax policies are mentioned by more than one group in their platforms. The individual content of each platform in relation to taxation is presented in table 11.

The only two groups that do not mention taxation in their programs are Amal and the LF. Amal also rejected an opportunity to participate in LCPS's survey, which makes its position on taxes more difficult to determine. The LF, answering a question on the preferred tax in case of the need for additional state revenues to spend on welfare programs, stated that it was 'against any taxes for now'. Apart from the LF, all other parties (Hezbollah, Kataeb, LiBaladi, PSP, Sabaa, and LiHaqqi) say they support 'amending the tax system to reduce economic inequality in Lebanon.' More details on each party's stance can be found in table 11.

Table 11 Party policies on the productive sectors

Party	Policies
Future Movement	Providing tax incentives for small- and medium-sized enterprises, as well as the industrial and agricultural sectors.
Hezbollah	Reforming the tax system to ensure justice, opposing taxes that affect low-income individuals and the poor, and ending tax evasion.
Kataeb	Establishing a special office tasked with combatting tax evasion and forging fiscal equality. Adopting the progressive taxation system, in which the tax rate increases as the taxable amount does, in an effort to establish social justice, improve tax collection, ensure compliance, combat fraud, and reduce tax evasion as well as the informal economy.
LiBaladi	Reducing the Value Added Tax (VAT) to 10% and enforcing tax reforms in a way that increases direct taxes and decreases indirect ones. Enacting a fair and progressive tax policy and reforming the tax collection process. Enforcing a real estate tax on empty properties and all real estate speculations to protect the social value of land.
LiHaqqi	Reducing wealth inequality and poverty by enacting a fair tax policy based on direct progressive taxation focusing on properties and rent, and veering away from the value added tax and other taxes that affect the poor.
Sabaa	[No tax policy section or sub-section. Tax incentives are mentioned in different parts of the program].

The Oil & Gas Sector: A focus on establishing institutions and saving funds

The oil and gas sector is mentioned in the platforms of five groups: Hezbollah, FPM, Amal, Kataeb, and Sabaa. The groups' positions generally focus on necessary steps for the good governance of the sector and its revenues. Three parties mention a sovereign wealth fund and a national oil company: Amal, Kataeb, and Sabaa. The FPM and Hezbollah, on the other hand, touch on the sector more lightly, with the FPM merely stating that it seeks the 'continuous development of extractive industries to liberate the Lebanese economy,' and Hezbollah mentioning the need for transparency, regulation, and an investment of oil revenues in sustainable development.

The LF, Future, LiHaqqi, and LiBaladi do not mention the oil and gas sector in their official platforms.

As seen in table 12, the most common policy denominators are creating a sovereign wealth fund and a national oil company, and ensuring transparency in the sector, with each mentioned by three of the five parties. Hezbollah and Kataeb favor investing revenues in development, but each remains very generic in their proposals, saying (respectively) that oil and gas resources should be used to support 'sustainable development' and 'other sectors'.

Table 12 Oil and Gas policies mentioned in more than one platform

Policy	Programs in which policy is included
Creating a sovereign wealth fund	Amal Movement - Kataeb - Sabaa
Creating a national oil company	Amal Movement - Kataeb - Sabaa
Ensuring transparency in the sector	Hezbollah - Kataeb - Sabaa
Investing revenues in development projects	Hezbollah - Kataeb

As table 12 shows, four policies related to oil and gas are mentioned by more than one group in their platforms. The individual content of each platform in relation to oil and gas is presented in table 13.

A preference for collecting funds in a sovereign wealth fund (SWF) was apparent in the results of an LCPS survey. When asked to choose between investing oil and gas revenues in public facilities and services, using them to pay back public debt, or collecting them in a sovereign wealth fund, most groups⁹ chose the latter. Hezbollah was the only party to opt for investing revenues in development, although the party made two choices in contradiction with the survey's instructions, the other being storing funds in an SWF.

⁹ Namely Hezbollah, Kataeb, the Lebanese Forces, LiBaladi, and Sabaa.

Table 13 Party policies on oil and gas

Party	Policies
Amal Movement	[Engaging in] special parliamentary efforts to follow up on oil and gas. Creating a sovereign wealth fund, a national oil company, and enacting the onshore petroleum law.
FPM	Continuous development of extractive industries to 'liberate' the Lebanese economy.
Hezbollah	Creating a legislative, legal, and institutional structure that ensures transparency and regulation in exploration and production, and the best investment of oil revenues in sustainable development.
Kataeb	Committing to international frameworks of transparency, collaborating with civil society, enacting a modern law for the sovereign wealth fund that maintains the fund for future generations. Adopting an economic strategy for the sector to best use revenues in developing oil and gas knowledge, creating jobs, and supporting other sectors. Creating a National Oil Company. (Details in components 66 - 69 of the program).
Sabaa	Passing laws related to the sovereign wealth fund, national oil company (after commercial exploration), General Directory of Petroleum facilities, and a law for exploring oil and gas on shore. Allocating all revenues to an SWF, and not spending them on public debt service, to be eventually invested abroad or in local productive sectors. Enacting a law to 'improve transparency in the oil and gas sector' without any distortions. Releasing any draft laws related to oil and gas six months before [being put up for a vote] in order to involve civil society and experts. Formulating an employment plan for the oil and gas sector: Specifying labor needs (More details in party's program).

Job creation: A scarcity of concrete proposals

Job creation is indirectly addressed by other policies, which makes it unsurprising that many programs do not touch on it directly. However, five of the analyzed programs do reference job creation, namely those of Hezbollah, the FPM, Future, LiHaqqi, and Sabaa (table 14).

Three of these programs include macro-solutions for jobs creation. Hezbollah calls for five- and ten-year economic plans, LiHaqqi calls for a strategy of economic advancement focused on creating jobs in the productive sectors and the knowledge economy, while Sabaa promises to create a new ministry for economic investments while setting yearly targets of jobs created by foreign direct investments.

The FPM and FM are less elaborate in their proposals. The FPM states its aim to ‘create larger social and economic job opportunities’ without offering details. The FM promises incentives for companies to employ young people.

Incentives for youth employment are also mentioned in Sabaa’s program, which proposes a scheme whereby the first year of social security subscription costs are covered by the government. In its table of new public expenditures, Sabaa says it would spend a mere \$29 million on ‘job creation initiatives’. Meanwhile, the 82,000 new jobs in the next four years that the program promises seem to be connected to other, sector-specific categories of new spending: The party says it would spend \$222 million on industry, agriculture, and oil extraction, and create 10,000 new manufacturing jobs that, in turn, will foster the creation of 22,000 more in linked sectors. The program also states that \$340 million of new investments would be made in the ‘service economy’ and promises 14,000 jobs in tourism and transport that would create an additional 18,000 jobs in linked sectors.

Table 14 Party policies on job creation

Party	Policies
FPM	Creating more social and economic job opportunities for Lebanon.
Future Movement	Enacting mechanisms to incentivize companies to create job opportunities for youth.
Hezbollah	Demanding five and ten year economic plans as part of a clear economic vision that aims to raise the rates of saving and investment, create jobs, develop the economy, and benefit from the diaspora’s energy and resources.
LiHaqqi	Formulating an economic development plan that includes direct state intervention to orient investments toward productive sectors that create jobs for youth, especially manufacturing, agriculture, and the knowledge economy.
Sabaa	Creating 82,000 jobs in the next four years through investment plans in various sectors. Ten thousand jobs in industry, and 22,000 jobs in linked sectors. Fourteen thousand in tourism and transport, and 18,000 in linked sectors. Setting yearly targets for jobs created by foreign direct investments in Lebanon. Creating a ministry for investments and promoting Lebanon abroad.

Trade: Virtually no signs of plans to change course

Trade is mentioned in the platforms of five groups: Hezbollah, the LF, Kataeb, LiHaqqi, and Sabaa (table 15), and is left out by the three parties with the largest parliamentary representation (the FPM, FM and Amal). Moreover, among the established parties that mention trade, only Hezbollah hints at the need for a new trade policy with shifted priorities. Along with the two emerging groups LiHaqqi and Sabaa, Hezbollah mentions reforming trade agreements to support local production, although the three groups have different perspectives. Hezbollah is more general in its approach, calling for ‘supporting local productive sectors by correcting the trade deficit and trade agreements with foreign states’. Sabaa is more precise, focusing on trade reciprocity with all partners, and mentioning a plan to crack down on ‘dumping’ when bilateral trade agreements do not exist. Finally, LiHaqqi calls for a tariff policy to support the ‘development of local sectors with high productive capacity’, and for amending or eliminating all trade agreements that hurt these sectors.

Kataeb and the LF take more technical and less political stances on trade policy. The LF mentions the ‘strict monitoring of legal and illegal crossings’ to crack down on smuggling. Kataeb calls for ‘reviving Lebanon’s accession to the World Trade Organization,’ without adopting stances on tariffs and protection.

Bilateral trade also appears in the programs of Kataeb and Sabaa. Kataeb calls for ‘activating the work of bilateral business councils’ to boost trade with specific partners, and Sabaa promises trade agreements with countries that possess high population densities, namely: China, Ethiopia, Russia, India, and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Sabaa’s trade policies entail another dimension not covered by other programs, namely, improving Lebanese trade infrastructure. The program mentions ‘improving the capacity of shipment facilities’ and reducing landing and transit fees at Rafic Hariri International Airport to improve the country’s ‘logistical competitive edge’, creating a new airport outside Beirut through a public-private partnership, privatizing the management of airports and sea ports, improving Tripoli’s port and its capacity, establishing free economic zones with low costs for repackaging and exporting, and improving truck parking spaces to facilitate more efficient land transit.

Table 15 Party policies on trade

Party	Policies
Hezbollah	Supporting local productive sectors by correcting the deficit in the trade balance and [trade] agreements with foreign states.
Lebanese Forces	Stricter monitoring of official and illegal crossings on Lebanon's borders and cracking down on smuggling.
Kataeb	Empowering bilateral business councils and benefiting from Lebanese expatriates who can play an important role in consolidating ties between Lebanon and the countries where they reside. Restarting Lebanon's accession to the World Trade Organization.
LiHaqqi	Reviewing trade policies and adopting a tariff policy aimed at developing domestic sectors with high productive capacity, and amending or abolishing free trade agreements that harm these sectors. Abolishing exclusive import licenses to liberate commerce from monopolies that raise prices for citizens.
Sabaa	Insisting on reciprocity with all trade partners even if it requires amending trade agreements. Ending dumping from countries without bilateral trade agreements. Improving the capacity of shipment facilities in the airport to improve Lebanon's logistical competition. Constructing a new airport outside Beirut through a public-private partnership. Privatizing the management of airports and ports, while maintaining state ownership. Reducing landing and transit fees in Beirut's airport and improving logistical services and strike agreements with airlines. Improving ports, such as Tripoli's, to increase capacity and achieve quick reforms. Establishing free economic zones and facilitating the process of repackaging and exporting. Improving parking for land transit. Increasing the number of trade agreements, especially with new partners such as China, Ethiopia, Russia, the DRC and India (countries with high population density).

Budget and fiscal policies: A focus on reducing deficit

Policy positions on fiscal policies and the budget range from technical or neutral in their approach to others that are more overtly political (table 16).

Kataeb and the FPM are on the technical side of the spectrum. The FPM briefly mentions 'reducing and regulating ineffective public spending.' Kataeb shares this priority, promising to reduce 'the deficit

ceiling and setting a clear plan to gradually decrease it each year in order to bring down the deficit-to-GDP ratio below 5% over the next four years.' The party is also concerned with adopting good practices in the approval of budgets. Kataeb mentions 'a state budget that is duly held, respects the principles of unity, annuality, and inclusiveness, and abides by the principle of non-allocation of incomes, while committing to the pre-requirement of submitting an audit of the previous year's accounts and abiding by constitutional deadlines.'

Hezbollah states that public spending should be 'adjusted and rationalized' to balance different priorities, of which they mention: The treasury, the needs of the population, and the development of the national economy.

LiHaqqi is more political in its approach as it calls for 'ending austerity policies', and increasing shares of public education and health care in the state's budget.

Table 16 Party positions on fiscal and budget policies

Party	Policies
FPM	Reducing and regulating ineffective public spending.
Hezbollah	Adjusting spending and rationalization commensurate with the overall financial situation of the state and the needs of the Lebanese people, and the development of the national economy.
Kataeb	Approving a state budget that is duly held, respects the principles of unity, annuality, and inclusiveness and abides by the principle of non-allocation of incomes, while committing to the requirement of submitting an audit of the previous year's accounts and abiding by constitutional deadlines. Reducing the deficit ceiling and setting a clear plan to gradually decrease it each year in order to reduce the deficit-to-GDP ratio below 5% over the next four years.
LiBaladi	Approaching the state's finances from a perspective that transcends calculations, and establishes required steps to deal with the deficit, restructure public debt, and reduce its share of the GDP.
LiHaqqi	Ending austerity policies and increasing the budget allocations of public health and education services.

b On Political and Administrative Reforms

From the many policy questions related to political and administrative reform that platforms address, corruption is the only one covered by all groups. Five other topics were also covered by six or more platforms, as shown in table 17.

Table 17 Most covered topics related to political and administrative reform

Topic	Established Parties Covering (total = 6)	Emerging Groups Covering (total = 3)
Corruption	6	3
E-Government	5	3
Judicial Reform	4	3
Decentralization	4	2
Sectarianism	4	2
State Employment	4	2

Corruption: A general consensus on the need for new legislation

Among topics of political and administrative reform, combatting corruption is the most extensively covered; all groups directly cover it in some form. This is hardly surprising given chronic corruption issues across Lebanon, which is ranked 136 out of 176 countries on the Corruption Perception Index issued by Transparency International (2016).

The major finding from an overview of the platforms' corruption-related content is an agreement on the need for new laws to fight corruption. Within this consensus, the approach and level of specificity vary significantly among parties. Hezbollah states in its platform that it is planning to 'pay special attention at this stage to combatting financial and administrative corruption according to the available legal and administrative mechanisms' without offering any specific plans. The FM and Amal are also unspecific, but they both mention legislative action to improve existing mechanisms. The FM states that it would launch a 'legislative and organizational workshop to combat corruption and bribery in the bureaucracy', while Amal says it plans to achieve 'full transparency' by 'modernizing laws' and 'monitoring the[ir] implementation'. The LF proposes a more specific action: The creation of 'an independent commission to combat corruption,' but without offering any explanation of the committee's composition, role, or jurisdiction, or how it relates to existing anti-corruption mechanisms. The FPM dedicates a section to corruption, in which the first part contains a set of slogans such as: 'Rotation of power', 'changing leadership and

implementing accountability after evaluating performance', and 'limiting the influence of businessmen in politics'. More specifically, the party promises to enact a series of laws on administrative decentralization, whistle-blower protection, public tenders, and conflict of interest, but does not mention any specific versions of draft laws on these issues.

The illicit wealth law is also central in many programs' approaches to combatting corruption. The FPM mentions enacting an illicit wealth law, without mention of the already-existing law that has been criticized for making it difficult to take action against corrupt officials. LiHaqqi mentions 'implementing the illicit wealth law' without noting the need for amendments, while LiBaladi and Kataeb focus on its amendment, the former without elaboration. The latter specifies three reforms: Eliminating the restriction of complaints to those 'damaged' directly, eliminating the bank deposit required by those filing complaints, and reducing the penalty in the event an investigation results in no indictment regarding illicit wealth acquisition.

Directly connected to combatting corruption is the issue of oversight agencies, which is covered by six platforms, namely those of: Amal, the FPM, Hezbollah, the LF, LiBaladi, and Sabaa. The various groups hold similar positions on the necessity of 'activating' the agencies' role and guaranteeing their independence from political influence by offering immunity to their directors. The agencies in question are the Central Inspection Board, the Audit Bureau, and Civil Service Council, with LiBaladi also mentioning the Judicial Inspection Authority.

Another policy linked to combatting corruption by three party programs is the abolition of the Council for Development and Reconstruction (CDR) and other development funds, which is advocated by Kataeb, LiHaqqi, and Sabaa. Kataeb calls for abolishing the CDR and 'the funds and agencies that serve as alternates to the work of ministries, and replacing them with the Ministry of Planning'. Similarly, LiHaqqi refers to 'funds and councils that burden the state's finances without being needed'. Sabaa calls for abolishing the CDR in addition to the Displaced Fund, the Council for the South and the Higher Relief Committee; linking this policy decision to the fact that these bodies are not subject to pre-spending monitoring.

Finally, the FPM and Kataeb also focus on ethics and institutional culture as tools against corruption. The FPM mentions 'supporting good practice', 'unifying national and social conceptions and adopting an anti-corruption discourse', in addition to raising awareness through the educational system. Kataeb promises a 'code of ethics' that includes binding rules of conduct that presidents, ministers, deputies

and senior officials must adhere to during their terms.' More details on each party's position on corruption can be found in table 18.

Table 18 Party policies on corruption

Party	Policies
Amal Movement	Achieving full transparency and fighting corruption by modernizing laws and monitoring their implementation. Empowering oversight agencies, enhancing their independence, and giving them the required immunity and power to monitor tenders.
FPM	Implementing a rotation of power, changing the leadership and establishing accountability after evaluating the performance [of public servants]. Limiting the influence of businessmen in the practice of political governance. Forming a legislative workshop to create a national commission for combatting corruption and passing the following laws: An illicit wealth law, a conflict of interest law, a public tender law, an administrative decentralization law, and a whistleblower protection law. Adopting all preventive tools [against corruption] and supporting sound anti-corruption practices. Unifying national and social concepts and adopting an anti-corruption discourse. Pressuring political parties to work on a comprehensive national program that combats the use of parties, associations, and unions to hide or expose corruption based on political interests. Supporting educational institutions in the struggle against corruption through awareness. Empowering oversight agencies.
Future Movement	Launching a legislative and regulatory workshop to combat corruption and bribery.
Hezbollah	Paying special attention to fighting financial and administrative corruption, according to available legal and administrative mechanisms. Enhancing oversight agencies and amending laws for effectiveness and independence.
Kataeb	Formulating and implementing a 'code of ethics' that includes binding rules of conduct which presidents, ministers, deputies, and senior officials would be required to adhere to during their terms. Lifting banking secrecy off the accounts and assets of deputies, ministers, top public servants, and contractors who are awarded state projects. Amending the Illegal Enrichment Act by limiting the complaint to the injured party, canceling the bank guarantee owed to the

Party	Policies
Lebanese Forces	<p>plaintiff, and reducing the imposed fine if the judiciary finds that there is no illicit enrichment situation. These amendments would make it easier for citizens to hold officials to account. Modifying the procedure based on which members of the Higher Judicial Council are selected and ensuring that appointments are made in accordance with judicial independence.</p> <p>Liberating the Audit Bureau, the Central Inspection Board, and all other supervisory bodies from executive authority control, and requiring them to submit detailed monthly reports about the performance of deputies.</p> <p>Ratifying the law of public transactions and assigning the task of tender management and the solicitation of bids exclusively to the Tenders Department.</p> <p>Appointing a 'Mediator of the Republic', also known as the ombudsman, establishing the National Authority for Human Rights, and approving the law of the National Anti-Corruption Authority.</p> <p>Abolishing the Council for Development and Reconstruction as well as the funds and agencies that carry out duties similar to or the same as that of ministries, and replacing them with the Ministry of Planning.</p>
LiBaladi	<p>Establishing an independent authority to combat corruption.</p> <p>Enhancing the roles of the Center Inspection Board the Audit Bureau and the Civil Service Council.</p> <p>Activating the illicit wealth law and the principle of reward and punishment in the staff system.</p> <p>Reestablishing immunity for the heads of oversight agencies to ensure agencies' independence (Audit Bureau, Central Inspection Board, Judicial Inspection Board, and the Civil Service Council).</p>
LiHaqqi	<p>Implementing the illicit wealth law.</p> <p>Lifting bank secrecy for individuals holding an official position in political institutions with the power of spending public money.</p> <p>Enacting the whistleblower protection law.</p> <p>Passing the implementation decrees of the Right to Access Information Law, and emphasizing its implementation in political institutions.</p> <p>Abolishing redundant funds and councils that burden the state's finances.</p>
Sabaa	<p>Passing a whistleblower protection law.</p> <p>Imposing the state's financial sovereignty by ending tax evasion.</p> <p>Passing a law forcing civil servants to disclose their income and wealth and tax returns publicly and regularly.</p> <p>Creating a special committee to track the wealth accumulation of politicians.</p>

Party	Policies
	<p>Enacting a law to appropriate funds stolen since 1975.</p> <p>Enacting a law preventing ministers and MPs from holding any position on the management boards of companies contracted by the state to prevent conflict of interest. Fully implementing and adhering to the access to information law.</p> <p>Creating the 'waseet al-Jumhuriya' institutions stipulated in law 664/2005 that receive citizen complaints and resolve their issues with state institutions free of charge.</p> <p>Enhancing the Central Inspection Board with [needed] logistical and human resources, and increasing its staff to guarantee the required number of inspectors in the public administration.</p> <p>Allowing the Higher Discipline Committee to assume its role by giving it wider purview and making its decisions binding, in order to end corruption and bribery.</p> <p>Fully implementing the public accountability law with a clear explanation of all articles.</p> <p>Eliminating all private funds for public institutions that are not part of the budget.</p> <p>Eliminating all funds that are not subject to monitoring before spending such as the High Relief Committee, the Displaced Fund, the South Fund, and the CDR; and moving all their responsibilities to ministries.</p> <p>Clarifying the rules of holding ministers and presidents accountable in front of the Higher Council for Prosecuting Presidents and Ministers.</p> <p>Ensuring the full independence of oversight agencies by separating them from the prime minister's office to prevent conflicts of interest.</p>

E-Government: A general consensus to digitalize, with little detail

The digitalization of government bureaucracy is a broadly adopted priority according to groups' platforms, with eight of nine programs including this component. There is no disagreement on the need to digitalize the bureaucracy, but the vast majority of platforms do not include clear action plans beyond passing a law or 'activating' a reform (table 19).

Apart from the purpose of reducing red tape and speeding up citizens' paperwork, many groups associate this reform with combatting corruption. The LF explicitly states that enacting the e-government draft law submitted by its MPs is a 'primary entry point to shut a few doors of waste and corruption.' Sabaa specifies that the purpose is reducing interactions between citizens and bureaucracy staff to reduce the likelihood of bribery or other forms of corrupt transactions.

In addition to the digitalization of bureaucratic transactions such as signatures and payments, another aspect of e-government concerns data collection and management. The FPM mentions ‘developing the management of databases and statistics by modernizing laws related to the Central Administration for Statistics, to make it an independent public institution.’ Additionally, the FPM cites the need to establish a ‘national institute for statistics and indices.’ LiBaladi mentions the need to use technology for demographic censuses to ensure harmony with administrative and geographical structures.

Table 19 Party policies on e-government

Party	Policies
Amal Movement	Implementing e-government to make citizens’ paperwork and lives easier.
FPM	Implementing e-government for the future—planning and coordination among ministries and training in various state administrations, according to a compressive plan based on sectoral plans. Implementing the transparency and corruption preventing system, the [right to] access information, and oversight agencies. Enacting required legislation for implementing e-government. Passing a law that repositions the Council of Development and Reconstruction into a framework of planning and monitoring. Developing the management of databases and statistics by modernizing laws related to the Central Administration of Statistics, to make the latter an independent public institution, and establishing the national institute for statistics and indices.
Hezbollah	Digitalizing bureaucracy to facilitate citizens’ transactions.
Kataeb	Ratifying the e-government law and setting a timetable for its application. Developing the Central Statistics Center and fully empowering it so that laws and government decisions are based on accurate figures and statistics.
Lebanese Forces	Digitalizing the bureaucracy and passing the e-government law submitted by the Lebanese Forces as a first step toward reducing waste and corruption.
LiBaladi	Building capacity in the public sector and digitalizing all services in administrations and institutions. Establishing a scientific and digital mechanism to perform demographic statistics to account for administrative and geographic divisions.
LiHaqqi	Setting an implementation mechanism for the e-government law in cooperation with specialized organizations.

Party	Policies
Sabaa	Implementing e-government and reducing interaction with staff—adopting an e-signature—investing \$1 billion to put Lebanon at number 23 in the rankings of e-governments.

Judicial Reform: A focus on enhancing judiciary's independence from political authorities

Reforming the judiciary is another prominent subject across platforms as it is covered by seven programs, specifically four established parties and all three new groups.

The most covered aspects of judicial reform entail enhancing the independence of the judicial branch. This is explicitly stated in all platforms, with varying degrees of detail in terms of proposed actions. Hezbollah specifically mentions 'developing the judicial system and allowing the judiciary to be an independent authority in a way that achieves justice and integrity without discrimination among citizens'. The LF is also generic in this regard as it mentions 'ensuring the judiciary's independence' without promising any practical steps. The FPM, similar to what it proposes on other issues, presents a series of brief mission statements on judicial reforms, including 'ending political intervention in the work of the judiciary,' 'immunizing judges in appointment and practice', and 'adopting merit, effectiveness and productivity as criteria in judicial operations. Although brief, Kataeb is more specific in its proposal, promising to modify 'the procedure based on which the members of the Higher Judicial Council are selected and making sure that appointments are in line with the independence of the Judiciary'. LiBaladi also endorses this demand, saying the council—as the guarantor of the judiciary's independence—should be liberated from the executive authority. More specifically, LiHaqqi says the 10 members in the HRC should be elected by judges themselves as opposed to being appointed through a decree upon the recommendation of the justice minister. Sabaa specifies increasing the number of elected judges on the council from two to seven, leaving untouched the three permanent positions held by the president and attorney general of the Court of Succession as HRC's president vice-president respectively, and the head of the Judicial Inspection Committee as an HRC member.

Sabaa and LiHaqqi also touched on other reforms related to the Higher Judicial Council. The former argues the council should have the authority to appoint judges directly, while LiHaqqi says it needs bylaws that eliminate sectarian quotas in its membership, should compose a detailed budget and a quota for women's representation, institute a

ban on paid employment for HRC members, lift members' bank secrecy, and give the council the responsibility of dealing with complaints related to the judiciary's independence.

In addition to this major theme, the programs includes a wide range of reforms presented in table 20. Another recurring component is ending the prosecution of civilians in the Military Tribunal, which has controversially dealt with all cases involving military personnel and some civilians. The LF hint at this objective in a generic statement, which reads: 'Abolishing exceptional courts and limiting their jurisdictions by submitting draft laws.' Kataeb includes approving the party's proposed amendment to the Military Justice Law that would 'limit the prerogatives of the Military Court to cases involving military personnel only and transfer power to look into disputes between military staff and civilians to the courts of justice.' The combination of the Kataeb's and LF's demands are also mentioned by LiHaqqi and LiBaladi, both of whom describe limiting the prerogatives of the court as a first step to eliminating it, with LiBaladi stating that the court's 'formation and processes contradict the characteristics of democracy, justice, and the right of defense'. Sabaa did not include this demand in its detailed judicial reform section.

The FM and Amal were the only parties that did not cover judicial reforms.

Table 20 Party policies on judicial reform

Party	Policies
FPM	<p>Permanently ending all political interference in the judiciary's work and insulating judges from political interference when they are carrying out their duties and when they are appointed. Adopting standards for judicial practice, such as qualifications, effectiveness, and productivity.</p> <p>Bolstering coordination between security forces and the judiciary.</p> <p>Ending violations so that citizens are assured of the performance [of authorities] and criminals are prevented from escaping punishment.</p> <p>Establishing a higher court for financial crimes.</p>
Hezbollah	<p>Developing the judicial system and empowering the judiciary to be an independent authority.</p> <p>Ensuring justice and integrity without distinction between citizens.</p>
Lebanese Forces	<p>Guaranteeing the independence of the judiciary.</p> <p>Abolishing exceptional courts and limiting their jurisdictions.</p>
LiBaladi	<p>Imposing the independence of the judiciary from the executive authority and the ability of judges to perform their mission.</p>

Party	Policies
	<p>Changing the process of the Higher Judicial Council's formation to make all its members elected by judges.</p> <p>Liberating judicial appointments from the grip of the executive authority and protecting the fix positions of judges to prevent their transfer due to political disputes.</p> <p>Enhancing the independence of the Judicial Inspectorate and the Judicial Studies Institute.</p> <p>Enshrining the freedom of assembly of judges and their right to strike, in addition to freeing them from the restrictions imposed by the traditional view of their function as judges.</p> <p>Extending the powers of the Constitutional Council to include the authority of interpreting laws and allowing the review of non-governmental bodies such as unions, associations, and others.</p> <p>Abolishing civilians trials before military courts as a first step toward the complete abolition of military tribunals and considering them exceptional courts whose functioning and composition are incompatible with the characteristics of a democratic system, justice, and the right to defense.</p>
LiHaqqi	<p>Amending the procedure for selecting members of the Higher Judicial Council and judicial formations [by changing] from political appointments to elections.</p> <p>Abolishing sectarian quotas in the judicial authority.</p> <p>Lifting the Ministry of Justice's hand off the judicial authority.</p> <p>Passing a law that activates the Higher Judicial Council and determines its bylaws, focusing on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Determining the council's role and its procedures of operation, and giving it the jurisdiction to review legislation related to the judiciary ■ Abolishing sectarian quotas in the selection of Higher Judicial Council members ■ Eliminating the article stating that eight members are appointed by the executive authority, and instead allow judges to elect all members ■ Setting a budget for the council ■ Giving judges in the courts of first instance and appeal the right to elect representatives to the council ■ Setting a women representation quota for the council ■ Prohibiting council members from combining their membership with external salaried employment ■ Eliminating bank secrecy for council members and requiring them to disclose properties owned by their families ■ Giving the council the responsibility of immediately processing any complaints related to the independence of a judge or jury

Party	Policies
Sabaa	<p data-bbox="368 360 1088 465">Publishing an annual report about the council's work and the status of the judiciary in Lebanon, and publishing decisions and work schedules on its website.</p> <p data-bbox="368 479 1088 501">Establishing judicial independence from political authorities by:</p> <ul data-bbox="368 517 1088 1189" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="368 517 1088 629">■ Giving the higher judiciary council the authority to appoint judges directly and increasing the number of members on the council who are elected by judges from two to seven <li data-bbox="368 640 1088 663">■ Improving financial and other support for judges <li data-bbox="368 674 1088 864">■ Making the judiciary more efficient by increasing the number of judges in courts by 30%, working to announce all decisions within a maximum period of 18 months from the beginning of trials, and reconsidering some articles in the criminal procedures code <li data-bbox="368 875 1088 943">■ Enacting a policy of considering mandatory mediation as the alternative to courts <li data-bbox="368 954 1088 1021">■ Eliminating obstacles hindering access to legal aid for the poor, the disabled, and the victims of domestic violence <li data-bbox="368 1032 1088 1099">■ Focusing on alternative sentences (free work in the public sphere, training on citizenship) <li data-bbox="368 1111 1088 1133">■ Creating 50 justice houses in different areas of the country <li data-bbox="368 1144 1088 1189">■ Digitalizing judiciary courts

Decentralization: General support for administrative decentralization draft law

Decentralization is the fourth-most covered topic in this category, with four parties and two new groups covering it (table 21). Hezbollah, the FPM, the LF, Kataeb, LiHaqqi, and LiBaladi call for approving the Administrative Decentralization Law, currently being discussed by parliament committees, without any apparent contradictions or specifications. Kataeb goes into further detail by specifying that local authorities should be 'granted extensive administrative and financial powers,' the pre-censorship over them should be replaced by post-censorship, and that 'administrative courts and Audit Bureau offices' should be established in all governorates 'to reduce corruption and squandering.'

The programs of Kataeb and the LF also include another decentralization-related policy: The creation of a ministry for local authorities (municipalities). Kataeb also specify that this ministry should be independent from the Ministry of Interior, which is currently responsible for municipalities' affairs and is officially named the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities.

Table 21 Party policies on decentralization

Party	Policies
FPM	Extended administrative decentralization, organization and sustainable development of land, local tax collection, and increasing staff productivity.
Hezbollah	Adoption of an expanded administrative decentralization law.
Kataeb	Establishing a ministry to manage and address the affairs of local authorities apart from the Ministry of Interior. Approving the decentralization law and reconsidering current administrative divisions, provided that local authorities are granted extensive administrative and financial powers. Abolishing pre-censorship and enacting post-censorship that monitors the performance of local authorities by establishing administrative courts and audit bureau offices in all governorates to reduce corruption and mismanagement of funds. Formulating a detailed timetable in the government to set the annual date when the share of the Independent Municipal Fund and the telecom proceeds will be allocated to municipalities.
Lebanese Forces	Enacting the administrative decentralization law that gives local elected councils the widest jurisdiction and financial and administrative independence. Enacting a law to establish an independent ministry for municipalities to enhance municipal work and local development.
LiBaladi	Encouraging local development by establishing comprehensive administrative decentralization. Working toward the implementation of administrative decentralization according to the constitution, in order to achieve local development and activate direct accountability; while being attentive to citizens and residents' needs given economic interdependency [between areas], urban sprawl, and demographic realities. Proposing a range of reforms that address the relationship between local and central governments, implementing judicial monitoring mechanisms, and entrenching participation and transparency at the local level. Advocating and pressing for a practical and digital action plan to carry out regular population censuses for citizens and residents; which would provide a data set to identify problems and formulate adequate policies for all residents across Lebanon.
LiHaqqi	Approving the administrative decentralization law to encourage local development and enhance the role of municipalities.

Sectarianism: Not a priority for major parties

Sectarianism is not widely covered by established parties, with only half modestly touching on it (table 22).

The FPM, whose campaign included a focus on sectarian power-sharing under the title of ‘partnership’, mentions the objective of ‘diminishing the sectarian and feudal system and dismantling the media system that protects it and promotes it’ in their program. Amal is more specific but also very brief, promising to ‘continue efforts toward forming the National Commission for the Abolition of Political Sectarianism,’ a provision introduced into the constitution in accordance with the Taef Agreement that ended The Lebanese Civil War.

Kataeb mentions sectarianism indirectly in one line, calling for ‘establishing a senate in which all of Lebanon's historical communities would be represented.’ Although the creation of a senate is typically considered a step to protect sectarian groups’ interests when sectarian quotas are eliminated from the parliament, Kataeb does not reference the latter action. LiHaqqi and LiBaladi state the two reforms together, in addition to supporting the elimination of sectarian quotas from all political and public institutions.

The FM, LF, FM, and Hezbollah do not mention sectarianism in their programs. However, LCPS’s survey had found that Hezbollah, like LiBaladi, LiHaqqi, and Sabaa, all support abolishing sectarian quotas in public institutions and the three top political posts ‘gradually on the long term’ rather than ‘as soon as possible.’ On the other hand, the LF and Kataeb are against such reforms.

Table 22 Party policies on sectarianism

Party	Policies
Amal Movement	Supporting efforts to form the National Committee for the Elimination of Political Sectarianism as stated in the constitution.
FPM	Diminishing the sectarian and feudal system, and dismantling the media system that protects it and promotes it.
Kataeb	Establishing a senate in which all of Lebanon's historical communities are represented.
LiBaladi	Abolishing criteria for sectarian distribution in political institutions and public administration by creating the National Committee for the Elimination of Political Sectarianism, and creating a senate, where sectarian groups are represented equally, with powers that are limited to issues specific to these groups, in a manner that does not contradict the constitution. Enacting an electoral law with wider voting districts and without sectarian components.

Party	Policies
LiHaqqi	Implementing the constitution in relation to abolishing political sectarianism after eliminating sectarian quotas in the parliament and establishing a senate. Eliminating sectarian quotas in all public sector positions. Eliminating sectarian quotas in the judiciary.
Sabaa	Forming the National Committee for the Elimination of Political Sectarianism with a clear timeline presented to the parliament and cabinet. Engaging in a national campaign against using religion in politics. Establishing a senate to guarantee the protection of religious groups and the parity [between Christians and Muslims], with a jurisdiction that is limited to clearly defined major decisions.

State Employment: A focus on replacing clientelism with merit-based employment

Another issue that is mentioned a relatively high number of times is state employment, which is found in five programs including those of three parties and two new groups.

The most recurrent aspects of state employment in the programs relates to the process of hiring civil servants. Jobs in the public sector should in theory be filled through a merit examination at the Civil Service Council in line with the needs of institutions. However, thousands have been ‘contracted’ by schools, universities, and other institutions without examination by the CSC. They work without access to employment security, monthly-paid wages, or work benefits. This form of employment is often linked to clientelism, whereby politicians use their contacts to offer state jobs to loyal constituents, in line with an unofficial distribution of jobs among sectarian groups.

Hezbollah, the FM, Kataeb, LiHaqqi, and Sabaa mention this issue in their programs, with varying levels of details on the roots of the problem. The FM is the most generic, promising to ‘restore the role of the Civil Service Council.’ Hezbollah also calls for ‘enhancing’ this role, but specifies that the CSC should be ‘the only entry point for public sector employment’ based on merit, and away from favoritism and distributing shares. Kataeb calls for ‘ending all forms of contracting’ and offering permanent jobs to those needing them among contract workers through ‘open examinations’, meaning tests that can be attended to by applicants other than the contract worker themselves. LiHaqqi also calls for ending what it terms ‘clientelist contracting’, but favors employment tests to be exclusive to those already employed through contracts. Sabaa does not endorse one particular solution, but also

favors restricting employment to CSC processes to end ‘political employment.’ The party also mentions ‘working to ensure the rights of contractors and daily workers in line with labor laws because the state should not be allowed to violate this law while the private sector is punished for it.’

Another major component entails cutting the cost of public sector employment. The FM phrases it generically, promising to ‘liberate the public sector from unproductive staff burdens.’ Kataeb promises to work for ‘control[ing] the wages accorded in the public sector, which account for more than 33% of the state’s total expenditure.’ The party also mentions mapping the employment needs of the public sector and eliminating ‘ghost jobs.’ Sabaa does not explicitly mention cutting public sector jobs, but also promises to map the staff needs of the public sector and ‘redistribute’ employees according to their skills. The party also mentions ‘reducing costs and wages’ as part of its deficit-reduction action plan, without offering any further details on the matter.

Other reforms and proposals, outlined in table 23, touch on efficiency and bureaucratic service. In this light, Sabaa proposes an extensive set of actions on improving corporate governance in public institutions.

Table 23 Party policies on state employment

Party	Policies
Future Movement	Freeing the public sector from unproductive staff burdens and restoring the role of the Civil Service Council.
Hezbollah	Enhancing the role of the Civil Service Council and making it an exclusive entry point for employment in the public sector. Ensuring that all public posts in the Lebanese state are subject to examinations and the selection of the highest merit, away from favoritism and quotas.
Kataeb	Opting for a correct and modern classification and description of jobs in the public sector so as to reduce random employment and control wages accorded in the public sector, which account for more than 33% of the state’s total expenditure. Conducting a survey that determines the workforce needs of all public administrations in a bid to purge them of the so-called ‘phantom jobs’. Suspending all forms of part-time contracts and launching competitive exams to fill vacancies as part of a new management structure.
LiHaqqi	Ending the clientelist contracting approach in public institutions, and employing those contracted via closed exams [at the civil service council].

Party	Policies
Sabaa	<p>Stopping clientelist employment in the state.</p> <p>Reducing the number of state employees by replacing every two state employees who retire with only one.</p> <p>Implementing early retirement schemes when necessary.</p> <p>Reconfiguring state institutions and classifying them by jurisdiction, average salary, and responsibilities.</p> <p>Enacting a policy to evaluate staff based on 'citizen satisfaction' including an online portal for complaints, penalties on staff not meeting citizen satisfaction criteria, depriving state institutions with low performance of benefits and funds, preventing ministers from violating hierarchies in ministries by restricting all employment to the civil service council.</p>

c On Public Services

As found in LCPS's analysis of emphasis in the electoral platforms of political parties and groups, matters related to public services received the highest level of attention from political groups (table 24). This is evident from the number of issues discussed in this section, which significantly exceeds those of any other section. This is unsurprising given the deterioration of services and their accessibility, an issue that is a top priority for citizens according to LCPS's previous research.

Table 24 Most covered topics related to public service issues

Topic	Established Parties Covering (total = 6)	Emerging Groups Covering (total = 3)
Transport	6	3
Education	6	3
Solid Waste Management	6	3
Electricity	5	3
Water	5	3
Health	5	3
Education	5	3
Telecom	5	3
Old Age Pension	4	3
Wastewater Management	5	1
Housing	3	3
Public Spaces & Maritime Properties	3	2
Poverty	3	1

Transport: Agreement on need for public transport, but not on the role of the state

All platforms cover the issue of transport (table 25). Calls for a functional public transport network in Lebanon are common across seven of the platforms with only two groups not mentioning it explicitly: The LF and Amal. In turn, the FM only mentions the words ‘ensuring public transport’, while Hezbollah promises a ‘comprehensive public transport strategy’, pointing to the ‘psychological, economic, and environmental harm’ suffered by residents due to traffic problems. However, neither of the two parties specify any particular system or technology. The FPM’s transport vision includes bus networks and rubber-tired trams, in addition to water ferries along the coast. LiHaqqi, Kataeb, and Sabaa favor reactivating the railway network to connect coastal cities. Sabaa and Kataeb also mention trams for inner city transport and buses to connect the coast to mountainous areas, with the former also mentioning a privately owned and operated ferry system. More information on the choices of each group, as well as other aspects of transport policies, can be found in table 25.

Groups also have different positions on the role of the state in transport. While the programs themselves are not very informative, the questionnaire results indicate that Hezbollah, the Progressive Socialist Party, LiBaladi, and LiHaqqi support a publicly owned transport system, while the LF and Sabaa prefer its privatization and Kataeb does not have a clear stance on the issue (the group ticked both answers in the questionnaire).

Table 25 Transport policies mentioned in more than one platform

Policy	Programs in which policy is included
Revitalizing public transport	Hezbollah: No details FPM: Buses, rubber-tired trams, and water ferries Future: No details Kataeb: Trams, trains, and buses LiHaqqi: Buses and trains LiBaladi: Buses Sabaa: Buses, trains, rubber-tired trams, and water ferries
Adding parking lots	Kataeb - LiBaladi
Improving/expanding highways	FPM - Amal - Future - Sabaa
Improving street lights	FPM - LF
Improving BEY airport	Future - Sabaa

Policy	Programs in which policy is included
Establishing new airports	Kataeb (Revitalizing Kleiat for civilian use, enhancing Riyak's military airport, and establishing a new airport in northern Mount Lebanon) Sabaa (outside Beirut)
Creating a separate ministry for transport	LF - Kataeb

As table 25 shows, seven transportation policies are mentioned by more than one group in their platforms. The individual content of each platform in relation to transportation is presented in table 26.

Table 26 Party policies on transportation

Party	Policies
Amal Movement	Continuing the implementation of main infrastructural projects, including (...) highways.
FPM	[Constructing] highways and roads that are safe for travelers and subject to sound and effective planning. Developing public transport through a series of buses such as rubber wheel trams. [Purchasing] new buses of all sizes. The establishment of bus stations on main highways. Improving and maintaining lighting on all roads. Ferries connecting Beirut to Tabarja and Jiyeh. Completing the circular motorway and the installation of the Dabia-Al-Aqiba highway. [Implementing] a plan to alleviate traffic congestion, especially in Greater Beirut, and to oblige municipalities to establish parks, playgrounds, and parking lots.
Future Movement	Modernizing and developing roads and highways; and guaranteeing public transport.
Hezbollah	Developing a comprehensive strategy for public transport, given the psychological, economic, and environmental damage suffered by Lebanese people due to the chaos of traffic congestion, especially in the capital and its environs.
Kataeb	Separating transport from the Ministry of Public Works by establishing a Ministry of Transport which would approve and implement a comprehensive policy for the land and maritime transport sector. Improving the means of public transport through the adoption of trams in major cities and buses that operate between the coastal and mountain regions. A smart technology system

Party	Policies
	<p>should be also adopted.</p> <p>Rehabilitating the Kleiat Airport for civil aviation, expanding the Riyaq military airport to stimulate economic activity, and establishing a new airport in the northern Mount Lebanon area.</p> <p>Rehabilitating railways along the coastline.</p> <p>Building parking towers in Beirut and other big cities that suffer from traffic congestion and the lack of adequate parking spaces.</p> <p>Implementing a partnership between the private and public sectors in major projects in various sectors such as water, transport, electricity, education, and health.</p>
Lebanese Forces	<p>Resolving the traffic crisis on Jounieh's highway.</p> <p>Working to create a real estate credit institution similar to the Public Institution for Housing, to encourage young people to buy land in their villages and build housing on them at an affordable price.</p> <p>Lighting highways and public roads, as a lack of lighting is the cause of many accidents.</p>
LiBaladi	<p>Building a transportation system that contributes to creating job opportunities and a cleaner environment, in addition to enhancing the economy. This sector could generate revenue by imposing taxes on oil and other resources that are in demand.</p> <p>Establishing a body responsible for the organization of transportation and enhancing reformation in the transport sector.</p> <p>Building a comprehensive transportation network (involving the informal sector): Public transport (buses) and smooth transport (for pedestrians and bicycles).</p> <p>Pushing local administrations to transform unbuilt private properties in cities and overcrowded neighborhoods into parking lots.</p> <p>Implementing laws to prevent infringement of public property, especially cars being parked on sidewalks, to facilitate the movement of pedestrians, which is a cornerstone of the success of an integrated public transport network.</p>
LiHaqqi	<p>Enacting a comprehensive land transport policy that includes reactivating the railway network in coordination with organizations active in this sector.</p> <p>Revitalizing the Higher Land Transport Council established in 1966 to coordinate among ministries and agencies concerned with transport affairs, in order to end the dispersion of responsibilities and the overlap of jurisdictions.</p> <p>Implementing the required financial incentives [to encourage] the purchasing of hybrid and gas-efficient cars.</p> <p>Establishing a public system for private buses, and working to reactivate the network of public buses inside and between areas.</p>

Party	Policies
Sabaa	<p>Improving the infrastructural environment for pedestrians and enacting a strategic plan to guarantee traffic safety.</p> <p>Implementing a comprehensive traffic plan and creating a committee to organize transport.</p> <p>Restarting train service between large cities, beginning with coastal areas. Part of the strategy should entail PPP to reduce costs.</p> <p>Installing a tramway inside main cities. This could be implemented at the municipal level with the private sector.</p> <p>Implementing road projects including highways and a ferry system near the coast to reduce traffic, in addition to a bus-based rapid transit system inside cities.</p>

Education: A scarcity of spending promises despite a general support for public education

Education is another policy covered by all platforms without exception (table 27). The content touches on public school funding and curricula, teachers' rights, the Lebanese University, and job market needs.

Most platforms focus on public education, particularly improving its quality (table 28). The FPM stresses on 'public education for everyone and quality in [human and material resources]'. Hezbollah says the improvement should be achieved through 'necessary legislation' without offering details. The FM mentions the goal of 'closing the gap in quality of education between public and private schools.'

While quality improvement is a common goal, only two platforms—those of Sabaa and LiHaqqi—state the need for an increase in public education funds to achieve this quality improvement. LiHaqqi proposes an unspecified increase in education's share of the government budget, while Sabaa specifies an investment of \$200 million over the next four years.

On the other end of the spectrum, the LF has the least typical proposal for educational reform, promising 'a scheme that provides parents with the required support and cover in return for taxes and fees they pay to the state, giving them freedom of choice regarding their children's education.' The LF does not express support for public education or explain how the scheme would work and which taxes would be considered (income, municipal, etc.) to determine a family's benefits in scholarships. This proposal is perhaps the closest to privatizing education. Indeed, it reflects the stance on education declared by the LF in LCPS's survey, which entails support for increasing government subsidies to private (including charity) schools and aiming for the privatization of the education sector.

Table 27 Education policies mentioned in more than one platform

Policy	Programs in which policy is included
Enhancing the quality of public education	Hezbollah - FPM - Future - Kataeb - LiHaqqi - LiBaladi - Sabaa
Protecting the Lebanese University from politics	FPM - Hezbollah - LiHaqqi - LiBaladi
Focusing on vocational training and job market needs	Hezbollah - FPM - Sabaa
Issuing a unified history book	Kataeb - Sabaa - LiHaqqi

As table 27 shows, four policies related to education are mentioned by more than one group in their platforms. The individual content of each platform in relation to education is presented in table 28.

Table 28 Party policies on education

Party	Policies
Amal Movement	Placing a renewed interest in the work of the Higher Educational Council.
FPM	Quality public education. Enrolling special needs students in educational institutions. Establishing Lebanon as a permanent center for inter-religious, inter-cultural, and inter-racial dialogue. Ensuring the complete independence of the Lebanese University.
Future Movement	Working toward closing the gap in quality of education between public and private schools.
Hezbollah	Passing necessary legislation to raise the level of formal education and special attention to vocational education, in order to strengthen the Lebanese University and restore its powers.
Kataeb	Establishing Lebanese University campuses in areas outside Beirut to help reduce the cost of living, housing, and transportation fees that students incur. Ending the licensing of new private universities to maintain the quality of education and granting licenses to colleges that provide programs that meet the needs of the Lebanese labor market. The licenses granted to some universities, which do not provide the required level of education according to internationally-approved standards, must be reconsidered. Activating and institutionalizing the work of the Supreme Council of Higher Education and appointing an evaluation commission—as stipulated by the law regulating the sector—to control and develop the level of education and ensure that it meets the needs of the labor market in coordination with the

Party	Policies
	<p>National Institution for Employment.</p> <p>Reassembling public schools in ideal compounds within one geographical zone and providing transportation for students from neighboring areas according to a strategic plan that ensures the quality of education by gathering the best cadres in one place, ending waste, and rationalizing the disbursement of financial and technical resources.</p> <p>Suspending part-time contract hiring and introducing a new mechanism that takes into account applicant's educational level, language knowledge, achieved training, and years of experience.</p> <p>Modernizing the educational inspection body and establishing a public-private system to evaluate and improve the quality of education.</p> <p>Issuing a unified history book that includes different perspectives regarding major events in Lebanese history, so as to respect the different viewpoints in the country and leave the student to draw the facts and reach conclusions that they find convincing.</p> <p>Re-examining the law relating to higher technical education in terms of years of learning and training, empowering the Supreme Council for Technical Education, working on the development of vocational and technical education curricula and improving its image to ensure a prestigious social status that attracts students, trainees, and parents.</p> <p>Implementing the partnership between the private and public sectors in major projects in different sectors such as water, transport, electricity, education, and health.</p>
Lebanese Forces	<p>Implementing a plan that provides parents with the required support and cover in return for taxes and fees they pay to the state, giving them freedom of choice regarding their children's education.</p>
LiBaladi	<p>Enabling individuals to enjoy the right of free and meaningful education at all levels of study in order to enhance their active involvement in political, economic, social, and cultural life and so they can keep pace with global and technological developments.</p> <p>Freeing the Lebanese University from sectarian divisions.</p> <p>Developing comprehensive and interactive educational curricula that disseminates the values of citizenship and focuses on building students' cognitive skills and behavioral abilities in vocational, technical, school, or university education.</p> <p>Strengthening governance and modernizing management in the education sector to become more participatory and inclusive and reviving formal schools and universities' role and trust of parents and students.</p>

Party	Policies
LiHaqqi	<p>Endorsing a sustainable system for members of educational bodies so they can assume their role through independent union work.</p> <p>Empowering supervision committees on public and private schools and activating the role of the institute of development and education research.</p> <p>Increase spending in the public budget on the general education sector for the development of educational methods in schools, technical institutes, and the Lebanese University.</p> <p>Termination of contracting in public educational institutions, and hiring contracted teachers through exclusive exams at the Civil Service Council, with university education being a basic criterion for selection, and by requiring teachers to undergo a period of training prior to permanent appointment.</p> <p>Adopting application decrees for the law aimed at adopting the necessary reforms in the educational sector to protect persons with disabilities.</p> <p>Adopting a law linking the tuition of private universities to the standard of living and inflation rates.</p> <p>Raising the age of compulsory education to 18 years, leaving the choice between secondary education and vocational education.</p> <p>Passing a new law regulating the wages of teachers, making them dependent on inflation rates and fair to all teachers.</p> <p>Stricter monitoring of teachers' actual wages in private schools.</p> <p>Stricter implementation of the laws governing tuition fees of private schools in collaboration with the parents' committees.</p> <p>Lifting all political interference off the Lebanese University, ensuring its independence, and adopting a law to revive the student elections in all universities.</p> <p>Drafting the necessary legislation to establish public universities and specialized institutes to suit Lebanon's future economic needs.</p> <p>Studying the possibility of merging the first and second branches of the Lebanese University, or any alternative that removes the sectarian legacy of this division and reduces unnecessary material burdens on the university.</p> <p>Adopting a law requiring the Ministry of Education and Higher Education to begin drafting a unified book for the modern history of Lebanon.</p> <p>Establishing clear conditions for any public support to semi-free private school, including the quality of education, provided that there are no nearby public schools with the capacity to contain students.</p>

Party	Policies
Sabaa	<p data-bbox="703 356 1445 472">Investing \$200 million over four years to renew educational facilities and equip them with new technology and inclusive features for PWD.</p> <p data-bbox="703 479 1445 551">Investing \$30 million to improve the curricula of public schools to shift the focus from the teacher to students.</p> <p data-bbox="703 557 1445 790">Amending official exams and a series of reforms for teaching methods to include one history book, the right to choose which religion to learn about, monitoring quality of teaching in all schools, improving curricula of vocational schools in line with labor market needs, adding classes that pertain to labor market needs in the last four years of school.</p> <p data-bbox="703 797 1445 949">Building a new online portal and mobile application connecting public school parents and students with teachers and the school administration, and allowing the dissemination of info on student and course evaluations.</p> <p data-bbox="703 956 1445 1108">Issuing national student cards offering discounts and special treatment, ending the inflation of tuition in private schools: The government pays 50% of the additional costs resulting of the ranks and salary scale, 25% for the second year and 5% for the third.</p>

Solid Waste Management: A need for a strategy balanced down by unclear plans

All nine parties' platforms touch on policies related to solid waste management, although to varying degrees. Among those policies, two are mentioned most frequently: Adopting a nationwide strategy for waste management and establishing a decentralized plan for waste management (table 29).

However, the established parties offer little detail on which specific solid waste management policies they favor. Hezbollah, the FM, the Kataeb, LiHaqqi, and LiBaladi mention the adoption of a nationwide strategy for waste management. All parties but the Kataeb fail to elaborate on what this strategy would entail, with each only mentioning that they would like to set 'a comprehensive master plan ... including immediate and strategic solutions' (Hezbollah), legislate 'a comprehensive and sustainable strategy to treat solid waste' (LiHaqqi), and enact 'a holistic national waste management plan' (LiBaladi). By contrast, the Kataeb's program not only proposes adjusting the solid waste management draft in accordance with environmental and scientific standards followed by the EU, but also states that the party favors a stronger role for the Environment Ministry—through the appointment of a regulatory solid

waste committee, and the inclusion of costs of establishing waste treatment and energy recovery centers to the ministry's budget.

Decentralization in waste sorting and treatment is also mentioned in the FPM, Kataeb, LiHaqqi, LiBaladi, and Sabaa programs. However, the FPM and LiHaqqi's programs only mention it in passing. Both LiBaladi and Kataeb's programs advocate for a strong role for local authorities. LiBaladi's program mentions 'building the capacities of local authorities to treat waste' and Kataeb's program states that the party would like garbage collection and waste sorting to remain under the jurisdiction and financial control of municipalities. Moreover, Sabaa and the Kataeb's programs mention decentralization by supporting private sorting facilities and recycling companies.

Another policy referenced in multiple platforms entails finding an alternative to existing landfills and burning facilities. LiHaqqi states that it rejects 'the policies of landfills and centralized burning facilities', and Sabaa's program states that they would like the number of burning facilities to be reduced. Both the FM and LiBaladi call for environment-friendly energy—the FM mentions 'developing scientific and environment-friendly alternatives for existing landfills, including the establishment of thermal plants', while LiBaladi states that they would like to 'implement a renewable and environment-friendly energy technology'.

The Amal and LF programs do not touch on specific policies regarding waste management. Amal's program states that the party would like to see a 'permanent solution to the waste crisis' by 'implementing environmental projects', but does not propose a specific solution or project. Similarly, the LF mentions that they would like to 'find an environment-friendly solution to household and other waste'. Both statements could imply that parties would support finding an alternative to burning facilities and encouraging recycling.

Table 29 Party policies on solid waste management

Party	Policies
Amal Movement	Implementing required environmental projects for a permanent solution to the waste and wastewater crises.
FPM	Clean environment. The polluter pays. Decentralized plan for waste [management].
Future Movement	Ending the waste management crisis through a comprehensive nationwide plan, and developing scientific and environment-friendly alternatives for existing landfills, including the establishment of thermal plants to address problems stemming

Party	Policies
Hezbollah	from the hundreds of random dumps and their risks to the environment and public health.
Kataeb	<p>Agreeing on a comprehensive master plan for the solid waste management crisis including immediate and strategic solutions.</p> <p>Approving a solid waste management draft after making necessary adjustments in accordance with environmental and scientific standards adopted by the European Union, and endorsing a national strategic method to manage solid waste, which could incorporate practical steps to minimize the accumulation of waste. Encouraging garbage sorting and boosting recycling industries, on the condition that companies are decentralized while [operating] under state supervision.</p> <p>Promulgating the draft law, proposed by the Kataeb party, proposing the clearance of debts owed by municipalities to the Independent Municipal Fund, due to the solid waste management contracts that were agreed upon by the cabinet without the prior consent of concerned municipal councils.</p> <p>Appointing a regulatory solid waste committee that falls under the purview of the Ministry of Environment's supervision. This body would be tasked with following up on the Tenders Department and municipalities when launching any tender for collecting, transporting, sorting, and treating waste.</p> <p>Including the costs of establishing and operating waste treatment and energy recovery centers across Lebanon in the Environment Ministry's budget, provided that the collection of garbage, street sweeping, and sorting remain under the jurisdiction and financial control of municipalities and federations.</p>
Lebanese Forces	Finding an environment-friendly and transparent solution to household waste and other waste.
LiBaladi	<p>Adopting comprehensive waste management plans and implementing renewable and environment-friendly energy technology.</p> <p>Enacting a holistic national [waste management] plan and building the capacities of local authorities to treat waste, based on the principles of reduction, reusing, and recycling.</p>
LiHaqqi	Rejecting the policies of landfills and centralized burning facilities, and legislating a comprehensive and sustainable strategy to treat solid waste through the principles of the international pyramid, in addition to committing to decentralization in waste sorting and treatment.
Sabaa	Implementing Sabaa's zero waste plan that entails decentralization, private sorting facilities, sorting at the source, and reducing burning facilities to a minimum.

Electricity: A focus on deficit and EdL reform, and an appearance of renewable energy

Electricity cuts are one of Lebanon's most significant social and economic challenges, so it is not surprising that eight out of nine programs contained promises to work for more consistent electricity production and delivery (table 30). As with other policy areas, many of the proposals are generic and do not commit to any specific policy for the sector. Hezbollah states that 'required steps' should be taken and 'relevant laws' applied, the FPM employs the phrase '24/24 electricity', and Amal and the FM mention 'electricity production plans', which would help achieve full coverage. Neither Amal nor the FM specified any particular plans although the FM asserted that the goal would be achieved in the following three years.

Reforming the national electricity company (Electricité du Liban) and reducing its budget deficit are also among the priorities. The FM's stated aim is to 'restore budget balance' to EdL by 'ending technical and financial waste', while Hezbollah mentions appointing a new management board for the company and LiHaqqi proposes digitalizing EdL's internal operations and 'employing young men and women with high qualifications and technical and administrative skills to improve [its] performance'. LiHaqqi also stresses the need to resolve the issue of daily workers contracted by EdL and prioritizing their employment continuity and the company's needs.

In terms of energy production technology, emerging political groups seem to be pioneering the move toward higher reliance on renewable energy. The four programs mentioning renewable energy sources are those of LiHaqqi, LiBaladi, Sabaa, and the FPM. LiHaqqi, LiBaladi, and the FPM mention it generally, while Sabaa set the goal of securing 15% of the nation's electricity from renewable sources by 2022. LiBaladi and LiHaqqi also emphasize the need to move from 'heavy fuels' to natural gas; with LiHaqqi stating that it should be a requirement for plants constructed in the future, whereas LiBaladi calls for transforming current plants.

Meanwhile, privatization is part of Kataeb's and Sabaa's visions to address electricity challenges, with both platforms referencing the private sector as a preferable alternative energy producer. Kataeb proposes a plan according to which private companies produce electricity as part of a public-private partnership as a way of reducing the deficit caused by EdL's operations, followed by a series of other actions to improve fee collection, reduce production costs, and reconsider prices. Sabaa appears to favor a privatization process that extends to residents'

relationships with electricity providers. Its platform reads that it favors ‘allowing the citizen to choose the network and company that offers them the best offers and service.’ LiBaladi and LiHaqqi, on the other hand, do not seem to endorse privatization, and instead focus on the public management of the sector through the establishment of the ‘Electricity Sector Regulation Authority’ as stated in law 462 passed by parliament in 2002.

Table 30 Party policies on electricity

Party	Policies
Amal Movement	Implementing and completing new plans for electricity production and distribution, and liberating citizens from [private generators] subscriptions.
FPM	Adopting renewable energy methods. Ensuring 24-hour electricity coverage at lower costs. Providing a quality supply of drinking water and curbing water consumption. Enhancing the extractive industries to liberalize the Lebanese economy.
Future Movement	Restoring the financial balance of EdL by reducing technical and financial waste. Constructing energy production plans to ensure uninterrupted electricity over the next three years.
Hezbollah	Addressing electricity crisis, through accelerating the adoption of measures to increase production and processing of transmission and distribution. Immediately implementing programs and projects approved previously and the application of relevant laws, as well as solving the drinking water crisis by accelerating the implementation of actions and projects planned.
Kataeb	Adopting a private-public partnership (PPP) to address the deficit regarding EdL, which has cost the treasury \$15 billion over the past 10 years, and ensuring broader power supply before tariffs are reconsidered. The collection of power bills should be made more efficient, and the operational costs should be also reduced in order to halt the treasury bills given to EdL and achieve financial balance in the budget. Providing new electronic electricity meters, with the possibility of introducing a payment system based on prepaid cards to curb fraud and boost revenues. Converting electricity production, which accounts for nearly two-thirds of air pollution, to gas which would significantly improve air quality.

Party	Policies
LiBaladi	<p>Implementing a partnership between the private and public sectors in major projects in various sectors such as water, transport, electricity, education, and health.</p> <p>Exerting pressure on the Ministry of Energy to transform currently-operational power plants from facilities that use costly fuel oil to ones that use natural gas and other renewable sources.</p> <p>Fully enforcing Law 462 related to the Electricity Regulation Authority (ERA) so that the latter can guarantee the quality of service and coverage. Bringing in informal service providers under one regulatory framework under the ERA's supervision; and determining one unified price for electricity consumption be paid by all citizens.</p>
LiHaqqi	<p>Forming the previously-approved 'Electricity Sector Regulatory Authority' to develop long-term strategies to address the electricity crisis.</p> <p>Building a natural gas electricity plant to produce electricity and expanding renewable energy power generation projects (solar and wind energy).</p> <p>Revitalizing human resources of Electricité du Liban by employing qualified young men and women with high technical and administrative skills to improve the performance of EdL and working toward reforming it.</p> <p>Digitalizing internal EdL operations, and addressing the issue of daily workers by employing the largest number of them through restricted exams at the Civil Service Council, taking into account two priorities: Their employment continuity and the needs of the company.</p> <p>Investing in enhancing the production capacities of plants in Zouk and Al-Jiyyeh, and launching production at the Deir Ammar II plant.</p>
Sabaa	<p>Achieving full electricity coverage in three years and moving Lebanon from rank 208 to 130 in renewable energy consumption.</p> <p>Outsourcing electricity production to private companies, with priorities for those listed on Beirut's stock exchange.</p> <p>Giving consumers the choice of which company to subscribe to.</p> <p>Moving to the use of liquid gas in power plants instead of heavy fuel in the next two years.</p> <p>Achieving 15% of total energy from renewable sources by 2022 through solar farms run by private investors incentivized by programs that grant them free land for 10 years.</p> <p>Installing digital energy consumption counters in households and companies to ensure accurate billing.</p> <p>Rehabilitating electricity cables, and investing L.L. 35 billion in removing all network violations.</p>

Party	Policies
	<p>Increasing the collection of electricity bills by 10% by innovating easier payment methods, including through the internet.</p> <p>Incentivizing the responsible consumption of electricity through a mobile application called 'social electricity' that allow users to compare their consumptions to other households and learn about tools to reduce it.</p> <p>Encouraging citizens and developers to equip residential buildings with solar panels.</p> <p>Subjecting the owners of electricity generators to taxes, and regulating their operation (details in the program).</p>

Water: Consensus on the need for better access, disagreement over dams

Like electricity, access to water and the quality of water distribution networks is another issue mentioned by all programs except that of the LF (table 31).

The only apparent disagreement among platforms concerning water management policy relates to dams. The FM mentions 'implementing 13 dams' to extend irrigation and potable water to all regions, and Sabaa favors constructing 15 and connecting them through a network that balances water distribution geographically. Hezbollah also supports this policy indirectly by mentioning 'resolving the drinking water crisis by speeding up the implementation of the decided works and projects,' and in the section on wastewater management supports the 'securing of funds for the construction of the Assi [River] dam.' LiHaqqi calls for 'reconsidering water dam projects and avoiding the approval of any project that is not approved by the residents of damaged areas.' These findings do not contradict and partly confirm the results of LCPS's survey, which found that only LiBaladi and LiHaqqi had taken a stance against water dams, and Hezbollah, PSP, Kataeb, Sabaa favored the policy. The LF stated that its position would depend on the circumstances, namely the dam's location, economic function, and environmental impact.

Moreover, Sabaa is the only party that explicitly references the private sector in its vision for water sector solutions, proposing an investment fund that would allow 'citizens, banks and local enterprises' to invest in the water sector. The envisioned fund would generate a profit rate of 12% per year, the program estimates, and would allow for 'avoiding the allocation of a large budget by the state to achieve quality transformation in the sector.' The program does not specify which activities would be profit generating, and which operations would be privatized but merely mentions that it would be part of a PPP policy that requires a special law.

Table 31 Party policies on water management

Party	Policies
Amal Movement	Completing remaining work related to the Litani [river] project.
FPM	Guaranteeing quality drinking water and regulating water consumption.
Future Movement	Expanding and developing water networks across Lebanon and developing and implementing 13 dams to provide drinking water and irrigation in all areas.
Hezbollah	Solving the drinking water crisis by accelerating the implementation of planned actions and projects; guaranteeing the funds to build the Assi [river] dam.
Kataeb	<p>Completing the establishment of mountain lakes in accordance with the ten-year plan approved in 2002.</p> <p>Re-evaluating dams that have not been implemented in the 10-year plan and turning them into water strips on rivers, thus reducing the cost and the negative environmental impact incurred by the construction of dams. This would also reduce the risk of landslides and geological faults, while increasing hydropower production.</p> <p>Building water towers in cooperation with water authorities, major municipalities, and municipal federations to provide safe drinking water to all houses in cities and villages.</p> <p>Directing water authority investments toward improving the efficiency of distribution networks, which waste more than 50% of water. This can be done by installing meters for subscribers and adopting a smart technology that allows supplies to be cut to those who do not pay their bills.</p> <p>Ensuring a high quality of water resources through quality control checks carried out by the Ministry of Environment, the application of the principle of "the polluter pays" by enforcing financial fees in the event of violations, and through clear binding conditions for the investment of groundwater and surface water.</p> <p>Completing the installation of sewage networks across Lebanon and linking them to water purification centers. Appropriate solutions should be found to deal with waste that results from purification processes.</p> <p>Implementing the partnership between the private and public sectors in major projects in various sectors such as water, transport, electricity, education, and health.</p>
LiBaladi	Exerting pressure on the Ministry of Energy and Water to regulate and improve the management of the water sector and its resources in Lebanon (including wells, farms, and informal service providers), and repair networks to reduce the cost of water for consumers, commercial establishments, and farmers.

Party	Policies
LiHaqqi	<p>Working on the application decrees pursuant to Law 221 on water, and clarifying the roles and responsibilities of the various water institutions, ending any overlapping and contradictions among them. Guaranteeing drinking water to all Lebanese territory which is of a quality that meets health standards to protect public health, by rehabilitating and expanding drinking water systems and benefiting from rain water.</p> <p>Improving the conditions of water units, especially their technical and financial efficiency, to guarantee a constant flow of water at the lowest possible cost.</p> <p>Setting geological and hydrogeological plans for groundwater, regulating water extraction processes, and enacting plans to maintain this water and use it for public good.</p> <p>Establishing a committee to monitor and combat corruption in the water sector. The committee would provide regular reports to the parliament.</p> <p>Reconsidering the water dam projects, and avoiding the approval of any project that is not approved by the residents of the damaged areas.</p>
Sabaa	<p>[Working toward] citizens having their daily needs of drinking water by 2024, and in six years, having an excess of 500 million cubic meters. This will be achieved through the following steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Acquiring 640 million cubic meters of additional water annually, by building 15 dams and a network to connect them nationwide. This will replace the current plan to build 44 dams, which would incur a higher cost and environmental damage ■ Benefiting from coastal water springs ■ Reducing the waste and linkage of water, as well as the flooding of canals, from 48% to 20%, by rehabilitating the water network. The program will cost L.L. 2500 billion but will bring \$467 billion in annual state revenues ■ Rehabilitating riverbanks and creating new canals to reduce river floods and increase water supply by 62 million cubic meters per year. ■ Guaranteeing drinking tap water in every house, through three steps: Regulating sewage water to prevent the pollution of natural springs and regularly testing quality in water tanks, rehabilitating pumps and refineries, and installing a new pipe network in unreached areas. ■ Using public-private partnerships to allow private investments in an investment fund specifically for the water company to reduce public spending

Healthcare and Social Security: General support for more investment in public hospitals

With the exception of Amal, all groups touch on social security or healthcare policy in their platforms (table 32).

Universal healthcare is mentioned directly by Hezbollah, the LF, LiHaqqi, and LiBaladi. Hezbollah simply writes ‘guaranteeing universal healthcare to citizens’, while the LF mentions the draft law presented by its own MPs to parliament. LiBaladi calls for enacting ‘the universal healthcare law’, without specifying whether it is the LF’s draft law or another. LiHaqqi states that a universal healthcare law should focus on covering the poorest social groups ‘of all ages, regardless of occupational status.’

Mental healthcare is only mentioned in the platforms of LiBaladi and Sabaa. LiBaladi calls for implementing the ‘Mental Health and Substance Use Strategy for Lebanon 2015-2020’ and guaranteeing a ‘preventive environment’, while Sabaa mentions expanding social security to cover mental and dental care among other currently-uncovered medical operations.

Improving the quality and capacity of public hospitals is also a priority according to the programs. The issue is mentioned directly by LiBaladi, Hezbollah, and LiHaqqi. The three groups focus on free and high-quality hospitalization across Lebanon, reforming hospitals’ administrations, and increasing public spending on the health sector.

Finally, the reduction of pharmaceutical drug prices are mentioned by two programs—those of Hezbollah and LiHaqqi—with Hezbollah saying this would be achieved by ‘ending monopolies in the drug market.’

The platforms’ content do not display any clear disagreements on health policy, and neither does LCPS’s survey findings. All participant groups declared their support for introducing sex education and reproductive health into school curricula, and all but Sabaa and the LF said they are in favor of expanding social security to cover the unemployed. The two parties present alternative plans for health coverage; Sabaa presents a comprehensive welfare program and a set of social security reforms, and the LF points in its platform to the universal healthcare draft law that its MPs have submitted to parliament.

Finally, despite ideological differences, most parties support increased investment in public hospitals and establishing new ones as opposed to privatizing healthcare or maintaining the status-quo. Hezbollah does not endorse any of the three options, and instead states the need for a new plan for the health sector, while the LF argues there is no ‘yes or no answer’ because the matter deserves further elaboration.

Table 32 Party policies on the health sector

Party	Policies
FPM	<p>Provision of advanced and preventive healthcare.</p> <p>Ensuring high quality and equitable treatment.</p> <p>Establishing a social safety net and old age pensions.</p>
Future Movement	<p>Working on the development of the healthcare provision system and enacting laws related to the adoption of the health card, which provides health coverage for each Lebanese not covered by any other insurance.</p> <p>Affirming the need to pass the old age pensions law.</p>
Hezbollah	<p>Raising the efficiency of government hospitals and their absorptive capacity, which suffer from recurrent problems related to funding and administration, and working to reduce the drug bill by reducing the monopoly in the drug market.</p> <p>Approving social protection laws and old age pensions.</p>
Kataeb	<p>Approving free health insurance for those over the age of 65 while amending the labor law to meet the requirements of a healthcare system for all workers, so as to ensure coverage after retirement for workers.</p> <p>Issuing and updating healthcare cards for non-insured persons and determining the state's contribution in accordance with a budget set in advance. By doing so, patients will benefit from healthcare services at reduced prices in public and private hospitals.</p> <p>Organizing and developing ties between private hospitals and insurance companies at all levels, while ensuring that hospitals would get their rights.</p> <p>Establishing a regulatory body for the health and pharmaceutical sectors to ensure quality and enforce applicable laws.</p>
Lebanese Forces	<p>Enacting the Universal Health Coverage Law, which will create a sense of tranquility for the citizen and achieve balance between their financial capacities, the state's treasury, and hospitals' conditions.</p> <p>Modernizing the health sector and using advanced technology.</p> <p>Providing all citizens with the access to advanced services both in their treatments and in the management of the health sector, and ensuring the highest standards of safety in medicines and nutrition.</p>
LiBaladi	<p>Guaranteeing physical and mental health care of high quality for everyone, and working to establish a preventive environment.</p> <p>Approving a universal healthcare law and adopting the Mental Health and Substance Use Strategy for Lebanon [2015-2020].</p> <p>Working to guarantee that public hospitals offer free and quality</p>

Party	Policies
LiHaqqi	<p>healthcare and hospitalization, in a manner that is decentralized and ensures balance between regions.</p> <p>Activating food safety regulations on consumer products and guarantee regular examinations.</p> <p>Approving a universal health coverage law that covers the poorest of all ages, regardless of occupational status.</p> <p>Increasing the share of the health sector in the public budget and supporting the health card project, focusing on the health priorities of women.</p> <p>Approving a law to reform the National Social Security Fund and expanding it to cover the unemployed and the retired.</p> <p>Amending the social security law to eliminate discrimination between men and women.</p> <p>Approving the old age pension with amendments that protect the poorest social categories.</p> <p>Building new public hospitals in rural areas, and activating and improving available hospitals by equipping it with the necessary human and technical resources to guarantee the quality and efficiency of their services.</p> <p>Working on required legislation to reduce the price of medicines and cover the cost of expensive medicines for those with limited incomes, including medicines that treat chronic illnesses.</p>
Sabaa	<p>Establishing a comprehensive social welfare program that guarantees temporary financial benefits, food vouchers, and/or shelter to the poorest citizens, the unemployed, and those with social and health conditions; on the condition that beneficiaries enroll in a rehabilitation program with the support of a social worker; this is aimed at re-integrating such individuals into the job market.</p> <p>Settling the debts owed by the National Social Security Fund.</p> <p>Bringing social security into the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Health and Leisure.</p> <p>Increasing coverage for the NSSF to cover mental, dental health, laparoscopy, and tests aimed at early diagnosis.</p> <p>Creating an online platform for social security, specifically to lift bureaucratic burdens for hospitals and pharmacies.</p> <p>Creating another online platforms for citizens to benefit from social security services.</p>

Telecommunications: A focus on improving public management of the sector

Telecom-related policies are included in all programs except that of the LF (table 33), and primarily focus on two connected components: Improving public management of the sector and reducing costs for users.

Indeed, the issue of activating the Telecom Regulation Authority (TRA) is mentioned by Hezbollah, the FPM, LiHaqqi, and LiBaladi. Although the TRA exists, it has not been granted the jurisdiction and independence to operate effectively in the management of the sector. Hezbollah commits to working for the 'formation' of this authority, while the FPM is more precise in its characterization of the current state of affairs when it acknowledges the TRA's existence but calls for the 'activation of [its] independent role' and 'liberating it from subordination.' LiBaladi calls for 'enacting the required reforms' for the TRA to improve the quality of service and reduce prices for users. Finally, LiHaqqi calls for 'activating and monitoring the performance' of the TRA and highlighting its most important prerogatives.

Hezbollah and Kataeb also commit to working toward implementing other main provisions of law 431 that established the TRA, which is creating Liban Telecom, a joint stock company that would acquire parts of the Ministry of Telecommunications and the semi-public company Ogero, and operate them as a national provider of landline and mobile services. The creation of the company was included in a decree enacted by the cabinet in 2005, but never went into effect due to strong political tensions and legal challenges.

Kataeb's program mentions that Liban Telecom would be a step toward achieving 'real competition' in the sector, a position echoed by the platforms of Sabaa and LiHaqqi, both of which call for opening the telecom services market to new competitors and therefore better deals for users.

In addition to reducing costs, LiHaqqi and Sabaa's platforms also include other user-focused reforms, such as extending mobile phone lines' validity (mentioned by both) and charging users by counting seconds rather than minutes of phone calls (mentioned by LiHaqqi). None of the established parties mention any policies in this regard. Instead, these parties focus on large-scale reform and infrastructure improvement. Hezbollah calls for 'reforming the telecom sector to improve its productivity', while the FPM calls for 'developing the technological environment' and creating a competitive tech production market. The FM also focuses on tech business by calling for reaching all areas with broadband to help local companies working in tech services that require high-speed internet.

Table 33 Party policies on telecommunication

Party	Policies
Amal Movement	Continuing the implementation of main infrastructural projects, including telecommunications.
FPM	Restructuring the telecommunications sector. Activating the independent role of the telecommunication regulation committee and liberating it from politics. Developing the technological environment for information, communication, and national digitization. Developing a competitive and innovative ICT market. Developing the ability to benefit from technology and services.
Future Movement	Continuing the policy of reducing the cost of telecommunications and internet services. Securing broadband services in all areas of Lebanon, which will give an important impetus to local companies that need high speed internet to export their software and services and innovative products.
Hezbollah	Reforming the telecommunications sector to increase its productivity, and establishing its regulatory authority and the Liban Telecom company as stated in the Telecommunications Law.
Kataeb	Speeding up the establishment of LIBA Telecom, which would be responsible of managing and developing the landlines network, in addition to establishing a third mobile phone operator in order to achieve real competition.
LiBaladi	Enacting required reforms to regulate the Telecom Regulation Authority to guarantee affordable prices and quality coverage and services, in addition to holding the Telecommunications Ministry accountable for guaranteeing broadband internet access nationwide and reducing the prices of mobile phone and landline calls.
LiHaqqi	Ending duopoly in the mobile phone services sector and allowing new companies to compete in the market. Improving internet network infrastructure and activating the fiber optic network across Lebanon, with the priority of making its use affordable. Extending the validity period of mobile phone lines so that a line does not expire until three months of non-usage. Charging customers by the second rather than minute for phone calls. Activating and monitoring the performance of the Telecom Regulation Authority established by law 431 in 2007, so that it performs its main roles which include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Encouraging competition in the telecom sector ■ Guaranteeing the transparency of markets and preventing

Party	Policies
	<p>monopolistic behavior</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Regulating concessions, and issuing, amending, suspending, and revoking licenses <p>Protecting the consumer and making access to telecom services easier for welfare institutions in the health and education sectors, and for people with disabilities.</p>
Sabaa	<p>Terminating the current mobile phone companies' contracts and opening the sector for competition under the supervision and management of the Telecommunications Ministry. This would reduce prices and improve services, in addition to increasing state revenues through effective taxation.</p> <p>Ending the policy of blackmailing citizens by having their lines expire when they fail to recharge.</p> <p>Guaranteeing faster and more affordable internet for every house by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Reducing the margin of profit for the ministry and Ogero and imposing strict regulation on internet providers ■ Creating a unified fiber optics network connecting houses to central networks to address the problem of old copper networks <p>Guaranteeing internet in all areas equally by decentralizing DSL services.</p> <p>Launching the 'connected citizen' program that guarantees Wifi in public spaces by 2022 for symbolic or no consumption cost.</p> <p>Offering telecom services packages for the 'deaf and mute' by giving them access to unlimited text and more internet data for video calls.</p> <p>Restructuring and organizing the postal system by issuing postal codes for all buildings with the help of municipalities.</p>

Old Age Pension: No disagreement over the necessity of the law

Pensions for the elderly are mentioned in the programs of four established parties (Hezbollah, FM, Future and Kataeb), and all three new groups (table 34). All programs call for establishing the pension, with LiHaqqi calling for 'amendments' to the current old age pension law to 'protect the poorest social groups.' Sabaa calls for a 'retirement fund' that is separate from the National Social Security Fund, to which citizens can subscribe regardless of their occupational status.

Table 34 Party policies on old age pension

Party	Policies
FPM	An old age pension.
Future Movement	Approving the old age pension law.
Hezbollah	Approving the social protection and old age pension law.
Kataeb	Guaranteeing old age pensions to allow beneficiaries to receive a fair and suitable retirement salary.
LiBaladi	Approving the old age pension system.
LiHaqqi	Approving the old age pension law with amendments to protect the poorest.
Sabaa	Approving the social protection and retirement law, and separating the retirement fund from the National Social Security Fund, so that the retirement system has a special fund through which retirement salaries are paid. The fund is managed by investment experts to make profits. Every citizen has the right to subscribe to the fund regardless of occupational status.

Wastewater Management: A focus on improving networks and protecting rivers

Wastewater management is also mentioned in the platforms of seven groups (table 35). The FPM is the most concise, merely promising ‘sustainable management of water and wastewater’. Similarly, Amal mentions wastewater briefly along with the solid waste management, calling for ‘implementing the necessary environmental projects’ to resolve the ‘crises’ in the two sectors. Kataeb mentions improving wastewater networks and linking them to refineries in all areas, in addition to finding a solution to the sludge resulting from the refining process. For Hezbollah and the FM, the focus—in addition to the improvement of sewage networks—is the protection of public waters. Future calls for ‘ending the excessive violations of rivers, coasts, and artesian wells by completing wastewater systems in all areas and linking them to refineries,’ while Hezbollah focuses on protecting the Litani and Assi rivers as a source of potable and irrigation water.

Table 35 Party policies on wastewater management

Party	Policies
Amal Movement	Implementing the environmental projects related to fully resolving the solid waste and wastewater crises.
FPM	Sustainable management of water and wastewater.
Future Movement	Ending continuing violations at rivers, coasts, and groundwater wells by completing the wastewater system in all areas and linking them to refineries.
Hezbollah	Following up with the government to work on the completion of wastewater treatment projects [for water dumped in] river canals, especially in the Litani and Assi rivers as two main sources of irrigation and drinking water, and to speed up the implementation of the Law on the Protection of the Litani River Basin.
Kataeb	Completing the installation of sewage networks across Lebanon and linking them to water purification centers. Appropriate solutions should be found to deal with waste that would result from the purification process.
LiBaladi	Collecting sewage and wastes far from touristic areas and appropriately treating it.
Sabaa	Investing L.L. 2,700 billion in rehabilitating the wastewater network; creating 18 new refineries and improving the existing 37 refineries; using filtered wastewater for agricultural purposes.

Housing: Scarcity of plans from major parties, while emerging groups focus on credit

The issue of housing is not extensively covered by most established parties' platforms. While Hezbollah, the FPM, and Amal do not mention it, the FM and Kataeb do so briefly, stating that they would try to reduce the costs of homeownership (table 36).

By contrast, the four remaining groups—the LF, LiHaqqi, LiBaladi, and Sabaa—mention specific policies. All express their support for providing housing loans. In its platform, the LF says it would create a real-estate credit institution in order to encourage young people to buy land and build on those areas at affordable prices. Sabaa mentions facilitating affordable homeownership through subsidized loans, while LiBaladi states that it would establish a systematic plan for the provision of medium to long-term loans. LiHaqqi goes further, saying that it would ensure that housing loans are issued only through the Public Housing Corporation to benefit low- and middle-income earners.

Policies concerning social housing are thoroughly covered by Sabaa's program. The party expresses its support for building low-rent residences, which would be achieved via BOT contracts on the condition

of low rents. The party also says that it would build new social housing in order to eliminate slums, and that low-income and homeless residents of those slums would be given priority access over social housing. Landowners of slum areas would be required to contribute to the costs of building these new houses, in exchange for retaining their land.

The programs of two parties—LiHaqqi and LiBaladi—indirectly address the housing bubble. LiHaqqi's program contains a policy of regulating the real-estate sector to protect housing from real-estate speculation. LiBaladi touches on several policies related to this, saying it would introduce taxes on constructed properties and uninhabited houses, as well as taxes on the profits earned by property owners due to increases in the commercial values of properties.

Regarding the housing and rent law, Sabaa's platform includes provisions to implement a new housing law to achieve balance between the interests of old tenants and landowners. The platform also states that old landlords should be compensated for their losses due to the old rent law through tax exemptions. LiBaladi's program supports the implementation of the new law, but emphasizes the need for launching a fund for housing rents to support low-income people.

Table 36 Party policies on housing

Party	Policies
Future Movement	Working to reduce the cost of buying a house, especially for middle income earners.
Kataeb	Implementing a housing policy to enable young Lebanese men and women to own affordable houses.
Lebanese Forces	Working to create a real estate credit institution similar to the Public Institution for Housing, to encourage young people to buy land in their villages and building housing on them for affordable prices.
LiBaladi	<p>Introducing taxes on built property, especially the land acquisition tax, in order to reduce speculation and to restore the social value of land.</p> <p>Developing the real property law, which requires landowners—when building on their plots—to maintain a high percentage of 'environmental services' (plant and biological diversity) that are present in real estate before construction.</p> <p>Endorsing a tax (diminutive over time) on the profits earned by the owner of a property due to significant increases in the commercial value of properties as a result of a change in the investment factor or in services provided by the state in the vicinity of the property.</p>

Party	Policies
	<p>Introducing taxes on uninhabited houses.</p> <p>Establishing laws to control the rental market.</p> <p>Promoting and supporting residential cooperatives.</p> <p>Introducing a regulatory framework for rent that establishes controls to limit the discretion of the existing contractual conditions in a manner that ensures stability for the lessee without diminishing the owner's rights through, for example, setting a ceiling for the increase of the rental allowance after three years.</p> <p>Activating the recently established rent law and advocating the establishment of a committee responsible for executing the law in addition to launching a fund for housing rents to support low-income individuals and introducing reforms on it (calculate the equivalent allowances and compensation that old tenants deserve at the time of vacating the rent without burdening the owners with additional financial burdens).</p> <p>Expanding the category of beneficiaries for the Housing Act to include individuals and part-time workers or consultant freelancers.</p> <p>Empowering the General Establishment for Housing to substantiate building housing and accessories in accordance with a systematic plan for developing an affordable and decentralized housing policy that provides medium- and long-term loans.</p> <p>Activating the leasehold system (2006 modification) by providing long-term loans and endorsing a [range of] policies that incentivize property owners and contribute to solving the housing problem.</p> <p>Examples of such policies are: Exempting the investor who sells residential units to the lessee by means of the ownership lease from the construction license fees and stamp fees on all the contracts and transactions organized to achieve the ownership rent, leaving the possibility of retrieving the vacuum fees, insurance, insurance and securitization, the construction of the purchased property and the exemption of the transfer of ownership of the residential unit to the lessee.</p>
LiHaqqi	<p>The suspension of work on the Rental Law of 1 April 2014, and the legislation of a comprehensive housing policy based on the criteria of social justice, adopting the following principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Enshrining the right to housing for all without distinction ■ Regulating the real estate sector and protecting housing from real estate speculation ■ Setting a quota that imposes a certain proportion of affordable housing in each residential area to prevent class division in cities ■ Protecting the right of old tenants to housing

Party	Policies
Sabaa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Protecting the right of small owners to fair rent allowances <p>Ending house loan subsidies to commercial banks, and restricting housing loans' issuance to the Public Housing Corporation and their beneficiaries to low- or middle-income earners.</p> <p>Recognizing housing as a human right. This can be achieved through three plans:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Building low-rent residences on state land by contracting them to developers via BOT contracts on the condition of low rents. Giving priority to old tenants, poor families, and those living in old buildings. ■ Enacting plans to facilitate cheap ownership of houses through subsidized loans and tax exemptions for developers. ■ Removing slums and moving residents to social housing built on state land outside Beirut in return for maintenance and consumption fees only. Priority to poor and homeless, and original landowners of slum areas will reappropriate their land after paying a contribution to the construction of social housing. <p>Implementing the new housing law to achieve balance between old tenants and landowners. Offering tax exemptions for old landlords to compensate for the old rent law.</p>

Public Spaces and Maritime Properties: Established parties focus on the environment with little attention to contested maritime projects

Public spaces are only mentioned in the platforms of three established parties and two emerging groups (table 37). The FPM only touches on the topic in the context of 'obliging municipalities to create gardens, sports courts, pavements, and parking lots.' Hezbollah focuses on the environmental aspect, promising to 'demand that relevant authorities implement laws protecting public properties and commons, especially those providing natural resources related to water (including groundwater), forests, and natural reserves.' Kataeb goes into further detail on the protection of rivers and coasts, suggesting the replacement of concrete buildings with wooden structures, and requiring companies to refine their wastewater and use public water responsibly.

Public maritime properties, an issue championed by many advocacy campaigns and controversies, is directly mentioned by Kataeb, LiHaqqi, and LiBaladi. Kataeb calls for 'declaring public maritime [...] properties as natural reserves and ending the granting of any new building or investment permits therein.' LiBaladi calls for enacting 'plans and laws' that would 'reinstitute all individuals' equal rights to access beaches for free', 'ensure the connectivity of beaches,' and outlaw any construction

that blocks sea views.’ As for the already existing violations of the properties, LiBaladi calls for ‘removing’ these violations and ending the current system allowing the exacerbation of the issue.

In LCPS’s survey, Hezbollah, Kataeb, LiBaladi, LiHaqqi, and Sabaa supported ‘removing violations and preventing new projects’ on public maritime properties, while the LF and PSP supported imposing higher fees and taxes on companies operating them. As mentioned, the FPM, the FM and Amal did not participate in the survey. Neither these parties’ platforms nor the survey outline a position on this issue.

LiHaqqi and Kataeb also oppose the commodification of common lands. LiHaqqi briefly touches on it in the introduction to its program, while Kataeb calls for ‘stopping and abolishing all delimitation processes affecting rural lands in order to prevent turning them into individual properties.’

The most comprehensive vision on public spaces is presented in LiBaladi’s program, which links public spaces to social dialogue and the sense of citizenship among the population. LiBaladi calls for central and local policies that establish ‘a network of green spaces in cities’, and urban planning policies aimed at establishing public spaces across Lebanon with equal access for all citizens, with special attention paid to people with disabilities and children.

Table 37 Party policies on public spaces and maritime properties

Party	Policies
FPM	Requiring municipalities to create gardens, sport courts, paved areas, and parking lots.
Hezbollah	Requesting that concerned authorities enforce laws protecting public properties and commons, especially sources of natural resources associated with water (including groundwater), forests, and protected areas.
Kataeb	Ensuring that Lebanon’s beaches form an uninterrupted line, demolishing concrete constructions to replace them with wood, and compelling touristic facilities to ‘refine’ wastewater and ration the use of water. Declaring public maritime, mountain, and river properties natural reserves and ending the practice of granting any new building or investment permits therein. Adopting a national plan, in partnership with the private sector and donor countries, to reforest the Cedars line and plant a strip line adjacent to the beaches. Stopping and abolishing all delimitation processes affecting rural lands in order to prevent them from being turned into private properties.

Party	Policies
LiBaladi	<p>Restoring the public margin that provides a space for common dialogue and discussion with and among people in order to identify their needs and listen to their suggestion in structuring developmental plans and strategies at the local level.</p> <p>Working on building a network of green spaces inside and outside cities.</p> <p>[Reclaiming] public spaces that provide space for meeting and dialogue among people and that contribute in raising awareness and patriotism</p> <p>Working on the construction of green spaces in cities. These will serve as entertainment spaces that depollute air in cities.</p> <p>Endorsing laws and plans that are related to civil organizations and which aim to allocate green spaces in certain areas in cities according to population density.</p> <p>Conducting a field research study of Lebanese coastal cities and proposing appropriate recommendations for the establishment of public spaces and ensuring the free and equal access of residents to and use of them.</p> <p>Endorsing plans and laws that restore and protect the right of the individuals to freely access the Lebanese coastal areas without material compensation, ensuring the connectedness of the shoreline, and not placing or imposing obstacles that prevent access to the shore. Implementing a prohibition on blocking the shore and the sea, and removing violations arising from the system of occupancy of marine property.</p> <p>Updating and enhancing the architectural conditions for public spaces (streets) in order to make them inclusive for people with special needs and safer for children and the elderly.</p> <p>Pushing local administrations to provide safe public spaces in neighborhoods for the use of children in overcrowded cities.</p>
LiHaqqi	<p>Enacting a law requiring the removal of violations in public maritime properties, prohibiting any future violations, and opening the coast to the public.</p>

Poverty: No new proposals on the table

Poverty reduction is mentioned directly in four programs, with only two programs specifying a policy (table 38). The FM calls for continuing and improving the ‘targeting of poverty in Lebanon’ project ‘that aims to provide health, education, and food services to 250,000 Lebanese,’ in addition to expanding the scope of the project to include vocational training. Kataeb mentions plans to work on ‘the national program targeting the poorest families’, a likely reference to the same policy, but

specifies that a priority is ‘to help families overcome poverty through work incentives and not relying permanently on government assistance.’ Kataeb also calls for ‘providing more assistance to marginalized groups’, building the capacities of social workers and institutions offering services, and focusing on low-income families.

LiBaladi and the FPM adopt broad slogans favoring this end. LiBaladi mentions ‘supporting the poorest families,’ while the FPM promises to ‘care for the oppressed, poor, and marginalized classes in a labor system that is open and allows opportunities and overcomes challenges.’ In this statement, the FPM seems to be hinting both at the need for worker protection and the plan to make the labor market more flexible by lifting restrictions on hiring and firing workers.

Table 38 Party policies on poverty reduction

Party	Policies
FPM	Caring for the oppressed, poor, and marginalized classes.
Future Movement	Developing the project ‘Targeting Poverty in Lebanon’ which aims to provide health, education, and food services to 250,000 Lebanese, and expanding the scope of the project to include vocational training.
Kataeb	Developing the work of the national program targeting the poorest families to help them exit poverty through work incentives and not relying permanently on government assistance. Providing more assistance to marginalized groups, strengthening the capacities of social service workers, notably specialized care institutions, and re-directing resources toward people with a low-income.
LiBaladi	Supporting the poorest families.

d On Social Policies, including rights and freedoms

Social policies receive less focus than the previous four policy categories in established parties’ platforms.¹⁰ However, two topics in this category are covered by all platforms, namely, women rights and youth-related policies, while other matters receive more emphasis from emerging groups (table 39).

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Hassan, N. 2018. ‘An Analysis of Party Platforms in the 2018 Parliamentary Election.’ Policy Paper. Lebanese Center for Policy Studies.

Table 39 Most covered topics related to social policies

Topic	Established Parties Covering (total = 6)	Emerging Groups Covering (total = 3)
Women Rights Participation	6	3
Youth & Voting Age	6	3
Migrant Workers	3	3
Refugees	3	2
Civil Liberties	3	2
Lebanese Emigrants	3	0

Women Rights and Participation: Various approaches to tackling women's affairs, and no commitment to a female quota

Lebanon's established parties and emerging groups have very different approaches to tackling women's issues (table 40). Some parties mention it as a separate section, item, or part of one item. Among those, the FM is the most concise, as its platform mentions 'the participation of youth and women in political life'. Hezbollah is also brief and unspecific in its platform, promising to 'enact laws that provide protection for women deserving more care and attention' without offering further details. Similarly, one item of Amal's program is dedicated to youth and women, as it mentions 'dedicating a share for Lebanese women to enhance their presence and parliamentary representation', in what seems to be a reference to a female quota.

The LF and FPM dedicate a section to women's rights, although it contains very general content. The LF's only promise is to 'enact laws that eliminate discrimination against women', while the FPM promises to establish the 'National Council for Women', start a 'legislative workshop for equality and against discrimination' and 'reveal women's capacity and give them opportunities, and encourage them to take on public positions.' Sabaa also dedicates a separate section titled 'behind every great nation is a woman' to discuss women's issues, and calls for a range of reforms and interventions including eliminating wage gaps, amending the penal code to protect women, establishing the minimal age for marriage at 18 years, criminalizing sexual harassment, achieving equality in social security, making maternity leave more accessible, and allowing women to pass the nationality to their husbands and children.

Meanwhile, LiBaladi, LiHaqqi, and Kataeb do not dedicate a section to women, but instead mention policies related to women in more than one section, an approach recommended by contemporary gender equality mainstreaming efforts. Moreover, all three groups call for

establishing a female quota in parliament, eliminating gender discrimination in labor and social security laws, and criminalizing sexual harassment. LiHaqqi also mentions establishing a public daycare network and amending the labor law to include domestic workers and agricultural workers, extending maternity leave, and criminalizing wage discrimination. In turn, Kataeb mentions empowering female entrepreneurs and ending discrimination in the penal code and personal status laws.

It is clear that parties are not on the same page concerning the question of whether to set a quota for female representation in parliament. Indeed, the FPM, FM, Kataeb, and Hezbollah do not mention the quota in their platforms; and Amal only hints at it by using the term 'share' rather than the usual 'quota'. And while the FPM, Amal, and the FM did not participate in LCPS's survey, the findings still revealed a disagreement over this point, where Hezbollah and the LF opposed enacting a female representation quota in parliament. Hence, neither of the five parties with the largest parliamentary blocs (the FPM, FM, Amal, Hezbollah, and the LF) have committed to the female quota in parliament.

LCPS's survey also revealed that the LF and Hezbollah diverted from other participating groups in their positions on other women issues. Both were also alone in opposing a law establishing a minimum marriage age of 18 years. Hezbollah argued that childhood as a notion depends on 'its social definition' and does not correspond to any absolute age. The two parties also stand out on the issue of giving Lebanese women the right to pass their citizenship to their non-Lebanese husbands and children. While other LCPS survey participants supported this right, the LF opposed it and Hezbollah abstained from answering, stating that 'the matter requires further debate.' Hezbollah also opposed the criminalization of marital rape, commenting that the term 'marital rape' itself is problematic as it contradicts 'the nature of family relationships.'

Table 40 Party policies on women's rights and participation

Party	Policies
Amal Movement	Dedicating a share for Lebanese women to enhance their parliamentary representation.
FPM	[Forming a] legislative workshop for equality and against discrimination. Revealing women's capacity, giving them opportunities, and encouraging them to take on public positions. Establishment of the national council for women.
Future Movement	[Encouraging] the participation of youths and women in political life.
Hezbollah	Drafting laws that provide protection for women deserving more care and attention.
Kataeb	Eliminating all forms of discrimination against women in the law pertaining to personal status, penal code, labor and social security and passing a law that protects them from sexual harassment. Creating a favorable and supportive business environment for women through incentives, special policies and specialized training. Adopting a female quota system that accounts for at least 30% of the parliamentary and municipal seats as well as in other areas of public service.
Lebanese Forces	Enacting laws that eliminate discrimination against women.
LiBaladi	Approving the draft law proposed by the Jinsiyati (my nationality) campaign to amend Law 15/1925 concerning citizenship, which would allow women to pass the nationality to their husbands and children, which men can do now. Establishing mechanisms that prohibit gender discrimination in employment, wages, and promotion systems. Specifically, increasing the lengths of the official maternity and paternity paid leaves for both the private and public sectors. Establishing equality between men and women and allowing women to benefit with their families from all services of the National Social Security Fund. Advocating that the ministries of justice and social affairs pass decrees to create a fund that aims to support victims of domestic violence, as mentioned in law 293/2014.
LiHaqqi	Approving a law allowing Lebanese women married to non-Lebanese men the right to pass her nationality to her children and husband. Approving a law that sets a women representation quota in the parliament in line with the CEDAW convention that Lebanon has ratified. Approving a comprehensive law that protects women and girls from

Party	Policies
	<p>harassment and violence (physical, sexual, moral or financial), and imposes stricter sentences on human traffickers.</p> <p>Amending the social security law to eliminate discrimination between men and women.</p> <p>Creating a network of public child care centers to lift the burden off mothers' shoulders, allowing them to participate in public life.</p> <p>Amending the labor law to extend maternity leave in line with the needs of the mother and child, criminalizing discrimination in wages and promotions, and expanding the labor law to cover domestic workers and farmers.</p>
Sabaa	<p>Abolishing all the content that was introduced into articles 505 and 518 of the penal code when article 522 was abolished.</p> <p>Specifically, abolishing the content that allows early marriage and exempts the rapist of a minor from punishment if they marry their victims.</p> <p>Banning the marriage of minor women and making 18 years the minimum age for legal marriage for both men and women, regardless of their religious affiliation. Activating the judiciary's role in this concern and punishing violators by giving power to minors affairs judges to intervene to protect children.</p> <p>Passing a law criminalizing sexual harassment and placing stricter punishments on business owners or supervisors who commit harassment in the workplace.</p> <p>Amending labor laws and social security laws to recognize full equality between men and women in terms of benefits. Specifically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Giving women the right of benefiting from their unemployed and uninsured husbands without condition ■ Exempting women from current policies that deprive them of maternity benefits when they have not been subscribed to social security for 10 months or more ■ Enacting a paternity leave of two weeks <p>Monitoring the private sector and enacting preventive penalties to end discrimination between genders.</p> <p>Passing a law allowing women to pass the nationality to their families and children.</p>

Youth and Voting Age

Policies relating to youth are mentioned in all platforms (table 41). A reduction of the voting age to 18 years old is endorsed in the platforms released by Hezbollah, Amal, LiHaqqi, LiBaladi, and Sabaa; and is left out by the FPM, LF, and Kataeb—the three 'Christian parties'. This reflects a sectarian dimension on this policy matter in political

discourse, specifically the more rapid increase in the number of Muslim voters compared to Christian voters and how this might affect political outcomes. However, when asked about reducing the voting age to 18 years in LCPS's survey, Kataeb supported the policy whereas the LF opposed it (FPM did not participate).

Apart from voting age reduction, policies supporting young citizens are mentioned by four of the established parties (the FPM, FM, LF, and Kataeb) and two new groups in their respective platforms. The FM is the most brief, only mentioning youth in the sentence: '[enhancing] the participation of youth and women in political life and public affairs management.' The FPM is also rather generic, favoring two goals of 'ending the brain drain' and 'engaging youths in political and partisan work,' but is more specific in promising the establishment of the 'National Youth Council'. Kataeb's vision includes supporting youths on two ends: Starting businesses with little capital and owning affordable housing. The latter issue is where the LF mentions youth, as it promises to work for the establishment of a public institutions to 'encourage youth to buy land in their hometowns and build residences'.

The new groups' platforms introduced other aspects of youth policy, although without offering much detail. LiBaladi's platform briefly mentions establishing 'youth service cards' and 'contracts between students and private universities', and is the only platform to include youth representation in unions and syndicate boards. In turn, Sabaa focuses on employment, proposing a program whereby the government rewards companies that employ young people by covering the social security subscription cost for an employee's first year at work.

Table 41 Party policies in relation to youth and their participation

Party	Policies
Amal Movement	Engaging with youth by lowering the voting age.
FPM	Limiting brain drain and building a knowledge economy. Encouraging youth to partake in political and partisan work. Establishing the national council for youth.
Future Movement	[Encouraging] the participation of youth and women in political life and public affairs management.
Hezbollah	Reducing voting age to 18.
Kataeb	Establishing a Lebanese-international program to encourage youth to launch projects with a limited capital, especially in areas outside Beirut, and setting out a housing policy to enable young Lebanese men and women to own affordable houses in their country.
Lebanese Forces	Working to create a real estate credit institution similar to the Public Institution for Housing, to encourage young people to buy

Party	Policies
	land in their villages and build housing on them at affordable prices.
LiBaladi	Nullifying the preset authorization of syndicate establishment and relying on objective standards that guaranty youth and female representation in the administrative board of syndicates and unions. Invoking the participation of youth in political and economic affairs. Ratifying legislative reform related to youth policies such as immigration, labor, political participation, health, education, and most importantly scaling down the voting age to 18 years, in addition to providing a youth services card and students contract with private universities.
LiHaqqi	Lowering the voting age to 18 years to encourage the participation and representation of young men and women in political work.
Sabaa	Reducing the voting age. Enacting a youth employment program that incentivizes companies to employ youths by covering the first year of social security payments on behalf of the employer.

Migrant Workers and Refugees: A major focus on job tensions

Policies related to migrant workers and/or refugees are mentioned by all parties but one (Amal Movement). The positions of different parties and the emphasis they place on specific issues varies significantly (table 42).

Table 42 Party policies on migrant workers

Party	Policies
FPM	Prioritizing the interest of the Lebanese workforce and offering them an advantage over foreign counterparts.
Future Movement	Strictly applying laws to prevent competition in the Lebanese labor force by foreign laborers.
Lebanese Forces	Ending [foreign] competition in the Lebanese labor force.
LiBaladi	Abolishing the kafala system for foreign workers in all its forms and implementing the labor law in free economic zones.
LiHaqqi	Abolishing the kafala system and giving foreign domestic workers the rights stated in the labor law, including the right to form unions.
Sabaa	Specifying the number of Syrian workers needed in Lebanon and offering work residencies on that basis. Ending the random employment of foreigners in private companies through a policy that puts a cap on non-Lebanese employees; and imposing penalties on violators.

The issue most commonly referenced is the protection of the Lebanese workforce from the foreign workforce, which is mentioned by five parties: the FPM, FM, LF, Sabaa, and Kataeb. This is only briefly mentioned by the LF and the FPM, who state that they favor the Lebanese workforce being given preference in the labor market over foreign labor. The FM, Sabaa, and Kataeb state that they favor the implementation of laws to restrict the number of foreign workers in Lebanon—while the FM only states that it would like to see ‘a strict implementation of laws to prevent competition’ from foreign workers. The two other parties have adopted a stronger position. Sabaa proposes placing a cap on non-Lebanese employees and only offering work residencies to Syrian workers based on the needs of the country, while Kataeb states that economic migrants should only be allowed entry when their protection in their native country is not ensured. Moreover, both parties state that they would like to see the implementation of the Ministry of Labor’s policy that restricts the right of Syrians to work to only three sectors (agriculture, construction, and waste collection).

Regarding the rights of migrants and refugees, three policies are tackled (table 43). The first touches on discrimination against foreigners, and are explicitly mentioned by LiHaqqi and Sabaa. LiHaqqi’s program proposes enacting a law criminalizing discrimination against any nationality, in addition to protecting the dignity of all refugees and legalizing their presence on Lebanese territory. Sabaa proposes eliminating all laws discriminating against Palestinian refugees—although their platform rejects their naturalization. The second policy entails abolishing the sponsorship system for foreign workers and applying the labor law to all—a measure supported by LiHaqqi, LiBaladi, and the LF. Three other parties, however, disagree. Kataeb, the PSP, and Sabaa argue that, although they would like the working conditions of foreign workers to be improved, each party is against the abolishment of the sponsorship system. And finally, three parties—LiBaladi, PSP, and LiHaqqi—state that they would like Syrians to be granted the right to asylum and be allowed to engage in employment and benefit from social services.

Moreover, a survey of parties indicates that all parties (Hezbollah, Kataeb, Li Baladi, PSP, Sabaa, and LiHaqqi) except the LF are against curfews imposed by some municipalities on Syrian citizens.

Another policy mentioned in platforms released by Hezbollah, the FPM, Kataeb, and Sabaa, favors the return of Syrian refugees. All agree on the urgency of finding a solution for the return of Syrian refugees

to their country. The Kataeb adds that Lebanon should work with the international community to speed up their return and facilitate their resettlement in Arab countries needing a labor workforce. Sabaa, however, recognizes the importance of protecting refugees' safety, stating that 'decent camps [should be created] for those unable to return to Syria'.

Finally, the last policy included in multiple platforms is the regulation and monitoring of refugees, which appears in the FPM's, Sabaa's, and the Kataeb's programs. Sabaa favors mapping all refugees through municipalities. The FPM proposes regulating the presence and residencies of Syrian workers and registering Syrian births. Kataeb's stance is more elaborate, with the party's program calling for municipalities and ministries to conduct a survey of Syrians in Lebanon to determine their legal status and distinguish between war-displaced and economic migrants.

Table 43 Party policies on refugees

Party	Policies
FPM	[Facilitating the] safe and quick return of Syrian migrants, regulating the presence and residencies of Syrian workers, registering and following Syrian births, teaching Syrian children the Syrian curriculum.
Hezbollah	Working for adequate solutions for the return of Syrian refugees to their home country.
Kataeb	Tasking municipalities, ministries, and relevant agencies with conducting a comprehensive survey of Syrians in Lebanon, determining the legal status of each, distinguishing between war-displaced and economic migrants, revising UNHCR data, and preventing the entry of economic migrants whose protection is not deemed mandatory as per international laws, and carrying out all needed contacts with the international community in order to speed up the return of Syrian refugees and their resettlement to Arab countries which need a labor workforce.
LiHaqqi	Enacting a law criminalizing discrimination against any nationality. Protecting the dignity of all refugees on Lebanese territory and legalizing their presence by formalizing their relationship with the state.
Sabaa	Adopting a serious approach to Syrian refugees' matters: Mapping all refugees through municipalities and facilitating the return of the largest possible portion to safe areas as soon as possible. Creating decent camps for those unable to return to Syria. Eliminating all laws discriminating against Palestinian refugees while rejecting naturalization.

Civil Liberties: Not a focus for major parties

Civil liberties and public freedoms are not among parties' top priorities. Hezbollah, the FPM, Amal, FM, and Sabaa fail to reference this issue directly in their programs, unless the FM's mention of the words 'a state of law and freedoms' is accounted for. The LF touches on the topic in its platform, stating that it favors 'ensuring guarantees for freedoms,' specifying individual liberties, as well as the freedom to express, believe, and practice. The party also points to the need for 'not tolerating violations by security forces', but does not adopt any specific policy on the matter (table 44).

Kataeb, LiHaqqi, and LiBaladi present a number of policies each on civil liberties and public freedoms. The three programs also agree on two major policies in this regard. First among them is the decriminalization of homosexuality through the elimination/amendment of law 534 of the penal code. In LCPS's survey, only Hezbollah opposed this policy, while, in addition to the three groups in question, the LF, PSP and Sabaa also supported the decriminalization of homosexuality.

The second common policy entails ending the prosecution of civilians by military tribunals, another demand widely advocated by human rights groups and social movement activists. Only Hezbollah does not support this reform, instead calling for 'maintaining the legal provisions currently in force concerning the jurisdiction of the military tribunal.'

Other relevant topics that are weakly covered by established parties' platforms include the decriminalization of drug use and the pre-censorship over artistic productions. Regarding the former, all groups except Hezbollah express support for decriminalization and the treatment of drug addicts as patients rather than offenders. Hezbollah expresses reservations, stating that while drug addiction is an illness, it starts with 'the criminal act of drug use', and that laws should be sensitive to this distinction.

Concerning the pre-censorship of artistic work by Lebanon's General Security, including theatrical and cinematographic works, all groups participating in LCPS's survey express opposition,¹¹ except Sabaa which accepts censorship 'as long as it does not violate the freedom of expression.'

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Reminder: FPM, Future, and Amal did not participate in the survey.

Table 44 Party policies on civil liberties and freedoms

Party	Policies
Future Movement	A state of law and freedoms.
Kataeb	<p>Abolishing the Ministry of Information and the General Security's pre-censorship on cinematic and artistic works, and reconsidering the powers and functions of the National Media Council in a way to include electronic media.</p> <p>Abolishing the death penalty and replacing it with the hard labor sentence.</p> <p>Extending the powers of the Defense and Interior Parliamentary Committee to strengthen the monitoring mechanism of the performance of the army and security agency, and forming the National Human Rights Commission to ensure full respect of human rights and public freedoms.</p> <p>Approving the proposal that was submitted by the Kataeb deputies to amend the Military Justice Law; a proposal which aims to limit the prerogatives of the Military Court to cases involving military personnel only and transferring the power to look into disputes between military staff and civilians to the courts of justice.</p> <p>Developing punishments as alternative to imprisonment, by resorting to social sanctions, probation, and other measures that are designed to rehabilitate those who have broken the law, not just punish them.</p> <p>Reducing pre-trial detention and halting arrest decisions via phone calls as done by general prosecutors.</p> <p>Abrogating all legal provisions that criminalize homosexuality.</p>
Lebanese Forces	<p>Guaranteeing freedoms; freedom of speech, belief, and practice; and free press and media. Protecting individual liberty and standing up to the violations of security forces.</p>
LiBaladi	<p>Eliminating all arbitrary detention centers in line with the principle of personal liberty which is guaranteed by the constitution.</p> <p>Amending the criminal procedures law to limit the duration of provisional detention, speeding up the prosecution procedures and improving the rights of detainees during the periods of investigation and detention.</p> <p>Enabling judicial assistance in the Beirut Bar Association.</p> <p>Abolishing all texts that inculcate any form of discrimination and stereotypes, and specifically performing a comprehensive review of the penal code to inculcate the principles of human dignity and not criminalize the choice of sexual orientation and gender identity or any intervention in personal life and choices</p>

Party	Policies
	<p>(particularly articles 531 and 534 used under the pretext of public morals violation, and articles 539 and 545 that criminalize abortion).</p> <p>Abolishing all articles that criminalize the practice of free speech and the critique of authorities and their leaders, or the incitement of sectarian tensions, from the penal code (articles 295, 383, and 389).</p>
LiHaqqi	<p>Amending the military law and defining the powers of the military tribunal, limiting them to cases involving military personnel, and eventually abolishing the court.</p> <p>Lifting General Security's pre-censorship of all forms of art in Lebanon.</p> <p>Separating the Cybercrime Bureau from all slander and defamation cases, and creating a special judicial authority, outside the criminal justice agencies, that is similar to the Court of Publications for material published on the internet.</p> <p>Amending or abolishing Article 534 of the penal code and all articles that violate human rights to guarantee public and individual liberty.</p> <p>Protecting the right to protest without condition and preventing any prosecution or harassment due to the practice of this right.</p> <p>Enacting a law that entrenches digital freedoms and protects personal data.</p>

Lebanese Emigrants: A focus on political participation

Policies related directly to Lebanese emigrants in foreign countries are given very different weights by the three platforms that mentioned the topic directly (table 45). Amal calls for the reestablishment of the Ministry of Expatriates 'to achieve the full political participation of Lebanese citizens [abroad]'. Kataeb also endorses this demand, calling for 'separating the Ministry of Expatriates from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and establishing an expat financial fund that lists on the stock exchange market to invest in Lebanese companies'. The FPM is most specific on this issue, dedicating a section to this topic. The party, which has become known for using the term '*intishar*' (diaspora)—a softer term than emigrant that can include those of second- and third-generation emigrants—calls for further changes in the electoral system to involve Lebanese abroad in voting and running for office. The party is also committed to creating a central database of Lebanese abroad, and organizing them in joint lobbying groups with citizens residing in Lebanon to advance their interests.

Table 45 Party policies on Lebanese emigrants

Party	Policies
Amal Movement	Reestablishing the Ministry of Emigrants to achieve the full political participation of all citizens with Lebanese nationality.
FPM	Continuing the modernization of the electoral law in terms of engaging emigrants in voting and candidatures. Creating a central database for the Lebanese diaspora and organizing lobbies among resident citizens and the diaspora. Setting a sustainable touristic strategy—especially for emigrants—and reducing travel ticket prices and facilitating the entrance of new airlines.
Kataeb	Separating the Ministry of Emigrants from the Foreign Ministry and creating an emigrants fund in the Beirut stock exchange to allow investments in Lebanese companies.

e On Defense and Foreign Policy

Components related to defense and foreign relations are the least numerous, but also controversial, especially issues related to foreign policy and questions of sovereignty (table 46).

Table 46 Most covered topics related to defense and foreign policy

Topic	Established Parties Covering (total = 6)	Emerging Groups Covering (total = 3)
Foreign Policy	5	3
Sovereignty and Defense	5	3
Army Support	4	2

Sovereignty and Defense: An expected divergence over Hezbollah's arms

All parties—the FPM, Amal, FM, LF, Kataeb, LiHaqqi, LiBaladi, and Sabaa—articulate policies on national sovereignty and defense, except for Hezbollah, which does not include these matters in their platform (table 47).¹²

Policies concerning Lebanon's protection from Israel and the liberation of Lebanese territory are featured in six parties' programs. Four parties state that they would work for the liberation of Lebanese territory: The FPM, Amal, Kataeb, and Sabaa. The FPM's program only states that Lebanon has a right to resist Israel in order to achieve this goal, while Sabaa's states it would do this 'through a strategic plan', without elaborating on what the plan would entail. Amal expresses its commitment to the liberation of Shebaa Farms, the Kfarshouba hills, and the Lebanese section of al-Ghajar, but also emphasizes the 'Army-People-Resistance' equation—therefore implying its support for armed resistance. By contrast, Kataeb states that it would resort to diplomatic means to reclaim these territories, and only once the process of demarcating Lebanon's land and maritime borders is complete. Regarding the protection of Lebanon's resources from Israel, the FPM states that it would 'protect Lebanon's land, water, natural, and oil resources from the greed of the Israeli Army.' Amal states that it would call on the UN to continue drawing the white line at the maritime border in order to protect Lebanon's offshore resources, while the FM's program calls for national solidarity to confront Israel's ambition to appropriate Lebanon's natural resources. While LiHaqqi and LiBaladi do not specifically mention any of these two policies, both parties' programs speak of resistance against Israel as necessity and a duty for all Lebanese, regardless of political or religious affiliations.

The aspect where parties diverge in their stands is the question of Hezbollah's weapons arsenal and its relation to the state's monopoly over violence. Five platforms mention establishing the state's full monopoly over arms: Kataeb, the FM, LiHaqqi, LiBaladi and the LF. Kataeb promises to work for the implementation of the provisions of the Constitution and UNSC Resolutions 1559 and 1710 in order to ensure the Lebanese Armed Forces is the only armed force. The FM also indirectly mentions this policy, stating its commitment to UNSC Resolution 1701. LiHaqqi states that it would work for the adoption of a national framework, where weapons and military force is restricted to the state's use.

The LF's program is the clearest in its condemnation of Hezbollah's military presence, calling for Hezbollah's weapons to be handed to the

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Hezbollah's Secretary General Hassan Nasrallah did mention sovereignty in the speech announcing the platform, but the platform itself did not present any specific policies in this regard.

state. Sabaa also mentions Hezbollah directly, and states that they would negotiate with Hezbollah through the Higher Defense Council to reach a 'sustainable solution in line with the strong stable and modern state that [they] want to build'. Moreover, LCPS's survey found that the Kataeb, LiBaladi, PSP, and Sabaa would support dialogue with Hezbollah in order to dissolve its military wing or include it in the Lebanese Armed Forces.

Finally, Sabaa's and LiBaladi's programs briefly touch upon personal arms possession, mentioning the need to control the illegal and unregulated possession of arms.

Table 47 Party policies on sovereignty and defense

Party	Policies
Amal Movement	[Adhering] to the 'Army-People-Resistance' equation and the agenda of the resistance against Israeli aggression and terrorism. Commitment to the liberation of Shebaa Farms and the Kfarshouba hills and the Lebanese part of al-Ghajar, rejecting Israeli violations of Lebanese sovereignty, adhering to the 13 points of contention on the blue border line, calling on the UN to continue drawing the white line at the maritime border, and protecting Lebanon's natural resources in the sea.
FPM	Affirming Lebanon's right to resist with the aim of liberating what remains occupied of Lebanese territory and protecting its land, water, and natural and oil resources from the greed of the Israeli enemy.
Future Movement	Protecting Lebanon from the repercussions of war and civil strife in the region, refusing to interfere in the internal affairs of Arab countries, and emphasizing the monopoly of arms in the hands of the state and its legitimate institutions, and bolstering the capabilities of the army and the security forces. Committing to international resolutions on Lebanon, especially [Security Council] Resolution 1701, and the affirmation of national solidarity obligations to confront Israel's ambition to appropriate Lebanon's natural resources.
Kataeb	Deploying the army across Lebanese territory so that there will not be any area that is not controlled by the Lebanese state, including Palestinian refugee camps and factions' bases. Tasking the army with setting out a national defense strategy to confront all dangers that threaten Lebanon's security, territorial integrity, and independence. Maintaining the armament of the Lebanese Army and diversifying the sources of its weapons. Institutionalizing the Higher Defense Council and turning it

Party	Policies
	<p>into a permanent coordination body that links competent security agencies together.</p> <p>Establishing a crisis anticipation watchdog body, which was proposed by Martyr Minister Pierre Gemayel, and adopting a national civil protection plan in order to deal with natural or industrial disasters.</p> <p>Demarcating Lebanon's land and maritime borders using all possible means, including satellites, as there is still no reason to prevent this process from being completed.</p> <p>Resorting to all diplomatic means to reclaim the Shebaa farms, the hills of Kfarshuba as well as all territories that belong to Lebanon once the demarcation process is achieved. This requires Syria to abide by the UN Security Council resolution demanding it to submit documents proving the real ownership of these lands.</p> <p>Implementing the provisions of the Lebanese Constitution and UNSC resolutions 1559 and 1701 in terms of arms possession in Lebanon where the military should be the only armed force.</p> <p>Controlling all Lebanese borders and abiding by the truce agreement with Israel.</p>
Lebanese Forces	<p>Hezbollah succumbing its weapons to the state and restricting strategic decisions in the hands of the Lebanese state without any competitor or partner.</p>
LiBaladi	<p>[Affirming] that the social, cultural, economic, political and military resistance against Israel is a national duty and not a privilege for a group at the expense of another. On defense, we are committed to extending the sovereignty of the state over all its territory and borders and inside the [Palestinian] camps through the development and implementation of an inclusive and complex defense strategy for the Lebanese state, starting by reactivating the building of the state's defense institutions, especially the security and military forces. To achieve this, and with the aim of giving back the state its jurisdiction to defend its land and people, we believe in the necessity of strengthening the capacity of communities, especially those on the Lebanese borders and in the poorest areas, and insulating them socially, economically and culturally so as to restore its dignity and the sense of belonging to the state and enable them to withstand [attacks by] the Israeli enemy or any external threat from any party. We will work to restore people's confidence in the rule of law, combat the phenomenon of unregulated arm possession, and opposing sectarian incitement or the settling of personal disputes through violence.</p>
LiHaqqi	<p>Restricting weapons and military force in one national legitimate</p>

Party	Policies
	<p>framework that protects the state's sovereignty and the dignity of citizens, and working to implement this goal without getting dragged into fear and incitement.</p> <p>Opposing foreign interventions in Lebanon and the intervention of local groups in other countries, and prioritizing the Lebanese national interest against the politics of [regional] axes, in order to protect Lebanon's sovereignty, unity and stability.</p> <p>Resisting against the Zionist entity and its agenda in Lebanon and the region are not conditioned by the affiliation to any regional axis; it is rather a cause in itself that stands independent of its political exploitation.</p>
Sabaa	<p>Creating a National Security Council.</p> <p>Controlling illegal weapons and imposing state monopoly of violence over all areas including Palestinian camps.</p> <p>Working to bring 'non-typical' resistance as a concept into the official armed forces and negotiating with Hezbollah through the Higher Defense Council to reach a 'sustainable solution in line with the strong stable and modern state that we want to build.'</p> <p>Working to liberate land occupied by Israel through a strategic plan.</p>

Foreign Policy: Slogans against foreign intervention, and an emerging Syria question

Three major themes arise when considering parties' positions on foreign policy: Relations with Syria, support for the Palestinian cause, and the affirmation of Lebanon's neutrality.

Six parties emphasize policies aimed at affirming Lebanon's neutrality and prioritizing the country's stability: The FPM, FM, Kataeb, LiHaqqi, LiBaladi, and Sabaa. All six parties' programs demonstrate opposition to foreign intervention in the country, as well as opposition to Lebanese intervention in the internal affairs of other countries. Kataeb's program calls for the introduction of a new article into the preamble of the constitution that clearly states Lebanon's permanent neutrality. In addition to this, LiHaqqi's and Sabaa's platforms explicitly state that parties reject the politics of regional axes and international alignments, and Sabaa adds that it would restrict all foreign relations to the Foreign Ministry.

Policies related to Syria are mentioned in three parties' programs: The FM's, LF's, and Kataeb's. The FM's program expresses opposition to the Syrian regime and support for the Syrian people in its political choices and its uprising against oppression. The two other parties'

programs show a willingness to weaken Lebanese-Syrian relations. Both the LF and Kataeb state that they would reconsider all Lebanese-Syrian treaties and abolish the Lebanese-Syrian Supreme Council. The Kataeb's program adds that the party would abolish the defense agreement between the two countries. Another common policy between the LF and Kataeb concerns the Lebanese-Syrian border. The LF's program states that the party would work to demarcate the borders with Syria, while the Kataeb states that they would demand Syria to submit documents to the UNSC to prove the real ownership of contested lands between the two countries, with the ultimate goal of liberating all Lebanese territory. Moreover, LCPS's survey showed disagreement between parties regarding how to deal with the Syrian government. The PSP stated that they would not coordinate with the Syrian government as long as the Syrian conflict remains unresolved. Kataeb, LF, LiBaladi, and Sabaa supported limited coordination but only on humanitarian issues, while Hezbollah opted for full and positive coordination with the Syrian regime.

The Palestinian struggle against occupation is mentioned by three parties—the FM, Kataeb, and LiHaqqi. All three parties express solidarity with the Palestinian cause and Palestinians' right to establish their own state. The FM and Kataeb's programs state that the parties would fully commit to the Arab Peace Initiative (Beirut Summit in 2002). The Kataeb's program also adds that the party would launch an international conference focusing on the issue of Palestinian refugees and aimed at reiterating their right of return to their homeland.

Two other policies feature in some parties' programs. Commitment to the League of Arab States' Charter is mentioned in the FPM's and LiBaladi's platforms. Two parties explicitly state that they would fight terrorism: LiHaqqi states that they would resist all forms of terrorism while Amal states that they would engage in regional and international plans to eliminate the sources of terrorism.

All parties' positions on foreign policy are listed in table 48.

Table 48 Party positions on foreign policy

Party	Policies
Amal Movement	<p>Preserving Lebanon's sovereignty, unity and national borders against the greed of Israeli aggression and its other face represented by takfiri terrorism, and engage in regional and international plans to dry the sources [of terrorism].</p> <p>Confronting organized crime which, along with the sleeper cells of the [Israeli] enemy and terrorism, is attempting to penetrate [Lebanon's] national security and ruin its young generations with drugs and other matters.</p>
FPM	<p>Insulating Lebanon from external conflicts, and respecting the League of Arab States' convention, and adopting an independent foreign policy [prioritizing Lebanon's] stability.</p>
Future Movement	<p>[Affirming] solidarity with the brotherly Syrian people in their political choices and their uprising against oppression, and working to resolve the issue of Syrian displaced people's return to their countries. [Adhering to] the national consensus to reject naturalization [of refugees] in all its forms, and defend Palestine's cause and the right of the Palestinian people to establish their own independent state with Jerusalem as the capital, and committing to the Arab Initiative for Peace that resulted from the Beirut Summit.</p>
Kataeb	<p>Resorting to all diplomatic means to reclaim the Shebaa farms, the hills of Kfarshuba as well as all territories that belong to Lebanon once the demarcation process is achieved. This requires Syria to abide by the UN Security Council resolution demanding it to submit documents proving the real ownership of these lands. Introducing a new article into the preamble of the Constitution, clearly stating Lebanon's permanent neutrality and seeking the recognition of the UN Security Council, the General Assembly of the United Nations, and the Arab League in this regard.</p> <p>Lebanon must also work on obtaining a clear acknowledgment of the value of Lebanon as a space for dialogue between civilizations, cultures and religions.</p> <p>Bringing the ordeal of Lebanese detainees in Syrian prisons to an end by uncovering their fate and paying a compensation to them or their families.</p> <p>Reviewing and amending all Lebanese-Syrian agreements, abolishing the Lebanese-Syrian Supreme Council as well as the Defense Agreement sealed between the two countries, and adopting diplomatic norms and principles when dealing with Damascus.</p> <p>Committing to the Arab Peace Initiative (Beirut Declaration 2002)</p>

Party	Policies
	and to the international resolutions pertaining to the Palestinian cause which is considered as righteous. Launching an international conference that would focus on the issue of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, while making sure that talks are based on their right to return to their homeland and the rejection of their naturalization, and working on a comprehensive plan to share this burden by all friendly countries until the Palestinians return home.
Lebanese Forces	Reconsidering the Lebanese-Syrian treaties. Abolishing the higher Lebanese-Syrian Council. Demarcating the borders with Syria.
LiBaladi	Enacting a foreign policy that prioritizes Lebanon's interest and is based on shared interests with foreign states. Commits to the League of Arab States' charter since Lebanon is a founding member. [Commits to] the decisions of the United Nations that aim to enhance international peace and security; and is based on protecting Lebanon from foreign intervention and not intervening in foreign states' internal affairs.
LiHaqqi	Committing to solidarity with the Palestinian cause and the campaigns supporting it globally, and rejecting any direct or indirect normalization of relations with the Israeli enemy, while rejecting the exploitation of the Palestinian cause for narrow political interests. Adopting a foreign policy based on the right of self-determination, and resisting all forms of occupation, racism, oppression and terrorism; be it the terrorism of non-state organizations or regimes.
Sabaa	Restricting all foreign relations to the Foreign Ministry and preventing intervention in Lebanese affairs. Enacting a foreign policy based on Lebanon's interests and against any alignments, regional or international.

Army Support: Unanimous call for capacity improvement

All groups directly mention support for the Lebanese Armed Forces except the LF and LiHaqqi (table 49). There are no contradictions among the platforms on this issue, since most only express support for the military and support for providing the military with required resources to operate effectively and in coordination with other agencies. However, Sabaa is the only party to suggest re-instating mandatory military service, proposing one summer camp followed by training courses every four years to preserve acquired skills and information.

Table 49 Party policies on supporting the armed forces

Party	Policies
Amal Movement	Increasing the number of troops, equipping the army with modern weapons, and enhancing the role and power of security forces across Lebanon.
FPM	Enhancing the army by building its capacity and guaranteeing its requirements. [Enabling] security forces and coordination and cooperation among them to deal with all security challenges, especially terrorism which should be eliminated through preventive action.
Future Movement	Keeping abreast of the work of the Special Tribunal for Lebanon and considering the indictments it will issue binding on the Lebanese authorities to prosecute and arrest the accused.
Hezbollah	Providing the necessary resources to strengthen the security and military institutions, primarily the Lebanese Army, and providing the necessary financial resources to enable them to carry out their national tasks in defending Lebanon and maintaining security and stability.
Kataeb	Maintaining the armament of the Lebanese Army and diversifying the sources of its weapons.
LiBaladi	[Renewing] the development of the state's defense institutions, especially security and military agencies, and restricting them to the decisions of the state.
Sabaa	Dedicating an additional budget of L.L. 1,500 billion to the Lebanese army over the next five years to equip it with improved weapons and technology. Bringing back mandatory military service for women and men, in the form of one summer camp and then one follow up training every four years. Allocating L.L. 300 million over the next five years to support the Internal Security Forces. Improving 100 Civil Defense Centers with new equipment to ensure quick (efficient) emergency services. Prioritizing coordination among security agencies through the Higher Defense council. Demarcating all Lebanese borders.



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