

A Snapshot of Lebanese Emigrants' Views on the Politics of Lebanon Following the Beirut Port Blast on August 4, 2020

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The Port of Beirut at the time of the blast. Photo Source: Nader Itayim, 2020.

SURVEY RATIONALE AND METHODOLOGY

The Beirut port blast on August 4, 2020, was considered “the most powerful non-nuclear explosion of the 21st Century,”². It pulverized the port, damaging over half the city, instantly killing 200 people mostly civilians, wounded more than 6,500, and left 300,000 without shelter. Many more people died later as a direct result of their injuries sustained from the explosion. The blast made Lebanon “the 7th worst -affected country by explosive violence.”³

The overwhelming evidence laid the blame on “senior Lebanese officials who failed to accurately communicate the dangers posed by the ammonium nitrate, knowingly stored the material in

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² Tacchi, J. (2021). An Anatomy of the Beirut Port Blast. *Action on Armed Violence*. <https://aoav.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/An-Anatomy-of-The-Beirut-Port-Blast.pdf>.

³ Ibid.

unsafe conditions and failed to protect the public.”⁴ This revelation stunned the world. The failure was aggravated by the government’s obstruction of the investigation into the blast and its adamant refusal to call for an international probe into the explosion.

It was at this juncture that we decided to take a snapshot of Lebanese emigrants’ views on the momentous political affairs in Lebanon. An electronic, anonymous, and self-administered questionnaire was developed and its link was made available on various Lebanese diasporic social media platforms. The survey ran from September to October 2020. One thousand and four (1,004) Lebanese emigrant citizens completed the questionnaire some of the results of which are herein presented.

SITUATIONAL CONTEXT

Since October 2019, Lebanon was in a state of chaos due to an economic and financial crisis, which led to mass protests, civil unrest, and political instability.⁵ By December 2020, the crisis was compounded by the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic and a political vacuum "in a setting of longstanding entrenched political corruption and a dysfunctional, mismanaged crisis response by the state."⁶

Despite the crises and the protests, nothing was able to break the regime's impunity. The political elites were able to preserve their positions in power and escape accountability while geopolitical conflicts threatened the country and further polarized its politicians and citizens alike.

The terrifying explosion exacerbated mounting fury among the Lebanese at the dereliction of duty, corruption, and mismanagement by successive Lebanese governments and Hezbollah⁷. Hezbollah exerted great influence over the port and Lebanon and which allowed a huge stockpile of flammable ammonium nitrate to be stored at Beirut’s port for more than six years. The explosion amplified



Families of the Port of Beirut blast victims are protesting to demand to know who is responsible for the explosion. Photo Source: Tom Nicholson, 2021.

⁴ Lebanon: Evidence Implicates Officials in Beirut Blast. (2021, August 3). *Human Rights Watch Middle East and North Africa*. <https://www.hrw.org/video-photos/interactive/2021/08/02/lebanon-evidence-implicates-officials-beirut-blast-targeted>.

⁵ UNICEF. (2020, November). *Comorbidity of Crises in Lebanon*. The United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund (UNICEF). <https://www.unicef.org/lebanon/media/5681/file>.

⁶ Abouzeid M, Halwani DA, Mokdad AH and Habib RR (2021) A Generation at Risk: The Impacts of Lebanon’s “Escalating Humanitarian Crisis on Children. *Front. Crisis Public Health* 9:704678. <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpubh.2021.704678/full>.

⁷ Hezbollah is an Islamist political and military party operating in Lebanon and the region as Iran’s proxy and part of its Shia network in the Middle East.

domestic and international reaction toward Hezbollah’s use of ammonium nitrate to make explosives and to traffic the chemical across the border to Syria⁸, where it was used as the main explosive material in the making of barrel bombs. These bombs were used to attack civilian facilities by the Assad regime during the Syrian conflict.⁹

Amid unprecedented public criticism and intense scrutiny of Hezbollah, Hassan Nassrallah, Secretary General of the party, gave a televised speech (August 7), seventy-two hours after the disaster, denying any connection to the nitrate. He gave another speech a week after, repudiating that his party had a special account about what happened in the port of Beirut, escalating his rhetoric against his critics, saying to his constituency, "Hold onto that anger. We will need that anger some day, to end once and for all the attempts to drag the country into civil war."¹⁰ His words were interpreted as an explicit call to the use of force yet again inside Lebanon. ¹¹

In the course of these unbearable hardships and tensions and following the scandalous revelation of the government’s criminal negligence in protecting its people, a press conference took place on August 17, 2020. From the Summer Patriarchal Residence of Al Diman, Maronite Patriarch Mar Bechara Boutros Al-Rahi announced, "Lebanon's Memorandum on Active Neutrality."



The first page of the Memorandum. Photo Source: The Maronite Patriarchate, 2020.

The Ramifications of the Release of "Lebanon's Memorandum on Active Neutrality"

This was not the first time that Al-Rahi proposed neutrality as a suitable choice for Lebanon’s international relations, internal stability policies, and a way out of the protracted impasses. The neutrality proposal goes against Hezbollah’s plan for Lebanon. The behavior of Hezbollah and its allies has been “chipping away at the country’s nonalignment in regional affairs to the detriment of Lebanon’s relations with both the Arab world and the West.” ¹²

The Memorandum antagonized Hezbollah, which unleashed its supporters to launch social media campaigns against the Patriarch, accusing him of Zionism and treason, and, in some instances, threatening his life.¹³

Hezbollah responded to the proposal for neutrality by threatening to hold a ‘Founding Conference’ based on the idea of ‘tripartite’ to replace the ‘Taif’

⁸ Khatib, L. (2021, June). *How Hezbollah holds sway over the Lebanese state*. Chatham House. <https://rb.gy/ifsts5>.
⁹ The Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR). (2021, May). In Nine Years, the Syrian Regime Has Dropped Nearly 82,000 Barrel Bombs, Killing 11,087 Civilians, Including 1,821 Children. <https://rb.gy/nm481c>.
¹⁰ Sly, L., & Haidamous, S. (2020, August 15). Hezbollah faces toughest challenge yet after devastating Beirut explosion. *The Washington Post*. <https://rb.gy/gcpbw1>.
¹¹ For information on Hezbollah’s use of force inside Lebanon, consult: Lebanon: Hizbollah’s Weapons Turn Inward. (2016, August 17). *Crisis Group*. <https://rb.gy/9a0jqb> and Chehayeb, K. (2022, February 3). Lebanon: The assassination of activist Lokman Slim, one year on. *Hezbollah News*. *Al Jazeera*.
¹² Harb, I. K. (2020). Lebanon’s Other Problem: Neutrality in Regional Affairs. *Arab Center Washington DC*. <https://rb.gy/btxtct>.
¹³ Abdul-Hussain, H. (2020, August 27). Lebanon’s attempt to move back toward neutrality met with resistance from Hezbollah. *Al Arabiya English*. <https://rb.gy/mlihld>; Frakes, N. (2021, August 25). No leap of faith. *Nowlebanon*. <https://Nowlebanon.Com/No-Leap-Of-Faith/>; and Fitzgerald, D. (2021, September 10). Lebanon’s Other Problem: Neutrality in Regional Affairs. *Arab Center Washington DC*. <https://arabcenterdc.org/resource/lebanons-other-problem-neutrality-in-regional-affairs/>.

constitution (the current Constitution of Lebanon) which established parity between Christians and Muslims in public positions, which did not exist in the National Pact of 1943. The 'tripartite' is "a proposal submitted by Tehran to have the quorum in the Lebanese parliamentary seats be divided equally between Sunnis, Shiites, and Christians, as is the case in Iraq."¹⁴ Hezbollah further called for Lebanon to align with China, Russia, and Iran; to join the 'axis of resistance'; and to be loyal to Iran's Supreme Leader, Ali Khamenei.¹⁵ The Grand Shiite Jaafari Mufti Sheikh Ahmad Qablan stressed "the legitimacy of Hezbollah's weapons" and considered the Patriarch's demand for neutrality as "treason."¹⁶

The proposal to change the Constitution is supported by the head of the Free Patriotic Movement, Gibran Bassil, an ally of Hezbollah. Bassil and his father-in-law-- the current president, Michel Aoun-- have always stood against the Taif Agreement¹⁷. Bassil, who is preparing himself to become president of Lebanon and who needs Hezbollah's consent to become president, echoed his ally's position, stating that "The Taif is a constitution, not a holy book! Nor is it an inevitable fate." He added that, "We can no longer live in a country whose regime is backward... There is no possibility of living and continuing with this stinking and rotten constitution..."¹⁸

Many feared that this change "would be done in the first place to the detriment of Christians, would weaken the logic of political Sunnism,"¹⁹ would be a prelude to placing Lebanon under the "Velayate-e-Faqih" system. "Velayate-e Faqih" or guardianship of the Islamic jurist is a system of governance where the Iranian "Vali-ye Faqih" is the supreme leader of the government who rules over the state, and who is the uncontested source of political and religious authority. This system is "at the crux of Shia Islamism and is fundamental in understanding not only how the Iranian system operates but also how Tehran can influence religious and political Shia networks beyond its borders"²⁰, especially Hezbollah in Lebanon.

Because of the port's devastating results, economic downturn, the exodus of the highly qualified and skilled, regional conflicts, internal altercation, and the "collective betrayal"²¹ of the political elites to act in the interest of the Lebanese, as President Emmanuel Macron described it, Lebanese residents and migrants were worried, frightened, and outraged.

CONTEXTUALIZING THE LEBANESE EMIGRANTS IN THE WORLD

Between 1975 and 1990, an estimated 990,000 Lebanese fled Lebanon.²² By 2007, an additional 446,019 had migrated.²³ Another 51,572 left between 2008 and 2010; 201,826 exited between 2011 (the start of the Syrian conflict) and the end of 2018, and 163,661 left between 2019 and the end of 2021.²⁴ Their majority are in the Gulf States, the US, Canada, Australia, and Europe. Their

¹⁴ عبد العزيز الهزاني، أ. (February 23, 2016). إما لبنان أو (حزب الله). *راصد الخليج*. <https://gulfoobserver.org/essay.php?id=10325&cid=423>.

¹⁵ Vohra, A. (2020, July 9). Lebanon Is in Economic Crisis, and China Wants to Be Its Savior. *Foreign Policy*. <https://rb.gy/xw7xsg>.

¹⁶ أخبار لبنان... المركز اللبناني للأبحاث والاستشارات.

(01 March, 2021). <http://www.center-lcrc.com/index.php?s=news&id=24079>

¹⁷ The Taif Agreement (called the National Reconciliation Accord) is the amended constitution of Lebanon following the end of the Civil War (1975–1990).

¹⁸ ج. حداد-ديس. مؤتمر تأسيسي او مثالته... هل يأكل اللبناني بنود دستور؟ www.rb.gy/mj1erl. (Jan 29, 2021). *Beirut Insights.com*.

¹⁹ Rabih, M. (2021). Le Hezbollah se prépare à l'éventualité d'un changement de système au Liban. *L'Orient-le Jour*. <https://rb.gy/yw1xem>.

²⁰ Aarabi, K., & Aarabi, K. (2019, March 20). What Is Velayate-e Faqih? Institute for Global Change. <https://institute.global/policy/what-velayat-e-faqih>

²¹ Macron accuses Lebanese politicians of 'collective betrayal.' (2020, September 27). *AW*. <https://rb.gy/eexvmm>.

²² أي فرح، أ. (2005). السكان والبطالة والهجرة في لبنان 1982–2001. منشورات الجامعة اللبنانية قسم الدراسات الإحصائية.

²³ Kasparian, C. (2007). *L'émigration des jeunes Libanais ... 1992 à 2007* : Vol. III. Université St. Joseph.

²⁴ سلامة، ف. (06 January 2022). موجة هجرة يشهدها لبنان والأرقام صادمة. *العهد*. <https://rb.gy/hsfsru>

connection with Lebanon and contribution to its economy through remittances,²⁵ recurrent visits,²⁶ and real estate investments,²⁷ combined with their diaspora politics,²⁸ make them influential players in all aspects of Lebanon's affairs.

SURVEY RESULTS- CONFIDENCE

Lebanese Emigrants Are Dissatisfied with the Functioning of Lebanon's Democratic System

Based on the data aggregated from the responses, the majority (89%) were discontented with the way the democratic system is functioning in Lebanon, with 70% being very unsatisfied.

Lebanese Emigrants Consider Corruption as the Main Illness of Governance in the Country

Corruption ranked the highest (89%)²⁹ among all the illnesses that plague the country. It was followed by political interference in the judiciary process (76%), 'Muhasassa' apportionment or distribution of shares (74%), nepotism and political patronage (69%), internal disagreement over national priorities (62%), incompetent and ineffective parliament (56%), and the absence of electoral reforms (55%).

Lebanese Emigrants' Lack Confidence in Governing Institutions

Eighty percent (80%) have no confidence in the parliament or the Council of Ministers, respectively, while 71% have no faith in the judiciary authorities, 74% don't trust the Central Bank, and 40% have doubts about the abilities of the military forces.

Lebanese Emigrants Lack Trust in Political and Religious Leaders

Eighty percent (80%) don't have confidence in the President of the country, 91% don't trust the Speaker of the House of Representatives, 80% feel the same about the Prime Minister, and 62% don't have faith in the religious leaders.

Lebanese Emigrants Lack Confidence in the Political Parties

Seventy-six percent (76%) of the respondents have no confidence in the political parties in general. The Amal Movement is the least trusted (76%) have no confidence at all, followed by Hezbollah (75%), the Syrian Social Nationalist Party (74%), the Free Patriotic Movement (70%), the Progressive Socialist Party (65%), the Leftist Parties (56%), the Marada (56%), the Future Movement (55%), the Lebanese Forces (50%), and the Kataeb Party (41%). It should be noted here that the Kataeb had the highest confidence (32%) among all the political parties in question, most markedly due to the resignation of their parliamentarians following the port blast.³⁰

Delving into the results, Shiite respondents have more confidence in Hezbollah than in the Amal Movement. This attitude is shared by participants of other religions. Similarly, the level of confidence or lack of it in the Future Movement is quite the same among respondents from different religions. It is noticeable that the Lebanese Forces have a similar level of confidence

²⁵ World Bank staff estimated remittances inflow to Lebanon to be 25.6% of the GDP equivalent to 6.9 billion dollars. Personal remittances, received (% of GDP) - Lebanon Data. (2021). World Bank Data. <https://rb.gy/s4u1n5>.

²⁶ Azzi, A. (2022, June 15). Cheaper Lebanon Brought Back Strong Tourism Activity by March 2022. BLOMINVEST. <https://rb.gy/ojn5jr>.

²⁷ صعب، أ. (22 July 2022). بعد انخفاض الأسعار.. سوق العقارات يتعش في لبنان. سكاى نيوز عربية <https://rb.gy/322ua4>.

²⁸ Marinova, N. (2010). Transnational Homeland Involvement of the US-based Lebanese Diaspora. Working Paper for the Global Migration and Transnational Politics series, Center for Global Studies, George Mason University. <https://rb.gy/vxed79>.

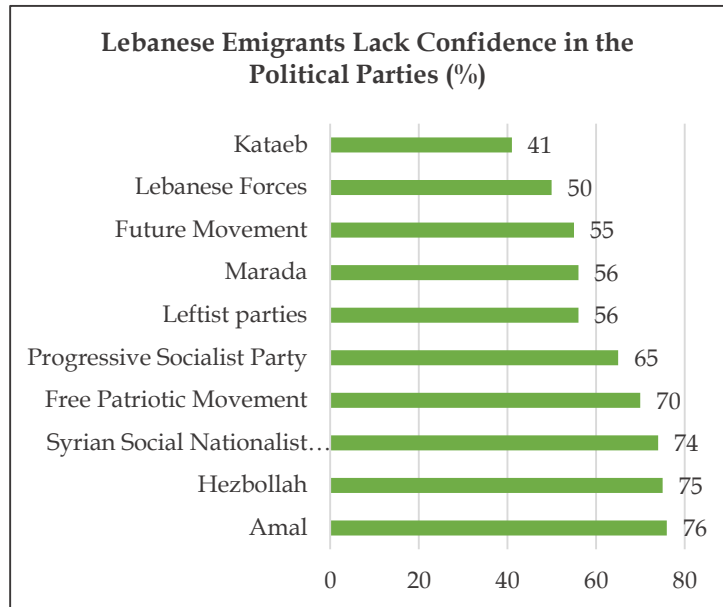
²⁹ This is commensurate with the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) – the most widely used global corruption ranking in the world – which ranked Lebanon 149/180 countries in terms of corruption. <https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2020/index/lbn>.

³⁰ Al Arabiya English. (2020, August 8). Lebanon's Kataeb party announces the resignation of three MPs. *Al Arabiya English*. <https://rb.gy/jillpq>.

among most Christians and considerably lower confidence among religious groups. The Marada and the Progressive Socialist Party have lower confidence levels across respondents from all religions.

There is a unanimous lack of confidence among respondents of all religions when it comes to the Syrian Social Nationalist Party. The results also show that Lebanese emigrants have more confidence in scientists and experts than other actors where forty-five percent (45%) of the respondents have confidence in NGOs and CS actors, 44% have confidence in the private sector-business leaders, and 67% have faith in experts and scientists.

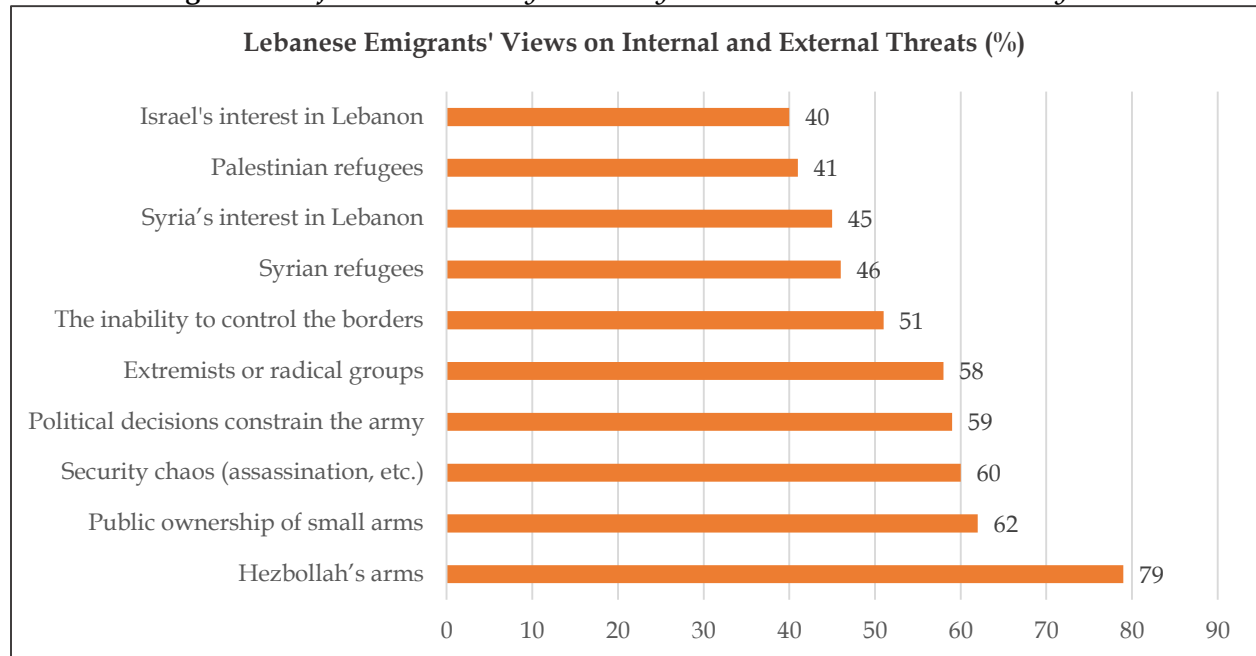
SURVEY RESULTS- THREATS AND GEOPOLITICAL ALIGNMENT



Lebanese Emigrants View Internal Security Threats as More Ominous than External Ones

The respondents ranked Hezbollah's arms as the one that poses the highest internal security threat in the country, followed by the widespread ownership of small arms by the general Lebanese population, fear of security chaos (e.g., assassinations, kidnappings, violent riots, etc.), and the fact that political decision-makers constrain the role of the Lebanese army. It is remarkable that for external threats, Israel ranked as the least external threat source and fell even behind Syria.

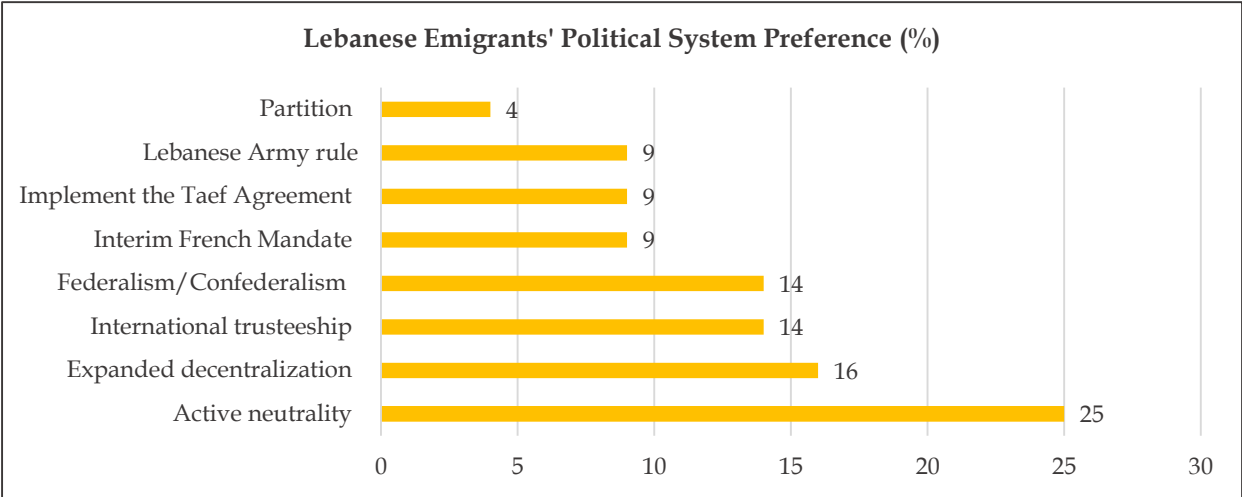
Lebanese Emigrants Preferred Neutrality Over Any Other Alternative Political System and Over



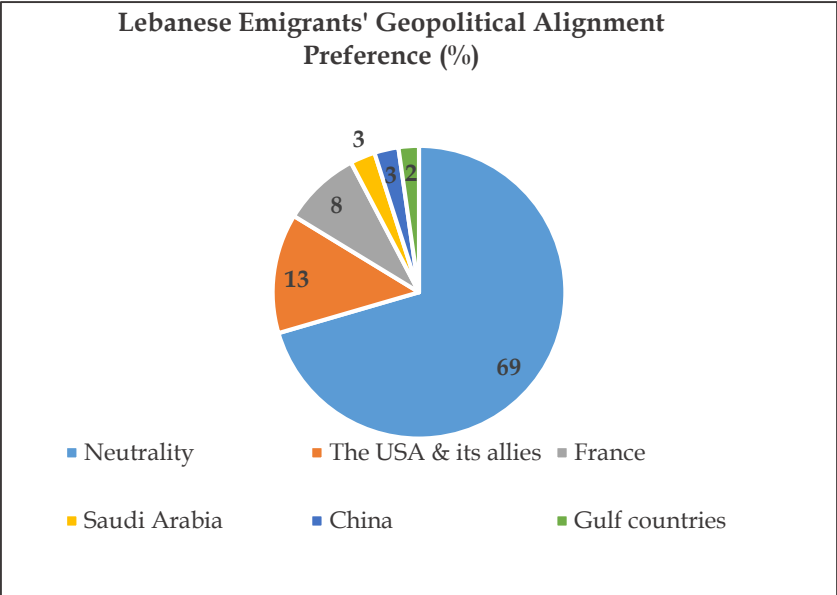
Any Other Proposed Geopolitical Alignment

Active neutrality scored the highest percentage (25%) among the respondents, followed by expanded decentralization (16%), international trusteeship (14%), and federalism or confederalism (14%). Nine percent (9%) opted for an interim French mandate, implementing the Taif Agreement and Lebanese army rule respectively.

Partition, on the other hand, scored low (4%), but the noteworthy result was that only 0.3% favored Velayate-e-Faqih, which indicates that even 99.00% of the Shiite respondents (100 strong) did not select Velayate-e-Faqih as an alternative.



Lebanese emigrants opted for neutrality over any other proposed geopolitical alignment with an overwhelming (69%) number across all religious groups that selected neutrality as an alternative to any other geopolitical alignment, which notably trumped all alignments suggested by Hezbollah, i.e., China (2%), Iran (1%), Russia (1%), Syria (0.4%), and Turkey (0.3%). Thirteen percent (13%) chose the United States and its allies, 8% France, 2% Saudi Arabia and China, and 2% Gulf countries.



LEBANESE EMIGRANTS' KEY CHARACTERISTICS

The highest percentage of the respondents were from Mount Lebanon province (29%). The lowest percentage was from Baalbek-Hermel (1.7%). The four provinces with the highest number of respondents were Mount Lebanon, Beirut, North Lebanon, and South Lebanon.

Of the 1,004 respondents, the majority were males (69.2%), compared with 30.8% of females. More than 50% of the sample were between 30 and 59, while the highest percentage of them were between 30 and 39. The lowest ratio of participants was between 18 and 24 (3.5%), and 25 and 29 (9.3%).

The highest proportion of the respondents were Christians (62%), compared with Muslims (38%). Maronite respondents made up (39%) of the total number of respondents, Greek Orthodox (9%), Greek Catholics (8%), Sunnis (20%), Shiites (10%), and Druze (9%). The lowest number of participants were Chaldeans and Jews (0.3% each).

Around 50% of the participants were currently immigrants from just four countries, the USA (17%), France (12%), the UAE (11%), and Canada (9%). The other 50% was distributed among 59 other countries. The countries with a significant percentage of respondents other than the aforementioned were Australia, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and the UK, with percentages that ranged between 5% and 6%. The highest percentage of the surveyed (49%) were citizens of the country of immigration with dual citizenship. The other relatively high percentage (37%) was those with permanent residency (Green Card or Carte de Séjour), while the lowest percentages (0.8%) and (0.3%) were asylum seekers and illegal migrants, respectively.

Eighty-seven percent (87.1%) of the surveyed have a university degree, mostly with a Bachelor's degree, a Master's degree, or a Ph.D.; only 1.7% of them have less than a high school degree. Fifty-one percent (51.1%) were full-time employees, compared to 16.2% who were self-employed. The remaining percentages were distributed among business people/entrepreneurs, retired, unemployed, part-time employees, students, and homestay respondents.

CONCLUSION

The aim of the survey was to take a snapshot of Lebanese emigrants' views on the political affairs of Lebanon following the Beirut port blast. Their views are important as they know that they are not immune from the ramifications of what is taking place in Lebanon because of their transnational-homeland involvement and because the majority of them live and/or work in countries with an interest in the affairs of Lebanon.

The notable findings drawn from this survey are:

- ❖ The respondents were affected by the Beirut port blast. The behavior of the political elites and the government institutions, and the consequent political polarization, especially in regards to the proposed changes to the Lebanese system and the geopolitical alignments that were being suggested. Consequently, a sizable number of the respondents expressed their discontent with the way the Lebanese democratic system is functioning; they considered corruption as the main illness of governance in the country; and showed a lack of confidence in the governing institutions, lack of trust in the political and religious leaders, as well as distrust in all the political parties. Notwithstanding the institutional quality of the countries of immigration, or the influence of the quality of such intuitions

on their perceptions, or their migration experience, the respondents' perceptions were significantly unfavorable toward Lebanon's domestic political institutions.³¹

- ❖ The respondents showed familiarity with the geopolitical culture of Lebanon (i.e., the practices that make sense of a state and its identity and position and role in a world of states).³² They also appeared to be versed with Lebanon's political imagination (i.e., the prevalent images, conceptualizations and discourses amongst the general population of where that state is positioned and located within the world's community of states, and to what 'civilization' or community of states do inhabitants of the state believe it belongs?);³³ They were acquainted with Lebanon's geopolitical tradition (i.e., thought on state identity, the national interest, and normative foreign policy priorities);³⁴ and conversant with Lebanon's geopolitical discourses (i.e., the public articulations and narrative that make up foreign policy: the formal professional narratives, the narratives used by politicians and practitioners, and the narratives about world politics expressed in popular cultural products such as cinema, magazines, cartoons, etc.).³⁵
- ❖ The most favorable internal political preference among the respondents was active neutrality which received the highest score of 25%, while 69% opted for neutrality for Lebanon's foreign policy. Opting for neutrality as a foreign policy option may be so much as shaping as reflecting on the most suitable approach to regional and international conflicts that deeply affect the country's sovereignty, internal peace, and progress. Lebanese emigrants espoused neutrality on various occasions. For example, in 1914, the Lebanese Alliance Party dispatched telegrams to the foreign ministries of France, England, Italy and the Vatican to maintain Lebanon's neutrality³⁶ and in 2007 and following the Summer 2006 war between Hezbollah and Israel, members of the Lebanese American Renaissance Partnership (LARP) "met with Zalmay Khalilzad, the US Ambassador to the UN, and discussed issues pertaining to the territorial neutrality of Lebanon."³⁷
- ❖ The responses showed parity between Hezbollah and the rest of the political parties – a shift from viewing Hezbollah as resistance above suspicion in the quagmires of internal corruption and apportionment-- to equating it with the rest of the culprits of the current predicaments in the country. A public opinion poll conducted in the fall of 2020 indicated a decline in the support of Hezbollah even among the Shiites where the support "dropped slowly but steadily over the past three years. Today it is almost 20 points lower than in late 2017."³⁸

³¹ Chauvet, L., Gubert, F., & Mesplé-Somps, S. (2016). Do Migrants Adopt New Political Attitudes from Abroad? Evidence Using a Multi-Sited Exit-Poll Survey During The 2013 Malian Elections. *Comparative Migration Studies*, 4 (1). <https://rb.gy/iuuoeb>.

³² O'Loughlin, J., et al. (2005). Russian geopolitical culture and public opinion: The masks of Proteus revisited. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 30 (03), 322-335. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-5661.2005.00174.x>.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Labaki, B. (2016). Les Rôles Économique Et Politique Des Émigrés Libanais Durant La Première Guerre Mondiale. *Cairn.Info*, 2(262 |), 27-48. <https://doi.org/10.3917/gmcc.262.0027>.

³⁷ Marinova, N. (2010, October). *Transnational Homeland Involvement of the US-Based Lebanese Diaspora* (Working Paper no. 15). Global Migration and Transnational Politics, George Mason University. <https://rb.gy/o7pswm>. For further information on the political role of the Lebanese emigrants consult Hourani, G. (2007, November). *Lebanese Diaspora and Homeland Relations. Migration and Refugee Movements in the Middle East and North Eastern Africa*, Cairo, Egypt. <https://documents.aucegypt.edu/Docs/GAPP/Guitahourani.pdf>.

³⁸ Pollock, D. (2020, December). Lebanon Poll Shows Drop in Hezbollah Support, Even Among Shia. *Fikra Forum*. Washington Institute for Near East Policy. <https://rb.gy/xpemgv>.

- ❖ In retrospect, the respondents to this survey were intuitive in their responses, especially in their forecast regarding the recovery of Lebanon, when 43% doubted that Lebanon would recover in 5–10 years' time, while 38% predicted that it would not, versus 18% who believed that it would. Saroj Kumar Jha, World Bank Mashreq Regional Director, stated in May 2022 that, "Despite early warnings, Lebanon has lost precious time and numerous opportunities to adopt a path to reform its economic and financial system. The cost of inaction is colossal not only on the daily lives of citizens but also on the future of the Lebanese people." He added that, "Two years and a half into the crisis, Lebanon has yet to embark on a comprehensive reform and recovery program to stop the country from further sinking. Continued deliberate delay in addressing drivers of the crisis represents a threat not only at the socio-economic level but also a risk of a systemic failing of state institutions and pressure on an already fragile social peace."³⁹

Historically speaking, Lebanese emigrants have always stood by Lebanon and its people during crises. Assisted by technology, we see various innovative types of their engagement in our current era. The hope is that this engagement will be accentuated in politics to bring about the needed change.

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³⁹ World Bank Group. (2022, May 30). Lebanon has Lost Precious Time, Urgent Action Needed Now. *World Bank*. <https://rb.gv/knahnu>.