THE LEBANESE CIVIL WAR (1975-1990): CAUSES AND COSTS OF CONFLICT

BY

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Abstract

This paper analyzes the factors that caused and sustained the 1975-1990 Lebanese civil war and aims to identify the main causes of the conflict. The author relies heavily on the Collier-Hoeffler Model but does not limit the list of causes of conflict to this model. The second part of the study is devoted to highlighting the costs of the 1975-1990 Lebanese civil war with the explicit purpose of raising awareness among decision makers of the long-term "lose-lose" nature of such conflicts. The paper concludes that the major causes of the Lebanese civil war were sectarian dominance within a confessional system and external factors that exacerbated the problem of divergent national identities.

Dedication

To the two Huda's in my life.

Acknowledgement

All thanks to God most Merciful for seeing me through this.

I am greatly indebted to Dr. Eric Hanley for accepting to be the Chair of my thesis committee, for his generous support and insight throughout this process. I would also like to thank Dr. Lynn Ground and Dr. Gary Reich for offering their valuable time to serve on the committee and for providing me feedback during the writing of this thesis.

Thank you. You made this happen.

List of Acronyms

ADF   Arab Deterrent Force

IMF   International Monetary Fund

LNF   Lebanese National Front

LNM   Lebanese National Movement

MERIP   Middle East Research and Information Project

MNF   Multinational Force

PLO   Palestinian Liberation Organization

SLA   South Lebanese Army

UNRWA   United Nations Relief and Works Agency

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 AIM OF THE STUDY

The aim of this paper is to research and identify the causes and costs of the 1975-1990 Lebanese civil war, the longest and most costly civil war in Lebanon. Henceforth, when I use term "civil war" without a specified year or qualification, I am referring to the 1975-1990 civil war.

1.2 IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

The majority of armed conflicts in the twentieth century were civil wars and the trend continues in the twenty-first century. Civil wars are an important area of research. "In 2008, 16 major armed conflicts were active in 15 locations around the world, 2 more than in 2007… All of these conflicts are intrastate: for the fifth year running, no major interstate conflict was active in 2008." [1] Figure 1 is a graphical depiction of the distribution of armed conflicts by type from 1946 to 2008 based on the Uppsala Conflict Data Base.

I believe that the findings of this study should be of interest to those involved with studying, preventing or resolving civil wars. And given the plethora of geopolitical hot spots, this study should be of particular interest to those tasked with nation building or designing governing and electoral systems for new fledgling "democracies" whether in

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[1] *SIPRI*; "Appendix 2A. Patterns of major armed conflicts, 1999–2008;" accessed on 3/17/10 at http://www.sipri.org/yearbook/2009/02/02A

Iraq, Afghanistan or the Balkans – societies with pronounced sectarian and/or ethnic[2] divisions.

Figure 1: Number of Armed Conflicts by Type, 1946-2008

Types: ▪ Internal; ☐Internationalized; ▪Interstate; ☐Extra-systemic.

Source: Lotta Harbom and Peter Wallensteen, 2009, "Armed Conflict, 1989-2008," *Journal of Peace Research* 46 (4) July: 579.

The section on the costs of the civil war emphasizes the long-lasting effects of the war on all sectors of the Lebanese people. Raising awareness could entice decision makers to consider the extent of the costs of armed conflicts and thus influence them to consciously choose short-term hard political decisions that could prevent long-term uncontrollable violence.

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[2] Other than the Lebanese Armenians, the Lebanese do not differentiate themselves along ethnic lines. Instead, they are segmented along sectarian/religious lines.

1.3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY/PAPER DESIGN

This paper is a case study of the Lebanese civil war. It is based on the historical narrative and progression of events leading to the 1975 civil war. In addition, this study makes use of quantitative and qualitative analysis based on secondary sources, such as books, journals, think tanks publications and government issued data, to develop conclusions on the causes and costs of the conflict.

Due to the complex and protracted nature of the Lebanese conflict, I had to consider the historical context of the civil war, to go back much earlier than 1975. To thoroughly study the causes of the conflict, especially to assess the social factors, this paper will provide a chronological review of the developments that led to the 1975 conflict and will cover the major milestones of the Lebanese civil war.

This paper is broadly based on testing Paul Collier's thesis regarding the causes of armed conflicts. The Collier-Hoeffler Model[3] was influential in the design of my study; I use it with other publications by Collier as the basis of this study. [4] I do not follow the Collier-Hoeffler research methodology; instead I use Collier's findings to identify a list of causes of conflict and then assess whether they were a factor in precipitating the Lebanese civil war. I will then supplement the analysis of the causes of the civil war with any other potential causes that might surface while researching this paper. So this study will include a social and historical perspective in addition to the economic, societal and political factors identified by Collier.

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[3] Collier and Hoeffler (1998); Collier and Hoeffler (2004).
[4] I did not follow one study of Collier's in particular. I used three books for sources of potential causes of conflict to be included in this study:
Collier et al. *Breaking the Conflict Trap: Civil War and Development Policy*; The World Bank and Oxford University Press, 2003.
Bannon and Collier. *Natural Resources and Violent Conflict: Options and Actions;* The World Bank, 2003.
Collier, Paul. *The Bottom Billion: Why the Poorest Countries Are Failing and What Can Be Done About It*; Oxford University Press, 2007

In the last section of this paper I describe the cost of the Lebanese civil war. Even though such an armed conflict will have spillover effects to neighboring countries, for the purpose of this study, I will only examine those costs affecting Lebanon. I try to assess the human and social cost as well as the economic and long-term political effects of the war. Here I use various sources for conducting my analysis, mostly from secondary sources like the World Bank, IMF, books and publications on the Lebanese civil war.

1.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

While I use historical accounts to identify causes and costs of the conflict, this paper is not a comprehensive historical account of the Lebanese civil war. Historical accounts are included for background purposes and to help the reader make sense of my conclusions. The historical section of this paper is a tool to identify the causes and costs of the conflict. Given the absence of a strong central government during the civil war and lack of census data, this paper's conclusions are based on the cumulative historical record and findings of trusted literature.

This paper is a case study and thus its conclusions take into account the specifics of the Lebanese case and do not constitute a universal hypothesis. However, the lessons learned from the Lebanese experience, especially as related to sectarian or multi-ethnic societies and their political systems should be applicable beyond the Lebanese case.

This paper does not attempt to comment on the advantages of one economic policy versus another. Some sections contain discussions on attitudes of certain Lebanese communities towards their government's economic policies. I do not endorse nor condemn these views; I simply include them here to take into account the community's

views and perceptions and how these perceptions, right or wrong, impact their attitudes

about sectarian violence.

Chapter 2: Historical Background

Before I get into causes and costs, I will present a historical background of pre- and post-independent Lebanon. I believe this overview is important if one is to understand the complexity of the country, to put modern events in context, and to help identify the origins of the 1975-1990 civil war.

2.1 GENERAL BACKGROUND

Modern Lebanon has been home to a variety of cultures and civilizations, giving it a rich and diverse ancient history. Lebanon's importance is due to its geographical position as the link between the Mediterranean Western world, Central Asia and India. So any regional power sought to gain control over this key segment of the trade route and with that came movement of armies and subsequently populations. Lebanon, part of ancient Syria, has been conquered by the Egyptians, Assyrians, Hittites, Persians, and Macedonians. Later it became a Roman territory and subsequently a Byzantine domain. The country fell to the Arabs in 633 CE. The land has since remained mostly under Muslim rulers, even though its rule often passed from one Muslim dynasty to another after the tenth century with the decay of the Abbasside Caliphate (750–1258) and rise of local dynasties. The Europeans were able to conquer parts of Syria during the Crusades, mainly the coast of what is today Lebanon. The Mamluks of Egypt reconquered the lands from the Mongol invasion of 1260 and held onto it until it fell to the Ottoman Sultan in 1516.[5]

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[5] Hourani (1946) 10-24

Due to its mountains the country was home to several minority communities, most prominent are the Maronites who arrived in the 8th century, the Druze later, and the Shias who settled *Jabal Amil*.[6] The mountainous terrain provided refuge for the heterodox communities like Maronites, Druz, Alawites, and Ismai'lis who fled prosecution from the dominant powers of their time.[7] The Maronites arrived in what is today Lebanon from Syria during the late 7th and early 8th centuries; emigration from Syria intensified after Umar Ibn Abd-al-Aziz instituted discriminatory practices against *Dhimmis*, non-Muslim people of the pact of protection.[8] The Druzes, people of an underground offshoot of Islam (considered heretics by Shias and Sunnis), arrived in Lebanon in the 11th century. Druzism either disappeared or completely went underground elsewhere in the Muslim world except in the Chouf Mountains of Lebanon where they remain a strong tight nit community to this day.[9]

Under Ottoman rule, these communities were given relative autonomy under a feudal system of prominent landowning families. Hitti describes this system: "The head amir would parcel out the fiefs among subordinate shaykhs or amirs of his house. Their main duty was to raise and transmit taxes and tribute to him. He in turn would deliver the Porte's share to a neighboring pasha or directly to Constantinople."[10]

The elite families could inherit their land and thus the feudal system was dominant till mid-nineteenth century.[11] The same families remain in power today under a patronage system. By the mid-nineteenth century, the system was not a pure feudal

[6] Winslow (1996) 1-27.
[7] Yapp (1989) 128-129.
[8] Hitti (1965) 90-95. The 'pact of protection' refers to the protection afforded by Muslim governments to citizens who are 'people of the book' (i.e. Christians and Jews).
[9] *Ibid.,* 96-103.
[10] *Ibid.,* 159.
[11] Zeine (1976) 22-3; Hitti (1965) 183.

system in the European classic sense of the 12th and 13th centuries; it was a semi-feudal system nevertheless, with rents and taxes (*miri*) to the landlord. While there were a few free landowners, the e*mirs* owned a majority of the land while the laborers worked on them and lived on them in subsistence conditions. The surplus was property of *emirs* or landlords who used it to pay the Ottomans (*miri*) and to provide largess to their own clan. Tax rates and crop sharing varied with the regional balance of power; the stronger the Ottomans, the more taxes the emirs had to pay and the less the laborers could keep.[12]

2.2 PRE-MODERN HISTORY

The Ottomans defeated the Mamluks on 24 August 1516 at Marj Dabiq in Syria and unseated them in 1517.[13] When Sultan Salim entered Damascus, Lebanese chiefs went there to present their homage. The Sultan was particularly impressed with Amir Fakhr el-Deen al-Ma'ni's eloquent praise, and he bestowed upon him the title of "sultan of the Mountain," the Mount Lebanon of today. Thus the feudal system was institutionalized under Sultan Salim and continued till the latter part of the nineteenth century. Mount Lebanon had local autonomy as long as it paid tribute and taxes to the Sultan. The rest of modern Lebanon and Syria were under the rule of the different w*alis* (governors) of Sham, Tripoli or Sidon. The Sultan was more concerned with serious threats to his domain, mainly from Persia and Egypt; Mount Lebanon was merely a thorn in his side.[14] The Ottomans remained the rulers of the Lebanon-Syria region until World War I.

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[12] Kushner, David. *Palestine in the Late Ottoman Period: Political, Social, and Economic Transformation*. See the chapter by Alexander Scholch (pp. 130-145) "Was there a Feudal System in Ottoman Lebanon and Palestine?"
[13] Zeine (1976) 6.
[14] Hitti (1965) 143-144.

The Ottomans gave the communities living in Mount Lebanon local autonomy as long as they recognized the Sultan's sovereignty over the domain and paid tribute.[15] The extent of Ottoman control varied with their relative geopolitical strength; however, they could intervene whenever they wished and did so on occasions when the local ruler crossed the line from autonomy to independence. For example, Amir Fakhr Al-Din II succeeded in achieving independence for a short period in the seventeenth century using personal prudence and an alliance with the Medici Grand Duke of Tuscany. However, the Ottomans regained the upper hand, defeated and executed Fakhr Al-Din II in 1635.[16] This desire to be independent of prevailing regional powers and forging alternative foreign alliances will repeat itself often with disastrous consequences for the country.

The nineteenth century saw the major changes that eventually brought about the creation of modern Lebanon. Amir Bashir II ruled for over half a century, from 1788 to 1840. During his reign, Lebanon was on its way to expansion, independence and establishing its role in the international relations of the region. Bashir II's history cannot be addressed here. It involved dealing with external powers like the Muslim Muhammad Ali of Egypt and European Christians, playing *walis* against each other and ruthlessly eliminating any local threats to his rule. He allied with the Ottoman army to fight the Wahhabis of Najd in 1810. Eleven years later he allied with Sidon's *wali* against the Damscus's *wali*, and then in 1831 he allied with Muahammad Ali against the Porte when the former sought the annexation of Syria. The Egypto-Lebanese government, however, overplayed its hand in Lebanon in its war with the Porte. Heavy taxation, forced labor, forced conscription and uprooting Lebanese trees for the Egyptian army all backfired. He

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[15] Hourani (1981) 126-127.
[16] *Ibid.*, 129.

even used Maronites to disarm the Druzes, a severe transgression on the honor of the Druzes. In 1840, the Lebanese in all their factions were united in their fight against the Egyptian army and fought "to restore their independence or die."[17] After Britain came to the rescue of Turkey, Bashir surrendered himself to the British in October 1840 and was then sent to Constantinople where he died in 1850. The end of his reign marked the end of the emirate age.

During the early 1800s, the Maronites numbers were increasing and their education improving with their close links with the Holy See. So they moved southwards towards rich farming areas into traditionally Druze districts.[18] Christians profited from Western education, immigration to the New World, the silk trade and commerce with Europe. Influenced by French ideals and inspired by Greek successes against the Turks, the Maronites sought independence in a Christian Lebanon.

The civil war of 1841 started with Maronites hunting on Druze land, ended with over 3000 people dead in sectarian fighting and increased European intervention in Lebanon to protect the Christians. The war might have started because of a hunting incident but it had its roots in Bashir II's reign when more Christians were migrating from Syria to the Chouf Mountains, long considered a stronghold of the Druzes. The Druzes feared that the Christians were gaining more prominence due to their openness to Western education and cultural influences. Johnson writes of the social mobility of the Maronites: "in one generation, some Druze lords had found themselves in debt to their former 'serfs.'"[19] Of course, Bashir, having used Maronites to suppress the Druzes revolt

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[17] Hitti (1965) 184-189; Hourani (1981) 131.
[18] Hourani (1981) 131.
[19] Johnson (2001) 92.

in Hawran in 1840, must have only aggravated the schism.[20] The war ended with dividing the mountain into separately ruled Christian and Druze districts, *qaim-maqams*,[21] but the districts based on sectarian majority were nevertheless mixed (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: Traditional Locations of Lebanese Communities (mid-1800s)

Source: Winslow (1996, 33). Map denotes areas of religious majorities; no region had a pure religious representation.

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[20] Hitti (1965) 191.
[21] Hitti (1965) 193.

In the late 1850s, Maronite peasants revolted against their Maronite landlords in the North and redistributed farmlands. In 1860, buoyed by the success of their coreligionists' revolt in the North, peasant Maronites in the South led an uprising against their Druze feudal lords. Disorganized and leaderless, the Maronites were no match for the Druzes who were united and could leverage Muslim sympathies and Turkish support. The sectarian war even expanded to Syria and eventually claimed as many as 12,000 victims.[22]

French troops landed in Beirut in August 1860 after Fuad Pasha, the Ottoman *visir*, already had established order. An agreement was reached in 1861 between the Porte, France, Britain, Prussia, Austria and Russia. Having lost all legitimacy, the *qaim-maqam* system was abolished and replaced by a *mutassarfiyyah*, governorship, ruled by an Ottoman Christian approved by European Powers with council representatives elected on a communal basis. Sunni Muslim towns were excluded from this entity.[23] The grave precedent was the establishment of a council based on sectarian quotas - still present to this date - and the personalization of politics.

Several authors cite the 1860 civil war as the flashpoint that erupted sectarian hatred to the surface.[24] The collapse of the feudal order after the peasant revolts of the mid-1860s and Bashir's policy of pitting Maronites against Druzes awakened sectarian tensions. Hourani attributes this change to internal and external factors: "At the moment of crisis, communal feeling, stimulated from outside and not held in check by a common authority, turned into religious hatred."[25]

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[22] Hitti (1965) 194-195; Hourani (1981) 132-135.
[23] Hitti (1965); Hourani (1981).
[24] Hitti (1965); Johnson (2001); Hourani (1981)
[25] Hourani (1981) 134.

2.3 MANDATE AND INDEPENDENCE

After joining the First World War on the side of the Central Powers, the Turks deposed of the last *Mutasarrif* in August 1915 and ruled Lebanon directly thus ending the Mount Lebanon Mutasarrifiyah.[26]

A secret agreement was reached between Sir Mark Sykes (British) and François Georges-Picot[27] (French diplomat) on dividing up Greater Syria and Iraq into French and British spheres of influence (see Figure 3). Russia was also involved in the agreement to secure areas closer to its sphere of influence but after the success of the Bolshevik Revolution, the Russians pulled out and revealed the terms of the agreement.

On the 7th of October 1918, a French division landed in Beirut. France was given a mandate over Lebanon and Syria in April 1920 during the San Remo conference. General Gouraud (French) defeated Arab forces at Maysalun and entered Damascus on July 25, 1920. Greater Lebanon was proclaimed by the French Commissioner on Sept 1, 1920 to include the coast and Biqa'. The Mandate was approved by the League of Nations in July 1922. Greater Lebanon now included a significant Muslim population that was against French rule and in favor of Sherrifian rule. May 23, 1926, the French declared Lebanon a constitutional republic.[28]

It is worth spending some time here on the attitudes of the different Lebanese communities towards the French Mandate, because herein lies some of the early causes of

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[26] Hitti (1965) 203.

[27] François Georges-Picot (1870-1951) was a professional French diplomat with long experience in the Levant and had served as consul-general in Beirut. Sir Mark Sykes (1879-1919) was a noted traveler, English politician, diplomatic adviser to the British Cabinet on Middle Eastern affairs and a close confident of Lord Kitchener, the Secretary of State for War during WWI.

[28] Hitti (1965) 217-221; Hourani (1946) 55.

the subsequent civil wars: a divergence in the attitude towards national identity between the Muslims and Christians.[29]

Figure 3: Control Zones per the Sykes-Picot Agreement

Source: *BBC.* "The Sykes-Picot agreement;" accessed on 3/21/10 at http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/in_depth/middle_east/2001/israel_and_the_palestinians/key_documents/1681362.stm

The Lebanese Christians and particularly the Maronites were the only[30] group in favor of an independent "Greater Lebanon…with expanded borders and under French

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[29] The divergence in the national outlook was already pronounced by the late nineteenth century: "while the Christians of Lebanon wanted political reforms and political independence, the Muslim Arab intellectuals in the rest of the Ottoman Empire sought to cleanse and to strengthen the Empire by advocating administrative reforms and a return to the purity of Islam and Muslim institutions" (Zeine 1976, 61).

[30] Hourani writes in page 146 of *Syria and Lebanon: A Political Essary*, ""The Catholic Christians were the only wholeheartedly pro-French element in the population of the Mandated Territories…"

rule." [31] Several Maronite delegations to Paris in 1919 relayed their desire for an independent or autonomous Lebanon under one form of French rule or another.[32] Sunni Muslims, and Shias to some extent, were against being ejected from a greater Ottoman empire, where they belonged to the ruling political community to become a minority under Christian rule.[33] The Majority Sunni population of Greater Syria was represented by Faysal Ibn Husayn at the Paris Conference of 1919 and wanted an Arab state including today's Syria and Lebanon with concessions to minorities and European powers.[34] An American commission was sent to the region to verify the delegates' claims. The King-Crane Commission concluded the majority wanted independence under an Arab State and that only the Catholics preferred French rule; if there was to be a mandate, the local population would accept one under American or British rule but not French rule.[35] Ultimately, the "King-Crane commission recommended keeping geographical Syria as a united political entity under Amir Faysal."[36]

While the Maronites were a majority in Mount Lebanon and had long eschewed an independent republic, one has to consider the overall demographics of Greater Syria (including Lebanon) to understand the Muslim, particularly the Sunni, opposition to French rule and the creation of Greater Lebanon as a separate state from Syria. Sunnis were 58% of the population of Greater Syria and the Muslims totaled 76% of the population. The Sunnis were never part of Mount Lebanon during Ottoman days and they

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[31] Hourani (1946) 50-51.
[32] Yapp (1989) 322.
[33] Anti-Turkish sentiment was mostly limited to the Maronite Lebanese; whereas, the vast majority of Arab Muslims did not desire to overthrow or destroy Ottoman rule. In fact, there is no historical evidence to support the view that Arabs suffered from backwardness due to the Ottomans, but benefited materially more than any other people under Ottoman rule (Zeine 1976, 15 & 36).
[34] Yapp (1989) 322.
[35] Yapp (1989) 323-324.
[36] Hourani (1946) 52.

considered themselves citizens of the Caliphate under direct Ottoman rule either from Damascus or Beirut.[37]

The French were aware that most Sunni Muslim and Arab nationalists were hostile to French rule. Therefore, French policy was to strengthen those segments of the society that were pro-French - in Lebanon, that would be the Maronites – and "the corporate spirit and separatist feelings of the minorities were deliberately fostered and were made the basis of the political divisions of the Mandated Territories."[38] France was more concerned in maintaining its own position[39] than in training the people for home rule. Nationalistic feeling and national leaders were suppressed.[40] Hourani believes this was one of the reasons for settling the Christian Armenians in Lebanon. French policy was geared towards linking Christian interests with France's by favoring Christians, especially the Maronites, in administrative and political positions and by "playing upon their fears of Moslem persecution."[41]

The confessional system[42] was already established under the Ottomans in Mount Lebanon; the French only continued this tradition. The 1922 representative system was

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[37] Hourani (1946) 126-127.

[38] Hourani (1947) 68.

[39] France had strategic and economic interests in Lebanon: an investment of about one billion francs in Greater Syria around the time of WWI; Syria and Lebanon were France's second greatest import region in the world after Palestine and its second export market after Great Britain.
The mandate was a strategic possession to maintain France's status as a Mediterranean Power: a base for air route connections with Far East possessions and an oil-line from Kirkuk to Tripoli which was a major supply source for France's armed forces (Hourani 1946, 153-155). Hourani cites the *Ministére des Affaires Etrangéres, Rapport, 1938, p.203."*
French diplomats knew this very well. The French Ambassador to Britain said: "…in Lebanon and in Syria we have special and long-seated interests which we must see respected…" (Zeine 1976, 101)

[40] Hitti (1965) 221.

[41] Hourani (1947) 69.

[42] Definition in Wikipedia: "Confessionalism is a system of government that distributes political and institutional power proportionally among religious communities. Posts in government and seats in the legislature are apportioned amongst different groups according to the relative demographic composition of those groups in a society, which is seen as a way of formally recognizing the communal political rights of indigenous groups. Currently, the political system of Lebanon is modelled [sic] in such a way, and the term

based on religious representation, a confessional system. General Sarrail, the French High Commissioner, tried to abolish the confessional system for a secular system, but this was objected to by all religious communities. The confessional system was preserved by the 1926 Lebanese Constitution under Jouvenal.[43]

France suspended the Lebanese constitution in 1932 due to the continuing "squabbles" among Lebanese factions. This move had the effect of uniting the Lebanese factions and France had to restore the constitution by the terms of the Franco-Lebanese Treaty of 1936. France again suspended the constitution in 1939 due to WWII. The different Lebanese factions were unified again under President Beshara al-Khoury. The Lebanese Chamber[44] ratified the constitution without any mention of France.[45] The French Commissioner arrested the Lebanese leaders (including Khoury). Lebanese protests and British pressure[46] forced France to release the Lebanese leaders, and eventually the Lebanese secured their independence on November 22, 1943.[47]

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is usually associated with Lebanon." I believe this definition precisely describes the Lebanese political system, at least as intended in the constitution.
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Confessionalism_%28politics%29 accessed on 5/25/2010.

[43] Yapp (1996) 105-106.

[44] The Lebanese Representative Council was established in 1922 under the French Mandate. Original there was a elected Chamber and a nominated Senate. They were later merged into one Chamber (Hourani 1946, 172-180).

[45] In 1943, the Lebanese leadership demonstrated by its revision of the Constitution (without any mention of France) that "the greater part of the politically conscious Lebanese desired an extension of autonomy" and were no longer willing to tolerate French interference as was possible under the mandate system (Hourani 1947, 73-74).

[46] British forces were present in Lebanon since 1941 and the Lebanese benefited from Anglo-French rivalry in their struggle for independence (Hourani 1981, 140). The Lebanese were united in their opposition to France. Lebanese notables, Muslim and Christian, agreed to accept the independence of Lebanon but also to be independent of France and to acknowledge that Lebanon is part of the Arab world (later codified by Lebanon by being one of the founding states of the Arab League).

[47] Yapp (1996) 106-108.

2.4 POST-INDEPENDENCE

The Lebanese inherited an electoral system designed to pit the various religious groups against each other to the benefit of the French, rather than as a representative tool to solve national problems democratically.[48] The National Pact came into existence at Independence, an unwritten understanding among the Lebanese: the Maronites would get the presidency, the most powerful position in the government; the Sunnis, the prime minister's office; and the Shiites, the Speaker of the Parliament. Also, the Maronites kept the army commander's position, the Druze the Defense Ministry; other positions were similarly reserved along sectarian lines. The House of Representatives seats were divided by a ratio of 6 Christians to each 5 Muslim representatives. Such a system breeds nepotism, social fragmentation, sectarian strife, and patronage politics. The outcome was inefficiency, waste, and well-founded or not, feelings of inequity. The National Pact was supposed to deliver a confessional system that reflected the relative weight of the religious groups. The problem is that this was based on the 1932 census, whereas the demographic reality had changed much by 1943.[49]

The first and last census was in 1932 and at that time Lebanon was 48.8 percent Muslim and 50 percent Christian; the Maronites were no more than 29 percent – see Table 1 for sectarian demographic composition from 1922 to 1996. No census has been conducted since due to political reasons; unofficial demographic surveys today show that Muslims outnumber Christians two to one.[50] While the Christians were a clear majority in Mount Lebanon (four-fifths) in 1932, they barely had a majority when adding all the territories of Greater Lebanon per Maronite demands. By 1943 their majority was eroding

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[48] Winslow, 78-106.

[49]Yapp (1996) 108-109.

[50] Andrews, John. "A question of faith;" *Economist*, vol. 338, Issue 7954, pp.15-17, 2/24/96

and the trend was obviously in favor of the Muslim population due to higher emigration rates among the Christians and higher birth rates among the Muslims, especially the Shias.[51] The problem of the confessional system had already started, "The percentages given for these groups…overestimated the Christian proportion and underestimated the weight of the Shia population. Nevertheless, they formed the basis of the division of power agreed primarily by Maronites and Sunnis."[52]

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[51] Yapp (1996) 104-105.
[52] *Ibid.,* 109.

Table 1: Confessional Composition of the Lebanese Population (1922 - 1996)

	Census		Census		Hourani Est.		Yapp Est .	Johnson Est.		Faour Survey		Stewart Est.
Confession	1922 Pop'n	1922 %	1932 Pop'n2	1932 %3	1943 Pop'n	1943 %	1975 %	1984 Pop'n	1984 %	1988 Pop'n	1988 %	1996 %
Shia	N/A	-	154,208	19.6%	200,698	19.2%	30.0%	1,100,000	30.8%	N/A	-	33.0%
Sunnis	N/A	-	175,925	22.4%	222,594	21.3%	20.0%	750,000	21.0%	N/A	-	20.0%
Druze	N/A	-	53,047	6.8%	71,711	6.9%	~10%	200,000	5.6%	N/A	-	8.0%
Muslims Total	273,366	45%	383,180	48.8%	495,003	47.3%	60.0%	2,050,000	57.3%	2,308,063	65.2%	61.0%
Maronites	N/A	-	226,378	28.8%	318,201	30.4%	25.0%	900,000	25.2%	N/A	-	20.0%
Greek Orthodox	N/A	-	76,522	9.7%	106,658	10.2%	-	250,000	7.0%	N/A	-	8.0%
Greek Catholics	N/A	-	45,999	5.9%	61,956	5.9%	-	150,000	4.2%	N/A	-	6.0%
Other Christians	N/A	-	43,645	5.6%	64,603	6.2%	-	225,000	6.3%	N/A	-	4.0%
Christians Total	335,668	55%	392,544	50.0%	551,418	52.7%	40.0%	1,525,000	42.7%	1,234,522	34.8%	38.0%
Jews	N/A	-	3,518	0.4%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Others	N/A	-	6,301	0.8%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	1.0%
Total Population	609,034	100%	785,543	100.0%	1,046,421	100.0%	100.0%	3,575,000	100.0%	3,542,585	100.0%	100.0%

Source: Adapted by Author from Jonson 2001

Data Sources: 1922 census figures from Faour (1988).

1932 census figures, and 1943 estimates from Hourani (1946), p. 121.

1975 estimates from Yapp (1996, p. 277).

1984 estimates from Johnson (1986, p.226).

Faour's numbers are based on a 1988 survey that was a by-product of the summer 1988 food assistance program.

1996 estimates from Stewart (1996, p. 292) based on Phares 1995 and Economist 1996 survey.

Note: No official census since 1932. All demographic numbers since are estimates.

Also, significant government positions were "inherited" within the same family, usually the same feudal families that ruled pre-independence, often referred to as the *zu'ama*.[53] Of 35 cabinets formed after independence, 31 were led by only four Sunni families. The "leading feature of Lebanese politics was the predominance of notables. By independence the ingredients of success in politics were established. They were a landowning base and local followers, urban wealth, modern skills and good alliances."[54]

The post-independence period coincided with the issue of Palestine reaching its zenith just before the United Nations was deliberating the Partition question. After receiving 150,000 Palestinian refugees in 1948, the issue of the loyalties of the Lebanese came into question – Christian-European or Muslim-Arab. The refugees, mostly Sunni, could not be integrated because of the significant effect that would have to the balance of power per the confessional system; the Palestinians were mostly settled around Beirut in refugee camps.[55] The economy was highly politicized and corruption was rampant[56]. Officially, the country had a *laissez-fair* system; nevertheless, businessmen had to liaise with politicians if they were to conduct business freely. "Liaisoning" could mean bribes (*bartil* or *rashawi)*, a cut of profits, preferential treatment due to family or sectarian connections, or sometimes the politicians would get involved in national business ventures themselves. The extreme was out right embezzlement, for example, a third of the supply department was embezzled in 1944 with no investigation.[57]

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[53] One example are the Feudal lords in Akkar, northern Lebanon, who built their power as landlords during the French mandate and prevented development in their region to prevent the government from interfering in local peasants lives to keep them within their control (Owen 2000, 224).

[54] Yapp (1996) 110-111.

[55] *Ibid.,* 267-268

[56]In the 1950s, President Khury faced "charges of favouritism, nepotism, corruption and laxity in the administration and execution of justice." A strike forced Khury to step down in favour of new president Chamoun (Hitti 1965, 224-6)

[57] Winslow (1996) 88.

At the same time, Lebanon was building a nation in a Cold War contested area. Several Arab states, including Egypt and Syria, were leaning towards socialism and thus getting closer to the Soviet Union, while others, such as the Gulf Kingdoms, were more traditional and staunchly anti-communist. Lebanon was pressured to choose sides, and again there was no Lebanese consensus on the issue.

2.5 THE CHAMOUN ERA, 1952-58

This is the period of the rise of Arab nationalism under Egypt's Nasser, who was bolstered by his victory in the 1956 Suez Crisis and the nationalization of the Suez Canal. President Chamoun was pressured by a sympathetic Muslim majority to the Nasserite regime. After the unification of Syria and Egypt to form the United Arab Republic in 1958 and a revolution in Iraq overthrew the monarchy, there was jubilation by Muslims in Lebanon and threats that Chamoun would be next.[58] Defeated in the 1958 elections, the leftist opposition went to the street. The opposition was also discontent with the distribution of government benefits, especially new Shia migrants in Beirut suburbs, and they united under the leadership of Kamal Jambulat of the Socialist Progressive Party, the Sunni Sa'ib Salam and opposition Christians, chiefly the Maronite Patriarch and some Orthodox Christians. So the president invoked the Eisenhower Doctrine claiming that the Muslims were supported by pro-Soviet Syria and the U.S. sent the battleship New Jersey with 5,000 troops to prop-up Chamoun. "Between 2,000 and 4,000 casualties occurred primarily in the Muslim areas of Beirut and in Tripoli" in violent confrontations between the opposition and government forces.[59] The 1958 civil war saw two major developments:

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[58] Hitti (1965) 231-232.
[59] Collelo (1989) Chapter 1.

The new features [of the 1958 events] were first the international dimension and the way groups in Lebanon sought to enlist outsiders by representing their struggle as part of the Cold War of the fight or the fight for Arab Nationalism: and second the involvement of the urban poor. In the longer term these two new elements would threaten the Lebanese political system as it had existed hitherto.[60]

The 1958 civil war revived the identity question that has troubled the country since the establishment of Greater Lebanon: Christian independent with a Western outlook or Muslim pan-Arab.[61]

2.6 THE RISE OF SHIHABISM, 1958-64

The army commander Fuad Shihab, who had refused to intervene in the 1958 civil war lest he were to divide the army, was elected after the 1958 civil war. He asked American troops to withdraw, increased Muslim participation in the government while keeping Christian majorities (in both the Cabinet and Parliament) and referring to the last civil war he declared "no victors, no vanquished." Shihab tried to maintain Lebanon's independence and preserve its neutrality in the regional struggle and Cold War. He improved relations with the Arabs. He also increased the role of the government by offering more services and benefits to the historically disenfranchised communities the Shias, the Druz and the poor urban Sunnis.[62] The urban wealthy were dissatisfied but the biggest reaction came from the poor he tried to help or empower:

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[60]Yapp 1996, 114-115.
[61] Rabinovich 1985, 26-28.
[62] Hitti (1965), 233; Yapp (1996), 256.

> There was a more fundamental contradiction in the policies of Fu'ad Shihab. It
> was to be expected that merchants and big business would resent the extension of
> state power but economic modernization also tended to turn acquiescent rural
> populations into discontented urban dwellers. The more prominent the role of the
> state the more importance was attached to the manner in which power was
> distributed within it.[63]

Yapp's insight above throws an important light on one of the potential causes of the civil war in Lebanon: the politicization of the economy. The greater the role of the government in the economy or the perceived bounty from capturing the State, the greater the risk of violence ventures.[64]

2.7 THE HILU ERA, 1964-70

The 1967 Arab-Israeli war erupted during Charles Hilu's presidency, elected September 1964.[65] More Palestinian guerilla fighters entered Lebanon. Starting in 1964 the Palestinians were conducting military trainings in refugee camps and by 1968 they started using Southern Lebanon as a base for raids against Israel. The country was again divided between pro-Palestinian Lebanese Muslims who believed in the Palestinians right as freedom fighters and anti-Palestinian Lebanese Christians who wanted to stay neutral and preserve Lebanon's independence. No Sunni prime minister would take action against the Palestinians, so president Hilu relied on the Deuxieme Bureau, a military intelligence unit, to control the Palestinians. In 1968, Israeli forces attacked Beirut airport as retaliation for a Palestinian raid raising internal tensions. Also, clashes between

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[63] Yapp 1996, 265-266.
[64] Collier and Hoeffler, 1998.
[65] Hitti (1965) 235.

Palestinian fighters and the Christian-controlled Lebanese army escalated in 1969. A Lebanese-PLO agreement was reached in Nov 1969 in Cairo resulting in a cease-fire and limiting PLO operations to the South with a commitment not interfere in Lebanese politics.[66] However, Israeli reprisals led to a massive internal migration (30,000, mostly Shia) from South Lebanon (*Jnoub)* to Beirut[67]. The issue of Muslim migrants not getting appropriate support and shelter from Christian leaders added to the sectarian tensions.

2.8 THE FRANJIYYEH ERA, 1970-76

Lebanon had to deal with another influx of heavily armed PLO guerrillas after their expulsion from Jordon by King Hussein in 1970 (Black September). There were some 300,000 Palestinians in Lebanon. The new arrivals considered Lebanon a launching pad for attacks against Israel. More Shias fled the South to Beirut and started joining radical groups. The government had to avoid aggravating the Muslim pro-Palestinian demonstrators while controlling the spread of violence, Palestinian attacks and Israeli reprisals. President Franjiyyeh could not use the full power of the Lebanese army against the Palestinians as the Maronites would have wished for several reasons: no Sunni leader would agree, Syria threatened to intervene, and the Lebanese army would split because the officer corps was dominated by Maronites but its rank and file were mainly Muslim Shias.[68]

The situation escalated into more clashes between the Lebanese Army and Palestinian guerrillas, more internal divisions, resentment within the Shia community in

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[66] Yapp (1996) 267-268.
[67] By the 1970s, the Shias were already leaving their traditional homeland en masse. 40% of the Shias of the South and 25% of the Biqa' had left their native regions, to either Beirut or abroad, mostly West Africa, by 1975 (Yapp 1996, 274).
[68] Yapp (1996) 268-269.

the South for the indifference of the Lebanese authorities to their plight, and eventually Lebanon had to deal with the repercussions of the 1973 Arab-Israeli war, mainly an increased Palestinian presence and divided domestic loyalties.

2.9 CIVIL WAR BREAKS OUT, 1975

By early 1975, Muslim Leaders, Druzes included[69], were demanding a reduction in the power of the Maronite president in favor of Muslims to accurately reflect the population changes since 1932 and balance the sectarian representation in the army. The Phalanges militia, Maronites, wanted to use the Lebanese military to bring Palestinians under control but no Muslim government representative would agree to the use of force against the Palestinians.[70]

In April 1975 four Phalangists were killed. Suspecting Palestinian involvement, Phalanges gunmen killed twenty-six Palestinians passengers in a bus. Random sectarian killing ensued and the situation escalated to an all out war by June 1975 dividing the country into two camps: a Christian "status quo coalition" and a Muslim-PLO "revisionist coalition." [71] People began leaving areas of mixed sects to the safety of more homogeneous regions. The Lebanese army split along sectarian lines and the Muslim side, the Lebanese Arab Army, joined the LNM (mostly Muslim-Left) and jointly attacked the presidential palace.

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[69] Druze leader Kamal Jumbulatt of the revisionist coalition issues demands: abolition of confessional system, new electoral law, reorganization of army, new citizenship law - presumably to nationalize Palestinians (Rabinovich 1985, 71).
[70] O'Ballance (2001) 1-7.
[71] Rabinovich (1985) 45.

The LNM almost defeated the LNF (mostly Christian-Right) with the aid of Palestinians from Syria. Syria had a pivotal role in the development of events in 1976.[72] First, Syria intervened on the side of the Muslim coalition in January 1976 with "American acquiescence" and Israeli "tacit agreement" for a limited intervention to resolve the conflict.[73] By February, Assad of Syria reached a reform plan with President Franjiyyeh, but when it was refused by the Muslim camp, President Assad dispatched more military units in the March-May period to aid the Christian[74] camp against the Muslim-PLO camp.[75] By the Fall of 1976, under Saudi and Arab public opinion pressure for allying with Maronites against Muslim Sunnis – Syria is a majority Sunni state ruled by an Allawite minority – Assad, Lebanon and the PLO reached an agreement in Riyadh in October 1976.[76] The Syrian Army's presence was legitimated by the Arab League under the ADF in 1976.

The 1975-76 civil war had cost the country gravely. "Although the exact cost of the war will never be known, deaths may have approached 44,000, with about 180,000 wounded."[77] The population partly "regrouped" along confessional lines: Christians in Eastern Beirut and Northern Lebanon, Druzes in the south of Mount Lebanon, and the Shias presence in Beirut suburbs was more pronounced. The Palestinians were the dominant force from Western Beirut to the Litani River. Syrian forces, under the Arab Deterrent Force, were the ultimate arbiters of Lebanese politics. The Lebanese state

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[72] Yapp (1996) 269-270.
[73] Rabinovich (1985) 49-51.
[74] It is hard to know for sure the true motives of Assad coming to the aid of the Christian forces who traditionally called for complete independence from Syria, but suggests a highly plausible reason: to take away any Israeli pretext of invading Lebanon and greatly threatening Syria's national security (Hiro 1993, 202-203).
[75] Rabinovich (1985) 53.
[76] Rabinovich (1985) 43-59; Yapp (1996) 269-270.
[77] Collelo (1989), Chapter 1.

suffered most. It was impossible to hold elections after 1972 and the government did not just lose its monopoly on the use of force but was not even able to use some force without having its army disintegrate as it did in 1976.[78]

Johnson concludes that the Palestinian presence was the most important factor in triggering the 1975 civil war. That is not to say that there were no other internal factors that contributed to the civil war, but the Palestinian presence certainly strained the system beyond its breakpoint. The Maronites, fearing Palestinians, Muslims and leftists, built their own militias as "surrogate protectors of the state."[79] The confessional system lasted as long as the confessional bourgeois *zaims* were united in their interest to stabilize the system with the least conflict and minimal government intervention.[80] Yapp agrees with Johnson on the effect of the external factor but adds another major factor: "the challenge to Maronite dominance by other groups within the Lebanese system."[81] I believe that both factors were crucial for the 1975 war: the internal factor could have been resolved peacefully if the Palestinian presence did not divide the Lebanese ideologically along sectarian lines, and the Palestinian presence would have been dealt with more effectively had all the Lebanese believed their political system to be fair and equitable.

2.10 THE SARKIS ADMINISTRATION, 1976-82

The main issues of the Lebanese problem remained unresolved after 1976: a domestic conflict between the status quo forces and the reformist coalition who squabbled about the "identity of the Lebanese entity and the distribution of power within

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[78] Yapp (1996) 271.
[79] Johnson (2001) 56.
[80] *Ibid., 56.*
[81] Yapp (1996) 269.

the Lebanese state and political system;" Syria's hegemony over Lebanon was enforced with 30,000 Syrian soldiers; the Lebanese could not agree whether the Palestinian armed presence was a sacred right or a violation of Lebanese sovereignty; and Israel's activities in Lebanon intensified due to the increased Syrian and Palestinian presence which now threatened its national security. The Lebanese Christians after being saved by Syria, came to see Syrian presence in Lebanon as an occupation and under the new leadership of the young charismatic Bashir Jumayyil, they were determined to maintain the political status quo and expel the Palestinians and Syrians with Israeli help.[82]

Syria had assumed control of Lebanon but had two serious powers to contend with, the Palestinians in the South and the Phalange in Christian areas. After several clashes with Christian rivals and even killing prominent Christian family members, Bashir Jumayyil was the undisputed leader of the Christians by 1980. Bashir was practically running a Christian state in 1980. He had a small army "trained and supplied mainly by Israel" and military service in the Maronite militias became mandatory in 1981 for all students.[83] Confident of their growing power, the Phalange under Bashir, had their eye on taking strategic Zahle – two hours from Damascus - from Syrian control. Syria's response was ferocious with heavy and sustained bombardment.[84] Israel gave limited aid to the Maronites by shooting down two Syrian helicopters. Syria responded by deploying surface-to-air (SAM) missiles. So the situation in Lebanon escalated to a regional conflict, but was contained "through the mediation efforts of other Arab nations and the United States."[85]

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[82] Rabinovich (1985) 89-95.
[83] *Ibid., 115*
[84] Rabinovich (1985) 115-116; Yapp (1996) 271-272.
[85] Collelo (1989), Chapter 1.

Syria gave the Palestinians relative freedom in the South to the detriment of the Lebanese locals, the Shias and Maronites. The Lebanese government tried to establish its control over southern Lebanon in 1978-79, but with Israeli and Major Sa'd Haddad's (SLA Commander) objection, several attempts ended with failure and eventually Sa'd Haddad declared the area under his control in the south as "Free Lebanon" and effectively defected to Israel. The Lebanese government stripped him of his rank and declared him a traitor.

In 1978, Israel launched a massive air bombardment on PLO positions in the South and West Beirut and invaded Lebanon in retaliation for Palestinian incursions and shelling of northern Galilee from South Lebanon and occupied all the land south of the Litani River, about ten percent of the country, causing thousands of casualties. The Israelis withdrew after three months at the request of the UN and were replaced by UN Interim Forces.

The Shias were affected the most from the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Around 200,000 people migrated from the South to Beirut and surrounding suburbs creating what was later called the "misery belt." The Shias[86], led by Imam Musa al-Sadr, started the "Movement of the Deprived" (*al-Mahrumeen*), which later became *Amal*.

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[86] The Shias were originally dominated by a few landowner families like the As'ads and were confined to serfdom in the South and Biqa'. They gained the most from Shihab's government service reforms and from the movement started by Musa al-Sadr, an Iranian scholar, who came to Lebanon in 1960 to improve their living standard. Al-Sadr formed the Movement of The Deprived in 1974, which became the shia militia Amal in 1975.
The Shias benefited greatly from the Islamic Revolution in Iran in 1979. By 1982 radical Shias were trained by the Iranian Revolutionary Guard, with Syria's acquiescence, in the Biqa'; Hizbullah was the most prominant of these radicals and eventually overshadowed the more secular Amal.
Both Amal and Hizbullah used Iranian support to buy arms but also to run social and welfare programs for the Shiites of Lebanon, which gained them complete dominance of Shiite politics and monopolized all Shia seats in the parliament of 1992 and subsequent parliaments (Owen 2000, 189).
High fertility rates among the Shias made them the largest single confessional group by 1975, estimated at 30%. Nevertheless, the Shias were not able to officially convert their numerical plurality and new religious and political revival into a reform of the National Pact in their favor (Yapp 1996, 273-276).

This period also witnessed major developments in the geopolitics of the region. By the late 1970s, Egypt's role had declined with the Camp David Agreement, and America viewed Syria's role in Lebanon through the Cold War lens. Syria became the Soviet Union's main ally in the region after Egypt signed the peace agreement and Syria's relationship with PLO warmed enough to allow them freedom of operation in Lebanon. Syria was now using Lebanon as part of its defense strategy: the Biqa' was the main route to invade Syria by Israel and south Lebanon could be used as a launching pad for a Syrian assault on Israel. The 1979 Iranian Revolution saw an increased role for the Iranians in Lebanon to enhance the status of the Shias.[87]

Between 1980 and 1982, clashes broke out all over the country. There were Shia-PLO clashes in the South, Maronite Phalange against Maronite Tigers,[88] automobile bombings in Beirut, Sidon and Tripoli, assassinations of religious leaders on both sides, and kidnappings of foreign diplomats.

2.11 THE ISRAELI INVASION, 1982 (*al-Ijtiyah*)

In 1982, Bashir Jmayel was the undisputed head of the Phalange and Maronites in Lebanon. He had secret talks with the Israelis[89] to encourage them to invade and promised a peace treaty if he became president.[90] With the presence of Syrian SAM missiles in Lebanon and active PLO fighters, on June 6, 1982 Israeli soldiers crossed the

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[87] Rabinovich (1985) 114.

[88] The Tigers were a Maronite militia under the leadership of the Chamoun family, a prominent Maronite family. Initially they allied with the Phalange but later rivalry over the leadership of the Maronite community brought the two into armed conflict.

[89] Rabinovich describes a historical amity between the Maronites and Israel. For example Emile Eddie and other Maronite leaders (including the Patriarch) had secret talks with the Jewish state to battle Muslim unity and pan-Arabism (Rabinovich 1985, 104).

[90] Yapp (1996) 271-272.

Green Line[91]. The Israeli army destroyed Palestinian positions in the South and Syrian missile sites. It also reached Beirut and laid siege to West Beirut – the Muslim part of the city – while the Eastern side was free of Israeli forces under Phalangist control.

Lebanese estimates, compiled from International Red Cross sources and police and hospital surveys, calculated that 17,825 Lebanese had died[92] and over 30,000 had been wounded during the Israeli invasion of 1982. In *Lebanon: A Country Study*, Thomas Collelo describes the carnage:

> Normal economic activity was brought to a standstill. Factories that had sprung up in the southern suburbs were damaged or destroyed, highways were torn up, and houses were ruined or pitted by artillery fire and rockets. Close to 40,000 homes--about one-fourth of all Beirut's dwellings--were destroyed. Eighty-five percent of all schools south of the city were damaged or destroyed. The protracted closure of Beirut's port and airport drastically affected commerce and industry. By 1984 the World Bank (see Glossary) and the CDR agreed that Beirut would require some US$12 billion to replace or renovate damaged facilities and to restore services that had not been properly maintained since 1975.[93]

All seemed to be going as the Israelis planned. Bashir was elected as president in August 1982 with half of the country under Israeli control, but he reneged on his promise of a peace treaty with the Israelis. Bashir was assassinated in September before his inauguration. Two days later, avenging their leader, Phalanges militiamen committed the Sabra and Shatilla massacre with Israeli "consent" when Israel had total control over West Beirut.[94]

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[91] Many books have been written about the 1982 Israeli Invasion and this paper will not cover the invasion in detail. For a good summary see Rabinovich 1985. For a detailed account see Richard A. Gabriel, *Operation peace for Galilee: the Israeli-PLO War in Lebanon*, 1984.

[92] *Annahar,* Lebanon's leading daily newspaper, September 1, 1982.

[93] Collelo 1989, Chapter 5.

[94] Yapp (1996) 272-3.

Under the eye of Israeli forces,[95] Phalange elements entered two Palestinian refugee camps and massacred some 2000 civilians, mostly women, children and babies.[96] The exact number is highly disputed and varies from "at least 800"[97] up to 3500 according to Amnon Kapeliouk, an Israeli journalist.[98] Robert Fisk, one of the first Western journalists to be present at the massacre scene, believes around 2000 were slaughtered in the Sabra and Chatilla refugee camp.[99] The United Nations General Assembly condemned the massacre and declared it to be an act of genocide.[100]

The PLO agreed to leave Lebanon for Tunisia after the siege of West Beirut left the city demolished, and with the guarantee that a Multinational Force (MNF) would protect the Palestinians to prevent another massacre. American, Italian and French troops were stationed in West Beirut, followed by a few British troops.

The Israeli Invasion, starting as retaliation for Palestinian raids and an attempt to neutralize the Palestinians in Lebanon, ended up changing "the internal balance of power between Christians, Shi'i, and Druze militias."[101] The Israeli Invasion was the cause of the rise of the Shias in the South, their traditional heartland, as they filled the vacuum left by the PLO with the creation and ascendance of Hizbullah.[102]

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[95] Description of the massacre by Collelo in *Lebanon: A Country Case Study*: "The militiamen were mostly Phalangists under the command of Elie Hubayka (also seen as Hobeika), a former close aide of Bashir Jumayyil, but militiamen from the Israeli-supported SLA were also present. The IDF ordered its soldiers to refrain from entering the camps, but IDF officers supervised the operation from the roof of a six-story building overlooking parts of the area. According to the report of the Kahan Commission established by the government of Israel to investigate the events, the IDF monitored the Phalangist radio network and fired illumination flares from mortars and aircraft to light the area. Over a period of two days, the Christian militiamen massacred some 700 to 800 Palestinian men, women, and children."

[96] Israel "facilitated" the military entry of Phalange fighters into the camp (Rabinovich 1985, 145).

[97] BBC, *Analysis: 'War crimes' on West Bank,* Wednesday, 17 April, 2002. Accessed February 11, 2010 http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/1935198.stm

[98] Kapeliouk, 1984.

[99] Fisk (2002) 359-400.

[100] *United Nations.* A/RES/37/123(A-F) UN General Assembly, 16 December 1982

[101] Owen (2000) 75.

[102] Yapp (1996) 272-273.

2.12 CHAOS AND END OF WAR, 1982-90[103]

By the fall of 1983, the Israelis started to withdraw due to continued casualties from Lebanese resistance, mainly from the Shias. Israel withdrew first to the south from Beirut to the Awwali River, and then left the Southern front to the defected SLA under Antoine Lahd.[104]

With the Palestinians gone and a weak Lebanese Army, this created a power vacuum. One more time, war escalated in late 1983 in Mount Lebanon between the Druze and the Maronites, then between the Druze and the Lebanese Army. The opposition (Druze, Sunnis, and Shias) defeated the Maronite militias in the Mountain. The Druze gained complete control of Chouf Mountain. The U.S.S. New Jersey came to the aid of the Lebanese Army, who was clashing with the Druzes, to declare a cease-fire. Shortly after, the Shia Amal militia clashed with the Lebanese Army in Western Beirut. The MNF withdrew after a series of suicide bombings that caused over 300 casualties among the French and Americans[105].

By 1984, Assad had the upper hand: his allies controlled two-thirds of Lebanon and the resistance to Israel had forced it to retreat and leave a 'security zone' under the SLA's control.[106]

Then, from the mid-eighties till the end of the civil war, Lebanon descended into a series of turf battles:[107] War of the Camps, *Ilgha'a* (elimination) battles, Liberation

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[103] For a short summary of the1980s turf battles and how the war ended with Syrian involvement and American tacit approval see Johnson 2001, pp. 224-225.

[104] Yapp (1996) 272-3. Antoine Lahd (retired lieutenant general) is Sa'd Haddad's successor.

[105] Murphy, Jarrett. *Beirut Barracks Attack Remembered: Oct. 23, 1983 Suicide Bombing Killed 241 Americans*, accessed on 3/13/10 at http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2003/10/23/world/main579638.shtml BBC, *1983: Beirut Blasts Kill US and French Troops*, accessed on 3/13/10 at http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/october/23/newsid_2489000/2489117.stm

[106] Hiro (1993) 208-209.

Battles, pro-Syrian fighting anti-Syrian factions, Christians against Christians, Muslims against Muslims, Palestinians against Palestinians and Shia against Shia.[108]

After the parliament failed to elect a president in the summer of 1988, the departing president, Amin Jemayel, appointed the Army Commander, a Maronite, as prime minister and left the country without a president.[109] General Aoun was supported by Saddam Hussein who wanted to decrease Iranian intervention in Lebanon through Shia militias. The country was again divided along sectarian lines with two governments: a Muslim one in West Beirut and a Christian one in East Beirut. Aoun, with Lebanese Army backing, launched the War of Liberation (*Harb al-Tahrir)* against the Phalange militia to consolidate his hold on Christian East Beirut.

Eventually with Arab mediation, the last elected parliamentarians convened in Tai'f, Saudi Arabia and agreed on a new accord, the Tai'f Agreement, where for the first time the parliament was divided equally between Muslims and Christians. With Arab and American backing in exchange for support for the Gulf War against Saddam Hussein, Syria deposed of Aoun in October 1993 using its air force and installed the agreed upon Tai'f government.[110] All militias were dissolved except for Hizbollah, which kept its arms restricted in the South and out of sight with the implicit agreement that Hizbollah would keep its role as a resistance movement and never use its arms internally. Since 1991, elections have been held regularly; however, results remain along sectarian lines

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[107] After Marines withdrawal, Shia takeover of Beirut in 1984, and Druze takeover of Mountain, Amin Jumayyil was forced to capitulate to Syrian demands. p.181: With Syrian approval, the Druzes and Shias defeated the last Sunni militia, al-Murabitun, in West Beirut in April 1985. With the lack of a strong central government and without a functioning national army, the Sunni community hence lost its historical political influence in the absence of any military arm. After 1985, the Shias vied against each other in the South for the leadership of resistance against Israel (Rabinovich 1985, 174-176, 181).
[108] O'Ballance, 1998.
[109] Yapp (1996) 278.
[110] Hiro (1993) 212.

since the Tai'f Agreement institutionalized sectarianism, which heretofore was implicit.[111]

Syria was the biggest winner from the Lebanese Civil War and the Ta'if agreement allowed Syria to keep its forces in Lebanon theoretically for two years but practically indefinitely. Syria forced the Lebanese government to sign two treaties in 1991. Lebanon signed a defence pact and Syria gained control of Lebanon's foreign policy. Syria was allowed to keep its forces and security apparatus in Lebanon, meddle in Lebanese politics as the final arbiter and even enforce the "exclusion of [Lebanese] authority from certain regions." [112] Two Thousand Iranian Revolutionary Guards remained in the Biqa' and 3000 SLA defected soldiers remained in the South. The end of the war brought one main benefit to the Lebanese State: once the government was formed it set about disarming the militias. All were disarmed except for those allowed to keep their weapons with Syria's blessing, Hizbullah, or with Israel's protection, the SLA.

There was no major internal violent conflict between 1990 and 2008; however there were several Israeli invasions and attacks since the end of the 1975-1990 civil war. Israel withdrew from South Lebanon in 2000.[113] The Lebanese government still claims that the Shaba' Farms are occupied while Israel says they are not Lebanese territories.

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[111] Yapp (1996) 464-467.
[112] Yapp (1996) 467.
[113] *UN Press Release,* SC/6878, accessed on 3/13/10
http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2000/20000618.sc6878.doc.html

Chapter 3: Causes of War

In this section, I will discuss the causes of the Lebanese Civil War from 1975 to 1990. I will first assess the potential causes of conflict as identified by Collier, and then add any other causes I have found during my research. To keep the analysis simple and manageable, I will discuss each probable cause individually and assess its impact on the civil war.
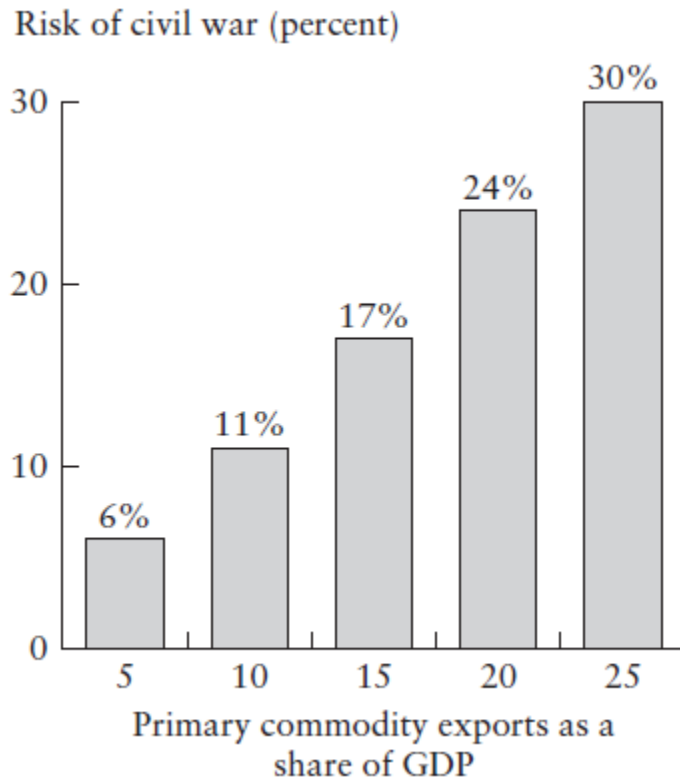
Before presenting my findings, I will start with a brief overview of the major conclusions of the Collier-Hoeffler Model. In Collier's own words:

> After testing for a number of factors, Collier and Hoeffler find that three are significant— the level of income per capita, rate of economic growth, and structure of the economy, namely, dependence on primary commodity exports. Doubling per capita income roughly halves the risk of a civil war. Each additional percentage point of growth reduces the risk by about 1 percentage point. The effect of primary commodity dependence is nonlinear, peaking with exports at around 30 percent of gross domestic product [see Figure 4]…Ethnic and religious composition also matters. Societies in which the largest ethnic group accounts for 45 to 90 percent of the population—which Collier and Hoeffler term "ethnic dominance"—have a risk of conflict about one-third higher…Once a country has had a civil war, its risk of renewed conflict rises sharply, although this risk fades gradually over time at about 1 percentage point a year.[114]

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[114] Bannon and Collier (2003) 2-3.

Figure 4: Natural Resources and Conflict in Low-Income Countries

Source: Bannon and Collier (2003) 3.

3.1 GEOGRAPHY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Lebanon sits on the far east of the Mediterranean in the middle of three continents--Europe, Asia and Africa. So its location cannot be considered a cause of conflict insofar as being a hindrance to economic performance – quite the contrary. The rich history, moderate climate and diverse geography (from Alps-like mountains to pristine beaches in less than 30 minutes) have been a blessing for the tourist industry, a major driver of economic activity. Yet some consider this important geopolitical location a curse as it invites external meddling from the powers that be.[115] Lebanon does not have

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[115] "Even were there no Syrian people a Syrian problem would still exist. Syria owes its political importance less to the qualities of its population that to its geographical position." Written almost 30 years

any major commodity exports like oil, gold or high-value cash crops. This drove the country to adopt a liberal, open economic system to differentiate itself in a historically more statist region to drive growth. The country's relatively liberal financial and banking secrecy laws attracted regional foreign investments in the service sector. So the lack of oil or other commodity exports might have been a blessing in disguise inasmuch as this was one less potential conflict driver to add to the country's overall risk of civil war. While the Lebanese economy does not have commodity exports that expose a country to external price shocks, its the heavy reliance on oil imports, tourism and the banking sector exposed Lebanon to regional shocks as well as international demand shocks and commodity price shocks.

> "The share of the tertiary sector (finance, commerce, transport, education, health) in the
> gross domestic product increased from 62 percent in 1950 to nearly 72 percent in 1970,
> one of the highest rates in the world… In 1965 it was estimated that 68 percent of the
> value added in the services sector was sold to foreign customers; this was equivalent to
> some 32 percent of the GDP!"[116]

Anytime there was a regional war or simply worries of a conflict the tourism sector would come to a standstill. Similarly, the banking sector was geared towards Arab oil money that started looking for alternative markets for investment after the 1967 War. Thus a big portion of the Lebanese economy was tied to regional stability in the most volatile region of the world. This exposure left long-term growth prospects vulnerable and many times the risks materialized and people's livelihood suffered, increasing the risk of conflict.

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before the civil war, Hourani is talking about Greater Syria which includes modern Lebanon (Hourani 1946, 10-24).
[116] Nasr, Salim. "Backdrop to Civil War: The Crisis of Lebanese Capitalism;" *MERIP Reports*, No. 73, Dec. 1978, pp. 3-13.

3.2 HISTORY OF CIVIL WARS

A history of sectarian conflict that dates back to the nineteenth century was never forgotten and the traditional ruling families could raise sectarian animosities to mobilize vast swaths of the society at their whim. Most ominously is that the ruling elites, feudal and large landowning families, that were involved in the historical sectarian conflicts continued to rule in one form or another, either through direct involvement in politics or patronage. Once a country has had a civil war, its risk of falling into another civil war is ten times higher than before the conflict started, after which this risk decreases year by year.[117] Lebanon's history of civil wars helps explain the 1975-1990 Lebanese Civil War, 15 years, and the failure of many truces and signed agreements to hold. Before the 1975-1990 civil war, Lebanon had several shorter and less destructive civil wars – discussed above in the review of the country's history, with the most significant one going back as far as 1860, and more recently the 1958 civil war. This history of civil wars entrenched sectarian hatred, weakened social capital and diminished the goodwill needed among people to prevent them from resorting to violence in trying times.

3.3 SECTARIAN DOMINANCE[118]

Daniel Pipes put it best: "the Maronite dilemma resembles that of the whites in South Africa: Both groups have a distinctive, centuries-old identity, both pride themselves on cultural ties to the West, and both wish to keep a majority of the

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[117] Collier et al. (2003) 104.

[118] Collier uses the term Ethnic Dominance. In Lebanon, the society is segregated along sectarian lines, and the Maronites were clearly the 'dominant' sect until the start of the civil war. There are elements of religious polarization in Lebanon too, but one can also use religious or sectarian dominance for the Lebanese case if one wishes to keep close to Collier's terminology.

population politically subjugated."[119] The Maronties resorted to raising militia forces in the 1970s for fear of losing their status quo privileges after the ascendancy of pan-Arabism and increased Palestinian[120] military activities in Lebanon.[121]

The inequitable governing system developed under the French Mandate was built with colonialist interests in mind and not as a true representative structure. "The Lebanese confessional solution was no longer adequate to the loads and demands of the present situation. The situation was beyond the rational management of the leaders."[122] The Lebanese cannot continue, however, to pin the blame on the French Mandate. The heart of the problem was a confessional system that no longer reflected the demographic changes on the ground: by 1975, Lebanon was 60% Muslim[123] and Shias were the largest community. Many attempts were made to revise the confessional system but the Lebanese factions could never agree on a revised political system.[124]

The parliament was divided along sectarian quotas that favored the Christian Maronites and the top three positions were also divided along sectarian lines. Christians refused to equitably share political and economic power with the Muslim majority.[125] As

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[119] Pipes, Daniel. "The Real Problem;" *Foreign Policy*, No. 51 (Summer, 1983), pp. 139-159.

[120]Two communities were excluded from the "clientelist system": Palestinian refugees and Shia migrants to Beirut. Both were easily radicalized since they felt excluded from the patronage system. The Maronites felt that their traditional homeland was being threatened by the radicalized communities. They were more threatened by the Palestinians who were becoming a 'state within a state' by the 1970s, causing the militarization of the Maronite community itself in the 1970s (Johnson 2001, 6).

[121] Owen (2000) 191; Johnson (2001) 56.

[122] Hudson, Michael C. "The Lebanese Crisis: The Limits of Consociational Democracy;" *Journal of Palestine Studies*, vol. 5, No. 3/4; Spring - Summer 1976, pp. 109-122.

[123] Per Yapp, clearly an estimate but several other sources agree with Yapp's conclusion, that the Muslims were a strong majority by the 1970s and that the Shias were the largest sect by then.
Faour conducted a demographic study in 1988. His conclusion supports the "widely-held view that Muslims comprise the majority of the Lebanese population (65 per cent). Soffer (1986) arrived at the same conclusion with a slightly lower estimate of the percentage of Muslims (60 per cent)."
See Table 1 for more detail.

[124] Yapp (1996) 277.

[125] Dilip Hiro describes the shortcoming of the National Pact: [the National Pact of 1943] "placed the all-powerful presidency into the hands of the Maronites. This locked the political system into a time warp. The

economic conditions of Muslims lagged behind those of the favored Christians, sectarian

tensions grew and the traditional politicians, *zu'ama,* were able to take advantage of these

grievances for personal benefits.

3.4 GOVERNMENT CORRUPTION

The sectarian political system fostered and reinforced cronyism and clientelism

(*Za'ama*). The society was highly politicized along sectarian lines. The country adopted a

laissez-fair economic system from the beginning and reaped higher levels of growth than

most of its neighbors. Still, there were inherent inefficiencies due to corruption and the

use of largesse by politicians to ensure loyalties and continued support.[126]

Rabinovich, a political scientist, observes that the conservative system aimed at

conserving the status quo; religious and traditional leaders kept their power and their

strength was practically instituted. The political and electoral system consolidated the

position of the *zu'ama* at the expense of the development of cross-sectarian political

parties with national agendas. The system called for election of parliamentary members

through regional lists; therefore, the *za'im* could carry the whole region and have his men

as representatives in the parliament in a locked system of patronage. The "Lebanese

system acquired an archaic complexion" because it solidified the regional *za'ama*

(lordship) at the expense of the national identity.[127]

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only way the faster-growing Muslim population could adjust the system to reflect the demographic reality
was by taking up arms" (Hiro 1993, 200)
[126] It should be clarified that compared to other governments of the region, the Lebanese government
remained small and modest. Most Lebanese went to private schools, and the country had a small army and
relatively small government institutions. However, pressure to expand civil service mounted as patronage
politics were more entrenched in the confessional system (Yapp 1996, 113).
[127] Rabinovich (1985) 24.

"Although the Lebanese were tolerant of political venality up to a point, they had been sorely abused in recent years. Corruption and favouritism pervaded the whole system – including the bureaucracy and parliament as well as the presidency." [128] Contracts were not granted based on the highest bidder or lowest cost but on favoritism. *Wasta*, a rampant form of corruption, became the norm for employment as people did not expect to get a job unless they had *wasta*, a powerful "mediator."

3.5 TOO MANY PARTIES TO PLEASE

While on the face of it, the conflict might have been Muslim-Christian or sectarian, the truth is that there were too many parties to satisfy: various Lebanese Christian and Muslim sects (eighteen sects with several political parties each); pro-Soviet or pro-American Lebanese; Nasserite/pan-Arabic or Independent Lebanese; pro-Palestinian, pro-Syrian or pro-Israeli Lebanese; Palestinians; Syrians; Israelis; French; Americans; Soviets (formerly); Iranians; Egyptians; Saudis; and Iraqis. Whenever a truce or an agreement was made between two or three parties, there was always a fourth, a fifth who felt betrayed or ignored and resorted to violence to achieve their aims. And predictably this violence was met with more violence and hence such violence never achieved the desired results.

3.6 UNEVEN DEVELOPMENT AND INCOME INEQUALITY

Uneven development between the urban and rural areas: Beirut was the most developed part of the country while rural and especially South Lebanon was ignored by

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[128] Hudson, Michael C. "The Lebanese Crisis: The Limits of Consociational Democracy;" *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol. 5, No. 3/4 (Spring - Summer, 1976), pp. 109-122

the central government.[129] The government provided basic services in the capital and Mount Lebanon, like roads, infrastructure, schools, universities, hospitals, telephones, and ports; without these it was hard to attract investors to the agricultural South. Lebanon's economy was still based on patronage and allocating government spending to the "connected." [130] The fact that the majority of undeveloped rural areas were predominantly Shia and in some places Sunni - Saida and Tripoli - led to associating underdevelopment with sectarian loyalties, as the government was perceived as a tool of the politically dominant sect, the Maronites, instead of a government for all the Lebanese.

By the late 1960s and early 1970s, the disparity between the South and rest of the country, along with high levels of violence in the undeveloped South led to massive migration to Beirut.[131] "By early 1975, 40 percent of Lebanon's entire rural population, including 50 percent of the rural population of the Beka'a and 65 percent of that of south

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[129] Soon after independence, Beirut became the leading banking centre of the Near East. The Lebanese government adopted a system of free trade and free currency exchange since 1943. By the 1960s, services contributed about 70% of GNP, which did not need a large government to flourish. Yapp sees that the economic and the political systems of Lebanon were in harmony. On the other hand, the benefits accrued especially to those groups, mainly Christian but also some *Beirutti* Sunni Muslims, who controlled the service industries. Agricultural and industrial workers were much less content with the government's policies; for them an increased state intervention in the economy was believed to bring increased prosperity. The Druze leaders (large landowners in the Chouf Mountain) and the Shia in the South, believing that they've been neglected by the State to the benefit of the service sector, wanted more government intervention assuming that it would be in their benefit (Yapp 1996, 114).
I do not have income data per sectarian sectors, however, I have regional income levels (see below) that show large regional income disparities. And as these regions are dominated by sectarian groups, one can extrapolate the regional income discrepancies to sectarian ones in the absence of religiously segmented income levels.
[130] Government spending as a percentage of GDP was relatively small before the war (15.4% in 1972) and increased dramatically by end of the war (39.4% in 1990). Source: Saad and Kalakech (2009).
[131] There was a significant gap in social and economic status of Christians and Muslims, especially the Shias. The system's flaws were contained by president Shihab's dominant personality and political dexterity, but when he stepped down in 1964, they resurfaced under Charles Hilu. Rivalries among Arab states and PLO activities in 1968 strained the system and exposed its fragility to external factors. In 1970, conservative Maronites united and elected Suleiman Franjiyya to preserve the status quo (Rabinoich 1985, 28-33).

Lebanon had been driven out of their homes and off their land"[132] because of uneven development, violence between Palestinians and Israelis, and sometimes between Palestinians and Lebanese Southerners especially as the PLO became the major armed group in the south. This migration continued "to stream to Beirut (75 percent) and to foreign countries (25 percent). Thus, on the eve of the civil war, the crisis and the depopulation of the Lebanese countryside were at an advanced stage."[133] Eventually, clashes increased between migrants from rural areas (especially South Lebanon) with the more affluent and sometimes indifferent *Beirutti* inhabitants.

The top twenty percent of the Lebanese in terms of income strata had 61% of total income for the 1945-1980 period.[134] According to Muller there is a correlation between inequality and the stability of democracy: "A very strong inverse correlation is…observed between income inequality and regime stability for a sample of 33 democracies."[135] High levels of inequality in a country like Lebanon would lead to an unstable democracy or as actually happened in the 1980s to absolute anarchy.

This does not contradict Collier's finding (see Figure 5) that "At low levels of per capita income, political institutions tend to be less stable in democracies than in autocracies."[136] Collier is considering income levels, whereas, Muller is considering inequality levels. Also note that authoritarianism is more stable than democracy only at lower income levels, less than $1,000 in 1995 US dollars. Lebanon's GNP per capita was

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[132] Nasr, Salim. "Backdrop to Civil War: The Crisis of Lebanese Capitalism;" *MERIP Reports*, No. 73. Dec. 1978, pp. 3-13.
[133] *Ibid.*
[134] Muller, Edward N. "Democracy, Economic Development, and Income Inequality;" *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 53, No. 1(Feb., 1988), pp. 50-68. For data sources see footnote 18: Ahluwalia (1976), Jain (1975), and Kuznets (1963). Author took two snapshots of income: at inauguration of democracy and at breakdown of democracy.
[135] *Ibid.*
[136] Collier et al (2003, 64).

much higher than this on the eve of war; it was over US $1,000 in 1972 using 1976 US dollars.

There are no researchable Gini Coefficient values for Lebanon. However, I did come across a paper from the American University of Beirut studying inequality and armed conflict in Lebanon which had this to say about Lebanon's Gini Coefficient:

> ...it is important to note that the Estimated Household Income Inequality Dataset did not have an observation for Lebanon. Gates (1998, p. 143), however, documents a Gini coefficient of 53.7 for 1960. For the year 1997, the Food and Agricultural Organization (online) lists Lebanon with a Gini coefficient of 56. We therefore assumed for Lebanon a value of 53 for all observations, which is probably a rather conservative estimate.[137]
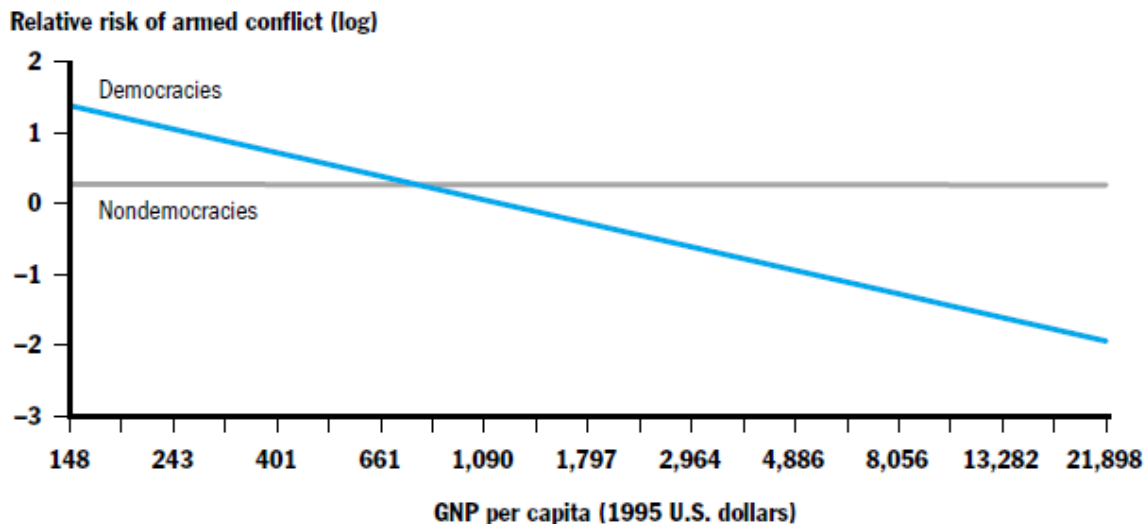
The paper concludes that "Lebanon is extremely unequal relative to its democratic and economic development level and that this inequality has substantial power in explaining armed conflict."[138]

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[137] Makdisi and Marktanner.
[138] *Ibid.*

Figure 5: The Risk of Civil War in Democracies and Nondemocracies at Different Levels of Income

Source: Collier et al. (2003, p.65)

Another indicator of regional inequality is income levels per region. I was able to get income levels for 1957, though eighteen years before the 1975-1990 conflict, they give an idea of the disparity between the regions. Per capita income in Beirut was US $803; in the Mountains, the North and Biqa' around US $200, and in the South US $151.[139] Having an income disparity of 400-500% along sectarian lines in a highly politicized country smaller than Connecticut makes Lebanon an opportunity not to be missed by any capable and willing *za'im*. Communal *za'ims* were eager to point out this income disparity along sectarian lines, blame the government for it, and promise their constituencies with more favorable government spending if only the people would

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[139] Hudson, Michael C. "Democracy and Social Mobilization in Lebanese Politics;" *Comparative Politics*, vol. 1, No. 2 (Jan., 1969), pp. 245-263.

maintain their undivided loyalties. Most of this was due to the rapid transformation of the economy from a rural/agriculture based to a service based economy.[140]

"By 1966 less than one-third (28%) of the labor force was engaged in the services sector which generated 68% of the GNP. In other words, two-thirds of the labor force must struggle for only one-third of the national income…Over the last two decades [late 1950s to late 1970s] *growth* has taken place in Lebanon's economy, but not *development* of benefit to the whole population."[141]

I would like to qualify my agreement with Muller, Hudson and Farson's conclusions since such income discrepancies do not always cause conflicts in other developing countries. I still believe, however, they were an important factor in Lebanon due to their uneven distribution. Income disparities were concentrated along sectarian lines in Lebanon, where everyone is aware of the patronage system and government corruption. So it was much easier to raise sentiments of disenfranchisement among a particular sect. Confessionalism makes it easier to channel any economic grievances along sectarian lines especially if communities were "encouraged to do so by their political leaders."[142] The Lebanese people's attitude toward their government was a reflection of their standards of living. If a region's economic performance suffered, they simply blamed it on the government which is led by another sect. This is exactly what happened among the Shias and led to the rise of the *Mahronmeen* (Deprived) *Movement* which later spurred the current *Amal Movement.* Shia politicians were successful in

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[140] Hourani 1981, pp. 147-148: "The most important event in Lebanese history after 1920 was the transformation of an agrarian republic into an extended city-state, a metropolis with its hinterland, and political events can only be understood in this context."
[141] Samih Farsoun. "Student Protests and the Coming Crisis in Lebanon", *MERIP Reports*, No. 19. (Aug., 1973), pp. 3-14.
[142] Johnson (2001) 23.

convincing their coreligionists that the root of their destitute resided in their unfair treatment by the government in Beirut.

In a study on the political positions of Lebanese students in the 1970s, Halim Barakat discovers a deeply politicized society. The overall socioeconomic position of the religious community to which students belonged was more indicative of the political and economic identification of a student than his/her immediate socioeconomic position. A rich Muslim student – whose community lagged economically - was more prone to identify with leftist ideologies than a Christian poor student – whose community fared better socioeconomically.[143]

3.7 CONFLICT NEIGHBORS: CONFLICT SPILLOVER

In addition to its disintegrated society and sectarian politics, Lebanon's neighbors were in conflict. After "sectarian dominance," the Arab-Israeli conflict is probably the second most important cause of conflict or at least the escalation of the civil war to uncontrollable violence. Lebanon has "bad neighbors" indeed.

Lebanon received the first influx of Palestinian migrants in 1948 after the first Arab-Israeli conflict. The second wave arrived after the 1967 Arab-Israeli war and the third major one in 1970, after "Black September" when the PLO was kicked out of Jordan. As of Dec 31st 2006, according to UNRWA, 408,438 Palestinian refugees live in 12 camps in Lebanon.[144] This is not the entire number of Palestinians as many well-off Palestinians would not be registered with UNRWA. Still, the lower estimate of 408,438 makes for ten percent of the Lebanese population, thus their impact on Lebanon's politics

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[143] Barakat 1977.
[144] "UNRWA Health Department Annual Report 2006;" accessed on 3/20/2010 at http://www.unrwa.org/userfiles/20100116104258.pdf

is significant. Lebanon did not have to contend with hosting a large immigrant influx but with an armed, actively fighting group that many times challenged the Lebanese government. Palestinians were using Lebanon as a staging ground to launch attacks against Israel. This led to several Israeli invasions in retaliation for Palestinian guerilla activities that caused the most damage to the country in human costs and destroyed infrastructure. Internally, it caused divisions between Muslims and Christians in their support for the Palestinians and their activities against Israel. Muslims in general and leftist organizations were sympathetic to the right of Palestinians to a war of liberation, whereas the Maronites saw the Palestinians as a threat to Lebanon's sovereignty and did not want to sacrifice their country for a Muslim-Arab cause. Increased Palestinian armed presence radicalized the underprivileged Muslims, mostly Shia migrants to Beirut from the South. This radicalization was considered by the Maronites a threat to the political system that had favored their ilk.[145] The Shias felt that they paid the highest price since they were predominantly in South Lebanon before the civil war, the area that bore the brunt of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict before the 1982 invasion, when Beirut was the site of the heaviest destruction. Continuous Israeli reconnaissance and sonic booms over Beirut and other Lebanese cities remind the Lebanese that they are not safe from the Israeli reach and this affects people's perceptions about safety and stability, which decreased Lebanon's attractiveness as an investment and tourist destination.

Israeli-Syrian Conflict

After Syria lost the Golan Heights to Israel in the 1967 war, it increased its involvement in Lebanese politics. Lebanon became even more important to its national

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[145] Hiro (1993) 200.

security strategies. Unable to launch a successful conventional war against Israel, it armed and supported proxy forces in South Lebanon to fight its battles on Lebanese lands. Again, Lebanon bore the cost while Syria reaped the political dividends. Syria was also worried about the rise of the pro-Israeli Phalangists so at times it intervened directly in the Lebanese war against them. Ironically, at other times when the LNM almost defeated the Christians, Syria interfered to protect the Maronites to avoid having one dominant faction that would eventually stand up to Syrian influence in Lebanon. So having warring factions with no absolute military advantage worked well for the Syrians who could be called upon as intermediaries by the loosing party for support.

External Intervention

The Lebanese war was not isolated from the geopolitics of its time. This was at the height of the Cold War, the rise of Iranian influence who supported the Shias in Lebanon, and the Iran-Iraq war. Saddam supported the Christian Army Leader, Aoun, to balance Iranian influence. The Saudis and traditional Gulf States funded Christian parties to offset the rise of Nasserite support among Lebanese Muslims. The Americans came to the rescue of the Christian and pro-Western presidents on more than one occasion with military intervention, as did the French. The list goes on and continues today. Lebanese divided loyalties facilitated external interventions. Several times, Lebanese militias actively sought funding and weaponry from whomever would provide them in exchange for short-lived loyalties. While many Lebanese blame external world powers for their miseries, the truth is that their eagerness to accept external intervention made meddling in Lebanon's internal affairs the norm, to the extent that choosing the next president ceased

to be a Lebanese affair and the new norm was for external powers to agree among themselves and give a name to the parliament to elect. The same impasse was repeated in 2007 after the end of the last Lebanese president's term. The country remained without a president till May 2008, when the Lebanese parties signed an agreement in Doha, Qatar with Saudi and Syrian blessing.[146]

3.8 DOING BUSINESS

There are no rankings for doing business in Lebanon for the years preceding the Lebanese civil war (1975-1990); however, one can use the Doing Business results published by The World Bank Group for 2008 to assess business conditions prior to the civil war (see Table 2). One can argue that the environment for doing business in 2008 is more conducive than those prevailing in the post-Independence and pre-civil war period since the late Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri liberalized the economy and introduced many reforms after the conflict ended during the 1990s. To be conservative one can assume it was not any worse in 2008 than the during pre-civil war era.

Overall Lebanon ranks 85 out of a total 178 countries for the Ease of Doing Business. This seems like an average ranking, but the country is 132 for Starting a Business, 113 for Dealing with Licenses, 121 for Enforcing Contracts, and 117 for Closing a Business. Lebanon is practically shooting itself in the foot. In effect, the country could achieve far greater prosperity by greatly liberalizing the legal, regulatory and bureaucratic practices that constrain individuals from realizing their potential.

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[146] *BBC*; "Lebanon vote ends leader deadlock;" published on 2008/05/25; accessed on 3/10/10 at http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/middle_east/7418953.stm

The country has free market policies on paper but the problem is bureaucracy and implementing these laws efficiently with minimal government involvement. If the environment to do business were more favorable, one would expect less rent seeking and a higher growth rate and more economic opportunities for the various Lebanese groups to profit from instead of resorting to violence in counterproductive attempts to achieve better standards of living at the cost of destroying each other and the country.

Table 2: Lebanon's ranking in Doing Business 2008

Rank	Doing Business 2008
Ease of Doing Business	85
Starting a Business	132
Dealing with Licenses	113
Employing Workers	53
Registering Property	92
Getting Credit	48
Protecting Investors	83
Paying Taxes	33
Trading Across Borders	83
Enforcing Contracts	121
Closing a Business	117

Source: *Doing Business 2008 Lebanon*: A Project Benchmarking the Regulatory Cost of Doing Business in 178 Economies, World Bank Group, Accessed on 3/20/2008 at http://www.doingbusiness.org

3.9 GOVERNANCE

Similar to inferring from the recent Doing Business rankings, I will use the range of the 1996-2006 Worldwide Governance Indicators to form an assessment of the governance situation in Lebanon during the pre-war period. Again, the assumption that the situation is not any worse today is feasible since the country has had over 15 years of post-conflict peace and development, significant government reforms in the 1990s and implementation of the Ta'if agreement. All indicators range between the 25th and 50th

percentile and recently the Political Stability indicator dipped far below the 25th percentile (see Figure 6). According to the booklet issued by The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development on measuring governance, "[r]esearchers estimate that when governance is improved by one standard deviation, incomes rise about three-fold in the long run." [147] The results show that there is plenty of room for improvement for governance in Lebanon.

So another cause of repeated conflicts is the lack of "good governance" which would have precipitated lower growth than possible with better governance. Moreover, the low ranking for Voice and Accountability, "the extent to which a country's citizens are able to participate in selecting their government, as well as freedom of expression, freedom of association, and a free media,"[148] is a reasonable explanation of why so many Lebanese resort to violence, rightly or wrongly, since the available system would not be capable of addressing their concerns. Lebanon has achieved low-middle to middle per capita income level; so an ineffective or partial democracy is no longer acceptable to the public and increases the risk of conflict.[149]
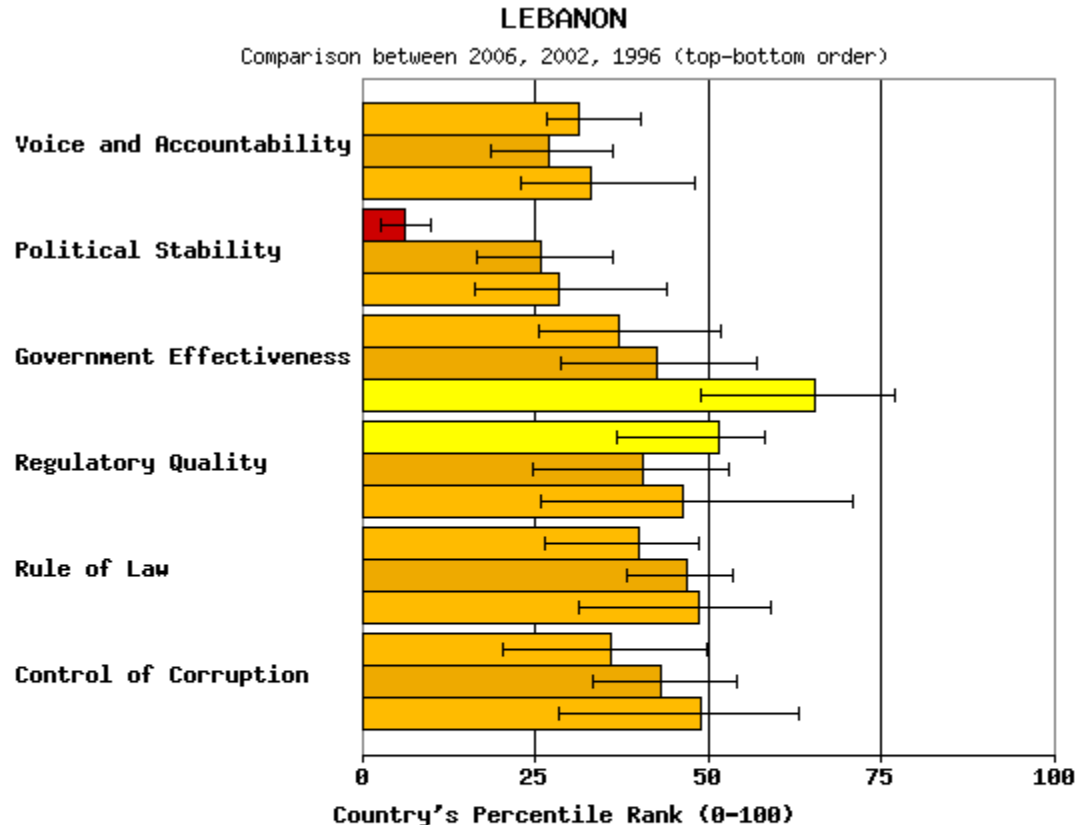
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[147] "A Decade of Measuring the Quality of Governance: Governance Matters 2007 Worldwide Governance Indicators, 1996–2006," The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development / The World Bank, 2007; accessed on 3/20/2010 at http://siteresources.worldbank.org/NEWS/Resources/wbi2007-report.pdf
[148] *Ibid.*
[149] Collier et al. (2003), 64.

Figure 6: Lebanon's Governance Indicators 1996, 2002, 2006

LEBANON

Comparison between 2006, 2002, 1996 (top-bottom order)

Country's Percentile Rank (0-100)

Source: Kaufmann D., A. Kraay, and M. Mastruzzi 2007: Governance Matters VI: Governance Indicators for 1996-2006

Note: The governance indicators presented here aggregate the views on the quality of governance provided by a large number of enterprise, citizen and expert survey respondents in industrial and developing countries. These data are gathered from a number of survey institutes, think tanks, non-governmental organizations, and international organizations. The aggregate indicators do not reflect the official views of the World Bank, its Executive Directors, or the countries they represent. Countries' relative positions on these indicators are subject to indicated margins of error that should be taken into consideration when making comparisons across countries and over time.

Figure 3; Downloaded from the Governance Matters 2007 website on 3/20/2008; http://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi2007/sc_chart.asp#

3.10 ECONOMIC FREEDOM

According to the 2008 Index of Economic Freedom, Lebanon ranks 73rd out of 157 countries, "the economy is 60.9% free" and can be described as "moderately free." Like many other indicators this is an average ranking. A closer look reveals serious problems for conducting business and obstructions to economic freedom. Investment is

only 30% free. The laws are liberal with few restrictions, "but red tape and corruption, arbitrary licensing decisions, archaic legislation, and an ineffectual judicial system are serious impediments, as are ongoing violence and the threat of war." Property Rights are 30% free due to weak enforcement; "The judiciary is significantly influenced by the security services and the police." Freedom from Corruption is 36% free due to rampant corruption in the public sector; "The public sector remains corrupt, especially in procurement, public works, taxation, and real estate registration."[150]

These constraints result in economic inefficiencies, lower incomes, higher costs to the consumer and lower growth rates than the country's potential. While not a direct cause since the country has relatively free policies when it comes to Trade, Fiscal and Financial Freedoms (See Figure 7) the high level of corruption in the public sector and the personal gains that result for those in power makes conflict attractive for those seeking a share of the rents created by policy-induced price distortions and corruption.
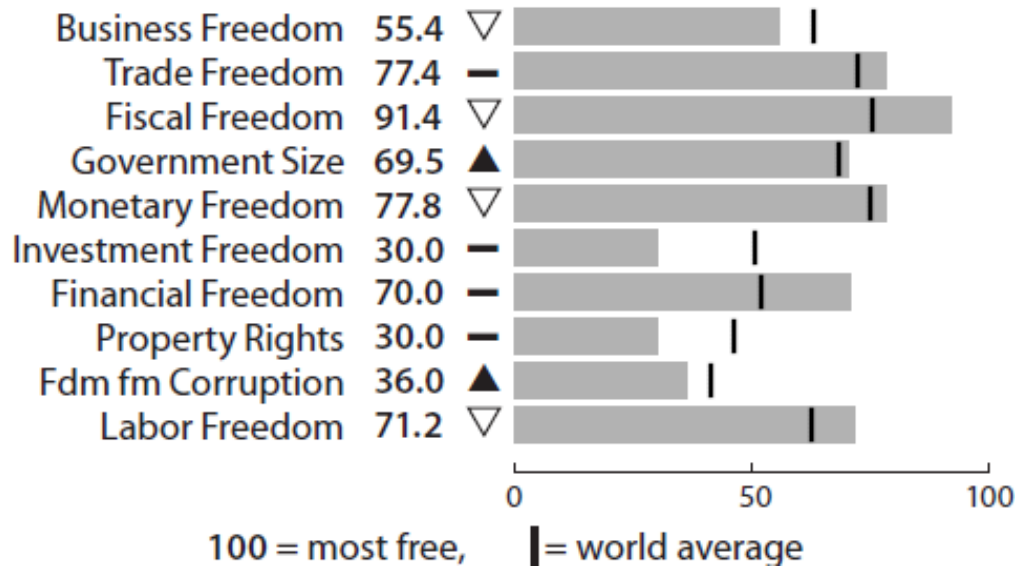
It is worth noting that almost all of the present government leaders with the exception of the Prime Minister were militia leaders or involved with militia activities during the civil war and continue the same practices that were present before the civil war: patronage politics, corruption, and government intervention in the judiciary.
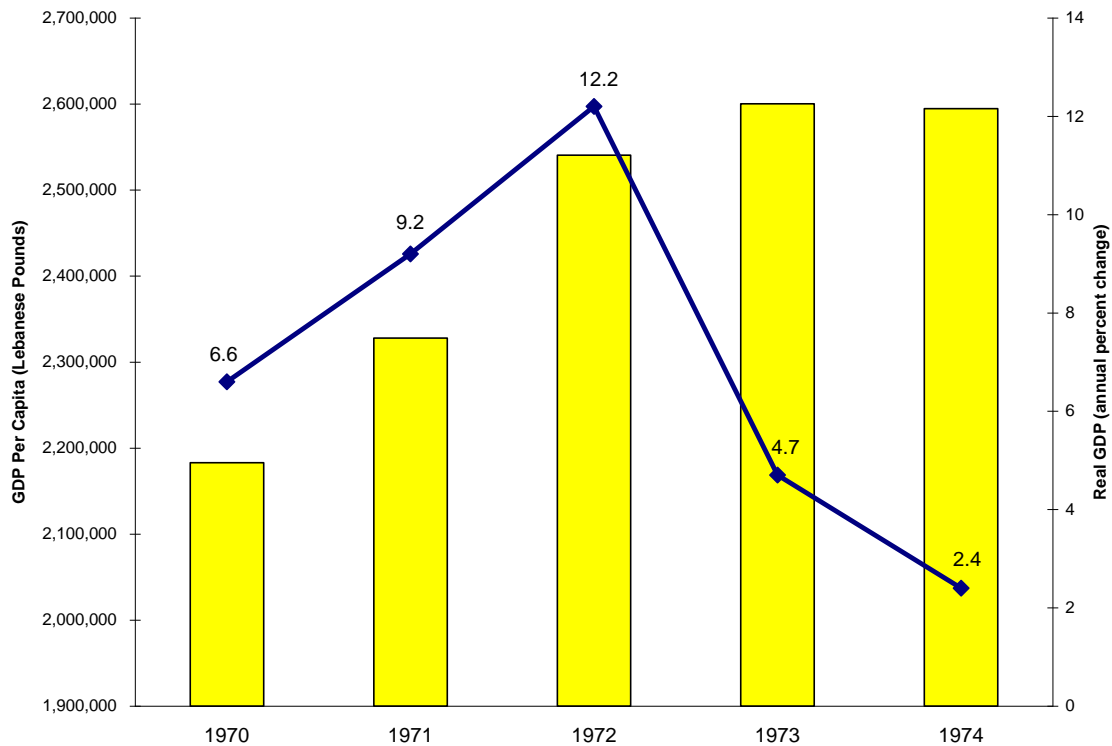
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[150] Holmes, Feulner, and Mary Anastasia O'Grady. "2008 Index of Economic Freedom;" The Heritage Foundation and Dow Jones & Company, Inc.; 2008, accessed on 5/6/2008 at www.heritage.org/index

Figure 7: Lebanon's Ten Economic Freedoms

Business Freedom	55.4	▽
Trade Freedom	77.4	▬
Fiscal Freedom	91.4	▽
Government Size	69.5	▲
Monetary Freedom	77.8	▽
Investment Freedom	30.0	▬
Financial Freedom	70.0	▬
Property Rights	30.0	▬
Fdm fm Corruption	36.0	▲
Labor Freedom	71.2	▽

100 = most free, ▮ = world average

Source: Holmes, Feulner, and Mary Anastasia O'Grady. "2008 Index of Economic Freedom;" The Heritage Foundation and Dow Jones & Company, Inc.; 2008, accessed on 5/6/2008 at www.heritage.org/index

3.11 INCOME AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

Based on IMF data from the World Economic Outlook Database, Lebanon had high rates of real growth before the 1975 war years. There was a slowdown after the high growth rates of the early seventies, but the economy still registered high positive growth rates during 1970-1974 (see Figure 8). The slowdown in growth was due to the 1973 war, oil price shock and geopolitical uncertainties in the region. Given the high rates of economic growth until 1974, one evidently must search elsewhere for the causes of the protracted civil war that broke out in 1975. One candidate is the highly politicized economy, which spawned and deepened internal tensions and political gridlocks. There were some symptoms of a slowing economy in general due to Arab oil money bypassing the Lebanese banking system in favor of European and American banks. Also, the role of Lebanon as a transit country for goods was diminishing as other Arab countries were

building up their own ports and roads. For example, "the volume of transactions on the Beirut stock exchange have declined drastically and progressively: from L.L. [Lebanese Pounds] 28.9 m in 1965 to L.L. 4.7 m in 1968. Capital investments in corporations declined from L.L. 304 millions in 1965 to L.L. 170 millions in 1966, L.L. 120 millions in 1967 and L.L. 49 millions in 1968."[151] The most immediate economic problem, however, was inflation. "In 1973, the rise in the cost of consumer goods ranged between 24% and 29%."[152] While the economy was still growing until the civil war year, an uncertain economic future and capital flight compounded with inflation might have made Lebanon more conflict prone.

Figure 8: Growth Rates 1970-1974

Source: Author.
Data Source: IMF, The World Economic Outlook (WEO) Database April 2003

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[151] Farsoun, Samih. "Student Protests and the Coming Crisis in Lebanon;" *MERIP Reports*, no. 19; August 1973, pp. 3-14.
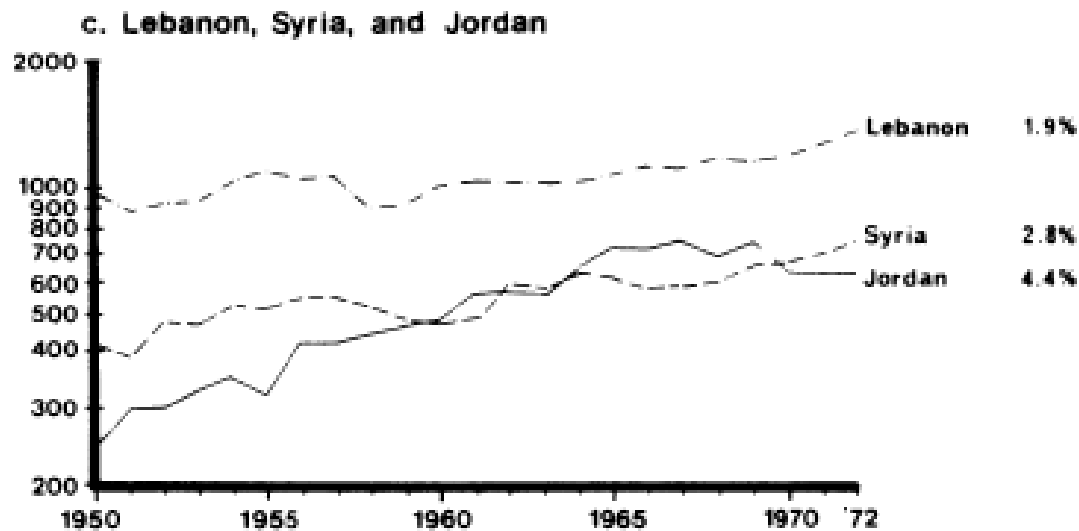[152] "Lebanon a Year Later: The Crisis Deepens;" *MERIP Reports*, No. 30; August 1974, pp. 26-28.

I also checked income levels, per capita GNP, for an earlier period. There was a period of stagnation in the 1950s and that could have been a factor in bringing about the 1958 civil war "but subsequently, between 1958 and 1972, per capita real GNP grew at an average annual rate of 3.5 percent."[153] This is a very rapid rate of growth. There was a dip starting in 1956 due to the Suez Crisis and the 1958 civil war which was far less destructive than the 1975-1990 civil war. After the 1958 war, the economy started recovering immediately but the per capita income took ten years to go back to the 1955 levels; this is a testimony to the enduring cost of conflict (to be discussed further later in this paper).

The consistent growth for over 15 years before the civil war shows that growth is not a cause of the Lebanese civil war. Income levels were higher than other countries in the region that did not have civil wars in the same period like Syria and Jordan; though these countries did show higher levels of average growth (see Figure 9). The optimism that higher growth brings could have been a factor in these countries averting conflict. Still overall, there is no evidence that the country's economic growth or the level of per capita income are causes of the 1975 conflict.

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[153] Barlow, Robin. "Economic Growth in the Middle East, 1950-1972;" *International Journal of Middle East Studies*; Vol. 14, No. 2, May 1982, pp. 129-157.

Figure 9: Per Capita GNP in 1976 Dollars and its Average Growth during 1950-1972

c. Lebanon, Syria, and Jordan

Source: Barlow (1982). Percentages on right-hand side are the average annual rate of increase for 1950-1972.

3.12 MILITARY SPENDING

As a percentage of GDP, military spending was not high by the region's standard, 2.6% of GDP before the war in 1971.[154] So it's hard to consider military spending as a cause of war. In fact, one can hypothetically argue that a stronger national army, hence higher military spending, might have discouraged conflict or controlled the Palestinians and other militias but this is hard to prove empirically. I contend that even with a larger military and security apparatus, in a country like Lebanon, where the soldiers are deeply divided along sectarian lines, the army would still have split like it did several times in 1976 and in the 1980s. I believe that would have aggravated the situation further; the country would have only gained two additional well-armed parties to the conflict (i.e. the factions of a split army).

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[154] Stewart, Frances, Humphreys, Frank P. "Civil Conflict in Developing Countries over the Last Quarter of a Century: An Empirical Overview of Economic and Social Consequences," *Oxford Development Studies,* Vol. 25, Issue 1, February 1997.

3.13 DIASPORA

Lebanon has a very large diaspora ranging from a conservatively estimated five million to an inflated estimate of 15 million. Even at low end of the estimates the total exceeds Lebanon's domestic population, and has higher levels of income than the locals.[155] As Collier et. al. (2003, 85) explains, this large diaspora almost doubled the risk of civil war in Lebanon. Most of the migrants were skilled labor or successful entrepreneurs and many became famous and multi-millionaires. There are big Lebanese concentrations of Sunnis in Australia, Maronites in Western countries and Shias in Africa. Usually those who leave the country tend to become more hard-line than those living in the home country. One reason could be that they are detached from the daily repercussions of extreme ideologies and have the means to support extremists. The massive remittances of the Lebanese, estimated at US\$ 1.5-2.5 billion,[156] were an important source of revenue for the militias and helped subsidize their activities. Because the militias controlled the banks, the land and business opportunities in their domains to the exclusion of the State, some Lebanese expatriates were partners with militia leaders and *zu'amas* in profitable legal and illegal activities like arms smuggling, drug production and distribution.[157]

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[155] Hourani (1992, 696).
[156] Arnson and Zartman (2005) 43.
Another source, Migration Policy Institute, puts remittances at US\$ 1.8 billion in 1990 growing progressively to US\$ billion in 2008. Source: "Remittances Profile: Lebanon," accessed on 5/31/2010 at http://www.migrationinformation.org/datahub/remittances/Lebanon.pdf
Lebanon's leading English daily newspaper, The Daily Star, quoted the Central Bank's governor saying "that annual remittances in 2006 alone reached \$5.6 billion, or 25.8 percent of GDP." Source: "World Bank puts 2006 remittances at \$5.6 billion," accessed on 5/31/2010 at http://www.zawya.com/pdfstory.cfm?storyid=DS240307_dsart35&l=064520070324. Therefore, Arnson and Zartman's remittance estimates seem to be in line with the historical trend.
[157] *Ibid.*

3.14 RENTS AND AID MONEY

Lebanon has been a recipient of foreign aid for decades. The country has had donors from Western as well as Arab countries. During the sixties and seventies, Lebanon received donations to help the regions most affected by the Israeli attacks, yet there were always scandals regarding allocations of aid money. One 1974 MERIP commented on the government's relief plan to aid southerners hurt by Israeli attacks, "…even in respect to this plan, scandals abound in the mass media as the feudal and semi-feudal zu'ama direct such government funds (in part received from Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and other oil states) to their own clients, allies and kinspeople, who are getting wealthier in the process."[158]

As more parties engage in rent-seeking activities in Lebanon – ruling elite and their cronies more successfully than others –

> the social losses inflicted by rent-seeking steadily mount, while the rest of society transfers an ever growing proportion of their real incomes to the beneficiaries of these subsidies. Increasingly, society will fragment into divisions by narrow interests, each seeking to garner subsidies from everyone else. Such is the recipe for a slow growth, conflictual society.[159]

This scenario very much reflects the state of the Lebanese economy before and during the 1975-1990 civil war.

Hence, the element of rent-seeking in the economy, especially the private appropriation and misallocation of foreign aid and government spending, increased the

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[158] "Lebanon a Year Later: The Crisis Deepens;" *MERIP Reports;* No. 30, August 1974, pp. 26-28.
[159] Ground (2010). It is worth noting that Lebanon's case of rent seeking meets Ground's definition of a "Negative Sum Game" where "the sum of the social losses imposed on society from ubiquitous rent-seeking exceeds the sum of the private gains from the struggle over the distribution and redistribution of dwindling national income. Such societies become highly conflict prone." Lebanon was and is still a "highly conflict prone" society indeed.

risk of a civil war by hampering potential higher growth rates as well as making the state an attractive resource to capture for private use.

3.15 DIVERGENT NATIONAL IDENTITIES

I would like to add one major cause of the Lebanese civil war not covered by Collier's list of potential causes of conflict: divergent national identities. At the creation of Greater Lebanon, the Lebanese communities held very different national identities.

The Maronites saw Lebanon as an independent Christian nation with a western outlook. For them Lebanon was the eastern most limit of the Christian Mediterranean. They had a long history of autonomy in Mount Lebanon, an established religious, cultural and commercial relationship with Europe and the New World. This Christian entity was to be defended at any cost.[160] The Muslims, the Sunnis more than others, saw themselves as Ottoman citizens, part of a much larger Muslim nation. With the rise of Arab nationalism, their aim was unity with the larger Arab world or at least unity within a Greater Syria where they would be part of the ruling majority, Sunni Muslims. The Druzes always considered themselves Arabs and held pan-Arab aspirations as long as their community's interests were respected and protected in Mount Lebanon.[161]

The construction of Greater Lebanon brought with it the Sunni community which historically espoused the Ottoman political culture – very different from the Maronite

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[160] For example, when Shihab, Chamoun's successor after the 1958 civil war, was bent on increasing the involvement of Lebanese Muslims in the political and administrative affairs of the state, many Christians saw that as "uncalled-for concessions." Threatened by Muslim radicalization in the 1970s, the Phalange destroyed downtown Beirut in fierce fighting to signal that the Lebanese Christians would "destroy the country themselves, or force its partition, rather than to yield on any issue" (Salibi 1976, 1-3 & 126-127).
[161] Salibi (1976) 159-162; Arnson and Zartman (2005) 24-25.

mountain culture.[162] For the Muslims, Lebanon's sovereignty could be compromised or even sacrificed for a larger pan-Arab nation. This fact gains greater importance as the center of gravity, economically and demographically, shifts to Beirut and the other coastal cities with a Sunni majority in the second half of the twentieth century.[163]

Hourani supports the view that the highly politicized Lebanese never had a common identity or a uniting ideology, leaving them exposed to external meddling:

> The mass of unconcerned private citizens, living remote from political life, which makes the stability of larger states, scarcely existed. A small, weak country, lying in an important position, cannot prevent its internal conflicts becoming the channels through which great powers win influence and pursue their own rivalries; by its position and the nature of its population, Lebanon lay open to waves of influence from America, from western Europe, and from the Arab world lying all around.[164]

I include "bad neighbors" or "conflict spillover" as a major cause of conflict in Lebanon, but the country's lack of a unifying ideology made it much easier for external factors to influence internal politics. Rabinovich cites this lack of a uniting ideology as the Achilles' heel of Lebanon: "the independent Lebanese republic appears to be artificial and archaic, built on shaky demographic and political foundations, and therefore doomed to be destroyed by the domestic and external foes of its political system."[165]

For Rabinovich, the country did not fulfill the requirements of a nation state but was a patchwork at best and the country's *zaims* knew that: "The Lebanese polity was not

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[162] Even writing in the 1940s, almost 30 years before the civil war, Hourani identified this divergence early on: Maronite parties promoted a Lebanese independence agenda, whereas Muslim parties promoted Arab unity (Hourani 1947, 70).
[163] Hourani (1981)147-148.
[164] Hourani (1981) 141.
[165] Rabinovich (1985) 17.

based on the presumed existence of a Lebanese nation but on a confederation of protonational communities, each of which claimed the ultimate allegiance of its members."[166] It is for this reason that the presence of the Palestinians was so divisive and destructive in Lebanon whereas it was handled effectively in all other Arab states. The identity differences between the Christians and the Muslims exacerbated their attitudes towards the Palestinian activities. The Muslims saw it as a sacred duty to be supportive of the PLO; whereas, the Christians saw the PLO's presence as an abuse of Lebanese sovereignty and security.[167]

In Figure 10, I represent the gap in the national identities of the Lebanese Christians and Muslims. Obviously, this is a broad generalization, but I believe it illustrates the issue at hand. While other societies start with a common identity base (i.e. Arabic, European, Muslim, Christian, African, Western, Asian, etc…), the different Lebanese communities build their identities on two different supranational affiliations. Hence the Lebanese republic had to contend with two different national identity pyramids. Moreover, Johnson believes that if the Lebanese did not have a shared national outlook, the confessional system did not help create one. A Lebanese society structured around confessional representation in every aspect of life (politics, military, education, commerce and social services) would find its "prospects for a national identification are reduced."[168] That is why, 60 years after its creation, the Lebanese are still divided about their country's national outlook.
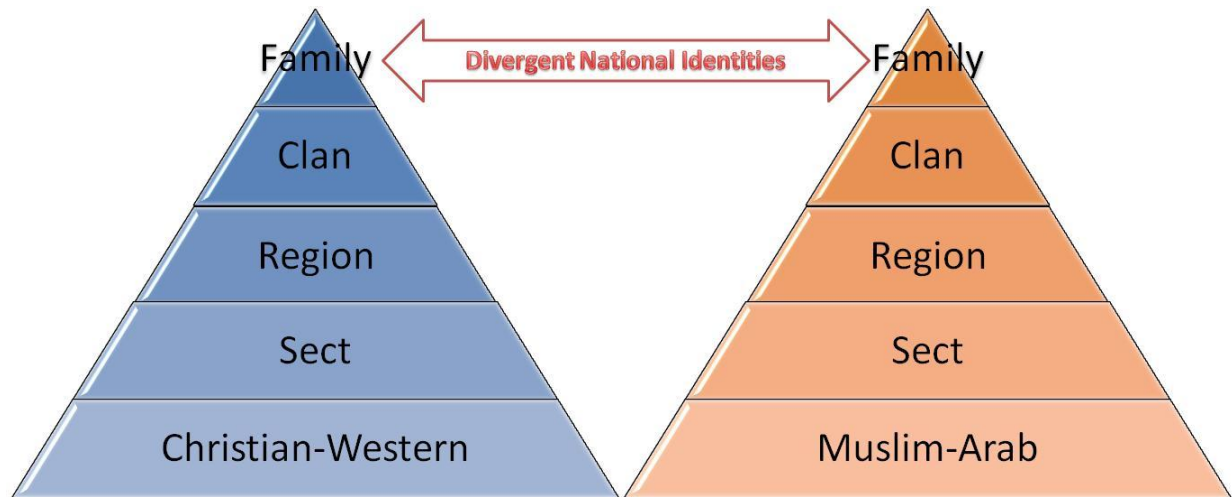
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[166] *Ibid., 24.*
[167] *Ibid., 42*
[168] Johnson (2001) 230-232.

Figure 10: Lebanese Identity Pyramids

Source: Author

3.16 CAUSES SUMMARY

The Lebanese civil war was the result of both internal and external factors. This is not restricted to the last civil war; it has recurred since the days of Ottoman rule:

> The three civil wars which Lebanon has experienced during the last two centuries – in 1860, 1958 and the…[1975-1990] one…– seem to have two main features in common. First, all three wars have involved an awakening of dormant religious sectarian tensions, which grew on every occasion to overshadow other expressed or implied sources and causes of conflict. Second, all three wars have been either initiated by regional or foreign powers to serve their own interests, or else used in one way or another for such ends.[169]

In addition to the classical causes identified by political scientists, like foreign interference, there are several other factors that increased the risk of a civil war in Lebanon and fall closely in line with the factors Collier identifies as major causes of conflict: sectarian dominance, "bad" neighbors, a large diaspora, and bad governance. A low ranking of ease of doing business, a low rating on economic freedom and a highly politicized economy add to these risks making the country's repeated conflicts more probable. See Table 3 for a summary of all the causes of war. To these I add one critical factor that combined with the others identified by Collier sealed Lebanon's fate: divergent national identities.

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[169] Kisirwani, Maroun. "Foreign Interference and Religious Animosity in Lebanon;" *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 15, No. 4. (Oct., 1980), pp. 685-700

Table 3: A summary of the causes of the Lebanese civil war

Potential Cause of War	Y/N
Geography and Natural Resources	NO
History of Civil Wars	YES
Sectarian Dominance	YES
Government Corruption	YES
Too Many Parties to Please	YES
Uneven Development & Income Inequality	YES
Conflict Neighbors: Conflict Spill Over	YES
Doing Business	YES
Governance	YES
Economic Freedom	YES
Income and Economic Growth	NO
Military Spending	NO
Diaspora	YES
Rents and Aid Money	YES
Divergent National Identities	YES

Source : Author.

A "YES" means that the potential cause increased the risk of war in Lebanon, a "NO" means it was not a conflict risk factor. This table does not reflect the magnitude of the risk factor.

Chapter 4: Costs of War

To assess the costs of the Lebanese civil war, I will follow the same structure used for assessing the causes of war. I will assess different costs of conflict individually to avoid confusion. There is no doubt that the impact of the costs of war on the population is compounded when experienced collectively, but it will be hard to reflect that in this paper. I also want to acknowledge that the grouping of the costs of war is inspired by three books of Collier.[170]

4.1 HUMAN COST

The Lebanese civil war is infamous for its ferocity and urban guerrilla fighting that in many news articles or movies when someone wants to describe how bad a conflict is they would compare it to Beirut. We can get an idea of the human toll if we just measure the war in human deaths compared to the country's small population. Several sources cite the figure of 150,000 people killed in the civil war, and that's the figure most used in Lebanon.[171] Edgar O'Ballance has a good section on the cost of the Lebanese War; he estimates about 150,000 to 200,000 perished during the war and 20,000 to 30,000 were kidnapped from a war population of 2.2 to 2.4 million.[172] This means that there was one death or injury for every ten people. There is hardly anyone in Lebanon who did not loose a relative during the civil war. In addition there are tens of thousands of "disappeared" people: no one knows what happened to them or ever recovered their bodies.

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[170] Collier et. al (2003); Bannon and Collier (2003); Collier (2007).
[171] LA Times, April 14, 2000
[172] O'Ballance (1998) 216.

It is hard to elaborate on the human tragedy of growing up and living through a 15 year brutal civil war. I hope the numbers above and other costs below describe some of that. Yet I doubt that one can ever capture in writing every individual suffering and human trauma experienced during such a war.

4.2 WEAK CENTRAL GOVERNMENT

Another result of the civil war was the virtual collapse of the central government. The Lebanese government became a shell of its former self with nominal authority in parts of Beirut. Lebanon was divided into different cantons under the control of various warring factions.[173] The resulting vacuum was exploited by militias and Palestinian fighters (PLO). The freedom to operate in Lebanon emboldened the PLO to launch more daring attacks on Israel and the result was devastating Israeli retaliations that did little to disrupt the PLO before the 1982 Israeli Invasion while destroying Lebanon's infrastructure and its economy.[174] The most significant invasions were in 1978 and 1982. In 1978, Israel invaded Lebanon, clearing out Palestinian strongholds as far north as the Litani River and establishing the renegade South Lebanese Army in South Lebanon. The 1982 Israeli invasion, which affected the entire southern half of Lebanon as far north as Beirut, was the most traumatic of the fifteen year war in casualties and economic ruin. Israel occupied the country south of the Litani river (about 10% of Lebanon) until 2000. The 1982 Israeli invasion and occupation of South Lebanon led to the formation of Hizbollah, which became the strongest militia in the country and is today the only party

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[173] Rabinovich (1985) 57.
[174] Cairo Agreement of 1969 was reinstated and PLO presence legitimized after the 1975-76 war (Rabinovich 1985, 56)

with arms other than the Lebanese army, strong enough to block presidential elections even though the government has a parliamentary majority.[175]

After the Shia saw their homeland, the South, overtaken by the Israelis with minimal resistance from the Lebanese Army, they were bent on forming their own defense apparatus. So a militant group splintered off *Amal*, the Shia movement with social welfare goals and took on increasingly Islamic Revolutionary tones (borrowing from the Iranian Islamic Revolution). With Syria's acquiescence, Hizbollah fighters were trained, armed and funded by the Iranians. Their status and capability kept growing to become by 2008 the kingmakers of Lebanese policy, as long as they met with Syria's ambitions. In other words, had Israel not invaded Lebanon, Hizbollah would not have come into existence. This shows how a civil war can end but its consequences remain far longer and how the Israeli action that was supposed to quell the Palestinian threat created a more perilous adversary.

In addition, the Lebanese government lost its independence to Syrian hegemony. With 30,000 soldiers stationed in Lebanon, Syria held a veto over presidential *selections* and total control over the country's foreign policy – Lebanon was not allowed to negotiate with Israel unilaterally. The Syrians oversaw selective implementation of justice. For example, they imprisoned Samir Gaaga, leader of the Maronite Lebanese Forces, for crimes during the war; whereas, they allowed other warlords to keep prominent positions in the government as long as they played by Syria's rules. Anti-Syrian politicians or members of the clergy were often assassinated or sent into exile. Syria again violated Lebanon's sovereignty by allowing some 2000 Iranian

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[175] *BBC*, "Lebanon vote ends leader deadlock," May 25, 2008. Accessed on 2/12/10 at http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/middle_east/7418953.stm

Revolutionary Guards to operate in the Biqa' and train Shiite groups, Hizbullah being the most prominent of them. Hizbullah members were allowed to keep their weapons, the only exception to the post-civil war disarmament policy. President Assad was determined to keep a strong bargaining chip with Israel for negotiations over the Golan Heights.[176]

4.3 INTERNATIONLIZATION OF THE CONFLICT

The many factions of the Lebanese civil war often sought funding and support from more powerful external parties. This internationalized the conflict, and the result was a more complicated conflict with more parties affected, reducing peace prospects and lengthening the conflict. At some time or another, there were Palestinian, Israeli, Syrian, Iranian, American, French, British, Italian, and other Arab fighters on Lebanese soil. These were in addition to the myriad clandestine operations as Lebanon became an open arena for intelligence operations and regional politics.

4.4 GDP AND WELFARE FORGONE

Several sources show that the fifteen year civil war almost halved Lebanon's economy. "Estimates in 1985 ranged from L£30 billion to L£43.8 billion; in either case, in real terms GDP [was] no more than half 1974 level. Inflation in 1987 [was] estimated at more than 700 percent, and unemployment estimated at 35 percent." [177] The International Monetary Fund "estimates that real gross domestic product in Lebanon dropped from LL 8.1 million in 1974 to LL 4.1 million in 1993."[178]

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[176] Johnson (2001) 181, 240-245.
[177] Collelo (1989), Chapter 3.
[178] Stewart, Dona J. "Economic Recovery and Reconstruction in Postwar Beirut;" *Geographical Review*, vol. 86, no. 4; (Oct., 1996), pp. 487-504.

Due to the capital intensive government rebuilding efforts total public debt rose from 58.6% of GDP in 2000 to 103.9% in 2006.[179]

I performed a counterfactual analysis to indicate the likely evolution of the Lebanese economy had the civil war never occurred. I choose the year 1969 as a base year with a 100 index to represent real GDP for that year. Based on IMF data, I took the average annual percent change of real GDP for all Developing and Transition Countries (some 147 countries) and applied it as the rate of change to the Lebanese economy had the war never happened. For the pre-war period, the Lebanese growth rate was actually higher than the selected group, so there is no overestimation of the welfare cost of the civil war, as measured by output and income forgone. As Figure 11 shows, at the end of the war, Lebanese real GDP was less than 50% of 1969's and less than a third of what it was the year before the war. Even 14 years after the end of the war, GDP is still less than 1969 GDP and 60% of the pre-war level. This shows how punishing a war can be and how long the cost of war persists. Had the war never happened, Lebanon could have had a real GDP over three times the 1969 level. This is an irreplaceable loss in welfare. While most of the developing world was growing, Lebanon was struggling to recover from fifteen years of war.
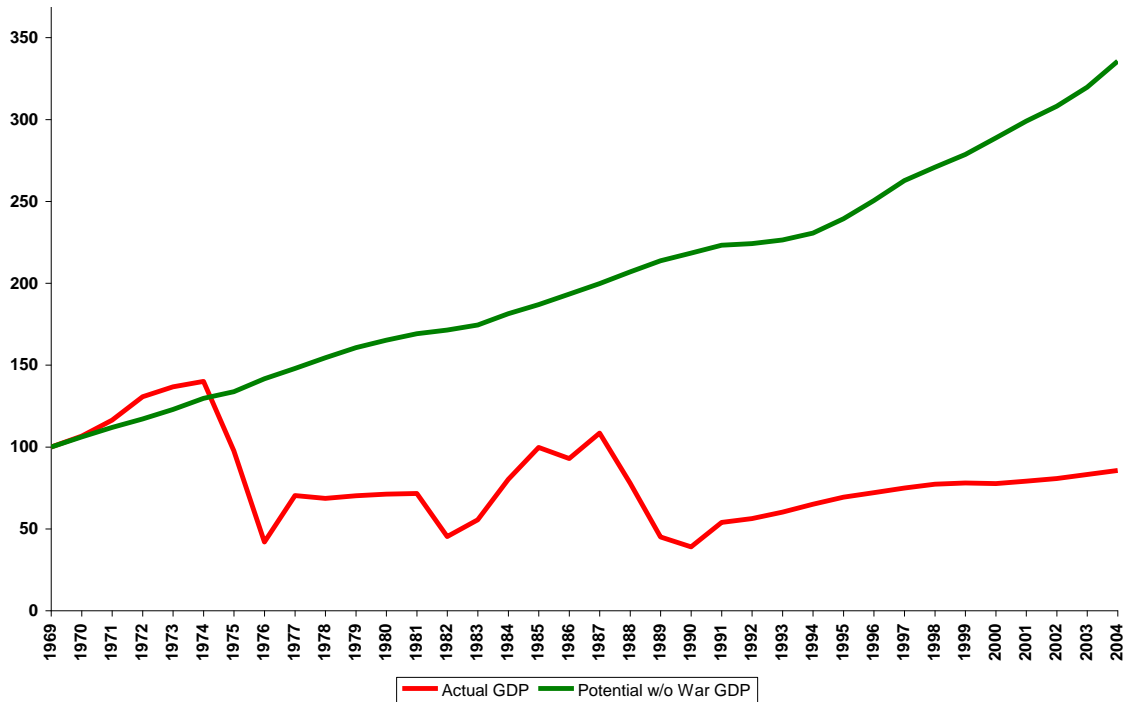
Salim Nasr points to another disruptive phenomenon during the war years, the forced redistribution of wealth: "The political-military up-heavals (sic) of 1975-76 and the following years were accompanied by all kinds of extortion exerted by the newly-formed and locally dominant armed factions, groups and gangs: pillage, seizure,

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[179] "Lebanon at a Glance," *Report No.47456-LB*, The World Bank, March 24 2009, p.40. Accessed on 3/21/10 at http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2009/04/03/000334955_20090403025016/Rendered/PDF/474560PJPR0LB0101Official0Use0Only1.pdf

occupation, forced taxation, smuggling and other forms of forced transfer proliferated."[180]

Figure 11: Cost of War – Lebanese GDP Forever Lost (Base Year 1969)

Source: Author
Data Source: IMF, The World Economic Outlook (WEO) Database April 2003

This was happening at the same time that the official economy was shrinking, with militias even controlling traditionally government functions like the sea port and customs. Custom revenues collected as a percentage of expected revenues decreased from 97% in 1980 to a miniscule 10% in 1986.[181] The confiscated state revenues benefitted the militias' destructive activities as well as their accumulation of wealth.

Becoming a failed state, Lebanon started attracting illegal activities and became a safe haven for arms smuggling, money laundering and drug production. For example, the

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[180] Nasr, Salim. "Lebanon's War: Is the End in Sight?," *Middle East Report*, No. 162, Lebanon's War, Jan-Feb 1990, pp. 4-8+30.
[181] *Ibid.*

value of opium and hashish production reached an estimated US$1 billion in 1987, equivalent to one-third of the Lebanese GDP at the time. An inefficient, corrupt and war-depressed economy affected the labor market: "the rate of unemployment [rose] from 5.4 in 1980 to 35 percent in 1989."[182]

4.5 INCREASED MILITARY SPENDING

Military spending increased dramatically due to the civil war – a common reaction of governments in civil war countries. It rose from 2.6% of GDP before the war (1971) to 6.6% in 1979 and to a high of 9.0% in 1985. Lebanon's 1971 GDP was only about 11% higher than that of 1985, so the increase in military spending was drastic. Ironically military spending increased to its highest level when the country needed development spending most. Military spending did not fall to prewar levels after war but remained high at 4.4% of GDP in 1994.[183]

4.6 CURRENCY DEVALUATION AND HYPERINFLATION

Decreased state revenue, increased military spending in the 1980s, more state subsidies, government budget deficits financed by printing money and a ruined economy led to a run on the *lira*, the Lebanese Pound. One of the main costs of the prolonged Lebanese war was hyperinflation and the collapse of the national currency. Having had ten straight years of growth prior to the war and a balance of payments surplus of more than US$4 billion the currency was stable until the last years of the war, but a day of
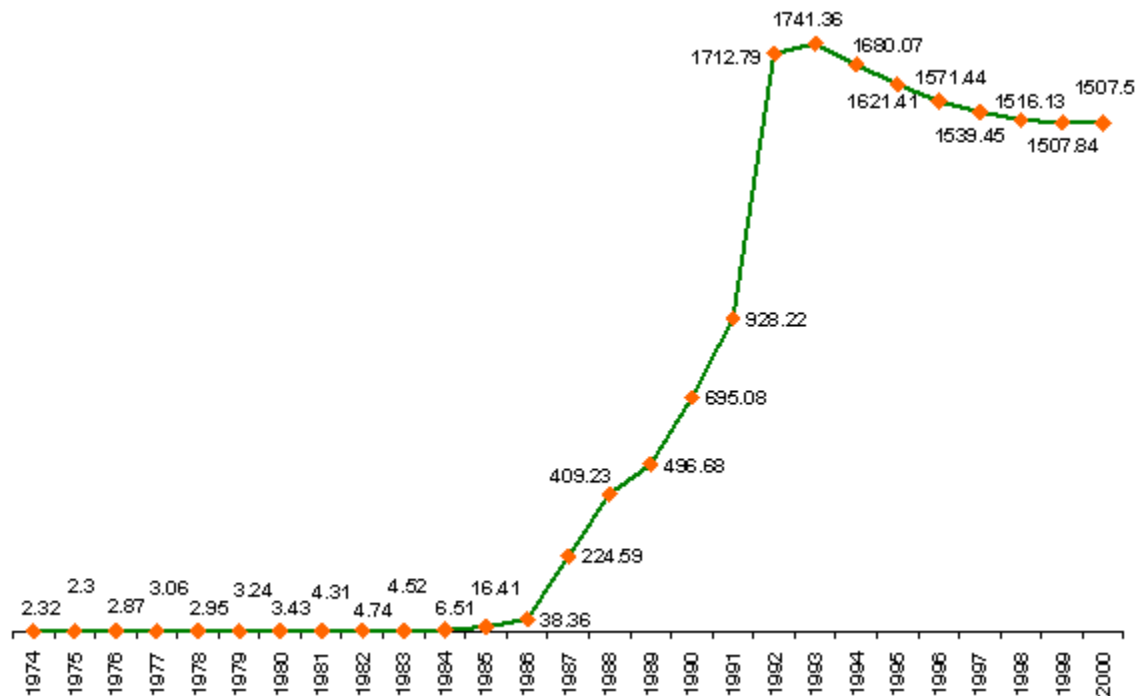
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[182] *Ibid.*
[183] Stewart, Frances, Humphreys, Frank P. "Civil Conflict in Developing Countries over the Last Quarter of a Century: An Empirical Overview of Economic and Social Consequences;" *Oxford Development Studies*, Vol. 25, Issue 1, February 1997.

reckoning was in the waiting. With the collapse of trust in the Lebanese Pound[184] (LP), depletion of the reserves, and crossing the psychological barrier of LP 100 per US$ the currency went into free fall. The *lira* went from LP 2.32 per US$ on the eve of war to over LP 500 per US$ at the end of war, and kept falling in the early nineties before stabilizing at LP 1,500 per US$ (Figure 12). Many people lost their life savings and there were numerous stories of suicides and heart attacks at the news of the falling currency. Figure 13 and Figure 14 show the impact of this devaluation on the poorest through the loss of purchasing power of the minimum wage and also the rise of emigration as the currency deteriorated.
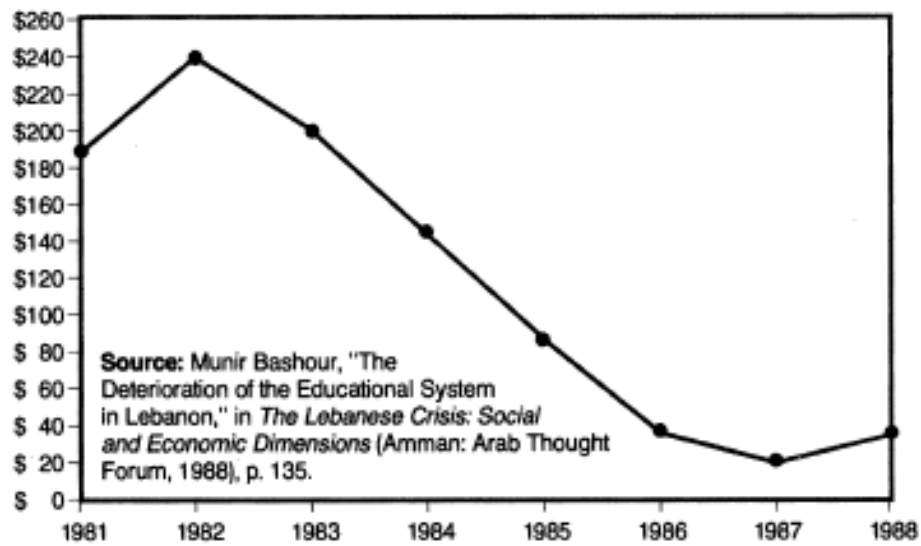
Figure 12: Exchange Rate Before and After the Civil War (LP/USD)

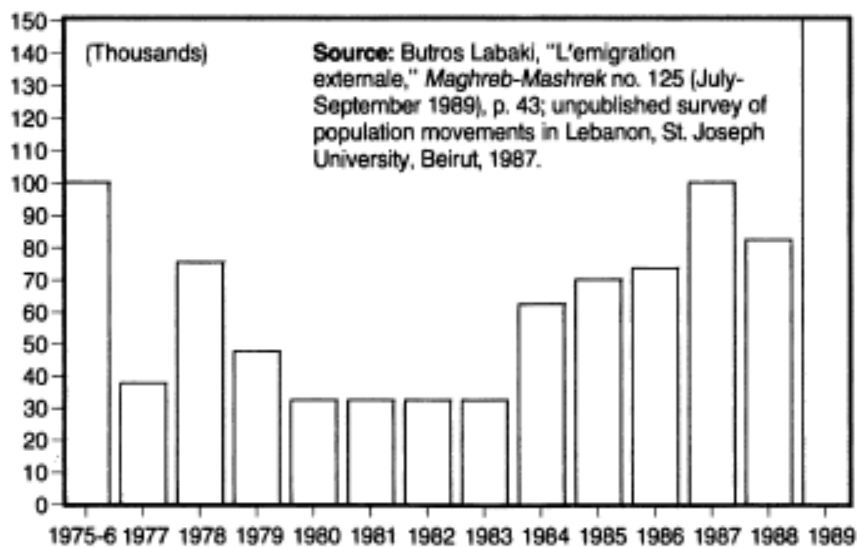Source: Author. Data Source: Exchange rate, national currency per US$, period average, From IMF [code 6110]

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[184] Lebanese Pound and Lebanese Lira are synonymous.

Figure 13: Value of Legal Minimum Wage in USD (1981-1988)

Source: Munir Bashour, "The Deterioration of the Educational System in Lebanon," in *The Lebanese Crisis: Social and Economic Dimensions* (Amman: Arab Thought Forum, 1988), p. 135.

Source: Wenger and Denney (1990)

Figure 14: Net Emigration out of Lebanon (1975-1989)

(Thousands)

Source: Butros Labaki, "L'emigration externale," *Maghreb-Mashrek* no. 125 (July-September 1989), p. 43; unpublished survey of population movements in Lebanon, St. Joseph University, Beirut, 1987.

Source: Wenger and Denney (1990)

A main driver for many ailments of the economy is inflation. In Lebanon one can see the relationship between violence and inflation. As the war dragged on there were severe shortages of goods and in some cases there were manipulations of commodity

prices by monopolists who took advantage of the weak government. In the end government spending, budget deficits, inflationary currency issue and the collapse of the value of the currency led to high levels of inflation that became hyperinflation by the mid-eighties (see Figure 15).

Figure 15: Inflation – Annual Percentage Change

Source: Author
Data source: IMF, The World Economic Outlook (WEO) Database April 2003

4.7 WAR ECONOMY: PROLONGED CIVIL WAR

Militias usually started as small local defense forces which later grew into organized professional military and self-sustaining business units. The area devoted to hashish production expanded from 60 hectares in 1984 to 3000 in 1988 under Syrian protection in the Biqa' valley, where no significant government presence was ever allowed. The Lebanese civil war cost several hundreds of millions of US dollars a year and drug trafficking was one source for financing it.[185]

Even legal goods and services that were provided by the government became the domain of the militia or "escaped state monopoly" as early as 1976. Militia groups were importing crude oil without license early on in the war. When two oil refineries were destroyed by Christian militias, the government minister decided that they could not be salvaged; the militias were ready to fulfill the demand. Even after the war ended, the government only licensed private oil terminals to six companies all linked to ex-militia groups.[186]

There was ample evidence of ideological and sectarian resentment before the start of the war; however, that alone could not explain the extent of ethnic cleansing and the consolidation of territorial gains by militias. As different militias carved out small enclaves and controlled the main transport routes, checkpoint "taxes" along the main corridors generated a significant source of revenue for the militias and financed their future violent ventures.[187]

Once started the Lebanese Civil War was hard to contain. A war economy once developed was self-sustaining. Drug money, smuggling, prostitution, protection rackets,

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[185] Arnson and Zartman (2005) 29-31.
[186] *Ibid.,* 34-35.
[187] *Ibid.,* 36-41.

militia "taxes"[188] and money laundering all gave warlords and other war profiteers considerable power that often rivaled or surpassed the State's. At times the militias gained enough economic power that they could buy arms in the black market freeing them from their external patrons. With the decline in the authority of the *za'ims* and the rise of the war economy, it was hard to put an end to the war using internal mechanisms. Only strong external intervention could have controlled such a conflict, but the international consensus did not come until 1990 when the interests of the regional and global powers aligned in the First Gulf War.[189] The war economy sustained the violent activities of the warring factions, thus prolonging the suffering of the Lebanese civilians for 15 years.

4.8 IMMIGRATION: BRAIN DRAIN

Brain drain and massive immigration represents a cost of war with long lasting effects. "With the city destroyed, many of Lebanon's highly skilled professionals left to work in other countries." There is no accurate data for the number of people leaving the country during the 1975-1990 period, but estimates range from 500,000 to 990,000.[190] For a country of four million this is a heavy toll especially during the post-war period when skilled labor is much needed to rebuild the country. They did not just take with them their skills, they were usually better off than the average Lebanese and took with them an estimated US$10 billion in capital.[191]

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[188] These were nothing more than another name for extortion rackets.
[189] Johnson (2001) 226.
[190] Stewart, Dona J. "Economic Recovery and Reconstruction in Postwar Beirut;" *Geographical Review*, vol. 86, no. 4; (Oct., 1996), pp. 487-504.
Hourani and Shehadi (1992, 610) provide a year-by-year analysis of Lebanese migrants; their net balance from 1975 to end of 1989 is 990,000 migrants.
[191] *Ibid.*

"Beirut lost its preeminence as interpreter between Europe and the Middle East."[192] The country relied on its location and banking sector to attract transit activity between the oil rich Arab countries and Europe. During the civil war several other countries took its place with better infrastructure and more stable environments (i.e. Cyprus, Qatar, and UAE). Tourism deteriorated to almost negligible levels and the only "tourists" were the Lebanese expatriates. The result is that Beirut faced an uphill battle to make up for the 15 years it lost during the civil war and the continuous development of its rivals. The situation remains unpredictable and so investors are unwilling to risk the funds needed to propel the country forward. "The Council for Development and Reconstruction reported hesitancy among investors, including Lebanese natives, to return while regional political problems remain unsettled. Hundreds of thousands of Lebanese left during the war, but only 55,000 had returned by 1991, an estimated 6 percent of the total."[193]

4.9 PSYCHOLOGICAL COSTS

The fifteen year Lebanese civil war had negative psychological effects and resulted in higher morbidity rates in the overall population, especially in West Beirut which saw the heaviest and most inhuman urban warfare. A study conducted at the American University of Beirut in collaboration with the University of Michigan concluded that

> the level of perceived negative impact of war-related events was found to be
> strongly associated with higher levels of depressive symptomatology among

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[192] *Ibid.*
[193] *Ibid.*

mothers…the level of a mother's depressive symptomatology was found to be

the best predictor of her child's reported morbidity, with higher levels of

symptoms associated with higher levels of morbidity.[194]

This is just one type of the social and psychological effects of the Lebanese civil war. Increased domestic violence, crime rates due to breakdown of social values, and deteriorating security infrastructure are other examples of the social costs of the Lebanese civil war.

4.10 INTERNAL MIGRATION

The rural migration to the main cities had started before the 1975 civil war, yet there is evidence that the major waves of internal migration, especially from the South, were due to violence (mainly Palestinian-Israeli clashes in the South). One also has to recall that the pre-1975 migrations from the South to Beirut were also due to the violent Israeli-Palestinian conflict in the South in the 1960s and 1970s. Also as the civil war started, the already undeveloped South received less government attention due to decreased resources and their diversion to resolve political and security issues. The rural population was halved from 1975 to 1990, adding more pressure to the so-called "misery belt" around Beirut (see Figure 16).

Yapp relates this internal migration to a major shift in Lebanese politics: "The continuing civil war in Lebanon accelerated the decline of the traditional notable leaders, the za'ims."[195] The za'ims, mostly landowners, lost their rural base due to migration to the main cities. By 1980 almost three-quarters of the population was urban. The share of

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[194] Bryce, Walker, Ghorayeb and Kanj. "Life Experiences, Response Styles and Mental Health Among Mothers and Children in Beirut, Lebanon;" *Social Science & Medicine*, Vol. 28, No. 7, pp. 685-695, 1989.
[195] Yapp (1996) 275.

the agriculture labor force declined from 38% of the total labor force in 1960 to 11% in 1980. In a confessional system, where politics are based on consensus of the regional traditional leaders, "the decline of the notables was associated with the decline of the state itself and the rise of new institutions independent of the state."[196]

Notwithstanding that the za'ama system had its own flaws which I discuss elsewhere, the traditional notables could sometimes be relied on to put a break on wanton violence. They were known to use sectarian strife as a bargaining chip to increase their share of the government's largesse but violence was measured and controlled. After the breakdown of the feudal system there was no structural alternative to contain or mediate social conflicts.[197] The decline of the zaims saw some of the worst acts of violence perpetrated in the 1970s and 1980s in the history of Lebanon.[198] Hence the civil war accelerated the urbanization of the population, which in turn led to the decline of the za'ims' authority and consequently that of the state itself.
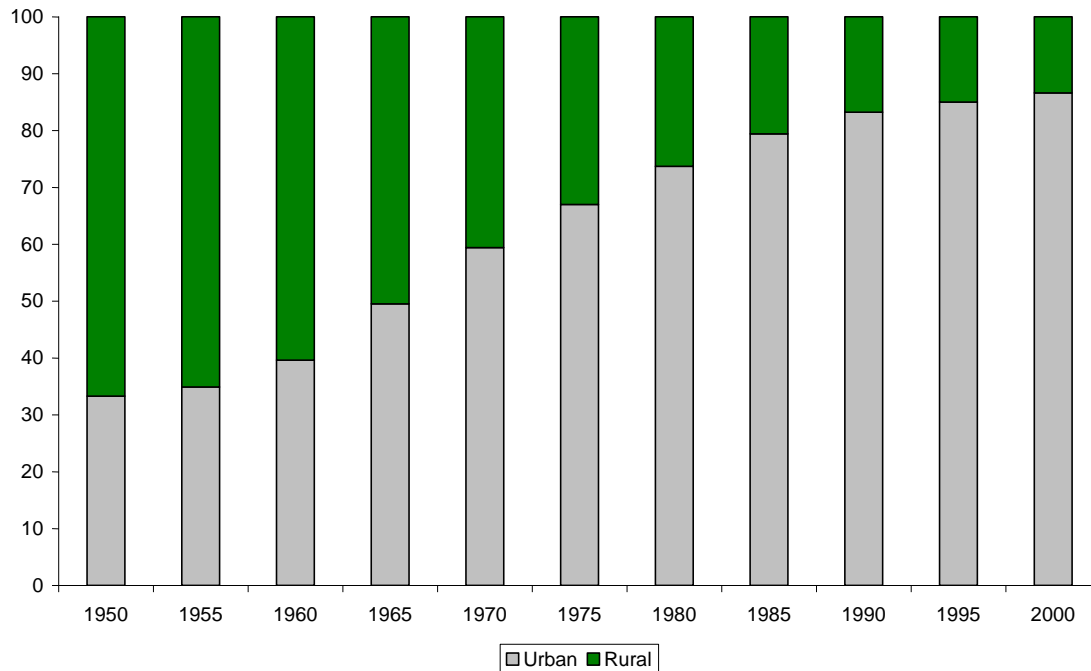
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[196] *Ibid., 276*
[197] Johnson (2001) 230-232.
[198] For example, in the mid-1970s, the traditional Sunni leadership had no direct control over their fighters who belonged to different radical factions under newcomers like Ibrahim Qulaylat (in Beirut) and Faruq al-Muqaddam in Tripoli (Salibi 1976, 142). Also the Phalange Maronite party saw a coup by the military leaders, Samir Gaaga and Emil Hubayqa, against the political leader from the traditional Jumayyil family. The Shias were originally dominated by a few landowner families like the As'ads and were confined to serfdom in the South and Biqa' (Yapp 1996, 273-276). By the 1980s their political leaders were ex-militia members or more conservative religious members from the Shia Supreme Council – created by Iranian born Musa al-Sadr.

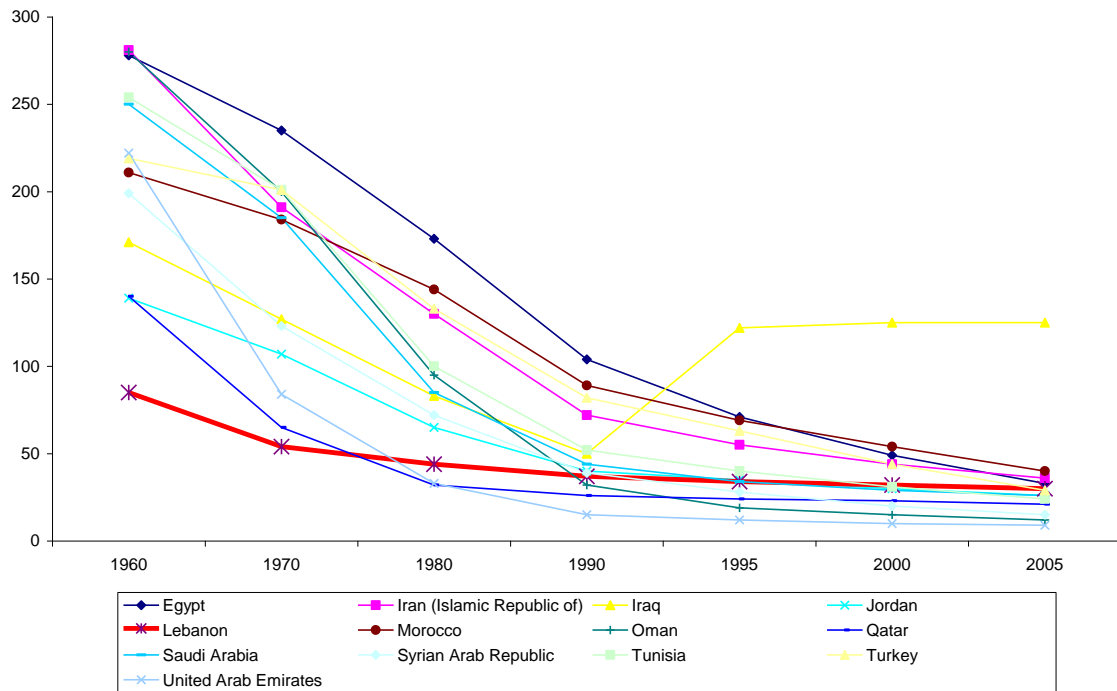**Figure 16: Urban and Rural Populations (Percent)**

Source: Author
Data Source: UN Population Division estimates and projections outlook (WEO) Database April 2003

4.11 INCREASED MORTALITY RATES

I analyzed the impact of the war on infant and child mortality rates. At first glance, mortality rates appear to have decreased in Lebanon, and that might be expected given the medical advancements that happened since the sixties and seventies. So it seems that the war had no impact on mortality rates, but if we compare mortality rates in Lebanon to those in the Middle East we can then see the impact of the war. Before the civil war Lebanon had the lowest mortality rates in the region. But after the war mortality rates became middle of the pack (see Figures 17 & 18). So all countries in the region improved their mortality rates at a much faster rate than Lebanon did and several overtook Lebanon

by the mid-eighties. So one can add the lives lost due to the slower improvement in mortality rates to the cost of the Lebanese Civil War.
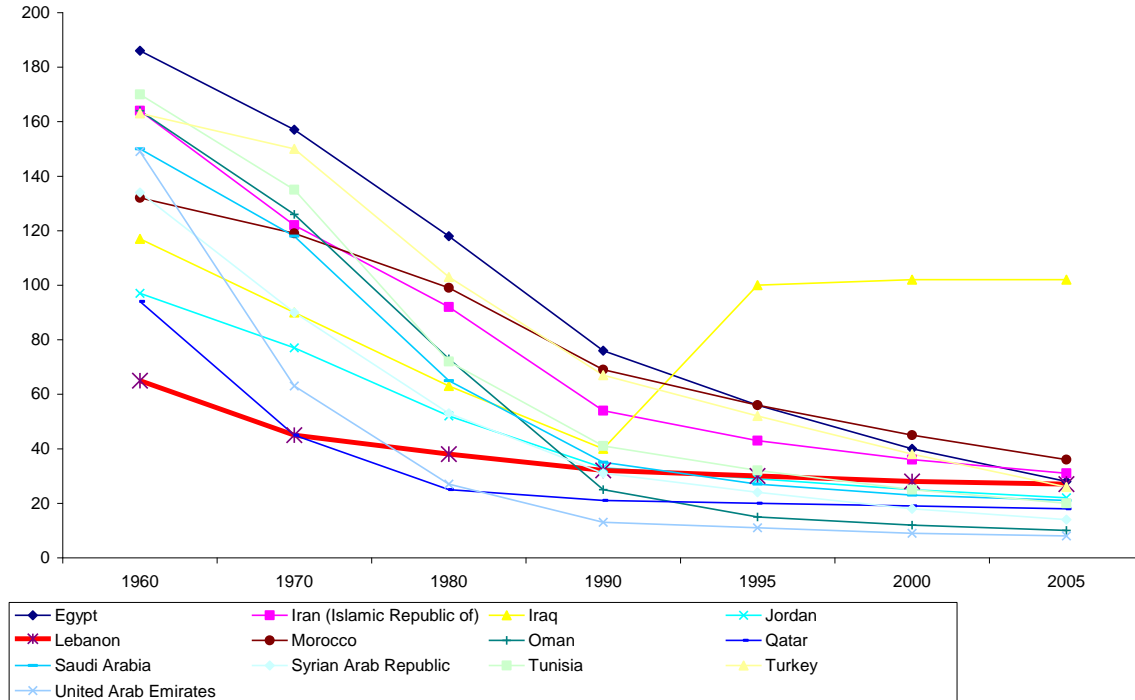
Figure 17: Mortality Rate Under Five

Figure 18: Infant Mortality Rate (0-1 yr) per 1,000 Live Births

Source: Author.
Data Source: UNICEF estimates based on United Nations Population Division estimates, UN Demographic Yearbook data provided by countries, and country sources compiled by Unicef. From
http://unstats.un.org/unsd/default.htm

4.12 SOCIAL CAPITAL

While far from perfect, the prewar mixed society was a model in the Middle East and often called the "Switzerland of the Middle East" for the relative diversity of the country compared to others in the region and its higher standards of living. But the civil war changed all this. There were many conflicts among the various factions. There were Christian-Muslim, Maronite-Maronite, Sunni-Shia, Sunni-Shia-Druz, Christian-Druz, and Shia-Shia clashes. This caused entrenched hatred in the society even in places where it did not previously exist. After the war, the country turned into a severely fractured and
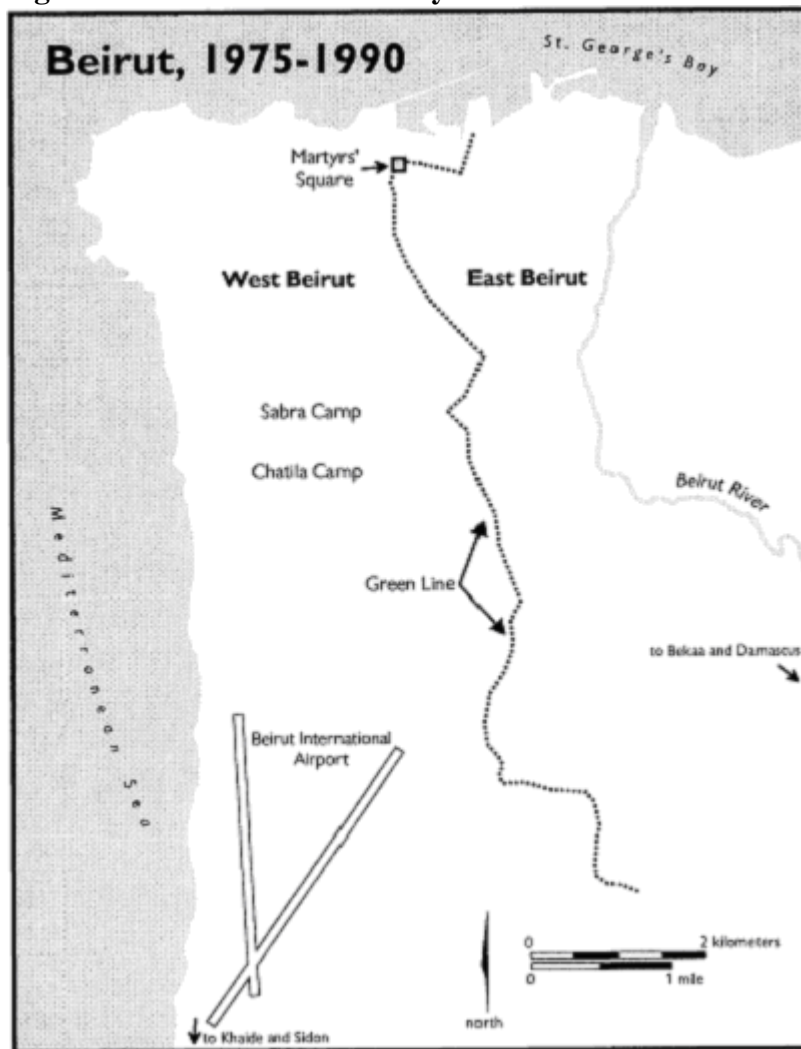
divided society along sectarian lines. "Muslims, who had made up 40 percent of the 1975 population of "Christian" East Beirut, were just 5 percent of the 1989 population [of East Beirut]. A similar redistribution occurred in West Beirut, where the Christian population dropped from 35 percent of the total in 1975 to 5 percent in 1989."[199] Faour's demographic study in 1988 also shows a segregated country after 13 years of war.[200] The loss of whatever goodwill was left among the sects left a major scar on the society even after the end of the conflict. Beirut, a small city, had its own "demarcation line" called the Green Line which divided Muslim from Christian neighborhoods (see Figure 19). This loss of social capital also caused a slow down in economic activity as half of the capital was isolated from its other half during the civil war. For an already small market, this created more costs and inefficiencies for both merchants and consumers.

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[199] Stewart, Dona J. "Economic Recovery and Reconstruction in Postwar Beirut;" *Geographical Review*, Vol. 86, No. 4 (Oct., 1996), pp. 487-504.

[200] The study found "a country sharply divided into two regions: a Christian region with a negligible proportion of Muslims (less than 1 per cent), and a predominantly Muslim region with a significant minority of Christians (10 per cent) comprising 30 per cent of all Christians. In addition, there is a third Israeli-controlled area [in the south] ruled by Christians."
Source: Faour, Mohammad; *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 27, No. 4 (Oct., 1991), pp. 631-641.

Figure 19: Beirut a Divided City

Beirut, 1975-1990

St. George's Bay

Martyrs' Square

West Beirut

East Beirut

Sabra Camp

Chatila Camp

Beirut River

Green Line

to Bekaa and Damascus

Mediterranean Sea

Beirut International Airport

to Khaide and Sidon

north

0   2 kilometers
0   1 mile

Source: Stewart (1996).

Chapter 5: Conclusion

The major causes that led to the Lebanese civil war are the confounding effects of sectarian dominance/polarization and a confessional system that did not adapt to the changing demographics; and external factors – like the Palestinian refugees,[201] the Arab-Israeli Conflict and inter-Arab conflicts that exacerbated the problem of divergent national identities.[202] Yapp reaches a similar conclusion:

> Historians dispute whether the Lebanese civil war was the result of internal causes…or whether it was caused by an external factor…It is clear that it was both: there were disputes but the factor which made them so difficult to resolve peacefully was the presence of the Palestinians. On the other hand the Palestinian problem could have been solved without overmuch difficulty if the Lebanese polity had been united.[203]

The main difference my conclusion has with Yapp's is the centrality of the divergent national identities; this is where my conclusion meets with Salibi's and Hourani's.

The confessional system was not a cause of the war by itself; however, frozen in the National Pact, as a political system it was not able to withstand the demographic changes[204] or external pressures.[205] Roger Owen believes that because the confessional

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[201] Johnson (2001, 226) finds that the "Palestinian refugees...contributed more than any other factor to the militarization of Lebanese politics."

[202] Salibi (1976) 160-162.

[203] Yapp (1996, 269).

[204] The confessional system only functioned with the cooperation and politicking of the traditional communal leaders. It was not ready or able to handle the "changed mood of the Shia community" who by the early 1970s was loudly demanding its fair share in the government patronage system under the leadership of Imam al-Sadr (Rabinovich 1985, 34-42).

[205] Paraphrasing Hourani (1981, 145-146), the problem is that the National Pact functioned effectively when the external powers, western Christendom and the Arab world, were on good terms. The confessional system could be easily pressured or risk collapsing when these external powers had conflicting interests.

system was based on the political consensus of a few traditional leaders, it eventually broke down when faced with untraditional pressures such as the "appearance of growing economic and social inequality...Palestinian militias...and repeated Israeli invasions."[206] Even though pan-Arabism was on the decline elsewhere by the 1970s, Lebanon was the only Arab country unable to prevent intra-Arab and Arab-Israeli conflicts from being fought on its territory.[207]

Unlike many civil wars, no one sect completely lost in the Lebanese civil war; the war did not end with total capitulation of one faction. The warring parties met at the negotiating table in Ta'if, Saudi Arabia. The war ended with the Maronites conceding a substantial portion of their power to Muslims and weakening the presidency in favor of the Sunni Prime Minister and the Shia Speaker of the Parliament. However, one has to wonder how long the Muslim community – over 60% of the population[208] – will be content with 50% of the parliament seats without being able to run for the presidency. The Shias, the single largest sect,[209] seeing their brethren gaining control in Iraq might not settle for the junior role anymore[210] – see Figure 20 for a geographical distribution of religious groups after the 1975-1990 civil war.
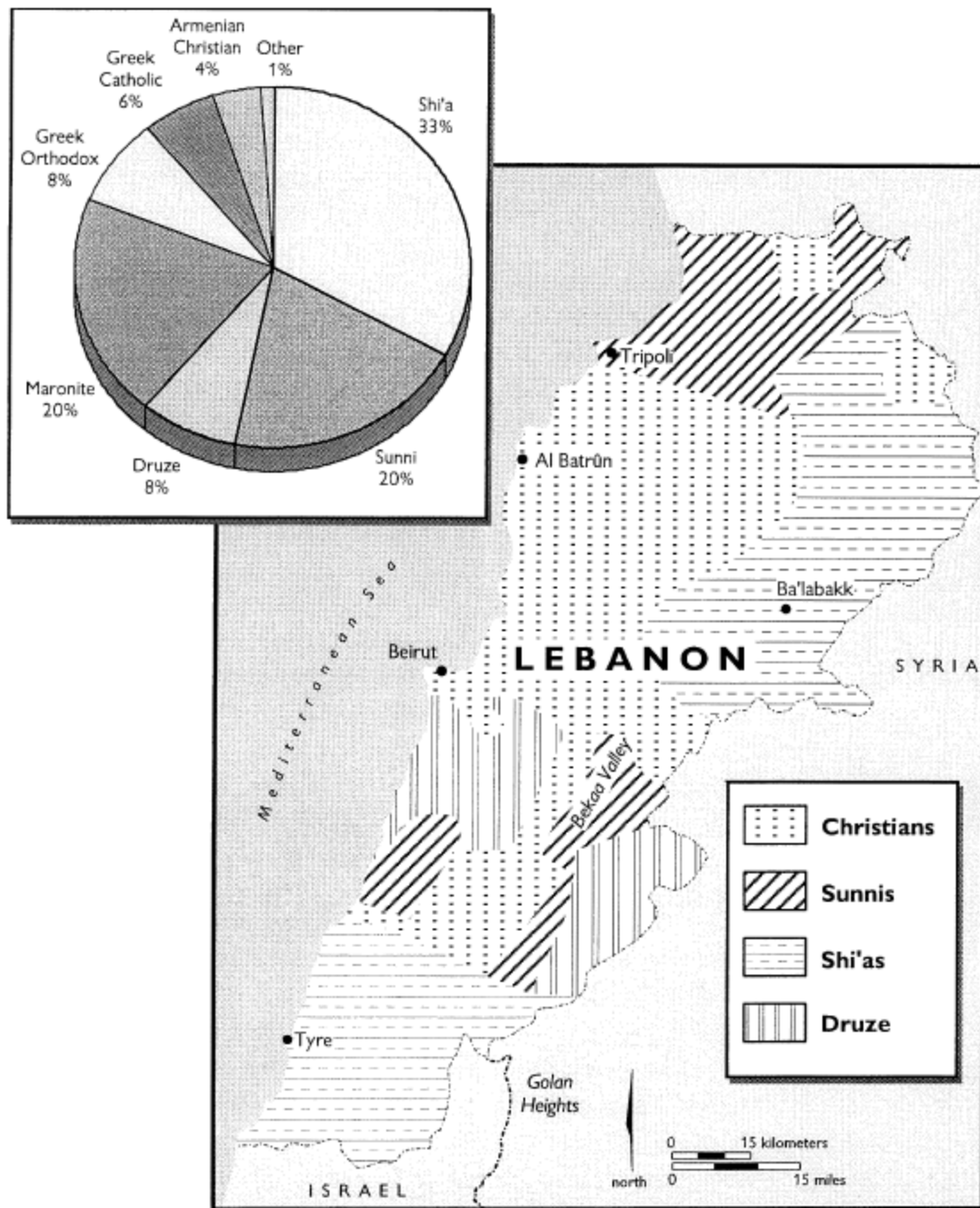
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[206] Owen (2000) 165-166.

[207] *Ibid.,* 71.

[208] Andrews, John. "A question of faith;" *Economist,* vol. 338, Issue 7954, pp.15-17, 2/24/96

[209] *Ibid.*

[210] Hiro (1993) 212.

Figure 20: The Geographical Distribution of Religious Groups, mid-1990s

Source: Stewart (1996, 492). Data from Phares (1995) and *Economist* (1996).

The causes that led to the 1975-1990 war remained in place after the end of the conflict. In 1996, a history doctorate candidate observed,

Sectarianism – a creation that dates back no further than the beginnings of the modern era – reached a peak in Lebanon's 15-year civil war. While a discourse of national unity has emerged in the post-civil war period, Lebanon is again paralyzed by feuding among the elite and by the neglect of ordinary citizens, nearly a third of whom are living in poverty. [211]

Even in 2010, twenty years after the war, most if not all of the causes of conflict mentioned above are still present. To mention a few: the governing system remains confessional and not representative of the population; the geopolitics of the region has not changed; freedom, governance and ease of doing business rankings are all low or at the bottom of the scale. External factors still threaten the stability of the country. There was a major war between Lebanon and Israel in June 2006.

Lebanon dropped nearly 12 points in the [2007 Failed States] index, giving it a total score just a hair shy of Liberia's. The 2006 war in Lebanon reversed much of the progress made since the end of its own civil war in 1990. Israeli air strikes drove more than 700,000 Lebanese from their homes and did an estimated US$2.8 billion in damage to the country's infrastructure. A political crisis has the current government deadlocked and the country's economy remains weak.[212]

The country might have weathered this blow in 2006 better if the root causes of the conflict had been addressed after the end of the civil war; "…Lebanon was vulnerable

[211] Makdisi, Ussama. "Reconstructing the Nation-State: The Modernity of Sectarianism in Lebanon," *Middle East Report*, No. 200, Minorities in the Middle East: Power and the Politics of Difference, (July - September, 1996), pp. 23-26+30).

[212] *Foreign Policy*, "Failed States 2007: The Best and Worst," June 11, 2007. Accessed on 3/19/10 at http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2007/06/11/failed_states_2007_the_best_and_worst

because its political and security structures lacked integrity and remained tensely divided by factionalized elites."[213]

In 2007, Lebanon entered a constitutional crisis that was actually rooted in domestic power struggles and regional geopolitics. Lebanon remained without a president from November 2007 to May 2008 because the different power factions could not agree on a president. The divisions this time were not Christian-Muslim, but pro-American against pro-Syrian-Iranian. Again the Lebanese could not agree on their national outlook. The elements of the recent conflict do have some sectarian tint, as the majority of the Sunnis back the pro-American pro-independence government while the majority of the Shias back the pro-Syrian pro-Iranian opposition. The Christians are divided between these two groups.

In 2008, Hizbullah took over Beirut in protest over the Lebanese government's decision to ban Hizbullah's closed circuit telephone system and remove the security chief at the Beirut airport.[214] The subsequent events are outside of the scope of this paper, but the Lebanese were able to avert another civil war and eventually agreed on a president after meeting in Doha, Qatar.[215] The government gave in to the opposition and Hizbullah gained veto power over any decisions of the majority government. Sectarian tensions remain as high as ever especially with the heightened sensitivities of what is going on in Iraq – the Shias are encouraged by the ascendency of their brethren in Iraq, the Iranian-American rivalry over regional politics, and the persistence of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

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[213] *Foreign Policy,* "The Failed States Index 2007," June 11, 2007. Accessed on 3/19/10 at http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2007/06/11/the_failed_states_index_2007?page=0,1
[214]*BBC. "*Hezbollah takes over west Beirut;" May 9th, 2008. Accessed on 2/11/2010 at http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/7391600.stm

[215] Worth and Bakri. "Deal for Lebanese Factions Leaves Hezbollah Stronger;" *The New York Times*; May 22, 2008. Accessed on 3/19/10 at http://www.nytimes.com/2008/05/22/world/middleeast/22lebanon.html?_r=1&hp&oref=slogin

The majority government, mainly Sunnis, Druz and Maronites, is supported by the U.S. and Saudi Arabia. The opposition, mainly Shia and some Maronites, is supported by Iran and Syria. The social, economic and political conditions in 2010 are reminiscent of those before 1975. Even if Lebanon manages to avoid another civil war, unless the underlying causes are addressed, with or without external help,[216] the country faces the risk of reverting to armed conflict sooner or later.

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[216] If past history is of any significance, it is doubtful that the Lebanese will be able to resolve their problems independently. To stop intra-Lebanese violence, the French and Ottomans had to interfere in 1860, the Americans had to interfere in 1958, the Syrians in 1976 and then in 1990. All major post-independence agreements were the result of foreign mediation signed on foreign soil: Cairo Agreement of 1969, Ta'if Agreement (Saudi Arabia) of 1989, and the Doha Agreement of 2008.

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*BBC. "*Hezbollah Takes Over West Beirut;" May 9, 2008. Accessed on 2/11/2010 at
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