LEBANESE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY

Salafi Jihadism in Post-2005 Lebanon: Causes and Consequences

By

Farah Al Hassan

**A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Master of Arts in International Affairs**

School of Arts and Sciences

August 2015

Lebanese American University

School of Arts and Sciences; Byblos Campus

THESIS APPROVAL FORM

Student Name: Farah Al Hassan I.D. #: 200900842

Thesis Title: **Salafi Jihadism in Post 2005 Lebanon: Causes and Consequences**

Program: Master of Arts in International Affairs

Department Of Social Sciences

School of Arts and Sciences

The undersigned certify that they have examined the final electronic copy of this thesis and approved it in Partial Fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of: Master of Arts in the major of International Affairs

Thesis Advisor's Name: Dr. Walid Moubarak

Signature

Date 27/8/2015

Committee Member's Name: Dr. Marwan Rowayheb

Signature

Date Aug 27, 2015

Committee Member's Name: Dr. Makram Ouais

Signature

Date Aug 27, 2015

THESIS COPYRIGHT RELEASE FORM

LEBANESE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY NON-EXCLUSIVE DISTRIBUTION LICENSE

By signing and submitting this license, you (the author(s) or copyright owner) grants to Lebanese American University (LAU) the non-exclusive right to reproduce, translate (as defined below), and/or distribute your submission (including the abstract) worldwide in print and electronic format and in any medium, including but not limited to audio or video. You agree that LAU may, without changing the content, translate the submission to any medium or format for the purpose of preservation. You also agree that LAU may keep more than one copy of this submission for purposes of security, backup and preservation. You represent that the submission is your original work, and that you have the right to grant the rights contained in this license. You also represent that your submission does not, to the best of your knowledge, infringe upon anyone's copyright. If the submission contains material for which you do not hold copyright, you represent that you have obtained the unrestricted permission of the copyright owner to grant LAU the rights required by this license, and that such third-party owned material is clearly identified and acknowledged within the text or content of the submission. IF THE SUBMISSION IS BASED UPON WORK THAT HAS BEEN SPONSORED OR SUPPORTED BY AN AGENCY OR ORGANIZATION OTHER THAN LAU, YOU REPRESENT THAT YOU HAVE FULFILLED ANY RIGHT OF REVIEW OR OTHER OBLIGATIONS REQUIRED BY SUCH CONTRACT OR AGREEMENT. LAU will clearly identify your name(s) as the author(s) or owner(s) of the submission, and will not make any alteration, other than as allowed by this license, to your submission.

Name: Farah Al Hassan

Signature:

Date: August 27, 2015

PLAGIARISM POLICY COMPLIANCE STATEMENT

I certify that:

- I have read and understood LAU's Plagiarism Policy.
- I understand that failure to comply with this Policy can lead to academic and disciplinary actions against me.
- This work is substantially my own, and to the extent that any part of this work is not my own I have indicated that by acknowledging its sources.

Name: Farah Al Hassan

Signature:

Date: August 27, 2015

Acknowledgement

I would like to thank my advisor, Dr. Walid Moubarak for the constant support and guidance throughout the time of my thesis, and thank my committee members Dr. Makram Ouais and Dr. Marwan Rowayheb.

I would also like to express my gratitude for Mr. Said Khalaf for fully sponsoring my Master's Degree in International Affairs at the Lebanese American University.

Salafi Jihadism in Post-2005 Lebanon: Causes and Consequences

Farah Al Hassan

Abstract

The purpose of the thesis is to prove that the sectarian division in Lebanon is a factor that facilitates the emergence and survival of Salafi Jihadi groups in the country. It shows how the sectarian division, be it on the political or social level, is leading to a malfunctioning political system on the internal level and eventually a weak position in the region, thus making Lebanon more susceptible to Jihadi Islamist groups. The sect-based consociational system of Lebanon makes some sects feel disadvantaged compared to others, thus pushing those subgroups to seek the help of the more radical ideologies. The shared identities across borders import into Lebanon regional and international disputes including sectarian rivalries, which may encourage Salafi Jihadism in the country. Moreover, both the internal deficiency and the external weakness produce deadlock and weak deterrence, making governmental reactions towards extremist activities either slow or not entirely effective. The link that exists between sectarian division, its outcomes and Salafi Jihadism forms a pattern that can similarly be used to look into the increase in sectarian tension in Lebanon since 2005 and the ascendancy of Salafi Jihadism ever since the civil war in Syria began in 2011. Once the uprisings in Syria turned violent, the sectarian division in Lebanon intensified and the country witnessed a rise of Salafi Jihadism. However, the extent to which Jihadism can grow within Lebanon remains limited due to social and political characteristics that distinguish the system.

Keywords: Lebanon, Sectarian division, Salafi Jihadism, Consociationalism, Sectarian identity

Outline

Introduction	1
I. Internal Politics and Fundamentalist Motivations	19
A. The Consociational Solution	21
B. Defected Consociationalism	28
C. Political Fragmentation and Fundamentalist Motivation	38
II. A Weak State and Fundamentalist Impulses	53
A. Identities Across Borders	54
B. Geographical Pressures	63
C. Sectarian Identities, Regional Instability and Fundamentalist Impulses	76
III. Lebanon, the Syrian Civil War and the Rise of Salafi Jihadism	81
A. Lebanon since 2005	82
B. Lebanon and the Civil War in Syria	85
C. Lebanon and the Rise of Salafi Jihadism	92
D. Case Studies: Tripoli and Sidon	97
E. How is Lebanon Different	105
Conclusion	109
Bibliography	114

Introduction

The Arab Uprisings that began in 2011 did not only end the authoritarian rule in several of the Arab countries and demonstrate the power of the non-violent mobilization of the people, but it has also given an opportunity for organizations with an Islamist ideology to become part of the political process. After being suppressed for many years by the authoritarian regimes of countries like Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Syria and Yemen, Islamists were finally capable of becoming actively and openly involved in their societies, running for elections and making it to legislative and executive positions¹. In Tunisia, for example, the Islamic Ennahda party rose to power following the uprisings and managed to win 40% of the parliamentary seats during the elections of 2011². Similarly, in Egypt the Muslim Brotherhood did not only win the majority in the parliament in 2011 through the Freedom and Justice Party, but also won the presidential elections in 2012 through their candidate Mohammad Morsi³.

Yet, the success of these “political” Islamist groups was short-lived in both countries⁴. The secular Nidaa Tounes Party took hold of the presidency in Tunisia in 2014⁵. As for Egypt, Mohammad Morsi was ousted with the help of the army in 2013 and former commander of the Army Abdel Fattah el-Sisi won the Presidential seat later in 2014⁶. One country, however, where the uprisings took a different direction especially when it came to Islamist activism, was Syria. The non-violent

¹ (Al Anani, 2012, pp. 466-470)

² (Dalacoura, 2012, p. 75)

³ (Amin, 2014, p. 393)

⁴ (International Crisis Group, Understanding Islamism, 2005, pp. 6-8) Ennahda and the Muslim Brotherhood are considered “political” Islamist groups since they use political participation to reach power and advance their ideology in the system, rather than resorting to violence.

⁵ (Markey & Amara, 2014, p. 1)

⁶ (Amin, 2014, pp. 393-394)

demonstrations soon turned into an armed confrontation between the regime and members of the opposition. This radical change of events gave way to the ascendancy of new actors in Syria characterized by Jihadi Islamist groups as Jabhat al-Nusra for example and the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria. Unlike the political Islamist groups in Tunisia or Egypt, the Salafi Jihadist groups in Syria believe in an extremist ideology characterized by the use of violence as a means to alter the political system employed in their country. In addition to the fact that the goal of these groups is to build a religious state based on the Sharia law, they are successful in growing financially, attracting more members from various nationalities and expanding their territory. As a result, the phenomenon of Salafi Jihadism became an international concern in general, and led to major repercussions on countries in the region and Lebanon in particular.

Ever since the civil war began in Syria in 2011, Lebanon started facing a new set of political troubles and security challenges that were in parallel with the rising popularity of Salafi Jihadism within its territories. Not only did already existing Islamist groups regain a noteworthy degree of political and civil power, but they also managed to ally themselves – verbally at the least- with regional extremist associations that were soon capable of importing their ideology and their radical activism into Lebanon. Once the Arab uprisings turned violent in Syria, the Lebanese arena started to witness inter-communal conflicts, battles with the army, car bombs, and suicide bombers. The Islamist Jihadi movements– whether old or newly established- are well armed and ready to take action against the government and its institutions, political parties, communities, individuals or any other entity that classifies as an enemy according to their convictions. Therefore, one has to ask, why

is Lebanon a country susceptible to Salafi Jihadism and how has the ascendancy of this phenomenon been facilitated within the country?

The aim of the study is to prove that the sectarian division that has been growing in Lebanon since 2005 has created a significant amount of political and social tension, eventually leading to an environment where the growing Jihadism in the region can infiltrate into Lebanon and motivate the development of similar groups on the local level. Choosing the year 2005 as a starting point to examine the increase of sectarian tension in Lebanon is especially important due to the political events that had been occurring ever since; the assassination of Prime Minister Rafik Al Hariri in 2005, the withdrawal of Syria in the same year, the 2006 Hezbollah-Israel war, the 2008 Sunni-Shiite clashes in Beirut as well as other incidents. Moreover, in order to show the link between sectarianism in Lebanon and the rise of Salafi Jihadism within the country's territories, the research will focus on both the internal and external connections that exist. The proposed argument will also be supported by looking into the major political events and changes that Lebanon has witnessed since the beginning of the turmoil in Syria in 2011.

On the internal level, the study argues that Lebanon suffers from an ill-functioning political system, characterized by lack of consensus and political elites that are more powerful than the state. This situation is directly linked to the sect-based consociational system that has been employed to include the various sects of the country in the decision making process. The result is economic and social challenges, deadlock and weak deterrence in the form of an inability to control unlawful actions. Ultimately, these outcomes push many members of the Sunni community to embrace Salafi Jihadism, and open a gateway to the growth and survival of violent groups within the country.

As for the external level, Lebanon's sectarian division contributed – to a great extent- to the country's weak position in the region, especially that the local communities share their sectarian identities with societies and nations across the borders. The research points out that the sectarian social division in Lebanon produced a deeper sense of distrust among the subcultures, a lack of cohesiveness and eventually the need to look for external alliances. Nonetheless, these external powers that became close with local groups in Lebanon use, at several occasions, the Lebanese arena to achieve their own regional interests, sometimes even taking advantage of the religious sentiments in the country and the Salafi Jihadi impulses as a pathway to their goals. The most influential among the internal and external actors that facilitate the rise of Salafi Jihadism in Lebanon is the link that joins between the Sunni-Shiite rivalry on the external level, which is transferred into Lebanon in the form of a deeper social and political sectarian division, and the economic and social vulnerability that exists among a large number of members of the Sunni community in Lebanon.

Review of the Literature

Of course, several of the key subjects of this study take up a notable portion of the literature, particularly issues like the sectarian identity, the consociational political system, Lebanon's weak position in the Middle East region and Salafi Jihadism in the region and in Lebanon. To begin with, since power in the political system became directly linked to the sect ever since the National Pact of 1943, tracking the origins of the sectarian identity became a major part of the literature on Lebanon. In fact, many writers look into the history of Lebanon to find when the sect

first began to gain prominence, specifically by going back to the 19th century when Mount Lebanon was divided under the Ottoman rule into a double Qaimmaqamiya and later became Mutasarrifiya⁷. One example is “The Culture of Sectarianism: Community, History, and Violence in Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Lebanon” where the author, Ussama Makdisi, shows the connection between the history of Lebanon and the rise of the sectarian identity in the country on both the social and political levels⁸.

Yet, finding how sectarianism overshadowed the feudal system of Lebanon following clashes between the Maronites and the Druze both in 1841 and 1860, and how the 12 seats of the Mutasarrifiyah were divided equally among members of different sects in Mount Lebanon is only one side of the connection between the sect and the consociational system in Lebanon⁹. Actually, a significant portion of literature on the politics of Lebanon also focuses on the execution of the consociational political system following the formation of Greater Lebanon in 1920 and more specifically after the independence of the country in 1943. The questions that are often examined in this part of the literature tackle the conditions under which the consociational system was adopted, how well does it perform in Lebanon and the likelihood of its endurance.

For instance, authors like Imad Salamey in “The Government and Politics of Lebanon” would thoroughly analyze every incident starting from the 1860 unrest in Mount Lebanon, all the way to the French mandate and the independence, as well as

⁷ (Makdisi, *The Culture of Sectarianism: Community, History, and Violence in Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Lebanon*, 2000, pp. 51-165)

⁸ (Makdisi, *The Culture of Sectarianism: Community, History, and Violence in Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Lebanon*, 2000)

⁹ (Makdisi, *The Culture of Sectarianism: Community, History, and Violence in Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Lebanon*, 2000, pp. 51-165) Each of the 6 sects present in Mount Lebanon received two seats out of the 12 designated to the council to govern Mount Lebanon.

agreements like the National Pact of 1943 or the Taif of 1989 in order to provide a clear description of the consociational path in Lebanon¹⁰. In this case, the author does not only aim to describe the circumstances under which the consociational system was adopted in Lebanon, but also to highlight the civil war period between 1975 and 1989 when the system failed, but still was reformed and reintroduced through the Taif agreement in 1989¹¹. Such events raise even more questions concerning the consociational political system in Lebanon, including what were the reasons behind the failure of the system, whether the sect-based political system needs to be altered or not and the dangers of the sect as a source of power in the political system.

Another example of an author that has tackled the failure of the system and its aftermath is Tom Najem in “Lebanon: The Politics of a Penetrated Society”¹². Similar to “The Government and Politics of Lebanon”, Najem discussed events beyond the civil war, and looked into the changes presented in the Taif as well as the direct Syrian control over Lebanon¹³. The presence of the Syrian apparatus in Lebanon, and the amount of influence it had in the country also raised questions about the extent to which the existence hindered the progress of consociational democracy in Lebanon. Moreover, greater attention was directed towards Lebanon and the power-sharing formula employed after the assassination of Prime Minister Rafik Al Hariri in 2005, the Cedar Revolution, the withdrawal of Syria and establishment of the Special Tribunal for Lebanon shortly afterwards.

¹⁰ (Salamey, The Government and Politics of Lebanon, 2014, pp. 7-71)

¹¹ (Salamey, The Government and Politics of Lebanon, 2014, pp. 38-71)

¹² (Najem, 2012)

¹³ (Najem, 2012, pp. 48-120)

Authors did not only show interest in trying to unfold the realities of the assassination or praising the peaceful demonstrations that took place in 2005, but they were also interested in the aftermath of such a major occurrence especially in a fragile system like that of Lebanon. “Crisis in the Levant: Lebanon at Risk?” by William W. Harris is one of the many literature works on the subject¹⁴. Also Hezbollah came to the forefront now; not just as a political party with an Islamic ambiance or a resistance movement against the Israeli occupation, but as a major actor – which some view as extremist and others do not- with an ability to hinder the course of events in Lebanon. One good example is the book of Judith Palmer Harik, “Hezbollah: The Changing Face of Terrorism”¹⁵. The party even gained more focus after it became linked to the fighting in Syria alongside the regime.

Taking all this into consideration, it is important to note that the findings of Arend Lijphart, about concepts like power-sharing and consociational democracies, became an essential reference for several of the writings that tackle the consociational model of governance in general, and in the case of Lebanon in particular¹⁶. The definition, conditions and application of this system as presented by Lijphart became a theoretical guideline to which many scholars adhered when raising the topic of a consociational system.

The geographic location of Lebanon also added to the country’s appeal as a subject of scholarly research due to the amount of influence that external actors and events could exert on the domestic matters of the country. “Beware of Small States: Lebanon, Battleground of the Middle East” by David Hirst is one of the many writings that tell how Lebanon “was almost designed to be the everlasting

¹⁴ (Harris W. W., Crisis in the Levant: Lebanon at Risk?, 2007)

¹⁵ (Harik J. P., 2005)

¹⁶ (Lijphart, Consociational Democracy , 1977, pp. 25-52)

battleground for others' political, strategic and ideological conflicts, conflicts which sometimes escalate into their proxy wars"¹⁷. Lebanon's position in the region, often identified as weak, is mainly a product of the relationships that the country holds with issues like Palestine and the occupation dilemma, the amount of control that Syria had exerted over the country – and still does to an extent-, and the role that other regional actors like Iraq and Iran play as patrons of major sects in the country. One example that depicts the connection that exists between Lebanon's position, its geographical location and the political changes of the Middle East region is "The Position of a Weak State in a Unstable Region: The Case of Lebanon" by Walid E. Moubarak¹⁸.

Moreover, Lebanon's location is a major element in identifying the ideologies and beliefs that not only shaped the politics of the country but also contributed to building the sectarian identity in Lebanon and forming every community's suspicions and reservations about their position in Lebanon and the region. "Lebanon and the Middle Eastern Question" by Kamal Salibi is one example where the author explains the role that notions like Lebanese nationalism and pan-Arabism had in the civil war of 1975¹⁹. While trying to show why ending the war in Lebanon was directly associated with solving larger regional issues in the Middle East, the author provides a perfect model of how the affiliation of Lebanon's Muslims with the greater Muslim Arab world and the insecurity of the Christian minority of Lebanon can violently divide the country for more than a decade. Even describing history as in "The Lebanese Identity" by Kamal Salibi as well, can serve the purpose of relating Lebanon's geography with the rise of the sectarian identity in

¹⁷ (Hirst, 2010, pp. 2-3)

¹⁸ (Moubarak, 2003)

¹⁹ (Salibi K., 1988)

the country²⁰. After all, a country's location determines its history and thus the phases that affect its modern structure, including its political system, identities, laws, culture and more. Other works in the literature that are similar to the latter of Kamal Salibi are abundant and thorough in showing why where Lebanon lays geographically can clarify the connection of the Sunnis in Lebanon to regional Sunni powers like Saudi Arabia for example, the Shiites to Iran and the Christians to the west, and how do these connections affect the politics of Lebanon on both the internal and external levels.

Salafi Jihadism is also a popular field in the literature. Often, Jihadism is tackled as one type of Islamic fundamentalism when the more general concept of Islamic fundamentalism is studied and clarified. For example, in "Islamic Fundamentalism: What it Really is and Why it Frightens the West", the author Shireen T. Hunter focuses on clarifying the "misperceptions" that have been built around Islamic fundamentalism, and even its connection to the Sunni and the Shiite sects in particular²¹. These misconceptions eventually affect the West's understanding of Islamic fundamentalism and in certain occasions the policies that the countries of the West adopt in order to deal with fundamentalist groups. A similar study is "The Truth and Illusion of Islamic Fundamentalism" by Jahangir Amuzegar, who after defining the term "militant Islam", points out several misconceptions that are often associated with Islamic fundamentalism and militant Islamic groups²². Among the clarifications that the author presents are; the difficulty of Islamic fundamentalist unification under one group around the world, the political

²⁰ (Salibi K. S., *The Lebanese Identity*, 1971)

²¹ (Hunter, 1986, pp. 192-197)

²² (Amuzegar, 1993)

aspect of Islamic fundamentalism, the various fundamentalist approaches around the world and the position of Islamic fundamentalists on democracy²³.

The report by the International Crisis Group “Understanding Islamism” is another example that tackles fundamentalism, and Salafi Jihadism as one element of the larger concept²⁴. The report differentiates among the various levels of fundamentalism in order to identify the principles, end goals and methods employed by the various fundamentalist groups. After all, the phenomenon has a long history in the Arab region and has become a major issue of concern around the world in recent years. In fact, ever since the terrorist assaults on the US occurred in 2001, more academics have been trying to uncover the dangers that fundamentalism could pose on the West. Groups like Al Qaeda for example and figures with similar mentalities to Usama Bin Laden have definitely gained the attention of a wide number of scholars who seek to understand the motives and aspirations of such movements and their leaders.

As for Salafi Jihadism as a topic on its own, one book that discusses Jihadists groups that have been dangerous to various parts of the world is “Al Sarab” by Jamal Sanad Al Suwaidi²⁵. The author looks into the specific case of Al Qaeda giving details about its beginnings, beliefs and position on the political changes that the Arab world had been witnessing since the uprisings began in 2011²⁶. In addition, the author takes the specific case of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria; a Jihadist group that was established in Syria after the civil war began, but is a major threat to other Arab countries of the region including Lebanon and even countries in the

²³ (Amuzegar, 1993, pp. 128-136)

²⁴ (International Crisis Group, Understanding Islamism, 2005)

²⁵ (Al Suwaidi, 2015, pp. 463-522)

²⁶ (Al Suwaidi, 2015, pp. 463-502)

West²⁷. Of course, Lebanon also has its share of literature on Salafi Jihadism as Jihadi groups became popular at some point during the civil war of 1975. In “Salafism in Lebanon: From Apoliticism to Transnational Jihadism”, Robert G. Rabil examines the origins of Jihadism, its beginnings in Lebanon and its development over time until the recent incidents that have taken place in Lebanon following the Arab uprisings and more specifically the civil war in Syria²⁸. Similar studies about Islamic fundamentalism in general and Salafi Jihadism in particular are more significant now that the world has been witnessing a new wave of Jihadism.

Another example is “Islamic Fundamentalism: The Story of Islamic Movements” by Youssef M. Choueiri, is also an example of a book that thoroughly discusses Islamic fundamentalism and the rise of what the author calls “radicalism”²⁹. Since the main aim of the author was to prove that Islamic fundamentalism has long existed in specific parts of the world, the author thoroughly discusses the stages of fundamentalism beginning with “revivalism”, “reformism” and finally “radicalism”³⁰.

Nonetheless, Lebanon, Jihadi Salafism, and sectarianism have been combined based on two patterns; either by taking Lebanon as a case study of a sectarian political system or a country where Jihadi Salafism exists, or by showing that a wrong sectarian power distribution will result in more Islamic radicalism in the country. The literature does not, however, show the cause/effect relationship that exists between the sectarian division in Lebanon and the rise of Islamic extremism in the country, regardless of the sectarian power sharing formula employed. Thus, the

²⁷ (Al Suwaidi, 2015, pp. 502-522)

²⁸ (Rabil, Religion, National Identity, and Confessional Politics in Lebanon: The Challenge of Islamism, 2011)

²⁹ (Choueiri, 2010)

³⁰ (Choueiri, 2010, pp. 13-236)

study will add by presenting a pattern that explains how the sectarian division affects the country on both the internal and external levels, thus becoming a primary trigger of the problematic outcome.

Methodology and Importance of the Topic

The data collected from primary and secondary sources of information are essential in grasping the origins of the sectarian division and understanding the role that identity, geography, and history have played in forming this division. Reliable books, journal articles and published reports will be used to outline the periods that had the most significant effect in the formation of the present day system in Lebanon. Moreover, sources that have talked about, defined, or analyzed the main ideas of the research - the sectarian division in Lebanon, the sect-based consociational system, and Lebanon's position in the Middle East region and the connection of those to the rise of Jihadi Salafism in Lebanon- are essential to the study. Furthermore, numerical data will also be useful in supporting some of the ideas related either to poverty, education, unemployment and other similar subjects in Lebanon. Yet, the research has several margins that need to be identified.

First, some of the main terms presented in the argument of the study must be defined. Beginning with the sectarian division in Lebanon, it refers to the rivalry between the major sects of the country – Maronites, Sunni, Shiite and Druze- on both the political and social level. Politically, the sectarian division is reflected through the political competition present in the legislative and executive body, and manifested itself in governmental deadlock and ineffective decisions. As for sectarian division on the social level, it is expressed through the lack of trust that has

grown between the sectarian subcultures in Lebanon, leading to feelings of suspicion between the communities and accusations of bias and inequality towards the authorities. Both forms of division, and especially between the Sunnis and the Shiites of Lebanon, promotes the use of Islamist extremist groups as a tool by some local political parties to advance their agendas and challenge the power of their opponents, or by regional powers as a form of a proxy competition, or even as a substitute to official representation especially by the Sunni community due to feelings of marginalization.

As for Islamic fundamentalism, since the term is broad and has no one comprehensive definition, conditions of its use in this study must be clarified. As a result, the general understanding of Islamic fundamentalism relies upon Youssef M. Choueiri's statement that "Islamic radicalism is a politico-cultural movement that postulates a qualitative contradiction between western civilization and the religion of Islam. Its emphasis on Islam as a comprehensive and transcendental worldview excludes the validity of all other systems and values, and dictates an apparent restitution of a normative set of beliefs untainted by historical change"³¹. However, the study is specifically concerned with one type of fundamentalism and thus wordings as Islamists, Islamist extremism, Islamic radicalism, extremists, fundamentalists and the like will be referring to what the International Crisis Group has classified in "Understanding Islamism" as Sunni Jihadi groups.

The report differentiates among three Sunni Islamist groups; "political Islamic" movements, "missionary" movements, and "Jihadi" movements³². The first, political Islamic groups are the most peaceful form of Islamic fundamentalism,

³¹ (Choueiri, 2010, p. 157)

³² (International Crisis Group, Understanding Islamism, 2005, pp. 1-18)

which seek to induce change by becoming part of the political system rather than using violence to undermine the existence of the nation-state. The second, missionary movements are solely concerned with safeguarding the principles of being a true and a good Muslim³³. As for Jihadi groups, they can be divided into three types; “internal” fighting against local regimes, “irredentist” trying to push non-Muslims out of specific territories, and “global” resisting the policies of the West. Jihadi groups, which are all violent, could also be separated into “salafis” and “Qutbists”. The latter are the followers of Sayyid Qutb and have a line of enemies starting from internal regimes all the way to countries of the West, salafi jihadists, on the other hand, are those who have adopted violent Jihad after being peaceful in spreading the values of Islam³⁴. While all three Sunni Islamist groups may exist in Lebanon, this study is mainly directed towards the salafi Jihadists – with a mix of internal, irredentists, and to a lesser extent global characteristics- who currently pose the greatest threat to the security and political stability of Lebanon. Moreover, the terms Salafi jihadism and salafi/salafists are used differently in the research based on their distinct implications. Although salafists are strict in following the Sharia in every aspect of their lives and not only the spiritual one, a great number of salafists refrain from the use of violence as a means to spread the rulings of religion³⁵. Those members that rather choose the non-peaceful methods are known as the salafi jihadists.

Second, it is also important to note that Hezbollah will not be addressed as one of the Islamic fundamentalist groups. On one hand, a significant number of scholars consider Hezbollah an Islamic fundamentalist organization with a radical

³³ (International Crisis Group, Understanding Islamism, 2005, pp. 6-14)

³⁴ (International Crisis Group, Understanding Islamism, 2005, pp. 14-18)

³⁵ (Saab & Ranstorp, 2007, pp. 826-827)

jihadist agenda, especially that Shiite fundamentalism does take up a part in the readings of the literature. The armed branch of Hezbollah is also an important aspect of the party that is important to the study, considering the fact that it is a very controversial political and security topic in Lebanon. Even though the party identifies its well-established armed base as a resistance movement in the face of the Israeli occupation of some regions in Lebanon, this motive has lost a major amount of public support ever since the liberation of occupied lands in 2000 and the events of May 7 in 2008³⁶. The party, however, still uses the card of the occupied Shebaa farms. On the other hand, Hezbollah's charter and goals did include establishing an Islamic state in Lebanon before the party began the process of "lebanonization" and took part in the parliamentary elections for the first time in 1992³⁷. The ideals of the party had also been inspired to a great extent from the Shiite sect in Islam and the Wilayat al Fakih of the Iranian Ruhollah Khomeini. However, Hezbollah will be tackled as one of the sect-based political parties in Lebanon rather than a radical Islamist group.

Third, as stated previously, there are many reasons that can lead to the emergence of the Islamic fundamentalist ideology in a certain state or region. Poor economic standards, social inequality, high unemployment rates and underemployment are all factors that might push people- especially the youth- to believe that their only way out is through the application of extremist interpretations of religion. This research will be taking into consideration these elements, but will dig deeper into finding one – sectarian division- that is more unique to the political composition of Lebanon. Therefore, economic marginalization and corruption will

³⁶ (Najem, 2012, pp. 80-81) In May of 2008, members from the Shiite parties of Hezbollah and Amal clashed in Beirut with Sunnis who were mainly supporters of the Future Movement.

³⁷ (Rabil, Religion, National Identity, and Confessional Politics in Lebanon: The Challenge of Islamism, 2011, p. 62)

be highlighted through exposing the down sides of the sect-based consociational system of Lebanon, and the economic and social drives toward Islamic fundamentalism will be linked to the sect-based political system of the country.

On a further note, the significance of tackling the relationship between sectarianism in Lebanon and the rise of Salafi Jihadism has two distinct dimensions. First, sectarianism is a reality under which a total of almost 4 million citizens are living and bearing the consequences of, especially that a considerable number of people still believe that the sect-based political system is the best way to handle the diversity of the Lebanese society. However, the sectarian division on the social and political level has not only weakened the state or impaired living standards, but has also increased the risks of damage now that religious extremism became a fact that the state has to deal with. As for the second dimension, taking this topic into consideration is one way of figuring the connection between sectarianism and Salafi Jihadism in Lebanon, and how a state that operates under a sect-based consociational system becomes a fertile ground that radicalism has resorted to in order to grow. At the same time, drawing this link is one way to understand how a country like Lebanon responds to the threat of Salafi Jihadism, how do the various political groups react to this phenomenon and what are the elements that determine the course of action in the country in such a situation. In other words, do political groups tolerate the presence of Jihadist groups in the country, if yes then why and for how long?

Keeping in mind that the aim is to draw a link between the sectarian division in Lebanon and the ascendancy of Salafi Jihadism, the study is divided into three chapters followed by a concluding summary on the matter discussed. Even though the study is divided between an internal and an external situation, they are very much

connected that often one leads to the other. The research does not provide an alternative to the sect-based consociational system, but tries to prove that a problem exists; thus suggesting another flaw that can grow out of the sectarian political system in Lebanon. In addition, although the study gives special attention to the period post-2005, earlier events will still play a major role in the analysis.

Chapter 1 shows how the political system employed in Lebanon can be a facilitating factor in the emergence of Islamic fundamentalism in the country. Therefore, since Lebanon has a consociational system, the chapter relies on Arend Lijphart's definition and characteristics of a consociational system as a framework³⁸. The chapter first looks into the reasons that make Lebanon a country fit for consociationalism, when was the system first used and how is the system applied. The chapter then examines the downside of the sect-based power distribution in Lebanon by pointing out how consensus between the various factions became a difficult task especially during the post-2005 period. The chapter finally discusses how the defected consociational system produces weak institutions that are controlled by patronage networks, eventually pushing some groups to adopt the ideology of Salafi Jihadism as an alternative. The last section of Chapter 1 will also point out the difficulty of producing decisions under the consociational political system of Lebanon and weak deterrence abilities of the Lebanese authorities, which ultimately facilitate the growth of armed Islamist extremist groups.

Chapter 2 looks into the role of the sectarian identity in Lebanon in building affiliations across the borders of the country, the pressure on the political system in Lebanon as a result of its location and how does Salafi Jihadism fit into this. The chapter shows how each of the major sects in Lebanon – Shite, Sunni, Maronite and

³⁸ (Lijphart, *Consociational Democracy*, 1977, pp. 25-52)

Druze- has built over time a connection with a regional or international ally as a source of both power and protection. Chapter 2 also discusses the impact of the regional Sunni-Shiite rivalry on Lebanon as well as that of the Palestinian issue, and then continues to examine the link between the sectarian identity, location and the rise of Salafi Jihadism in Lebanon.

As for Chapter 3, it is to apply the proposed relationship between sectarian division and the rise of Salafi Jihadism in Lebanon, since the civil war in Syria began in 2011. After briefly outlining the main events that helped escalate sectarian tension in Lebanon since 2005, the chapter will then present two case studies from Tripoli and Sidon. Both of these case studies are examples of post-2011 incidents when sectarian division and interests led to governmental deadlock, a delayed support for the concerned authorities to take action and eventually an armed conflict between a Jihadist group and the official authorities. Finally, the chapter will end by listing a number of reasons that explain why even though Lebanon confronted Jihadist groups – and may need to face the challenge again-, those groups remain supported by a very limited minority that is incapable yet of taking over the system in the country.

Chapter 1

Internal Politics and Fundamentalist Motivations

According to Iliya Harik in “The Ethnic Revolution and Political Integration in the Middle East”, although members of the same ethnic identity had been separate during the Ottoman rule due to “differences in religion, language, geography, and authority structure”, ethnic conflict only came to the forefront with the rise of new communication methods that facilitated the movement of the people and increased interaction among the various communities³⁹. The changes that occurred in communication led to “suspicion, reluctance to mix, tensions, and often rejections” among members of different ethnic groups⁴⁰.

The solution pursued was the unification of each of the ethnic groups under a single entity, whereby “ the ethnic group is called a nation and ethnic sentiment of unity is called nationalism”⁴¹. Eventually, several of the ethnic communities were joined together in the same nations leading either to a repression of the minority by the larger groups, or employing “ a modicum of reasonable relations but with mutual political suspicion and lack of cooperation”⁴². Lebanon fits in the latter group of nations where the Druze and Maronites- dominated Mount Lebanon was expanded in 1920 to include several other sects, thus introducing new actors to the internal political scene whose shares of power have been distributed through a sect-based consociational system⁴³.

³⁹ (Harik I. F., 1972 , pp. 304-308)

⁴⁰ (Harik I. F., 1972 , p. 309)

⁴¹ (Harik I. F., 1972 , p. 309)

⁴² (Harik I. F., 1972 , p. 310)

⁴³ (Salamey, The Government and Politics of Lebanon, 2014, pp. 14-37) Following the Second World War and the downfall of the Ottoman Empire, France took control over Lebanon as agreed upon in the Balfour Declaration. Afterwards, Greater Lebanon was formed after adding new territories like Tripoli, Sidon and the Bekaa. These Muslim-dominated regions changed the sectarian demographics

After 1920 Lebanon encompasses along side the Druze and the Maronites several sects including Sunnis, Shiites, Greek Orthodox, Greek Catholics and Armenians along side smaller communities as the Alawites and the Siracs for example. With this internal diversity comes a sense of distrust and suspicion among the different groups, which either develops out of being a minority in a larger homogenous region- as in the case of Lebanese Christians and Shiites- or by belonging to a majority that fears it is losing its power due to the absence of the right representation and the growing power of the rivals – as in the case of the Sunnis of Lebanon. While the former are afraid of being forced to submit to the control of the larger faction or to flee the region, the latter are convinced that the minorities have their international or regional allies, as Iran for example or the West, plotting to weaken them. Ultimately, both sides feel the urge to defend their culture; hence, internally working closely to ensure that members of their respective sects are well united and are a part of the power structure, and externally associating themselves with cross border identities or allying with more powerful actors of the international system.

This section of the study is solely concerned with the first form of defense. Therefore, taking this into consideration the first question to answer is; how does the sectarian identity, and eventually sectarian division, affect the consociational political system of Lebanon and where does the ascendancy of Salafi Jihadism fit into this equation? In order to answer this question, the chapter will begin by going back to when consociational democracy first came into effect in Lebanon and examine the factors that made Lebanon eligible to operate this system based on Arend Lijphart's work⁴⁴. The discussion will specifically focus on the rise of the sectarian identity in Lebanon, the

of Lebanon and ultimately pushed for the creation of a sect-based power sharing formula that was officially introduced through the National Pact in 1943.

⁴⁴ (Lijphart, Consociational Democracy , 1977)

prerequisites of a consociational democracy and the four major features of a consociational system.

The second section of the chapter will also be based on Arend Lijphart's theoretical framework of consociational democracy. The chapter will go over the incidents during which the consociational system failed, focusing on the events of 2005 onwards, and looking into the elements that explain this failure especially when the political system of Lebanon is derived from the sectarian nature of the Lebanese society. The chapter will then end by identifying how the sect-based system weakens the state's institutions, produces deadlock and weak deterrence, thus giving way for the Islamic fundamentalist ideology to exist and develop in Lebanon.

The Consociational Solution

Interaction among the people of Mount Lebanon had been, for a long time, based on feudal premises. The population was divided between commoners and feudal chiefs, without much attention being given to their Druze or Maronite identities. Peasants were responsible to the Sheikhs, who in turn ran local affairs through collaboration with other notables of the mountain. Even the religious representatives had given in to this employed order⁴⁵. It was in 1840 when the first strings of sectarianism appeared in Mount Lebanon, as clashes between the Maronites and the Druze of the region broke out on several occasions⁴⁶. In fact, the first attempt at reconciliation was in 1842 when the region was divided into a double Qaimmaqamiya; one under a Maronite rule and the

⁴⁵ (Makdisi, *The Culture of Sectarianism: Community, History, and Violence in Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Lebanon*, 2000, pp. 28-50)

⁴⁶ (Makdisi, *The Culture of Sectarianism: Community, History, and Violence in Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Lebanon*, 2000)

other under a Druze one⁴⁷. Later in 1861, after a more intense dispute between the Maronites and the Druze, the Europeans and the Ottomans introduced a new order in Mount Lebanon; the Mutasarrifiya. This time the sect was officially recognized as a distinguishing social and political factor when a consociational-inspired council was put together, distributing a total of 12 seats among 6 different sectarian identities⁴⁸.

Years after, when Greater Lebanon was established, the sectarian identity started to gain a more prominent role in the domestic affairs of the country. Now that the society became more heterogeneous and the territory increased, the amount of influence that every sect could impose on internal politics changed as well. The various groups became skeptic of one another fearing being dominated or repressed by any other faction whose power surpasses theirs. Therefore, every group demanded guarantees on their shares of power in the government, thus producing the sect-based consociational system under which the state functions.

The purpose behind a power-sharing formula is to build a system that allows a culturally heterogeneous society to solve its disputes within the governmental context. As per the definition of Arend Lijphart, “consociational democracy means government by elite cartel designed to turn a democracy with a fragmented political culture into a stable democracy”⁴⁹. Lijphart continues to explain that such a political approach has a higher chance of succeeding in the presence of a specific setting, compiling a set of preconditions under three broad titles: “inter-subcultural relations at the elite level”, “inter-subcultural relations at the mass level” and “elite-mass relations within the

⁴⁷ (Salamey, *The Government and Politics of Lebanon*, 2014, pp. 16-18)

⁴⁸ (Makdisi, *The Culture of Sectarianism: Community, History, and Violence in Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Lebanon*, 2000, p. 159)

⁴⁹ (Lijphart, *Consociational Democracy*, 1969, p. 216)

subcultures”⁵⁰. Lebanon is one country case that had these criteria by the time a confessional system was officially adopted for the first time in the state of Greater Lebanon under the National Pact of 1943⁵¹.

The first prerequisite to a consociational system that Lebanon actually had during the years leading to its independence is the common hazard of the French mandate, which resided from the end of the World War I until the country’s independence was officially recognized in 1943⁵². Prior to the mandate, Mount Lebanon along with its neighboring entities – and several other parts of the region- had been subjects of the Ottoman Empire for four centuries. Therefore, by the time that Greater Lebanon with its new territories was promised independence in 1941, all the various groups in the country were eager to become sovereign. Since the promise was not fulfilled as they desired, they took it upon themselves to claim their own independence forcing the French to acknowledge it in 1943 and totally depart out of Lebanon by 1946⁵³.

Even when President Bechara El Khoury and Prime Minister Riad El Solh drew together the National Pact, they gave a substantial amount of attention to solve a debate over another matter that can be considered a double-edged external threat to the communities in Lebanon; the identity of the country. By realizing the necessity of having all groups submit to the Arab character of Lebanon; Christians would no longer seek the protection of the West especially that of the European countries like France and the

⁵⁰ (Lijphart, *Consociational Democracy*, 1969)

⁵¹ (Salamey, *The Government and Politics of Lebanon*, 2014, pp. 14-37) Before Greater Lebanon was established in 1920, a council with consociational features existed in the Mutasarrifiya of Mount Lebanon.

⁵² (Lijphart, *Consociational Democracy*, 1969, p. 217) The first aspect of “inter-subcultural relations at the elite level” is having an “external threat” facing the country.

⁵³ (Salamey, *The Government and Politics of Lebanon*, 2014, p. 29) President Bechara El Khoury, Prime Minister Riad El Solh along with a number of other members of the government were jailed in Rashaya after they declared Lebanon’s independence, without consulting with the French authorities, by amending constitutional articles related to the French mandate.

Muslims would drop their ambition to revive the Sunni dominated territory of Greater Syria making Lebanon a part of it.

A second requirement that Arend Lijphart has pointed out as essential to the survival of a consociational model of governance and that Lebanon did meet was the absence of an absolute majority among its multi-sectarian society⁵⁴. According to the 1932 census, while the Lebanese Christians were slightly more in number than the Lebanese Muslims, none of the sects held a population number that would allow it to dominate the rest. The Christians made up almost 50% of the population and the Muslims were around 48%. Although the Maronites were the largest sect making up almost 28.7% of the population, the Sunni Muslims were not so far being nearly at 22.5%⁵⁵.

Moreover, in Lebanon's early years of post-independence the country enjoyed a somewhat relaxed economic and social status. In other words, Lebanon had a "relatively low total load on the decision-making apparatus"⁵⁶. On one hand, Lebanon had been an economic and touristic hub benefitting from its strategic location between three continents, its shorelines on the Mediterranean, the nature of its land, and being the most liberal among the countries of the region. On the other hand, as a small country Lebanon had little to be involved in on the international level and so was "more likely to escape the onerous burdens entailed by an active foreign policy"⁵⁷.

Not to forget, under the French mandate and abiding by the Sykes-Picot agreement designed by the French and the British, the formerly Ottoman ruled cities of Beirut, Tripoli, Sidon, Tyre and the Bekaa valley were added to the autonomous Mount Lebanon

⁵⁴ (Lijphart, *Consociational Democracy*, 1969, pp. 217-218) The second aspect of "inter-subcultural relations at the elite level" is the presence of a "multiple balance of power among the subcultures".

⁵⁵ (Maktabi, 1999, pp. 234-235)

⁵⁶ (Lijphart, *Consociational Democracy*, 1969, p. 218)

⁵⁷ (Lijphart, *Consociational Democracy*, 1969, p. 219)

in 1920 forming the present day Lebanon⁵⁸. The Maronite fear, as a regional minority, of being dragged into the Muslim Arab world and the Sunni trust that an Arab unification can still happen made it clear that the line dividing the two communities was a sharp one similar to what Lijphart pictures to be needed on the public level for a consociational system to survive⁵⁹. Admitting to the Arab identity of Lebanon in 1943 did ease the tension between the Christians and the Sunnis creating a better environment for collaboration, but did not elevate affinity towards Lebanese nationalism enough so that it can overshadow the old identity convictions; at least not for the Sunnis whose desires were awakened by the Syrian-Egyptian unification under the United Arab Republic in 1958. As the idea of an integrated Muslim region lingered in the minds of the Sunnis, the Druze did not seem to be troubled by the rising popularity of pan-Arabism, the Shiite voice was still a minor one and the Maronites saw in the building of their own state within the former borders of Mount Lebanon a last resort.

These disparities were further entrenched by the type of networks that often come to exist between affiliates of the same communities in Lebanon. The first of these networks is the family. The ties that are usually formed within a certain family are not only important on a personal level, but are also useful on the political level as well. Providing services to family members is a common way of expanding the loyalty circle of a political leader belonging to that family. The same is true when it comes to the role of the “*zaim*” or the leader of a subculture, as pledging absolute support for the *zaim* of the party is not something unusual. On the contrary, a devotee of the party is likely to receive benefits in return for his/her allegiance⁶⁰. It is also not surprising if these loyalties are

⁵⁸ (Salamey, The Government and Politics of Lebanon, 2014, p. 24)

⁵⁹ (Lijphart, Consociational Democracy, 1969, pp. 219-221) Under “inter subcultural relations at the mass level” talks about how “distinct lines of cleavages” in a society are favorable to the formation of a consociational democracy.

⁶⁰ (Khalaf, 1968, pp. 246-259)

preserved throughout generations in parallel with the transfer of power from father to son or father to brother.

Likewise, citizens who belong to the same religion, and more specifically the same sect, also tend to construct their own network of loyalty exchange for privileges. The multiple sects of the country are mostly represented through the local parties and so the head of the party also becomes a prominent figure of the sect⁶¹. Accordingly, spiritual beliefs become the shared feature upon which the patterns of connection are assembled. Yet, since the *zaim* is a member of a certain family and also the leader of one of the sects represented in a party that he heads, each of the sectarian parties will then be directly linked to a specific family name. As one author states, “It is often difficult to determine which came first, kinship or confessional loyalty; suffice it to say that the two variables were mutually reinforcing”.⁶²

Although each of these linkages has helped the sectarian groups in Lebanon become stronger, more coherent on the inside and brought every subculture closer to its leader, they also widened the gap between the sects and made it acceptable that power remains exclusive to the same elites over time⁶³.

Lijphart also talks about four characteristics that are vital to the continuity of a consociational system; “grand coalition”, “mutual veto”, “proportionality” and “segmental autonomy and federalism”⁶⁴. Thus, seeing that Lebanon satisfied the

⁶¹ (Khalaf, 1968, pp. 259-263)

⁶² (Hamzeh, Clientalism, Lebanon: Roots and Trends , 2001, p. 171)

⁶³ (Lijphart, Consociational Democracy, 1969, pp. 221-222) Two issues must exist at the “elite-mass relations within the subcultures”; “adequate articulation of the interests of the subcultures” and “widespread approval of the principle of government by elite cartel”.

⁶⁴ (Lijphart, Consociational Democracy , 1977, pp. 25-52)

prerequisites deemed necessary for a consociational democracy, how was this system applied in the Lebanese political arena?

Beginning with the first element, it is important that “political leaders of all significant segments of the plural society cooperate in a grand coalition to govern the country”⁶⁵. In the case of Lebanon, this first condition was fulfilled when the National Pact assigned the highest governmental positions to the major sects of the country. Ever since, a Maronite has occupied the presidential seat, while a Sunni represented the premiership and the speaker of the parliament is always a Shiite. This division of power also paved the way for the second constituent of a consociational democracy, mutual veto. Each of the Lebanese sects and support groups are given a certain amount of authority, relative to their governmental appointment, that they can use to dismiss working on a particular topic.

Even proportionality was perfectly depicted in the parliament. Based on the data collected from the census of 1932, the ratio of six Christians to five Muslims became the standard of distributing parliamentary seats and allocating the top civil service posts⁶⁶. As for the last factor, and although Lebanon has always been considered too small to be turned into a federation and many of its regions are filled with people from different sects, the subgroups still enjoyed a noteworthy degree of autonomy if they belonged to an area that was religiously homogenous. Missionary schools, local clinics, hospitals, social organizations, religious courts and religious houses were -and still are- an expression of that autonomy that members of every sect had.

⁶⁵ (Lijphart, *Consociational Democracy*, 1977, p. 25)

⁶⁶ The 6:5 ratio between the Christians and the Muslims was later modified by the Taif agreement in 1989 to become an equal ratio of 5:5.

Defected Consociationalism

At many times the societal feelings of skepticism, which originate from linguistic, racial, ethnic or any other kind of disparity, are overlooked or reverted. However, in other situations the differences are highlighted to the extent that little room is left for productive cooperation, similar to the illustration in Lebanon's sect-based consociational system. While it seemed that the consociational form of governance was serving Lebanon well, it soon began to face obstacles out of which some led to the utter failure of the system.

One example is the brief tensions that were witnessed in 1958. On one hand, the president at that time, Camille Chamoun, was accused by the pan-Arab Muslims of the country of being pro-western after he hesitated to show support for Egypt against the West during the 1956 crisis of the Suez Canal. On the other hand, the Christians were worried that the merging between Egypt and Syria in 1958 would motivate local the Muslim community to try joining the short-lived United Arab Republic⁶⁷.

A more serious episode of consociational failure was the Lebanese civil war that erupted in 1975. Demographic changes, internal pressures to modify the power-sharing formula or to totally abolish it, the clash of ideologies between the Lebanese nationalists and pan-Arabs, the rise of the Palestinian question and the influx of refugees were all transformations that the consociational system could not handle. After fifteen consecutive years of conflict, the confrontations only ended upon the enactment of the Taif agreement in 1989.

The chaos that took over Lebanon for fifteen years definitely destroyed the executive and parliamentary political cycles as well as the power-sharing consensus. In addition to

⁶⁷ (Salamey, *The Government and Politics of Lebanon*, 2014, pp. 34-35)

the fact that a primary cause of the civil war at the time was Sunni dissatisfaction with the consociational formula and Maronite fear of the change that would occur in the balance of power if the power-sharing formula was reformed to satisfy the Sunnis, the political system of the country was paralyzed with the absence of security in the country⁶⁸.

Moreover, the influx of Palestinian refugees after 1967, the Palestinian intervention in the internal politics of Lebanon and the Sunni alliance with the Palestinian movements in an attempt to shift the internal balance of power to their favor further exacerbated the political tension in the country. The parliamentary elections came to a halt during the war period as the last elections were held in 1972 until regular political activity was restored in 1992⁶⁹. The cabinet also faced numerous strains as Sunni Prime Ministers found difficulty to balance between their support to the local Sunni demands and the overall situation of the country.

In fact, the situation of the government further deteriorated when it was divided between the power of General Michel Aoun who was appointed temporarily by President Amin Gemayel following difficulty to elect a new president, and the authority of Salim Al Hoss who has already been a Prime Minister under the presidency of Gemayel⁷⁰. As for the army, it had been accused of being pro-Christian as early as the war began when it received orders to fight against the Palestinian groups in Lebanon whom the Muslims tried to support ever since their influx into Lebanon began after 1967⁷¹. Even later, by the

⁶⁸ The Sunni community in Lebanon demanded a greater share of power, while the Maronites believed that giving the Sunnis – in particular and the Muslims in general- more power would threaten their own power in the country and their existence in the region as a whole. Eventually, after the Taif came into effect, the Muslims of Lebanon did receive a greater share of power. The Maronites lost a significant amount of their power, especially when several of the Maronite President's political advantages were shifted to the position of the Sunni Prime Minister.

⁶⁹ (Salamey, *The Government and Politics of Lebanon*, 2014, p. 58)

⁷⁰ (Najem, 2012, pp. 42-43) Although the Christians may have accepted General Michel Aoun as a Maronite Prime Minister, the Muslims of the country rallied behind Salim Al Hoss who was a Sunni Prime Minister as per the National Pact agreement of 1943.

⁷¹ (Salibi K. S., *Cross Roads to Civil War: Lebanon 1958-1976*, 1976, pp. 90-97) The first signs of Sunni dissatisfaction with the performance of the Army came to the front when residents from Sidon

end of the war, the Army fought somewhat personal wars between their commander Michel Aoun and his opponents, specifically the Lebanese Forces and the Syrian army. These confrontations were a result of Aoun's failed attempts to take control over the Christian areas, drive the Syrian apparatus out of Lebanon and object against the implementation of the Taif⁷².

Yet, even though the Taif helped bring the civil war to an end, the agreement also contributed a few elements to the deficiency in the consociational system of Lebanon. On one hand, the changes in the distribution of power presented by the Taif are problematic. First, shifting a great share of authority from the position of the Maronite President to the cabinet headed by a Sunni Prime Minister aggravated the feelings of marginalization among the Maronites of the country⁷³. Second, as has been the case since the consociational system was first introduced by the National Pact in 1943, the division of power among the three main figures of the government, or what is referred to as the "troika" – meaning the president, prime minister and speaker of the parliament-, is not always practical. If the three parties were in agreement political affairs would run smoothly, however disagreement among the three often leads to deadlock that may require a series of negotiations and concessions to be solved⁷⁴.

On the other hand, the lack of proper execution of the Taif is another factor that has negatively affected the political system in Lebanon. Not only has the clause on the "abolition of political sectarianism" through a "phased plan" been disregarded, but also

clashed with the armed forces following the killing of Maarouf Saad by the Army during a fishermen demonstration in Sidon. Later, the Sunni animosity towards the Lebanese Army grew as the latter fought Palestinian groups on several occasions.

⁷² (Najem, 2012, pp. 42-43) Although Michel Aoun tried to fight the Syrian presence in Lebanon and expressed his disapproval of the Taif Accord, the Syrian retaliation and the international desire to bring the Taif into effect drove Michel Aoun into exile until 2005.

⁷³ (The Taif Agreement)

⁷⁴ (Moubarak, 2003, pp. 22-23)

was the section describing the timeline of the Syrian withdrawal from Lebanon⁷⁵.

According to the Taif, the Lebanese authorities were to take control over the Lebanese territories within two years after the agreement was signed, and the Syrian troops were to withdraw to the Biqaa before a complete departure from Lebanon⁷⁶. However, the Syrian apparatus remained in Lebanon for an additional 15 years after the civil war had ended. Ultimately, the Syrian presence further defected the consociational system of Lebanon by taking control of local and foreign decision-making and depriving Lebanon of its sovereignty. In fact, Syria preserved its control over Lebanon through a set of strategies that the Syrian apparatus employed and by taking advantage of the political deficiencies in Lebanon.

One, in order to maintain its influence over the politics of Lebanon, Syria managed to spread its authority into every part of the system that could affect its presence in Lebanon. In the parliament for instance, representatives were often allies of Syria since the electoral districts were distributed in such a way that a significant number of its political supporters would win seats in the parliament⁷⁷. Even in the cabinet governmental decisions reflected the interests of Syria, and the various media outlets avoided criticizing the Syrian apparatus in order to escape any form of oppression that could result as a reaction to their work⁷⁸. Two, Syria also took control over the foreign decisions of Lebanon. In addition to the fact that Lebanon signed treaties that connected the country economically and politically to Syria, some of these treaties linked the two countries in foreign matters as well⁷⁹. Perhaps the most important of these treaties is the “Treaty of Brotherhood, Cooperation and Coordination Between the Syrian Arab

⁷⁵ (The Taif Agreement)

⁷⁶ (The Taif Agreement)

⁷⁷ (Salamey, *The Government and Politics of Lebanon*, 2014, p. 113)

⁷⁸ (Fakhoury, 2009, pp. 140-141)

⁷⁹ (Moubarak, 2003, pp. 18-20)

Republic and The Lebanese Republic” signed shortly after the end of the civil war in May of 1991⁸⁰. After all, Lebanon was part of Syria’s negotiations process with Israel over peace in the region and retrieving the Golan Heights that were occupied in 1967. By continuing to affect the decision-making process in Lebanon, and more importantly the actions of Hezbollah, Syria held a source of pressure over Israel and therefore an advantage as a power in the region⁸¹.

Three, although the Syrian control over the politics in Lebanon has greatly contributed to the malfunctioning of the country’s consociational system since the country had lost its sovereignty to a foreign power, the sect-based structure also facilitated the Syrian take over in the country. On one hand, the deadlock that resulted from the “troika” arrangement often needed a third party intervention, a role that Syria occupied during its presence in Lebanon up until 2005⁸². On the other hand, since feelings of distrust among the various communities in Lebanon push members of these groups to seek the support of an external ally, and due to the constant struggle among the “*zaims*” of the sects to stay in power, the Syrian influence in Lebanon was further validated through the networks that were built between the Syrian apparatus and a major number of the political actors in Lebanon⁸³. One way to secure a party’s share of power in any branch of the political system was through preserving a close relationship with Syria.

Many years later, and as of the Syrian withdrawal in 2005 Lebanon regained its sovereignty and the political regime went back to being locally operated⁸⁴. Yet again the consociational system stumbled on several occasions. In 2006 the principle of mutual

⁸⁰ (United Nations Peacemaker, 1992)

⁸¹ (Moubarak, 2003, pp. 20-22)

⁸² (Fakhoury, 2009, p. 188)

⁸³ (Fakhoury, 2009, p. 189)

⁸⁴ Even though the decision making process could still be influenced by regional and international actors, Lebanon had no foreign army within its territories anymore.

veto backfired when members of the March 8 coalition resigned from their ministerial seats leaving the government nearly paralyzed, in June of the same year a Hezbollah-Israeli war broke out, and in 2007 the presidential position was left empty after failure to elect a successor to President Emile Lahoud before the Lebanese political arena finally erupted in 2008. All the friction that had been growing ever since Prime Minister Rafik Al Hariri was assassinated in February of 2005 was diverted into an armed battle on the 7th of May 2008 between Hezbollah and his allies against the Sunni factions⁸⁵.

Later that month the regionally sponsored Doha agreement, which re-embraced the sectarian power-sharing system of Lebanon, had to be introduced to end the fighting. The former commander of the Lebanese army Michel Suleiman was chosen to be the succeeding president and a national unity government had to be formed before the next parliamentary elections were to take place in the summer of 2009⁸⁶. Lebanon looked as if it was on the right track until the post-2009 elections cabinet of Prime Minister Saad Al Hariri collapsed on the 12th of January 2011⁸⁷. Once again, members of the March 8 camp resigned.

Prime Minister Najib Mikati was next to hold the premiership, putting together an executive that left out the representatives of the March 14 bloc⁸⁸. Internal pressures were on the rise now that the situation in Syria was further deteriorating, and members of the March 14 coalition constantly blamed the cabinet for the rising domestic instability and accused it of being pro-March 8; finally Mikati decided to step down from his position in March of 2013⁸⁹. Still, consociational governance did not get any easier in Lebanon. It took Prime Minister Tammam Salam 10 months to assemble the next cabinet and no new

⁸⁵ (Najem, 2012, pp. 80-81)

⁸⁶ (Salamey, *The Government and Politics of Lebanon*, 2014, p. 70)

⁸⁷ (Cutler, 2011)

⁸⁸ (Salamey, *The Government and Politics of Lebanon*, 2014, p. 79)

⁸⁹ (Cutler, 2011)

president has yet been elected since the six years term of President Michel Suleiman came to an end in May of 2014⁹⁰.

If the power-sharing approach was an ideal fit for the multi-sectarian Lebanese society and endured well during the early years of independence – prior to 1975 and excluding the brief events of 1958-, then where has Lebanon gone wrong on the consociational system? In order to answer this question, Arend Lijphart's four elements of consociational democracy must be re-examined, as to determine how they have been manipulated by the sectarian division in Lebanon.

The same qualifications that had facilitated the application of consociational democracy in 1943 were no longer completely present after 2005, thus leading to the defection of the system later on. To begin with, although discontent towards the Syrian presence in the country had greatly intensified by 2005, Syria was not a shared enemy among the various Lebanese parties. On one hand, the Bristol camp stressed the need for the employment of UN Security Council Resolution 1559 that necessitated the withdrawal of foreign troops from Lebanon, and pushed further for their demands following the assassination of Prime Minister Rafik Al Hariri and the increased allegations against the Syrian regime. On the other hand, the Shiite parties of Amal and Hezbollah constantly criticized the 1559 resolution and had later reasserted their support for Syria through organizing a mass demonstration in Beirut on March 8 of 2005⁹¹. Members of the latter coalition not only voiced their gratitude to the services of the Syrian apparatus while in Lebanon, but also maintained their good connections with the

⁹⁰ (BBC News, 2015)

⁹¹ (Salamey, *The Government and Politics of Lebanon*, 2014, pp. 64-67) Prior to the assassination of Prime Minister Rafik Al Hariri in February of 2005, the Bristol Camp represented a group of local political actors that opposed the continuing presence of the Syrian apparatus in Lebanon. In addition to Prime Minister Rafik Al Hariri, the bloc also included the Druze leader Walid Jumblatt as well as Christian groups like the Kataib Party for example and the Lebanese Forces.

regime, thus making their relations more controversial ever since the civil war began in Syria in 2011 and Hezbollah got directly involved in the fighting.

Adding to that, the lines of cleavage are much deeper now than they ever were before. During the 19th century, loyalties in Mount Lebanon shifted from being based on social hierarchy to become an extension of the sectarian atmosphere that took over the region following the hostilities of 1841 and 1860. At first, individuals living in the area offered their loyalty to the *zaim*- or sheikh-regardless of his sectarian identity, but out of respect to his person as the landowner and the link between the region and the higher authorities⁹². Nonetheless, when aggression began to grow between the Druze and the Maronites, the sect became the basis upon which loyalties were built. A similar pattern aggravated sectarian antagonisms in 2005 and afterwards. Although the country had already been divided along sectarian lines, the frequent bombings and assassination attempts along with the short-term armed battles like that of May 2008 took disparities to a new level.

The likelihood that the Alawite Syrian regime, an ally of the Shiite parties of Lebanon, is directly involved in the assassination of the Sunni Prime Minister Rafik Al Hariri increased sectarian tensions⁹³. Besides, the Sunni-Shiite resentment took a new dimension when armed men from Hezbollah and Amal occupied the Sunni streets of Beirut on the 7th of May 2008. The Muslim population became mindful of its Shiite or Sunni identity as the political arena separated into a March 14 and a March 8 camp, and associates of the latter bloc became recurrent targets of assassination assaults. Consequently, the power of the “*zaim*” was re-enforced and religious and kinship ties

⁹² (Hamzeh, Clientalism, Lebanon: Roots and Trends , 2001, pp. 168-169)

⁹³ (Talhamy, 2009, pp. 561-565) Although Syria has a Sunni majority, the Alawites of the country managed to reach power and specifically the presidency in 1971.

were granted a bigger role in politics now that feelings of wariness among the Lebanese people has grown immensely.

Furthermore, and in addition to the argument that the value of a grand coalition has been weakened earlier in 1989 when the Taif channeled the power of the Maronite president to the Sunni premiership and the Shiite speaker of the parliament, the rising domestic tensions made it harder to work in a grand coalition now that the local politics reflected a “government-versus-opposition” reality⁹⁴. The partition into this governmental structure was provoked by the various incidents occurring internally, whether it was the dilemma around the Syrian presence in Lebanon, the issue of the Special Tribunal for Lebanon and the investigating committee, the war of 2006 between Hezbollah and Israel, or even the most recent civil war in Syria.

In 2006 and 2011 the March 8 opposition walked out on the governments of Prime Minister Fouad Siniora and Prime Minister Saad Al Hariri respectively depriving them of their legitimacies, and in 2011 the principle of grand coalition was totally ignored on the executive level when members of the March 14 camp did not take part in Prime Minister Najib Mikati’s cabinet. The absence of major groups from a governmental arrangement and the empowerment of the opposition in other governmental designs, as in the case of the 16-11-3 national unity formula of the Doha agreement in 2008, are both measures that undermine the standard of mutual veto⁹⁵. Under the national unity plan, the largest number of ministerial seats was given to the March 14 bloc whose members filled the majority in the parliament, members of the March 8 camp were given 11 seats and the

⁹⁴ (Lijphart, *Consociational Democracy*, 1977, p. 25) According to Lijphart, in a consociational democracy a grand coalition government is often established to include representatives of the various constituents of the country; unlike other democracies where the majority takes over the government while its power is challenged by an opposition.

⁹⁵ (United Nations Security Council, *Security Council Report*, 2008, p. 2)

president- a neutral- had 3⁹⁶. This formula created what came to be known as the “blocking-third” or “*al thulth al mu’attel*”, thus generating the ability to obstruct the work of the cabinet upon disapproval from a third of the members. As a result, even though the opposition represents the minority in the government, its members can still prevent a certain decision from being adopted or even bring down the government by forming a coalition that adds up to a one third of the total number of ministers in the cabinet. In 2009, when the same formula was employed in the cabinet led by Prime Minister Saad Al Hariri and as the disagreement over the international tribunal increased, the opposition and the neutrals resigned bringing down the government thus creating deadlock in the decision making process for the second time⁹⁷.

As for proportionality in the parliament, the equal ratio of 5:5 between the Christians and the Muslims and the distribution of seats depending on the size of each sect have not considered the demographic changes that have taken place. Not only there was no other census other than that conducted in 1932, but also there is no chance given to non-sectarian parties or independent individuals to run in parliamentary elections. In the last elections that were held in 2009, the electoral law was based on that of 1960. Subsequently, Lebanon was divided into small regions known as the “Qada”. Depending on the population size, each Qada is designated a number of seats, which in turn are divided proportionally among the sects available within that Qada⁹⁸. Parties then form coalitions and present their candidates in every region in a list that voters can either drop in the ballot box without making any changes, or can cross out names or add names of candidates that belong to other lists⁹⁹. The majority in the parliament would then be the

⁹⁶ (United Nations Security Council , Security Council Report, 2008, p. 2)

⁹⁷ (Salamey, The Government and Politics of Lebanon, 2014, pp. 78-79)

⁹⁸ (Salamey, The Government and Politics of Lebanon, 2014, pp. 111-116)

⁹⁹ (Salamey, The Government and Politics of Lebanon, 2014, pp. 111-116)

bloc with the highest sum of seats won in all the districts, 128 being the total number of seats, and would have the right to propose a name as the Prime Minister¹⁰⁰.

Even though a whole new group has emerged in civil society to call for the total abandonment of the power-sharing system and its replacement with a secular system, the majoritarian bloc vote has not been altered causing deeper sectarian division and giving more power to the “*zaim*”. This voting system along with the sharper lines of division and the element of autonomy that is required in a consociational democracy, all have made the elites stronger than the law and the state and turned political parties into forums delivering public services to their followers.

Political Fragmentation and Fundamentalist Motivation

In “Rebuilding Weak States” the authors Eizenstat, Porter and Weinstein identify three “capability gaps” that weak states often suffer from, the “capacity gap”, the “legitimacy gap” and the “security gap”¹⁰¹. While the first gap emphasizes the basic needs for the people, the legitimacy gap tackles the role that the rights of the people have in legitimizing a government, and the security gap is concerned with the importance of maintaining security by the state in order to prevent unlawful acts¹⁰². One way of explaining the relationship between the weak state institutions -that are the result of the sect-based consociational system- and the rise of Jihadi Salafism in the country is actually through applying these three “capability gaps” to the case of Lebanon.

Beginning with the “capacity gap”, according to the same authors “a government must also provide basic services such as education and health care to its citizens. An

¹⁰⁰ (Salamey, The Government and Politics of Lebanon, 2014, p. 144)

¹⁰¹ (Eizenstat, Porter, & Weinstein, 2005, pp. 136-139)

¹⁰² (Eizenstat, Porter, & Weinstein, 2005, pp. 136-139)

inability to do so creates a “capacity gap”, which can lead to a loss of public confidence and then perhaps political upheaval”¹⁰³. In the case of Lebanon, the incapability of the state to provide the people with their basic needs and the exploitation of political power affects all the communities, resulting in feelings of marginalization and in some cases radicalism.

Since Lebanon operates under a consociational political system, all governmental and upper civil service posts are appointed based on the power-sharing formula. Hence, almost every sect acquires a share of positions, whether in the parliament, the cabinet, the army or any other entity, that is proportional to the 5:5 ratio presented by the Taif in 1989. The country’s system is also dominated by a certain number of parties that represent the major sects in all political issues. Each of the parties is headed by one of the popular leaders, many of which have inherited their positions from a family member or had been militia leaders during the civil war, and whose capabilities – along with those of the party- have surpassed those of the state through taking advantage of what the power-sharing system has offered them¹⁰⁴. The incompatibility of powers between the political parties and political elites and the state weakened the state institutions and opened up one gateway through which the Islamist fundamentalist ideology could enter the country.

Every party is given a significant degree of autonomy in districts where large numbers of their supporters reside. In these areas, parties develop vast networks of social

¹⁰³ (Eizenstat , Porter , & Weinstein , 2005, p. 136)

¹⁰⁴ Several of the political parties in Lebanon are headed by individuals who have inherited their positions by family lines, have been militia leaders during the civil war of 1975 in Lebanon or even both. The Kataeb party for example was founded by Pierre Gemayel; its leadership then moved to his son Bachir Gemayel who served as president for a short time during the civil war before his brother Amin Gemayel succeeded him after his assassination, and afterwards the latter’s son Sami Gemayel. The leadership of the Progressive Socialist Party was also passed from its founder Kamal Jumblatt to his son Walid Jumblatt. Both the Kataeb party and the Progressive Socialist Party, as well as the Amal Movement led by the Speaker of Parliament Nabih Berri and the Lebanese Forces headed by Samir Geagea had been active in the fighting during the civil war. The leaders of these groups, among others, are still primary actors and members of the sect-based consociational system of Lebanon.

services to deliver to the people. Hezbollah for example builds schools, hospitals and clinics in the Shiite-dominated southern suburbs of Beirut, south region, the Nabatieh district and even in the Bekaa. As for Christian parties like The Free Patriotic Movement of General Michel Aoun, the Kataeb or the Lebanese Forces, they are primarily concerned with Christian regions like the Matn, Keserwan or even Bcharre in the north. The Druze parties like the Progressive Socialist Party of Walid Jumblatt, for instance, mainly work in the Chouf and Aley regions, and the Future Movement focuses on areas like Beirut, Tripoli, Sidon, Akkar and Al Dinniyeh with Sunni majorities. Also, the parties have their own websites, online newspapers, as well as social media accounts as Twitter and Facebook as media platforms and direct connections with their supporters¹⁰⁵.

Taking hospitalization as a case to look at, and according to the statistics of 2012, out of 166 hospitals contracting with the Ministry of Public Health in Lebanon, only 25 are public while the rest – 141 hospitals- are private¹⁰⁶. Yet, not all the parties have equal amounts of resources and the kind of projects that the parties can fund and the number of individuals they can provide to often vary from one party to the other. Actually, Hezbollah and the Future Movement are considered the wealthiest among the support groups; therefore, they are probably the most active in the domain of social services¹⁰⁷. For instance, while the former manages the Islamic Health Unit and has 24 clinics and four hospitals, the latter runs more than 40 clinics under the Health Directory of the Hariri Foundation¹⁰⁸.

¹⁰⁵ For example, Hezbollah has the Al Manar channel, the Free Patriotic Movement has the Otv, and the Future channel belongs to the Future Movement. Even some newspapers are divided among the political blocs, either as direct media investments or simply as political supporters of one of the groups. The Al Mustaqbal for instance is considered pro-March 14 while Assafir or Al Akhbar are pro-March 8.

¹⁰⁶ (Statistics Department, 2013)

¹⁰⁷ (Cammett & Issar , 2010, p. 391)

¹⁰⁸ (Cammett & Issar , 2010, pp. 400-402) Hezbollah and the Hariri Foundation also control educational facilities and charity associations.

This form of interaction between the political representatives and the public is known as clientalism, which took the form of “governmental patronage” ever since the consociational system was introduced in 1943¹⁰⁹. In return for these local services, the parties gain the people’s loyalty, which is directly related to the second point, elections and proportional representation in the parliament. Since the electoral law divides the 128 parliamentary seats in accordance with the sectarian identities in the country, political parties utilize their potentials in collecting votes from their sectarian affiliates to ensure their admission – and re-election- into the parliament. Once elected, parties will have a better access to state institution and hence will increase their ability to provide a wider range of services to their constituents; and the cycle goes on¹¹⁰.

Moreover, parties are known to uplift their service providing activities during elections season. Even individuals who are not of the same sect or are not close supporters of the party become direct targets of political campaigns if their votes can tilt the final results of the ballot boxes, especially in mixed districts where electoral competition is intense¹¹¹. Vote buying, covering transportation fees, roads maintenance, and even supplying meals are all mechanisms that political parties employ during elections in the hope of increasing their chances of winning.

Also, since proportionality reaches beyond the parliament and includes the civil service occupations, and because the principle of grand coalition emphasizes the participation of all the major factions of the society clientalism is not limited to the legislative branch. Consequently, a third point to tackle is the fact that ministerial seats and public administrative appointments are also used as a source of power accumulation

¹⁰⁹ (Hamzeh, Clientalism, Lebanon: Roots and Trends , 2001, p. 171) Earlier in Mount Lebanon, clientalism had feudal characters, whereby security was exchanged for loyalty to the *zaim* or the landowner.

¹¹⁰ (Hamzeh, Clientalism, Lebanon: Roots and Trends , 2001, p. 172)

¹¹¹ (Cammett & Issar , 2010, pp. 386-387)

by many of those who either fill those positions or have the right to assign individuals to the job. When in office, ministers tend at many times to give privileges to those belonging to their sect, to followers of their parties or supporters of the larger political alliances to which they belong. A citizen who has connections with members of the political apparatus in Lebanon is known to have what is called “wasta”. This status makes it easier for its holder to receive the kind of services – especially those related to the ministry held by the individual’s support group- that the state must be delivering equally to all its nationals based on meritocracy and under the regulation of laws. Citizens also use their “wasta” to evade from the law and avoid or commute prosecutions.

Nevertheless, clientalism is negatively affecting the state in two ways. First, the person of the representative along with the party and the sect, have overshadowed the importance and the role of the governmental institutions. In order to obtain a basic right or to complete a public obligation, a Lebanese citizen most often relies upon what the *zaim*, the party or his connections could deliver rather than what the state institutions can offer or what the state laws articulate. Consequently, as the significance of belonging to a sect and identifying with a certain sectarian identity increases, the line that divides the country’s subcultures will grow wider and the power of state institutions will weaken.

Second, due to the fact that a large portion of the state services are not being equally channeled to all the Lebanese citizens, the state is constantly accused of bias; which ultimately could lead to a radical reaction from the people’s side. On one hand, the Lebanese political system is already under economic and social pressure and thus cannot perform in utter strength or deliver very generously to the people. After all, Lebanon’s internal stability can be directly affected by any regional turmoil or change in the balance of power – or even by international variations. On the other hand, the sect-based consociational system -which has also increased the pressure on the system by creating

deadlock and lack of cooperation on several occasions- has empowered the sect and eventually the party and the *zaim*, who have manipulated the system to their advantage. Some elites may try to be fair in their representations, but in several other instances political leaders either choose to prioritize their followers or to pay less attention to the needs of the people – whether supporters or not- once the elections period is over¹¹².

Nonetheless, the end result is the growth of dissatisfaction towards the performance of the state. The shift of power in the parliament along with the exploitation of the grand coalition rule leaves some sects feeling misrepresented. Adding to that, the unequal distribution of state services and the monopolization of certain sectors, especially those related to the economy, by elites, families, parties or sects also produce a feeling of marginalization among the groups. Furthermore, due to the amount of emphasis on political power, economic and social matters often become secondary issues to parties and political representatives. Ultimately, the result is what the authors of “Rebuilding Weak States” called “loss of public confidence” which increases the chances of a “political upheaval”¹¹³. In Lebanon, dissatisfaction with the system due to the “capacity gap” is in certain cases reflected through the rise of religious extremism as an alternative to the deficient system of the state. People living in the underprivileged regions like some parts of the North, the South or the Bekaa for example, where poor economic conditions and social underdevelopment are concentrated, are often the most affected. While some individuals decide to speak up against the political system, others give in to the sectarian

¹¹² (Cammett & Issar , 2010, pp. 411-415) . In the Ouzai region, the Hariri party has somehow neglected supporters of the Future Movement once the elections were over, and Hezbollah only expanded their services to reach the Shiites of Jbeil starting in 2005 for electoral reasons especially at a time when domestic politics were changing. In 2006 Hezbollah allied with the Free Patriotic Movement of Michel Aoun and so it had to help the party collect more votes, especially that the new electoral law gave more prominence to the Shiite population in Jbeil.

¹¹³ (Eizenstat , Porter , & Weinstein , 2005, p. 136)

political parties earning their own “wasta” and others begin to relate to the ideologies of Islamist extremism.

Statistics provided by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) in 2008 in collaboration with the Ministry of Social affairs in Lebanon show that until 2004, 28.6% of the Lebanese people lived on an income that is less than \$4 a day. In terms of acquiring the “basic needs” of a household, in the North 38% of the citizens were considered deprived and 9% extremely deprived, in the South 40% were deprived and 4% extremely deprived, in the Bekaa 29% were found to be deprived and 4% extremely deprived while 42% of the people in the Nabatieh classified as deprived and 5% as extremely deprived¹¹⁴.

At least three of those districts have experienced some form of Islamic fundamentalism at a certain point, even prior to the major changes in the politics of Lebanon that began to take place in 2005. Taking the North for example, Tripoli and the mountainous Al Dinniyeh both were areas where Islamist extremist groups like Harakat al Tawheed al Islami (Islamic Unity Movement) and Majmouat al Dinniyeh (Dinniyeh Group) respectively emerged. The former reached the peak of their influence in 1984-1985 when their radical beliefs were transformed into actual regulations in Tripoli by “imposing a very strict code of conduct, and forcing non-Muslim residents out of the city”¹¹⁵. As for the latter group, its members led a fighting against the Lebanese Army in

¹¹⁴ (Abla, 2014, pp. 22-24)

(Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2010, pp. 16-18) The basic needs term refers to the availability or absence of essential elements within a society like “food, clothing, housing, education and public transportation”. It may also include issues like healthcare, employment or being part of the decision making process.

¹¹⁵ (Abdel-Latif, 2008, p. 6) Harakat al Tawheed Al Islami was established by Sheikh Said Shaaban, The success of the movement in implementing an extremist Islamist ideology in Tripoli was short lived as it fell apart following the clashes with the Syrian army in 1985.

Al Dinniyeh in 1999¹¹⁶. Significant numbers of the community in Tripoli and Al Dinniyeh are still amongst the poorest in the country. Data collected by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) in 2011 indicates that 32% of the families in Tripoli categorize as deprived and 28% as extremely deprived¹¹⁷. Another study showed that the degree of poverty in the Akkar/ Minieh – Al Dinniyeh area reached 60% by the year 2004¹¹⁸.

In the Bekaa, Majdal Anjar also witnessed the development of a radical Islamist ideology among some members of its community, and so did Sidon in the South. For example, Islamic fundamentalism in Majdal Anjar can be traced back to 1986, but the phenomenon came to the forefront when five men from that same region were killed in Iraq fighting against the US troops there¹¹⁹.

Moreover, when talking about the legitimacy gap, the authors in “Rebuilding Weak States” explain that in order “to foster its legitimacy a government needs to protect the basic rights and freedoms of its people, enforce the rule of law, and allow broad-based participation in the political process”¹²⁰. Since a significant number of the Sunni community does not believe that the political system in Lebanon is capable of protecting their rights or even bringing them justice, it is not uncommon for those groups to refuse to submit to the Lebanese government as their legitimate representative. Therefore, in an attempt to feel secure some members of the Sunni community would seek an alternative form of protection, one that they believe is found in religion, and that could either be

¹¹⁶ (Saab & Ranstorp, 2007, pp. 832-833) Majmouat Al Dinniyeh was assembled by a jihadist who had taken part alongside other Islamist fundamentalists against the Soviets in Afghanistan.

¹¹⁷ (Abla, 2014, p. 25)

¹¹⁸ (United Nations Development Program, 2008, p. 20)

¹¹⁹ (Saab & Ranstorp, 2007, pp. 834-835)

¹²⁰ (Eizenstat, Porter, & Weinstein, 2005, p. 136)

implemented by entering the political process as in the case of activist Islamists or through the use of force as in the case of Salafi Jihadist groups¹²¹.

For instance, some members of the Sunni sect in Lebanon believe that the Sunni community specifically lacks a proper representation by its Sunni political and religious leaders, whether it was the former Prime Ministers Saad Al Hariri or Najib Mikati or Fouad Siniora, or others who are members of the cabinet, representatives in the parliament or clerics. The absence of the right representation, as described by one party of the Association of Muslim Scholars in Lebanon (Hay'at al-Ulama al-Muslimin fi Lubnan), does not necessarily mean “numbers”, but refers to the representatives’ “influence in governance”, which in the case of the Sunnis in Lebanon was further affected by the governmental formula introduced by the Doha Agreement, and thus is reflected through underdevelopment, unemployment and poverty in Sunni dominated regions like Tripoli, Akkar and Bekaa¹²². Although the Sunni community in Lebanon had been skeptic about sharing power with the other sects since Greater Lebanon was formed in 1920, the outcomes have been more serious as the sectarian division deepened and the Sunni-Shiite antagonism increased since 2005¹²³.

In addition, the legitimacy gap between the Sunni community in Lebanon and the official authorities has increased due to the weakened roles of the religious institutions that represent these groups, Dar Al Fatwa in particular¹²⁴. Every sect in Lebanon is represented by a higher religious organization recognized by the state. However, due to

¹²¹ (International Crisis Group, Understanding Islamism, 2005)

¹²² (Sheikh Salem Al Rafei, 2014)

¹²³ The Sunni community in Lebanon became a part of the country when Greater Lebanon was formed under the French mandate in 1920. However, members of the Sunni community were for a long time interested in being part of the greater Arab world, rather than Lebanon, especially that they shared with the rest of the Arab world the same history and religious background.

¹²⁴ (Lefèvre, Lebanon's Dar al-Fatwa and The Search for Moderation, 2015) Dar Al Fatwa in Lebanon is the official religious institution that represents the Sunni community of the country and is headed by an elected Sunni Mufti. The institution is responsible for settling debates over religious matters as well as overlooking the welfare of the Sunni community in Lebanon.

the sect-based consociational system the roles of these institutions intertwine in many occasions with the politics and sectarian divisions of the country¹²⁵. Religious figures either ally themselves with a particular political party thus empowering political sectarianism and contributing to the sectarian division in the society, or are overshadowed by political “*zaims*” through power and material resources. Eventually, the outcome is the same. Members of the sect turn to other non-credible sources for both religious and social protection. In the case of the Muslims of Lebanon, and particularly members of the Sunni community, individuals are finding the security that they need among extremist religious representatives. Radical Islamists offer a substitute to those affected by the state triggered economic, social and political marginalization; thus, making the deprived believe even more that the employed political systems are corrupt and that the economic, social or even political inequalities that the people are living under are the result of the absence of the Islamic law from the systems of governance.

Finally, the presence of a “security gap” in Lebanon is another factor that encourages not only the growth but also the survival of Salafi Jihadi groups in the country. According to the authors of “Rebuilding Weak States”, “A state’s most basic task is to provide security by maintaining a monopoly on the use of force, protecting against internal and external threats, and preserving sovereignty over territory.”¹²⁶. Otherwise, “rebellious armed groups or criminal non-state actors may use violence to exploit this security gap”¹²⁷. In the case of Lebanon, the “security gap” is the result of two interconnected factors; the distrust that exists between the official authorities and the people and the limited ability of the official authorities to act at all times.

¹²⁵ (Abdel-Latif, 2008, p. 21)

¹²⁶ (Eizenstat, Porter, & Weinstein, 2005, p. 136)

¹²⁷ (Eizenstat, Porter, & Weinstein, 2005, p. 136)

Of course, the internal security institutions of Lebanon try to maintain sectarian and political neutrality in order to serve equally among the citizens. However, the consociational political system and the sectarian division threaten and cast doubt on the impartiality of these institutions. First, due to the sect-based distribution of power the highest position of every security apparatus in Lebanon is also specific to one of the major sects – Maronites, Sunnis and Shiites-, and thus it is not uncommon to accuse a security establishment of bias to one sect or even the party that represents that sect. One example is the animosity that grew during the civil war of 1975 between the Sunnis of Lebanon and the Lebanese Armed Forces. The chief of the Lebanese Armed Forces had always been a Maronite, and therefore the clashes that broke between the Lebanese army on one side and the Palestinian armed groups on the other caused denunciations against the army, which was then considered biased towards the Maronites and against the Sunnis of the country.

Similar suspicion towards the performance of the Lebanese Armed Forces still exists, especially from the side of the extremist Sunni groups in Lebanon. In fact, according to the Salafi Jihadi groups the army is not only unfair towards the Sunnis of the country but it is a religious duty to wage an armed confrontation against the institution. For instance, in December of 1999 a group known as Majmouat al Dinniyeh began an attack against the army in the North region of al-Dinniyeh that lasted for six days¹²⁸. Even though the duration of the clashes was short, the Jihadi group revealed the extremist ideology that exists among a significant number of the citizens in the region and the possible intentions of implementing a religious rule in the country or Northern region at the least¹²⁹. Another example occurred in May of 2007 when a Salafi Jihadist group known as Fath al-Islam in

¹²⁸ (Saab & Ranstorp, 2007, p. 833)

¹²⁹ (Saab & Ranstorp, 2007, pp. 823-833)

the Palestinian camp of Nahr al-Bared fought against the Lebanese army¹³⁰. The conflict began when members of the Jihadi groups killed soldiers from the Lebanese Army following a bank theft, and although the group was non-Lebanese, the opposition against the Lebanese Armed Forces reflects the resentment that exists towards the security institution¹³¹.

Second, the distrust that exists towards the security authorities in Lebanon is not only a result of the sectarian representation in these institutions but also a product of the limitations that the consociational political system instigates on the ability of the security institutions to act during critical situations in the country. In order to maintain some degree of neutrality, the security institutions maintain a high level of caution when two sects or political parties and blocs become involved in any form of clash, whether armed or peaceful in the form of demonstrations or other protesting mechanisms. In fact, the security authorities may choose not to interfere at all in order not to risk being accused of bias. However, this latter form of reaction often leads to two results; either disappointment from one party amid feelings of being marginalized by the authorities or the general notion that the security forces in Lebanon are incapable of fulfilling their responsibility of providing security and protection for the people. In both cases the outcome is one; distrust towards the security system of the country and the urge to develop a system of self-protection sometimes using religion as a background and particularly Jihadism.

One example that illustrates the case of the “security gap” in Lebanon and its relationship with the rise of Salafi Jihadism in the country is the dilemma around the

¹³⁰ (International Crisis Group, Lebanon's Palestinian Dilemma: The Struggle Over Nahr Al-Bared, 2012, pp. 1-2)

¹³¹ (International Crisis Group, Lebanon's Palestinian Dilemma: The Struggle Over Nahr Al-Bared, 2012)

arms of Hezbollah. Initially, Hezbollah was officially established in 1985 after its Shiite members had began their first resistance activity against Israel in 1982 following the latter's invasion of Beirut¹³². After the civil war came to an end in 1989, Hezbollah continued its role as a Lebanese resistance movement challenging the Israeli occupation and became part of the political system in Lebanon in 1992 after taking part in the parliamentary elections for the first time that same year. The party won its first parliamentary seats and continued to take part in the political process in Lebanon through the legislative branch until its members finally entered the cabinet after 2005¹³³.

Although the Taif necessitated the disarmament of all militias in Lebanon, Hezbollah's arms – or what is known as the Lebanese Islamic Resistance- were excluded from the decision given the “resistance” position that the armed branch of Hezbollah held – and still holds- in its battle against the Israeli occupation of Southern territories in Lebanon. Nonetheless, after the liberation of 2000, tolerance towards the arms of Hezbollah decreased. While a significant group of political actors consider that the liberation responsibility of the resistance movement ended with the Israeli withdrawal in 2000 and thus the arms of Hezbollah are irrelevant, Hezbollah believes that the liberation will be complete upon the retrieval of the Shebaa farms¹³⁴.

¹³² (Qassem, 2005, pp. 87-98)

¹³³ (Fadlallah D. , 2014) Hezbollah chose not to “participate in an installed rule” but rather to “depend on popular elections” as a means to become part of the political system in Lebanon. As a result, the first parliamentary participation of Hezbollah was in 1992 after the war had brought the parliamentary elections to a halt for more than 10 years. Later, after 2005 Hezbollah had to let go of its role as a “permanent opposition” to the executive authority. After the Syrian withdrawal in 2005, Hezbollah entered the cabinet due to “ the Resistance’s need to be a direct partner in the power since the Syrian presence at the time was at least a safeguard at the strategic level, a cover for the work of the Resistance”, but now Hezbollah had to protect the Resistance from any executive decision that could negatively affect the presence and continuity of the Lebanese Islamic Resistance in Lebanon.

¹³⁴ Although Hezbollah considers the liberation of the Shebaa farms a part of its resistance responsibility against Israeli occupation of territories in Lebanon, there is an ongoing dispute over whether the Shebaa farms belong to Lebanon or are part of Syria.

Therefore, the first element to the security gap is the presence of an active non-governmental armed force within Lebanon with an agenda and a structure that does not answer to the state. One, Hezbollah's resistance movement and its fight against the Israeli occupation of land in Lebanon reflects an inability of the state, particularly the incapacity of Lebanon's security forces, to protect the country against foreign threat. In fact, one way that Hezbollah justifies its possession of weapons is by pointing out the threat that the Israeli presence in the region confers on the Arab world as a whole, the absence of an adequate response on behalf of the Arab countries towards the occupation and the lack of sufficient "defense capabilities" by the state in Lebanon¹³⁵. Two, Hezbollah's armed branch provides precedence to self-protection and even extremist armed groups. Regardless of the status of Hezbollah – whether considered a political Islamist party or an extremist Jihadi group-, the reaction to its role in Lebanon and the region particularly the rise of rival Sunni Jihadi groups is a second element to the security gap in Lebanon.

On one hand, the lack of trust in the Sunni official representation and the feelings of insecurity due to beliefs in the weakness of the state pushed members of the Sunni community to seek methods of self-protection. Although some might choose to use their "wasta" with powerful political actors in the country as a safeguard, others take arms as a source of security. Since the state's laws have already been breached by the presence of a fully operating Lebanese Islamic Resistance, adopting a similar behavior – even though with much smaller boundaries- is to many Lebanese citizens justifiable. On the other hand, the fears that exist over a change in the sectarian balance of power in Lebanon and particularly the deepening sectarian division especially among the Sunnis and the Shiites of the country and the region, is another reason why members of the Sunni subculture may resort to arms and extremist religious beliefs. After all, Hezbollah is a Shiite party

¹³⁵ (Fadlallah D. , 2014)

that represents an ideology that is extracted from the Iranian Revolution and is also protected and supported as a party by Iran. Moreover, even though Hezbollah was once supported in its fight against the Israeli occupation by citizens from the various sects in Lebanon, suspicion towards the role of the party increased after the events of May 7 in 2008. By turning its arms inwards, and particularly against supporters of the Sunni Future Movement, Hezbollah lost a significant amount of support from the Sunni sect and became a target of Sunni Salafi Jihadi opposition, whereby one of their main goals is to empower the Sunni sect against the rise of any other subgroup. In addition, this form of hostility between the Sunni sect and the Shiites, as well as the distrust that exists between a significant number of the Sunni sect and the army will only persist and further develop as the sectarian division in the country deepens, feelings of marginalization grow and political representatives encourage this division through the sectarian speeches that they use to preserve their shares of power.

Chapter 2

A Weak State and Fundamentalist Impulses

Before Lebanon was expanded to take its current area it was restricted to what was known as Mount Lebanon, a home for the Druze and the Maronites under the direct rule of a local Emir and the supervision of the Ottoman authorities. In 1842, the system of the double Qaimmaqamiya came into effect whereby one was headed by a Druze and the other by a Maronite, and in 1861 Mount Lebanon became an autonomous Mutasarrifiya directed by a Christian but non-Lebanese Mutasarrif¹³⁶. It was after the construction of Greater Lebanon in 1920 that the current Lebanese identity became relevant to citizens living within the 10,452 km² area, and the identity only became official when independence was recognized in 1943. Yet, even after the independence of the country was recognized Lebanese nationals still felt the need to identify themselves with their sect-based subcultures, and in some occasions with other nation-states in the region. The reason why the people had the urge to look beyond the Lebanese borders is actually twofold.

On one hand, this connection to the outside springs out of Lebanon's historical formation. The citizens that became Lebanese nationals after the changes of 1920 initially belonged to distinct territories in the region, either sharing a common identity with the rest of the Arab region- particularly the Arabian peninsula- and seeking to operate under

¹³⁶ (Makdisi, *The Culture of Sectarianism: Community, History, and Violence in Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Lebanon*, 2000, p. 159)

the same system of governance, or lacking a sense of belonging to the larger Arab world. The Sunnis for instance aspired to attain their pre-1920 unification plans for a long time, and the Maronites worried about being dominated by the Muslim current of the Arab world. On the other hand, the distrust that grew between the local entities pushed members of every community to form closer relations with regional or international actors, and their sense of fear was further highlighted by the already existing rivalries in the region— whether it was the Sunni-Shiite tensions or the Palestinian issue.

As a result, the question to ask here is; how can the sectarian division in Lebanon weaken the country as a regional actor and how do sect-based regional affiliations facilitate the rise of Salafi Jihadism within the country? The chapter will begin by showing the origins of the sectarian affiliations in Lebanon and identifying the connection patterns that exist between the various sects in Lebanon and other actors in the region. The chapter will then move to explain how these affiliations link the internal politics of Lebanon directly to the political events and changes in the region. By pointing out the role of the sectarian identity in connecting the sects of Lebanon to the outside and in transferring the conflicts of the region to the inside of the country, the chapter will show the relationship that exists between an imperfect national identity that is overshadowed by the sectarian identity, the weak position of Lebanon as a state in the region and the rise of Salafi Jihadism within the country.

Identities Across Borders

Upon the downfall of the Ottoman Empire following World War I and the take over of the British and the French in the Arab region, the Maronites were to a certain extent, and until the early years of post-independence, comfortable with the

enlargement of the Lebanese territories¹³⁷. First, some of the added lands included cities like Beirut, Tripoli or Sidon, that lay at the coast of the Mediterranean sea, providing to the Maronites of Mount Lebanon a better access to surrounding countries and continents. Hence, those areas along with the valleys of the Bekaa and Akkar were considered major sources of economic benefits that Lebanon could now use to prosper¹³⁸. Second, the Maronites were confident about maintaining power, as they constituted the largest sect – but not an absolute majority- in the newly founded Lebanon¹³⁹. In 1932, out of a total of 793,396 Lebanese citizens, the Maronites made up a total of 227,800 when the closest to them, the Sunnis, were 178,100¹⁴⁰.

Third, the Maronites had developed a good connection with the west, and particularly the French, that dated back to Mount Lebanon. The Europeans saw the Christians of Mount Lebanon as a starting point of resistance against the Ottoman Empire in the Middle East, and in turn the Maronites resorted to the French for support during the clashes with the Druze in 1860¹⁴¹. Therefore, a link was formed between the Christians and the West, which later became a source of power for the Maronites under Greater Lebanon and lasted beyond the French mandate until present day Lebanon. The West became an external ally that the Christians of Lebanon, and especially the Maronites, turned to whenever they felt that their role in Lebanon's political system might be at risk due to an unwanted shift in the sectarian balance of power in the country.

¹³⁷ The feelings of concern due to holding a minority status in the Sunni dominated Arab world did exist after 1920 and 1943, but they greatly escalated later on with the influx of large numbers of Sunni Palestinian refugees following the 1948 Al Nakba in Palestine and the consequent fears that a naturalization decision would alter the internal balance of power between the Lebanese sects.

¹³⁸ (Salibi K. S., *The Lebanese Identity*, 1971, pp. 78-79)

¹³⁹ (Hirst, 2010, pp. 8-13)

¹⁴⁰ (Maktabi, 1999, p. 235)

¹⁴¹ (Makdisi, *The Culture of Sectarianism: Community, History, and Violence in Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Lebanon*, 2000, pp. 15-26)

One example that could depict this relationship is Operation Blue Bat, when troops from the United States entered Lebanon for a few months in 1958 after the Muslims of the country as well as the Druze began to protest against President Camille Chamoun's pro-Western inclinations. When Egypt was in confrontation with France, Britain and Israel in 1956 over the Suez Canal following its nationalization by President Gamal Abdel Nasser, President Chamoun did not take a clear stand in support of Egypt but rather seemed to be inclined towards the West. Yet, the president's position was not what the pan-Arabs of the country had been expecting as they voiced their alliance with Egypt and took the streets to express their dissatisfaction with their country's position¹⁴². Two years later in 1958, as President Chamoun signaled his desire to extend his term as it was coming to an end, sectarian clashes broke out in the country and the US involvement was needed to secure the President's remaining time in power¹⁴³. Actually, the unification of Egypt and Syria under the United Arab Republic that same year aggravated the feelings of threat among the Maronites and specifically towards their role in the domestic politics of Lebanon¹⁴⁴.

Unlike the Maronites of Mount Lebanon, the Sunnis were less interested in the annexation of their formerly Ottoman ruled districts to the new Lebanon. One, the Sunni- Ottoman relations were far more better than the Maronite-Ottoman relations. After all, while the Sunnis and the Ottomans shared the same religious

¹⁴² (Salibi K. S., *Cross Roads to Civil War: Lebanon 1958-1976*, 1976, pp. 1-3)

¹⁴³ (Salibi K. S., *Cross Roads to Civil War: Lebanon 1958-1976*, 1976, pp. 1-3)

¹⁴⁴ Egypt and Syria are two major actors in the politics of the region with a Muslim majority. The unification of the two regional powers in 1958 raised fears among the Christians that the expansion would increase to include other Arab countries, including Lebanon, which would then diminish their power, as they become a minority in a larger Arab entity. Even though the Christians are already a small subgroup in the region, they hold a significant position in the internal balance of power in Lebanon. Therefore, an inclusion of Lebanon into a larger Arab state would further decrease the percentage of the Christians in proportion to the numbers of the other sects and thus they would risk losing any amount of power that they have within Lebanon.

backgrounds, the Christians along with members of other religions were regarded as “*dhimmis*” who had to abide to stricter rules¹⁴⁵. For the Sunnis, therefore, it was easier to cope with the Islamic-inspired rule of the Ottomans that made them a privileged sect. Two, the Sunnis had reservations about the Maronites holding the upper power in the system. As one author puts it, “For the orthodox, largely city-dwelling Sunnis, members of the Arab nation’s largest religious community and its traditional ruling class, the prospect of subordination by local Christians was if anything worse than European colonialism; an ‘almost unimaginable inversion of the natural order in their world’”¹⁴⁶. Three, the Sunnis had been seeking for a long time to achieve unification in the Arab world, a goal that they felt closer to once the Ottoman rule came to an end. In fact, Sherif Hussein made the first step when he managed to take over Damascus in 1918 as part of the “Arab Kingdom”¹⁴⁷. Nonetheless, little was attained as the French and the British spread their influence over the Arab region as per the Sykes-Picot agreement¹⁴⁸. Belonging to the dominant Sunni sect in the region, holding the same Arab identity, sharing a common history and speaking the same language were the basis upon which the unification aspirations were built in the Arab region, and the same factors that made the Sunnis of Lebanon feel directly linked to the Sunni ruled countries of the region, especially the more powerful actors like Saudi Arabia for example.

As for the Shiites in Lebanon, they were among the smaller and poorer communities of the country, whose role in internal politics only began to grow later

¹⁴⁵ (Hirst, 2010, pp. 9-10) “*Dhimmi*” was a term used to refer to non-Muslim inhabitants of the Muslim dominated regions of the Arab World. “*Dhimmis*” were mainly Christians and Jews, whereby members of the two religions were treated differently especially when it came to taxation and political matters.

¹⁴⁶ (Hirst, 2010, p. 11)

¹⁴⁷ (Hirst, 2010, pp. 6-7)

¹⁴⁸ (Hirst, 2010, pp. 6-7)

on during the 1970s. One major influence of the Shiite sect was Imam Musa Al Sadr. Since his primary goal was to support the development of the Shiite community in Lebanon, Imam Al Sadr established the Movement of the Deprived (Harakat Al Mahroumin) to voice the social and economic needs of the Shiites in Lebanon and criticize the political process in the country¹⁴⁹. Alongside building schooling institutions, medical facilities, religious associations and social welfare networks, Al Sadr also supported the arming of Shiite members to fight against Israeli invasions especially in regions like the South and the Bekaa¹⁵⁰.

Another stimulus to the Shiite community in Lebanon had been the Iranian revolution of 1979. The ideals put forward by Ayatollah Khomeini promoting the need for justice in the Muslim world, adopting the Palestinian cause and holding a responsibility to liberate the Palestinian lands from Israeli occupation, as well as classifying the United States as an enemy became an inspiration to which a great number of the Shiites followed through¹⁵¹. Accordingly, being the center of the Shiite sect and practices and a Shiite governed country, Iran directly became an external ally of the local Shiites of Lebanon¹⁵².

Later, after the civil war came to an end the Shiites of Lebanon, and more specifically Hezbollah established an alliance with Syria. Although a major number of political parties and representatives voiced their support for Syria after the civil war due to the latter's control over Lebanon, Hezbollah built a different relationship that the party preserved even after the Syrian withdrawal in 2005. The party claims that its principles contradicted with the Syrian methods employed in Lebanon and the

¹⁴⁹ (Salibi K. S., *Cross Roads to Civil War: Lebanon 1958-1976*, 1976, p. 78)

¹⁵⁰ (Salibi K. S., *Cross Roads to Civil War: Lebanon 1958-1976*, 1976, p. 78)

¹⁵¹ (Fuller, 2006-07, pp. 146-147)

¹⁵² Iran became even closer to the Shiites of Lebanon following the establishment of Hezbollah after the Israeli invasion of Beirut in 1982. Hezbollah became a primary representative of the Shiites in Lebanon, while being a major ally of Iran in Lebanon and the region.

non-sovereign form of governance that existed during the Syrian presence in the country until 2005, but Hezbollah also explains that the connection with Syria was a required strategic alliance in its fight against the Israeli occupation¹⁵³.

By becoming close to Syria, especially prior to 2005, Hezbollah protected its arms and the resistance movement against any governmental decision that may negatively affect the continuation of the movement or its role, since the decision making process was influenced by the Syrian presence¹⁵⁴. The party also gained a pathway through the Syrian territory for the armed support that it receives from Iran for the purpose of its battle against Israel. Since Syria is the only ally to Hezbollah and Iran in the region, the link that its land provides between the two sides is essential to the relationship that exists between Iran and Hezbollah. In exchange, and while in Lebanon, Syria also had an effect on the decisions of Hezbollah and the actions of the resistance branch against the Israeli occupation. Ultimately, Syria benefitted from this influence in the negotiations with Israel over the retrieval of the Golan Heights that were occupied in 1967¹⁵⁵. Moreover, since the regime in Syria is controlled by the Alawites who represent a minority in the country compared to the Sunnis of Syria, the regime needed the protection of the Shiites in the region since they are considered the closest sect to the Alawites¹⁵⁶. As a result, Syria built a coalition with Iran and Hezbollah based on religious similarities between the two sects as well as a shared need for a strategic alliance following political isolation in the region¹⁵⁷. However, the role of Syria as a route for the arms of Hezbollah has

¹⁵³ (Fadlallah H. , 2015, pp. 118-121)

¹⁵⁴ (Fadlallah H. , 2015, pp. 118-121)

¹⁵⁵ (Moubarak, 2003, pp. 20-22)

¹⁵⁶ (Talhamy, 2009, pp. 561-565) The Alawites tried for many years to prove that they, as a sect, are members of the Muslim religion in order to be accepted in the Muslim Arab world. They have collected several statements from prominent religious figures in the region to prove their belonging, especially from Shiite clerics who they share with a few common points of their beliefs.

¹⁵⁷ (Talhamy, 2009, pp. 569-573)

been hindered by the civil war that began in Syria in 2011 due to the fighting that took over the country and the spread of the opposition armed groups through various regions in Syria. In order to protect their alliance and their interests, both Iran and Hezbollah became directly involved in the conflict in Syria to support the regime against the opposition.

As Lebanon's independence was officially recognized in 1943, working under a common political system became inevitable for each of the different sects of Lebanon. Nonetheless, each of the sectarian subcultures held fears of being dominated or oppressed by another, given that none of the sects formed an absolute majority. As a result, leaders of the various communities in Lebanon moved to adopt the sect- based consociational system in Lebanon as a guarantee to their relative powers in the political system of the country. The Maronites for example, although they had interest in the additional lands that came to make the new Lebanon, were insecure about the demographic changes that were in favor of the Muslims of the country, that would eventually shift the local balance of power to the advantage of the latter. After all, Muslims of the country had higher fertility rates and the Christians had higher numbers of emigration. In fact, statistics show that while the fertility rate of the Muslims in 1971 were at 5.44 that of the Christians was at 3.56, divided among the Shiites at 6.65, Sunnis at 5.2, the Maronites at 3.75 and other members of the Christian community in the country at 3.35¹⁵⁸. The same statistics also reveal that between 1975 and 1984 emigration among the Christians reached 78% compared to 22% among the Muslims of the country¹⁵⁹. Adding to that, the Christians are a minority in a Muslim-Sunni dominated region.

¹⁵⁸ (Lebanese Information Center, 2013, p. 11)

¹⁵⁹ (Lebanese Information Center, 2013, p. 4)

The Sunnis were hesitant about joining a political system with the Maronites who held the larger amount of power in the country and were more at ease with the West, when the former were mostly devoted pan-Arabs. As for the Shiites, they had little impact on the system as they were the most underprivileged of the sects but managed to fill in the position of the speaker of the parliament, while the power of the Druze had been overpowered by that of the Sunnis ever since the territories of Lebanon expanded.

Few years after the independence, and specifically after World War II the concept of parties became more popular and so the Lebanese arena began to witness the establishment of a number of new political parties¹⁶⁰. Now that an organized institution was needed, every sect designed a party where the *zaim* held the leadership. Some examples of those were the Kataib party (Phalangist party) of the Maronite Gemayel family, the National Bloc of Emile Edde who was also a Maronite and the Constitutional Bloc of Bechara El Khoury, as well as the Sunni Najjada party. Ideologically inspired parties were also formed in the period prior to the civil war of 1975, like the Baath party affected by that of Iraq, the Lebanese Communist party or even the Syrian Social Nationalist Party which believed in a borderless Greater Syria¹⁶¹. Later during the civil war more parties developed – many of which acted as militias as well-, as the Lebanese Forces for instance that defected from the larger Kataib party, or the Shiite party of Amal or even the Independent Nasserist Movement (Al Murabitoun) that was a pan-Arab party, in addition to imported political parties as the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO).

¹⁶⁰ (Hamzeh, Clientalism, Lebanon: Roots and Trends , 2001, p. 173)

¹⁶¹ (Khazen, Political Parties in Postwar Lebanon: Parties in Search of Partisans , 2003, pp. 606-609)

Hence, Lebanon's parties were now the representatives of the people through members elected to seats in the parliament rather than just the person of the *zaim*, and due to the sect-based consociational system of Lebanon parties "have generally reflected the communal nature of society and few were able to overcome the confessional barrier"¹⁶². Therefore, external affiliations to the more powerful regional or even international actors based on common sectarian identities were now mirrored through the local parties of the country. Moreover, since consociational governance was not eliminated by the Taif of 1989 but rather reinforced through a modified formula of power sharing, several of the parties that remained active after 1990 and still operate under the present political system of Lebanon along with new post-war parties have developed even closer relations with external actors.

The Sunnis are most connected to the Sunni-ruled countries of the Gulf and so parties like the Future Movement, for example, representing the Sunnis in Lebanon are allied specifically with Saudi Arabia given the religious similarities that they hold. Even some of the more radical Sunni groups of Lebanon claim to be supported by countries from the Gulf like Qatar and Saudi Arabia. The Shiites are affiliates of Iran as in the case of the Amal party and more importantly Hezbollah, and are even close to the Alawite ruled Syria. As for the Christians of Lebanon, although they have often been associated with the West, whether Europe or the US, the changing politics of Lebanon pushed the Christian parties of the country to form alliances that protect their set of interests rather than sect or religion¹⁶³. For instance,

¹⁶² (Khazen, *Political Parties in Postwar Lebanon: Parties in Search of Partisans*, 2003, p. 606)

¹⁶³ Following the end of the civil war in 1989 the political environment in Lebanon changed significantly. The Taif provided the Muslims of the country with increased political power divided between the positions of the Sunni Prime Minister and the Shiite Speaker of the Parliament, while the power of the Maronites diminished. In addition, even though no official census had been conducted since 1932 in order to determine the demographic characteristics of Lebanon, it is widely acknowledged that the Maronites no longer represent the majority in the country. Moreover, the Middle East region and specifically the Arab world had divided between

even though the Maronites represent a majority among the Christians of Lebanon, the major Maronite parties of the country like the Lebanese Forces, the Kataib Party and the Free Patriotic Movement have divided between supporters of the Sunnis and allies of the Shiites. While the first two groups became joined the March 14 alliance with the Sunni Future Movement and ally of Saudi Arabia, General Michel Aoun of the Free Patriotic Movement allied with Hezbollah, the main supporter of Iran in Lebanon. Yet, those inter-sectarian alliances between the Muslim and the Christian parties of Lebanon did not overshadow the significance of the Maronite sectarian identity within the Christian political groups, since the sect remains the primary element of representation, power and interest in the country.

Geographical Pressures

Where Lebanon lays geographically has a direct effect on the country's politics, economy, military performance and even its society and culture. Actually, due to the fact that Lebanon's sectarian division has defected its political system and empowered the sectarian identity over the sense of national identity in many ways, Lebanon's internal politics became more vulnerable to pressure emanating from its geographical position. The most important form of pressure that the country suffers from is that of conflict, whether it was an armed one, an ideological competition or even a race aiming at shifting the balance of power in the region.

One rivalry that has long reverberated in the politics and culture of Lebanon is the centuries old antagonism between the Sunnis and the Shiites. Historically, the

two major poles, the Saudi Arabia and Gulf counties Sunni coalition and the Iran, Syria and Hezbollah Shiite and to a lesser extent Alawite alliance. As a result, these internal and regional changes affected and eventually altered the interests, agendas as well as strategies of the Christians, and mainly the Maronites, of Lebanon.

animosity between the two sects can be traced down to the earlier days of Islam and to disputes over power succession¹⁶⁴. One, as the region developed and the nation-state came into existence each of the sects occupied a specific area, of a size that either expanded or diminished during invasions and concurring, until they finally settled into their present day countries. While the Shiites became the dominant culture in Iran and branches of the sect spread to countries like Iraq and Lebanon among others, the Sunnis were the majority in the gulf and other Arab countries of North Africa.

Consequently, a Sunni rule took over the countries of the gulf that had a Sunni absolute majority and Iran adopted Shiism as the base of its political system ever since the Iranian revolution succeeded under the leadership of Ayatollah Khomeini in 1979. Of course, some countries were an exception to this pattern, as Bahrain for example that is Shiite in majority but is ruled by a Sunni monarchy, Syria that is governed by the Alawite minority when the Sunnis are the largest sect in the country, and Iraq under Saddam Hussein who empowered Sunnis over a Shiite majority. Adding to that, not all countries of the region use religion equally as part of their political system. While in Saudi Arabia and Iran religion is implemented in a rather strict way, other countries have suppressed attempts to introduce religion into the system as in Syria for example or Egypt under former president Hosni Mubarak.

Two, the remains of the historical clashes also increased the amount of wariness between the two sects, which was soon officially recognized through the religious political systems of the region and thus was transformed into political distrust and a battle of regional power that could also be detected in the internal politics of Lebanon. The main actors in this regional sectarian dilemma are the most

¹⁶⁴ (Fuller, 2006-07, pp. 144-145)

powerful countries representing the two sects, specifically Iran and the countries of the gulf led by Saudi Arabia. Since the two sides are very close geographically, both strive to preserve their influence in the region, though in different ways, as to deter any chance by the other to shift the balance of power in their favor. While Saudi Arabia maintains a close relationship with the US, whose in conflict with Iran ever since the Shah was ousted by the Iranian revolution and the new system perceived the US as an enemy, Iran focuses on empowering the Shiites of the region and builds close relations with the those states opposing to the US, as Russia for example.

The general disagreement over religious interpretations -as a result of the dispute over succession in the early Islamic Caliphate- divides the Sunni and the Shiites of Lebanon when it comes to the practice of religion in a similar manner to the division on the regional level. Yet, having a heterogeneous society where none of the sects is an absolute majority, Lebanon adopted a political system that is greatly different from any other form of governance employed in the region. Nonetheless, since the sectarian identity is a key element of politics and society in Lebanon, the Sunni-Shiite hostility easily entered the system of the country.

Therefore, since Lebanon's Muslims have close connections with their sectarian identities outside the country, a Sunni or a Shiite citizen often feels a responsibility to defend their sect thus bringing the regional rivalry internally. More importantly, local sectarian parties also make an effort to voice their support for their respective external allies, holding positions that match those of the bigger powers they are linked to. It is common for instance for a member of the Future Movement to accuse Iran and the Shiites of having a bigger plan that aims to overpower the Sunnis of the region, or blame Iran and its local allies – Amal and Hezbollah- for the instability in Lebanon and the Levant, claiming that their radical Shiite ideology and

Iran's nuclear project produce uncertainty especially with the US and other countries of the West. Since Iran, along with Hezbollah, hold very antagonistic views towards the Israeli occupation of Palestine, their arms pose a threat to Israel and hence are a concern to the US as well. The tension between Iran and its allies and Israel and its allies keeps the future of the region and the possibility of peace unclear. In fact, the statements of political representatives often demonstrate the division that exists between the political factions in Lebanon as well as the significance of sectarian affiliations that exist across the borders.

For example, one statement by the leader of the Future Movement, Prime Minister Saad Al Hariri, that shows the position of the party towards Iran and Hezbollah in comparison to the party's relationship with Saudi Arabia is, "the determination to place Iran's interests above the interests of Lebanon, is a situation present for years, we will not acknowledge its usefulness and it will not push us today to comply with it through hasty responses. As for the relationship with Saudi Arabia and the Gulf countries, it was and it will remain greater than being shaken by the offenses and tendentious campaigns, Saudi Arabia offered to Lebanon and the Arab countries well-being and peace and sincere brotherly support, and others offered and still offer advanced projects for war and disputes and dominance"¹⁶⁵.

Similarly, Hezbollah criticizes the relationship between the US and Saudi Arabia – as well as other Gulf countries-, arguing that the former conspires with Israel to weaken the region in general and those who are against their policies in particular as part of an interest plan that they seek to achieve. For example, in one of his speeches on the role of Hezbollah in the fight against Israel, the Secretary General of Hezbollah Sayyid Hassan Nasrallah said, "Israel feels comfortable in

¹⁶⁵ (Official Future Movement Website, 2015)

front of some Arab countries' huge armies because the decision-making of these regimes is within the US"¹⁶⁶.

Although the Christians of Lebanon may not be directly involved in the Sunni-Shiite dilemma, political parties representing them are nevertheless drawn to choose a side. On one hand, parties like the Lebanese Forces, the Kataib party, the Free Patriotic Movement or the Marada Movement, all have a set of beliefs that shape their interests and goals. These beliefs and interests can either match those of Saudi Arabia for example or that of Iran, and thus direct the attention of the local Christian parties towards one external actor and against another. Parties that prefer a peaceful settlement in Palestine for instance or consider that the armed branch of Hezbollah and the position of Iran pose a threat to the stability of the region would not build relations with the Shiite side, but rather incline towards the Sunnis. The opposite is also true, Christian parties that believe arms are needed to face the Israeli occupation or that the US policies are used to restrict the capabilities of countries in the Arab world, would then favor the Shiite camp. Other parties in Lebanon also follow the same pattern to side with either the Sunni external ally or the Shiite, like the Druze Progressive Socialist Party or even secular parties like the Syrian Socialist Nationalist Party.

On the other hand, the non-Muslim parties of Lebanon also form local political blocs with either the Sunni or the Shiite parties of the country. They often have similar points of view, share common interests and seek to maintain a coherent alliance where one way to do that is to back the decisions and actions of other members of the coalition, and eventually build relations with their relative external allies. For example, the Free Patriotic Movement may not be interested in the

¹⁶⁶ (Al-Manar Website, 2012)

Palestinian issue as much as the Shiite members of March 8 but would still back Hezbollah's decision to continue their hold of an armed resistance group or become closer to Iran. Likewise, the Lebanese Forces or the Kataib party may worry about Sunni domination and the decrease of the Christian- specifically Maronite- power in Lebanon, but would remain in support of the Sunni groups of March 14 and try to have better connections with the Sunni countries of the gulf.

Furthermore, in addition to the Sunni-Shiite rivalry other forms of conflict over interests and struggles over power in the Arab world affect the political system of Lebanon as a result of the imperfect sense of national identity in the country, the rise of the sectarian identity and the affiliations that have been built across the borders. Although some political groups may hold similar positions with external actors due to the commonality of beliefs and principles, many have to offer more than political statements in order to fulfill their role in the patron-client relationship that exists between the two sides. In return for protection and support from the outside, local parties reciprocate by offering loyalty to external actors thus providing them with an access to influence the internal politics of Lebanon so that they match their interests in the region.

The process of exchange between an external patron and an internal political group can take place when two conditions are available: one, the external ally has a certain set of interests in the Arab region that they seek to reach or are involved in the power competition of the region, and two, the external ally must have a party acting as a client within the Lebanese political system. For the first factor, the Sunni-Shiite rivalry, the oil reserves in the Arab gulf and some Arab countries of North Africa, the Israeli occupation of Palestine and the existence of Islamic fundamentalist groups are all features that made the Middle East and North African region an area of

interest to countries other than those of the Gulf or Iran, including powers like the US, Russia and some countries in Europe¹⁶⁷. As for the second, a majority of the local parties of Lebanon work closely with external actors due to the distrust that has grown over the years between the different sects, or out of conviction that they share the same beliefs with those actors rather than other factions within Lebanon. Accordingly, several examples can be found of when local political groups in Lebanon represent the power capabilities of their respective allies and political events occurring within the country were a reflection of disputes on the regional or even international level.

For instance, during the civil war and more importantly after the invasion of 1982 Iran gathered independent Shiite factions fighting against the Israeli troops under one group, Hezbollah, in order to protect the sect in a heterogeneous and turbulent Lebanon¹⁶⁸. The party adopted the principle of Wilayat Al Fakihi and building an Islamic state in Lebanon became one of its goals before its “lebanonization” process began following the end of the civil war¹⁶⁹. Also, liberating lands occupied by Israel was another major target that the party aimed to achieve. The work, objectives and interests of Hezbollah remain in parallel with those of Iran as the party continues to receive financial and military aid from its regional and ideological ally.

Another country that built close relations with Hezbollah is Syria. Although the latter had for long rigid policies towards parties with religious backgrounds, many have argued that having a certain amount of influence over Hezbollah’s

¹⁶⁷ (Hirst, 2010, pp. 2-3)

¹⁶⁸ (Fuller, 2006-07, p. 143)

¹⁶⁹ (Rabil, Religion, National Identity, and Confessional Politics in Lebanon: The Challenge of Islamism , 2011, pp. 62-65) The first participation of Hezbollah in the parliament was in 1992.

decisions and actions is an element that Syria can make use of during negotiations with Israel over the Golan Heights¹⁷⁰. After all, Hezbollah needed the consent of Syria to maintain its armed resistance movement ever since the Syrian apparatus took control over Lebanon after the Taif of 1989¹⁷¹. Syria has also fought alongside the Christians of Lebanon, specifically the Kataib party, during the first year of the civil war when both were feeling threatened by the growing power of the Palestinian groups in Lebanon and especially the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). Yet, soon the Christians shifted to form a new coalition against Syria as well as the Palestinians; the former then moved its support towards the Druze and the Shiite groups of the country, Amal and eventually Hezbollah¹⁷².

The separate peace agreement that was being put together between Egypt and the Israelis also pushed the Druze and more specifically the National Movement led by Kamal Jumblatt to incline more towards Syria and the Soviet Union, who in turn needed an internal ally in Lebanon during the civil war to disrupt the peace talks in the region¹⁷³. The National Movement was a pan-Arab group that supported the Palestinians and rallied against the sectarian power-sharing formula in Lebanon, and thus needed the support of a powerful external actor when facing the Christian-dominated Lebanese Front. Syria was concerned about being left out of the peace agreement in the region and the Soviet Union was against the advancement of the US agenda in the Middle East¹⁷⁴. Under such circumstances the relationship between the Lebanese National Movement, Syria and the Soviet Union developed during the civil war. Of course, this does not imply that the work of political parties in Lebanon is

¹⁷⁰ (Hokayem, 2007, pp. 36-38)

¹⁷¹ (Hokayem, 2007, pp. 37-38)

¹⁷² (Najem, 2012, pp. 35-38)

¹⁷³ (Jabbra & Jabbra, 1983, pp. 594-595)

¹⁷⁴ (Jabbra & Jabbra, 1983, pp. 594-595)

completely dictated by their external allies. The local groups consider the preferences of external patrons especially when they are receiving support in return – whether material or in terms of power-, but they also enjoy a significant degree of autonomy over their decisions and actions, which has further increased following the withdrawal of Syrian troops from the country.

Moreover, the Palestinian-Israeli issue is also a conflict in the region that has caused pressure on the political system in Lebanon on more than one level. The first group that was motivated to react against the occupation of Palestine was that of pan-Arabs. Although a majority were Sunni Muslims, members of other sects and secular parties also joined as the Lebanese Communist Party for example or the Druze Progressive Socialist Party or even the Syrian Social Nationalist Party. A second group that voiced their support to the Palestinians and their fight against the Israeli occupation was mainly of Sunni pan-Islamists, who were further provoked following the failure of the Arab countries in their confrontations with Israel during the six days war in 1967. While the latter two factions were determined to help the Palestinians not only through humanitarian aid but using military resistance as well, a significant number of the Christian community – whether members of the political body or not- were concerned about the changes in the region and their repercussions on Lebanon.

Although the power-sharing formula was still based on the census of 1932 giving a considerable amount of power for the Maronite president, the demographics of the country were changing due to the higher fertility rates of the Muslims and so the influx of large numbers of Sunni Palestinians was considered an additional threat

to the power of the Christians in Lebanon¹⁷⁵. After all, among the Palestinians entering the country around 85% were Sunni Muslims, thus making the naturalization of Palestinian refugees a very sensitive subject¹⁷⁶. In fact, in order to reduce the effect of the demographic differences the local Christians reacted by targeting the Christian Palestinians, giving the Lebanese nationality to almost 28,000 members by 1951¹⁷⁷.

Along with the dilemma around demography came political division on whether the Palestinian resistance groups should be allowed to use the Lebanese territory in their fight against the Israeli occupation or not. As public frustration was on the rise following the outcomes of the 1967 war between the Arab forces and Israel, armed groups in Lebanon began to take more action against the occupation using areas on the borders in the South. Soon afterwards the PLO moved its headquarters to Beirut after they were forced to leave Jordan in 1970.

Several regions of the country had to suffer from retaliations from the Israeli side. One example is the events of 1968 when the Beirut airport was attacked by the Israelis causing significant damage, which the Christian “Hilf” bloc blamed on the Palestinian resistance movements¹⁷⁸. Later on, the Palestinian armed movements clashed with Christian groups –especially the Kataib party- and the army. In fact, the army was accused of bias since it was supported by a large number of Maronites in its fight against the Palestinian resistance groups. Similar incidents became recurrent during the few years leading up to the beginning of the civil war in 1975. Even

¹⁷⁵ (Lebanese Information Center, 2013, p. 4) In 1971 the Muslims of Lebanon had a fertility rate of 5.44 while that of the Christians was 3.56, in addition to a higher emigration rate for the latter group.

¹⁷⁶ (Haddad, 2004, p. 475)

¹⁷⁷ (Siklawi, 2010, p. 599)

¹⁷⁸ (Salibi K. S., *Cross Roads to Civil War: Lebanon 1958-1976*, 1976, pp. 35-38) The “Hilf” was composed of the Party of Liberal Nationalists (P.N.L), the National Bloc and the Kataeb party.

governmental processes became harder as blocs formed with the rise of sectarian tension in the country, and Sunni Prime Ministers either resigned or failed to bring the opposing groups into agreement on how to deal with the Palestinian issue¹⁷⁹.

The local political division over the Palestinian presence in Lebanon was also reflected during the 1982 Israeli invasion against the PLO. The Lebanese National Movement (LNM) encompassing pro-Arabs, Palestinian groups and a number of secular parties fought alongside the Palestinians and against Israel whose troops had reached Beirut¹⁸⁰. As for the Maronite parties, they continued to take action against the Palestinian resistance groups, the most prominent of which was the Lebanese Forces under the leadership of Bachir Gemayel. Even Shiites, divided between members of Amal and independents, took part in the clashes against the Israeli troops. Ultimately, the events of 1982 led to significant changes in the Lebanese political arena. The attempts of the LNM were far from successful, the PLO had to evacuate Beirut towards Tripoli and eventually to Tunisia, President Bachir Gemayel was assassinated and Israeli withdrew its forces in 1985. Adding to that, the Shiite involvement marked the beginning of the military activity of Hezbollah in the form of an Islamic resistance to Israel, before the entity was finally announced as an official political party in an “Open Letter” in February of 1985¹⁸¹.

The internal politics of Lebanon faced further pressure when Lebanon’s future with the Palestinian movements and Israel coincided with the interests of other states in the region. Syria, for example, favored peaceful Lebanese borders that would hold no threat of an Israeli invasion on its borders. After the 1967 Arab-Israeli

¹⁷⁹ (Salibi K. S., *Cross Roads to Civil War: Lebanon 1958-1976*, 1976)

¹⁸⁰ (Salamey, *The Government and Politics of Lebanon*, pp. 44-47) The Lebanese National Movement under the leadership of Kamal Jumblatt included groups like the Mourabitoun, Lebanese Communist Party, Syrian Social Nationalist Party, the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine and others.

¹⁸¹ (Qassem, 2005, pp. 87-98)

war the Golan Heights in Syria fell under Israeli occupation. As a result, Syria intended to protect other borders that are in common with Lebanon and at the same time keep the possibility of retrieving the Golan Heights from Israel open¹⁸². In order to attain its plan Syria entered Lebanon in 1976 to fight the Palestinian presence alongside the Christians of the country, and continued its battle against the PLO until the latter left Lebanon in December of 1983¹⁸³. Still, other countries saw in an internally troubled Lebanon an opportunity to advance their political role in the region and shift the balance of power in their favor, as was the case with Iraq for example. For Iraq, instability on the Syrian borders would weaken Syria thus giving the former a chance to acquire a more influential role in the politics of the region¹⁸⁴. Local contenders in Lebanon received political and material support from the interested countries, which further contributed to the internal division that had transformed into a civil war in 1975. Not to forget, the Lebanese political system encountered an increased amount of economic and social burdens with the entrance of large numbers of refugees into the country.

Even many years after the civil war ended, the politics in Lebanon are still affected by the Palestinian issue that is far from being resolved. One, there is the constant debate over whether the Lebanese Army possesses the capacity to protect the Lebanese borders from the Israeli threat and the ability to subdue an Israeli offensive if it happens. Two, on the other side of the debate over the security of the land in Lebanon lays Hezbollah with the argument that the party's armed branch, the Lebanese Islamic Resistance, is sustained for the sole reason of defending Lebanon against Israeli aggression. Even though the liberation of Lebanese territory from

¹⁸² (Seaver, 2000 , pp. 260-261)

¹⁸³ (Rabil, Salafism in Lebanon: From Apoliticism to Transnational Jihadism, 2014, pp. 75-76) Syria pursued the PLO even after they left Beirut and took shelter in Tripoli.

¹⁸⁴ (Seaver, 2000 , pp. 260-261) Libya also had a similar perspective to Iraq on the events in Lebanon.

Israeli occupation has been acknowledged on the 25th of May 2000, an achievement accredited to the Islamic Resistance, Hezbollah insists that the mission is not over since the Shebaa farms are yet to be liberated¹⁸⁵. Yet, Hezbollah's acquisition of arms is denounced by a significant number of political parties, mainly members the March 14 bloc, and even members of the Lebanese society, who both consider the Islamic Resistance as a source of power for the party, yet with negative implications on Lebanon¹⁸⁶.

Three, the naturalization of Palestinians – though unlikely to happen- is still perceived as a threat to the power of the Christians in Lebanon, and the Palestinian camps remain a controversial topic¹⁸⁷. In fact, with politically active resistance groups as in Ain al-Helweh camp in Sidon or the Nahr al-Bared camp in the North of the country, Palestinian camps still pose a security issue for the government. Not only do these camps have groups that are armed and have fought one another on several occasions, but they have also encompassed a number of Islamic fundamentalist groups over the years. Therefore, the question of whether the government should get directly involved in managing the camps' security or not has been raised on several occasions. Although the internal security forces (ISF) did establish a unit inside the Nahr al-Bared camp and the Lebanese army is also present there, Nahr al-Bared became an exception following the clashes between Fath al-Islam and the Lebanese Army in 2007¹⁸⁸. Otherwise, the security forces are not

¹⁸⁵ The issue of the Shebaa farms is complicated due to disagreement over whether the territory is part of Lebanon or Syria. Yet, Hezbollah claims a responsibility to liberate the Shebaa farms from Israeli occupation based on the belief that the region is a part of Lebanon.

¹⁸⁶ The arms of Hezbollah are at many times blamed for negatively affecting political stability in Lebanon as well as the country's relations with external actors. Positions against the armed branch of Hezbollah increased after the events of May 7 of 2008 in Beirut and later the direct intervention of Hezbollah in the Syrian conflict alongside the regime.

¹⁸⁷ (International Crisis Group, *Nurturing Instability: Lebanon's Palestinian Refugee Camps*, 2009)

¹⁸⁸ (International Crisis Group, *Lebanon's Palestinian Dilemma: The Struggle Over Nahr Al-Bared*, 2012)

present inside any other camp even though the government managed to maintain close monitoring over the camps during the last few years.

Furthermore, political parties in Lebanon adopted distinct positions towards the management of those camps. While Christians and members of the Future Movement prefer that the government and Lebanese security forces be in charge of security in the camps, where arms should be very well controlled, Hezbollah fears that a plan of disarmament in the camps would ultimately lead to a decision regarding the party's arms as well¹⁸⁹. Likewise, Palestinian factions also divided on the matter depending on their own interests and the connections they have mainly built with Muslim Lebanese political parties¹⁹⁰.

Sectarian Identities, Regional Instability and Fundamentalist Impulses

The prevalence of the sectarian identity in Lebanon and the development of sect-based connections to external actors facilitated the infiltration of regional disputes into the country. The end result was political instability characterized by aggravated feelings of marginalization and weak representation among the people as well as division in opinions over the events that were taking place in the region, and thus different reactions among the active political factions in the country. While certain groups chose to use political activism to express their views, several used weapons to defend their beliefs and some resorted to religious extremism. In the case of the latter, Islamic fundamentalism was either a reaction to the failure of certain ideologies - pan-Arabism in this case -, or to assist Muslim communities in their

¹⁸⁹ (International Crisis Group, Nurturing Instability: Lebanon's Palestinian Refugee Camps, 2009, pp. 7-9)

¹⁹⁰ (International Crisis Group, Nurturing Instability: Lebanon's Palestinian Refugee Camps, 2009, pp. 20-21)

defense against what Islamists categorize as enemies and infidels or it could have been a result of both.

In fact, salafi jihadi Palestinian resistance groups were the product of both failed ideologies and the assumption that Muslims were at war with enemies of their religion. After the 1967 war and the inability of Arab regimes to help the Palestinians in their struggle against the Israeli occupation and the end of the unified United Arab Republic of Egypt and Syria in 1961, two ideas became popular among a significant number of pan-Arabs¹⁹¹. First, Arabism was not the solution to what the Palestinians were facing and Arab rulers are mostly incapable – and at times even unwilling- to defend the Palestinians. Second, the Israeli occupation is a war against Muslims and thus the alternative ideology could be Islamism and a jihad war.

The Islamic Jihad Movement (al-Haraka al-Islamiya al-Mujahida) was one radical resistance group that was established in 1975 under the leadership of Sheikh Hamed Abu Naser in Ain El Helweh camp in Sidon¹⁹². In addition to the already existing frustration with the Arab regimes the year 1975 marked the beginning of the civil war in Lebanon, a time when some Maronite factions clashed on several occasion with Palestinian resistance groups. Also, few years later in 1982 armed Palestinian groups had to fight against the Israeli invasion as well as Maronite forces, who also wanted to push the Palestinian resistance groups out of Lebanon. This gave reason enough for rising Palestinian Islamists like the Islamic Jihad Movement to believe that they were in a fight against groups who are “waging a cultural and ideological war against Islam to wipe out Islamic civilization and control Muslim

¹⁹¹ (Rabil, *Salafism in Lebanon: From Apoliticism to Transnational Jihadism*, 2014, p. 134)

¹⁹² (Rabil, *Salafism in Lebanon: From Apoliticism to Transnational Jihadism*, 2014, pp. 134-139)

lands”¹⁹³. As a result, the Islamic Jihad Movement strived to protect the ummah and thus took part in several wars, mainly against Israel in 1978 and 1982 and later alongside the Palestinians during the camp wars for a limited amount of time. Sheikh Abu Naser, the first “emir” of the movement, also followed a strict approach towards the right clothing, good behavior and religious obligations as prayers for example in the camp of Ain el-Helweh, in an attempt to enforce religion in what he thought was the right way¹⁹⁴.

Usbat al-Ansar is a second Jihadi Palestinian group that was developed under similar circumstances as the Islamic Jihad Movement later in 1986 by Sheikh Hisham Sharaydi, who had been involved in the battles against Israel during the invasion of 1982. In general, Usbat al- Ansar grew out of the idea that “Islam was the only correct solution”¹⁹⁵. Although the group denied in 2001 that it had connections with al-Qaeda, some of its members were involved in the fighting with al-Qaeda against the US troops in Iraq¹⁹⁶. The group was also accused of carrying out assassinations both in 1995 and 1999, the latter year including 3 Lebanese lawyers, and later in 2002 they were responsible for the killing of soldiers from the Lebanese Army during a surveillance mission of members of the group¹⁹⁷. Nevertheless, the track of activism of Usbat al-Ansar had been significantly altered following the Nahr al-Bared clashes between the army and Fath al-Islam, resulting in more cooperation between resistance groups in the camps, including Usbat al-Ansar, and the Lebanese security forces.

¹⁹³ (Rabil, *Salafism in Lebanon: From Apoliticism to Transnational Jihadism*, 2014, p. 135)

¹⁹⁴ (Rabil, *Salafism in Lebanon: From Apoliticism to Transnational Jihadism*, 2014, pp. 136-140) The camp wars began in 1984 between the factions in the Palestinian camps and the Shiite Amal movement and continued for many years later. The Islamic Jihad Movement ended the use of arms in 1986 during the leadership of Sheikh Abdallah Halaq.

¹⁹⁵ (Rabil, *Salafism in Lebanon: From Apoliticism to Transnational Jihadism*, 2014, pp. 139-144)

¹⁹⁶ (Saab & Ranstorp, 2007, p. 840)

¹⁹⁷ (Rabil, *Salafism in Lebanon: From Apoliticism to Transnational Jihadism*, 2014, pp. 144-148)

Although both the Islamic Jihad Movement and Usbat al-Ansar are non-Lebanese factions they were both capable of growing within Lebanon due to the political changes and the turmoil of the civil war, specifically the several wars against existing Palestinian groups in Lebanon, the Israeli invasion of 1982 and the identity crisis that had been awakened by the sectarian armed conflicts of the war. Even though several movements in Lebanon that supported the Palestinians in their fight against the Israeli occupation were inspired by pan-Arabism, the issue soon took a sectarian form not only due to the failure of the latter ideology but also as a result of the rising sectarian tensions in Lebanon.

Disparity over the sect-based power distribution, which had been influenced by the growing importance of the sectarian identity over the years, was one major factor that led to the civil war of 1975. As a result, most of the battles of the civil war were among groups representing the major sectarian identities of the country, mainly Druze, Maronites, Sunnis and Shiites, in an attempt to protect the sect against any form of political, social or economic marginalization. Under such circumstances, and especially when pan-Arabism seemed to have failed, many Muslims in the country adopted the Palestinian issue and several non-Lebanese Islamists were allowed to take action against the Israeli occupation from Lebanon due to the common religious identity that existed between the two sides, even when they did not belong to the same country and shared different nationalities. Islamists found a safe ground in Lebanon where they could be supported by a significant number of local political groups and sectarian subcultures, especially when official authorities had little control over the country due to the civil war.

Similarly, the shared sectarian identity between the Sunni community in Lebanon and that of Iraq pushed several Sunni-Lebanese to join the war in Iraq

against US troops. In addition to members of extremist groups like Usbat al-Ansar from the Ain al-Helweh camp, a number of Lebanese nationals joined the fight in order to help Iraq, protect the ummah from the enemy and support the Sunnis of Iraq in their armed struggle against the Shiites. In fact, a Lebanese from Majdal Anjar became the leader of a group known as Ansar al-Islam in Iraq responsible for attacks against the US army. He also encouraged several others from the same region to fight in Iraq as well¹⁹⁸. Even though Lebanon did not witness a form of repercussion following the events in Iraq similar to what had happened after the Israeli occupation of Palestine, nationals were also motivated by their sectarian identities to get involved directly in issues that were beyond Lebanon's borders.

¹⁹⁸ (Saab & Ranstorp, 2007, pp. 834-835)

Chapter 3

Lebanon, the Syrian Civil War and the Rise of Salafi Jihadism

The vibrant fundamentalist environment that is overwhelming Lebanon's politics and security, as a reaction to the ongoing turmoil in Syria, is not the first of its kind during the country's history. In fact, the country did have an earlier experience with the fundamentalist ideology shortly after the 1948 Al Nakba in Palestine, and more heavily after the Arab- Israeli 1967 war and up until the early 1980s. The Muslim sentiments that were aroused by the Palestinian problem were hard to control especially that Lebanon had been in a civil war that began in 1975 and lasted until 1990. Groups like the "Islamic Unity Movement" or the "Popular Resistance" for instance – in Tripoli, North of Lebanon- did not cease to fight, specifically against the Syrian troops that were trying hard to drive the Palestinian resistance movements out of Lebanon¹⁹⁹.

More than twenty years after the civil war ended, a new regional crisis emerged in Syria and once again Lebanon struggles from repercussions in the form of radical Islamism. Lebanon became a direct target of Islamist fundamentalist groups and the events in the region were now a new source of contention between the March 14 and March 8 blocs in Lebanon. Yet, why is Lebanon a country susceptible to such episodes of Salafi Jihadism, how did the Arab uprisings and civil

¹⁹⁹ (Rabil, Religion, National Identity, and Confessional Politics in Lebanon: The Challenge of Islamism , 2011, pp. 48-52)

war in Syria contribute to the new wave and what are the limits of this phenomenon in Lebanon if any exist?

The chapter will begin by outlining the main events that characterized the internal political environment in Lebanon before the civil war in Syria began, specifically post-2005, and then the connection that exists between the events in Syria and the political process in Lebanon as well as the rise of Salafi Jihadism – and even political Islamism- in the country. In order to prove the relationship between the internal and external weakness of the country and the escalation of the Jihadist ideology within its territories, two case studies representing recent events in Tripoli and Sidon will be tackled in the chapter. Through discussing the two cases, the causes and the aftermath of the Jihadi phenomenon will be clarified. The chapter will then end by pointing out the limitations that this occurrence faces in Lebanon even when the political system has facilitated its emergence.

Lebanon Since 2005

As in the case of fundamentalism during the civil war, sectarian tension had been building up in the country before the new wave of Salafi Jihadism began following the civil war in Syria, and specifically since 2004. Actually, 2004 was a critical year for the political scene in Lebanon in many ways. One, it was the end of the six years term of President Emile Lahoud, who first came into office in 1998. Known for his close alliance with the Syrian apparatus that had been in Lebanon since 1976, the extension of Lahoud's tenure was the first heated debate that Lebanon had to go through that year. While the Shiite parties of Amal and Hezbollah joined sides with the president and the Syrian allies, the idea of extending Lahoud's

term in office faced great opposition, especially from the side of Prime Minister Rafik Al Hariri. Actually, the latter's resistance to keeping Lahoud in presidency for a new term was part of a greater discontent, which had been growing internally almost since 2001, against the continuing Syrian presence in Lebanon. In addition to the Sunni Prime Minister Rafik Al Hariri, the Druze leader Walid Jumblatt and the Christian figures of the Qornet Shahwan grouping were dissatisfied with the Syrian hegemony over Lebanon as well; thus, making up a second political challenge that had greatly escalated by 2004²⁰⁰. Eventually, President Lahoud's term was extended by three additional years after the constitutional amendment had successfully passed in parliament. However, the dilemma around the Syrian control on Lebanon was still far from being solved.

Two, it is not only that internal resentment towards the Syrian presence in Lebanon was growing on the part of some members of the political body; Syria was also facing international pressure – mainly led by the US and France- to withdraw from Lebanon as a reaction to the regime's disapproval of the US invasion of Iraq in 2003²⁰¹. In fact, the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1559 of September 2, 2004 was the first internationally adopted action towards the Syrian regime²⁰². Given that two of the main points from the 1559 Resolution were the departure of “foreign forces” from Lebanon and the “disbanding and disarmament of all Lebanese and non-Lebanese militias”²⁰³, the Lebanese political parties divided between two camps. While the Bristol camp- mainly including the Christian parties, Prime Minister Rafik Al Hariri, and Walid Jumblatt- supported the resolution and called for

²⁰⁰ (Khazen, *Political Parties in Postwar Lebanon: Parties in Search of Partisans*, 2003, pp. 621-623) The Qornet Shahwan group came to the forefront in April of 2001 and mainly represented Christian political parties in Lebanon. The various members of the group agreed upon several political matters, one of which was the issue of the Syrian withdrawal from Lebanon.

²⁰¹ (Harris W. W., *Crisis in the Levant: Lebanon at Risk?*, 2007, p. 42)

²⁰² (Harris W. W., *Crisis in the Levant: Lebanon at Risk?*, 2007)

²⁰³ (United Nations Security Council, *Security Council Resolutions on Lebanon*, 2004)

the exit of the Syrian forces and the decommissioning of the arms of Hezbollah, the Ain Al Tineh camp – including the Amal movement and the Hezbollah party- allied itself with Syria against all other groups²⁰⁴.

Three, and amid such settings, the system received its biggest shock through the assassination of Prime Minister Rafik Al Hariri on the 14th of February 2005. The brutal murder of the Sunni Prime Minister, along with a series of other successful and failed assassination attempts against members of the opposition to Syria, was the trigger behind the Cedar Revolution under which Lebanon divided into two new alliances²⁰⁵. The first, March 14, joined the Future Movement of the Hariri family with Maronite parties as the Phalangist Party (Kataeb Party) of the Gemayels' and the Lebanese Forces of Samir Gaegae and rallied against the Syrian regime. The second, March 8, maintained its alliance with Syria and included both Amal and Hezbollah and was later joined by the Free Patriotic movement of General Michel Aoun; who had defected from the Britstol camp. Although the Progressive Socialist Party of Walid Jumblatt was at first a part of the March 14 alliance, it later shifted its support as it often moved between the two blocs. Eventually, UN Security Council Resolution 1595 was adopted on April 7 of 2005 to start an investigation commission on the assassination of Prime Minister Rafik Al Hariri and soon afterwards on April 26, the Syrian apparatus was out of Lebanon²⁰⁶.

Nevertheless, the departure of the Syrian forces did not help stabilize the political arena in Lebanon. In fact, the situation was only getting worse. In 2006, the national dialogue failed to solve some of the most pressing political issues-especially

²⁰⁴ (Salamey, The Government and Politics of Lebanon, 2014, p. 64)

²⁰⁵ (Salamey, The Government and Politics of Lebanon, 2014, p. 64)

²⁰⁶ (Salamey, The Government and Politics of Lebanon, 2014, p. 65)

that of the disarmament of Hezbollah²⁰⁷. In July of the same year, a month-long war erupted between Hezbollah and Israel causing significant amounts of humanitarian, economic, and infrastructural damages; and in November, the cabinet of Fouad Siniora was deprived of its legitimacy following the resignation of Shiite ministers from the March 8 coalition²⁰⁸. In 2007, the three years presidential extension of Lahoud's term came to an end without any consensus on who would be the next president. Finally the peak was reached in 2008 when the political disagreements of March 8 and March 14 were transformed into an armed conflict between the Sunnis and the Shiites in the streets of Beirut²⁰⁹. Actually, the May confrontations only came to a halt after a Qatari-led intervention that resulted in what came to be known as the Doha agreement; the first internationally sponsored treaty for internal reconciliation in Lebanon since the Taif of the 1989. Former commander of the Lebanese army, Michel Suleiman, was the new President as agreed upon during the discussions in Doha.

Lebanon and the Civil War in Syria

When it was assumed that the country was at a new start, the Arab uprisings began and the civil war erupted in Syria. Consequently, Lebanon now had to deal with a new set of political, economic and social pressures. On one hand, the intensity of the fights in Syria led to the displacement of a very large number of its citizens

²⁰⁷ (Najem, 2012, pp. 78-79)

²⁰⁸ (Najem, 2012, p. 80)

²⁰⁹ (Salamey, The Government and Politics of Lebanon, 2014, pp. 69-70) Armed supporters of Hezbollah and Amal took the streets in Beirut in May 7 fighting against armed followers of the Sunni Future Movements following the decisions adopted by the Siniora government two days before the clashes began. The first was to replace Wafik Shkair as the highest member of the security apparatus in the Rafik Al Hariri International Airport due to his close ties with Hezbollah and the second decision had to do with the telecommunication system that also belonged to Hezbollah.

many of whom resorted to Lebanon where they took shelter in newly established or already existing refugee camps. According to the statistics of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the number of “registered” Syrian refugees in Lebanon reached a total of 1,174,830 by the end of June of 2015²¹⁰. A significant number of Syrian nationals are also either not registered with the UNHCR yet or do not qualify as refugees²¹¹. Nonetheless, the large numbers of refugees entering Lebanon produced a series of constraints on the economy in the country, especially when unemployment and unequal distribution are problems that a significant number of the citizens in Lebanon had already been suffering from. Moreover, the government was now faced with new challenges when it came to meeting the needs and controlling the influx of the large numbers of people crossing the borders and escaping the war in Syria²¹².

The burdens of securing shelters, food and medical support to the refugees overwhelmed the government in Lebanon even though several governmental and non-governmental international and local organizations offered – and continue to offer – a significant amount of assistance to both the government and the Syrian refugees²¹³. Adding to that, members of the communities that are hosting the largest numbers of individuals from Syria are frequently voicing their discontent towards the economic situation especially that several of them blame the Syrian refugees for

²¹⁰ (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2015)

²¹¹ (Salem, Can Lebanon Survive the Syrian Crisis, 2012, pp. 7-8)

²¹² (Salem, Can Lebanon Survive the Syrian Crisis, 2012, pp. 7-8) The majority of Lebanon’s borders are shared with Syria. This along with the fact that the state in Lebanon has a weak ability to control its borders, due to the limited size and ability of the security forces of the country, has made Lebanon a first destination for Syrian refugees. The borders are especially porous in regions where the villages on the borders that have a Sunni majority, as in the case of the North for example and Akkar, as well as the Bekaa and Aarsal.

²¹³ (United Nations High Commissioner For Refugees) The most popular among the international organizations assisting the Syrian refugees in Lebanon is the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). In addition to working closely with the government in Lebanon in order to provide shelter, food and healthcare for the refugees, the UNHCR has built a large network for collaboration with other international and local organizations that are also working with Syrian refugees, even in countries other than Lebanon like Jordan, Iraq and even Turkey.

taking jobs and overpopulating their regions²¹⁴. The refugees are also being held responsible for the increasing crime rates in some areas of the country, and are in return facing different forms of discrimination²¹⁵. After all, a majority of the refugees, a total of 86%, have taken shelter in areas that are among the most troubled in Lebanon, thus aggravating the already harsh living conditions²¹⁶.

On the other hand, the civil war in Syria has severe repercussions on the political arena in Lebanon. By further dividing the powers of the region and deepening the sectarian division, especially between the Sunnis and the Shiites of the region and Lebanon, the war in Syria made consensus between the political actors in Lebanon very hard to achieve. While the Sunnis in the country who are mainly represented by the Future Movement, along with their allies in the March 14 coalition, support the Syrian opposition against the Alawite regime of Bashar Al Assad, the Shiites and Hezbollah as well as other members of the March 8 bloc support the regime.

As soon as the various political groups in Lebanon claimed their stand with either the regime in Syria or the opposition, the political cycle in Lebanon began to face frequent episodes of deadlock. After the break down of Saad Al Hariri's government in January of 2011 following the resignation of ministers from the March 8 coalition, a new government was put together four months later under the leadership of Prime Minister Najib Mikati²¹⁷. Although the latter "dissociated" the cabinet from the events in Syria, the absence of members from the March 14

²¹⁴ (Khatib, Repercussions of the Syrian Refugee Crisis for Lebanon, 2014)

²¹⁵ (Khatib, Repercussions of the Syrian Refugee Crisis for Lebanon, 2014)

²¹⁶ (Khatib, Repercussions of the Syrian Refugee Crisis for Lebanon, 2014)

²¹⁷ (Salem, Can Lebanon Survive the Syrian Crisis, 2012, p. 6) Due to dispute over the Special Tribunal for Lebanon that was developed in order to investigate the assassination of Prime Minister Rafik Al Hariri, members of the March 8 coalition in the cabinet resigned, thus breaking down the cabinet of Prime Minister Saad Al Hariri in January of 2011.

coalition in the cabinet and the worsening security situation in Lebanon as the civil war in Syria developed pushed Prime Minister Mikati to resign from his position²¹⁸. It took 10 months for the next cabinet to be formed; after the resignation of Mikati in March of 2013 and under the leadership of Prime Minister Tammam Salam the new cabinet came into effect in February of 2014²¹⁹. As for the parliament, elections that were scheduled to take place in 2013 were canceled following dispute over the elections law and concerns regarding the outcomes of the civil war in Syria. Eventually, the members of the parliament extended their terms until November of 2014, before a second extension occurred for an extra three years until 2017²²⁰. Nonetheless, the representatives in the parliament rarely convene especially that the political groups have been incapable of electing a new president since the end of President Michel Suleiman's term in May of 2014.

In addition to the expanding deadlock in the political system, the security situation in Lebanon has been deteriorating as well. The Lebanese arena began witnessing new episodes of car bombs, suicide bombers, clashes among groups of different sects, battles with the army and even recurring incidents of kidnapping. For instance, Sunni villages on the borders as in the case of Akkar in the North or Aarsal in the Bekaa became targets of the Syrian regime, either as a result of members of the opposition who might be crossing the borders into Lebanon or against the residents of the villages who may have been providing shelter, medical or material support to opposition groups close to the region²²¹. Moreover, political and personal kidnapping in exchange for political requests or ransom respectively became a common form of assault. In fact, the wave of kidnapping began when in May of

²¹⁸ (Salem, Can Lebanon Survive the Syrian Crisis, 2012, pp. 5-7)

²¹⁹ (BBC News, 2015)

²²⁰ (BBC News, 2015)

²²¹ (Salem, Can Lebanon Survive the Syrian Crisis, 2012, p. 7)

2012 members of the opposition in Syria kidnapped a number of Shiites from Lebanon while they were returning from a religious visit in Iraq²²². More than a year later in October of 2013, the kidnapped were released in exchange for the freedom of two Turkish men who were in turn kidnapped in Lebanon²²³. This incident prompted a series of smaller scale kidnappings across Lebanon that are mostly executed as a method of collecting money or for personal reasons.

Yet, another reason why the Shiites were kidnapped in Syria was due to accusations that they were connected to Hezbollah²²⁴. In fact, ever since Hezbollah became directly involved in the war in Syria either by sending members of the Lebanese Islamic Resistance to fight alongside the regime in Syria, or through confrontations with Salafi Jihadi groups like Jabhat Al Nusra and the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) on the borders of Lebanon, adjacent to Aarsal, regions in Lebanon with Hezbollah supporters and Shiite residents became recurrent targets of Salafi Jihadi groups. In Beirut, the Shiite dominated southern suburbs – or what is known as al-Dahiya- as well as the Hermel region in Bekaa witnessed around 10 bombing attacks between July of 2013 and February of 2014, including a double attack on the Iranian embassy in Chiyah in November 19, 2013²²⁵. The assaults were adopted by Sunni Jihadi groups, which were among the extremist opposition groups fighting the Syrian regime including Jabhat al-Nusra, ISIS and the Abdallah Azzam group²²⁶. Eventually, a strict security plan was implemented in al-Dahiya as part of a

²²² (Salem, Can Lebanon Survive the Syrian Crisis, 2012, pp. 9-10)

²²³ (Malkin, 2013)

²²⁴ (Salem, Can Lebanon Survive the Syrian Crisis, 2012, pp. 9-10)

²²⁵ (The War Spreads: A Timeline of Syria-Linked Violence in Lebanon, 2014)

²²⁶ (The War Spreads: A Timeline of Syria-Linked Violence in Lebanon, 2014)

greater plan for Beirut in an attempt to limit the security violations that had been escalating ever since the civil war broke out in Syria²²⁷.

Other regions in Lebanon also experienced similar forms of violence. In Tripoli, for example, two mosques were attacked by car bombs on the 23rd of August 2013 during Friday prayers killing more than 40 people and injuring hundreds²²⁸. Since the assaults took place in a Sunni region, Sunni representatives from Tripoli and members of the March 14 coalition in general accused the Syrian regime, and more specifically its allies in Tripoli represented by the Alawite Arab Democratic Party, of being responsible for the attacks. These claims were based upon the belief that the regime in Syria is also fighting the Sunnis in Lebanon due to their position as supporters of the opposition. The speculations against the Syrian regime especially increased after an earlier plan to situate explosives in the North region of Lebanon was exposed in 2012; the devices were transported from Syria into Lebanon with the help of a former minister who is a close ally of the Syrian regime²²⁹. The plot was uncovered by the Information Branch of the Internal Security Forces, whose head was assassinated shortly afterwards in October of 2012²³⁰. Later in December of 2013, former minister Mohammad Chatah, a supporter of the Future Movement and March 14 coalition, was also assassinated.

The Lebanese Armed Forces also faced – and continue to face- some battles of their own as a result of the increasing tension following the outbreak of the civil war in Syria. In addition to the security violations occurring in the various regions of Lebanon, the army had to handle frequent clashes between the Sunni radicals of Bab

²²⁷ (Beirut Security Plan Begins Next Month: Minister, 2014)

²²⁸ (Holmes & Siddiq, 2013)

²²⁹ (Salem, Can Lebanon Survive the Syrian Crisis, 2012, p. 10)

²³⁰ (Salem, Can Lebanon Survive the Syrian Crisis, 2012, p. 10)

al-Tabbaneh and the Alawite militants of Jabal Mohsen in Tripoli. After almost 20 rounds of confrontations between the two groups since the beginning of the civil war in Syria in 2011, a security plan was introduced in April of 2014 to end the fighting²³¹. The army also fought a Jihadi group led by Ahmad Al Assir, who had formed his own extremist armed faction in Sidon. The conflict began on June 23 of 2013 when members of Al Assir's group attacked soldiers at a checkpoint in the area and the clashes continued for the next two days²³². Although the battle ended shortly afterwards, a new battlefield was opened in August of 2014 between the Army and the Jihadi group of al-Nusra on the border between Aarsal in the Bekaa and Syria²³³. The fighting against al-Nusra Front was also limited to a few days with the Lebanese Armed Forces having the upper hand in the clashes, yet the army lost a significant number of casualties and at least 25 soldiers and policemen have been captured as hostages by both the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) and al-Nusra while negotiations for their return have been unsuccessful²³⁴. Even though the battle ended, the Lebanese Army enhanced its presence in the Aarsal region while minor strikes still occur sporadically against the Jihadi groups taking shelter in the area across from Aarsal.

²³¹ (The War Spreads: A Timeline of Syria-Linked Violence in Lebanon, 2014)

²³² (Salem, Lebanese Army's Defeat of Salafists Buys Only Short Respite, 2013)

²³³ (Dziadosz & Perry, 2014)

²³⁴ (Hassan, 2015) The two Jihadi groups have executed around 4 of the hostages. The Lebanese government, and specifically through the General Security unit, has been trying to negotiate with the kidnappers in order to secure the return of the soldiers. Several conditions have been requested by al-Nusra Front including an exchange between extremists held in jails in Lebanon and the soldiers, but the negotiations have been unsuccessful. In addition, the families of the hostages have been active in demanding more effort from the government, using demonstrations, sit-ins and even holding meetings with government officials in order to follow up on the progress of the negotiations.

Lebanon and the Rise of Salafi Jihadism

Looking at the effects of the civil war in Syria on the politics and security of Lebanon, one major question to ask would be why is Lebanon directly affected by the turmoil in Syria and more importantly why has the result been the ascendancy of Salafi Jihadism in Lebanon? After all, Lebanon's political system has long been considered the most democratic in the Arab region and thus the most immune against upheaval. In addition, other surrounding countries, specifically Jordan, has successfully protected its political system even when it is much less democratic than Lebanon. Jordan has also secured its territory against any form of religious radicalism even though the majority are Sunni Muslims in the country. Therefore, this is where the connection between the internal defected political system and the external weakness of Lebanon in the region display the link between Lebanon and the civil war in Syria, and ultimately the rise of Salafi Jihadism in Lebanon.

Unlike the uprisings that took place in other countries of the Arab region like Egypt for example or Tunisia, the upheaval in Syria turned violent shortly after it first began in March of 2011. For several months after the demonstrations were initiated members of the opposition chose to react to the violent approach that the regime adopted against the activists through peaceful methods of protest²³⁵. However, as the demonstrations proved ineffective and the international community did not intervene – as it did in the case of Libya- members of the opposition also resorted to the use of arms as a form of defense against the regime as large numbers of the opposition joined the Free Syrian Army²³⁶. Although the opposition initially

²³⁵ (International Crisis Group, Tentative Jihad: Syria's Fundamentalist Opposition, 2012, pp. 1-2)

²³⁶ (International Crisis Group, Tentative Jihad: Syria's Fundamentalist Opposition, 2012, pp. 1-2) Although there have been talks by powers of the international community, specifically the United States, to intervene in Syria against the regime of Bashar Al-Assad no intervention occurred. Rather,

insisted on the universality of the struggle regardless of the sect or religion of the Syrian people, the dispute eventually transformed into a sectarian conflict. Since the regime in Syria is dominated by the Alawites who are a minority, while the majority of the people are Sunnis, a civil war broke out in the country between the regime and the opposition eventually provoking specific Islamist extremist groups of waging Jihad against the regime in Syria²³⁷. Yet, how is the civil war in Syria connected to the rise of political deficiencies in Lebanon and the rise of Salafi Jihadism in the country?

One, since the sectarian identity in Lebanon overshadows the national identity and members of the various sectarian groups often affiliate themselves with members of the same sect across the borders of the country, the Sunni-Alawite conflict in Syria was easily transferred into Lebanon in the form of a Sunni-Shiite/Alawite division. As the Sunnis of the country allied themselves with the Sunni opposition, Shiites and the Alawite minority of Lebanon supported the Alawite regime. Moreover, since the struggle in Syria drifted away from being solely a fight for a better form of governance or values like freedom and equality, sectarian resentment escalated thus pushing Sunni and Shiite sympathizers in Lebanon – as in Syria- to defend their ally and challenge their opponent based on religious beliefs and even Salafi Jihadi convictions.

In fact, the civil war in Syria contributed to the already existing suspicion between the Sunnis and Shiites of Lebanon and thus provoked the rise of Salafi Jihadism in Lebanon. Since Hezbollah, the major representative of the Shiites in

an international alliance was formed in 2014 to initiate attacks, mostly in the form of airstrikes, against the growing power of ISIS especially in Iraq. In addition to Western countries, countries from the Gulf have also joined the alliance.

²³⁷ (International Crisis Group, Tentative Jihad: Syria's Fundamentalist Opposition, 2012, pp. 1-3)

Lebanon, supported the regime of Bashar Al Assad, both of which are allies of Iran, Sunnis in Lebanon referred to the war in Syria as part of the Shiite plan led by Iran to spread its influence over the Sunni Arab world. This interpretation of the events in Syria is reinforced by the growing division between the Sunnis of the region represented by Saudi Arabia and other countries of the Gulf and the Shiites represented by Iran. Therefore, in order to fulfill their duty towards their sectarian allies by assisting them to restrict the power of the Shiites in the region and in Lebanon, some Sunni groups took up arms and announced a war of Jihad against all supporters of the Syrian regime, in Lebanon and even across the border in Syria.

Another factor that facilitated the growth of a radical approach towards the events in Syria and their effects on Lebanon is the weak role of the official Sunni representation in Lebanon and particularly religious institutions like Dar al-Fatwa. The Sunni community has criticized the role of Dar al-Fatwa on several occasions, especially as the war in Syria developed, due to corruption scandals and accusations that the former Mufti was a supporter of Hezbollah, before a new Mufti was lately elected in August of 2014²³⁸. This position towards the official religious representation of the Sunnis in Lebanon reduced the effectiveness of a moderate position towards the ongoing Sunni-Shiite rivalry and the civil war in Syria, and instead enabled the radical ideologies to expand. In fact, according to an official Sunni representative from Dar al-Fatwa, the war in Syria does not represent a situation where a Jihad war is needed, since the conflict is merely an internal issue that occurred as a result of a strict form of governance that has been employed for several years²³⁹.

²³⁸ (Lefèvre, Lebanon's Dar al-Fatwa and The Search for Moderation, 2015)

²³⁹ (Sheikh Malek Al Shaar, 2014)

Two, the urge to defend the Sunni community in Lebanon against the growing power of Hezbollah in particular and the Shiites in general further intensified due to the presumed idea that the Sunnis in Lebanon are economically and socially marginalized and politically misrepresented. This belief enhanced the fears of the Sunni community of being dominated by a Shiite power, and pushed Salafists in the country to act separately in order to protect the Sunni community in Lebanon and in Syria. For example, political salafists or Islamist activists organized numerous demonstrations – especially in Tripoli- and participated in several talk shows and interviews in order to express their discontent with the position of the state on the civil war in Syria and to emphasize their support for the rebels. As for the Salafi Jihadi groups in Lebanon, they recruited men from Lebanon to cross into Syria and fight alongside the opposition, including al-Nusra for example as well as other similar Jihadi groups²⁴⁰. Even some political Salafist groups in Lebanon do not deny providing material support for rebels across the borders in Syria²⁴¹. In fact, smuggling weapons into Syria especially from Sunni villages on the borders like Akkar for instance or the Bekaa, became recurrent and assisting injured Syrian fighters crossing the borders into Lebanon to seek medical help also became widespread.

Three, the direct intervention of Hezbollah in the fight in Syria alongside the regime further increased the Sunni-Shiite division in Lebanon and aggravated the extremists' resentment towards the state and particularly the security institutions of the country. According to the radical groups, Hezbollah's involvement in the struggle in Syria is not only another form of aggression towards the Sunnis of the region, but also a demonstration of bias by the state towards the Sunni community in

²⁴⁰ (Lefèvre, *The Roots of Crisis in Northern Lebanon*, 2014, p. 12)

²⁴¹ (Sheikh Salem Al Rafei, 2014)

Lebanon. The radical Sunnis of Lebanon, and even a significant group of the moderate Sunnis of the country, pointed out the disparity between allowing Hezbollah to possess an armed branch and cross the borders into Syria while Sunni activists are being arrested and some have been jailed for years without facing trial²⁴². A frequently asked question among the Sunnis of Lebanon became why Hezbollah can but the Sunnis cannot.

In fact, such positions intensified especially among the radical Sunni community in Lebanon when in 2012 a Sunni activist who sympathizes with the opposition in Syria, Shadi Al-Mawlawi was arrested by the General Security office in Lebanon and later when a Sunni cleric was killed at an army checkpoint in the North²⁴³. In the case of the first, protests broke out especially in Tripoli where Salafists of the region condemned the actions of the state and accused the authorities of supporting the Syrian regime²⁴⁴. Eventually, Mawlawi was released before becoming an active Salafi Jihadi fighter in the clashes between Jabal Mohsen and Bab al-Tabbaneh in Tripoli and a close ally of ISIS assisting the Jihadi group in recruiting fighters from Lebanon²⁴⁵. Even following the killing of the Sunni Sheikh, Salafists took to the streets to denounce the incident and minor clashes broke out in Beirut between supporters of the Syrian regime and opposition sympathizers.²⁴⁶

²⁴² (International Crisis Group, *A Precarious Balancing Act: Lebanon and the Syrian Conflict*, 2012, p. 4) A large number of Islamists were jailed following the battle of Nahr al-Bared between the army and the Jihadi group of Fath al-Islam in 2007. However, the Islamists' trial has been delayed ever since even though the amount of time they have been detained may have surpassed their sentence periods if they had been put on trial. In addition, the government tried to handle the issue of the prisoners in a faster manner following the kidnapping of army soldiers by al-Nusra and ISIS during the latter's battle with the army in Aarsal in August of 2014.

²⁴³ (Lefèvre, *The Roots of Crisis in Northern Lebanon*, 2014, p. 12)

²⁴⁴ (Salem, *Lebanon Edges Closer to Syrian Crisis*, 2012)

²⁴⁵ (Saab A. G., 2015)

²⁴⁶ (Lefèvre, *The Roots of Crisis in Northern Lebanon*, 2014, p. 12)

Four, even though the radical Sunnis of Lebanon accuse the Sunni representation in the country of failing to defend the Sunni rights or empower the Sunni community in its fight against the Shiites whether in Lebanon or in Syria, some of the Sunni political parties and actors in Lebanon used the growing wave of Islamists extremism in the country to serve their own political and sectarian agendas. Although this issue remains controversial in Lebanon, several reports point out that a number of Salafi fighters, particularly in Tripoli, have been supplied with financial and armed support from Sunni political actors from within the system in Lebanon²⁴⁷. While the initial aim of the parties providing the support is to establish groups that are capable of challenging the power of Hezbollah and induce pressure on the politics of the country due to their radical approach, the strategy failed when the power of the violent groups expanded even beyond the control of political actors.

Case Studies: Tripoli and Sidon

Following the Israeli invasion of Beirut in 1982 and the heavy attacks that the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) faced, members of the movement along with their leader Yasser Arafat withdrew from Beirut to Al Badawi refugee camp in Tripoli. Since the Syrian army wanted the PLO completely out of Lebanon, the fighting did not stop. Eventually, the Palestinian movement was forced out of the country following defeat by the Syrian troops even though it had been backed by several of the local pan-Arab groups in Tripoli and even Islamists²⁴⁸.

²⁴⁷ (Lefèvre, *The Roots of Crisis in Northern Lebanon*, 2014, pp. 14-15)

²⁴⁸ (Rabil, *Religion, National Identity, and Confessional Politics in Lebanon: The Challenge of Islamism*, 2011, p. 51)

One of the allies of the PLO in Tripoli was the Islamic Unity Movement (Harakat al Tawheed) that operated under the leadership of Sheikh Said Shaaban. Even though the PLO had lost its battle against Syria, the Islamic Unity Movement continued to fight in an attempt to defeat Syria and spread its extremist Islamist ideology in Tripoli. In fact, from 1983 until 1985 the Islamic Unity Movement succeeded to take control over the city and force its radical regulations²⁴⁹. The movement, along with its allies like the Popular Resistance and the Arabic Lebanese Movement, believed that the Sharia law had to be implemented and that an Islamic rule must be established in Lebanon as an alternative to the then employed political system and Arab regimes.

Nonetheless, the success of the Islamic Unity Movement was short-lived due to both internal division within the movement and the continuous Syrian attacks on Tripoli²⁵⁰. Even though Sheikh Shaaban managed to leave Lebanon as Syria took control over Tripoli, the outcomes of the fighting between the supporters of the Islamist movement and Syria – as well as some of its local allies- still affect the present day politics of Tripoli as well as Lebanon. Following an attack that killed Syrian soldiers in December of 1985, Syria retaliated by a heavy strike on Bab al-Tabbaneh, causing a massacre that both Syria and its Alawite allies of Jabal Mohsen were held responsible for²⁵¹. Ever since, hostility grew between the residents of both sides – Bab al-Tabbaneh and Jabal Mohsen-, thus representing anti-Syrian Sunnis and Alawite Syrian supporters respectively.

²⁴⁹ (Rabil, *Salafism in Lebanon: From Apoliticism to Transnational Jihadism*, 2014, pp. 9-10)

²⁵⁰ (Rabil, *Religion, National Identity, and Confessional Politics in Lebanon: The Challenge of Islamism*, 2011, pp. 51-52)

²⁵¹ (Rabil, *Salafism in Lebanon: From Apoliticism to Transnational Jihadism*, 2014, pp. 77-78)

Even though the rivalry continued to exist even after the civil war came to an end, and small scale clashes did occur occasionally between the two sides, three major events awakened the hostilities after 2005; the assassination of Prime Minister Rafik Al Hariri in February of 2005, the Beirut clashes of May 7 in 2008 and the onset of the civil war in Syria in 2011. Each of these incidents contributed in a way of its own to the Sunni-Alawite resentment that exists between Bab al-Tabbaneh and Jabal Mohsen, eventually deepening the sectarian division and giving way for the re-emergence of Islamist activists in the region, both political and jihadi.

In 2005, a major Sunni figure Prime Minister Rafik Al Hariri was assassinated and the accusations were directly pointed towards Syria²⁵². The Sunni feelings of suspicion, distrust and fear of losing their influence in the balance of power in the country of course reached Sunni residents of Bab al-Tabbaneh. The residents of the two areas, like the majority of the people in Lebanon divided between the two camps that took over the politics of the country, March 14 as an opposition to Syria and its presence in Lebanon and March 8 as allies of the Syrian regime. Thus, as the Sunnis of Bab al-Tabbaneh rallied behind their new leader Saad al Hariri, the Alawites of Jabal Mohsen re-emphasized their support to Syria.

Ultimately, the local allies of Syria in Lebanon, specifically members of the March 8 coalition, became the rivals of the March 14 bloc and thus were considered partners in the “destabilization plan” against Lebanon under Syrian directions. Yet, since a primary actor of the March 14 bloc was the Sunni Future Movement of the Hariri family, while the Shiite Hezbollah and Amal were major actors of the March 8 alliance, the pro-Syrian and anti-Syrian dispute began to take a sectarian dimension represented by the Sunnis on one side and the Shiites on the other. The first signs of

²⁵² (Salamey, *The Government and Politics of Lebanon*, 2014, pp. 64-65)

the growing hostility between the sects appeared during the 2006 war between Hezbollah and Israel. When Hezbollah kidnapped two Israeli soldiers, Israel retaliated by heavy attacks on Lebanon, thus starting more than a month long war between the two sides²⁵³. Although Hezbollah justified the kidnapping as a means to free Lebanese prisoners from Israeli jails in an exchange process – which actually took place when the war came to a halt- and Shiites in Lebanon celebrated what they considered a victory for Hezbollah, the Sunnis blamed Hezbollah and the party's hasty decisions for the economic, infrastructure and more importantly human losses. According to local parties who are in opposition to Hezbollah, the July war of 2006 was merely a strategy in order to prove that Hezbollah's arms are still necessary for defending Lebanon against Israel²⁵⁴.

A second incident that demonstrated the opposition that was growing towards Hezbollah from the Sunni side of the Future Movement was the decisions implemented by the Siniora government that affected the telecommunication system of Hezbollah and called for the replacement of the highest member of the security apparatus in the airport who was an ally of the party²⁵⁵. As a reaction to these decisions, armed members of Hezbollah as well as others from Amal occupied the streets of Beirut in May 7 of 2008 as they fought against Sunni supporters of the Future Movement²⁵⁶. Ever since, the division between the Sunnis and the Shiites/Alawites reached its highest levels and demands for the disarmament of

²⁵³ (Salamey, *The Government and Politics of Lebanon*, 2014, pp. 68-69)

²⁵⁴ (Salamey, *The Government and Politics of Lebanon*, 2014, pp. 68-69) At the time, Hezbollah was facing local and international pressure, through the UN SC Resolution 1559, to disarm.

²⁵⁵ (Salamey, *The Government and Politics of Lebanon*, 2014, pp. 69-70)

²⁵⁶ (Salamey, *The Government and Politics of Lebanon*, 2014, pp. 69-70)

Hezbollah's weapons became recurrent among Christian and Sunni members of the March 14 coalition as well as the people who supported the bloc²⁵⁷.

For members of the Sunni community who resided in Bab al-Tabbaneh, the events of May 7 were another hint that the power of the Sunnis in Lebanon may be at risk and that their role may be overshadowed by the rising power of the Shiites represented by Hezbollah. Eventually, when the Syrian uprisings turned violent and the mainly Sunni opposition entered into a confrontation with the Alawite regime, the Sunnis of Bab al-Tabbaneh were more convinced of the Sunni-Shiite power struggle that is occurring within Lebanon, Syria and the region as a whole.

One, the Sunnis of Bab al-Tabbaneh had already been economically vulnerable as their region is among the poorest in the country. A report by the UN ESCWA in 2014 indicates that 87% of the families in Bab al-Tabbaneh are considered deprived and 52% are considered severely deprived²⁵⁸. Therefore, feelings of being marginalized had long existed in the region. Two, like other sects in Lebanon the Sunnis of Bab al-Tabbaneh and the Alawites of Jabal Mohsen have allied themselves with a local political party that represents their sect and more importantly built an affiliation with an external political power that they share a common sect with. Consequently, the Alawites ally with Hezbollah, Syria and Iran and the Sunnis with mainly the Future Movement, Saudi Arabia and other countries of the Gulf. In return for financial support and protection whether through politics or providing them with arms, the local sects become clients of those groups providing

²⁵⁷ Hezbollah often justified the possession of an armed branch with the purpose of fighting against the Israeli occupation. However, following the clashes of May 7 of 2008 in Beirut, Hezbollah lost a large amount of non-Shiite supporters who previously backed the party's position against Israel.

²⁵⁸ (ESCWA & Arab Urban Development Institute, 2014, pp. 21-23)

not only verbal support or votes during elections, but also serving them during proxy confrontations.

Three, in Lebanon the feelings of suspicion among the people in the Tabbaneh were met with sectarian speeches and statements of Sunni representatives, accusing Hezbollah of supporting the plans of the Syrian regime within Lebanon and condemning the Hezbollah, Iran, Syria alliance that is aiming at overshadowing the powers of the Sunnis in the region. Similar charges were also voiced by Sunni powers of the region, like Saudi Arabia and other countries of the gulf, which the Sunnis of Lebanon often ally with. On the other side, members of the Hezbollah party, and allies of Syria and Iran have also been accusing the Sunnis and the Sunni powers of the region of conspiring with the West to induce instability in the region. As a result, rather than quieting the sectarian resentments, political parties and representatives further intensified the division.

Four, some of the local political parties as well as regional political powers used their clients in Bab al-Tabbaneh and Jabal Mohsen to settle their larger local and regional struggles over the balance of power. The patrons provided material funding to the fighters in al Tabbaneh and Jabal Mohsen either in the form of financial or armed support²⁵⁹. Attacking the Alawite Jabal Mohsen – an ally of Hezbollah and Syria- from the Sunni Bab al-Tabbaneh, and vice versa, served as a venue of retaliation between the contending political parties in Lebanon and even in the region, in the form of an small-scaled internal by proxy civil dispute. For instance, militants in Bab al-Tabbaneh and Jabal Mohsen began a new round of conflict when Hezbollah became more involved in the battle against the Jihadi groups in May of 2013, specifically in the fights of the Qalamoun region bordering

²⁵⁹ (Lefèvre, *The Roots of Crisis in Northern Lebanon*, 2014, p. 11)

Arsal²⁶⁰. Similarly, other rounds of fighting were initiated following incidents like the assassination of the head of the Information Branch of the Internal Security Forces, or the loss of pro-opposition fighters in Syria or even due to an escalation of tension between the supporters of the regime in Jabal Mohsen and the supporters of the rebels in Bab al-Tabbaneh²⁶¹.

Eventually, the Jihadists of Bab al-Tabbaneh gained enough power to release themselves from the control of the political parties in Lebanon. Several of the Jihadi groups of Bab al-Tabbaneh became independent actors with a freedom to act according to their extremist beliefs, thus widening their circle of assaults to include soldiers in the army, civil Alawites crossing to reach their homes in Jabal Mohsen and even businesses owned by Alawites in the region²⁶². As a result, after almost 20 rounds of clashes between Jabal Mohsen and Bab al-Tabbaneh, the army introduced a security plan to end the hostilities on April 1 of 2014²⁶³. Even though the plan had been successful, Sunni Jihadi groups and Sunni Jihadi activists from Bab al-Tabbaneh were capable of developing networks of their own, thus becoming independent and more active in the struggle against the Syrian regime and Hezbollah, either by joining the Salafi Jihadi groups in their battles against the regime, or by recruiting fighters from Lebanon to assist the Jihadi opposition groups in Syria or even by supplying the rebels with different forms of material support.

The deepening Sunni-Shiite division in Lebanon as a result of the ongoing civil war in Syria, as well as the sectarian speeches and the growing opposition to the arms of Hezbollah and the party's involvement in the war in Syria gave way to the

²⁶⁰ (The War Spreads: A Timeline of Syria-Linked Violence in Lebanon, 2014)

²⁶¹ (Jabal Mohsen and Bab al-Tabbaneh: Violence Timeline, 2013)

²⁶² (Human Rights Watch, 2014, pp. 2-3)

²⁶³ (Amrieh & Al Alil, 2014)

emergence of Salafi Jihadism in Sidon as well. The Jihadi group was established by Ahmad Al Assir, a Sunni Jihadist who began his movement as an ally of the Syrian opposition fighting the regime of Bashar Al Assad in Syria, and an opponent to the weapons of Hezbollah. Al Assir used sit-ins and demonstrations as well as other peaceful methods of protests as a first approach to express his position. In addition, due to the growing tension in the country a number of citizens in Sidon rallied around Ahmad Al Assir as supporters of his stand with the Syrian opposition and more importantly against the growing power of Hezbollah.

The state tolerated the actions of Ahmad Al Assir until June of 2013. Although Al Assir had resorted to peaceful methods during his early stages of activism in Sidon, the real objectives of his group were revealed when members of Al Assir's movement attacked soldiers at an army checkpoint in the region²⁶⁴. Soon afterwards on June 23 clashes broke out in Abra in Sidon between followers of Al Assir and the Lebanese Armed Forces. According to Al Assir, fighting the army was part of the Sunni duty to defend the sect against infidels in Lebanon, whether they were Shiites in general or members of Hezbollah in particular, or even governmental institutions that failed to disarm Hezbollah or diminish its power in Lebanon²⁶⁵. The clashes ended two days later on June 25 with Al Assir and several of his followers fleeing the region. Eventually, and almost two years after the clashes occurred in Abra of Sidon, Ahmad Al Assir was arrested on August 15 of 2015²⁶⁶.

Nonetheless, the events of Abra were controversial in Lebanon. Several members of the Sunni community voiced their support for Ahmad Al Assir's peaceful activism against the disparities between the powers of the Sunnis and the

²⁶⁴ (Salem, Lebanese Army's Defeat of Salafists Buys Only Short Respite, 2013)

²⁶⁵ (Salem, Lebanese Army's Defeat of Salafists Buys Only Short Respite, 2013)

²⁶⁶ (Fugitive Salafist Sheikh Ahmad al-Assir Arrested at Beirut Airport, 2015)

Shiites in Lebanon including political parties and actors in the country²⁶⁷. In fact, when Al Assir's group launched its attack against the army, the actions of the movement were justified by pointing out to the armed branch of Hezbollah and the state's lack of action towards the disarmament of the party. Adding to that, a significant number of the Sunni community raised doubts around the role of the army in the fights in Abra since it was accused of being assisted by Hezbollah and criticized for its repressive treatment of some of the detainees from the region²⁶⁸. The growing sectarian tension did not only facilitate the emergence of Al Assir's jihadi group in Saida due to the growing hostility between the Sunnis and the Shiites, but also convinced a large number of the Sunni community of the need to fight the Shiite power, in Lebanon and the region, even if it were through an extremist Jihadi approach.

How is Lebanon Different

The sect-based political system in Lebanon hindered the work of the public institutions in Lebanon and weakened the position of the country in the region, thus allowing the political changes and challenges of the region to easily cross the borders into Lebanon. Among the challenges absorbed by the Lebanese arena is Salafi Jihadism, a product of the Sunni-Shiite division in Lebanon and the civil war in Syria. Yet, even though Lebanon had to deal with – and is still dealing with – a new wave of Salafi Jihadism, the influence and power of the Salafi Jihadi ideology has so far been limited. Unlike surrounding countries in the region, like Syria for example or Iraq, Salafi Jihadi activists remain a minority in Lebanon with little chance to take

²⁶⁷ (Salem, Lebanese Army's Defeat of Salafists Buys Only Short Respite, 2013)

²⁶⁸ (Salem, Lebanese Army's Defeat of Salafists Buys Only Short Respite, 2013)

over the politics of the country. Yet, what factors instigate the type of relationship that exists between Lebanon and the Salafi Jihadism?

First, Lebanon and a majority of the political parties in the country have already experienced a 15 years civil war that destroyed the lives of civilians due to fear, insecurity, casualties and immense damage to the economy and the infrastructure. Therefore, the political actors in Lebanon as well as the people know the dangers of provoking a sectarian strife in the country and thus act accordingly to diminish the possibility of a new civil war erupting. One way of doing so is by containing the sectarian tension – as much as possible-, by encouraging dialogue among the various political groups, fighting sectarian suspicion and distrust as well as preventing radical ideologies from spreading across Lebanon. In addition, since none of the sects constitutes an absolute majority, political actors in Lebanon are well aware that none can dominate the politics of the country without an alliance or any other form of collaboration with other groups in the country.

Second, facilitating the development of the Salafi Jihadi ideology may increase the number of Salafi Jihadi groups in Lebanon and thus a growth in their popularity and influence. Such changes threaten the continuity of the political system in Lebanon especially if the system was challenged by the rising power of Salafi Jihadi groups in the country. Of course, since the take over of the system by radicals is a disadvantage for the various moderate political groups in Lebanon –whether among the Muslims or the Christians-, the authorities will exert an effort in limiting the power of the Salafi Jihadi groups in Lebanon as well as the effect of the Jihadi ideology.

Third, Lebanon's population is divided between Muslims and Christians. Even though the latter group does not make up the majority, Christians in Lebanon are still essential actors in the political system that can defuse the effects of the Sunni-Shiite division in the country. On one hand, the Christians are backed by countries of the West that seek to protect the presence of the Christians of Lebanon in the Muslim dominated Arab region. Therefore, the Christians' external allies are well –aware of the dangers of a Jihadi take over in Lebanon and are thus committed to the protection of the Christians against any attempt to push them out of the region or decrease their power. On the other hand, the Sunni and Shiite political groups of Lebanon are also in need of alliances with the Christians of the country. The power of the Sunni parties and the Shiites is not sufficient to achieve political gains in the local politics of Lebanon and pursue the interests of the two Muslim communities. As a result, Sunni and Shiite parties turn to Christians to increase their sphere of support whether during elections or at times of disagreement over governmental decisions. Yet, the Muslim parties are more likely to receive the support they need from the Christian parties when they show moderate rather than extremist principles that would not threaten the Christian community.

Finally, although the sectarian political system of Lebanon possesses a significant number of deficiencies that has negatively affected the political cycle and ultimately hindered the economic, social and security conditions in the country, the consociational system still offers a number of democratic values. Unlike other countries of the Arab world, the people in Lebanon have enjoyed a certain degree of freedom in expression and information. The people and the media are often allowed to criticize the system as well as the political actors, competitive parliamentary elections are held, a large number of political parties exists, civil society is given a

freedom to act and several rights and values are protected by the law. The absence of such elements from the systems of other countries of the Arab world was a primary trigger of the Arab uprisings. Among the protesting groups are Islamists with extremist agendas aiming at employing religious political system that is based on the Sharia law. In addition, the electoral threshold presented by the parliamentary electoral law in Lebanon prevents small parties from entering the political structure of the country. Although the high threshold is an advantage to the already dominant political parties while preventing secular parties and independent candidates from reaching the political system, it reduces the chances of an extremist Islamist party to enter the system as well. After all, and unlike the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt or Ennahda in Tunisia, Islamist parties in Lebanon lack the needed amount of support to pass the electoral threshold and attain an official representation in the parliament in Lebanon.

Conclusion

When the Arab uprisings began to spread throughout the Arab region, Lebanon was the only Arab state with a political system that offered the people relatively sufficient freedom to prevent an upheaval against the ruling authorities. Nonetheless, the sect-based consociational system of Lebanon failed to entirely shield the country against the effects of the political changes and the growing security threats in the region. In fact, the employed political system contributed to an increased sense of dissatisfaction among the various subcultures in Lebanon and eventually a deeper sectarian division, a defected political system, a weak regional and international position and a hospitable environment for Salafi Jihadism to grow and survive.

On the internal level, the consociational system matched the needs of the heterogeneous demography of Lebanon, especially after the expansion of the country's territory in 1920²⁶⁹. However, as the numbers of every sect changed – either increasing or becoming more of a minority in proportion to the other-, discontent with the sect-based power distribution that had been implemented as per the National Pact of 1943 further escalated leading to the first major collapse of the system characterized by the 15 years of civil war from 1975 until 1990. Although the power sharing formula had been reformed through the Taif of 1989, the deficiencies of the sect-based consociational system later resurfaced after the assassination of Prime Minister Rafik Al Hariri in 2005, the withdrawal of Syria that same year and the rise of sectarian tension in the country. As events like the war with Israel in 2006, the sectarian clashes in Beirut in 2008 and the several assassinations and assassinations attempts dominated the politics of Lebanon, deadlock and ministerial resignation became recurrent outcomes in the country.

²⁶⁹ (Salamey, *The Government and Politics of Lebanon*, 2014, pp. 14-37)

The sectarian political system also empowered the sect – and more specifically the leader of the sect- that is often represented through a political party over the state, thus weakening the deterrence capabilities of the state and producing patronage networks that political representatives use to preserve their shares of power in the system. As a result, several of the groups in Lebanon claim to be marginalized by the system including a portion of the Sunnis who frequently point out the social and economic troubles of the Sunni regions in Lebanon and often blame their struggle on the official Sunni representation, whether in the parliament, the cabinet or any other branch of the government. Although a major number of the Sunnis criticize the state peacefully, some have found an alternative in extremist religious ideologies including Salafi Jihadism. The poor economic conditions, the absence of the right employment opportunities, young age and the feelings of sectarian marginalization met with distrust towards the official authorities and the security forces of Lebanon, are all products of the deficient sect-based consociational system and factors that facilitated the rise of Salafi Jihadism in the country.

On the regional level, the sectarian division in Lebanon resulted in skepticism among the various sects and produced a need among the sectarian communities and political parties to look across the borders of Lebanon for protection. In fact, since the subgroups in Lebanon share their sectarian identities with different countries in the region, they enjoy the opportunity to build alliances with regional powers as a form of security against a possible change in the local balance of power in favor of a rival group or sect. Yet, this form of connection with external actors also serves as a gateway for the powers of the region to use their patrons in Lebanon as well as the political arena in the country to settle their disputes by proxy and reflect their struggle for regional hegemony. Eventually, these external characteristics of Lebanon, including the sectarian affiliations

that the political actors build across the borders, enable the movement of regional conflicts and radical ideologies into Lebanon including Salafi Jihadism.

The hazards of the sectarian division in Lebanon along with a defected consociational system, regional weakness and a sectarian sense of identity that overshadows the national identity have most recently been revealed through the political deadlock and security violations that have dominated the arena in Lebanon ever since the civil war began in Syria in 2011. In fact, two factors that stand out in the connection that exists between the sectarian division in Lebanon and the rise of Salafi Jihadism in the country are the internal economic deprivation of a significant number of members of the Sunni community, combined with the intensified Sunni-Shiite division in the region that has also manifested itself in social and political sectarian division in Lebanon. Due to their poor economic and social conditions, some members of the Sunni community build loyalties and adopt Salafi Jihadi ideologies as an attempt to improve their economic conditions through the implementation of religious laws, as well as to replace the official Sunni representation in the country and even to support other Sunnis within Lebanon and across the borders in wars that they perceive as a Jihad.

As the uprisings to call for a different form of governance in Syria turned into a sectarian war between the Sunni majority of the people and the Alawite dominated regime, the Sunni-Shiite division in Lebanon intensified. In fact, among the most serious consequences to the civil war in Syria is the rise of a new wave of Salafi Jihadism in Lebanon. The growing power of Hezbollah and the direct involvement of the party in the battles in Syria alongside the regime and against the opposition aggravated the Sunni resentment towards the Shiites in Lebanon. Therefore, the position of the Sunni community on Hezbollah's military intervention in Syria and the battles being fought on the borders of Lebanon against Salafi Jihadi groups has been expressed in two ways. The

first is through intense criticism through speeches and statements of political figures in Lebanon who are often members of the March 14 coalition or supporters of the opposition in Syria. As for the second, it is through carrying weapons and establishing radical armed groups either as an attempt to match the power of Hezbollah, or to join the fighting in Syria against the regime or even to help the Sunni community regain its rights by defending it against infidels whether they were members of other sects in Lebanon – especially the Shiites and Alawites- or members of the security forces of the country.

Two events that show the depth of the division between the Sunni and the Shiites in Lebanon and prove the link that exists between sectarian division, internal and external political weakness and the rise of Salafi Jihadism in Lebanon are the Sunni-Alawite clashes of Jabal Mohsen and Bab al-Tabbaneh in Tripoli and the army battle with Ahmad Al Assir's group in Sidon in 2013. Both occurrences marked a new stage of confrontations between the state in Lebanon and Salafi Jihadism, as well as an additional shortcoming of the sectarian based political system and social division in Lebanon. Yet, the events also asserted that even though Salafi Jihadism can grow and survive in Lebanon, certain characteristics of the social composition and the political system in Lebanon, previous experiences in history and the consequences that could result from a single political miscalculation draw a limit to the extent to which Salafi Jihadism can develop and expand within Lebanon. In addition to the experience of 15 years of civil war, the democratic features of the political system and the certain degree of freedom that exists in the country, the presence of a significant Christian community in Lebanon – although a minority- that is backed by the west and that both the Sunnis and the Shiites need, as well as the fear of Jihadi dominance have compelled the state to react firmly to the growing extremism in Tripoli and Sidon as well as other parts of Lebanon.

Nevertheless, the outcomes that Lebanon has so far experienced as a result of the turmoil in Syria suggest that sectarianism in Lebanon and the sect-based consociational system are problematic political features. The deficiency of the system does not emanate from the consociational constituent of it but rather from the sectarian dimension of its application in Lebanon. Of course, one can also argue that sectarianism is also embedded in society and among members of the various communities in Lebanon and thus the challenge lies in eliminating the sectarian distrust that exists among the people. Yet, this distrust has been further encouraged by the sectarian political system that has been incapable of distributing equally to the people, thus fostering feelings of marginalization and suspicion among the different groups. In addition, the people have been pushed to rely on the services of the sect rather than the state since the latter has been overshadowed by the power of the political parties and “*zaims*”. Therefore, the answer to the ongoing troubles in Lebanon is to reduce the gap between the various sects in Lebanon as a first step in the process of eliminating the sectarian element from the country’s politics and empowering the national interest and identity over the sectarian one. In addition, as the sectarian division decreases and economic conditions improve, the Sunni-Shiite rivalry in the region and its consequences – in the form of radicalism- would then perhaps have a limited effect on the politics of Lebanon and a smaller chance of importing its repercussions into the country.

Bibliography

- (2012, August 6). Retrieved July 20, 2015, from Al-Manar Website:
<http://www.almanar.com.lb/english/adetails.php?fromval=3&cid=33&frid=23&secatid=14&eid=63911>
- (2015, March 27). Retrieved July 20, 2015, from Official Future Movement Website:
<http://www.almustaqbal.org/node/5718>
- Abdel-Latif, O. (2008). Lebanon's Sunni Islamists—A Growing Force . *Carnegie Endowment* , 1-22.
- Abla, Z. (2014). *Studies and Reports*. Retrieved November 12, 2014, from Council for Development and Reconstruction: <http://www.cdr.gov.lb/study/mdg/MDGR2013-2014e.pdf>
- Al Anani, K. (2012, October 25). Islamist Parties Post-Arab Spring. *Mediterranean Politics* , 466-472 .
- Al Suwaidi, J. S. (2015). *Al Sarab*. Abu Dhabi.
- Amin, K. (2014, November 24). International Assistance to Egypt After the 2011 and 2013 Uprisings: More Politics and Less Development . *Mediterranean Politics* , 392-412 .
- Amrieh, A., & Al Alil, M. (2014, April 2). Army Sweeps Bab al-Tabbaneh in Tripoli Crackdown. *The Daily Star* .
- Amuzegar, J. (1993). The Truth and Illusion of Islamic Fundamentalism. *SAIS Review* , 127-139.
- Appleby, R. S. (1993). Fundamentalism's Modern Origins . *Foreign Affairs* , 217-218 .
- Appleby, S. R., & Marty, M. E. (2002). Fundamentalism. *Foreign Policy* , 16-18+20-22.
- Barakat, H. (1973). Social and Political Integration in Lebanon: A Case of Social Mosaic . *Middle East Journal* , 301-318 .

Barkin, J. S. (1998). The Evolution of the Constitution of Sovereignty and the Emergence of Human Rights Norms . *Millennium - Journal of International Studies* , 229-252.

BBC News. (2015, April 29). Retrieved June 20, 2016, from Lebanon Profile - Timeline:
<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-14649284>

Beirut Security Plan Begins Next Month: Minister. (2014, July 29). *The Daily Star* .

Cammett, M., & Issar , S. (2010). Bricks and Mortar Clientelism: Sectarianism and the Logics of Welfare Allocation in Lebanon . *World Politics* , 381-421 .

Carpenter, T. G. (2013). Tangled Web: The Syrian Civil War and Its Implications . *Mediterranean Quarterly* , 1-11 .

Choueiri, Y. M. (2010). *Islamic Fundamentalism: The Story of Islamic Movements*. London: Continuum.

Copeland, G., & Salamey , I. (2011). How exceptional are Islamists? Comparing support for Hezbollah and the Lebanese Forces. *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies* , 157-175 .

Crow, R. E. (1962). Religious Sectarianism in the Lebanese Political System . *The Journal of Politics* , 489-520 .

Cutler, D. (2011, 1 12). *Timeline: Events Leading to New Lebanon Crisis*. Retrieved 10 18, 2014, from Reuters: <http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/01/12/us-lebanon-hariri-events-idUSTRE70B5VK20110112>

Dalacoura, K. (2012, January). The 2011 Uprisings in the Arab Middle East: Political Change and Geopolitical Implications . *International Affairs* , 63-79.

Dawisha, A. (1984). The Motives of Syria's Involvement in Lebanon . *Middle East Journal* , 228-236 .

Denney, J., & Wenger, M. (1990). Lebanon's Fifteen-Year War 1975-1990. *Middle East Report*, 23-25.

Department of Economic and Social Affairs. (2010). *Retooling Global Development*. Retrieved November 12, 2014, from The United Nations:
http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/policy/wess/wess_current/2010wess.pdf

Dziadosz, A., & Perry, T. (2014, August 3). Lebanese Army Battles Gunmen at Syria Border, 16 Killed. *Reuters*.

Eizenstat, S. E., Porter, J. E., & Weinstein, J. M. (2005). Rebuilding Weak States. *Foreign Affairs*, 134-146.

El-Hokayem, E. (2007). Hizballah and Syria: Outgrowing the Proxy Relationship. *The Washington Quarterly*, 35-52.

ESCWA, & Arab Urban Development Institute. (2014). *Poverty in Tripoli*. Retrieved from United Nations ESCWA: <http://css.escwa.org.lb/ECRI/Docs/UNTripoliexecutive.pdf>

Fadlallah, D. (2014, December 19). (F. A. Hassan, Interviewer, & F. A. Hassan, Translator) Beirut, Lebanon.

Fadlallah, H. (2015). *والمسار الرؤية لبنان في والدولة الله حزب*. Beirut: All Prints Distributors & Publishers.

Fakhoury, T. M. (2009). *Democracy and Power-Sharing in Stormy Weather: The Case of Lebanon*. VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften.

Fugitive Salafist Sheikh Ahmad al-Assir Arrested at Beirut Airport. (2015, August 15). *The Daily Star*.

Fuller, G. E. (2006-07). Resistance, The Hizballah-Iran Connection: Model for Sunni. *The Washington Quarterly*, 139-150.

Gartenstein-Ross , D., & Vassefi , T. (2012, November 15). Perceptions of the “Arab Spring” Within the Salafi-Jihadi Movement . *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* , 831-848.

Haddad, S. (2004). The Origins of Popular Opposition to Palestinian Resettlement in Lebanon. *International Migration Review* , 470-492.

Hamzeh, A. N. (2001). Clientalism, Lebanon: Roots and Trends . *Middle Eastern Studies* , 167-178 .

Hamzeh, A. N. (2000). Lebanon's Islamists and Local Politics: A New Reality . *Third World Quarterly* , 739-759 .

Handel, M. I. (1990). *Weak States in the International System*. Routledge.

Harik, I. F. (1972). The Ethnic Revolution and Political Integration in the Middle East . *International Journal of Middle East Studies* , 303-323 .

Harik, J. P. (2005). *Hezbollah: The CHanging Face of Terrorism* . London: I.B.Tauris.

Harriman , H., & Talbot, B. J. (2008). Disarming Hezbollah. *Mediterranean Quarterly* , 29-53 .

Harris, W. (2013). Investigating Lebanon’s Political Murders: International Idealism in the Realist Middle East? . *The Middle East Journal* , 9-27 .

Harris, W. W. (2007). Crisis in the Levant: Lebanon at Risk? *Mediterranean Quarterly* , 37-60.

Harris, W. W. (2006). *The New Face of Lebanon: History's Revenge*. New Jersey : Markus Wiener Publishers.

Hartman , D., & Emerson, M. O. (2006). The Rise of Religious Fundamentalism. *Annual Review of Sociology* , 127-144 .

Hassan, N. (2015, June 9). Lebanon Hostages will Share Captors' Fate: Nusra's Qalamoun Chief. *The Daily Star* .

Hazran, Y. (2010). The Rise of Politicized Shi'ite Religiosity and the Territorial State in Iraq and Lebanon . *The Middle East Journal* , 521-541 .

Hirst, D. (2010). *Beware of Small States: Lebanon, Battleground of the Middle East*. London: Faber and Faber Ltd.

Hokayem, E. E. (2007). Hizballah and Syria: Outgrowing the Proxy Relationship . *The Washington Quarterly* , 35-52 .

Holmes, O., & Siddiq, N. (2013, August 23). Bombs kill 42 Outside Mosques in Lebanon's Tripoli. *Reuters* .

Howard, L. M. (2012). The Ethnocracy Trap . *Journal of Democracy* , 155-169 .

Hudson, M. C. (1969). Democracy and Social Mobilization in Lebanese Politics . *Comparative Politics* , 245-263 .

Hudson, M. C. (1976). The Lebanese Crisis: The Limits of Consociational Democracy . *Journal of Palestine Studies* , 109-122 .

Human Rights Watch. (2014, January). Retrieved July 19, 2015, from Human Rights Watch: https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/related_material/lebanon_4.pdf

Hunter, S. T. (1986). Islamic Fundamentalism: What It Really Is and Why It Frightens the West. *SAIS Review* , 189-200.

International Crisis Group. (2012). A Precarious Balancing Act: Lebanon and the Syrian Conflict. *International Crisis Group* , 1-35.

International Crisis Group. (2006). Lebanon at a Tripwire. *International Crisis Group* , 1-19.

International Crisis Group. (2012). Lebanon's Palestinian Dilemma: The Struggle Over Nahr Al-Bared. *International Crisis Group* , 10-28.

- International Crisis Group. (2010). Lebanon's Politics: The Sunni Community and Hariri's Future Current. *International Crisis Group* , 1-35.
- International Crisis Group. (2009). Nurturing Instability: Lebanon's Palestinian Refugee Camps. *International Crisis Group* , 1-40.
- International Crisis Group. (2012). Tentative Jihad: Syria's Fundamentalist Opposition. *International Crisis Group* , 1-42.
- International Crisis Group. (2005). *Understanding Islamism*. Cairo/Brussels: International Crisis Group.
- Jabal Mohsen and Bab al-Tabbaneh: Violence Timeline. (2013, May 28). *The Daily Star* .
- Jabbra , N. W., & Jabbra, J. G. (1983). Lebanon: Gateway to Peace in the Middle East? *International Journal* , 577-612 .
- Kabbara, M. (2015). (F. A. Hassan, Interviewer, & F. A. Hassan, Translator) Tripoli.
- Karabell, Z. (1996-1997). Fundamental Misconceptions: Islamic Foreign Policy . *Foreign Policy* , 76-90 .
- Karam, K. (2012). The Fragile Balance in Lebanon: Domestic Tension and Foreign Pressure . *Mediterranean Politics* , 184-189.
- Kassis, H. E. (1985). Religious Ethnicity in the World of Islam: The Case of Lebanon . *International Political Science Review* , 216-229.
- Khalaf, S. (1968). Primordial Ties and Politics in Lebanon . *Middle Eastern Studies* , 243-269.
- Khalidi, R. I. (1985). Lebanon in the Context of Regional Politics: Palestinian and Syrian Involvement in the Lebanese Crisis . *Third World Quarterly* , 495-514 .
- Khatib, L. (2014, December 10). Repercussions of the Syrian Refugee Crisis for Lebanon. *Carnegie Middle East Center* .

Khatib, L. (2014, August 16). The Political and Security Fallout of the Battle in Aarsal. *Carnegie Middle East Center* .

Khazen, F. E. (2004)). Ending Conflict in Wartime Lebanon: Reform, Sovereignty and Power, 1976-88 . *Middle Eastern Studies* , 65-84 .

Khazen, F. E. (2003). Political Parties in Postwar Lebanon: Parties in Search of Partisans . *Middle East Journal* , 605-624 .

Khoury , A., & Ghosn, F. (2011). Lebanon after the Civil War: Peace or the Illusion of Peace? *The Middle East Journal* , 381-397 .

Kisirwoni, M. (1980). Foreign Interference and Religious Animosity in Lebanon . *Journal of Contemporary History* , 685-700.

Lebanese Information Center. (2013). *The Lebanese Demographic Reality*. Lebanon: Lebanese Information Center.

Lefèvre, R. (2015, January 5). Lebanon's Dar al-Fatwa and The Search for Moderation. *Carnegie Middle East Center* .

Lefèvre, R. (2014, April). The Roots of Crisis in Northern Lebanon. *Carnegie Middle East Center* , 1-28.

Lijphart, A. (1977). Consociational Democracy . In A. Lijphart, *Democracy in Plural Societies: A Comparative Exploration* (pp. 25-52). New Haven: Yale University Press.

Lijphart, A. (1969). Consociational Democracy. *World Politics* , 207-225.

Lijphart, A. (2009). Constitutional Design for Divided Societies . *Journal of Democracy* , 96-109.

Lijphart, A. (1968). Typologies of Democratic Systems. *Comparative Political Studies* , 3-44.

- Makdisi, U. (1996). Reconstructing the Nation-State: The Modernity of Sectarianism in Lebanon . *Middle East Report* , 23-26+30 .
- Makdisi, U. (2000). *The Culture of Sectarianism: Community, History, and Violence in Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Lebanon*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Maktabi, R. (1999). The Lebanese Census of 1932 Revisited. Who Are the Lebanese? *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* , 219-241 .
- Malkin, B. (Ed.). (2013, October 19). Syrian Rebels Free Kidnapped Lebanese Pilgrims. *The Telegraph* .
- Markey, P., & Amara, T. (2014, December 22). *Veteran Essebsi wins Tunisia's First Free Presidential Vote*. Retrieved 2015, from Reuters:
<http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/12/22/us-tunisia-election-idUSKBN0JZ04F20141222>
- Moubarak, W. E. (2003). *The Position of a Weak State in an Unstable Region: The Case of Lebanon*. Abu Dhabi : The Emirates Center for Strategic Studies and Research .
- Muller , B. J., & Abboud, S. N. (2013). Geopolitics, Insecurity and Neocolonial Exceptionalism: A Critical Appraisal of the UN Special Tribunal for Lebanon. *Security Dialogue* , 467-484.
- Najem, T. (2012). *Lebanon: The politics of a Penetrated Society* . New York: Routledge.
- National Emergency Committee on Lebanon . (1983). Lebanon, The Palestinians and The PLO: A Profile. *Race & Class* , 327-334.
- Payne , R., & Salamey , I. (2008). Parliamentary Consociationalism in Lebanon: Equal Citizenry vs. Quotated Confessionalism. *The Journal of Legislative Studies* , 451-473 .
- Perthes, V. (2006). The Syrian Solution . *Foreign Affairs* , 33-40 .
- Qassem, N. (2005). *Hizbullah: The Story from Within*. (D. Khalil, Trans.) London: Saqi Books.

- Rabil, R. G. (2011). *Religion, National Identity, and Confessional Politics in Lebanon: The Challenge of Islamism* . New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Rabil, R. G. (2014). *Salafism in Lebanon: From Apoliticism to Transnational Jihadism*. Georgetown University Press.
- Rasler, K. (1983). Internationalized Civil War: A Dynamic Analysis of the Syrian Intervention in Lebanon . *Journal of Conflict Resolution* , 421-456.
- Saab, A. G. (2015, February 27). ISIS Seeks Wider Presence in Lebanon with Fugitives' Help. *The Daily Star* .
- Saab, B. Y., & Ranstorp, M. (2007). Securing Lebanon from the Threat of Salafist Jihadism . *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* , 825-855.
- Safa, O. (2006). Lebanon Springs Forward. *Journal of Democracy* , 22-37.
- Salamey, I. (2009). Failing Consociationalism in Lebanon and Integrative Options. *International Journal of Peace Studies* , 83-105.
- Salamey, I. (2014). *The Government and Politics of Lebanon*. New York: Routledge.
- Salem, P. (2012, December). Can Lebanon Survive the Syrian Crisis. *The Carnegie Papers* , 1-26.
- Salem, P. (2013, June 27). Lebanese Army's Defeat of Salafists Buys Only Short Respite. *Carnegie Middle East Center* .
- Salem, P. (2012, May 17). Lebanon Edges Closer to Syrian Crisis. *Carnegie Middle East Center* .
- Salem, P. (2006). The Future of Lebanon . *Foreign Affairs* , 13-22 .

- Salibi, K. (1988). *Lebanon and The Middle Eastern Question*. Centre for Lebanese Studies.
- Salibi, K. S. (1976). *Cross Roads to Civil War: Lebanon 1958-1976*. New York: Caravan Books.
- Salibi, K. S. (1971). The Lebanese Identity. *Journal of Contemporary History* , 76-81, 83-86 .
- Seaver, B. M. (2000). *The Regional Sources of Power-Sharing Failure: The Case of Lebanon . Political Science Quarterly* , 247-271 .
- Sheikh Bilal Shaaban. (2015, February 4). (F. A. Hassan, Interviewer, & F. A. Hassan, Translator) Tripoli.
- Sheikh Malek Al Shaar. (2014, December 18). (F. A. Hassan, Interviewer, & F. A. Hassan, Translator) Tripoli.
- Sheikh Salem Al Rafei. (2014, December 14). (F. A. Hassan, Interviewer, & F. A. Hassan, Translator) Tripoli, Lebanon.
- Siklawi, R. (2010). The Dynamics of Palestinian Political Endurance in Lebanon. *The Middle East Journal* , 597-611.
- Sorenson, D. S. (2011). Lebanon: Untangling the Web . *The Middle East Journal* , 501-506 .
- Statistics Department. (2013, 11 10). *Statistics*. Retrieved 11 1, 2014, from Ministry of Public Health: <http://www.moph.gov.lb/Statistics/Documents/StatisticalBulletin2012.pdf>
- Talhamy, Y. (2009). The Syrian Muslim Brothers and the Syrian-Iranian Relationship . *The Middle East Journal* , 561-580 .
- Telhami, S. (2007, January 1). *Current History*. Retrieved 2014, from Brookings: <http://www.brookings.edu/research/articles/2007/01/01middleeast-telhami>
- The Taif Agreement*. (n.d.). Retrieved July 6, 2015, from Permanent Missions to the United Nations:

https://www.un.int/lebanon/sites/www.un.int/files/Lebanon/the_taif_agreement_english_version_.pdf

The War Spreads: A Timeline of Syria-Linked Violence in Lebanon. (2014, August 4). *The Daily Star* .

Thompson, E. V. (2002). Will Syria Have to Withdraw from Lebanon? . *Middle East Journal* , 72-93 .

United Nations Development Program. (2008, August). *Social and Local Development*. Retrieved November 12, 2014, from United Nations Development Program in Lebanon:
<http://www.lb.undp.org/content/dam/lebanon/docs/Poverty/Publications/Poverty,%20Growth%20and%20Inequality%20in%20Lebanon.pdf>

United Nations Economic and Social Council . (2012, November 2). *Implementation of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* . Retrieved March 7, 2015, from United Nations:
http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=E/C.12/DJI/1-2

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees . (2012, October). *For the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights' Compilation Report -Universal Periodic Review: DJIBOUTI*. Retrieved March 10, 2015, from
<http://www.refworld.org/country,,,COMP,DJI,,5072836f2,0.html>

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (2015, June 30). *Syria Regional Refugee Response*. Retrieved July 20, 2015, from UNHCR: The UN Refugee Agency:
<http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/documents.php?page=1&view=grid&Language%5B%5D=1&Country%5B%5D=122&Type%5B%5D=1>

United Nations High Commissioner For Refugees. (n.d.). *Syria Regional Refugee Response Inter-agency Information Sharing Portal* . Retrieved July 15, 2015, from UNHCR:
<http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/partnerlist.php>

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (2014, June 20). *UNHCR - Global Trends Report*. Retrieved March 8, 2015, from UNHCR The UN Refugee Agency :
<http://unhcr.org/trends2013/>

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (2013, December 1). *UNHCR Global Appeal 2014 - 2015 - Djibouti*. Retrieved March 10, 2015, from UNHCR The UN Refugee Agency: <http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/home/opendocPDFViewer.html?docid=528a0a230&query=djibouti%20global%20appeal>

United Nations Peacemaker. (1992). Retrieved June 2015, from http://peacemaker.un.org/sites/peacemaker.un.org/files/LB-SY_910522_TreatyBrotherhoodCooperationCoordination.pdf

United Nations Security Council . (2008, June 10). Retrieved from Security Council Report: <http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/Lebanon%20S2008392.pdf>

United Nations Security Council. (2004, September 2). *Security Council Resolutions on Lebanon*. Retrieved July 15, 2014, from Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for Lebanon: [http://unscol.unmissions.org/portals/unscol/SC%20Resolution%201559%20\(2004\)%20on%20Lebanon.pdf](http://unscol.unmissions.org/portals/unscol/SC%20Resolution%201559%20(2004)%20on%20Lebanon.pdf)

United Nations Security Council. (2005). Resolution 1595 (2005) . (pp. 1-3). United Nations Security Council.

Yadav, S. P. (2010). Understanding “What Islamists Want”: Public Debate and Contestation in Lebanon and Yemen . *The Middle East Journal* , 199-213 .