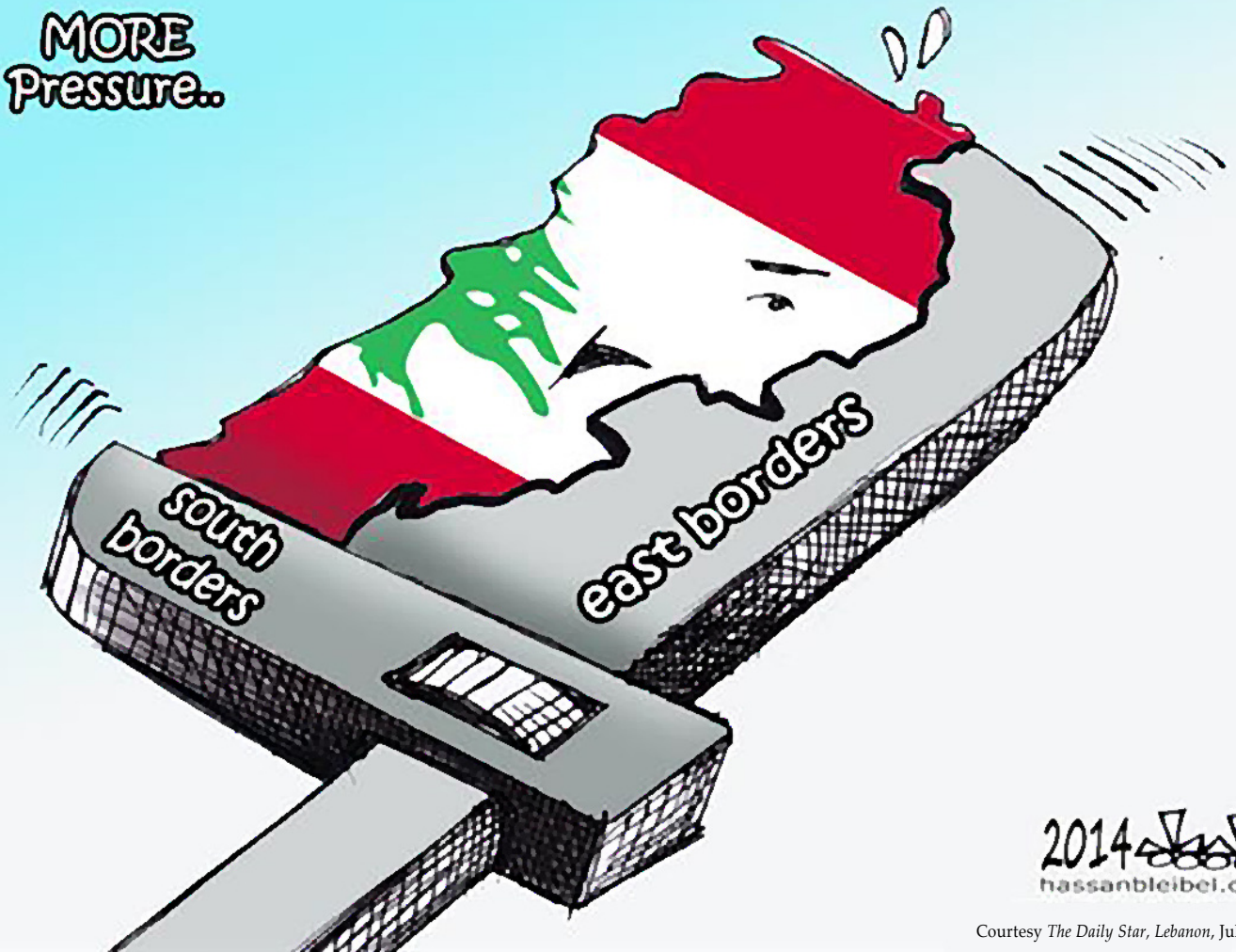


Carina Perelli

LEBANON: A REMNANT OF THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE TRYING TO SURVIVE IN A REGION IN TURMOIL

MORE
Pressure..



Courtesy *The Daily Star, Lebanon*, July 16, 2014



Lebanon is the only multi-confessional country left in a region that is experiencing the collapse of the post-Ottoman order, the failure of the variegated experiments and formulas to create and sustain Arab States in the Middle East, the centrality of non-State actors, the proxy fight for supremacy between Saudi Arabia and Iran (with other regional players such as Turkey, Egypt and Qatar vying for influence), as well as the periodic escalation of the intractable conflict between the Palestinians and the Israelis.

SERIES PEACE & SECURITY

About the author:

CARINA PERELLI (RESDAL's Member)

Director of Silverkrieg Limited, she is a private consultant dedicated to conflict and violence management, particularly in hostile environments. She performs tasks related to training, evaluation, auditing, regulation and facilitation. She is an expert in political negotiation, political analysis and designing institutional mechanisms to mitigate violence as well as in questions of political stability, security and defense in conflict regions, whose field of action includes Afghanistan, Haiti, Iraq, Mexico, Nigeria, Lebanon, Libya, Palestine and East Timor. Her experience also includes working in Latin American countries such as Argentina, Bolivia, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay. She has held the position of Director of the Electoral Assistance Division of the Department of Political Affairs in the United Nations and UN International Commissioner ad interim, Independent Electoral Commissioner in Iraq for the Referendum of 2005. Former Executive VicePresident of IFES (International Foundation for Electoral Systems) in Washington DC and former Country Representative of IFES in Afghanistan (2009-2012).

Copyright RESDAL. Rights reserved.

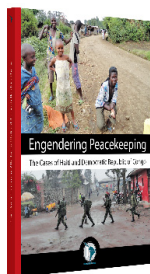
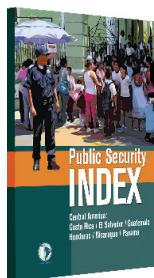
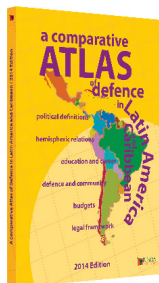
This report was carried out within the framework of the 'Gender Perspective in Peacekeeping Operations: Cases and Lessons from Contributing Countries' project, which receives financial support from:




Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation

October 2014

Other RESDAL publications



 <https://www.facebook.com/resdal>

 https://twitter.com/RESDAL_

<http://www.resdal.org>

secretaria@resdal.org

LEBANON: A REMNANT OF THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE TRYING TO SURVIVE IN A REGION IN TURMOIL

Lebanon is the only multi-confessional country left in a region that is experiencing the collapse of the post-Ottoman order, the failure of the variegated experiments and formulas to create and sustain Arab States in the Middle East, the centrality of non-State actors, the proxy fight for supremacy between Saudi Arabia and Iran (with other regional players such as Turkey, Egypt and Qatar vying for influence), as well as the periodic escalation of the intractable conflict between the Palestinians and the Israelis.

A Region in Upheaval

Lebanon is the only multi-confessional country left in a region that is experiencing the collapse of the post-Ottoman order, the failure of the variegated experiments and formulas to create and sustain Arab States in the Middle East¹, the centrality of non-State actors², the proxy fight for supremacy between Saudi Arabia and Iran³ (with other regional players such as Turkey, Egypt and Qatar vying for influence), as well as the periodic escalation of the intractable conflict between the Palestinians and the Israelis.

The demise of the Arab State project and the retreat of State structures from everyday life have pushed people to seek the protection the State can no longer provide in sectarian identities and allegiances. The wreckage of the State has brought with it the implosion of the notion of “citizenship” – the elusive, faulty, but fundamental principle of political equality of all denizens of a territory vis-à-vis the power of State structures and institutions - replacing it with the particularism of membership to a specific group, affiliation to a particular sect, belonging to a distinct ethnicity. Against this backdrop, the combination of pauperization, marginalization, demographic bulge, and denial of political voice has proven lethal. In the Middle East today, what divides takes preeminence over what unites. In that sense, the current conflagration in the region is not about terror and extremism, fitna⁴ and jihad in Islam, sectarian confrontations or oil and economic interests: it is a foundational dispute about political order.

The arc of instability in which Lebanese reality is immersed is characterized by the “democratization of violence”⁵ and the presence of motley armed coalitions of de-territorialized fighters, warring alongside the disgruntled and disenfranchised, political opportunists, professional revolutionaries and militants, members of criminal organizations, engaging in combat other groupings of combatants that also control pockets of territory. In asymmetrical warfare, the cost of disruption has decreased significantly for insurgent groups thanks to a variety of factors (a black market flush with weapons, use of low cost technology for urban warfare, efficient use of social media, availability of pools of candidates for recruitment amidst the disenfranchised and the disgruntled in a region with a significant youth bulge and an endemic deficit of hope and opportunities, lack of legitimacy of State structures, to quote but a few) whereas the cost of addressing that disruption with the current institutional mechanisms (armed forces, police, prison services, judiciary, State media, etc.) remains high not only in violence-related expenditures but also in the risks associated with the erosion of legitimacy. For strong States with institutionalized armed forces, this fight is the equivalent of attempting to kill mosquitoes with missiles: costly, ghastly and with a lot of collateral damage. For fragile States, or those that are crumbling, the choice is between admitting defeat and surrendering or becoming one of the many parties of combatants vying for preeminence in a geographical location.

The line of demarcation between non-State and State combatants in the violent clashes in Libya, Syria, Iraq has blurred, with the State security forces becoming just one more armed protagonist fighting alongside militias and battling other bands of gunmen at the same time, backed and funded by regional and international players engaging in their own proxy wars. Although the number of combatants is relatively small⁶, this type of warfare presupposes a mastery of PSYOP⁷, particularly in social media, and AGITPROP⁸ among the population of the region or potential adherents and recruits. The Internet has become another battleground, at the same time (as the dams and cities where physical combat takes place, with Twitter and YouTube as the new frontlines. They allow for the staging of the grim “Theater of Terror”⁹, “performance violence” as Juergensmeyer calls it, a macabre succession of beheadings and shootings, forced conversions and exemplary punishments destined to horrify, anger and fascinate the viewer, sap the enemy’s morale and destroy its “will to fight”, and, equally important, capture the imagination of – and hence attract - potential recruits.¹⁰

If the Islamic State (IS) seems now to be so successful, it is because it incarnates a possible “solution” to a phenomenon long in the making but that sweeps the Middle East nowadays: that of “a Sunni majority with a minority complex – a powerful though confused feeling of marginalization, dispossession and humiliation. More and more Sunnis throughout the region experience and express the feeling that they have been deprived of their fundamental rights and are suffering persecution.”¹¹ The Sunni communities are confronted by a history of past political failures while “remembering” a Golden Era of power and might, caught between the stark alternatives of the fear of State authoritarianism and the fear of chaos, floating in a perceived vacuum of hopelessness. Unable to fulfill their traditional role as intermediaries between their communities and the State apparatus and deliver palpable goods, elders and tribal leaders have

been emasculated in the peripheries, whilst in large urban settings the demise of “hidden professional political operators” inserted in State bureaucratic structures has deprived the Sunni of important mechanisms of articulation within the State.¹² This perverse cycle breeds resentment, helplessness and rage, and sets up a fertile breeding ground for extremism, particularly amongst the young, who have seen their expectations and hopes quashed time and time again when intransigent and short-sighted elites seize control of government and institutional machineries¹³ and become predatory and exclusionary power-holders, depriving other groupings of legal forms of access to legitimate political space and dignity. In the meantime, there has been a role reversal with the Shia, perennial underdog of the Middle East, witnessing the rise of Iran, a Shia State, and Hezbollah, a Shia movement, and the doctrine of Political Islam, of the Shia Ayatollah Khomeini, consolidated. Aside from the objective conditions, there is an element of humiliation at play that facilitates the polarization of the conflict between the two communities. As Yezid Sayigh points out in his Op-Ed of August 21, 2014 in *Al-Hayat*,¹⁴ Islamism is taking hold predominantly among the growing underclass of societies that are quickly urbanizing framed by States that have failed to evolve. It is the result of the degradation and mutation of the structures of socioeconomic and political power of States controlled by elites that failed to respond to social change.

Divisions and fault lines are no less profound within the communities in the Middle East, including amidst extremist groups, with frequent secessions and accusations of treachery and apostasy¹⁵ and acts of violence going concomitantly with the labels. The permanent depuration of the membership of these groups, the occasional opportunistic alliances that end up in new killings and divisions, the expurgation of “tainted” habits, interactions, and “deviationist approaches” against the backdrop of cowed populations strongly reminds us of other revolutionary movements of a bygone era. The quest

for purity is particularly appealing to frustrated youth that have bought into the new narrative and who have fallen prey to the “seduction of violence”¹⁶, even if their knowledge of Islam comes more from PDFs downloaded from the Internet than from mosque attendance. The “cult of heroism” in a grey world, the romanticized version of the sectarianization of politics where you obliterate your enemies, the myth of the “noble death” has always resonated with potential young recruits, and is particularly attractive to a generation bred on videogames and superhero movies¹⁷. It seems a lot less appealing to regular people living in areas controlled by the revolution and subject to their rule and violence: these people either retrench from public space or flee the territory. However, even ordinary people view with relief the semblance of “law and order”, rules and punishment systems that banish chaos from the streets and the arbitrary from their lives. One of the biggest challenges for IS will be to control/administer not death but a territory, while continuing to have the same romantic appeal to recruit wannabes: there is nothing romantic about cleaning the sewage and directing traffic, dealing with the drudgery of austere daily life and fighting not for a cause but for your share of the budget.¹⁸

Continuous strife has led to massive population displacements. The UN estimates that Syr-

ia has lost half its population since the conflict started, with more than 6 million people internally relocating within the country to flee insecure areas, and a massive influx of refugees into neighboring countries: Jordan, Iraqi Kurdistan, Turkey and Lebanon absorbing the majority of the impact of the Syrian refugee crisis¹⁹. In Iraq,

ISIL proclaimed the creation of the Islamic State (IS)²⁰ on 29 June 2013 as a Caliphate. This instrumentalization of an obsolete political construct transforms religious solidarities in the key axis of the political structure of government as a matter of doctrine²¹. IS has targeted every group it considers apostate, heretic or infidel and uprooted entire populations of Christians, Shabaks, and Yazidis, as well as killing Shia, moderate Sunni, Turkmen and representatives of State institutions such as

members of the Iraqi armed and security forces and the Kurdish Peshmerga, senior bureaucrats and State officials.

These massive population movements, coupled with constant battles and skirmishes, petty crime and generalized breakdown of law and order, have overwhelmed the social (and physical) infrastructure not only of the countries affected by direct conflict on their soil but also of those countries that become hosts to the refugee influx. The vicious loop of armed conflict and refugees has put pressure on the sanitation, health care, water, employment and education systems in all these countries. In Iraq, half the



Shatila, one of the main Palestinian refugee camp in Beirut.

provinces will have serious problems opening schools this year, according to UNICEF, because they have either fallen under the control of IS or their buildings are used to house IDPs. In Lebanon, a significant number of Syrian refugee children cannot attend classes because schools are already operating at full capacity or because of differences in school programs and Lebanese bureaucratic requirements make it impossible for Syrian children to follow the regular Lebanese coursework²². Prostitution, human trafficking, gangs, adult unemployment, child labor and early marriages are starting to become rampant. In a region with a significant youth bulge, the lack of schooling and institutionalized frames of reference and containment of children will lead to serious problems in the future, including a deepening of some of the root causes of conflict: disaffection, resentment, hopelessness, and actual lack of material prospects. If not addressed, the maelstrom created by the disruption of social order will become the breeding ground for future generations of extremists, nihilists and the human flotsam associated with anomic conditions. There is only a slim chance that these aspects of the refugee question will be addressed by international agencies and national governments as funds pledged in 2014 only cover a fraction of the budget required. Meanwhile, private funds are being channeled via private charitable organizations that, in many cases, continue to propagate the ideology of Salafism and Wahhabism among refugee youths²³, and in an ironic turn of events, classes have restarted in the territories of Syria and Iraq controlled by ISIL.... using the official Saudi curricula for math, science and Arabic.

The cost of conflict is also reflected in the economy of the countries of the region. As the economies of the region are intertwined not only by direct trade but also by geography, many of the achievements of the countries of the region have been derailed by the current state of conflict. Iraq, for instance, represents 7% of Lebanese exports but is also a transit route for Lebanon goods to the Gulf. Many trade routes are thus currently

blocked, leading to the inability to access the Gulf markets and creating ripple effects in the economies of the region. According to the World Bank²⁴, Lebanon – whose economic growth had already slumped with the recession brought about by the Arab Springs in the region - witnessed a sharp growth reduction with the Iraq conflict, cutting down growth forecasts by half.

A morose sense of doom prevails. The US has effectively retreated from the region after the disruptive invasion and occupation of Iraq: the Ghost of Mistakes Past colors its hesitant positions vis-à-vis conflict in this part of the world.²⁵ After investing 25 billion dollars in building the capacity of a conventional Iraqi Army that crumbled when confronted with a transnational “insurgency”, the USG government is weary of moving beyond air strikes and the deployment of advisors to Iraq, even if that limited intervention has burned in 3 months 560 million dollars of the 800 million the Pentagon plans to spend in this country for security in 2014.²⁶ American public opinion is not keen to support another US foreign military intervention any time soon, particularly in Iraq. Even though air strikes have already started against targets in both Syria and Iraq, there is a marked reluctance to engage these groups on the ground and an insistence that only national and regional actors must engage in ground operations. Moreover, whilst decision- and policy-makers are acutely aware of the fact that the answer to the problems briefly described above is not merely military, there are no new ideas on the table in terms of governance, diplomacy and international cooperation to replace the much criticized doctrine of civilian “nation building” and its military counterpart, the COIN. With variants that place more or less emphasis on military options and military aid, the other Western countries find themselves in the same disconnect loop as the Americans²⁷. There is greater clarity in what not to do (intervene directly) and on the length of the conflict (this is going to be a long and protracted fight and the prospects for near-term resolution are bleak) than on what to do (the effectiveness of



La Corniche, the Mediterranean seafront.

airstrikes and drones, the nature and conduct of operations in cyberspace against an enemy that conducts a “virtual guerrilla” campaign, the need and means to support local ownership of the conflict in a region where local powers are in conflict with each other) and who that enemy is (IS, Al Qaida, other extremist groups, global trends towards extremism and radicalization among youth).

Lebanon: A Precarious Experiment Gambling on the Survival of the Most Adaptive Systems

A small country²⁸ cradled at the crossroads of the Mediterranean and the Arab worlds, marrying the coastal areas of the cosmopolitan Levant with the rural realities of the Mountain and the hinterland, with a tumultuous history of conflict and resurgence, the Republic of Lebanon embodies the attempts of seventeen faith-based communities to live together and share a common national narrative. As Salibi puts it: “To create a country is one thing, to create a nationality is another.”²⁹ The history of Lebanon is the quest for a common “we” in a perpetual tension

between foreign intervention and sovereignty, trans-border alliances and violence. It is a country highly segmented, composed only of “minorities” that operate with high degrees of autonomy, where no single religious group has the majority, plagued by systemic instability and institutional weaknesses, privileging the criteria of pluralism and coexistence over efficiency and efficacy. As Augustus Norton aptly phrases it, “Lebanon is an anomalous state because so much that constitutes politics in Lebanon is conducted on the periphery of the State, if not outside of it.”³⁰ It is also a country where the authoritarianism prevalent in the rest of the region has been avoided and where things get done despite the lack of effective government institutions. In short, Lebanon is an example of adaptation more than efficiency: the systems put in place have allowed it to survive or at least surmount the effects of the points of friction and conflict in its environment but have acted as a brake impeding further political and social development. It has also facilitated the phenomenon of a country used as an arena for proxy regional confrontations, interventions, and clashes be-

tween third-party actors in “imported” conflicts that are also local ones.

Some authors have defined Lebanon as “a microcosm of the peoples, cultures and religions found in the Middle East region as a whole”³¹, while others have highlighted the precariousness³² of the institutional arrangements that allow “this tiny replica of the [Ottoman] empire that ended ninety years ago”³³ to exist and function.

The institutional arrangements of Lebanon stem from the old millet system of the Ottoman Empire³⁴, a system whose basis was later reinforced during the French mandate and enshrined in the 1926 Constitution, the 1943 unwritten “National Pact”³⁵ and the Taif Agreement of 1989³⁶. An added layer of institutional complexity was reached with the Doha Agreement of 2008³⁷.

This recourse to pacts, dialogues and agreements that institutionalize provisional “exit by consensus” options in times of crisis that then become more or less fixed and permanent features of the system is a fundamental trait of Lebanese politics. It shows the dexterity of a political establishment conformed by interdependent and intertwined confessional elites³⁸ operating in a playing field of rules that highlight rather than obscure the cleavages and sectarian differences and renders them functional to the precarious stability of the country. It also points out a fundamental contradiction at the core of the Lebanese dynamics. On the one hand, pacts operate under the principle of “neither winners nor losers” stemming from the National Pact and reinforced throughout Lebanon’s modern history. On the other, it is a profoundly exclusionary society, not only in terms of class and gender, but also of nationality of origin. The consensus can only be maintained by denying rights and disenfranchising large sectors of the population (Palestinian refugees, women, Syrian refugees, the underclass, foreign “temporary” workers). The pressure of their compounded demands over the system was often relieved in the past by emigration. In a globalized world of fences and

walls, the recourse to migration is forestalled.

The pacts have also tried to disassociate or at least distance Lebanon – the permanent arena in whose territory regional conflicts are played – from the upheavals of the region. In a sense, the Lebanese sectarian oligarchy at the commands of the country has operated effectively as a Board of Administration of conflict that preserves the integrity of the country at the price of maintaining it in a state of stasis. Anything can unbalance the precarious equilibrium that keeps Lebanon together: hence the slowness of change and the timorous attempts at reform in a world which races into an uncertain future. Lebanon’s elites have taken a page out of *Il Gattopardo*³⁹. Whether the rate of incremental change adopted will accommodate the rapid societal changes taking place in a globalized world and economy will probably dictate whether Lebanon can continue to exist under the current model.

Lebanon is also a country that has at times had part or the whole of its territory occupied by Israel and Syria and that survived a civil war that threatened the very basis of coexistence, navigating conflict through agreements and trying to preserve the national unity of the country from being torn apart by regional strife and alignments that resonate with and enhance whatever fissure the Lebanese coexistence model presents. It is in this light that the Baabda Declaration of neutrality and dissociation, particularly vis-à-vis the Syrian civil war, issued by the National Dialogue Committee on June 2012, has to be understood.

The resultant electoral system and institutional arrangements are among the most intricate in the world. Lebanon is a parliamentary Republic: the Parliament is unicameral, with 128 seats won by direct election. All Parliamentary seats are divided equally between Muslims and Christians, with seats further subdivided between eleven confessions⁴⁰. The right to stand for election is confessional although the law does not require candidates to provide proof of their confessional status. The right to vote is non-confessional: voters can vote for all seats, even



Marks of the war can still be perceived on some buildings.

if they do not belong to the same confession as the seat being contested. The electoral system is based on multi-member district and voters have as many votes as there are seats elected in the district (block vote). However, voters use only a single ballot paper to vote and the ballot is not annulled if it is not complete, that is, if there are fewer names in the ballot than seats in dispute. It is also a plurality/majority system: the candidates that get the most votes win the seats.

The post of President is reserved for a Maronite Christian, the Prime Minister position for a Sunni Muslim and the role of Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies for a Shia Muslim. The Parliament indirectly elects the President for a period of six years. The term is non renewable, while the mandates of the Members of Parliament last 4 years. All institutions, starting with the Cabinet of Ministers, are balanced in terms of confessions and special majorities of the Cabi-

net are required for “national issues” such as the general mobilization of the army, calling a state of emergency or establishing the annual national budget.

The whole design of the system is geared towards making the government function by inter-confessional consensus and not by either order or imposition: a subtle and relatively effective nudge towards practicing the art of compromise. However the system is also prone to stalemates and paralysis or, at least, bickering and a constant start and stop flow that makes decision-making on central issues slow and painful.

Moreover, inter-confessional consensus often obscures intra-confessional strife, with citizens following leading families, patronage networks and leaders within the various confessions. There is no political parties law: parties have to register under the old Law on Associations

of 1909 that comes from the Ottoman Empire⁴¹. The system favored (and favors, at least in the language used in the Electoral Law) candidates and confessions: elections, until 2005, were “super local elections” more than national events, following the spirit of the Ottoman Commonwealth. The election took place over 4 Sundays as voters had to travel to the district where the family originated from. Citizens tended to vote for local notables and well-known personalities, and the platforms of the candidates related more to community affairs and local issues than to national affairs.

2005 was a pivotal year, marked by the assassination of Rafik Hariri and the withdrawal of the Syrians: all of a sudden Lebanese voters were confronted with truly national issues that went beyond the borders of localized interests and intra-confessional debates. It has been said that the so-called “Cedar Revolution” was the awakening of Lebanon, the equivalent of the Arab Spring phenomenon with a better outcome⁴². Two blocs emerged from the street mobilizations: the “March 14” and the “March 8”⁴³ movements; both of them are inter-confessional alliances, with a third bloc of more “independent” minded politicians and technocrats (such as the President of the Central Bank) also playing significant roles in government. These two coalitions still dominate politics, leaving little space for the emergence of smaller groupings within this framework.

The Lebanese State is a fragile and weak entity. On the one hand, it is subject to the constraints of confessional balance: positions are allotted along sectarian lines. The civil service and public administration are thus vulnerable to the same problems, including patronage, that plague the political system. On the other, whole areas of everyday life (all matters related to personal and civil status, for instance) fall outside its purview as they are adjudicated following the religious codes, practices and processes of the different confessional communities. There is no unified code of law governing personal status in Lebanon: legislative and judicial plural-

ism is the norm, further enhancing the role of the religious authorities and leadership of each community and reinforcing their collective role as a “confessional oligarchy.”⁴⁴ With no modern institutions and a “semblance of a modern State”, “the existing institutions cannot introduce needed reforms for fear that these changes would alter the status quo and the balance of interests among the communities. This makes it almost impossible to devise a national agenda for political and economic reform.”⁴⁵

Only two State institutions are perceived as truly national: the Central Bank of Lebanon and the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF), both responsible for the stability of the country at different levels. Although both are as subject to sectarian allotment of posts and quotas as the rest of the State bureaucracies, they have reached a level of autonomy because of the centrality of their functions and, at least in the case of the LAF, past history and experience. However, particularly in the case of the LAF, the limits of technical proficiency are the presence or absence of what one senior Lebanese military officer called “political cover”, that is, clear and coherent political decision-making that would allow for clear and coherent decision-implementing. In the absence of such “orders from above” at the level of the political class, the LAF is often forced to deploy tactically proficient measures but lacks a perceived coherent strategy. Moreover, the temptation to make use of an institution such as LAF to shoulder more tasks at the national level is always present, particularly in times of crisis, and for any crisis⁴⁶.

The matter is further complicated by the co-existence and co-dependence of the LAF with Hezbollah. Created during the Israeli invasion of 1982 and officially founded in 1985 as a Shia militant formation funded by Iran to resist the Israeli intervention and defend Lebanon’s national territory, Hezbollah (“Party of Allah” or “Party of God”) is at the same time a political party, a resistance movement, a social network of charities and programs for social development⁴⁷, a powerful telecommunications net-



A Syrian refugee woman wonders around the streets of Beirut, asking for help to car drivers.

work, and an armed organization. It has been classified *in toto* or in part as a terrorist group by the governments of the US, Canada, EU, UK, France, the Netherlands, Australia, New Zealand, Bahrain, the Gulf Cooperation Council, and Israel. As a political party, it not only has parliamentary representation, seats in Cabinet, and the majority of the municipal mayoralties in the South but also constitutes the backbone of the 8 March Alliance and has had *de facto* veto power in Lebanon's parliament since the Doha Agreement. As an armed militia, Hezbollah has an almost endless supply of funds and weapons to rearm coming from Iran and Syria, a cadre of experienced and battle-hardened field commanders, training centers with induction programs geared towards fresh volunteers ready to fight, as well as clearly delineated combat doctrines and hierarchies. It is a highly disciplined military-like (or militia-like, at least) entity.

Due to the hybrid nature of Hezbollah, it also has what LAF lacks: political cover. The armed wing can count on the support of the powerful political wing to block, advocate and negotiate (sometimes in a high-handed way) positions vis-à-vis its present actions and future endeavors. It can also count on the political arm to curtail any progress of the LAF that would endanger Hezbollah's "right" to keep its arms for "national defense" purposes; and it can also rely on its powerful telecommunications network⁴⁸ and the mobilization of the "Arab Street" to maintain the legitimacy obtained by being perceived as a resistance movement dedicated to the national defense of the integrity of Lebanese territory.

However, Hezbollah's claim to the title of "resistance movement" (in the street, it is common to hear them referred to as just "The Resistance" at least by their followers) was damaged both inside Lebanon and within the Arab world by

the Party of God's involvement in the Syrian conflict in defense of the Assad regime. Not only did the group open itself to criticism by the 14 March Alliance who accuses them of violating the Baabda Declaration and bringing the Syrian Civil War to Lebanon; it has also provided an opportunity for many in the Shia community to express their discontent or at least their unease with Hezbollah's foreign adventures⁴⁹. The crisis of popular legitimacy has also reached beyond Lebanon's borders to the broader Muslim constituency in the Arab world, who have started to dub them a paramilitary Shia group instead of the victorious resistance movement that defeated Israel and made the until then invincible Tsahal retreat back to its own borders. In the rarefied atmosphere of Shia/Sunni confrontations brought about by the unexpected rise of IS and its temporary ally the Nusra Front (*Jabhat al-Nusra*), Hezbollah finds itself in the uncomfortable position of being on the defensive in the propaganda front. The problem is further compounded by the role Hezbollah plays in the current governance crisis Lebanon is facing to indirectly elect and appoint a new President.

Nonetheless, Hezbollah continues to be the strongest movement in Lebanon and a symbiotic partner of the LAF. Hezbollah's refusal to disarm is contingent upon the strength of LAF as an internal stabilizing force and the relative weakness of the armed forces to face an external threat and defend Lebanon's borders. In that respect, the rise of the IS as an external threat, the operations of Aarsal and Brital, the series of terrorist attacks inside Lebanon and the unrest in Tripoli, have only reinforced that symbiosis, although the outpouring of external financial and technical aid to the LAF might skewer the delicate point of equilibrium of this symbiosis. UNIFIL operates as a buffer instead of a traditional peacekeeping force in the South, thus completing the triptych of the hybrid and very *sui generis* system of Lebanon's external defense: a national military, an armed militia and a multinational force guard the borders of the country whilst the LAF operates as an internal stabiliz-

ing counterpoint to the efforts of confessional leaders to stem the rise and influence of more extremist positions within their communities.

The return of Saad Hariri, the election of Sheikh Abdel-Latif Derian as the Gran Mufti of Lebanon after a contested process that threatened to divide the Sunni community even further, can be seen as efforts in this direction. The Sunni confessional and political leaders are caught in the anvil of having to manage the anger and resentment of Lebanese Sunnis, on the one hand, whilst still defending the State and its institutions on the other. This resentment might deepen some of the inter-confessional fault lines, as in the case of Tripoli. Perceived double standards by the agents of order, particularly the army, only aggravate the sense of outrage of a Sunni underclass in the throes of very difficult economic circumstances. This feeling of being the "*laissés-pour-compte*" (the cast-offs), the rejected and outcast of a society where there is no space for them, subject to LAF repression while their Shia and Alawite neighbors thrive under the protection of Hezbollah, might make those communities tilt to forms of Islamic extremism. It is to them that the Gran Mufti of Lebanon addressed as a matter of priority with his words welcoming the Islamic New Year on October 25 2014: "As [true] Lebanese, our program should be a united nation, a unified state, a united Army and a united living. I call on all the Lebanese to stick to the nation and the state regardless of how much energy and effort it takes."⁵⁰ In the same speech, however, Sheikh Derian also highlighted the need for a restoration of the role of moderate Sunnis in State administration and lamented that the marginalization of Sunni leadership from public affairs since the assassination of Rafic Hariri had been destructive to coexistence and order. The next day, Lebanese newspapers reported that fighting had erupted between the army and Islamic militants in the city of Tripoli, leaving in its wake dead and wounded soldiers, civilians and Sunni militants after two days of clashes that quickly enveloped the Old City⁵¹. The violence, the worst in several

months in Sunni areas, was deemed by all to be spillover of the Syrian conflict. Two members of the LAF were kidnapped, following a strategy that provided good results to the Nusra Front in Aarsal. The same day, Saad Hariri and the Sunni confessional and political leadership publicly endorsed the LAF's actions.

The Christian confessional communities of Lebanon, for their part, are on edge. Lebanon hosts the majority of the Headquarters and Sees of the Christian Churches of Orient; those same churches that are under direct attack in the region, particularly in Iraq and Syria where the Christians have started an exodus towards Lebanon, the only country in the Middle East with a Christian Presidency (despite the fact that the Presidential seat is vacant at the moment due to lack of consensus among politicians) and where they find safety in numbers and leverage⁵². Their congregations throughout the Middle East had already started to dwindle before these attacks, the compounded result of urbanization, disproportionately high rates of emigration and demographic transition factors, as well as the prevailing violence and persecutions in the region. Now, with their brethren fleeing the threat of IS, the Christians of Lebanon are developing a bunker mentality. Some of them are rearming for the first time since the Civil War⁵³ and there is a note of despair, fear and impotence in the editorials and columns of the Christian press. One of them, written by Nagib Aoun in the newspaper *L'Orient Le Jour* on October 20 2014, reads: "Fondamentalisme chiite contre jihadisme sunnite: c'est désormais chacun pour soi et un Allah créé à l'image de l'homme nouveau: vengeur et haineux. Entre un Hezbollah qui prétend



Courtesy *The Daily Star*, Lebanon, October 30, 2014.

avoir l'oreille de ce dieu-là et des terroristes qui se le sont appropriés et quasiment pris en otage, y a-t-il encore un dieu disponible, libre de ses mouvements, pour protéger le Liban?" [Shia Fundamentalism versus Sunni jihadism: it is therein each for him/her-

self and an Allah created at the image of the new man: vindictive and full of hate. Between a Hezbollah that pretends to have the ear of that god and terrorists who have appropriated that god and taken him hostage, is there still a god available, free of his movements, to protect Lebanon?]⁵⁴

If the Christian communities continue to feel threatened to this degree, they will retreat within the confines of their own confessions, a reflex all too common in Lebanon when facing pressures. Many observers have noted the increase in the gulf separating the different confessional communities in 21st century Lebanon⁵⁵. The problem is further compounded by the looming economic crisis, the spillover of the Syrian conflict and the burden of a mass of Syrian refugees that, because of its volume, cannot be absorbed by a tiny country like Lebanon, which has yet to deal with the problem of the non-absorption of half a million Palestinians parked into "islands of (in) security"⁵⁶. Xenophobia is mounting, as are distrust and sectarianism. Lebanon, that tiny remnant of the Ottoman Empire, might implode. Or, against all odds, the adaptive reflexes of a society and a political elite that have seen too much and have too much to lose might kick in. If the latter happens, a new consensus will emerge that reminds us of the words of *Il Gattopardo*: For everything to remain the same, something has to change.

1 Since the fall of the Ottoman empire, experiments in pan-Arabism, nationalism, various milder forms of Islamism, socialism (not to speak of anti-imperialism and capitalism) have been launched (and failed) in the region. Professor Pierre-Jean Luizard appropriately remarked at a Conference organized by IReMMO in Paris on September 14, 2014, that the Ottoman Empire was a transnational entity where identities, particularly sectarian ones (with the notable exception of the Shia), were recognized and benefitted from legal and political guarantees and protection as well as a certain degree of autonomy under the millet system. Today we are seeing a return to sectarian identities without the guarantees provided by the Ottoman system, not as an early form of religious pluralism but as a basis of divisive intransigence.

2 The eruption into the political scene of ISIL (Islamic State of Iraq and Levant or *al Dawla al Islamiyya f'il Iraq w'al Sham*) is the latest manifestation of that trend. The proclamation of an Islamic Caliphate in a territory that shatters the Sykes-Picot original demarcations of areas of influence is a relatively new phenomenon –preceded only by the attempts of AQMI to territorialize its rule in Mali. ISIL later became the self-proclaimed Islamic State (IS): there are political controversies surrounding the use of that name, as it means granting the territorial entity they control and administer the status of a State. The US Government calls it ISIL and defines the entity they govern as a quasi-State, whilst the French have adopted the Arabic derogatory terminology of DAESH. In the region, the names DAESH and takfiris are usually employed to refer to them and their fluid alliances with other extremist movements. See Carina Perelli, *ISI, ISIL, DAESH, IS... A Many-Headed Hydra, A Chameleon of A Thousand Names and Appearances* (RESDAL Newsletter, October 2014), www.resdal.org/ing/newsletter/nota-1-isis/parte1_eng.pdf.

3 That some, like Gregory Gauser III have dubbed the new Middle East Cold War. For the discussion and state of the debate on this concept, see Gregory Gauser, *Beyond Sectarianism: The New Middle East Cold War* (Doha: Brookings Institution, 2014).

4 The concept of *fitna* is very complex. For the purpose of this paper, we are using it in the connotation of “dissension, sedition, civil war burning at the heart of Islam, within the community of believers” to refer to the specifically Sunni/Shia, Sunni/Sunni and Shia/Shia aspects of the conflict. See, for instance, Georges Kepel, *Fitna: Guerre au Coeur de l'Islam* (Paris : Gallimard, 2004).

5 Fareed Zacharia used the concept in *The Future of Freedom: Illiberal Democracy at Home and Abroad* (New York: WW Norton, 2007 – Revised Edition).

6 It is estimated that ISIL has between 10,000 and 30,000 fighters of 81 nationalities to carry out not only the battle for expansion of its area of influence but also to control a territory that is five times the size of Lebanon. For profiles of foreign recruits, see for instance, “Inside ISIS: The Making of a Radical” by Louise Stigsgaard Nissen, September 6, 2014 in *Narratively* (narrative.ly/stories/inside-isis-the-making-of-a-radical); “For Jihad Recruits, a Pipeline from Minnesota to Militancy” by Jack Healy, *The New York Times*, September 6, 2014, available at <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/09/07/us/for-jihad-recruits-a-pipeline-from-minnesota-to-militancy.html>; and “De la petite delinquance a l'islam jihadiste en seulement 3 mois” par Anthony Samrani, September 1, 2014, *L'Orient Le Jour*, www.lorientlejour.com/article/883688.

7 For a brief description of PSYOP actions, see the August 30, 2014 *New York Times* article by Scott Shane and Ben Hubbard: “Isis Displaying a Deft Command of Varied Media”. Electronic version in: <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/08/31/world/middleeast/isis-displaying-a-deft-command-of-varied-media>.

8 For an example of AGITPROP, see the way in which the families and neighbors of the Lebanese Armed Forces soldiers and NCOs that were made prisoner during the battle of Aarsal are manipulated with the threat of beheading the soldiers to close major arteries and roads in Lebanon. Covered in *The Daily Star* (Lebanon) on August 29 and 30, <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Lebanon-News/2014/Aug-30/269059-families-of-captured-soldiers-block-roads-in-lebanon>. IS issued a video of captured soldiers calling for this measure to pressure the Lebanese government to swap prisoners after releasing a video of the beheading of two Western journalists, a Kurdish Peshmerga and a Lebanese sergeant, followed by the execution by the Nusra Front of a Lebanese Shia soldier and the threat of more executions to come. The Nusra Front has also sent videos with messages directly to the families of captured Lebanese soldiers and policemen.

9 Mark Juergensmeyer uses this expression in the book *Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000 - revised in 2003.). For a detailed analysis of religious violence, politics, and the secular State, see Mark Juergensmeyer: “Religious Terror and the Secular State”, *Harvard International Review* (Winter 2004).

10 See, for instance, the analysis by Rob Crilly of the execution of journalists Foley and Sotloff in *America Al-Jazeera*, September 3, 2014: “Islamic State’s execution videos are sly propaganda written in blood” in america.aljazeera.com/articles/2014/9/2/sotloff-executionsvideopropaganda.html.

11 Peter Harling, “IS Back in Business”, *Le Monde Diplomatique* (English Edition, September 2014). The author makes a compelling argument, worth reading in full, regarding all the vacuums IS has filled.

12 Angelo Panebianco, *Modelli di Partito* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1982). Even though Panebianco uses the concept in the framework of party systems, it is still useful to refer to the professional operators of the different communities that used to be embedded in State structures and provided articulation and voice, did favors and delivered tangible goods to their communities, sometimes inserted in complex networks of patronage and linked to tribal elders and geographically-based elites. Processes like the De-Baathification in Iraq that targeted a majority of Sunnis with lower level membership in the Baath party, for instance, purged these operators from State structures.

13 Iraq under the government of Prime Minister Maliki is a prime example of this phenomenon.

14 Yezid Sayigh, “Arab States at a Tipping Point”, *Al-Hayat* (August 21, 2014).

15 Hence the name takfiris applied to extremists, as they often dub their adversaries *kafir* (infidel). Takfiri is a Muslim who accuses another Muslim of apostasy.

16 The expression belongs to the recently deceased Hector Ricardo Leis, an Argentinian former Communist and former Montonero, who devoted his life to debunking the myth of heroism associated with the South American guerrillas. He used the particularly apt phrase “administrators of death” to refer to the insurgent leaderships.

17 It is quite telling that ISIL has released their own version of a video game (*Grand Theft Auto: Salil al Sawarem*) from which they had not even removed the logo of the original **Grand Theft Auto** on which it was modeled, reflecting not only the ideology of the group in the audio but also changing the landscape and depicting the terrain in which they are fighting. For scenes from the game, see Paul Crompton, "Grand Theft Auto. Isis Militants Reveal Video Game", *Al Arabyia News* (October 20, 2014).

18 Testimonies of disenchanted foreign recruits point in that direction.

19 Syrian refugees exceed 3 million, as of 29 August 2014 according to UNHCR. There are 1.1 Million in Lebanon, 608,000 in Jordan and 815,000 in Turkey. 6.5 million are internally displaced in Syria. Around 200,000 have fled to Iraq, particularly to the Provinces of Dohuk, Erbil and Sulaimanya in Kurdistan: those areas are now affected by the conflict between the KRG and IS. According to UNHCR, the Syria operation is the largest the agency has had to deal with since its creation, 64 years ago. According to the Economic and Social Commission for West Asia (ESCWA,) 50% of the world refugees nowadays are Arabs whilst Arabs represent only 5% of the total world population.

20 This has resulted in internal displacement (with an estimate of around 1.8 million Internally Displaced People or IDPs living in 1,400 locations according to UNOCHA) as well as people trying to flee the country altogether as refugees. As of 26 August 2014, there were more than 8 thousand Iraqi refugees, mostly Christian, in Lebanon according to the Minister of Social Affairs of Lebanon.

21 For a brief overview of the concept of Caliphate, see Julia McQuaid, "Reviving the Caliphate: Fad or the Future?", *CNA Occasional Papers* (Arlington, Virginia: CNA, July 2014). More in-depth historical studies in French can be found in the website *Les clés du Moyen Orient* (www.lesclesdumoyenorient.com) particularly the interview to Professor Henry Laurens, and the article by Nicolas Hautemaniere, "Vers un nouveau califat? Une mise en perspective historique" (July 14, 2014).

22 For a description of the latter problem, see Sarah E. Parkinson, *Educational Aftershocks for Syrian Refugees in Lebanon*, (Middle East Research and Information Project – MERIP: September 7, 2014), available at http://www.merip.org/educational-aftershocks-syrian-refugees-lebanon?utm_source=Sailthru&utm_medium=email&utm_term=%2AMideast%20Brief&utm_campaign=2014_The%20Middle%20East%20Daily_9.8.14

23 Shadows of the Taliban? Talib means student in Pashtun and refers to the Afghans who, many of them as refugee children, studied in the ultra-conservative madrassas of Pakistan and who later joined the anti-Western movement.

24 *Predictions, Perceptions and Economic Reality - Challenges of Seven Middle East and North Africa Countries Described in 14 Charts, MENA Quarterly Economic Brief* (Washington DC: World Bank, August 2014).

25 In declarations to the New York Times, on August 30 2014, Dan Pfeiffer, Senior Adviser to the White House, stated: "We'd much rather do this right than do it quickly. We tried the opposite [during the Bush years] and it worked out very poorly." See Karen DeYoung and Dan Balz, "Obama sets his own pace in a world whirling with crises", *The New York Times* (30 August 2014).

26 *Pentagon's Relatively Small Iraq Costs May Jump with Escalation* (Washington DC: Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments-CSBA, August 28, 2014) available at <http://www.csbaonline.org/2014/08/28/pentagons-relatively-small-iraq-costs-may-jump-with-escalation>. According to a ballpark estimate of the Pentagon provided to the website [military.com](http://www.military.com) on September 26, 2014, the daily cost of the operation is \$7.5 million (<http://www.military.com/daily-news/2014/09/26/costs-of-campaign-against-islamic-state-near-1-billion.html>.) The recent flurry of speeches by President Obama on the subject, that culminated with the presentation he made at the General Assembly of the United Nations in October 2014 have repeatedly tried to reassure US public opinion that there will not be "boots on the ground" and prepare it for a long conflict in which the US will try to raise another US-led "coalition of the willing" to fight ISIL and other extremist groups by "degrading and eventually destroying them."

27 The most concrete measures of consensus, aside from pledging funds to refugee agencies and military aid, have to do with foreign fighters. On October 24, 2014 an urgent session of the Security Council chaired by President Obama unanimously passed the US-backed resolution on Foreign Terrorist Fighters (FTF).

28 Area: 10,452 square kilometers; Population: the UN estimated the population of Lebanon to be 4,822,000 inhabitants in 2012, prior to the influx of the 1.1 million Syrian refugees that fled to Lebanon after the outbreak of hostilities in Syria. Registered Syrian refugees now constitute a quarter of the population in Lebanon, with the numbers going up at a rate of 12,000 a week. By the end of 2014, the UN estimates that Syrian refugees will become one third of the total population of the country.

29 Kamal S. Salibi, *A House of Many Mansions: the History of Lebanon Reconsidered* (London: Tauris, 1988).

30 Are Knudsen and Michael Kerr (eds.), *Lebanon After the Cedar Revolution* (London: Hurst, 2012), page XVI (Foreword).

31 Tom Russell, *A Lebanon Primer* (Washington DC: Middle East Research and Information Project, MER 133, 1985).

32 Michael Hudson, *The Precarious Republic: Political Modernization in Lebanon* (Boulder CO: Westview Press, 1985).

33 Ambassador Frederic Hof, *The Puzzle of Post-Ottoman Political Legitimacy in the Middle East/Levant Region* (Beirut: Research and Strategic Studies Center-Lebanese Armed Forces, 2010.).

34 The system through which communities (confessional or ethnic) governed their daily affairs and adjudicated complaints and conflicts autonomously through their own religious-based laws and tribunals, with little interference from the Ottoman State. The system under which acts were judged was thus based on a person's religious affiliation, granting religious authorities enormous power and permitting (and privileging) the consolidation of confessional elites and hierarchies that then mediated relationships between the members of the communities and the Ottoman authorities and State. Professor Henry Laurens has called this decentralized arrangement the "Ottoman Commonwealth". From another angle, the evolution of the system that bred sectarianism under the Ottoman Empire and the entanglement of the colonial powers in the process is well analyzed by Ussama Makdisi, *The Culture of Sectarianism: Community, History and Violence in 19th Century Ottoman Lebanon* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 2000).

35 Known as the “National Pact” (al-Mithaq al Watani), this agreement is considered an exercise in Realpolitik that looked for the lowest common denominator shared by the Lebanese independence leaders and transformed it into a political formula; at the time, those who participated in the Pact were not only Lebanese politicians but also Arab leaders (Syria and Egypt) and Western Powers (France and UK). See Farid el-Kazem, *The Communal Pact of National Identities: the Making and Politics of the 1943 National Pact* (Oxford: Center for Lebanese Studies, 1991).

36 The Taif Agreement of 1989 is also referred to by the names of “Document of National Accord” and the “National Reconciliation Accord.” It was reached in the city of Taif (Saudi Arabia) on 22 October 1989 and aimed at ending the Lebanese Civil War, accommodate the shifting confessional demographics of the country, reassert Lebanese sovereignty in Southern Lebanon still under Israeli occupation, and establish a timetable for the withdrawal of the Syrians from Lebanon (that only happened in 2005). It enshrined the principle of “mutual coexistence” between the sects in Lebanon, ensuring their proper representation by restructuring the National Pact arrangements. See Michael Hudson, “Trying Again: Power Sharing in Post-Civil War Lebanon”, *International Negotiation* (Vol. 2: 1997, pp. 103-122) on the coexistence formula achieved and its effects.

37 The agreement among rival sectarian factions, their regional backers (Iran, Saudi Arabia and Syria) and the Lebanese Government, also known as the Lebanese National Dialogue Conference, reached in Doha on May 2008, to end the 18 month long political crisis that threatened to restart a civil war in Lebanon. The UN Security Council and all major powers hailed the Doha Agreement. See the excellent analysis of Robert F. Worth and Nada Bakri published in the New York Times on May 22, 2008: *Deal for Lebanese Factions Leaves Hezbollah Stronger*, available at <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/05/22/world/middleeast/22lebanon.html>.

38 For a good historical perspective on the Lebanese political establishment, see Kamal Dib, *Warlords and Merchants. The Lebanese Business and Political Establishment* (Reading, UK: Ithaca Press, (2004).

39 Novel by Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa that depicts the dilemmas faced by a Sicilian aristocrat facing the changes brought about in the class structure and society of Sicily by the Risorgimento. The most famous quote from the book is probably “something needs to change so that everything can stay the same.” See, Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa, *The Leopard* (New York: Random House: 1966), originally published by Feltrinelli, 1958 in Italian under the title of *Il Gattopardo*.

40 For a detailed explanation of how the system works, see *The Lebanese Electoral System* (IFES Lebanon Briefing Paper, March 2009) available at [http://www.ifes.org/Content/Publications/Papers/2009/-/media/Files/Publications/SpeechCommentary/2009 and Assessment of the Electoral Framework: Election Law of 2008 \(Lebanon Democracy Reporting International & Lebanese Association for Democratic Elections, 2009\) available at http://democracy-reporting.org/files/report_lebanon_0902.pdf](http://www.ifes.org/Content/Publications/Papers/2009/-/media/Files/Publications/SpeechCommentary/2009 and Assessment of the Electoral Framework: Election Law of 2008 (Lebanon Democracy Reporting International & Lebanese Association for Democratic Elections, 2009) available at http://democracy-reporting.org/files/report_lebanon_0902.pdf).

41 This loose requirement of mere notification of existence is what allows Hezbollah to be registered as a political party while also operating as an active armed group.

42 Augustus R. Norton posits such a thesis in the Foreword of the book by Are Knudsen and Michael Kerr (eds.), *Lebanon: After the Cedar Revolution* (London: Hurst & Company, 2012).

43 The name “March 14” derives from a large demonstration against the Syrian presence in Lebanon which took place on that date in 2005 while the name “March 8” comes from a large demonstration in favor of the Syrian presence, to “express gratitude to the Syrians” that also took place in 2005.

44 Julia Choucair, “Lebanon: Finding a Path from Deadlock to Democracy”, *Carnegie Papers #64*, (Washington DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2006).

45 Choucair, op. cit.

46 The government threatened to deploy members of the LAF to supervise the national exams during a strike of teachers in the education sector in 2014, for instance.

47 Hezbollah controls at least 4 hospitals, 12 clinics, 12 schools, 4 agricultural centers, an extensive social assistance program, to mention the most salient endeavors in this field, not to mention its environmental programs, amusement parks and the services it provides to communities.

48 Hezbollah owns and controls *Al-Manar TV*, the satellite television station and the radio station *Al-Nour*. It also controls a weekly publication and several YouTube Channels and even launched a videogame, *Special Force*.

49 For a summary of these criticisms, see Eric Lob, *Is Hezbollah Confronting a Crisis of Popular Legitimacy?* (Brandeis University, Crown Center for Middle East Studies, Middle East Brief # 78, March 2014), for Internet version see www.brandeis.edu/publications/meb/MEB78.pdf.

50 For coverage of the speech, see *The Daily Star*, October 25 2014: “Derian calls for Muslim Unity Ahead of the New Year”, http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Lebanon-News/2014/Oct-24/275196-lebanon-mufti-marginalization-of-sunnis-is-destructive.ashx?utm_medium=email&utm_source=transactional&utm_campaign=Newsletter#ixzz3H712hmfY

51 The headline of *The Daily Star* for October 26, 2014 was: “Army pounds militant hideouts in North Lebanon” for instance while *L’Orient Le Jour* provided photos under the headline: “Samedi cauchemardesque à Tripoli” [Nightmarish Saturday at Tripoli]. Tellingly, the same edition of the newspaper offers a Dossier called *Quand les Chrétiens de Syrie organisent leur protection* [When the Christians of Syria organize their own protection].

52 The official position of the Christian Churches is that they’d rather receive Christian refugees in an overcrowded Lebanon than to see Christians emigrate farther away, because that would mean the extinction of the Christian confessional communities in the Middle East.

53 Reported by the *Associated Press*, “Some Christians arm as Mideast perils mount” (September 5, 2014, byline of Zena Karam and Bassem Mroue).

54 “Chacun pour soi et Allah à la carte”, *La Chronique de Nagib Aoun*, 20/10/2014, in *L’Orient Le Jour*.

55 Knudsen & Kerr (op. cit.).

56 Sari Hanafi, *Enclaves and Fortressed Archipelago: Violence and Governance in Lebanon’s Refugee Camps*, in Knudsen & Kerr (eds.), op. cit.