



# **THE PEARL OF THE MEDITERRANEAN**

An Analysis of the Causes of the Lebanese Civil War and if  
Lebanon can be regarded as a Deviant Case

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Finally, I would like to dedicate this paper to all the victims of the Lebanese civil war. I sincerely hope, together with all Lebanese, that Lebanon one day will regain its reputation as the true Pearl of the Mediterranean.

# Abstract

This Master thesis analyzes the causes to the Lebanese civil war and if Lebanon can be regarded as a deviant case in comparison to existing civil war theories that explain the outbreak of civil wars. The author has composed his own civil war theory, consisting of the most commonly used explanatory factors behind the causes of civil wars and this theory is applied on the Lebanese civil war to be able to answer the research questions. A qualitative method and a literature study are being used to answer the questions at issue. The results show that political discrimination, a government breakdown and the involvement of external actors explain the outbreak of the Lebanese civil war. Furthermore, Lebanon corresponds to the theoretical framework regarding the political instability and the external actors' role in a country before a civil war, while Lebanon becomes a deviant case when comparing it to the variables of economy, "new wars" and to some extent the regional impact on Lebanon. This thesis proves that a stable economy is not a guarantee against an outbreak of civil war. It shows that a discriminating political system is one of the main causes of civil war and it evidently shows that external powers most often have a personal interest in a civil conflict that takes place in their surrounding area.

*Key words:* Lebanon, The Lebanese civil war, civil war, deviant case,  
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# 1 Introduction

The Pearl of the Mediterranean, The Switzerland of the Middle East, Little Paris, the Door to the Orient; Lebanon is a state that has been given many names through the years. Its strategic position in the eastern Mediterranean, between Europe and the Middle East, has made it into a meeting point for intellectuals, business men, politicians, journalists and tourists from all over the world. During the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century Lebanon was seen as one of the most successful countries in the developing world that in a nearby future would take a further step forward and become a part of the industrialized world. The country was prosperous, there was a bank in every street and alleyway and the freedom of speech was a basic right that all Lebanese took for granted unlike their Arab neighbors. Celebrities were eating and drinking at “Pepe’s fishing club”, King and Presidents were losing their money at “Casino du Liban” and the winner of Miss Universe in 1971 was Lebanese. Nevertheless, in 1975 the Lebanese civil war started and it would last for 15 years and end the golden days of Lebanon. Lebanon as the world and its own people had known it would change and it would no longer be famous for its food, culture and glamour; it would now be famous for its atrocities and war crimes. A country that had been seen as a role model in the Middle East and the developing world was now bombed into ruins. How was it possible? What were the causes behind it?

## 1.1 Research Problem

My purpose with this paper is to investigate and analyze the causes to the Lebanese civil war and if Lebanon can be regarded as a deviant case. There are many different theories that are trying to explain the most common causes to civil wars. I will compose my own theory that will use the most common denominators that explains the causes to civil wars. I will apply my self-composed theory on the Lebanese civil war and see if Lebanon can be regarded as a deviant case. I want to make this paper as objective and close to reality as possible and my highest wish is to avoid accusations of being biased and support one side or another in the conflict. Domestically, in Lebanon it is difficult to find completely non-biased historical explanations of the war and there are as many explanations to the war as there are sects in Lebanon.

This will be an empirical paper where the theory will be used as an analytical tool that can analyze the empirical reality. I have decided not to have a descriptive part of the Lebanese history in this paper; the most important events will instead be included and mentioned in the analytical parts of the paper. The Lebanese history is an extremely complex one so it is important to narrow down what I am analyzing and only analyze what is relevant to answer the research questions. Furthermore, I will not analyze every political party or meaningful politician in Lebanon. I will try to keep it as general as possible and analyze the larger and more relevant events.

The Lebanese civil war lasted between the years 1975 and 1990, and it must be emphasized that this paper will focus on the causes that led up to the civil war and not on the events that occurred after the start of the war. The Lebanese civil war was a war that consisted of several smaller wars and this paper will analyze the causes to the armed events that took place in 1975-76. These years are regarded as the first years of the civil war.

I hope that this thesis can: 1. Find deviant variables that can be analyzed and used in future civil war research and 2. Explain the special status of Lebanon in the Middle East region and why the civil war took place. When looking at the Middle East today you can see that there are many countries that has just experienced or are on the brink of civil war, for example Iraq, Syria, Bahrain, Libya and Yemen. Is this something that can be relevant when looking at the Lebanese case? Can lessons be taught from the Lebanese example or is Lebanon a deviant case of its own?

## 1.2 Research Questions

My two research questions are:

- *What were the causes behind the Lebanese civil war?*
- *Can Lebanon be regarded as a deviant case in relation to existing conventional theories that are explaining the outbreaks of civil wars?*



## 2 Theoretical framework

My theory will mix a number of different causes and basic factors that can explain the onset to civil wars. The goal with my paper is to investigate why Lebanon is a deviant case regarding its civil war in relation to existing conventional theories. I want my theory to work as an analytical framework and my theoretical approach will help me in the analytical part of this paper. I will try to focus on the most logical causes to why there are civil wars. In the beginning of the theoretical part I will write a short definition of what it is that defines a civil war. I do not want my theory to be too broad so I have chosen the factors that I believe are the most relevant ones for my research. I will reflect and critique the arguments I am using in my framework. In the end of the theory part I will write a small summary and discussion of my theory.

### 2.1 What Defines a Civil War?

A civil war is “...an internal conflict with at least 1.000 combat-related deaths, with both an identifiable rebel organization and government forces suffering at least 5 % of the casualties”. This is the most common definition that is being used when discussing civil wars.<sup>1</sup> To develop the statement you can say that a civil war is an inter-state conflict between two or several military organized sides. There are several causes behind civil wars. The most common ones are a social or political dissatisfaction with the current government in power, a fragmentation between different regions of a country, the position of certain ethnic or religious minorities or liberation from a colonial power. External factors can also affect a civil war to a great extent and affect its start, course, duration and ending. Civil wars are in general characterized by a strong polarization and intransigence

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<sup>1</sup> P Collier & A Hoeffler, ”Greed and Grievance in Civil War”, *World Bank*, March 13, 2002, p.3.

between the different sides which makes it difficult to reach any future peace settlements or solutions to the conflict. The international law in civil wars is rarely used and civil wars are characterized by a cruelty both against combatants and civilians. Therefore the consequences of a civil war can effect generations to come, both on a political, social and emotional level.<sup>2</sup>

## 2.2 Economic Factors

Before a civil war starts a state has most often faced a financial crisis, economic recession and a growth collapse. For a country that faces high unemployment it will be easier for the rebels to recruit people that can fight for their cause. Economic stability is an important deterrent for government popularity. As long as a government can offer jobs and good finances it will be more difficult for rebels to get credibility among the masses. The motive of “greed” can be a bigger motive for civil wars than “grievance”; if a group cannot gain any benefits from it (or think they can), then the chances are unlikely that a civil war will take place.<sup>3</sup>

Nevertheless, a financial decline will solely not lead to a civil war, as long as the citizen of a state believes in the constitution and the court system the chances that a war will take place does not have to be that great. For example is Bahrain a country that has had a stable economy were everything from schools to health care is financed by the state. However, there have been several demonstrations and uprisings against the regime. The Bahraini people want political freedom, however Bahrain is a dictatorship and was (or is?) on the brink of a civil war. Bahrain is a good example on how even a good economy is useless in the discussion of a country’s stability.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Agrell Wilhelm, (1996). ”Inbördeskrig”, *Nationalencyklopedin*, p. 385, Höganäs: Bra Böcker AB.

<sup>3</sup> Collier & Hoeffler p. 3.

<sup>4</sup> Gengler, Justin, *Religion and Politics in Bahrain*, 2012-12-02, [http://bahrainipolitics.blogspot.se/2012/02/five-things-past-year-has-and-hasnt\\_12.html](http://bahrainipolitics.blogspot.se/2012/02/five-things-past-year-has-and-hasnt_12.html) 2012-04-04.

### 2.2.1 Redistribution of Resources

During times of economic crisis security dilemmas can rise. Financial decline may lead to insecurity among the masses when people suddenly get a worsening standard of living. This makes people more suspicious and jealous of their neighbors who perhaps have seen an increased standard of living and both the richer and the poorer masses can become victims of a nationalistic rhetoric from the political leadership. Domestic groups can also be fearful when the remnants of the old state are being sold for redistribution. When a state breaks down someone must take control over the vital industries, arms depots and important supply stocks. However, this relocation could benefit some groups more than others, therefore it is important for the different groups to decide if they should grab as many resources as possible or just sit down and accept the status quo. Especially the authoritarian elites of a society can feel threatened by the reforms demanded by economic liberalization or political democratization and the result of this will almost certainly make them lose their earlier privileged positions. The old leaders have strong motives to turn the population they can control against reform-minded groups.<sup>5</sup>

### 2.2.2 Structure of Income

Structure of income is a variable that is included in the economic one. If a government controls the levels of income and can raise the level of income this is something that will favor the government's position. If the distribution of wealth would be an unequal one the situation could be the opposite. For example can a country rich in resources still face the possibility of civil wars, the diamond wars in Sierra Leone and Uganda are two good examples. Rebels can be motivated to get their piece of the natural resources to reach financial wealth and also be in a better negotiating position. However, these types of events are only possible if there are wide economic gaps in a society, so even if a state has a high GDP the

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<sup>5</sup> Walters, Barbara F. & Snyder, Jack, *Civil Wars, Insecurity and Intervention*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1999., p. 7-8.

GDP per capita is even more important, at least when it concerns the question of civil war. The larger the gaps in society are the more unstable the political situation will become.<sup>6</sup>

Due to the new globalized economy the wars of today are different from the old ones. The new wars (civil wars) economies are very decentralized. The participation in wars is low and unemployment is high. The new war economies are highly dependent on external resources. During these types of wars the domestic production goes down and so does the tax revenues. The local war militias are financing their wars through criminal activities like smuggling and robbery.<sup>7</sup>

There is always an ongoing discussion if globalization is good or bad from an economic viewpoint, especially for states in the developing world. Corporations are moving their manufacturing abroad to even cheaper locations. The diamond wars are good examples of how globalization can make the domestic political situation unstable; the diamonds are being sold abroad where diamonds are requested which they are not in their countries of origin. Nevertheless, according to a new UN report<sup>8</sup> poverty has decreased significantly for the last 20 years and this can be seen as a direct result of globalization and its advantages. As mentioned above, even if a state has a high growth it is of high importance to reduce the gaps in a society which can lead to instability. All states strive for a good economy and increased structure of income, but there is a thin line between being a part of globalization and being used by globalization.

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<sup>6</sup> Collier, Paul, Hoeffler Anke & Rohner, Dominic, "Beyond Greed and Grievance: Feasibility and Civil War", August 7<sup>th</sup>, 2006, p. 10-11

<sup>7</sup> Kaldor, Mary, *Nya och Gamla Krig*, Bokförlaget Daidalos AB, Göteborg, 1999, p. 16-18.

<sup>8</sup> United Nations, *The Millenium Development Goals Report 2011*, 2011, [http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/pdf/\(2011\\_E\)%20MDG%20Report%202011\\_Book%20LR.pdf](http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/pdf/(2011_E)%20MDG%20Report%202011_Book%20LR.pdf) 2012-04-06.

## 2.3 Political Instability and Rule of Power

### 2.3.1 Government Breakdown

Groups within a country have little to fear from each other when there is a central government in control that enforces rules and regulations on all of its citizens. Nevertheless, there are times when the government's ability to rule and maintain order will fail. A government can dissolve because of a number of reasons but when it does happen domestic groups within a country will face new challenges and security dilemmas. Who will be in control? Will other groups take advantage of the situation? Will the country remain at peace or go to war? Groups or individuals can respond to this in different ways. Some groups may connect more to their ethnicity and have a more sectarian thinking, some groups may move within the country to find a sanctuary, others may demand stronger minority rights and some will stockpile on weapons. If one group arms itself others will follow. This encourages neighbors to strengthen their defenses although the position of the original group is less secure.<sup>9</sup>

However, a central government does not always secure stability between different groups. A central government can play off different ethnic groups against each other in order to strengthen its own position. For example in many African countries, a President can come from a certain tribe and be accused of giving his own tribe special treatment, which in some cases can be an accurate accusation.<sup>10</sup> I believe that a government breakdown is dangerous if it does not exist any legal rules on how a new government can be formed. There are many examples from democratic states where governments have been forced to retire after a vote of censure, but in democracies there are fixed rules over how a new government can be formed.

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<sup>9</sup> Walters p. 4-5.

<sup>10</sup> Isabirye, Stephen, 1995, *Tribalism in Africa*, <http://www.hartford-hwp.com/archives/30/065.html> 2012-04-06.

### 2.3.2 Changing Political Balance of Power

Groups can become fearful if the balance between the groups is changing. If one group suddenly becomes more powerful than another one it may lead to destabilization. For example can a majority with a high birth rate threaten to overtake the power. It can occur when a large number of refugees arrives to a new country and changes the domestic situation. A change of the political system can also change the balance within a country. When the political power shifts earlier privileged groups can feel unsafe and disoriented: they have the choice of either going to war or resist any new settlements. These changes do not necessarily need to threaten their physical security situation, but as long as it restricts their political or financial power it can work as an argument not to sign any treaties with their rivals.<sup>11</sup>

I believe that the problem with times of a changing balance of the political power is when groups from the beginning have been discriminated in the current political system they are living in. First of all, it is a question of definition of what it is that constitutes a “group” but it is not sustainable to have a system where some groups are more privileged than others. The result of this is that in times when the political system is changing a previous privileged group feel threatened while a previous discriminated group feels that it want to gain more political power. Therefore it is of high importance that states from the beginning have a rule of power where no groups are discriminated according to the constitution and the political system.

### 2.3.3 Confessional Democracy and Stability

When there is a confessional rule of power in a state it is an indirect recognition of diversity and dissent. Those are two conditions necessary in a state to be able to establish a democratic order, particularly in a divided society.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Walters p. 6-7.

<sup>12</sup> El-Khazen, Farid, *The Breakdown of the State in Lebanon 1967-1976*, I.B Tauris & Co Ltd, London, 2000, p. 24.

The problem of power sharing and political participation is perhaps the most serious obstacle in the way of achieving political legitimacy, especially in developing countries. There are several explanations for the lack of political legitimacy: poverty, misdistribution of wealth, the colonial legacy, rapid modernization and also a low credibility among the people towards the political institutions. Nevertheless, weak political orders do not necessarily need to be unstable. Several of the countries in the developing world have been facing an authoritarian, but still stable rule. A state that does not have an authoritarian stability must instead have a legitimate power sharing order. In the absence of a strong authoritarian presence and concentration of power the distribution of power-sharing becomes a necessity for political stability.<sup>13</sup> However, can a power-sharing formula work in the absence of a strong state? Or can it work in the presence of a strong state? According to Michael C. Hudson, power-sharing formulas would only work in states where the state is strong but also autonomous. If the state becomes an instrument for external actors or a particular segment, ethnicity or class in a country it cannot acquire the legitimacy it needs to be able to rule out inter-sectarian tensions and conflicts.<sup>14</sup>

An important point to mention is that modernization in a confessional democracy could be a very delicate matter. If the state itself is facing modernization so must the political system and this can be very difficult to achieve even in a homogenous state.<sup>15</sup>

## 2.4 Identity and Civil War

### 2.4.1 Ethnic dominance

A source to conflict can be when a majority is discriminating a minority within a country. The risk of exploiting the minority decreases the smaller the minority is because then there is less potential for exploitation. The most likely range for

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<sup>13</sup> Michael C. Hudson, "The Problem of Authoritative Power in Lebanese Politics. Why Consociationalism Failed." in Nadim Shehadi & Dana Haffar Mills *Lebanon: A history of conflict and Consensus*. The Centre for Lebanese Studies in association with I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd, London, 1992, p. 234-237.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid

<sup>15</sup> El Khazen p. 24.

ethnic exclusion to occur is when the largest ethnic group constitutes a majority, but not an overwhelming majority of the population (around 45-90 %). According to the CH-model the variable of ethnic dominance is unimportant; the proportion of conflict societies is the same as that of peaceful societies. Nevertheless, a society with an ethnic dominance has a moderately increased risk of conflict. The ethnic dominance may lead to a structural political exclusion of other minorities.<sup>16</sup>

I want to emphasize that many countries contain an ethnic dominance of some kind. Countries where the question ethnic dominance is a serious problem are most often in previous colonial states (India, African countries). The colonial power has perhaps given a certain majority/minority special treatment which will lead to consequences. Furthermore, also in the most developed and rich societies can minorities be discriminated, live in “ghetto areas” and also be discriminated on the labor market. The result may not be civil war, but instead more criminality and misery.

## 2.4.2 Social Fractionalization and Civil War

In civil wars cohesion is important. Compared to a rebel army government forces has two clear advantages: It can during a period of several years build a sense of unity and belonging within the army, which is almost impossible for a rebel army to achieve during a short period of time. Furthermore, government forces can use the rhetoric and ideas of nationalism while rebel forces must find another alternative. Rebel forces need constant recruitments which are easier to conduct if everybody of its members is coming from the same homogenous group. A rebel army needs cooperative behavior and obedience which is easier to achieve if all its members comes from the same ethnic/religious group. The chances of rebellions within a state would be even more difficult the more diversity there is; the recruitment pool for the rebels would become more restricted. Nevertheless, according to the CH-model conflict societies are more fractionalized than peaceful ones.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Collier & Hoeffler, p. 13.

<sup>17</sup> Collier & Hoeffler, p. 11-12



The term social fractionalization itself is a combining of ethnic and religious fractionalization which is closely related. As mentioned above, cohesion is important for rebel effectiveness; social fractionalization makes a society safer in that sense that it will be harder for the rebels to recruit. However, the CH-model claims that a highly fractionalized society has a significantly increased risk of conflict; even if the country is dominated by an *ethnic dominance* it will not increase the risk of conflict.<sup>18</sup>

### 2.4.3 New Wars, Identity and Globalization

Author Mary Kaldor claims that what she calls “new wars” differ from the old ones regarding targets, methods of fighting and financing. The goals of the new wars are about identity politics and not like old wars where geo-political or ideological interests were of high importance. The new wars are directly related to globalization: without globalization we would not have seen any “new wars”. The term “new war” can shortly be compared to that of a civil war.<sup>19</sup>

These new types of identity politics are built on a claim to power that can be nationalistic, clan-bound, religious or linguistic. Nevertheless, before this identities were closely connected to a special perception of the state interest or to future projects, for example on how society should be organized. However, new identity politics is about how to claim power based on ethnic labels- if it has any ideas on political or social changes it is often connected to idealized and nostalgic imaginations of the past. To a certain extent it is true that identity politics is based on traditions and memories, but they are also “re-invented” when other sources of political legitimacy vanishes. These retrograded identity policies are being used when there is a lack of future projects and, unlike an idea-based policy where every identity can be included, the new type of identity policy is very exclusive and leads to even more fragmentation.<sup>20</sup>

Another characteristic that composes the “new wars” is that it contains a new type of warfare. It is based on guerilla warfare and counter-insurgency, but there are some differences. The new warfare is just like guerilla warfare trying to avoid

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<sup>18</sup> Collier & Hoeffler, p. 13.

<sup>19</sup> Kaldor, p. 10-18

<sup>20</sup> Ibid

large armed clashes with army units, instead it is trying to control or win the heart of the population in the area it is operating in. Unlike traditional guerilla warfare, expressed in the writings of Mao Zedong and Che Guevara, the new warfare is based on spreading fear and hate among the population. The goal is to get rid of everybody with another identity or opinion; again a policy of exclusion. These new types of soldiers consist of a motley crowd of people: paramilitary groups, local warlords, criminal gangs, police forces, mercenaries but also regular army units or people who have deserted from the same army. These armed groups are highly decentralized and they operate by mixing conflict and cooperation with other armed groups. They are using light but deadly weapons and modern communication technique.<sup>21</sup>

The new identity policy derives from the disintegration of the modern state structure, especially in states that have been centralized and authoritarian for a long period of time. According to Kaldor, the new identity policy contains two “main sources” that are connected to globalization. The first can be seen as a reaction to the political establishment’s impotency and reduced legitimacy. It is a sort of political mobilization for politicians that want to survive on the national level even after the possible formation of a new state. The other “source” is coming from the so called parallel economy: the new legal and illegal ways to build a decent existence for people in the forgotten parts of society and the question of identity legitimizes this behavior.<sup>22</sup>

As mentioned earlier Kaldor claims that the “new wars” (civil wars) do not have any geopolitical or ideological goals. They are based on ethnicity and power and they are the result of globalization and modernization. However, many civil wars in previous history have also been based on ethnicity so it is not strictly related to modernization. Instead you can make the claim that the number of conventional wars has decreased thanks to globalization, democratization and organizations like the United Nations etc.

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid

<sup>22</sup> Ibid

#### 2.4.4 Fear and Identity

A group can suddenly feel threatened or insecure if their geographical position within a country makes them vulnerable. This can happen in two ways. First, a sudden territorial change can leave one ethnic group isolated and vulnerable in a country or region dominated by a rival group. This can make the group feel both weaker and discriminated and find it harder to defend itself from outer threats. The second way is that of geographically induced insecurity. New peace treaties can force hostile groups to stay in the same area. If they cannot retreat to their own defensible “boundaries” every group will feel vulnerable and take measures to protect themselves.<sup>23</sup>

One of the most difficult security dilemmas is emerging when groups after signing peace treaties are forced to hand over their weapons and demobilize. The situation becomes dangerous because there is a small implementation period where a group who was disarmed is not able to defend itself and it is not able to enforce any new political terms. This creates a reverse security dilemma; the more groups disarm themselves the more vulnerable they feel. If they are vulnerable, they become even more sensitive to violations which make it more unlikely for them to fulfill their side of the bargain. This is why rebel groups often reject peace treaties and disarmments; they do not know the after effects of the peace settlements.<sup>24</sup>

The factor of fear I believe is an important common denominator that is an ingredient in all wars. In every place where weapons are present so is fear. Weapons are mainly being used in war because of two reasons: to kill people and to spread fear. In a weaponless society the situation would have been different (although weapons are present almost everywhere). Therefore the theoretical argument of fear is closely related to that with the use of weapons, so the conclusion can be made that the weapon dealers (states, smugglers, merchants) have a big role in helping to spread the fear.

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<sup>23</sup> Walters, p. 6-7.

<sup>24</sup> Walters, p. 8.

## 2.5 External Actors

Civil wars are taking place in one country, but in almost all domestic conflicts there are external actors that are using their influence to achieve their own goals in a conflict. These involvements can be based on economic or political interests from the foreign actors. Furthermore, the different domestic actors in a pre-war context can behave differently if they believe they have some type of foreign support.<sup>25</sup>

The use of signals is of a high importance in a pre-war context. The signals given from foreign actors to a specific state or actors within a state can change the domestic political situation. This is because the domestic actors dare to implement certain actions because they know they have outside support, indirectly this could also mean that they are overestimating their own chances to win in a specific conflict. For example can the opposition in a country challenge the government because they know that they have outside support, but outside powers can also support a sitting government or even change sides during a conflict to benefit their own interests. This may very well be one of the most logical reasons to why external actors are involved in a country's domestic affairs in the first place.<sup>26</sup>

The effect of a foreign intervention can indeed be affected by the pre-war signals and the relations between the outside power and the country where the conflict is taking place. A “non-intervention” can have a greater effect than a real military intervention just because there are so many different channels foreign actors can use to affect the domestic situation.<sup>27</sup>

Nevertheless, if a civil war has been ongoing for a longer while external interventions do occur. An external intervention is “...a unilateral intervention by one (or more) third party governments in the form of military, economic or mixed assistance in favor of either the government or the rebel movement involved in the civil war”.<sup>28</sup> There are two type types of interventions: partial interventions and “external agency” interventions. A partial intervention is when the external actor clearly is choosing one of the sides in a conflict. An external agency intervention is when there is a mainly neutral and multilateral peacekeeping force aiming at

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<sup>25</sup> Thyne, Clayton L., *Expecting the Expected: Signals, Intervention and civil War Duration*, 2008, p. 2.

<sup>26</sup> Thyne p. 3-6.

<sup>27</sup> Thyne p. 22-26.

<sup>28</sup> Ibrahim A Elbadawi & Nicholas Sambanis, “External Interventions and the Duration of Civil War”, *World's Bank's Development Economic Research Group*, March 18-19, 2000, p. 8.

solving the conflict in an impartial way (the United Nations are a good example of this). The peacekeeping forces usually take action when the war is over or when an armistice agreement has been signed. It is always difficult to define what type of intervention that is ongoing; therefore it is important to know what factors that underlie the intervention (pre-war signals).<sup>29</sup> There are analysts that claim that if external actors want to contribute to peace they should do so through mediation and not intervention.<sup>30</sup>

There are a couple of factors that makes an external intervention more/less feasible. External interventions are more likely to occur in civil wars where a lot of people have been killed; outside powers can feel that they are forced to intervene and save people's lives. An external intervention is less likely to occur in ethnic wars. Furthermore, external interventions are less likely to occur when the region where the fighting is taking place is characterized by high levels of democracy or when the government in power has access to a strong army.<sup>31</sup>

In civil war research it can be difficult sometimes to define the role of the external actors and what role they actually do play. They can send soldiers, money, weapons and political propaganda which can affect a conflict to a large extent. It is important to define what an external actor is and why it is involved in a conflict. No civil wars are only domestic matters just because the active role of the surrounding world and this is important to have in mind while analyzing civil wars.

### 2.5.1 The Diaspora Variable

The diaspora variable is a very important one. Groups living outside the country can send money back and help to finance rebellions. Diasporas are usually much richer than the population in their country of origin. Diasporas can affect the domestic situation in their homelands by starting organizations abroad in a peaceful environment. The diasporas do not suffer the consequences of the conflict in their homelands and they can also carry some old historical grievances which rebel organizations in their homelands can exploit. According to the CH-model the existence of a diaspora does not increase the risk of a conflict, but if

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Preston, Matthew, *Rhodesia and Lebanon in Perspective*, 2004, p. 151.

<sup>31</sup> Elbadawi and Sambanis p. 12.

there is a conflict then there is a big possibility that the diaspora will play a larger role.<sup>32</sup>

The role of the diaspora is closely connected to the role of the globalization process. The identity politics of today are local and global, national and transnational. The diasporas are able to affect their homeland's situation thanks to better communications, new ideas, new techniques etc. The speed of political mobilization has increased thanks to the use of electronic medias like internet, mobile phones and televisions. Modernization and globalization are two terms that will affect the role of the diasporas which in turn will affect the political situations and identity politics in their home countries.<sup>33</sup>

I want to emphasize that many countries today has a significant amount of citizens living abroad and in some cases you may even call it a diaspora. The existence of a diaspora is naturally not a main reason to civil war, but I think that the diaspora can have a huge influence on internal conflicts. Many leaders that have returned to their war-torn countries have often lived around their countrymen abroad (Gandhi in South Africa, Fidel Castro in Mexico).

Usually the money from a diaspora can be one of the most important pillars for a country's economy. Diasporas can also affect the government in their home countries where the war is taking place, which means that the role of the diaspora becomes a political factor too.<sup>34</sup>

## 2.6 Summary and discussion

As mentioned in the beginning of this section my theoretical framework will work as an analytical tool to help me with my empirical analysis. The definition of what a civil war is will help me to understand the basics of a civil war. I believe that I have chosen the most relevant factors that can explain the causes behind a civil war. Economy, rule of power, identity, external actors and the diaspora are all factors that will be very relevant in my research. Some factors are naturally more

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<sup>32</sup> Collier & Hoeffler, p.8.

<sup>33</sup> Kaldor, p. 14-16.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

important than others and will be given more space, but they all need to be included to give a credible explanation to my questions at issue.

This paper will analyze the causes to the Lebanese civil war, but also why Lebanon can be regarded as a deviant case. The theory I have composed can be seen as a universal one although it contains a discussions about several different factors. What makes the Lebanese civil war deviant is for example when it is not following the explanatory factors embedded in my theory. The methodological section of this paper will further explain what a deviant case is and how it can be analyzed.

# 3 Methodology

## 3.1 A Qualitative Method and a Case Study

Methodologically I will conduct a qualitative literature study, which means that each phenomenon I am analyzing must be judged from its own unique conditions. Unlike a quantitative method, a qualitative method cannot make any generalizations. Indirectly, you may claim that you are criticizing existing theories in the area you are doing research about; almost all theories are based on generalizations. As a qualitative researcher the empirical reality is of high importance and new insights are being made while researching it. The qualitative researcher is close to the material he is analyzing and he prefers meeting people in reality than staring himself blind at numbers and statistics.<sup>35</sup>

As with all other research, a research paper starts with a clearly defined question at issue. It is the answer to this question that hopefully will be found in the literature the researcher is using. To be able to start the analysis you need to divide your question at issue into smaller more precise questions that can be given to the text material. The answer to these questions is also the answer to your main question at issue.<sup>36</sup>

I will conduct a descriptive case study over Lebanon. I will focus on the causes to the Lebanese civil war which means that the time-period between independence in 1943 and the start of the civil war in 1975 will be the most important one, but perhaps some events that took place before the independence in 1943 will also be a part of my analysis.

Naturally, my goal is to answer my research questions and I will do that with the help of my theoretical framework that I will apply on the Lebanese case. Furthermore, I want to achieve a good validity which means that I want to reach a

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<sup>35</sup> Teorell, Jan & Svensson, Torsten, *Att fråga och att svara*, 2007, s.11.

<sup>36</sup> Teorell et al p. 21-24.



good correspondence between the theoretical definitions and the operational indicators. However, I am looking for the deviant variables in this paper which probably means that some parts of my theory are not correspondent with the empirical reality in the Lebanese case.

## 3.2 A Deviant Case

My case study of Lebanon will be a descriptive one, but it will also be a deviant one. A deviant case study is interesting from heuristic purposes; it can criticize, develop or add variables to already existing theories.<sup>37</sup> The reason why researchers are using deviant cases is because they want to inductively identify new variables or causal mechanisms. If a deviant case is offering new conclusions to an earlier analyzed problem, it can be because new variables have been discovered or previous variables have not been analyzed very professionally.<sup>38</sup> The result of using a deviant case will hopefully be that the researcher will find new concepts, variables and results. According to Max Weber, the specification of new concepts and variables "...is often one of the most important contributions of research."<sup>39</sup> When discovering new variables the researcher can analyze them and see if they are relevant and how they play out in different contexts.<sup>40</sup>

If a theory fails to fit the evidence in a certain case we do not know if it is because a bad theory has been used or if it is because the theory has been used in the wrong contextual condition to in a good way give a valid explanation to the case and its variables. In this paper my theoretical framework can be compared to a "most-likely theory", meaning that it contains the most common variables that are being used in civil war research. Where the Lebanese case study is mismatching the variables of my theory, the so called deviant factors, will hopefully

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<sup>37</sup> George, Alexander L. & Bennet, Andrew, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences* 2005, p. 75.

<sup>38</sup> George et al p. 111.

<sup>39</sup> George et al p. 114-115.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

be found. Most civil wars share the same common denominators, but every case has also its own unique historical explanation.<sup>41</sup> By identifying and analyzing deviant cases the researcher can develop contingent generalizations that identifies in which conditions alternative outcomes do appear; with methods like this new theories can be formulated.<sup>42</sup>

You may claim that this paper will be, to some extent, theory developing. The deviant variables I hopefully will find can be used as a critique against the theory I am using, but it can also be used in future research about civil wars.

### 3.3 The Material and a Reference Critique

When a researcher is writing a Master Thesis it is of extreme importance that he can substantiate his claims, especially when writing about Lebanon. Lebanon is a country that has as many TV-stations and newspapers as it has political parties and religious fractionalization (this is something I will return to in my empirical analysis.) Therefore a use of a non-biased (or at least balanced) reference material is mandatory. I will use a technique/method to conduct my case study that is called the historical method. The historical method is being used to describe time of events and it is mainly focused on the dynamic. The historical method can also be called a “reference critique” and is used to validate and analyze the references I am using. The most important criteria to look at are: authenticity, proximity in time and space, tendency and independence.<sup>43</sup> I will not analyze my references one by one in my analysis, but I want the reader to know that I have a reference critique in mind when choosing my material and conducting my analysis.

To use a reference critique is something you may claim must be used for any paper that is written, but it must be emphasized in the Lebanese case. Today, it does not exist a shared collective memory<sup>44</sup> in Lebanon which has led to the result

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<sup>41</sup> George et al p. 123.

<sup>42</sup> George et al p. 216.

<sup>43</sup> Esaissason p.313-316

<sup>44</sup> Traboulsi,, lecture, *The Search for a Shared Collective Memory in Lebanon*, 2012-01-12.

that no side has a balanced view of the war and this is also affecting the political situation of today. The material I have collected is therefore focused on being as close to reality as possible. I have material from both Lebanese and non-Lebanese authors. The references I am using are most often written by well-known academics or journalists who are well respected in the world of academia. I am trying to avoid the very local bias historical coverage from the political parties or religious organizations. Nevertheless, if I find two tendentious references with opposite views of a certain event, they can for example still confirm and validate the same historical event from two different viewpoints. This could mean that the event itself actually did occur.<sup>45</sup>

I am using secondary references in my paper that are written by authors from all parts of the world. I have references that are written before, during and after the civil war to give me a comprehensive picture as possible.

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<sup>45</sup> Esaiasson et al p. 322.

## 4 Analysis

On the 13<sup>th</sup> of June 1975 there was a divine service taking place in a Christian Maronite church in the suburb of Ayn al-Roumaneh. A group of high party members from the Christian Party Kataeb were going to attend the service, including the party leader Pierre Gemayel. Just when Pierre Gemayel was stepping out of his car, another car with high speed drove by and two men pulled up their machine guns and shot at Pierre Gemayel and the visitors of the service. Pierre Gemayel survived, but three other people were killed in the group. Kataeb wanted revenge and they believed that the shooters were PLO-commandos.<sup>46</sup>

Later that same day a bus with Palestinians was on its way back to the Tel el-Zaatar refugee camp. They had been on an excursion, but the bus driver did not know the way back so he decided to take a shortcut through a Christian area with the name Ayn al-Roumaneh. The bus was stopped by Christian militiamen and 27 Palestinians were killed in what was going to be known as the “Ayn al-Roumaneh bus incident.” You may call it the “Sarajevo of Lebanon”. This was the spark that ignited the fire and started the Lebanese Civil war.<sup>47</sup>

Naturally, there were causal factors behind the war and they will be analyzed in this section of the paper. Every headline in the analysis is directly related to the ideas and claims pronounced in the theory.

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<sup>46</sup> Ringberg, Åke, *Blodet i Beirut*. 1987, p. 39-40.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

## 4.1 The Lebanese Miracle?

*I don't know what makes the economy work, but it's doing very well and I wouldn't advise you to touch it.*

- Paul van Zeeland, late 1960s<sup>48</sup>

This section will analyze the pre-war Lebanese economy and its effect on the domestic situation. I have chosen to keep the analysis as close to my theory as possible and therefore I will describe the structure of the Lebanese economy, the class inequalities, the rapid urbanization and the effects of sectarianism in relation to the economy. This section will be focusing on if the economy can explain the outbreak of the war and if the Lebanese case is applicable on my theory.

### 4.1.1 An Impressive Growth

From the Lebanese independence until the start of the civil war Lebanon showed an impressive economic growth. Lebanon experienced a tremendous banking boom and became the center of trade between the western countries and the Arab world. Manufacturing had a very high rate of growth: 5 % annually in the 1950s, 10 % in the 1960s and 12 % annually in the first half of the 1970s. Small industries were still the most dominating sector were 10,700 firms had less than 25 employees, but bigger firms were up and coming. Tourism grew rapidly and tourists arrived from both the Arab and the Western world.<sup>49</sup> The fast economic growth of Lebanon demanded intensive employment of labor: The number of workers doubled from 65,000 in 1965 to be 120,000 when the war broke out.<sup>50</sup> Lebanon faced a growth of 7 % annually from 1950-1974.<sup>51</sup> Thanks to the financial success in Lebanon the government could invest heavily in electricity,

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<sup>48</sup> Gates, Carolyn L., *The Merchant Republic of Lebanon*, 1998, p. XV.  
[http://books.google.se/books?id=yrGuIVtzNggC&pg=PR5&lpg=PR5&dq=the+merchant+republic+of+lebanon+XV&source=bl&ots=JmGITPhjFU&sig=3Wncs94TWj\\_ZwBLmJcie3WcElsE&hl=s v&sa=X&ei=4PmmT8CcN-X54QSN4-GHCA&ved=0CGgQ6AEwAw#v=onepage&q&f=false](http://books.google.se/books?id=yrGuIVtzNggC&pg=PR5&lpg=PR5&dq=the+merchant+republic+of+lebanon+XV&source=bl&ots=JmGITPhjFU&sig=3Wncs94TWj_ZwBLmJcie3WcElsE&hl=s v&sa=X&ei=4PmmT8CcN-X54QSN4-GHCA&ved=0CGgQ6AEwAw#v=onepage&q&f=false)  
2012-04-04.

<sup>49</sup> Hanf, Theodor, *Coexistence in Wartime Lebanon*, 1993, p. 102-103.

<sup>50</sup> Traboulsi, Fawwaz, *A Modern history of Lebanon*, 2007, p. 157.

<sup>51</sup> El Khazen p. 252.

irrigation and other infrastructure projects in the less developed parts of the country. The telephone networks and power plants were improved and extended. Large investments were made in the educational sector which is proved in data from 1974: Only 14 % of the Muslims and 11 % of the Christians were illiterates. The enrolments in school were equal between Christian and Muslims.<sup>52</sup> In March 1975 you got 2,22 Lebanese pounds for one dollar. Many people believe that the 1950s and the early 1960s were the real golden age of Lebanon, but the truth is that it was the first half of the 1970s that was the most prosperous time from an economic perspective. Lebanon benefitted considerably on the oil boom; the Arab states put their money in Lebanese banks and over 150,000 Lebanese went to the Gulf to work.<sup>53</sup>

In 1969 if you take a look at how many Lebanese that lived below the poverty line (less than \$75 per month) the number was only 5 %. The number in Asia was 57 % and in Africa 43 %. Furthermore if you look at the real per capita consumption Lebanon was ranked twenty-second in a list of fifty-seven industrial and developing countries. The only countries from Asia, Africa and Latin America that were ahead of Lebanon were Israel, South Africa and Japan. Furthermore, there is an index called the Physical Quality of Life Index (PQLI). It combines infant mortality, life expectancy and literacy. Lebanon had a better PQLI than countries like Portugal, Brazil, Turkey, Syria and Iraq.<sup>54</sup>

The financial system of Lebanon can be called a “monopolistic laissez-faire” system where there were influential families that controlled large parts of the Lebanese economy. There were 41 families that controlled a majority of the shares in one third of the companies in the trading and service sector, which were the dominant sectors of the Lebanese economy. Five of those families owned 50 % of the country’s export/import trade.<sup>55</sup> When looking at these numbers you may suspect that Lebanon was a feudal society and this is something I will return to in the political section of this analysis.

What were the consequences of the rapid industrialization and modernization of Lebanon? The answer can be found in the agricultural sector. Large portions of the agricultural sector had been taken over by importers and only 15 % of the food in Lebanon was locally produced. The farmers of Lebanon were not ready to face capitalism and a global economy where debts, exploitation, money lenders, banks,

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<sup>52</sup> Hanf p. 99.

<sup>53</sup> El Khazen p.253

<sup>54</sup> El Khazen p. 259.

<sup>55</sup> Traboulsi p. 157.

fertilizers etc. forced the small scale farmers to abandon their farms and move into the cities and also move abroad. In the late 1950s approximately half of the Lebanese population made their living from agriculture, in 1975 only 20 % remained in that sector. The agricultural sector had lost 100,000 workers and Lebanon was unprepared on its result: a rapid urbanization.<sup>56</sup>

This economic section is not corresponding to the theoretical framework. There were no signs of recession or financial decline in the Lebanese economy and therefore, in this regard, no explanatory factor for the outbreak of the war.

#### 4.1.2 The Poverty Belt of Beirut

The result of the urbanization was that huge crowds of people from all over Lebanon moved to Beirut and moved into its suburbs. Beirut was surrounded (and to some extent still is) from the north to the south by these suburbs. Over a time period of two decades the population of Beirut increased from 400,000 to one million inhabitants and we must not forget the Palestinian camps that are situated in different parts of the city. These suburbs are not as bad as the *favelas* of Rio de Janeiro, but their lack of water, electricity, the poor sanitary conditions and the overcrowded apartments led to that discontent spread among its inhabitants. These areas became popular breeding grounds for the populist parties on the Right and the Left.<sup>57</sup> It is not typically for Lebanon that a rural population goes urban and that the suburbs of major cities turn into urban slums, but the rural immigrants were going to play a big part in the war. In the beginning of the war rural migrants were recruited to fight in the urban-based militias that were created by different political parties. The fighters in the militias often consisted of low and middle-class people independent of what sect you belonged to.<sup>58</sup> The argument that the rapid urbanization was one of the causes to the Lebanese civil war is too weak, but it definitely shaped the outcome of the war and how it was fought. According to the theoretical framework a rebel movement needs constant recruitments and these recruits were easy to find in the growing slum areas of Beirut.

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<sup>56</sup> Traboulsi p. 158-159

<sup>57</sup> Traboulsi p. 161-162

<sup>58</sup> El Khazen p. 258

### 4.1.3 Regional Disparity and a Sectarian Economy

Although the economy was blooming in the beginning of the 1970s, there were still enormous gaps in the Lebanese society. Between 1967 and 1975 the prices doubled and Beirut was classified as more expensive than Washington D.C. The prices on imported goods and meat rose and intense property speculation led to an unhealthy real estate market. Before the war started there were between 40,000 and 50,000 luxury apartments in Beirut alone that stood empty; bought financed and speculated by the sheiks and princes living in the Gulf. This happened while many poor Lebanese lived in the suburbs. In the early 1970s the Christian bourgeoisie was dominating the Lebanese economy. The Christians owned around 75 % of the commercial sector while the number for the Muslims was 25 %.<sup>59</sup> In the industrial working class around 75 % were Muslims, mostly Shi'a.<sup>60</sup> Nevertheless, these numbers proved that it did exist a Christian working class that constituted 25 % of the Christian population in Lebanon. Both the Christians and the Muslims in Lebanon were strongly stratified also within their groups. From a class perspective you can see that it did exist a proletariat, and a poor Muslim had more in common with a poor Christian than they had with their religious kinsmen: They worked in the service/manufacturing sector, had the same salaries and lived in similar housing conditions.

However, the differences between the sects could be seen in the middle class who constituted 67 % of the population in 1973. There were flagrant gaps between public and private schools and the private schools were more dominated by the Christians. The Christians was also better bi- or tri-lingual compared to their Muslim neighbors; one of the reasons to this was because they had better schooling but also closer ties with the outside world and often spoke another language at home. These inequalities could then be seen in the public and private sector. Depending on which university you graduated from it would be easier for you to get a high-salary job. Nevertheless, also the Middle class, regardless of religion, wanted to see a change of the political system and the economic system. They were tired of the "petit bourgeoisie" that controlled a big part of the Lebanese economy and also the middle class was hit by the price increases in the beginning of the 1970s.<sup>61</sup> When reconnecting it to the theory you may perhaps

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<sup>59</sup> Richani, Nazih, *Dilemmas of Democracy and Political Parties in Sectarian Societies*, 1998, p. 24-25.

<sup>60</sup> Traboulsi p. 162.

<sup>61</sup> Traboulsi p. 163-164.



sense that the old financial elite saw their privileges being threatened. However, the result of this is something that is more visible in the political arena and will be analyzed later on in this paper.

#### 4.1.4 Socio-economic Instability

In the early 1970s the number of social conflicts, demonstrations and strikes increased, but what is interesting is that all types of confessional undertones were left out. The conflicts at this point were not on a communal level, it was on a social and economic level. Lebanese on the countryside revolted against their feudal landowners and protested against the state-owned tobacco monopoly. The Traders association, that contained members from all communities, protested against the protective tariffs and other similar economic regulations. The unions, the student movements, the teacher's associations and the federation of industry and commerce also conducted strikes and demonstrations and did contain members from all religious communities.<sup>62</sup>

The late 1960s and early 1970s consisted of social conflicts where methods like blockades, strikes, occupation of factories and mass demonstrations were being used. Members from all communities took part in the conflicts, but the Lebanese example does not differ from examples in homogenous societies in times of social conflicts. The Lebanese state also listened to the people, the minimum wage was raised several times and working conditions were improved. Lebanon was evolving into a country where class conflict was dominating, but could still be solved peacefully. There was even a Lebanese scientist who "predicted" modernization before revolution.<sup>63</sup>

When you investigate literature from before the war there is no one that predicts the war, especially not from an economic perspective. The economic problems of Lebanon were more pronounced and more severe in the 1950s and 1960s. The bus attack in Ayn al-Roummaneh was not caused by socio-economic factors. The economic problems that Lebanon did face could be solved in a peaceful manner and the economy was up until the war seen as an economic

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<sup>62</sup> Hanf p. 109-110.

<sup>63</sup> Hanf p. 110.

miracle all around the world. There were more countries than Lebanon that faced problems like an unequal income distribution and a large rural population going urban. Lebanon's open market-based economy was also adaptable to face adjustments and improvements.<sup>64</sup>

#### 4.1.5 A Deviant Case?

When investigating the economic variables in relation to the Lebanese case you can make the claim that Lebanon is a deviant case. Lebanon was not in an economic recession and the annual growth impressed states all around the world. The economy of Lebanon was not just dependent in one or two raw materials and the economy was very well developed for being a country in the development world. The gaps in society were decreasing and investments were being made in the welfare system. The years closest to the war were economically the strongest ones and investments in Lebanon from states abroad increased. Naturally, the Lebanese economy was not an isolated island; it was affected by the economic currents in an increasingly globalized world. Lebanon was positively affected by the oil crisis; oil-money went to Lebanese banks and many Lebanese went to work in the Gulf. There were of course socio-economic problems. The rapid urbanization led to a frustration in the urban slum areas where many rural migrants lived, but this scenario can be seen in many countries around the world. From the slums people were recruited to the different militias when the war already had started, but it was not a cause to the war itself.

As mentioned in the theoretical framework, war often occurs in societies that have faced severe financial problems. In Lebanon this was not the case. The schools were filled with students from all communities and they trusted the state when it came to the question of offering them a job. Minimum wages were raised several times after protests from the unions and other different groups which is an evidence of that there was some kind of dialogue between the state and its population. There was no desire for people to raise arms; no other organization could give them a more secure financial stability than the state. Needless to say there were gaps in the Lebanese society, but this united the Lebanese population and made the different communities feel that they did share a common goal.

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<sup>64</sup> El Khazen p. 260-262.

The enemy was the “petit bourgeoisie” that owned large parts of the Lebanese economy. The feudal land-lords on the country side were also seen as oppressors and exploiters. You can make the comparison that Lebanon was just like other countries that had gone from being a colony to going through modernization with all the complications that can result in. However, by just investigating the economic factors there is nothing that could predict the outbreak of the civil war, at least not in relation to the theory.

Lebanon confirms its deviant self when you are investigating its economy in relation to the civil war. As mentioned above, for economists the war came as a shock and they cannot give a valid explanation to why there was a war. The answers we have found in this section of the thesis is that Lebanon is a deviant case regarding its strong economy before the outbreak of the war and the economic factor was not one of the crucial causes to the Lebanese civil war.

## 4.2 The Breakdown of the Lebanese State

*Lebanon is a country which must be completely still politically in order to prevent communal self-centeredness and mutual distrust from turning into active and angry contention.*

- Edward Shils, 1966.<sup>65</sup>

This section will first analyze the confessional democracy of Lebanon and see if it fits my theoretical assumptions over how a stabile confessional democracy should be constituted. Furthermore will this section analyze the gradual breakdown of the Lebanese state and the onset of a partial government supporting some groups more than others in the country. The political balance of power will be analyzed where the old elites saw their privileges being threatened and the arrival of Palestinian refugees changed the domestic situation. This section is not historically analyzed in a completely chronological order and that is because I am analyzing the events that are the most relevant ones for my theory, which means that some events connected to each other can occur during different time periods.

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<sup>65</sup> Khalaf, Samir, *Civil and Uncivil Violence in Lebanon*, 2002, p. 103.

#### 4.2.1 The Weaknesses of Lebanese Confessionalism

Lebanon became independent from the French colonial power in 1943. In the decades before independence there had been excitable discussions regarding the future constitution and rule of power in Lebanon. The Christian Maronites wanted an independent Lebanon with a Christian supremacy while the Sunni and Greek Orthodox communities wanted to be part of a greater Arab State, including Syria. In the early 1940s the political spectrum in Lebanon started to expand and the Shi'a community made its entrance on the Lebanese political scene (although they still were marginalized) and new ideologies and political parties were established.<sup>66</sup>

In 1943 an oral agreement called the National Pact was reached. This pact constituted the new and "modern" Lebanon. The pact says that the President will always be a Maronite Christian, the Prime Minister Sunni Muslim and the Speaker of Parliament Shi'a Muslim.<sup>67</sup> The Muslims recognized the existence of a Lebanese entity while the Christians accepted to share power and recognize parts of the Arab identity within the state. Nevertheless, the Christian supremacy was exemplified in the decision to only elect Maronites as Presidents. The President had the most powerful position in the Lebanese political system. Furthermore, in the parliament the ratio between Christian and Muslim deputies was 6/5. The Christians were in majority when the last census was made in 1932, but everybody was well aware of that the Christian numbers were in decline. This unique political system that involved participation from all religious groups was given the name *confessionalism*.<sup>68</sup> However, the national pact was only supposed to be a temporary solution. A constitution was written in 1926 that was non-confessional and that was supposed to be used in Lebanon when the National Pact was abolished.<sup>69</sup> This never happened and was one of the main reasons to the breakdown of the Lebanese state and this will be further analyzed later on.

The political system of Lebanon from independence in 1943 until the outbreak of the war in 1975 was based on the National Pact. The National Pact had a unique character, but its flaws were quite clear. The result of having confessionalism as a big part of a countries political system led to that the

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<sup>66</sup> Rabinovich, Itamar, *The War for Lebanon 1970-1985*, 1986, p. 23-24.

<sup>67</sup> Zeidler-blomberg, Beatrice, *Mellersta Östern*, 1991, p. 46.

<sup>68</sup> Rabinovich p. 24-25.

<sup>69</sup> *Bicameralism, Ta'if, and the Lebanese Constitution*, <http://lebanonsenate.org/taif-constitution/> 2012-04-11.

traditional and religious leaders kept and expanded their power in their respective communities. Furthermore, it was also very difficult to establish political parties that could reach across the communal boundaries. As I mentioned earlier Lebanon was ruled on the regional level and in parliament by Zu'ama (feudal-lords). The Zu'ama were powerful in their own communities, so they were always elected to parliament often together with people of their choice from their own community. The use of nepotism occurred frequently in Lebanon.<sup>70</sup>

The Zu'ama may have represented different communities in Lebanon, but that did not stop them from cooperating with each other. The feudal-lords had more in common with each other than with the people on the street. The confessional system in Lebanon was virtually closed to new contenders and it was first in the 1960s when new political winds reached Lebanon that the political system would face its real challenges.<sup>71</sup>

Nevertheless, despite the heavy criticism of the confessional system in Lebanon it actually had several advantages. In a confessional state it is more difficult for a despot to take the power and this never occurred in Lebanon (unlike with the rest of its Arab neighbors). The freedom of speech was guaranteed and all confessions were represented in the parliament. Lebanon was a (relatively) politically stable country with a good economy that attracted investors from everywhere. The confessional system encouraged cooperation, even over the communal boundaries. Lebanon kept its position as a pluralistic society and what is extremely important to remember is that the Lebanese confessional system was the only genuine political system that survived in the post-World War II Arab World.<sup>72</sup>

There have been claims that Lebanon is a deviant case when discussing confessionalism. The system itself is discriminating; the Maronite Christians belonged to the elite and the Christians were always guaranteed more seats in the parliament and the post as President. According to the theory, a requirement for a working confessionalism is that the state is situated in a stable region. This was not the case with Lebanon. Political scientist Paul Salem claims that Lebanon was not a confessional state at all; it was presidential.<sup>73</sup> The role of the presidents is something that will be analyzed later on in this analysis, because it has indeed affected the domestic situation of Lebanon to a great extent. Furthermore, as

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<sup>70</sup> Rabinovich p. 25-26-

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> Hudson p. 229-230.

stated in the theoretical framework a legitimate confessional democracy must either have a fair power-sharing system or a strong state and army to be considered fair and just. Lebanon had neither which means that the theory makes the claim that Lebanon had been an unjust confessional democracy since independence in 1943.

#### 4.2.2 The Palestinian Factor and the Public Participation of the 1960s

It is impossible to analyze the Lebanese civil war without including the Palestinian factor. The Palestinians' situation in Lebanon and around the Arab world has affected the domestic policies of several Arab countries. The Palestinians had to flee from their home country when the Zionists arrived. They fled mainly to their surrounding Arab neighbors. A large part of them ended up in Lebanon. The Palestinians settled in refugee camps all over Lebanon, believing that they would return soon. This never happened.<sup>74</sup>

As stated above, confessionalism in Lebanon had its flaws. A majority of the Palestinians do not have a Lebanese citizenship so they are not allowed to vote and they are denied access to the Lebanese health care system. After 1948 a lot of Palestinians fled to Lebanon. The Lebanese welcomed them with open arms and until the 1960s they did not constitute an important power factor in the Lebanese society. The Palestinians themselves believed that the Arab states would help them return to Palestine. Nevertheless, in 1967 three Arab armies were defeated by Israel. The result was that the Palestinians themselves raised arms and started with guerilla attacks against Israel, having their home bases in the surrounding Arab countries. As mentioned above members from the whole political spectra in Lebanon supported the Palestinians, but this changed in 1967.<sup>75</sup>

The Palestinians started to conduct attacks against Israel from Lebanese soil. The result was that the Israelis retaliated and often killed Lebanese civilians and sometimes destroyed whole villages. A big debate started in Lebanon and the country was divided into two camps: A Pro-Palestinian and an Anti-Palestinian camp. However, the role of the Palestinians in Lebanon is often simplified and the

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<sup>74</sup> Picard, Elizabeth, *Lebanon. A Shattered Country*, 1996, p. 77-88.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

Palestinians were also used by Lebanese politicians in order for them to win some popular support and achieve credibility in questions regarding domestic policies. Perhaps some Lebanese may claim that the Palestinians were changing the political situation in Lebanon which they did, but not from a parliamentary viewpoint because they were not given the right to vote.<sup>76</sup>

Nevertheless, the Palestinian guerillas acted arrogant in Lebanon and they behaved as a professional mafia. They conducted kidnappings, imposed roadblocks, occupied and sized property etc. They were basically harassing many of the Lebanese that in the beginning had nurtured them and showed them their hospitality. The state was too weak to handle the guerillas. The result was that the Lebanese government in 1969 met with Gamal Abdel Nasser in Egypt and with Yassir Arafat; the leader of the PLO. The result was an agreement called the "Cairo Accord". It stated that the Palestinians had the right to conduct guerilla attacks against Israel, but the accord required that the attacks were coordinated together with the Lebanese army "without compromising the overall sovereignty of Lebanon."<sup>77</sup> The Palestinians felt that they had the freedom to do whatever they wanted. The Arab states were not caring about the domestic situation of Lebanon, their priorities was to put pressure on Israel. In the early 1970s the Arab countries stopped the PLO to conduct attacks from their own territories, but they always allowed the guerillas to conduct attacks from Lebanese soil.<sup>78</sup>

The actions of the Palestinians took place in a time when the political awareness was raised in Lebanon. This was the late 1960s and naturally an open state like Lebanon was affected by the global situation. New political and radical parties were established and the political awareness increased. An urban dissatisfied middle-class was created and objections were raised against feudal Lebanon. Many left-wing-Lebanese parties were influenced by the Palestinian resistance organizations.<sup>79</sup> Until the late 1960s the political situation was non-sectarian and especially on the left-wing side there were members from all confessions. Before the sectarian polarization in Lebanon mainly two sides were facing each other: A Conservative Christian Maronite feudal right and a heterogonous coalition of socialists, communists, Muslims, Druze and Palestinians on the left. The most powerful elite were the Maronite Christians and they saw their privileges being threatened. Greek-orthodox and Catholics had in

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<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> Khalaf p. 216-219 and 221.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> Picard p. 99-100.

Lebanon been raised in an urban tradition of co-existence with the Muslims. All groups except the Maronites had been discriminated during the French Mandate. Before the 1967 war the Kataeb party was open for cooperation over communal lines, after 1967 the situation became the opposite. Kataeb started to present itself as the protector of Lebanon and its nationalism. Kataeb which, except for the main party was allied to several Christian radical organizations, accused the government of being weak and claimed that the army was paralyzed by the Muslim leaders that made compromises with the Palestinian resistance. The situation got even more paralyzed and in 1970 Lebanon saw the first armed clashed between Kataeb militia and Palestinian militias.<sup>80</sup>

A couple of turning points came in 1970 that would radically change the domestic political situation of Lebanon; Black September, the death of Gamal Abdul Nasser, a coup d'état in Syria and a presidential election in Lebanon. The events of Black September (the King of Jordan's decision to crush the power of the PLO in Jordan<sup>81</sup>) forced a lot of Palestinians and also the PLO leadership to go to Lebanon. Lebanon had now become their sole home base for resistance. The death of Nasser had the consequence that Egypt now lost its dominating role as the main negotiator in the Middle East, Syria was now taking its place and the coup d'état made the Syrian state more radical and that will be analyzed later on in this paper. The fourth event was the election of Suleyman Franjeh for President in Lebanon. The decision to choose Franjeh as President would have a major impact on Lebanon and its road to war which will be analyzed in the next section.<sup>82</sup>

Lebanon is corresponding to the theoretical framework regarding the arrival of the Palestinians in Lebanon. The arrival and political demands of the refugees challenged the old political model of the state and is one of the reasons to its breakdown. The old feudal elites did not have the will to modernize the system which is, according to theory, a dangerous standpoint in a state where the people are demanding modernization.

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<sup>80</sup> Picard p. 102-103

<sup>81</sup> Hirst, David, *Beware of Small States*, 2011, p. 85-86.

<sup>82</sup> Al-Jazeera, *The War of Lebanon*, 2004, part 2.



### 4.2.3 Shehabism vs. Feodalism

Lebanon was a confessional democracy, but through its post-World War II history had the presidential power always had a big influence on domestic politics. In 1958 did President Camille Chamoun leave his office and he did not run for a second term. During his presidency what was going to be called “The Lebanese Miracle” started and record rates were seen in the banking, tourism and construction sectors. Officially, Chamoun wanted Lebanon to stay neutral, but he had close relationships with the west and especially the USA, which would be clearly visible in the end of his presidency.<sup>83</sup>

President Chamoun established two traditions that would put a great deal of power in his hands. First he chose weak prime ministers, who were more loyal to the President than their own communal communities. Second, the President ruled and cooperated with the director-generals of the major departments (Defense, Justice, Foreign affairs, Internal security, Finance), which meant that they could take decisions without discussing a certain issue through the ministries or the parliament. Almost all of the leaders were Maronites. Furthermore, Chamoun “reformed” the Lebanese electoral system, the electoral districts became smaller and the number of deputies was reduced. Officially the President wanted to “replace quantity by quality”.<sup>84</sup> In theory the goal was to weaken the power of the traditional leaders in the parliament. In reality the President’s power was increased, close to authoritarian, and the parliament became even more sectarian. Chamoun succeeded in getting many supporters and Maronites elected to parliament and the majority of the Muslim leaders ended up outside the parliament. The consequence was that the Muslim masses became even more attracted to the Nasserite nationalist and anti-colonial discourse.<sup>85</sup>

In 1958 the Muslim and Nasserite left rose arms against Chamoun’s presidency. President Chamoun called for the USA to assist him to stay in power. They came and restored stability, but the Americans had realized that Chamoun was too unpopular to stay in power and they did not want to see him re-elected so they supported another candidate named Fuad Shehab. Shehab was a man picked from the army (seen as relatively neutral) and his thoughts would come to affect the domestic policies of Lebanon until the outbreak of the civil war.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> Traboulsi p. 128-137.

<sup>84</sup> Traboulsi p. 129.

<sup>85</sup> Traboulsi p. 130.

<sup>86</sup> Traboulsi p. 135-137.

Shehab was very much aware of the regional disparities in Lebanon and its negative side effects. The Muslims had rose arms against the government just because they were the most discriminated group in the Lebanese society. Shebab's dream was to build an independent and strong Lebanon and to create a national unity among its inhabitants. Shehab stated that those who benefitted from Lebanese prosperity would take care of the deprived Lebanese that did not. His ideological thoughts were close to a social-liberal state-building. The first thing he did as President was to hold a meeting with Gamal Abdel Nasser in a tent on the Lebanese-Syrian border. Shebab emphasized that Lebanon would stay neutral (even a bit pro-Arab) as long as Nasser would not try to affect the domestic Lebanese situation. Nasser accepted his demands and the two leaders had a good relationship all through their presidencies.<sup>87</sup>

President Shehab was a lawyer and an institutionalist and he filled his government with technocrats. The public administration expanded and recruited 10.000 new functionaries which goal was to limit the power of the MP's (feudalists) and reduce the political corruption and nepotism. President Shebab kept and maintained the authoritarian tradition from President Chamoun. The army intelligence increased its influence and started to: intervene in trade unions, expand their presence in local neighborhoods, control the carrying of arms and use the state of emergency-policy in the Lebanese border regions to be able to control Lebanese life. President Shehab tried to offer the country a new political order, which included a strong state that could serve the interests of all Lebanese. However, President Shehab did not do anything to abolish the political sectarianism as such; his goal was more to have a sectarian system that did not contain any doses of social or economic injustices.<sup>88</sup>

In the parliament election in the spring of 1964 the Shebists won a great victory, winning majority in the parliament. President Shehab did not run for a second term, well aware of what happened with his precursor in 1958. Naturally, the opponents of President Shehab (the Maronite elite) threatened to cause disturbances if Shehab would be re-elected. The new President was a compromise candidate named Charles Hilu. Charles Hilu was not as characteristic as Fuad Shehab, but he ruled Lebanon with the methods of Shehabism.<sup>89</sup> It was the

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<sup>87</sup> Traboulsi p. 138.

<sup>88</sup> Traboulsi p. 138-145.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

presidential election in 1970 that seriously would start the breakdown of the Lebanese state.

In 1970 Suleyman Franjeh was elected President of Lebanon. There had been fierce debates in the parliament preceding it. Ironically, Kamal Jumblatt, who was the leader of the Progressive Socialist Party (PSP) and also the leader of the whole left-wing movement in Lebanon, was the one who made it possible for Franjeh to win the parliament majority. The logical choice of Jumblatt would perhaps have been to vote on the more neutral Shehabist candidate Elias Sarkis, but Jumblatt believed that he could benefit more of Franjeh from a feudal standpoint. Kamal Jumblatt may perhaps ideologically have been a socialist, but he was born as a feudal-lord in the mountains of Lebanon. Franjeh rewarded the men who had been voting for him and was loyal to the “communitarian democracy” that guaranteed their privileges. All communities except the Maronite one became frustrated when Franjeh handed out key posts to his Maronite allies. Franjeh was choosing weak prime ministers who lacked a cliental base of their own and could be easily manipulated. The feudal-lords of Lebanon got back the influence they had lost under the Shehabist era and the state was weakened. The abandonment of Shehabism together with the armed growing tensions between the Christian elite and the Left and Palestinian resistance made the situation unstable.<sup>90</sup>

The Christian allies of President Franjeh created militias that could oppose the “Palestinian threat”. The borders of Lebanon became more unstable and the independency of Shehabism lost ground. The result was that the state could not handle the political and armed escalation that occurred in the first half of the 1970s. There were several incidents where the army and Christian militias were fighting the Palestinians and left wing movements. When the bus incident occurred in Ayn al-Roummaneh in 1975 the armed clashes turned into war and the Lebanese state had now definitely lost its monopoly of violence and ability to uphold the law.<sup>91</sup>

Theoretically, the breakdown of the state is one of the most common events that most occur for a civil war to break out. The return of feudalism in Lebanon made the state weaker and some politicians’ indirect support of one of the sides made it partial which led to a decreased credibility among the Lebanese population. The Lebanese case is here corresponding to the theoretical framework.

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<sup>90</sup> Picard p. 97-103.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

#### 4.2.4 A Deviant Case?

Lebanon is to a great extent following my theoretical framework and it is difficult to find any explanatory deviant variables in this category. Naturally, the political instability was something that led to the outbreak of war. All civil wars are always preceded by some type of political instability. The Lebanese state was weakened and was not able to control its own territory. The question you must ask is why the state lost its power? During the years of Shehabism Lebanon could find some type of stability, but confessional democracies most often require a permanent strong state. Lebanon has a deviant variable embedded in its confessional system. Lebanon was a confessional democracy with a weak state, but according to my theory it is recommended that the state is either strong or have a fair power-sharing formula. As we all know, the power-sharing formula was not equal in Lebanon. It is impressive that Lebanon actually succeeded in becoming a state in 1943, but the success had a prize that would become visible later on. The constitution is stating that Lebanon is a non-sectarian state and the National Pact was just supposed to be temporarily.

In the years before the outbreak of the war the government did not represent the majority of the people, it did only represent certain groups, in this case the Maronites and its allies. Instead of securing stability between the different communities it fueled the tensions between groups into conflict. This is very common before outbreaks of civil wars.

The inequality and disparity between the groups became more visible when the presidency was weakened. Lebanon was going through modernization, but the political system was not modernized.

The Palestinian resistance often has to take the blame for being one of the causes to the breakdown of the Lebanese state. They did affect the domestic situation and made it unstable, violent and they behaved like a professional mafia, but they were also used in Lebanon by two sides that needed them to benefit their own interests and demands.

What makes Lebanon deviant in this case is that it had the same rule of power since 1943 and it took more than 30 years until the civil war broke out. Civil wars can often occur in combination with a country's independence. Why did it not happen earlier? One of the causes to that is the political mobilization in the late 1960s combined with the arrival of the Palestinians. Shehabism and a strong state was also a factor that reduced the sectarian and class tensions during the mid-20th century, but the most severe mistake being made was that the sectarian political system never was abolished.

## 4.3 A War over the Lebanese Identity

*One of the strange features of the inhabitants of these lands is that they are religious, and fanatic at that, in their sayings, appearances and feuds, while in churches, mosques and temples they are atheists and believe in nothing.*

- Author unknown, Beirut, 1920s<sup>92</sup>

Initially, this section will give a brief overview over the historical political discrimination in Lebanon that can be directly related to the use of identities. The Lebanese fractionalization is something that has clearly shaped the identities of Lebanon but, as the quote above states, the use of identities has been used more in a sense to achieve political goals than to fulfill personal needs. I will investigate if the causes to the Lebanese civil war can be defined as a “new war” where identity driven politics is the main source. Finally, I will analyze the scenario of fear and how that led to the armament of different groups and a more unstable political situation.

### 4.3.1 The History of the Lebanese Identities

In 1861 the Ottoman empire, who was starting to see the end of its hegemony in the Middle East, were pressured by the Western powers to introduce some type of self-governing in Mount Lebanon. The result was the *Mutasarrifiyya* which became a separate political and administrative entity. Lebanon was at this time an important trade route between the west and the east and Lebanon became the natural gateway between the two. Thanks to the European economic penetration of Mount Lebanon the Christian Maronites improved their socio-economic and political situation and they became the rulers of Mount Lebanon. During the *Mutasarrifiyya* there was no “Lebanese identity”; even the Maronites saw themselves as Syrians.<sup>93</sup>

In 1920 the state of *Grande Liban* was established on the ruins of the *Mutasarrifiyya*. The Ottoman Empire was defeated in the First World War and the French got the territories of today’s Syria and Lebanon. They divided Syria and

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<sup>92</sup> Ziadeh p. 7.

<sup>93</sup> Firro, Kais M., *Inventing Lebanon. Nationalism and the state under the Mandate*, 2003, p. 15-16.

Lebanon into two different states. *Grande Liban* was supposed to be a nation state for the Christian Lebanese with France as its protector, although there lived people in Lebanon with several different confessions. The communalism from the *Mutsarrifiyya* continued during the French mandate and became the base of the Lebanese political system. In spite of the fact that Lebanon has faced a lot of criticism for its confessionalism we must emphasize that confessionalism turned away Lebanon from being a centralist, authoritarian state like so many of its Arab neighbors. However, the idea of communalism in Lebanon should not be seen as a “natural product”. The power sharing system, the state administration and even the national identity in Lebanon has been shaped by the politics of the ruling elites and their regional and international allies.<sup>94</sup>

The use of colonialism in Lebanon can be seen as the root to the confessional system. The French and the ruling elite in Mount Lebanon wanted to achieve hegemony, which they could reach with the instrumental use of sectarianism. The ideas of nationalism had reached Lebanon, which both the French and the ruling Maronites saw as a threat against their power. By establishing a sectarian system the ideas of nationalism had problems with setting foot in Lebanon. However, the ideas and impacts of nationalism would return a couple of decades later.<sup>95</sup>

The idea that the different confessions would make up the nation-state’s political system in Lebanon was not founded on the grass-root level; it was something enforced by the elite. Lebanon can be compared to many other Arab states like Syria, Jordan, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia and Iraq (before the fall of Saddam Hussein) where a dominant minority is controlling the state. The first time the confessional system actually was “reformed” was in combination with the Lebanese independence in 1943. The Sunni Muslims wanted to be a more powerful part of the political establishment and were offered the post as prime minister. Nevertheless, the traditional elites and feudal-lords (*Zua’ma*) were the dominant representatives of their own communities and in the parliament and Lebanon still consisted of small cantonized communities.<sup>96</sup>

As stated above, the system of sectarianism prevented the establishment of class- and ideological based parties. However, the problems Lebanon faced during the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century can very well be compared to those of class struggles, democracy-issues and a lack of individual rights. Furthermore, the sectarian

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<sup>94</sup> Ziadeh, Hanna, *Sectarianism and Intercommunal Nation-Building in Lebanon*. 2006, p. 8-9.

<sup>95</sup> Firro p. 49-51.

<sup>96</sup> Ziadeh p. 166-167.

polarization in Lebanon has a non-Lebanese dimension, where regional and international allies were needed to secure and reinforce the communal positions of the different sects. First it was the Ottomans and the French, after the 1950s it was the USA, Israel, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Iran etc. The support of the outside powers did leave the domestic communal situation in a status quo.<sup>97</sup>

What we can learn from this is that the identities of Lebanon were mainly created as a result of colonialism and an elitist rule. The ideas that Lebanon should be a confessional state were not coming from a bottom-up perspective. Theoretically, the history of the Lebanese identities is closely connected to the existence of an ethnic dominance. The ongoing discrimination was made possible thanks to the establishment of an unjust political system, which would lead to consequences in the future.

#### 4.3.2 A Fearful Escalation

The argument of fear has been widely used in the debates regarding the Lebanese civil war. In the last census that was made in 1932 it was quite clear that the Muslims would be in a majority within a couple of decades and the Lebanese Maronites feared that the French soon would leave them and stop giving them external support.<sup>98</sup> In time of independence many Christians saw Lebanon as a Christian Maronite haven in the midst of a “hostile Muslim environment”. The Christians saw the National Pact in 1943 as a compromise between the Christians and Muslims. They saw the National Pact as the only solution for Lebanon to keep its original character. Even if the Christians lost their numerical superiority they would hold the most powerful political positions in the country. The economy should also be a free one with few regulations, low taxations and a small bureaucracy. The wealthy Christians simply feared that the Muslims, but also the poorer classes would demand reforms that could lead to “unfortunate political consequences”.<sup>99</sup>

It was in the 1960s that the non-Maronite Lebanese on the streets demanded a greater share of power. The old feudal-lords, from different confessions, did not

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<sup>97</sup> Ziadeh p. 170-176.

<sup>98</sup> Rabinovich p. 21.

<sup>99</sup> Rabinovich p. 29-30

know how to handle the situation, they still wanted to maintain their power but they did not want to be a part of any “radical” parties or movements. The result was, though they tried to compromise and mediate, that the feudal-lords lost their former influence over the Lebanese society and this was never restored.<sup>100</sup> As stated earlier, until the outbreak of the war the Lebanese political turmoil was not basically sectarian. However, there was a more widely used sectarian rhetoric used by the old feudal-classes that wanted to maintain their hegemony. This would come to have a great impact on the war later on.<sup>101</sup>

In the beginning of the 1970s it became known that different Christian groups were buying weapons to protect themselves/liquidate the Palestinian resistance. In July 1973 the first armed clashes took place between the Christian militias and the Palestinians resistance and it was not going to be the last one. The first part of the civil war in 1975-76 was mainly a war between the Christian militias and the Palestinians (backed up by some left-wing groups) and it was first later on that a mainly sectarian participation and sectarian clashes would dominate the acts of the war.<sup>102</sup>

Two main consequences was the result of the events in the early 1970s. First, the radicalization, armament and militancy of the Palestinian resistance had created rifts within the Lebanese society. Second, the use of violence increased significantly. What were supposed to be restrained demonstrations turned into violent clashes were family issues and clan feuds were turned into confessional and communal hostility. Furthermore, in the early 1970s there was an increasing polarization between the ruling governing elites. The Kataeb with its allies demanded that the Palestinians would respect the Cairo Accord while many Sunni Muslim leaders and the Druze leader Kamal Jumblatt together with his left-wing allies supported the activities of the Palestinian commandos. The Kataeb was frightened by the Palestinian activities and hence started its own armament. Kataeb had the support of the Christian President and his allies so they received support from the Lebanese Army and security forces.<sup>103</sup> Both groups were looking at each other with hostility and fear. The Palestinians feared that they would witness another “Black September” and the Christians feared that the Palestinians with their left-wing allies would take the power in Lebanon. The conflict went from being a conflict about socio-economic and political rivalries to become a

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<sup>100</sup> Rabinovic p. 83-85.

<sup>101</sup> Hudson p. 228.

<sup>102</sup> Trabousli p. 182-183.

<sup>103</sup> Khalaf p. 222-223.



conflict of life and death. The communal loyalties became more important than the loyalty to the state.<sup>104</sup>

In addition to the armament conducted by the political parties there was also an ongoing mobilization made possible thanks to the religious forces. Christian, Sunni, Shi'a and Druze clerics were equally involved in mobilizing their different communities. Most important of all is that they gave moral and spiritual legitimization to the ongoing acts of violence.<sup>105</sup>

Nevertheless, the mobilization with the help of identities was just made on the eve of the war. In the mid-1970s Lebanon had "reached the lowest level of confessional political mobilization since independence."<sup>106</sup> A decrease of sectarian identification was recorded and many Lebanese, especially among the young, saw the problems with the confessional structures of Lebanon. Lebanon was before the outbreak of the war less confessional than it was prior to the 1958 crisis or three decades earlier in the time of independence. In brief, confessionalism was losing its influence in Lebanon and so were the ideas of the importance of belonging to a specific religious identity or sect.<sup>107</sup>

In this case Lebanon is directly corresponding to the theoretical framework. The introduction of fear led to an armament between the different groups. There was no national hegemon that could stop it. The use of violence during demonstrations made the domestic situation even more hostile. Fear was not one of the major causes to the war, but the existence of fear made the domestic situation even more unstable and the access to weapons can almost be seen as a requirement for a war to break out.

### 4.3.3 The Lebanese Civil War- A New War?

Mary Kaldor's main thesis claims that the "new wars" began to occur in the 1980-90s in mainly Africa and Eastern Europe. The Lebanese civil war started in 1975 and would, regarding the aspect of time, in that case be one of the very first "new wars". It must be emphasized that this thesis is analyzing the causes that led to the war and not the causes that maintained it. When you are analyzing the causes to

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<sup>104</sup> Khalaf p. 227.

<sup>105</sup> Khalaf p. 230-231.

<sup>106</sup> El Khazen p. 238.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

the war Kaldor's theory is not that matching when looking at the events in Lebanon, but there are some similarities.

The roots to the conflict in Lebanon were based on an unwieldy political system, the remains of a feudal hierarchy and the rise of new and radical ideologies. The battle over identities was not one of the causes to the conflict. The new politics of identity at the eve of the war was forced down from the political elites on their different communities. The reason behind this was because the old elites or party leaders wanted to obtain more power or at least maintain the power they already had and some leaders were only able to get support from their own communities.<sup>108</sup>

According to Kaldor the origins of the new politics of identity can be found in the disintegration of the modern state and the Lebanese state definitely lost its legitimacy before the outbreak of the war. However, the new form of identity politics often occurs in states that have been centralized and authoritarian and this was not the case in Lebanon. The different sects had always been allowed to practice their religions and celebrate their different traditions and they were definitely not oppressed from a religious viewpoint.<sup>109</sup>

Naturally, globalization and modernization was something that did shape the events of the war and the causes to it, but Lebanon had since the Phoenician times been a country open for the outside world to visit or make business in. Globalization itself was not a reason for the war, but perhaps globalization made the distribution of new ideas and ideologies to arrive faster to Lebanon.<sup>110</sup>

One point that is more accurate when comparing Kaldor's theory with the Lebanese case is the methods of fighting. Guerilla warfare and counter-insurgency were the methods being used in the armed fighting and no conventional army battles took place. The militias often consisted of working and middle-class people from the suburbs and they used light weapons like machine guns, Grenades and RPGs. The use of tanks and such were not commonly used among the militias.<sup>111</sup>

Kaldor's theory is interesting when comparing it to the Lebanese case, but Kaldor's theory about a "new war" is not offering satisfactory explanations to why the civil war broke out in Lebanon, but it would probably better explain the development of sectarianism during the war.

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<sup>108</sup> Rabinovich p. 60-65.

<sup>109</sup> Ziadeh p. 114-120.

<sup>110</sup> Picard p. 16-20.

<sup>111</sup> Carlsson, Bo Kage, *Orons bälte*. 1991, p. 44.

#### 4.3.4 A Deviant Case?

When analyzing the identities of Lebanon and its effect on the outbreak of the civil war you can find variables that confirm the theory, but also some deviations. The ethnic dominance was represented by the Maronites and in the years before the war they represented perhaps 30-35 % of the population but they succeeded in discriminating, both politically and economically, the rest of the population. This was made possible thanks to the National Pact established in 1943. The National Pact strengthened the tradition of confessionalism. Confessionalism in Lebanon was not established to create a fair power-sharing-model in the country; it was the result you got when mixing colonialism (France) and a domestic elitist rule (Maronites). Naturally, the rest of the Lebanese would hold on to their religious identities when seeing how the leaders of the country held on to theirs. The National Pact made it difficult to establish class- and ideological based parties and the lack of that led to a more radical Lebanese society that would come to explode in April 1975.

In the mid-1970s identities were used as a method for mobilizing the different communities. This was a result of the ongoing escalation. From being a conflict where political reforms was at stake (conservatism vs. reforms), the conflict was now a matter of life and death. The Maronites armed themselves because they feared the Palestinians and the Palestinians armed themselves because they feared the behavior of the old Maronite elite. Many other groups followed the same pattern and the religious legitimation enhanced the use of identities. In this sense, the Lebanese case is following the theory based on fear.

Nevertheless, Lebanon has a deviation when comparing it to the thoughts of Mary Kaldor. The outbreak of the Lebanese civil war was a conflict that was driven by interest-driven motives and not by identity conflicts. However, the battles over identities became important later on in the war and that is where Kaldor theory is more appropriate to use. In an explainable sense of the war perhaps a class-driven Marxist approach would be better to use as an analytical tool, than the theories of Kaldor, when discussing motives. Perhaps you can make the claim that the Lebanese civil war (the causes to it) was one of the last “old wars”, where a war perhaps would not have taken place if reforms would have been made in time.

However, we must remember the words of el Khazen: Lebanon was much less confessional in the mid-70s than it ever had been before during independence. The use of identities in Lebanon was not one of the causes to the Lebanese civil war, but it was a factor that definitely would come to shape the future events of the war and its aftermath.

## 4.4 Lebanon's Foreign "Friends"

*And each of the factions was able to enlist some outside power on its behalf. All this turned Lebanon into a miniature model of all the Middle East conflicts rather than, as it had been historically, a symbol of their resolution.*

- Henry Kissinger, *Years of Renewal*, 1999<sup>112</sup>

This section will focus on the external influence on Lebanon. I will analyze the regional situation and the role of Lebanon on that arena. According to theory, I will analyze the "pre-war signals" that was expressed by mainly Syria and Israel but also the involvement by the rest of the Arab world. Furthermore I will investigate the interventions in Lebanon and see if they were partial or not and why they did occur. Finally, I will analyze the role of the diaspora and see how it affected Lebanon. The empirical analysis will stay close to the ideas pronounced in the theoretical framework.

### 4.4.1 A Hostile Arab Environment

The problems Lebanon was facing during the first half of the 1970s were not greater than other countries in the development world had faced during the same time period. The big difference was that Lebanon was situated in a politically instable region where the external influences had a great impact on Lebanon as a state, especially after the six-day war in 1967. In other post-colonial countries the state had gained power and moved away from society while the situation had gone in the opposite direction in Lebanon. Lebanon became a confessional deviant case in an authoritarian Arab world. The political governance of Lebanon made it vulnerable to external pressure.<sup>113</sup>

Furthermore, political scientist Malcolm Kerr writes that that idea of unity among the Arabs is much stronger than the idea of unity between the Latin Americans or English speaking countries. However, Kerr or no other western historians can give a valid an explanation to why it is like this. The dreams of the Arabs would come to cast a shadow over Lebanon. Lebanon became an anomaly

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<sup>112</sup> Khalaf p. 204.

<sup>113</sup> El Khazen p. 7-10.

in the Arab world system: A confessional democracy that co-existed with some of the world's most radical, progressive and secular regimes.<sup>114</sup>

Historically, Lebanon's domestic crisis has often been affected by external events. The radicalization of Arab politics in the 1950s, the 1967 and the 1973 wars and the effects of "Black September" almost affected Lebanon more domestically than the events had made in their country of origin.<sup>115</sup> Lebanon was too small to be able to affect its Arab neighbors, but it was too weak to be able to resist decisions taken by them. The Arab states supported the Palestinian cause even if it would challenge the sovereignty of Lebanon; after 1973 Lebanon would become the new battlefield of the Middle East. Suddenly, there was no more room for compromises and you were either for or against the Palestinian cause.<sup>116</sup>

Lebanon received the nickname "The Switzerland of the Middle east" because of a reason: It wanted to uphold its neutrality. Lebanon had good relations with the western world which could be seen as provocative in the Arab world. The western countries also had interests in Lebanon, but 1. They did not have the same impact as the Arab states had 2. The manifestation of the western involvement (mainly the USA) would be expressed through the actions of Israel or other regional actors.<sup>117</sup>

Lebanon was a provocateur in the rectified Arab World. It was the only democracy in the region, it had a successful economy, the freedom of speech (80-100 newspapers published daily/weekly) contributed to that intellectuals from all Arab countries ended up in Beirut. Banned Arab parties could hold their congresses in Lebanon any many people found political asylum in the country. The Arab regimes themselves used the free press of Lebanon and subsidized at least one newspaper of their own to express its own opinions that would have been censored in Cairo, Damascus or Baghdad. Nevertheless, the Arab states regarded the freedom of Lebanon to be a weakness. Perhaps Lebanon would have been able to take care of its domestic issues if the army would have been strong which almost can be seen as a requirement in a neutral state. However, Lebanon's confessional system did not have room for a strong army and the result was a weaker state that was more vulnerable to external pressure.<sup>118</sup>

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<sup>114</sup> El Khazen p. 10.

<sup>115</sup> El Khazen p. 24.

<sup>116</sup> El Khazen p. 119.

<sup>117</sup> Hanf p. 111-112.

<sup>118</sup> Hanf p. 160-161.

Lebanon was the weakest state in the region but this was not only because of the political system and its openness; Lebanon was from a territorial view the smallest state in the region containing a small population. Nevertheless, if Lebanon would have been situated in a region with democratic states Lebanon's size, openness and political system would not have been a weakness or an arena for inter-state conflicts.<sup>119</sup> There are political scientists that praise or criticize the post 1943 political system in Lebanon, but most of them agree on that Lebanon's internal conflicts were not reasons enough for the war to take place; it was the external pressure that was one of the most crucial factors.<sup>120</sup>

In brief, if Lebanon had been situated in a democratic region the chances are very great that the civil war never would have taken place. There were mainly two states that were heavily involved in the destabilization of Lebanon and can be accused of being two of the main perpetrators that helped in causing the war. Those states were Syria and Israel.

#### 4.4.2 The Dream of the Lion

As mentioned earlier in this paper the coup d'état in Syria in 1970 would come to have a great impact on Lebanon. A man named Hafez al-Assad (Assad=Lion in Arabic) came to power and would stay there for 30 years. Assad had a dream of a Greater Syria where Lebanon would be included. Assad claimed that Syria and Lebanon had always been one a country and one people through history.<sup>121</sup> Furthermore, neither Syria nor Lebanon had embassies in each other's capitals.<sup>122</sup>

During the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century Syria was too unstable to effectively put pressure on Lebanon. The entrance of Hafez al-Assad made that pressure possible. The open society of Lebanon was a threat but also an opportunity for the dictatorial Syrian regime. Syria both had political and military concerns in Lebanon. In the 1973 war Israel had been flying over Lebanon to avoid the Soviet-made anti-aircraft missiles around the Golan Heights. Assad believed that Lebanon was too weak to protect Syria's eastern front, but if Syria controlled Lebanon they could outflank the Israeli defenses or even open a new front against Israel. Nevertheless,

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<sup>119</sup> El Khazen p. 120-121.

<sup>120</sup> Rabinovich p. 32-33.

<sup>121</sup> Lund, Aron, *Syrien och Libanon- grannar med problem*, 2006, p. 4-9.

<sup>122</sup> Ringberg p. 85-86.

something that is even more important are the political benefits Assad could gain from Lebanon. During the 1970s Egypt started to lose its dominating position in the Middle East as the only regional Arab hegemon and Assad's Syria was taking its place. Damascus was the new capital Arab political leaders went to if they wanted pan-Arab support. Assad also wanted to control the PLO which he could do if he could control Lebanon (where the PLO-headquarters now were situated). The PLO could with Syrian support put pressure on Israel.<sup>123</sup>

Assad did find a particular interest in the Shi'a community of Lebanon. If he could get the support from the Lebanese Shiites that could legitimize his own Alawite rule in Syria. This the Lebanese Shiites did and in return they received Syrian support.<sup>124</sup>

In 1975 Syria and the PLO formed a joint military command and Assad wanted the world to know that a peace resolution in the Middle East would be impossible without the involvement of Syria.<sup>125</sup>

In the mid-1970s Syria could mobilize in Lebanon some parts of the PLO, the Lebanese Shi'a community, some pro-Syrian parties and Lebanon's half-million Syrian workers. Syria also had the possibility of closing the border with Lebanon which would have had devastating effect on the Lebanese economy. The final alternative by Syria would be to threaten with a military intervention. Lebanese politicians started customary to go to Damascus as they had gone to Cairo before and Syria could now use its "veto power" over major Lebanese political decisions.<sup>126</sup>

Syria has been involved in Lebanon's domestic affairs solely because of its own interests and taking no regard to the will of the Lebanese people. Syria has fueled tensions and conflicts just so it can act as the "mediator".<sup>127</sup> A good example is in the beginning of the war in 1975-1976. The Lebanese Front (LF-alliance of Christian parties) was fighting against the PLO and its left-wing and Muslim allies, headed by Kamal Jumblatt, which were called the Lebanese National Movement (LNM). In the beginning of 1976 the Christians were in a very precarious state and they were on their way of losing the war. Although Syria's allies were winning the Syrian leadership was not satisfied with the current situation. Assad believed that a victory for his PLO-LNM allies would

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<sup>123</sup> Rabinovich p. 37-38.

<sup>124</sup> Rabinovich p. 37.

<sup>125</sup> Hanf p. 174.

<sup>126</sup> Rabinovich p. 37.

<sup>127</sup> Hanf p. 176-177.

lead to a radical and independent Lebanon that could threaten the hegemony of Syria. Both Arafat and Jumblatt applied for Egyptian support which made Assad fear that he would lose his power over Lebanon. The result was that Syria invaded Lebanon in 1976 to help the Lebanese Front against the PLO and the LNM. The tides were turning and after a couple of weeks the LF was in a triumphant mood. However, the Syrians did not let any of the sides wipe out the other one. In October 1976 a conference in Saudi Arabia was held regarding the situation in Lebanon. The result was to send a peacekeeping force of 30.000 men where the Syrian contingent would compose the largest part of the force. The result was that Syria's troops could stay in Lebanon recognized by the Lebanese government, the Arab League and with the financial support of the Arab oil-states. The Palestinians had to accept the Syrian presence in Lebanon because they were not able to fight against two regional hegemons. The biggest losers of this agreement were the LF and the LNM who had taken the most damage during the fighting. The big winner was Syria and Hafez al-Assad who must have believed that his dream about a Greater Syria would soon come to be fulfilled.<sup>128</sup>

Syria is corresponding to the theories pronounced in the framework. Its intervention was clearly partial and it showed clear pre-war signals before the war started. For example if the Syrian-dominated deterrent force would not have been titled as a peacekeeping force but instead as an invading force, then suddenly the conflict in Lebanon would not at all have been regarded as a civil war but instead as a more conventional war.

#### 4.4.3 The Involvement of the Holy Land

As early as 1948 David Ben Gurion predicted an occupation of south Lebanon all the way up to the Litani River. The struggles in the Middle East have often been related to the lack of water and the Israeli-Lebanese conflict was not an exception. The vision of Ben Gurion was that the Litani River would constitute the Northern border of Israel. This would be achieved by creating conflicts between the Christians and the Muslims and thereafter create a Christian marionette-state in Lebanon that would be under the protection of Israel. The Maronites of Lebanon did not respond on the Israeli invite. They were satisfied with the establishment of

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<sup>128</sup> Hanf p. 208-225.



the National Pact and they received military protection from France. However, thirty years later the situation would be different.<sup>129</sup>

The Lebanese-Israeli border was the most peaceful border in the region until the mid-1960s and Israel regarded Lebanon as its least hostile neighbor. The Lebanese neutrality was not supposed to be an expression for sympathy towards Israel, although some Arab states thought differently. Lebanese from all confessions disliked, feared and mistrusted the Israeli state and the large majority showed sympathy for the Palestinians. There was a fear over that Israel wanted to invade Lebanon to reach the water of the Litani River.<sup>130</sup> Furthermore, the state of Lebanon itself provoked the Israeli leadership because it stood in large contrast to the political structures of the Israeli state. Lebanon was a confessional pluralistic society and was very open and tried to advocate a co-existence between different religious communities. Israel's claim that co-existence with its Palestinian neighbors is an impossibility becomes ridiculous when you look at the situation in pre-war Lebanon.<sup>131</sup> When the Palestinians coined the idea of a state for Jews, Christians and Muslims this was greeted with enthusiasm in Lebanon, while Israel saw this proposition as a threat. As late as 1974 President Franjeh talked in the UN assembly proposing that a future Palestinians state could use the model of Lebanon.<sup>132</sup>

The real problems between Lebanese and Palestinians started in the mid-1960s when the Palestinians launched commando raids against Israel from Lebanese soil. The Israeli response was never in proportion to the cause of the reaction and sometimes whole villages were destroyed by Israeli artillery and fighter jets. The aim of the Israeli government was that the Lebanese government and the Lebanese people would turn against the Palestinians. Israel also targeted and killed Palestinian politicians. The result of the Israeli aggressions was that the situation became more polarized in Lebanon (which has been analyzed earlier in this paper).<sup>133</sup>

The power of the Maronite elite was weakened and requested some sort of support from the Israeli state. However, Israel was facing a difficult dilemma. They saw with fear how the PLO had established itself in the country and contributed to the weakening of the Lebanese state, but at the same time they did

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<sup>129</sup> Ringberg p. 164-176.

<sup>130</sup> Hanf p. 162.

<sup>131</sup> Khalaf p. 214-215.

<sup>132</sup> Hanf p. 163.

<sup>133</sup> Hanf p. 163-164.

not want to get too involved in the Lebanese domestic affairs. Israel was in the middle of peace negotiations with Sadat's Egypt and an invasion of Lebanon could lead to the abolishment of those peace talks and at that moment Israel was focusing its regional tensions on Egypt. The Israeli leadership believed that a massive military intervention could lead to an armed conflict with Syria and destabilize the region even further. Israel supported the pro-Israeli militias in the country but did not offer them any Israeli troops. However, if Israel did not intervene at all in Lebanon they feared that Syria would take over the country and make it to an even larger military base for the PLO. This would make Syria stronger and a bigger threat against Israel. Syria would also be able to attack Israel not only from the area of the Golan Heights but also from South Lebanon. Israel chose the intermediate way. They accepted a Syrian intervention of Lebanon, but Syrian troops were not allowed to go *south of the Litani River*. Furthermore Syria was not allowed to use its air force or place anti-aircraft missiles in Lebanon. Israel continued with their support of the pro-Israeli militias.<sup>134</sup>

In brief Syria and Israel (with the help of the USA) decided the future of Lebanon. Israel would later on, after the war had started and been ongoing for a couple of years, occupy South Lebanon and make it into a "security zone".<sup>135</sup> Israel is just like Syria consistent with the theoretical framework and showed a clear involvement in Lebanon before the war started.

#### 4.4.4 A Helpful Diaspora

The Lebanese Diaspora is perhaps one of the biggest diasporas in the world compared to the small population of Lebanon. There are over 12 million Lebanese in the diaspora and only four million Lebanese in the country itself. There have been several "refugee waves" from Lebanon since the 1860s and people have left Lebanon in different segments, often related to conflicts or poverty.<sup>136</sup> For the first time ever the Lebanese diaspora will be allowed to vote in the 2013 elections.<sup>137</sup> This has never been permitted before, which means that in the years prior to the civil war the Lebanese Diaspora had no real parliamentary power.

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<sup>134</sup> Rabinovich p. 106-107 and 121-122.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid.

<sup>136</sup> Traboulsi p. 47.

<sup>137</sup> <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Politics/2012/Apr-26/171457-sleiman-firm-on-2013-polls-expat-vote-approved.ashx#axzz1tK7dyW3V> 2012-04-28.

The strength of the diaspora was that they could send significant sums of money to their different communities in Lebanon. A community that especially benefitted on his was the Shi'a community. Historically, they have possessed underprivileged positions in the country which was clearly visible from an economic perspective. With the economic aid they received from abroad it would become easier for them to require political reforms. This was valid for people from all the different confessions, but perhaps most visible among the Shi'a community.<sup>138</sup>

The emigration of Lebanese did affect the domestic political situation. Lebanon has traditionally been a country where family members move abroad to work. The result was that the labor market was replaced by non-Lebanese, mostly Syrians, which would come to affect the situation later on.<sup>139</sup>

Furthermore, something else that affected the domestic situation in Lebanon was not only the aid from the diaspora abroad, but it was the actions of the Lebanese from the diaspora that came back to Lebanon. Many of the Lebanese that had left Lebanon had belonged to the working-class, but when they came back they had climbed on the economic ladder and had become middle-class. They joined the rest of the bourgeoisie and started investing heavily in dominant sectors of the economy such as finance, commerce and property. The social promotion acquired by the work abroad would soon lead into domestic politics. The newly rich would constitute large parts of the middle and upper classes and they were not parts of the old traditional elites. Naturally, they wanted to have a greater influence in the political arena and they did not have the pressure to show solidarity with the old feudal elites. They had been raised in the traditional Lebanese working class and that is where their loyalty remained. The Lebanese civil war would see a scene change where new leaders rose (and some of them are still in power) and became a part of the new political elite.<sup>140</sup>

The Lebanese Diaspora has clearly shown its effect on the pre-war Lebanese domestic situation: 1. The loss of a native Lebanese work force would lead to an increase of Syrian guest workers which became a tool in the hands of the Syrian government. 2. The money the diaspora sent to Lebanon helped all confessional communities to get an increased standards of living and a higher educational level which later would lead to a higher political awareness. 3. The return of the

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<sup>138</sup> Picard p. 99.

<sup>139</sup> Traboulsi p. 159.

<sup>140</sup> Traboulsi p. 159-160.

Lebanese emigrants formed a new middle/upper class that wanted to shape the future of Lebanon by getting more influence in the domestic political arena.

The Lebanese diaspora is confirming the theoretical framework's ideas of a diaspora and its impact on the domestic political situation. What makes Lebanon special in this case is the role of the people from the diaspora that came back to Lebanon and used their influence to achieve political goals. This has also been an important pillar of the Lebanese economy.

#### 4.4.5 A Deviant Case?

Lebanon is following the theory regarding the pre-war signals both Israel and Syria sent out prior to the war. They were both heavily involved in the domestic affairs of Lebanon. Syria invaded Lebanon in the start of the war (partial intervention), although the Syrians themselves called it a peacekeeping operation. What makes it deviant in this case is that the intervention occurred just a couple of months after the war had started, which is very unusual regarding civil wars. The armed conflicts of 1975-76 had not yet been given the title of a civil war and instead of that Lebanon saw a winning side Syria maintained the status quo (in cooperation with Israel) which evidently would maintain the conflict.

The interventions are, according to the theory, less likely when the country is a democracy although the Middle East itself was a non-democratic region. The dictatorships did not fight each other but instead they focused on supporting different actors within Lebanon. I would want to make the statement that if Lebanon had been situated in a democratic region, the civil war would never have taken place. The ultimate question is if you even can call it a civil war because so many foreign actors were involved and were contributing to the conflicts within the country. Lebanon became the new battlefield of the Middle East and its openness and plurality, including a weak army, made Lebanon into an easy target. I would claim that Lebanon is going outside the theory regarding the roles of the external actors. The external actors were more dominating than the Lebanese state itself, which means that you theoretically can draw the conclusion that the Lebanese civil war instead of a civil war actually was a regional war taking place in a very small area. This conclusion can be accused of being a bit exaggerated, but we must remember that the states of the Middle East cannot be compared to the nation-states of the west and Lebanon's neighboring countries claimed that some parts of Lebanon or the whole country itself belonged to them.

The history and role of the Lebanese Diaspora was a factor that shaped the events of the war, but it was not one of the crucial causes to the war. What makes the role of the diaspora into an interesting variable is that the largest political impact did not come from the diaspora abroad; it came from the people in the diaspora that had returned to Lebanon.

# 5 Conclusions

## 5.1 What were the Causes behind the Lebanese Civil War?

One of the most crucial causes to the Lebanese civil war was the complete breakdown of the Lebanese state. This breakdown had occurred gradually since after the six-day war in 1967. Several unlucky events clashed that would quicken the breakdown of the state and what they all had in common were that they led to a political domestic instability.

First of all, the causes behind the war were not based on sectarian ideas; it was based on an unfair political system and a conflict between on the one side the working and middle-classes and on the other side the feudal elite. A Christian Maronite elite had the monopoly on the most powerful positions in the country while the old feudal-lords (that existed in all confessions) had a monopoly on the power in their own communities. The political awareness of the 1960s challenged both the old elites and the National Pact and several violent demonstrations took place in the country with a demand to end the political discrimination.

The arrival of the Palestinians after “Black September” would destabilize the situation in Lebanon. The PLO headquarters moved to Beirut and they would become a “state within a state”, in the end not showing any obedience to the Lebanese state (which challenged the state’s authority). The strong retaliations from Israel, caused by Palestinians resistance attacks, would polarize the Lebanese population to be either for or against the PLO in Lebanon. The armament of the PLO would lead to an existential fear by some groups which led to that also they armed themselves. It must be emphasized that the Palestinians were used by the different sides in Lebanon in a way that would benefit their own political interests while at the same time the PLO had their own political agenda.

The presidential election of 1970 was one of the more crucial events. The idea of Shehabism, with a strong army, secret service and strong state institutions was abolished and the different communities and feudal lords got back some of their power. This made an already unstable Lebanon even more unstable and weakened the Lebanese state even more in a country filled with domestic challenges. The LNM and PLO saw the return of a stronger Maronite elite that would threaten

their positions in the country and the Lebanese army was too weak to stop anyone from getting arms.

The regional situation put further pressure on the Lebanese state. The authoritarian systems praising Arab socialism were not applicable with the confessional reality of Lebanon. While Arab states prohibited Palestinian guerilla activities from their own lands they did not mind if the Palestinians put pressure on Israel from the Lebanese land. Syria and Israel supported different groups within the country that could support their own interests and they did not respect the Lebanese state's authority. Everyone wanted a piece of Lebanon.

An unfair political system and foreign involvement was the main causes to the Lebanese civil war. The complete breakdown of the Lebanese state led to an anarchical situation without a domestic hegemon that could stop the fighting that started in 1975. The war was not based on socio-economic issues or because of an ethnic racism. However, the war would later on become a war between sects and each of the war-lords would try to steal the remaining pieces of the Lebanese state. Nevertheless, it is important to emphasize that the Lebanese civil war was not a war that started because of an ethnic hateful environment between the different communities.

## 5.2 Can Lebanon be regarded as a Deviant Case?

When discussing the Lebanese economy in relation to my theory Lebanon is a complete deviant case. The economy in the years before the war was incredibly strong and had a high annual growth. The economy was not based on raw materials which often is the case in civil war-torn countries. The economical gaps in society decreased, investments were done in the welfare sector, minimum wages were increased and all children went to school. The oil-crisis was, unlike for the rest of the world, something that turned out positively for Lebanon: Oil-money from the gulf ended up in Lebanese banks and many Lebanese went to work in the Gulf. Outside the western hemisphere Lebanon had one of best developed economies. There is nothing in the economic part of my theory that could predict the outbreak of the civil war in Lebanon and in this case Lebanon is completely deviant.

Regarding the variables of political instability and rule of power Lebanon is to a great extent following my theory; all civil wars are preceded by political

instability. The state was gradually weakened which was the result of several challenges which questioned the state's authority. Lebanon did not have the conditions for being labeled as a stable confessional democracy. Lebanon did not have a strong army, but it did neither have a fair power-sharing system. This confirms the theory that the state was supporting one side more than another and contributed on fueling the tensions between different groups (especially after the 1970 election). The arrival of the Palestinians after 1967 was also a contributing factor that confirms the theory that refugees from the outside can change a country's domestic stability. When a country is facing modernization, but not modernizing the political system it will lead to conflict. In this case Lebanon cannot be seen as deviant and it confirms the theory that political instability is a must before a civil war.

Regarding the variables about identity Lebanon is both confirming and deviating from the theory. The ethnic dominance is characterized by the Maronites (although they consisted of less than 45 %) and how this dominance was holding the most prominent political positions in the country. Furthermore, the question about fear is confirmed by the theory were the Maronites and PLO rearmed themselves in fear of being extinct. Nevertheless, the position of the ruling Maronites and their privileged positions in the National Pact was a result of the French colonial rule and the establishment of a Maronite elite leadership. The confessional system was not coming from a bottom-up perspective. Lebanon becomes a deviant case in relation to the thoughts of "new wars". The war was not driven by motives of identity; it was driven by motives of interest. The Lebanese civil war did not start as a war over identities and at least the outbreak of the civil war cannot be labeled as a "new war".

Syria and Israel were both showing clear pre-war signals in the years before the civil war and that is according to theory and strengthens the belief that most of the civil wars are not just internal affairs. Both Syria and Israel would conduct partial interventions in Lebanon and Syria invaded Lebanon just a couple of month after the war has started (which is highly unusual according to the theory). What makes Lebanon into a deviant case is that the external actors had such a great influence over the domestic policies of Lebanon. If Lebanon would have been situated in a democratic region the war would probably never have taken place. This confirms that the Lebanese civil war was not just a civil war; it was a regional war taking place within the borders of Lebanon. Naturally, there were actors inside Lebanon that asked for foreign support, but in reality the foreign actors could control their allies in the country and it is possible for the Lebanese civil war in future research to be regarded as something more than just a civil war.



In relation to my theory, Lebanon is both confirming it, but is also deviating from it. Lebanon is confirming the theory regarding the political instability, a political discrimination and an ethnic dominance's rule over a larger majority. Lebanon becomes a deviant case when looking at the economy, "new wars" and also in some aspects the external actors.

### 5.3 The Usefulness of the Results

The results of this paper can be used in future civil war research and hopefully be applied on current situations in today's world. It evidently shows that a good economy is not a guarantee for avoiding civil wars. For example Bahrain is a country where there is no financial distress among the people, but there is a political discrimination of a larger majority. This paper shows that a civil war may perhaps break out in the future in Bahrain if the current domestic situation would stay the same.

The same thing can be said for several of the countries in the Middle East where we just now are witnessing an "Arab Spring", where people are overthrowing presidents and dictators and demanding political reforms. The situation can be compared to that of Lebanon in the late 1960s where the rigid political system never changed and that was one (among other things) of the main causes to the war. Therefore it is very important that the old regimes of the Middle East implement reforms and do it now, because if they wait for too long the chances are that we will see armed conflicts, where innocent people will get killed (Syria).

Regional stability is an extremely important factor too. If a state facing a civil war is surrounded by democratic states with good intentions chances are greater that the civil war will not start or at least not last for such a long time. In a region of dictatorships the situation may be the opposite, like in the case with Lebanon. Therefore it is important that the Middle East region will see a fast, but still stable, democratization process preferably with peaceful means.

The results of this paper can hopefully be used in other civil war case studies around the world but also in future theoretical civil war research. Hopefully, this paper can predict and show the warning signals of when there is a risk that a civil war will break out in a specific country or region. However, although

generalizations can be made, it must be emphasized that each specific case has its own unique conditions and Lebanon is a good example of that.

## 6 Executive Summary

This paper has analyzed the causes to the Lebanese civil war and if Lebanon can be regarded as a deviant case in relation to existing conventional theories that are explaining the outbreaks of civil wars. The author has composed his own theory that is containing the most common denominators that are explaining the outbreaks of civil wars. The theory is focusing on economy, rule of power, political instability, identity, external actors and the diaspora. A qualitative literature study and a case study have been conducted to answer the research questions.

The causes to the Lebanese civil war were based on several different factors. Lebanon had an unjust political system that politically discriminated the majority of the population and had done so since independence in 1943. Nevertheless, it was first in the 1960s, when new political winds reached Lebanon and new radical parties were established, that the people would demand political reforms and started demonstrating on the streets. This happened at the same time as the six-day war occurred and one of the consequences of the war was that the Palestinians raised arms and started to conduct attacks against Israel from Lebanese soil. Israel retaliated and Lebanon was divided into a pro-Palestinian and an anti-Palestinian camp which polarized the situation in Lebanon even more.

The “Black September” occurred in 1970 in Jordan and the PLO-leadership moved to Beirut. The old Maronite elite saw the PLO as a threat against their power and later on existence which led to clashes between Maronite militias and PLO-militias. The armament of different groups and the creation of militias challenged the authority of the state. The authority of the state was something that became even more weakened after the presidential election in 1970.

The ruling of Shehabism had been the dominating rule of power in Lebanon from the late 1950s until 1970. Fouad Shehab introduced a stronger state in Lebanon giving less power to the old feudal-lords of the different communities. Fouad Shehab was an institutionalist and he believed that Lebanon should be governed through law and order. When Suleyman Franjeh was elected President in 1970 this would change. The old feudal-lords got back more of their power, this in a time when Lebanon was in need of a strong government. The political instability led to in the end a complete breakdown of the Lebanese state.

However, the external pressure on Lebanon is one of the most crucial factors that explains why the war started. The Arab world, Syria and Israel had their own interests in Lebanon and the authoritarian tradition of the Middle East did not fit with the openness, plurality and confessional democracy of Lebanon. If Lebanon would have been situated in a democratic region then the war would probably never have taken place. The Lebanese civil war did not start because of socio-economic issues and it did not start on the basis of identity-driven motives. The bloody sectarianism of Lebanon was something that developed during the course of the war and was not one of the causes to it.

The “Ayn al-Roummaneh” incident on the 13<sup>th</sup> of April 1975 was the spark that started the civil war in Lebanon. The state was at this time too weak to stop the fighting and foreign actors fueled the tensions between different groups in Lebanon and the war was a fact.

Lebanon is both confirming and deviating from the theoretical framework. In relation to the economic variables Lebanon is completely deviant. Lebanon was seen as a financial miracle in the developing world. There is no evidence that shows that the economy of Lebanon can explain the outbreak of the Lebanese civil war. Naturally, Lebanon had problems with class inequalities, but they did not have as big financial problems in Lebanon as they had in other countries in the developing world.

Regarding the political instability and rule of power in Lebanon to a great extent corresponding to the theoretical framework. Political instability can be seen as a must in a country where a civil war breaks out. In many cases you can see a government breakdown which is exactly what happened in Lebanon at the time before the outbreak of the war. You could see a change of the political balance of power where the influence of the feudal-lords decreased and their power in society was reduced. Lebanese from abroad moved back to Lebanon and demanded a greater share of the political power which was seen as a threat by the old elites of Lebanon. According to theory, a functioning confessional democracy must either have a fair power-sharing system or a strong army. Lebanon had neither, but wanted to uphold its neutrality as an independent state.

Regarding the variable of identity Lebanon is both corresponding and deviating from the theory. The ethnic dominance is represented by the old Maronite elite that controlled the most powerful political positions in the country but also the most dominant sectors of the economy. Furthermore, the emergence of fear is something that occurs before most civil wars and both the Maronites and the PLO were afraid of being completely extinct by each other. In this regard Lebanon is corresponding to the theoretical framework. Nevertheless, Lebanon is

deviating from the theory when comparing it to the thoughts of Mary Kaldor. The causes to the Lebanese civil war cannot be described as a “new war”. The causes to the war were driven by interest-motives and not by identity-motives. Kaldor’s ideas are probably better to use when analyzing the development of sectarianism during the war.

Lebanon is confirming the theoretical framework regarding the actions of the external actors. Lebanon’s neighbors, Syria and Israel, showed clear pre-war signals and it was obvious that they played a big role before, during and after the outbreak of the war. This confirms the idea that civil wars are more than just internal affairs. In the Lebanese case you may even say that the role of the external actors was so great that you may not even call the Lebanese civil war a civil war. It was a regional war that took place within the borders of Lebanon, so in this case you can make the claim that Lebanon goes “outside the box” because of the dominating role of the external actors.

Finally, the reasons why the Lebanese civil war broke out were because of a severe political instability that included a government breakdown which led to an anarchic situation in Lebanon without a state hegemon. The external pressure was contributing to the breakdown of the Lebanese state. The political instability that led to the war was a result of an unjust political system and a dysfunctional confessional democracy. The causes to the war were not based on socio-economic conflicts or because of an ethnic hatred between the different communities.

Lebanon is both confirming and deviating from the theoretical framework. Lebanon corresponds to the theory regarding political instability, government breakdown, an unjust political system and the influence of the external actors. Lebanon becomes a deviant case when comparing it to the variables of economy, “new wars” and to some extent the regional impact on Lebanon.

This thesis proves that a stable economy is not a guarantee against an outbreak of a civil war. It shows that a discriminating political system is one of the main causes of civil war and it evidently shows that external powers most often have a personal interest in a civil conflict that takes place in their surrounding area.

This paper has given results that hopefully can be used in future civil war research around the world. This paper can show and perhaps predict the warning signals of when there is a risk that a civil war will break out in a specific country or region. Nevertheless, we must remember that each specific case has its own unique conditions and Lebanon is a good example of that.

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