Are Political Deficits in Lebanon Self-Imposed or Externally Inflicted? *

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Abstract

Since gaining independence from France, Lebanon has been plagued with political instability. With the official end of the Civil War in 1991, Lebanon has been attempting to move towards a lasting peace and political stability; however, several factors have prevented Lebanon from achieving these goals. This paper will seek to examine whether Lebanon's political deficits, in terms of political instability, is self-imposed or externally inflicted. In terms of self-imposed factors, this refers to political corruption, ethnic and religious fractionalization, militarization of groups, as well as economic and political inequalities. On the other hand, external factors measure whether the backlash of the Arab-Israeli wars, foreign intervention, and the influence of the Iranian Islamic Revolution contribute to political instability. This study will invoke a mixed method approach of multivariate analysis as well as case studies

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INTRODUCTION

Since gaining independence in 1943, Lebanon has been plagued with political deficits [political instability and violent conflicts], ranging from civil unrest and political assassinations to more extreme forms of instability like the loss of authority in central government to armed conflict. Much of Lebanon's political framework rests on the 1926 Constitution, the 1943 National Pact and the post-civil war Taif agreement, which established and reinforced, respectively, the country's confessional model based on the country's three major communities (Muslim, Christian and Druze population). In other words, Lebanon has followed a strict Consociational democracy, where governance is based on a power sharing system between various religious groups in the country.[1] Most significantly, the 1943 National Pact stipulated that the president must be a Maronite and the president of the Council must be Sunni, this move ensured that the system operated on a representative system of Muslim and Christian. According to Lijphart "[c]onsociational democracy means government by elite cartel designed to turn democracy with a fragmented political culture into a stable democracy" (1969, p. 216). Much of the literature on consociotional democracy has argued that power-sharing systems in divided societies will encourage cooperation and avoid outright violence among the various groups in the country. Lebanon, like many other divided societies, has engaged in consociotional democracy with proportional representation and federalist system of government. Within consociotional model of democracy, political elites play a

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[1] Power sharing system based the following sectarian groups and class cleavages: Maronite Christians, Roman Catholics, Orthodox Christians, Armenians, Druze, Sunni Muslims, and Sh'ia Muslims. Lebanon has 17 recognized religions but the study will focus on the main religions: Maronite Christians, Orthodox Christians, Shia Muslims, and Shitte Muslims.
See, for example, Brow 2001; Devotta 2002; Horowitz 2001; Goldstone 2002; Rothchield 2001; Seaver 2000; Toft 2002; Weiner and Teitelbaum 2001; Wriggins and Guyot 1973.

critical role in moderating social cleavages, and at times they can aggravate social cleavages, in turn leading to conflict in society among the various groups (Dekmejian, 1978, p. 253). This was evident in Lebanon where various elite groups had exacerbated the religious divide in the country as a result of their political actions and respective ideologies. The literature on consociotional democracy has identified four main features: coalition of elites representing their group within society, veto power given to each group, proportional representation, and autonomy for social groups (Lijphart 1969; El Badavi and Makdisi 2009; Dryzek 2005; Andweg 2000; Bogaards. 2000). Dryzek contends that "states with consociotional democracy aspects for their part can sometimes preserve political stability in real world divided but they undermine the ability of groups to live together through deliberative and democratic social learning" (2005, p. 238).[2] It is important to note, that power sharing political system are not all inherently politically unstable, rather when a country is plagued with several other dilemmas such as economic and political marginalization, armed non-state actors and regional instability, than the power sharing system can contribute to instability in a country. Lijphart comments on divided societies and power sharing political system:

> "the relative success of a power-sharing system is contingent upon the specific mechanisms devised to yield the broad representation that constitutes its core. In fact, the biggest failures of power sharing systems, as in Cyprus in 1963 and Lebanon in 1975, must be attributed not to the lack of sufficient power sharing but to constitution writers' choice of unsatisfactory rules and institutions" (2004, p. 99).

Despite the efforts to achieve political stability in a deeply divided country, the established power-sharing system fell apart in 1975 with the onset of a Civil War –

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[2] The power sharing system in Lebanon dates back to 1861 (Zahar, 2005).

bringing the economy and government to a complete collapse. From 1975 – 1990, Lebanon has been plagued with political turmoil leaving much of Beirut riddled with bullets, countless death and displacement, as well as contributing to increasing tensions between religious groups in the country. Once known as the *'Paris of the East'*, post-civil war Lebanon now stands for political instability and violent conflict, and a fragmented political sphere deeply divided along religious lines. With the official end of the Civil War in 1991, Lebanon has been attempting to move towards a lasting peace and political stability; however, several factors have prevented Lebanon from achieving these goals.

Much of the literature on political instability and violent conflict has determined that political and economic inequalities as well as ethnic and religious fractionalization are the major factor contributing to instability and violent conflict, especially in Developing countries. The model presented in this paper is related to several assumptions that have developed in the political conflict literature. From that viewpoint, the paper intends to examine whether the leading theories of political instability and violent conflict are the factors in Lebanon. Additionally, the study seeks to examine alternate hypotheses for political deficits in Lebanon, and so the study develops and examines a model of political deficits by looking at internal and external factors to political instability and violent conflict in Lebanon. The internal factors for political instability and political violence are as follows: economic and political marginalization, party structure and the militarization of communities. On the other hand, the model of political instability and violent conflict also posits external factors, they are as follows: foreign intervention (Syria, Iran, Israel, Saudi Arabia, the United States), the Iranian

Islamic Revolution, the after shocks of the Arab-Israeli conflicts, and finally the after shocks of the inception of Israel in 1948 (Palestinian Liberation Organization [PLO, hereafter] and Palestinian refugees). The paper will operationalize political instability in terms of regime shifts, mainly the abrupt loss of authority in central state institutions and political assassinations as a means to achieve political goals, while violent conflict is refers to civil war, interstate war, and minor armed conflicts. In order to get a clear understanding of Lebanon's political deficits since independence, the study will examine four periods of political instability and violent conflicts (that have varying degree of violence): 1958 Civil War, 1975 Civil War (this period also includes regime factor), 2006 Israel-Hezbollah War, and finally 2005-2009 politically motivated assassinations. To isolate the source of political deficits, this paper will examine Lebanon's political environment from 1943-2009, with specific focus on four key periods of instability and violence. The paper will be developed two stages. First, I will discuss the literature on political instability and political violence (interstate and intrastate wars). The second stage will develop the theoretical arguments behind the internal and external factors pushing Lebanon towards political instability and violent conflict. The subsequent section will discuss the literature on political instability and violent conflict.

INSTABILITY SCHOLARSHIP

When referring to instability the literature tends to categorize various forms of instability that develop within a country: wars, genocide, volatile regime changes, and civil unrest (Goldstone, Bates, Epstein, Gurr, Lustik, Marshall, Ulfeder, and Woodward 2010; Goldstone 2005; Gates Hegre, Jones, and Strand 2006; Fearon and Laitin 2003).

The subsequent section will discuss factors contributing to political instability (regime instability and civil unrest) as well as wars (interstate and intrastate wars).

i) Political instability:

Scholarly understandings on regime instability have stressed the role of economics and political inequalities. The following section will discuss the key literature in these approaches, which will be used to develop the basic framework for the model proposed in this study. Within the literature on political conflict two contending theories have developed to explain political instability: economic discontent theories (Gurr 1970, Lichbach 1989, Midlarisky 1986 and 1988 Lipset 1959, Majstorovic 1995, Przeworski and Limongi 1997) and political opportunity theories (Tilly 1978, McAdam 1982, Jenkins 1985, Tarrow 1989). Conflict theorist assert that economic and political inequality within a country tend to push the oppressed group into taking arms in order to improve their economic and political well being in society (Gurr 1970, Tilly 1978, Lichbach 1989, Midlarisky 1986, Lipset 1959, Majstorovic 1995, Przeworski and Limongi 1997). The former theories contend an economic inequalities argument as the main cause of political instability. Perotti (1996) and Arvinen and Nafziger (2002) contend that income inequality is a contributing factor in social discontent among the disadvantaged groups within society, thereby leading to uprising in order to change the status quo. Several scholars maintain that countries with income inequality are generally more politically unstable than their counterparts with income equality among citizens (Alesina and Perotti 1996; Okedokum and Round 2001; Perotti 1996). Relative deprivation theory, Marxist theory of rebellion, and ethnic mobilization theory, are the three major theories of economic discontent. Several studies have confirmed a positive

relationship between income inequality and political violence, where income inequality breeds relative deprivation among citizens (Sigelman and Simpson 1977; Muller 1985; Muller and Segelman 1987).[3] On the other hand, Marxist theory of rebellion argues that a class struggle in society will breed discontent, and eventually lead to conflict among the classes. Finally, the ethnic mobilization theory contends that economic and political discrimination will create a cultural division in society, where ethnic identities are strengthened and political mobilization takes root. The more widespread economic and political discrimination is in society, the greater the chances for ethnic-based political mobilization because of the perceived discontent and grievances (Eller 1998; Gurr 1996; Lipset 1993). Gurr, for example contends that "...ethno-political leaders seeking to mobilize support among threatened and disadvantaged peoples, not because religious or historical differences generate a primordial urge to conflict" (1996, p. 74)

The political opportunities theories contend that the political context of the country contributes to the instability, by emphasizing the importance of the relationship between political structures, regimes, and the distribution of political power. A fundamental assumption underlies all political opportunity theories is that instability occurs as a result of political opportunities available to certain, due to changing political environment and constraints, and this theoretical approach rejects the economic discontent argument of economic inequalities.

Others have argued that a heightened religiosity tends to contribute to political instability, for example, in East-Timor, Bosnia, Palestine, Sir Lanka, and Lebanon to

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[3] Relative deprivation theory refers to the "...perceived gap between people's value expectations and their value capabilities – that is, the discrepancy between what people think they ought to get from society and what they believe they will actually obtain" (Schock, 1996, 101).

name a few (Hasenclever and Ritterger 2000; Hoffmann 1998; Huntington 1993; Juergensmeyer 1993; Marty and Appleby 1995; Seul 1995). In several Muslim countries, you see a move towards religiosity, with attempts to apply *sharia Law* as part of the countries public law arrangement. The impact of religiosity has been further exacerbated with the end of the Cold War, as the nature of conflict shifted more towards intrastate conflict.[4] Primordialists scholars, like Huntington and Seul, have argued that religion and culture are the fundamental causal mechanism pushing a country down the path of political instability, and to a great extent to engage in civil war and genocide. The 1994 Rwandan genocide illustrates this claim clearly. According to Hasenclever and Ritterger primordialists perceive the "differences in religious traditions should be viewed as one of the most important independent variables to explain violent interaction in and between nations" (2000, p. 641). More importantly, a heightened sense of religiosity contributing to political instability is very much dependent on the context in which groups find themselves living. The Shiite Muslims, for example, had a sense of heightened religiosity in the 1970s, which was decidedly dependent on the social, economic, and political context that they lived in and responded accordingly through the establishment of Shiite militant movements. Owen contends:

> "Historically Shiite communities had been forced to the margins of the Arab world by long series of Sunni ruling dynasties, and tended to live in poor, mountainous or desert areas with access to few resources and only the poorest land. Their members were thus particularly responsive to late twentieth century movements of communal self-assertion, whether expressed in religious or class terms" (1992 p. 170).

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[4] During the Cold War period superpower were able to suppress nationalistic and religious tensions because of the rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union. In the case of Lebanon, superpower rivalry was not enough to suppress the political conflict in the country as evident with the 1954 and 1975 civil wars.

Another area of research has attempted to examine the implication natural resources have on political instability, by means of resources rents impact on political regimes (Ramsay 2006; Ross 2001b; Freidman 2006; Wantchekon 2002). Ross (2001) concluded that oil impedes democracy in oil producing states of the Middle East and other regions. Interestingly, Ross's study outlined that oil production as well as exportation greatly impede democracy in the poorer countries rather than in the richer countries (p. 356). Several studies have reflected the 'resource-curse' where resources abundance, particularly in oil, has been followed by authoritarian regimes (Ross 2000c; Sachs and Warner 2001; Wantchekon 2002). The resource curse is characterized by abundance of natural resources in poor and developing countries, where such wealth is detrimental for the country's development (Ross, p. 328). The resource curse, in much of the literature, has been compared to the 'Dutch disease'. Ramsay (2006) conducted a study to determine the detrimental effect of the increase in values of natural resources, particularly in oil, has on the level of political freedom in oil producing countries. In his study, Ramsay concluded that a negative relationship existed between oil resources and political institutions in oil producing countries. Equivalently, Clark notes that the discovery of oil was a vital factor in consolidating a non-democratic regime in the Congo (1997, p. 65). As the literature suggests political instability in divided societies are primarily a result of socioeconomic factors and cultural and/or religious factors.

ii) Interstate and Intrastate war:

A growing number of scholars have written about interstate and intrastate wars. Systemic theorists attempt to explain the outbreak of war by asserting that the properties within the international system contribute to conflict between states (Waltz 1979; Gilpin

1988; Mearsheimer 1990; Organski and Kugler 1981). On the other hand, others have attempted to explain interstate wars as part of the bargaining process between states, where states will prefer war in order to improve their settled outcome (Morrow 1999; Fearon 1995; Wagner 2000). With respect to intrastate wars [civil wars, hereafter] the literature has determined that greed and grievances (Collier 1998; Buhaug and Gates 2002) and insurgencies (Fearon and Laitin 2003; Fearon 2003) are the major contributing factor for civil wars.

PATTERNS OF POLITICAL INSTABILITY AND VIOLENT CONFLICT

The paper will operationalize political instability in terms of democratic reversal and the use of violence by groups to achieve their set political goals. Democratic reversal refers to a significant shift in democratic governance where the central government loses it's monopoly of power in the country and to a lesser extent the weakening of democratic norms (political rights, civil liberties, and government accountability). This form of political instability also includes the gradual lose of authority in central government institutions. The second aspect of political instability is the increasing outbreak of political violence in the country by state and non-state actors. Political violence, for the purpose of this paper ranges from low-level to high-level violence, political assassinations and armed conflict, respectively. Politically motivated assassinations, clearly, illustrate the use of violence by non-state actors to achieve political objective, for example, the political assassinations of Prime Minister Rachid Karami in 1987 and Mutfi a chief religious leader (Sunni) in 1989. A more intense form of violence is minor armed conflict, interstate wars, and civil wars. For example, minor armed conflicts are defined

as an armed conflict that are short of war, that causes 25-999 battle related deaths occur in a given year. On the other hand, intrastate wars, also know as civil war, refer to an armed conflict between politically organized groups within a state that causes over 1000 battle

Political instability and violent conflict are illustrated in Figure 1, where points 1-6 illustrate political instability and points 7-9 illustrate violent conflict. With respect to low-level political instability, points 1-2 illustrate the lowest type of political instability, where citizens express their dissatisfaction with the government or the existing political environment, for example, in 1960s Lebanon was plagued with various anti-government demonstrations and riots against the control of political power by the elites in society (Maronite Christians). Moving along the scale points 3-6 indicate an intermediate level of political instability, which includes assassinations of key political figures, developments of crisis within the country (non-military crisis), abrupt loss of authority in central government, and purges of political opponents. In the case of Lebanon, these types of instability have developed since independence in 1948; for example, Former Prime Minister Hariri was assassinated (2005) and Former President Gemayel (1982). The far right spectrum of the scale notes high-level violent conflict, point 7-9, which includes coup d'état, genocide, and war, in the case of Lebanon the country has reached the highest level of political instability: 1958 civil war, 1975-1990 civil war, and 2006 Hezbollah-Israel war.

Political Instability Scale

Low Instability					High Instability
	Riots	Political assassinations	Abrupt loss of authority in central government	Genocide	
I	2	3	5	8	I

1	4	6	7	9
Anti-Government Demonstrations	Crisis threaten to bring down government	Purges	Coup D'etate	War

MODEL OF POLITICAL INSTABILITY AND VIOLENT CONFLICTS

The paper develops an internal and external model of political deficits that aims to explain the factors contributing to political instability and violent conflict in Lebanon since gaining independence in 1943. Internal factors to political deficits (includes both political instability and violent conflict) consist of: economic and political marginalization (absolute-power control by ethnic elites and powerless population), party system (ideology, inclusive and exclusive representation, and elite cartels), and the militarization of communities. The external factors to political deficits (includes both political instability and violent conflict) consist of: foreign intervention (Syria, Iran, Israel, Saudi Arabia, the United States), the Iranian Islamic Revolution, the after shocks of the Arab-Israeli conflicts, and finally the after shocks of the inception of Israel in 1948 (Palestinian Liberation Organization and Palestinian refugees).

Figure 2: Internal – External Model

INTERNAL FACTORS   EXTERNAL FACTORS

Economic/Political   Foreign Intervention [4]
Marginalization [1]

POLITICAL INSTABILITY

Political Framework [2]   Iranian Islamic Revolution

Militarization of Groups   Arab-Israeli Conflicts [5]

War memories   [3]   Inception of Israel 1948 [6]

Note: 1 - absolute-power control by ethnic elites and powerless population; 2 - political party structure, consociotional democracy, and elite cartels, divided society; 3 – 1958 and 1975; 4 - Syria, Iran, Israel, Saudi Arabia, the United States; 5 – region instability; 6 - Palestinian Liberation Organization and Palestinian refugees.

i) Internal factors

The first internal factor, economic and political marginalization, posits that in a divided society marginalized groups tend to hold the greatest discontent for the status quo, and when given the opportunity will seek to alter the existing status quo through the use of peaceful or violent means.[5] The religious divide between Christian and Muslim as well as Arab and Armenian population, especially when one when group dominates government has created discontent among the disadvantage group, mainly Shiite community. Within Lebanon three religious groups make up the majority of the population in the country, the Maronite Christians, Sunnis Muslims, and Shiites Muslims; however, since independence the Shiite Muslim population has experienced political and economic marginalization, despite the groups clear majority within the country over the

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[5] Divided society refers to a country that is divided along religious, linguistic, and ethnic identities, for example, Austria, Canada, Colombia, Cyprus, Bosnia, India, Lebanon, Malaysia, the Netherlands, and Switzerland are all divided societies. In order for democracy to flourish several scholars have argued that divided societies much have some sort of power sharing governing system, in order to ensue the rights of all groups are represented.

years.[6]   As a result of their disadvantaged status in the country the Shiite population attempted to alter this status quo in their favor, especially their increasing population, and they were able to change their status through the establishment of AMAL Movement and Hezbollah.

Shiite Population Growth

Year	Shiite Population	Percentage of Total Population
1932	154,208	19.6%
1956	250,605	17.8%
1975	668,500	26.2%
1984	1,100,000	30.8%
1988	1,325,000	32.8%
2005	1,600,000	40%

Sources: Halawi, *A Lebanon Defied*, p. 50; Johnson, *All Honourable Men*, p. 3; Roschanack Shaery-Eisenlhor, *Shiite Lebanon,* p. xii; UN, *World Population Prospects*.

As evident from the above chart, population rates for the Shiite's increased significantly since the 1932 census, however, despite this change, the community contiuned to live on the periphery of society. The sense of exclusion from politics and Maronite hegemony cause considerable discontent within the community, in turn leading to mobilization and militancy due to the global Shiite awakening that was occurring since the early 1970s.

By the late 1970s, Shiite 'awakening' was taking hold, and the Shiite population was beginning to find its political voice, as a means to deal with their dissatisfaction with the status quo in the country. In that light, Shiite's of Southern Lebanon began to organize, as evident with the formation of AMAL Movement (*Hope)* and later Hezbollah *(Party of*

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[6] It is important to note that the elites in the Shiite population had aligned themselves with their counterpart elites in the country; however, only acted in order to benefit their own needs as opposed to other Shiite's.

God), which were to act as a champion of the Shiite population, and thereby ensuring greater economic and political power in Lebanon.[7] This sense of economic and political inequality among the Shiite population, especially with the Shiite awakening in the 1970s, contributed to political instability as the Shiite population sought to rectify their economic and political circumstances.

The political party structure of Lebanon is another internal factor contributing to instability and violent conflict. The party structure contains three underlying factors that have problematic for the country: party ideology, inclusive and exclusive representation, and elite cartels. Much of the literature on political parties have argued that parties aligned with religious doctrine, particularly with Islamic fundamentalism tend to fail to develop a perceptible party structure and carry out the regular functions of a modern western political party (link between citizens and party). In the case of Lebanon, AMAL and Hezbollah, which both were formed as formal political parties in the post- civil war period, have contributed to political instability and violent conflict due to the parties Islamic doctrine. Prior to Hezbollah abandoning its goal of establishing a government based on Islamic principles, mainly based on *Sharia* law, this has contributed to increasing tensions with Christian political parties that favored secular system of government. Hezbollah's party ideology advocates a holy war to liberate Lebanese territory as well as occupied Palestinian territories, and establishing an Islamic state in Lebanon modeled on the Iranian republic. Harb and Leenders (2005) argued that Hezbollah's political participation has moved the party from its radical agenda to

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[7] In addition to improving the economic and political power of the Shiite population in Lebanon, AMAL and Hezbollah also advocated for political reform of the political system and the formation of an Islamic republic, respectively. The study will only focus on AMAL, Hezbollah, and Kataeb Regulatory Forces because these groups were the dominant militant groups in Lebanon.

normalized political activities. From 1990-2005, much of the Maronite Christian political parties, such as the Lebanese Forces, Phalanges (Kata'ib), and the Liberation Movement, have all opposed the Islamic doctrine outlined by AMAL Movement and Hezbollah, and so the latter parties have taken measures, at time violent, to ensure the status quo and limit the advancement of AMAL Movement and Hezbollah within Lebanese politics. Not only does party ideology contribute to political instability and violent conflict, but inclusive and exclusive representation is also a component in Lebanon's political deficits.

Finally, exclusion and elite cartels have also contribute to political instability and violent conflict. Elite cartels refer to a comprehensive coalition of elites that represent their respective group within cabinet and parliament, and to a lesser extent within society (Lijphart 2004). In that respect, elite cartels in the case of Lebanon played this particular roles as well as ensuring the contuined existence of their respective group in politics. The elite cartel system has existed in Lebanon before independence in 1943, and only became institutionalized with the French Mandate. Given all this, the elite cartel system had alienated and further divided the country, especially groups living on the periphery. Khazen (2003), for example, suggests that much of the political parties in Lebanon are a personification of a few powerful elites (aristocratic families) in the country. In the case of Jumblatt, like many other party leaders, he garnered support from the Druze community not because of his political platform but because of his religious affiliation.[8] Additionally, the party structure in Lebanon that is mainly loyal to its religious affiliation tended to create a narrow focus for party activities in parliament in turn contributing to

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[8] The three main communities supported political parties that only they could identify with, for example, Sunni supported parties that an Arab and Shiite political platform.

political instability in the country. The narrow scope for the party system in Lebanon hinders political competitiveness, which is imperative for democratic process. Khazen notes that, "loyal parties are neither able nor willing to influence government policy beyond a predetermined ceiling they would be content to maintain the existing status quo which serves their interests" (2003, p.621). Most significantly, several pro-Syria parties, for example, Socialist Progressive Party (Jumblatt) and Amal Movement (Berri), opposed the removal of Syrian forces and influence from Lebanon because of fear of loss of power and a change in the status quo in Lebanon. This situation has contributed to political instability within parliament and rest of the country between pro-Syrian and anti-Syrian parties. Given all this, Lebanon's political party system is partially responsible for political instability.

The party system also created a system of exclusion, which contributed to political instability and political violence. The 1926 Constitution and the 1943 National Pact set the foundation for Shiite political marginalization, where Parliamentary representation was based on the 1932 census, thereby giving the Shiite community 19 seats. In spite of having 19 seats in parliament, Rashid Karami (part of the Shiite elites) controlled much of the political power given to the Shiite community in parliament, and like other Shiite elites his political allegiance was with the Maronite parties. From that viewpoint, Rashid Karami neglected his own community and supported the interest of the Maronite community. The actions taken by Rashid Karami and other Shiite political elites set the seed for discontent among the rural and poor Shiites in Southern Lebanon and West Beirut.

Total Seats in Parliament by Religious Sects

Religious Sects	Total Seats Pre-Taif Agreement	Total Seats Post-Taif Agreement
Maronite	30	34
Greek Orthodox	11	14
Greek Catholics	6	8
Armenian Orthodox	4	5
Armenian Catholic	1	1
Protestants	1	1
Minorities	1	1
Sunni	20	27
Shiite	19	27
Druze	6	8
Alawite	-	2
Total	99	128

Source: Khazen, Farid el. (2003). "Political Parties in Postwar Lebanon:
Parties in Search of Partisan" *Middle East Journal*, 57(4): 605-624.

Another, component of the internal model for political instability is the militarization of groups. During the Civil War both militant groups played a critical role in the war and have contuned to do so after the war. Following the 1989 Taif agreement, all militant groups were required to demilitarize for the expectation of Hezbollah and to a lesser extent the AMAL Movement. Another militant group was the Palestinian refugees living the South that were loyal to Syria had also contributed to political instability in the country whenever they clashed with Lebanese authority or Israel. The continued militarization of the Shiite community, through AMAL Movement and Hezbollah, has contributed to political instability and political violence (the 2006 war between Hezbollah guerrilla forces and Israel). In 1999 Hezbollah forces in Southern Lebanon ambushed and killed an Israeli General and two Israeli forces. Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu responded that, "Israel cannot tolerate this kind of repeated attack on its territories and soldiers" (BBC News, 1999). This example clearly illustrates how the actions taken by a non-state actor have contributed to political instability in the region because Israeli policy towards militant aggression on its territory has resulted in the use of military force against

the aggressor.   Thus, the militant character of AMAL Movement and Hezbollah, especially after Israeli withdrawal from the South, has been a contributing factor in political instability and violent conflicts in Lebanon.[9]

ii) External factors

The paper also draws upon external factors to assess Lebanon's political instability: Arab-Israeli conflict, Palestinian refugees, foreign intervention, and the Iranian Islamic Revolution. First, the model developed in the paper suggests that a causal mechanism is present between Arab-Israeli conflict affect on Palestinian refugee influx and political instability in Lebanon. The Arab-Israeli conflict can be a contributing factor to political instability through its affects on Palestinian refugees; for example, the increase of Palestinian migration into Lebanon has had a backlash on the delicate balance (agreement) between Maronite Christians and Muslims in the country (includes Shiite, Sunni, and Druze Muslims).   This was a clear case in the 1970-1971 with 'Black September', where Lebanon had an influx of Palestinian refugees in the country. [10] In addition to affecting the delicate religious balance, Palestinian militant activities in Lebanon, specifically in Southern Lebanon, has contributed to political instability as Israel counters attacks from the Palestinian Liberation Army [PLO, hereafter] in Lebanon. The influx of PLO guerrillas and the establishment of PLO headquarters in Beirut, allowed Palestinian militants to coordinate attacks on Israeli territory from

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[9] In 1985, Israel established a buffer zone in Southern Lebanon in order to protect its territory from attacks by AMAL Movement, Hezbollah, and Palestinian militant factions in the South.

[10] Black September (1970-1971) refers to PLO's exodus from Jordan. The Arab-Israeli war in 1967 triggered radical Palestinian nationalism, particularly the Palestinian Liberation Organization [PLO]. In 1970 Jordan had between 30, 000-50,000 PLO fighters, which were demanding more autonomy in Jordan. This increasing demand for autonomy by the PLO threatened Jordanian national sovereignty and national security, and in response King Hussein of Jordan, order Jordanian troops to expel the PLO forces from the country. The expulsion of the PLO consequently contributed to the death of thousands of Palestinians and displacement, leaving them with only one solution, to take refuge in Lebanon.

Southern Lebanon. This situation lead Israel to invade Lebanon in 1982 so as to remove the PLO from Beirut in order to remove the threat posed by the PLO on Israel. The influx of Palestinian refugees and more importantly militant Palestinian groups has had a direct and indirect impact on the country's political instability and political violence. The direct impact was the interaction between Israel and the PLO, and the indirect impact, which will be more burdensome for Lebanon. The indirect impact deals mainly with Hezbollah and other militant groups within Lebanon. As a note, during the 1975 civil war many of Lebanon's Christian and Muslim parties converted to militant groups in order to protect their respect communities, for example, the Kata'ib (Phalanges) turned to militancy during the war (Khazen, 2003). As stated above with the end of the war militant groups were required to demilitarize and take on modern political party structures; however, Hezbollah refused to disarm claiming that as long as Israel posed a threat to Lebanon, and the Lebanese army was too weak to do anything, then it was Hezbollah's responsibility to protect Lebanese sovereignty. In 2008 the government of Prime Minister Fouad Siniora attempted to gain some control over the activities of Hezbollah by attempted to seize and shut down the groups telecommunication networks, which was used by the groups to spy Lebanese citizens that were collaborating with Israel. In response to the government attempt to control Hezbollah's activities, the group reacted violently by seizing Western Beirut and fighting broke out between Hezbollah and supporters of Prime Minister Fouad Siniora. This lead to several death and many feared that country might fall back toward the path of civil conflict. According to BBC news " The armed and bloody coup which is being implemented aims to return Syria to Lebanon and extend Iran's reach to the Mediterranean" (BBC News, 9 May 2008). This situation has contributed to increased

political instability and minor armed conflict in the country, which is mainly attributed to the stance Hezbollah has taken due to external factors impacting the country.

Another, external factor affecting Lebanon's political instability is the Iranian Islamic Revolution the paper posits that a causal mechanism is present between the Iranian Islamic Revolution and political instability in Lebanon. The theocratic regime in Iran has been a catalyst for political instability in Lebanon through its partial influence on the Shiite awakening in the 1970s and full support (military and political) of Hezbollah. As noted above Shiite awakening is a major factor for political stability in Lebanon by the militarization of Shiite population in the South. The increasing role of Hezbollah in the political environment has resulted in greater political tension among the various groups in the country, especially when the ideology of Hezbollah is in conflict with other groups in the country. Given all this, the internal and external model of political instability and violent conflict attempts to examine which factors play a significant role in

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The study indicates that since gaining independence in 1943 Lebanon has been plagued with waves of political instability ranging from low levels to high levels of political instability. The analysis indicates various factors in the internal-external model account for the political instability in the country, more importantly, external factors exacerbated internal factors pushing the country towards political instability. One than wonders if Lebanon were to live in bubble, protected from external factors, could the country have avoided political instability. This conclusion opens the door to examine the influence external factors have on intra-state conflicts. In the case of Lebanon, group militancy, the aftershocks of the Arab-Israel conflict, political resurgence of religious

communities, as a result of religiosity, and socioeconomic factors have had negative impact on Lebanon's political instability.

Future research could identify the following: (1) what internal/external factors contribute to certain types of political instability; (2) whether political parties and constitutional framework play an internal role in increasing political instability in the country; (3) whether economic development in the post-civil war period has had contributed to a reduction in political instability.

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