

World Bank

Report Part Title: The Lebanese Civil War, 1975—90

Report Title: UNDERSTANDING CIVIL WAR

Report Subtitle: Evidence and Analysis

World Bank (2005)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.com/stable/resrep02484.7>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <https://about.jstor.org/terms>



World Bank is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to this content.

JSTOR

The Lebanese Civil War, 1975–90

3

SAMIR MAKDISI AND RICHARD SADAKA

The Lebanese civil war broke out in April 1975, 29 years after the withdrawal of foreign troops from Lebanon in 1946. The civil war was finally settled in October 1989, under an accord of national reconciliation negotiated by the Lebanese Parliament under Arab auspices in the town of Taif, Saudi Arabia. This agreement, known as the Taif Accord, was ratified the same month by the Lebanese Parliament. Actual fighting did not completely end, however, until a year later, in October 1990.

This chapter analyzes the Lebanese civil war using the Collier-Hoeffler (CH) model. After explaining the prewar conditions, we discuss the identities, interests, and organization of the multiple parties to the war and identify three phases of the war. We then evaluate the fit of the CH model to this case and consider alternative explanations.

We find that religious, rather than ethnic, fractionalization was a key factor in the Lebanese civil war. External intervention was also crucial. Because economic explanations of the causes of the Lebanese war are weak, the CH model, which gives great weight to economic factors, does a poor job in predicting the outbreak of the war. Factors identified by CH as potentially affecting civil war duration are, however, helpful in explaining the relatively long duration of Lebanon's civil war. Finally, we briefly examine the goals and actual results of the Taif Accord. We offer an assessment of the likely stability of this "sectarian" resolution to the conflict, taking into account that, until very recently, there was a continued Syrian military presence and strong political influence in the country. Under strong international pressure, Syrian troops were forced to withdraw from Lebanon in April 2005, and consequently Syrian influence greatly diminished.

Prewar Conditions

Rapid Economic Growth

The prewar Lebanese economy grew rapidly during the years 1946–75. The private sector, which was primarily trade- and services-oriented, with no significant

natural resource wealth, played the dominant role in economic development. Governmental policy was mostly noninterventionist and supportive of private sector initiatives. Domestically, a conservative fiscal policy was followed. Monetary policy began to play a role only toward the end of the prewar period. Public sector management of economic enterprises was confined to a few public utilities. Externally, a free foreign exchange system had been maintained since the early 1950s, permitting the private sector to interact freely with the outside world. In sharp contrast, neighboring countries (and indeed many other developing countries at the time) maintained exchange controls and gave the public sector the leading role in economic development.

The Lebanese private sector traditionally has been enterprising. Under these favorable conditions for private sector initiatives, the national economy experienced a broad-based expansion in the prewar period, while maintaining relative financial stability. Lebanon attracted foreign capital and enterprises supplemented by emigrant remittances from the Lebanese diaspora, especially from those living in the United States and South America. The average annual rate of growth from 1950 to 1974 was about 7 percent. The annual rate of inflation was estimated to be about 2–3 percent until 1971; after that it increased, averaging about 8 percent in the three years prior to the outbreak of the civil war. Per capita income increased significantly, standing in 1974 at about \$1,200, one of the highest levels for a developing country at that time.¹ Educational standards were also relatively advanced; for the same year, gross school enrollment for the first and second levels stood at 74 percent. Again, this was a higher level than found in neighboring Arab countries, as well in many other developing countries.

Despite the robust economic growth, important socioeconomic disparities existed. They were manifest in the strikingly uneven development among the various regions of the country and in the limited progress made in narrowing the gap between rich and poor. A study conducted in the mid-1970s indicates that for 1973–74 about 54 percent of the population could still be classified as poor or relatively poor, 25 percent as middle class, and the remaining 21 percent as well-to-do and very rich.² This was an improvement over the situation prevailing in the early 1950s. Compared to other developing countries, this inequality was also not overly pronounced (Harik 1985). However, it must be considered in the context of Lebanon's regional inequalities and their confessional dimensions. For example, the position of the middle class was much more salient in Beirut (dominated by Sunni Muslims and Christians) and the central mountain region (dominated by Christians) than in regions like the south, the Beqa', the northeast, and Akkar in the north (dominated by Shi'a and Sunni Muslims), where large land holdings and class distinctions were common.³ This gave a clear confessional hew to the question of inequity in income distribution, particularly in regard to the Shi'a community. As we argue below, it is religious division—not ethnic division as argued by Collier and Hoeffler—that has had an important bearing on postindependence political developments in Lebanon.

Major Political and Military Tensions

What is striking about the prewar phase is that, robust economic growth and rising per capita income notwithstanding, the country faced major political tensions and confrontations. The underlying reasons are both domestic and regional. The domestic factor was directly related to the sectarian system for power sharing, principally among the three leading religious communities (the Maronites, the Sunnis, and the Shi'a). This system has been in place since independence in 1943, although it was modified under the Taif Accord (the system remained consociational).

While the constitution of the newly independent state guaranteed equal rights to all citizens, Article 95 specified that, for a temporary but unspecified period, religious communities would be equitably represented in public employment and cabinet posts. The principle of equitable representation was not defined. However, an unwritten national accord reached among political leaders on the eve of independence specified that the post of president of the republic was to be held by a Maronite Christian, that of the speaker of the house by a Shiite Muslim, and the premiership by a Sunni Muslim. This arrangement was later incorporated in the Taif Accord. In practice, a sectarian formula was also applied to cabinet posts that, more often than not, were apportioned among the six largest religious communities in the country (and the Armenians who are considered a separate community). Other officially recognized religious communities were often excluded from cabinet representation. An overall balance between Christians and Muslims has been maintained in the cabinet to this day. Appointments to most, if not all, public administration positions have been subject to time-honored sectarian considerations, particularly higher positions that were to be equally apportioned between the two communities. Similarly, parliamentary seats were distributed among the various religious communities in accordance with an agreed sectarian formula which, on the whole, favored the Christian community. The Christian sects combined were entitled to 55 percent of the total number of seats.

The office of president carried with it substantial executive powers. For example, the president chaired the council of ministers and appointed the prime minister and cabinet members, albeit after due consultation with major political actors whose views could not be ignored. With such presidential (and other governmental) prerogatives, the Maronite community emerged as the single most influential religious community in the pre-1975 period. This was reinforced by the electoral law that assigned a small majority of parliamentary seats to the combined Christian communities led by the Maronite community. In practice, the powers enjoyed by the president's office translated into a comparative advantage in appointments for higher administrative positions.

Despite the presidential prerogatives, the need to preserve the delicate sectarian balance, particularly between the three major religious groups, acted as a check on the powers of the presidency. When sharp disagreements arose between the president and the prime minister, there were serious cabinet crises with sectarian overtones. More significantly, the sectarian balance implied that no one single political,

religious, or politicoreligious group (including the army) could impose its hegemony or ideology. This, as it turned out, had its positive aspect in that it tended to promote political liberalism, albeit in the context of the prevailing sectarian system. The pre-war years were characterized by periodic parliamentary elections (no matter how imperfectly conducted), religious freedom, relatively free expression and association, the peaceful change of presidents and cabinets, and the growth of sectarian and non-sectarian political parties. Nonetheless, the dictum of delicate sectarian balance led to the emergence of a weak state and, as a consequence, the inability to implement substantive administrative reforms. The prevailing political system tended to foster corruption, nepotism, clientism, and laxity in upholding the public interest when it conflicted with private interests (Picard 1996a).

Although the Lebanese political system was functional, it was increasingly strained. Foremost were the constant domestic political calls by Muslim political leaders for a more equal power sharing between Christians and Muslims. Such calls carried with them a potential shift of economic benefits in favor of Muslims, arising from greater access to public sector employment as well as opportunities to participate in or control private economic enterprises that were largely in the hands of the Christian community. The Maronite establishment tended to ignore such calls, fearing the political implications of even a limited loss of constitutional power. Additional strains emanated from the uneven development among the various regions and wide disparities in income distribution that led to migration from rural to urban centers and to the unchecked and rapid growth of poor suburbs around the major cities (Beirut in particular). Indeed, in 1974 the religious leader of the Shi'a community, Imam Musa al Sadr, launched a political movement, "Amal," as a political and economic thrust intended to enhance the position of the Shi'a community in the Lebanese sectarian system, as well as to act as a countervailing force to the growing influence of Palestinian organizations in southern Lebanon. Amal presented itself as a "movement of the dispossessed," and its appeal was to a large extent based on the lagging socioeconomic conditions of the Shi'a community in comparison with other communities in Lebanon.⁴ It was to develop, especially after 1982, into one of the major warring factions in the Lebanese civil war.

External factors also placed increasing strains on the Lebanese political system. Principal among these factors was the rising military power of resident Palestinian organizations, particularly after the 1967 Arab-Israeli war. While their activity was ostensibly directed at keeping the Palestinian cause alive and continuing the struggle to reclaim Palestine, these organizations' presence in Lebanon became intricately linked to Lebanese domestic political affairs. The domestic and regional political agendas could hardly be separated. The prevailing weaknesses of the political system were exploited by Palestinian organizations to enhance their political and military positions. For this purpose, they forged alliances with disenchanted Lebanese sectarian (Muslim) and nonsectarian political parties, as well as with groups that regarded such an alliance as a means to pressure the Maronite establishment to accept political reforms. The nature of the desired reforms differed from one Lebanese political group to another. Leftist and other nonestablishment groups wished to introduce

fundamental changes to render the system less confessional. Traditional Muslim groups aimed at readjusting the sectarian formula to ensure a distribution of power more favorable to the Muslim community. For both groups, political reforms would have offered wider economic opportunities.

This combination of domestic and external factors eventually led to the outbreak of war on April 13, 1975. On that day, armed clashes broke out in a Beirut suburb between members of the Maronite-dominated Kataeb (Phalange) party and members of Palestinian organizations. The leader of the Kataeb was scheduled to participate in the dedication of a new church in the Beirut suburb of Ain al-Rammaneh. As a security measure, the area surrounding the church was closed to traffic. On the morning of that day, an unidentified car attempted to break through a security checkpoint. The resulting gun battle left four people dead, including two Kataeb party members. Armed men from the Kataeb and National Liberal (Maronite-dominated) parties took to the street. On the afternoon of that day, a bus carrying 30 passengers (some armed) belonging to various Palestinian organizations passed through Ain al-Rammaneh. Shooting broke out, leaving 27 of the passengers dead.

The clouds of an impending armed conflict between Christian parties and Palestinian organizations had been gathering for a number of years, particularly after the expulsion of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) from Jordan in 1970. With this expulsion, southern Lebanon became in practice the only sanctuary for PLO operations against Israel, no matter what measures the Lebanese state undertook to control Palestinian military activity. Fueled by mutual mistrust and opposing objectives, periodic armed clashes took place between the Palestinians and the Lebanese army and/or Christian parties.⁵ All efforts, domestic and Arab, aimed at reconciling existing differences failed to produce more than a temporary reprieve. This was the prevailing atmosphere prior to the clash in the Beirut suburb that ignited the civil war (see el Khazen 2000; Salibi 1976, 54–98).

Combatants and Phases of the Civil War

Combatants

Although there were two main warring camps, the combatants in the civil war included both major and minor militias and parties. The main traditional Christian (Maronite) parties included the Kataeb and National Liberal parties. These parties were forcibly united in 1980 into one organization called the Lebanese Forces, whose combined fighting force was estimated to be 8,000–10,000 fighters. Minor militias included the Marada Brigade (mainly Maronite, located in the northern town of Zogharta with 700–800 fighters) and the Guardians of the Cedars. The latter militia was mainly Maronite, with 500 fighters; it merged in 1980 with the Lebanese Forces. This camp favored the existing political system.

The opposing camp was more heterogeneous. Apart from the PLO, it included several Lebanese political parties and groups, notably Amal (Shi'a) and the Progressive Socialist Party (Druze). The Palestinian armed groups numbered close to 8,000 fighters prior to the Israeli invasion of 1982. They constituted the main fighting force in

the early years of the conflict. As the war unfolded, the Lebanese armed groups became stronger, especially after the bulk of Palestinian forces had to withdraw from the country following the Israeli invasion. The Amal Movement fighters were estimated at about 3,500 and the Progressive Socialist Party fighters at more than 5,000. The last few years of the war witnessed the growth of the Hizbullah Party (over 4,000 fighters), which focused primarily on resisting Israeli occupation and therefore operated mostly in southern Lebanon. Other members of this camp included the Syrian Nationalist Party (800–1,000 fighters, secular), the Communist Party (600–700 fighters, secular), and the Mourabitoun (at their peak 3,000, Sunni, mostly in West Beirut) (see table 3.1 for figures and references).

The large militias developed into elaborate organizations. To support their military activities, they set up public relations, social services, and other administrative offices. Their fighters were organized into ranks. On average, a soldier's salary was usually \$75–\$150 per month, which was higher than the prevailing minimum wage. Low-ranking officers were paid \$170–\$200 per month, while higher ranking officers

Table 3.1 War Period Militias

<i>Major militias</i>			
<i>Name</i>	<i>Dominant religious affiliation</i>	<i>Strength</i>	
		<i>Fighters</i>	<i>Total military and civilian personnel</i>
Amal	Muslim Shi'a	3,000–4,000 (1)	10,000 (3)
Hizbullah	Muslim Shi'a	4,000–4,500 (1)	18,000 (3)
Lebanese Forces	Christian Maronite	8,000–10,000 (1)	20,000 (3)
Palestinian Militias		8,000 (2)	
Progressive Socialist Party	Druze	5,000–6,000 (1)	16,000 (3)
South Lebanon's Army	Christian and Muslim Shi'a	2,000–2,500 (1)	
<i>Estimated Total</i>		<i>30,000–34,000</i>	<i>64,000</i>
<i>Minor militias</i>			
<i>Name</i>	<i>Dominant religious affiliation</i>	<i>Strength (number of fighters)</i>	
The Marada Brigade	Christian Maronite	700–800 (1)	
Zghorta Liberation Army	Christian Maronite	700 (2)	

(Continued)

Table 3.1 War Period Militias (Continued)

<i>Minor militias</i>		
<i>Name</i>	<i>Dominant religious affiliation</i>	<i>Strength (number of fighters)</i>
The Guardians of the Cedars	Christian Maronite	500 (4)
National Liberal Party	Christian Maronite	2,000 (2)
National Bloc	Christian Maronite	200 (2)
Baath Party	Muslim	500 (1)
National Syrian PPS	Secular	800–1,000 (1)
Saiqa		500 (2)
The Communist Action Organization	Secular	100–150 (1)
Lebanese Communist Party	Secular	600–700 (1)
Lebanese Arab Army (LAA)		2,000 (4)
The Najjadah	Muslim Sunni	300 (4)
The Murabitun (The Sentinels)	Muslim Sunni	3,000 (4)
Firqat an Nasr (Victory Divisions)		1,000 (4)
Waad Party	Christian	600–700 (1)
Tanzim Sha'bi Saida	Muslim Sunni	500 (1)
Arab Democratic Party	Muslim Alawi	500 (1)
The Order of Maronite Monks	Christian Maronite	200 (4)
<i>Estimated Total</i>		<i>14,700–15,250</i>

Sources: (1) Hamdan (1997); (2) O'Ballance (1998); (3) Richani (2001); (4) Library of the Congress (1987).

received between \$250 and \$400 a month (Atallah 2001). It was quite common for militias' military personnel to earn an amount exceeding their regular salary from side activities, most of which were illegal. High wartime unemployment acted as an incentive for young men to join the militias. In addition to paying their fighters, militias bore other costs associated with military conflict; these included the cost of equipment, ammunition, transportation, training, food, and medical supplies. It is estimated that total military costs constituted 60 percent of the large militias' budgets.

The remaining 40 percent of the militias' expenditures were divided among two main activities. First, all militias had an "information office." The parties communicated with the general public through press releases, press conferences, newspapers (which civilians were frequently forced to buy), radio stations, and, in some cases, TV stations. Some militias also had representation abroad. It is estimated that such public relations activities constituted 20 percent of the large militias' budgets. Second, militias became increasingly involved in providing social services, especially after the collapse of the Lebanese currency in the mid-1980s. They often provided scholarships for children's schooling, medical assistance (clinics and subsidized medicine), and food subsidies. These social services, which constituted about 20 percent of large militias' budgets, helped to lessen the militias' unpopularity among the population in their areas of operation.

The Lebanese, Syrian, and Israeli armies were also directly involved in the war. Syria initially supported the Christian/government camp with direct military intervention, but subsequently shifted its support to the opposing camp. Israel invaded Lebanon more than once (the largest invasion took place in June 1982). It backed the groups opposed to the PLO and created, after 1982, the so-called South Lebanon Army (2,000–3,000 fighters, Shi'a and Christians) that controlled a southern strip of the country until April 2000. Throughout the war, other forms of external intervention took place, mainly via financial support.

The combatants in the civil war thus comprised a multitude of parties that could be divided into two main camps: one in support of the state and one opposed to it. Within each camp there occurred frequent intramilitia fighting. The war was thus not one pitting the state against a well-defined rebel group. There was extensive military intervention by neighboring countries in support of one camp or the other.

Phases of the War

The civil war period can be divided into three phases. The first phase was 1975–77, comprising two years of war followed by a year of relative peace. Fighting was mainly between Christian parties allied with the government and the PLO and its Lebanese allies. Beirut was a divided city. The PLO/Lebanese coalition had effective control of West Beirut. The Lebanese army and traditional Christian parties were in control of East Beirut. Fierce battles took place between the Kataeb party and Palestinian groups at the outskirts of Beirut in areas that included Palestinian refugee camps. This fighting ended with the Kataeb in control of the refugee camps in the northeast suburbs of Beirut and the forced eviction of their residents. Christian towns south of

Beirut, notably Damour, were ransacked by Palestinian and Lebanese militias. Atrocities were committed by both sides.

In April 1976, Syrian forces entered Lebanon in support of the government and its political allies and clashed with the opposing PLO/Lebanese coalition (the so-called National and Islamic Forces). The objective of this intervention was to contain the expanding military dominance—and, by extension, political power—of the PLO and their Lebanese allies.⁶ This was followed by an Arab summit meeting held in Riyadh in October 1976 that called for a cease-fire that was to be supervised and enforced by an Arab Deterrent Force (ADF) consisting of troops from Syria, Sudan, Saudi Arabia, and Yemen. In practice, the Syrian forces that made up the bulk of the ADF were already in Lebanon.⁷ The other Arab troops arrived in November and, with their arrival, Beirut was reunified.

The second phase of the conflict was 1978–82, which politically and militarily ended with the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in June 1982. This period witnessed an escalation in fighting between the main parties to the conflict in Beirut and elsewhere in the country. Both Israeli and Syrian troops became involved in factional fighting.⁸ A significant development in July 1980 was the success of Bashir Gemeyal, leader of the Kataeb militia, in uniting by force all Christian militias into one organization named the Lebanese Forces. The country became effectively divided into regions that were militarily controlled by Syria, the Lebanese army and Lebanese forces, and the PLO and the Lebanese parties allied with it. Beirut was again divided into an eastern part, controlled by the Lebanese Forces and the Lebanese army, and a western part, controlled by the PLO/Lebanese coalition.

The third phase, from June 1982 to October 1990, was one of large-scale external intervention. This period began with the Israeli invasion of June 6, 1982 and concluded when the fighting ended a year after the acceptance of Taif Accord of October 1989. Shortly after moving into Lebanon, Israeli forces reached the outskirts of western Beirut and laid siege to it for almost two months.⁹ Fighting took place between the PLO, Lebanese parties, and the Israeli army, and between the Syrian and Israeli armies in the Beqa' valley. Eventually, the United States brokered an agreement in the summer of 1982 by which the PLO forces were forced to withdraw from western Beirut and Lebanon, while Syrian troops withdrew from West Beirut.

Israel attempted to impose a friendly government with the election of Bashir Gemayel as president by the Lebanese parliament on September 14, 1982. However, Bashir was assassinated before taking office. Israeli troops then entered into West Beirut and briefly occupied it.¹⁰ Following the assassination of Bashir Gemayel, parliament again met on September 22 and elected Amin Gemayel (the older brother of Bashir) for a six-year term as president. In the meantime, four Western powers (the United States, Britain, France, and Italy) agreed to send troops to Lebanon, ostensibly on a peacekeeping mission, which had as one of its goals the protection of the refugee camps in the greater Beirut area following the withdrawal of the PLO. These forces departed in early 1984; their mission ended without accomplishing its main objectives.¹¹

The newly formed government of Amin Gemayel entered into negotiations with Israel for a peace treaty which, among other things, called for the withdrawal of Israeli

troops from Lebanon. There was strong opposition to this treaty from Syria and its local allies on grounds that it would put Lebanon under Israeli control and undermine Syrian–Lebanese relations, weakening the Arab struggle for Palestinian rights. While the treaty was approved by parliament on May 17, 1983, it was not signed by the president and, hence, was never enforced.

This phase witnessed fierce fighting, particularly in the summer of 1983, between the Progressive Socialist Party (Druze dominated) and the Lebanese Forces in the Shouf Mountains east and southeast of Beirut. The end result was a mass exodus of Christian communities from the region, the destruction of many Druze and Christian towns, and the killing of hundreds of civilians. Similarly, until February 6, 1984, greater Beirut was under the control of the government. On that day, the Lebanese army was forced to withdraw from West Beirut, which again came under the control of militias and political organizations opposed to the government (primarily Amal and the Progressive Socialist Party). The civil strife between East and West Beirut was reignited, but it was not simply between the main Lebanese parties to the conflict. Intramilitia fighting frequently took place in both parts of the city, especially in the more heterogeneous West Beirut.¹² At the request of authorities in West Beirut, Syrian forces reentered this part of the city in February 1987 to maintain order and prevent intramilitia clashes.

The failure to elect a new president in September 1988 led to a unique two-government situation. When the six-year term of President Amin Gemayel was about to end in September 1988 without agreement on a successor, he unilaterally appointed the commander of the army, General Michel Aoun, as president of a council of ministers composed of the six members of the army command. The three Muslim members of the appointed council refused to serve. The existing government at the end of Gemayel's term refused to acknowledge the legitimacy of the council appointed by Gemayel and considered itself as the sole legitimate government of the country. Hence, two competing governments emerged.

The government of General Aoun refused to acknowledge the Taif Accord ratified by the Lebanese Parliament in October 1989. After a period of ferocious fighting, first between the army led by Aoun and Syrian army units, and then between pro-Taif Maronite forces (most notably the Lebanese Forces) and the army led by Aoun, the latter was forced by a joint Syrian–Lebanese military action to take refuge in the French Embassy. He was allowed to leave the country in October 1990, and his departure paved the way for the unification of the Lebanese government and public administration.¹³

Given the intensification of the war, it is not surprising that the 1982–90 period witnessed rapidly deteriorating economic and social conditions along with accelerating emigration. After 1984, the value of the Lebanese pound declined rapidly in nominal and real value. This was a period of increasing budgetary deficits and mounting inflation. The heavy human and economic toll mounted as the war raged.

To sum up, the forced eviction of Palestinian camps from the eastern districts of suburban Beirut in the pre-1982 phase of the war led to the creation of a central zone (including Beirut) that was effectively under the control of the Lebanese authorities.

In the wake of the Israeli invasion, there was a short-lived and costly attempt by the Maronite-dominated Lebanese Forces to expand to Druze strongholds in the mountain districts to the east of Beirut. Their failure led to an exodus of Christian communities toward regions controlled by the Lebanese government and Christian militias. Soon afterwards, the civil war settled into a relatively stable pattern of territorial control that largely corresponded to sectarian divisions. Throughout this phase, there were occasional intrafactional armed clashes, culminating in the 1988–90 war among parties who controlled East Beirut and the surrounding eastern and northern suburbs. The costs of the war were large. By some estimates, more than 144,000 died as a result of the war (5 percent of the population)¹⁴ and tens of thousands were forced to leave their homes and villages and seek refuge elsewhere in the country (Ministry of the Displaced, 1992). The economy was damaged and indirect costs (forgone production) are estimated at anywhere between US\$80 and \$160 billion (at 1995 prices).¹⁵

Causes and Duration of the Civil War

Onset of the War

The CH model relates the incidence of civil war to a number of variables, including a social fractionalization index, an ethnic dominance dummy variable, income and economic growth, natural resource wealth, and population size (Collier 2000; Collier and Hoeffler 2001, 2004). How well does the CH model fit the Lebanese case?

Religious fractionalization in Lebanon can be regarded in two ways: (1) the composition of the population into various Christian and Muslim sects (currently there are 18 officially recognized religious communities, with the Maronite, Shi'a, and Sunni communities taken together dominating with an estimated 70–80 percent of the population)¹⁶; or (2) its broad division between the Christian and Muslim communities, which at the time of the outbreak of the civil war was estimated to be in the neighborhood of 45–55 percent respectively.¹⁷ In the evolving pre-1975 political environment, calls for more equitable sectarian political power sharing centered on increasing the political power of the Muslim community as a whole vis-à-vis the Maronite community. Although the importance of increased participation of the Shi'a community in the formula for power sharing was recognized, this did not become explicit until the Taif Accord. For analytic purposes, it is more appropriate to consider that Lebanon's religious "map" is composed of two broad religious communities. This is primarily the way that Lebanon's religious fractionalization is treated by CH.

The Lebanese population is ethnically (linguistically) homogeneous, thus ethnic fractionalization does not play a role in the war. The small Armenian community (less than 7 percent of the population) is fully integrated into Lebanese political life while maintaining its cultural heritage. Because the social fractionalization index is a combination of the indices of religious fractionalization and ethnic fractionalization, and because the latter is low, Lebanon's social fractionalization index is low as well (see tables 3.2 and 3.3).

Table 3.2 CH Model Coefficients for Core and Alternative Models

<i>Model</i>	<i>secm</i>	<i>lngdp</i>	<i>gy1</i>	<i>sxp</i>	<i>sxp2</i>	<i>frac</i>	<i>etdo</i>	<i>peace</i>	<i>lnpop</i>	<i>geogia</i>	<i>constant</i>
Core	-0.0316		-0.1152	18.937	-29.4432	-0.0002	0.6704	-0.0037	0.7677	-2.487	-13.0731
Alternative		-0.9504	-0.098	16.7734	-23.8005	-0.0002	0.4801	-0.0038	0.5105	-0.9919	-3.4375

Note: See note to table 3.3 for definition of abbreviations.

Table 3.3 Data on Lebanon

<i>Year</i>	<i>secm</i>	<i>rgdpa</i>	<i>gy1</i>	<i>sxp</i>	<i>frac</i>	<i>etdo</i>	<i>peace</i>	<i>pop</i>	<i>geogia</i>	<i>psecm</i>	<i>pgdpa</i>
1970	49	1,474.51	1.875	0.05	938	0	136	2,617,140	0.645	0.00720	0.02615
1995	77	626.65	6.750	0.044	938	0	50	4,005,000	0.644	0.00296	0.05590

Note: Variable names are as follows: *secm*, secondary school enrollment for males; *lngdp*, log of real per capita income; *rgdpa*, real per capita income, *gy1*, growth rate of real income; *sxp*, primary commodity exports as a percent of GDP; *sxp2*, square of *sxp*; *frac*, social fractionalization; *etdo*, ethnic dominance; *peace*, time at peace since last civil war; *lnpop*, log of population size; *geogia*, geographic fractionalization. *psecm* and *pgdpa* denote the probability estimates of civil war onset predicted by the core and alternative models, respectively.

According to the CH model, the risk of conflict rises with ethnic dominance. Ethnic dominance is defined as a case in which the largest single group comprises between 45 and 90 percent of the population. Lebanon is not characterized by ethnic dominance. However, we may postulate that Lebanon's religious divisions are akin to ethnic-linguistic divisions in other countries that witnessed civil wars. Thus, the fact that at least one of the two main religious communities in Lebanon made up more than 45 percent of the total was akin to ethnic dominance. If we reoperationalize the dominance variable in this way, the CH model comes closer to capturing the roots of the Lebanese civil war.

The CH model also relates the incidence of war to income, economic growth, and natural resource wealth. When the war started, Lebanon, with a small population of under 3 million, had one of the highest per capita income levels in the region (and a high income level relative to developing countries in general).¹⁸ We noted earlier that the national economy had been expanding at a fast rate before 1975. Expanding employment opportunities should have lessened the risk of war by increasing the opportunity costs of the war. There was also little class conflict, given the limited role played by leftist parties or the workers' movement. Indeed, once the war started, it was the underprivileged on both sides of the sectarian/political divide that fought one another while various warlords (most of whom fought the war under "national" slogans) exploited sectarian feelings to prolong the conflict in order to achieve their private interests (see Makdisi 1977). Finally, Lebanon is not resource-rich, so its risk of civil war according to the CH model should have been low (for 1973–74 primary exports constituted less than 3 percent of GDP).

The CH model generates a low probability of war in Lebanon. For 1970, the probability was very small (2.6 percent), lower than the mean probability of civil war for the countries in the CH data set (around 6 percent).¹⁹ The probability on the eve of the war in 1974 cannot be calculated because the model uses data organized at five-year intervals and excludes years of ongoing war.²⁰ But, because underlying conditions did not change significantly, the probability of war in 1974 should also have been low.²¹ What kept rising, however, was the underlying political tension.

The prediction of a low probability of war by the CH model for Lebanon is not surprising. The ethnic dominance dummy variable takes a value of zero. Other variables that point to a low incidence of war for Lebanon (in comparison with the countries that experienced civil wars) include a higher growth rate than the mean for those countries, a very low ratio of natural resource wealth to GDP,²² a relatively small population, and a higher geographic dispersion. However, the social fractionalization index for Lebanon was higher and the time distance from a past recorded conflict (1958) was shorter. But the last two variables are noneconomic. In other words, the main causes of the civil war in Lebanon are political rather than economic. Equally important, the CH model does not account for external intervention, which for Lebanon, as well as many other countries, was an important factor in the onset and duration of civil war.

Similarly, the calculation for 1995 also points to a relatively low probability of war breaking out (5.6 percent). The factors that account for the rise in this percentage in

comparison with 1970 include a shorter time period from the end of last conflict (1990), a larger population, and lower real per capita GDP.²³ The effect of these variables more than compensated for the effect of per capita real GDP growth, which was higher in 1990–94 than it was in 1965–69.

All the above estimates emerge from the GDP (or “alternative”) version of the CH model. By comparison, the secondary school enrollment (or “core”) version produces a probability of war for 1970 of 0.72 percent and a probability of war for 1995 of 0.3 percent. These very low numbers reflect the strong traditional emphasis on education in Lebanese society. Because of this emphasis, it may be that secondary school enrollment is not a good proxy for economic opportunity. The probabilities emerging from the GDP version seem more reasonable. If we gave weight to the results of the secondary school enrollment version, we would end up with extremely low probabilities of war. This would lend further support to the contention that the causes of the war in Lebanon are not well represented in the CH framework.

The CH model finds little correlation between political repression or other grievance and the incidence of war. Variables such as land or income inequality or the level of democracy are statistically insignificant.

For Lebanon, economic variables such as income, economic growth, and natural resource wealth, tend, according to the CH model, to decrease the probability of civil conflict. Nevertheless, other socioeconomic factors helped to create a crisis situation. The pre-1975 uneven development among Lebanon’s regions and the accompanying socio/sectarian divisions were factors which, given the appropriate circumstances, could be exploited to support violent political change via the unleashing of sectarian conflicts. In the early 1970s, rising inflationary pressures added to the “explosive” potential of these divisions.

The Lebanese confessional system did not lead to the oppression of one religious group by another, as may be the case in countries with major ethnolinguistic conflicts. Indeed, major attributes of liberal democracy, such as freedom of expression and openness to the outside, have been maintained. However, the sectarian formula for power sharing agreed to on the eve of independence came to be regarded by the Muslim community as unjust and a cause for political grievance. While not advocating the elimination of the confessional system, most of the Muslim leadership (allying itself in the early stages of the war with the PLO) pressed for a modified formula of power sharing that would give them a bigger role in running the affairs of the state. This implied a corresponding change in their involvement in public administration and their relative share of the public sector. Similarly, increasing political power meant increasing opportunities for the Muslim community to participate more widely in the national economy.²⁴ However, this picture should not obscure the fact that some of the actors involved in the conflict (individuals and political groups) genuinely embraced a secular viewpoint and were motivated by nonsectarian ideologies. To them, the conflict was a means to change the sectarian order toward a more secular and equitable system. This did not materialize in the postwar era. If anything, the sectarian nature of political behavior has become more pronounced.

Our above analysis suggests that, of the variables in the CH model, it is religious (as opposed to ethnolinguistic) fractionalization that was important as a determinant of the Lebanese war and that the other variables are not relevant. But, as noted earlier, it was the combination of internal and external factors that brought about the onset of the war. The key external factor was the political/military stance of the PLO and its conflict with the state, which invited more external interventions. These interventions also influenced the duration of the war, which we turn to next.

Duration of the Conflict

Factors that affect the onset of war need not also explain its duration. In particular, the level of income affects duration to a lesser extent than it does onset and war duration has a nonmonotonic relationship with ethnolinguistic and religious fractionalization. Also, the odds of peace decline radically after the first year of conflict (Collier, Hoeffler, and Soderbom 2001). Other authors in examining the subject of duration, emphasize the emergence of war economies, which provide an economic incentive for wars to continue (Keen 2000; Richani 2001). Finally, external intervention plays a significant role. The average length of a civil war that had external interventions was nine years, whereas wars in which there was no external intervention had an average length of 1.5 years (Elbadawi and Sambanis 2000).

The Lebanese civil war lasted for a relatively long time (16 years). This was much longer than the average duration for the civil wars that have taken place since the end of the World War II, namely two years. The broad religious divisions within Lebanese society seem to fit the general pattern of fractionalization which helps to prolong conflicts. Two additional factors played a significant role: economic greed and external interventions.

Once the civil war broke out, economic gains accruing to the warring parties became a major factor that sustained the war. The militias sought to enhance their economic/financial position by various means: looting, confiscation of private property, imposing taxes in the regions under their control, cultivation and trading of drugs, trading in contraband, outright thievery (including in 1975–76 the pillaging of the port of Beirut and the downtown district), bank robberies, and fraudulent banking practices. Warring parties stood to gain a great deal financially from the ongoing war (see tables 3.4 and 3.5).

There are no reliable and systematic data on the financial resources accruing to the militias during the civil conflict. Scattered estimates, however, are available. By one estimate, the militias were able to amass \$15 billion during the war in addition to funds received from outside sources (Corm 1994, 216–218). A comparable estimate of \$14.5 billion (for the aggregate turnover of the so-called black or informal economy) was published in *Annahar* daily newspaper.²⁵ Added to the external financial assistance provided by intervening outside powers, the major militias had sufficient resources at their disposal to finance their costly military and civilian operations, permitting (or inducing) them to sustain the long-lasting and profitable armed conflict. Substantial personal wealth was accumulated by the various militia leadership and their henchmen.²⁶

Table 3.4 Estimates of Financial Resources Accruing to Militias During the Civil War

<i>Militia</i>	<i>Amount</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Frequency and time frame</i>
Lebanese Forces	US\$75 million (1)	Annual budget of the Lebanese Forces	Annual
Lebanese Forces	US\$40 million (1)	Share of the annual budget used to equip the Lebanese Forces militia troupes and pay for their salaries (55 percent)	Annual
Lebanese Forces	US\$25 million (2)	Israeli direct military help to the Lebanese Forces	Annual; 1976–1982
Lebanese Forces	US\$80,000 (3)	Earnings from controlling various ports incl. the fifth basin of Beirut port	Monthly
Lebanese Forces	US\$100 million (1)	Total investment of the Lebanese Forces	
Lebanese Forces	US\$60 million (1)	Total investment of the Lebanese Forces in real estate	
Lebanese Forces	US\$5 million–US\$6 million (4)	Total expenditures	Monthly; 1988
Lebanese Forces	US\$20 million (4)	Occasional sales of arms in foreign markets	
Lebanese Forces	US\$5 million (4)	Sale of weapons and ammunition to the Lebanese Army	
Lebanese Forces	US\$65 (9)	Monthly salary of the fighters	Monthly
Lebanese Forces	US\$150 million–US\$200 million (4)	Estimated gross annual income	Annual, 1982–1989
PSP	US\$60,000 (3)	Earnings from controlling the ports of Jiyeh and Khalde	Monthly
PSP	US\$75 (4)	Monthly salary of the fighters	Monthly
PSP	US\$70 million–US\$100 million (4)	Estimated gross annual income	Annual, 1982–1989
PSP	US\$70 million–US\$100 million (4)	Income from the ports of Khaldeh and Jyeh, importation of fuel, industrial projects in Shouf, taxation, and foreign aid.	Annually
PSP	US\$100 million (4)	Grant from the PLO	1987
PSP	US\$40 million (4)	Grant from the PLO, of which the first installment was received	1987

(Continued)

Table 3.4 Estimates of Financial Resources (*Continued*)

<i>Militia</i>	<i>Amount</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Frequency and time frame</i>
PSP	US\$35 million (4)	Grant received from Libya	1987
Hizbullah	US\$23 million (4)	Financial support from Iran	Monthly
Hizbullah	US\$3 million (4)	Funding from Iran allocated for the recruitment of 25,000 fighters, who each will be paid US\$100 per month	Monthly, 1987
Hizbullah	US\$100 (4)	Monthly salary of the fighters	Monthly
Hizbullah	US\$36 million– US\$60 million (4)	Estimated gross annual income	Annual, 1982–1989
Amal	US\$75 (4)	Monthly salary of the fighters	Monthly

Sources: (1) *Le Commerce* 26.05.89; (2) Picard (1996b); (3) *Les Cahiers de l'Orient*. Revue d'étude et de réflexion sur le Liban et le monde arabe, deuxième trimestre (1988), no. 10, pp. 271–287; (4) Richani (2001).

Note: PSP, Progressive Socialist Party.

External interventions, particularly those by Lebanon's two regional neighbors, were critical in sustaining the war. Intervention included the provision of arms and substantial financing of the warring parties. One source holds that foreign financial assistance to the warring parties totaled twice the amount they raised locally, or about \$30 billion, if not more.²⁷ There were also military interventions by Syria and Israel, and as well as a multinational peacekeeping mission. As Syria and Israel supported opposing groups, a *modus vivandi* was created that contributed to a prolonged war as Lebanese parties could not independently reach a negotiated settlement.

The role of Lebanese and Palestinian diasporas in sustaining the violence cannot be easily measured. The warring parties attempted to secure assistance from their respective communities abroad. This support took the form of political lobbying and/or propaganda, as well as financial assistance. No estimates of the inflow of these financial resources are available, but it is known, for example, that Palestinians working in Kuwait were subject to a tax on their earnings earmarked for the PLO. The impact of the Lebanese and Palestinian diasporas on the civil war was probably minor. Active support of the warring militias among the diaspora was in all likelihood confined to small groups.

The Lebanese case exhibits a perhaps atypical level of factionalism. There were multiple parties to the war that frequently broke down in intrafactional violence. Even the government(s) whose composition reflected sectarian divisions often included members who were sympathetic to the cause of the groups opposing the state. Governmental institutions kept functioning in various parts of the country controlled

Table 3.5 Estimates of Financial Resources Accruing to Militias During the Civil War

<i>Source 1</i>								
<i>Arms trade</i>	<i>Looting</i>	<i>Exploitation^a</i>	<i>Smuggling</i>	<i>Bribes and extortion^b</i>	<i>Ports</i>	<i>Drugs</i>	<i>Political money and military resources</i>	<i>Total</i>
Average US\$400 million	Gross value of looted prop- erty US\$2 bil- lion of which US\$500 mil- lion accrued to looters <i>1975–1990</i>	Profits US\$50 mil- lion <i>Annually, 1975–1990</i>	Illegal exports of fuel US\$40 mil- lion <i>Total, 1980–1989</i>	US\$200 mil- lion <i>Annually, 1975–1990</i>	Loss of tariff rev- enues of legal ports ^c Minimum US\$15.5 million Maximum US\$19.5 million <i>Annually, 1975–1990</i>	Total exports ^e US\$1.7 bil- lion <i>Total as of 1985</i>	US\$10 billion <i>1975–1991</i>	Turnover of the Black Economy US\$14.5 bil- lion <i>1975–1990</i> US\$900 mil- lion ^f <i>Annually, 1975–1990</i>
Earnings from arms trade exceeded US\$150 million <i>Annually, 1975– 1990</i>			Earnings from illegal exports of subsidized wheat US\$20 mil- lion <i>Total, 1987–1990</i>		Average earnings from unloading, loading, and transport in illegal ports US\$2 million <i>Annually, 1980–1989</i> and US\$8 million <i>Annually, 1987–1989</i> Illegal earnings ^d US\$2.1 billion <i>Total 1975–1990</i>			

Source II

Pillaging ^g	Ransoms ^h	Embezzlement of banks ⁱ	Drugs and contraband	Confiscation of army arsenal	Total
Minimum US\$5 billion			Earnings from trade in drugs		
Maximum US\$7 billion	US\$500 million <i>Total, 1975–1990</i>	US\$250 million 1982–1983 ^j	Minimum US\$700 million Maximum US\$1 billion <i>Annually, 1975–1990</i>	Value Unknown ^k	Total earnings US\$5 billion 1975–90
<i>Total, 1975–1990</i>					

Sources: Source I: *Annahar*, October 15, 1990, p. 8; Source II: Corm (1994).

- a. Exploitation includes imports and sale of expired medical supplies, imitation of products and selling them as originals, bank notes forgeries (esp. US dollars), etc.
- b. Source I also reports that during 1975–90, illegal commissions on governmental projects and purchases totaled US\$600 million and accrued to 200 government officials.
- c. Due to the existence of illegal ports.
- d. Earnings created by avoiding the payment of port charges and custom fees, both of which had generated abnormal profits for industrialists, merchants, and importers.
- e. Another source, Couvrat and Pless (1993), estimates profits accruing from the drug business at US\$2 billion for the period 1975–90.
- f. Another source, Richani (2001), estimates the war economy's money circulated at US \$900 million per year between 1978 and 1982, of which US \$400 million was circulated by the PLO, US \$300 million was donated by foreign sources to different militias, and US \$200 million was acquired by militias from internal Lebanese sources through various means, including extortion, drug trafficking, and contraband.
- g. Includes pillaging of the Beirut Port (1976), looting of the downtown district (1975/76), and confiscation of property.
- h. Revenues from imposed tolls and taxes are not quantified.
- i. In April 1976, the British Bank of the Middle East was subject to armed robbery. Estimates of stolen cash range from US\$20 million to US\$50 million. (Source: Fawaz 1993).
- j. This figure pertains to the reserves embezzlement from the First Phoenician Bank and Capital Trust Bank.
- k. Source II mentions that in the period 1982–83, the Lebanese army purchased about US\$1 billion worth of arms from the United States, presumably as replacement for the confiscated arms and equipment.

by different sects/parties and paid the wages of their employees irrespective of their political loyalties and the areas in which they served. Furthermore, external interveners at times shifted their support from one side to another. For example, the initial direct Syrian intervention in the early stages of the war was in support of traditional Maronite parties but later shifted to supporting groups opposing the Maronites. Similarly, Israel, initially supported traditional Christian parties that fought the Palestinians, but eventually created a surrogate army in the south that included both Christians and Muslims.

Resolving the Conflict: The Taif Accord and Beyond

The settlement under the Taif Accord was based on the reaffirmation of the principle of sectarian power sharing, albeit with a modified formula. The Accord drew on earlier reform plans that, for various domestic and external reasons, could not be implemented. The most significant of these was the Syrian-sponsored 1985 Tripartite Agreement (between the Lebanese Forces, Amal, and the Progressive Socialist Party militias), which proposed constitutional amendments, a number of which were similar to those subsequently adopted in the Taif Accord (Mailat 1992).

Although the Lebanese parties to the conflict might, after 16 years of war, have become exhausted and ready to reach a settlement, it took external pressure to conclude the war. This was largely prompted by the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in August 1990. This event encouraged outside powers (both Arab and Western) involved or concerned with the Lebanese conflict to help settle it as a prelude to the launching of the Allied campaign led by the United States to liberate Kuwait at the beginning of 1991. Syria, a main actor in Lebanon's civil conflict, was one of the Arab countries that supported this campaign. As noted earlier, the ratification of the Taif Accord did not lead to the cessation of hostilities in Lebanon until the ouster of General Aoun in October 1990 through direct Syrian military action undertaken with tacit U.S. approval.²⁸

The Accord created a more equitable sectarian formula for power sharing among the two main religious communities by enhancing the position of the prime minister (Sunni Muslim), as well as that of the speaker of the house (Shi'a Muslim), and curtailing some of the privileges that the president (Maronite) had enjoyed. For example, the new Taif constitution stipulates that the appointment of the prime minister is to be determined by binding consultation with members of parliament, which the president is required to conduct for this purpose. To that extent, the prime minister is no longer beholden to the president, as before, for his appointment. Also, the council of ministers, which collectively was given wide executive powers, is chaired by the prime minister unless the president chooses to attend its meetings, in which case the president chairs. In practice, with some exceptions, the president has, so far, chaired council meetings. As for the speaker of the house, his term of appointment was extended from one to four years, which effectively freed him from the pressures associated with one-year appointments. Furthermore, instead of the small advantage previously enjoyed by the Christian community in parliament, the Accord specified

equal representation for the two communities. This same principle continued to apply to the council of ministers.

The essence of the political system, thus, remained unchanged. However, by readjusting the basis for sectarian power sharing, the Accord envisaged, in principle, a more collegial political governance among the major religious communities and, hence, a firmer basis for domestic political stability. One major manifestation of this anticipated collegiality is the enhanced power of the council of ministers, which is supposed to act as a collective governing body. In contrast with parliamentary acts that are taken by majority vote, the new constitution specifies that decisions of the council of ministers are to be arrived at by consensus and only failing that by majority vote. For “fundamental” questions facing the country, failing consensus, a majority of two-thirds is required, subject to parliamentary approval.²⁹ Significantly, the Taif Accord allowed for a temporary stay of Syrian troops in Lebanon to help the Lebanese authorities establish law and order; the eventual withdrawal of these forces was to be subject to the mutual agreement of the Syrian and Lebanese governments. As would be expected, until forced to withdraw in April 2005, Syria had exercised substantial political influence in postwar Lebanon.

A recent study on the successful settlement of civil wars argues that whatever reasons bring combatants to the negotiating table and their signing of power sharing pacts, the successful resolution of such wars would still require third-party security guarantees concerning the safety of the combatants and the enforceability of the agreed pacts.³⁰ The Taif Accord, which allowed for the presence of Syrian troops in Lebanon (albeit on a temporary basis), seems to support this conclusion. On the other hand, it is also important to understand the nature, extent, and duration of third-party (external) security intervention. The Lebanese case demonstrates that this intervention could go beyond its originally intended objectives. In as much as third-party security guarantees may be necessary to help postconflict governments enforce power-sharing pacts and maintain domestic peace, it is equally important to ensure that the third party entrusted with this task does not, for self-serving reasons, become perennially embroiled in domestic political processes and outcomes. This, of course, would depend on the nature of the agreed political compromises that paved the way for the resolution of civil conflicts and whether they are inherently stable in the long run—a matter that we cannot go into here.

In the case of Lebanon, the collegiate governance in the post-Taif period has not been successful so far. In particular, the council of ministers has not come to assume the enhanced role assigned to it in the constitution. Instead, the phenomenon of “troika rule” (the troika comprising the president of the republic, the speaker of the house, and the prime minister) emerged and has tended to dominate political life, particularly after 1992. Effectively, it undermined the privileges that the Taif Accord granted to the council of ministers as a collective governing body and diminished the role of individual cabinet members in decision making. Without going into the reasons that led to the troika rule, what is significant is that disagreements among council members were not necessarily settled within the council of ministers or parliament, but outside these institutions through reliance on the *de facto* “troika”

system. Failing such a resolution, resort to Syrian mediation became necessary or mandatory in order to settle existing disputes. With Syria playing the role of the influential arbiter, domestic political flare-ups were not permitted to disrupt the political process.³¹

This, in turn, raises a fundamental question concerning the long-term workability of the Taif Accord in the absence of an outside steadying or arbitrating hand. Does it constitute the ultimate political framework that will ensure stability in the long run? While the diffusion of political power among the main religious communities was intended to contribute to sectarian stability, the post-Taif political experience reveals the persistence of potential sectarian elements of instability (though in the Lebanese case, as amply demonstrated, domestic stability cannot be isolated from regional influences). The question remains whether, in the absence of destabilizing external influences, the post-Taif political system is sufficiently viable to withstand internal shocks without outside assistance.

From the end of the civil war until April 2005, Syrian involvement was a major factor in determining political outcomes. Now that Syrian troops have withdrawn, the workability of the Lebanese system under the condition of greatly diminished Syrian influence is yet to be tested. Even if it is correct, as some argue, that the lack of firm stability in the post-Taif era, in large measure, was attributable to the dominating Syrian military and political presence, this would not negate the existence of elements of potential instability associated with the nature of the political system itself. For whatever its merits, the finely tuned sharing of political power among Lebanon's religious communities is inherently discriminatory. Conflicts among the various political and sectarian leaders have arisen, and can arise again in the future, over what they consider to be the rightful share of the religious community that each represents in managing the affairs of the state. Sectarianism has continued to act as the mainstay of political behavior. The Taif settlement notwithstanding, there is no guarantee that, as in the past, sectarianism will not be a destabilizing influence.

The question of how to move from a discriminatory sectarian system to a more stable nondiscriminatory political system or, alternatively, how to husband the present system to render it more stable, falls outside the purview of this chapter.³² Nonetheless, we can postulate that the prewar circumstances that led to the civil war are not as relevant in the postwar period. Calls for more equitable power sharing among the major religious communities have been met. The Palestinian factor is no longer significant and the regional conflict is no longer as salient in Lebanese politics. In the absence of active destabilizing external influences, it is doubtful that the remaining potential elements of domestic instability mentioned above—most notably religious fractionalization—would, on their own, lead to a renewal of civil conflict. But this is a matter that requires further study before arriving at firm conclusions.

In addition, Lebanon's trade- and services-oriented economy, the traditionally dominant private sector, and the country's high educational attainment make a recurrence to war unlikely, because such a course would have high economic opportunity costs.

Conclusions

The CH model is based on a simple portrayal of a war between the state and a single rebel group. This is, of course, oversimplification. The Lebanese case highlights the complicated dynamics that result from competition among several warring groups and their allies.

Religious fractionalization appears as an important cause of civil conflict in the Lebanese case, but it has not been fully examined in the CH model or in the literature more generally. It is not clear, for example, if religious fractionalization would have been as important a factor in Lebanon if the political system had been secular (nonsectarian). More cross-country research is needed to determine whether religious dominance plays the same role as ethnic dominance and under which conditions it can fuel civil war. Our study suggests that an interactive effect between educational attainment and religious dominance deserves further attention.

Repeated and competing external interventions played a major role in provoking, prolonging, and ending the civil war in Lebanon. Until its withdrawal in April 2005, Syrian military presence in the postwar period exerted significant influence over domestic politics. For Lebanon, the question that needs to be addressed is whether the post-Taif Accord political system is sufficiently viable to withstand internal shocks without some form of external involvement. If not, which political reforms are necessary to make the system viable?

More generally, this raises the related question of how to ensure that third-party security guarantees, which may be necessary to resolve civil conflicts and ensure the enforceability of power-sharing pacts in the immediate postconflict era, do not themselves permit or induce the guarantor to become embroiled in domestic political issues in pursuit of specific objectives, such as enduring political dominance. This may be especially relevant in cases where ethnolinguistic or religious factors had played an important role in the onset of such conflicts.

Economic motives for civil war were weak in this case. We can immediately discount the influence of natural resources. As the Lebanese economy was and remains heavily dependent on trade and services, the policy issue of diversification for the purpose of reducing the risk of potential conflict associated with natural resources does not arise. The rate of growth preceding the conflict pointed to lower, rather than a higher, risk of civil war. We, therefore, need to consider both the grievance (political agenda) and greed (economic agenda) elements in interaction. Once the civil war broke out, economic factors played an important role in prolonging its duration.

Notes

1. For a review of the prewar economy, see Badre (1972) and Makdisi (1979).
2. See Schmeil (1976), quoted in Labaki and Rjeily (1993, 182).
3. On prevailing prewar conditions in the south, see Sâlih (1973).
4. However, the wide cultural and professional gap between Christians and Muslims at the beginning of independence was progressively reduced over the period under consideration. See, for example, Labaki and Rjeily (1993, 185).

5. Military confrontations took place between the Palestinian military organizations and the Lebanese Army in 1968 and 1969. The conflict was settled with Egyptian mediation in November 1969. While the PLO would nominally respect Lebanese sovereignty, the agreement allowed a measure of freedom for Palestinian groups taking action against Israel from Lebanese soil. Increased Palestinian activity brought them in armed conflict with Lebanese security forces and Christian parties.
6. A new president of the republic, Elias Sarkis, was elected by parliament in September 1976. He succeeded Sulieman Frangieh, whose six-year term had ended.
7. The ADF force consisted of 30,000 men, of whom 27,000 were Syrians.
8. For example, in March 1978, Israel invaded southern Lebanon. This military action resulted in 2,000 deaths and 250,000 displaced persons and ended with the deployment of UN troops on the Lebanese Israeli border. In 1980, Syria concentrated troops in the Beqa' valley and clashed with Kataeb militia entrenched in the city of Zahle near the Beirut-Damascus highway.
9. The invasion brought economic havoc in its wake. Estimates of damage to physical property alone exceeded \$2 billion. See Council for Development and Reconstruction, *The Reconstruction Project*, April 1983, I.5.
10. The well-publicized massacres took place in the refugee camps Sabra and Chatila while the Israeli army was still in control of West Beirut.
11. U.S. and French army barracks were the target of suicidal attacks in October 1983 that resulted in high troop casualties. These incidents hastened their decision to withdraw. Prior to that, in April 1983, the U.S. Embassy located in West Beirut was blown up. It was later relocated to the eastern suburbs of Beirut.
12. After the Israeli invasion, Hizbollah, supported by Iranian funding, began to grow in the southern suburbs of Beirut and in Shi'a-dominated regions of the country. It frequently clashed with Amal in West Beirut for control of the Shi'a community. Clashes also occurred between the Progressive Socialist Party and Amal. During intramilitia warfare, the smaller Sunni militia, the Mourabitoun, was defeated. Intramilitia fighting occurred throughout the war not only in Beirut but also in other parts of the country.
13. As noted above, Syrian troops (which had originally entered Lebanon in 1976, the second year of the civil war) continued to be deployed in Lebanon until April 2005. Earlier, in May 2000, Israeli troops and their surrogate army had been forced to withdraw from the occupied areas in the southern part of the country under constant attacks from resistance groups, especially Hizbollah.
14. See report published in "Annahar," March 5, 1992. The figure excludes the death toll in Palestinian camps. The report cites a total of more than 184,000 injured, more than 17,000 who disappeared, and more than 13,000 who were maimed.
15. These are adjusted estimates based on available estimates for forgone production at 1974 prices. See Makdisi (2004, chapter 2).
16. Each of these communities probably constituted between 20 and 30 percent of the total population.
17. The last population census was conducted in 1932. Hence, no official estimates on the religious composition of the population have been available since that time.

18. For 1973–74, the two years preceding the outbreak of the civil war, estimates of real per capita gross domestic product (GDP) range from \$1,000 to \$1,300 (1974 prices).
19. Estimates obtained from Anke Hoeffler.
20. Calculating a probability of war for 1975 would be a misapplication of the CH model, which deals with the probability of a war starting in the subsequent five-year period beginning from a situation of peace. Lebanon was already at war in 1975.
21. Real per capita GDP was roughly 20 percent higher in 1974 than it was in 1970, while the average per capita real GDP growth in 1970–74 was approximately 45 percent higher than it was in 1965–69. The population increased by about 10 percent from 1970 to 1974.
22. According to the CH model, the incidence of civil war is likely to have a nonmonotonic relationship with the level of natural resources.
23. These variables are listed in order of increasing strength. In other words, the variable that played the greatest role in making the probability of war higher in 1995 than in 1970 was per capita GDP, followed by population, and so on.
24. In the private sector, Christian dominance of the economy declined over time as the Muslim communities grew in political and educational stature.
25. Issue of October 15, 1990, p. 8. One source reports that PLO investments in Lebanon—largely financed by Arab countries—were estimated at about \$1.46 billion in the early 1980s (see Hamdan 1997).
26. Estimates of the direct costs of the war vary. Tarabulsi (1993) estimates the cost of a day's fighting at \$150,000—\$500,000. Picard (1996b) puts the cost of the war at \$150 million to \$1.5 billion a year. Assuming an annual average of \$800 million, this implies a total loss of around \$13 billion for the entire war.
27. See Corm (1994, 218). Some estimates put Libyan financial assistance to the PLO and their Lebanese allies at about \$50 million a month, at least prior to 1982, which adds up to a total of \$4.8 billion from 1975 to 1982. For the whole war period, *Annahar* (see note 25) estimates the total of political money and military resources at about \$10 billion. Another source quotes an estimate of \$300 million for the annual inflow of political money prior to 1982, for a total of \$2.7 billion. See Nasr (1989).
28. After more than 14 years in forced exile, Aoun returned to Beirut on May 7, 2005 following the withdrawal of Syrian troops in the preceding months.
29. For a critical assessment of the Taif Accord, see Mailat (1992, 53–58).
30. See Walter (2002, 90–91 and 160–161).
31. Syria's substantial influence in Lebanon was publicly acknowledged and often referred to in the local press. On August 18, 1998, *An-Nahar*, daily, headlined its commentary on the local situation: "Syria is no longer embarrassed in declaring its choice of the new president." In Lebanese diplomatic jargon, Syria's accepted role as an arbiter and dispenser of advice to Lebanese politicians and officials was subsumed under close cooperation and coordination between the two countries, particularly when invoked in the context of Israeli plans to destabilize the Lebanese domestic situation.
32. Barbara Walter (2002, 167–168) notes that consociational power-sharing solutions are appealing to groups who fear political domination. But power-sharing pacts are not stable over time unless they evolve into liberal, open political institutions. For a relevant discussion and application to Lebanon, see Makdisi (2004, chapter 5).

References

- Atallah, Tony. 2001. "The Organization of the Internal War: A Modern Conflict Strategy in a Diverse Society (The Lebanese Case, 1975–1990)." Doctoral dissertation. Lebanese University, Beirut.
- Badre, Albert. 1972. "Economic Development of Lebanon." In *Economic Development and Population Growth in the Middle East*, ed. C. A. Cooper and S. A. Alexander. New York: Elsevier.
- Collier, Paul. 2000. "Economic Causes of Civil Conflict and Their Implication for Policy." In *Managing Global Chaos*, ed. C. Crocker, F. Hampson, and P. Aall, 143–82. Washington, DC: U.S. Institute of Peace.
- Collier, Paul, and Anke Hoeffler. 2001. "Greed and Grievance in Civil War." Policy Research Working Paper 2355, World Bank, Washington, DC.
- . 2004. "Greed and Grievance in Civil War." *Oxford Economic Papers* 56 (4): 563–95.
- Collier, Paul, Anke Hoeffler, and Måns Soderbom. 2001. "On the Duration of Civil War." Working Paper, World Bank, Washington, DC.
- Corm, G. 1994. "The War System: Militia Hegemony and the Re-establishment of the State." In *Peace for Lebanon? From War to Reconstruction*, ed. D. Collings, 215–230. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- De Soysa, I. 2000. "The Resource Curse: Are Civil Wars Driven by Rapacity or Paucity." In *Greed and Grievance: Economic Agendas in Civil Wars*, ed. M. Berdal and D. M. Malone, 113–36. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- Elbadawi, I., and N. Sambanis. 2000. "External Intervention and the Duration of Civil Wars." Paper presented at the World Bank Conference on the "Economics and Politics of Civil Conflicts," Princeton University, Princeton, NJ, March 18–19.
- el Khazen, Farid. 2000. *The Breakdown of the State in Lebanon, 1975–1976*. London: I. B. Taurus.
- Fawaz, N. 1993. "Traboulsi: De la violence. Fonctions et rituels." In *Stratégie II, Peuples Méditerranéens*, 57–86. Paris: Editions Anthropos.
- Gleditsch, N. P., H. Strand, M. Eriksson, M. Sollenberg, and P. Wallensteen. 2000. "Armed Conflict 1946–99: A New Dataset." Paper presented at the World Bank Conference on "Identifying Wars: Systematic Conflicts Research and Its Utility in Conflict Resolution and Prevention," Uppsala University, June 8–9.
- Hamdan, Kamal. 1997. *Le conflit Libanais: Communautés religieuses, classes sociales, et identité nationale*. France: Garnet Editions.
- Harik, Iliya. 1985. "The Economic and Social Factors in the Lebanese Crisis." In *Arab Society, Social Science Perspectives*, ed. S. Ibrahim and N. Hopkins, 412–31. Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press.
- Keen, David. 2000. "Incentives and Disincentives for Violence." In *Greed and Grievance: Economic Agendas in Civil Wars*, ed. M. Berdal and D. M. Malone, 19–41. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- Labaki, B., and K. Abou Rjeily. 1993. *Bilan des Guerres du Liban, 1975–1990*. Paris: Editions L'Harmattan.
- Library of the Congress. 1987. "Country Report: Lebanon." Available online at: www.memory.loc.gov/frd/cs/lebanon/lb_appnb.html.

- Mailat, Joseph. 1992. *The Document of National Understanding, a Commentary*. Beirut: Center for Lebanese Policy Studies.
- Makdisi, Samir. 1977. "Economic Aspects of the Lebanese Crisis." In *The Lebanese Crisis*. Cairo: Arab Organization for Education, Culture and Science. (in Arabic)
- . 1997. *Financial Policy and Economic Growth, the Lebanese Experience*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- . 2004. *The Lessons of Lebanon: The Economics of War and Development*. London: I. B. Tauris.
- Ministry of the Displaced. 1992. "The Movements and Regions of the Displaced." In *The Issue of Displacement in Lebanon, 1975–1990*. Beirut, Lebanon: Ministry of the Displaced.
- Nasr, Salim. 1989. "The Political Economy of the Lebanese Conflict." In *Politics and The Economy in Lebanon*, ed. N. Shehadi and B. Harny. Oxford: Center for Lebanese Policy Studies.
- O'Ballance, E. 1998. *Civil War in Lebanon, 1975–92*. Houndmills Basingstoke Hampshire: Macmillan.
- Picard, Elizabeth. 1996a. *Lebanon, A Shattered Country*. New York: Holmes and Meier.
- . 1996b. "Liban: La matrice historique." In *Economie des guerres civiles*, ed. Jean Ruffin, 62–103. Paris: Hachette.
- Reynal-Querol, M. 2002. "Ethnicity, Political Systems and Civil Wars." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 46 (1): 29–54.
- Richani, Nazih. 2001. "The Political Economies of the War Systems in Lebanon and Colombia." Paper presented at the World Bank Conference on the "Economics of Civil Wars," Oslo, June 11–13.
- Salibi, Kamal. 1976. *Cross Roads to Civil War, Lebanon 1958–1976*. Beirut: Caravan Books.
- Sâlih, Farhân. 1973. *Lubnân al- Junûbî, wâqi'uha wa qadâyâhû* [*Southern Lebanon, Its Reality and the Issues It Faces*]. Beirut: Dar Al Talia.
- Schmeil, Yves. 1976. *Sociologie due system politique Libanais*. Grenoble: Universitaire de Grenoble.
- Tarabulsi, F. 1993. *Identites et solidarites croisées dans les conflits du Liban contemporain*. Doctoral dissertation, University of Paris VIII.
- Walter, Barbara. 2002. *Committing to Peace: The Successful Settlement of Civil Wars*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

