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From Sectation to Nation

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For Michael, Assoum, Fadi, and Johnny

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Acknowledgments

A Note on the Author

My name is Anthony Fadi El-Hachem. I am a Lebanese American born to two Lebanese parents in the United States of America. I am currently majoring in International Studies and Economics at Trinity College in Hartford, CT. I also hold a minor in Arabic.

Since I was a child, I have always been fascinated with Lebanon. My family and I have traveled there summer to visit relatives and friends. In a sense, I feel as though it is my home away from home.

I understood the problems going on there, but I never got answers. The only response was: "It's the government!" But if that's the case, why isn't anyone doing anything about it?

I really want to help Lebanon. I want Lebanese society to reflect the country's outer beauty. I hope that this thesis may present Lebanon with an alternative solution to its problems. God willing, one-day Lebanon will be renewed.

Abstract

A *sectation* is a country consisting of individual parts with disparate identities. Lebanon is classified as such because of the sectarianism that emerged out of the confessional political system's emphasis on sect and religious affiliation. My work attempts to find a potential solution to the division in the country. It includes: First, an analysis of the history of Lebanon in order to find instances where confessional politics actually induced sectarianism. Second, the use of the Qur'an and political Islamist thinkers to explain how the establishment of an Islamic government may help move Lebanon towards nation. Third, an examination of the present-day Islamic government in Egypt headed by President Mohamed Morsi and the Muslim Brotherhood to illustrate the need for the complete espousal of the current regime to achieve renewal rather than regression. The total abolition of the confessional political system can set the country on the path to renewal. And an Islamic government is a viable alternative, a way out, and an opportunity to transform Lebanon into a nation: a community with a common identity.

Introduction

"All of us! For our Country, for our Flag and Glory!"[1] This quote is the first line of the Lebanese national anthem. It should be rewritten: "All of us! For our Sect, for our Religion and Glory!" Lebanon's religious composition consists of a total of eighteen divergent sects: Alawites, Armenian Catholics, Armenian Orthodox, Assyrians, Chaldean Catholics, Copts, Druze, Greek Catholics, Greek Orthodox, Isma'ilis, Jews, Latin Catholics, Maronites, Protestants, Sunnis, Shiites, Syriac Catholics, Syriac Orthodox. Sectarianism has been a destructive force in Lebanon due to the current government system.

By partitioning the Lebanese into sects politically, the confessional political system has encouraged *sectation*: a country consisting of individual parts with disparate identities. How can Lebanon become a nation: a community with a common identity? The renewal of Lebanese society will be accomplished through the abolition of the sectarian government. The establishment of an Islamic government in its place presents a viable alternative, an opportunity to counteract sectarian division.

The confessional political system's emphasis on sect and religious affiliation up top has resulted in division and conflict on the ground. For example, the Double

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[1] "Lebanese National Anthem," *Embassy of Lebanon, Washington, DC,* 2002, http://www.lebanonembassyus.org/country_lebanon/anthem.html

Qaymaqamate established in 1842 divided Mount Lebanon into two districts: one under a Maronite and the other under a Druze. The region was split as people on the ground sided with their corresponding sect. After a few disagreements fighting broke into the Civil War of 1860. Similarly, sectarianism emerged from the confessional political system erected in 1943. It became the arena where religious sects attempted to advance their ambitions ultimately resulting in the Civil War of 1975 that devastated Lebanon. More recently, the divisive nature of the government is apparent in laws such as the Orthdox Voting Law. By restricting the Lebanese to the confines of sect, the confessional political system has steadily become authoritarian. The system must be abolished for Lebanon to move away from *sectation* and towards nation.

An Islamic government presents an alternative to the current system. The emphasis on sect is eliminated as unity is promoted over division. For example, the power of *ijtihad* (or the interpretation of the sacred texts through the use of independent reason) belongs to all Muslims and not a single sect such as Shiites, Sunnis, or Druze. In addition, the emphasis on plurality in the Islamic state is demonstrated by the inclusion of minority groups in the political sphere rather than their isolation. It is very important that the new government does not regress, but rather renews meaning the complete elimination of the confessional political system.

The Islamic government in Egypt has failed in its attempt and has fallen into a state of regression. The actions of President Morsi and the Muslim Brotherhood have resulted in the continuation of authoritarianism and sectarianism as opposed

to their culmination. For example, Article 3 of President Morsi's draft Constitution states: "The canon principles of Egyptian Christians and Jews are the main source of legislation for their personal status laws, religious affairs, and the selection of religious leaders."[2] Although it upholds the rights of minority groups, this Article actually preserves sectarianism rather than prevents it by literally separating the Christians and Jews from the rest of the Islamic state.

The new Islamic government in Lebanon must commit to a process of renewal in order to finally move towards nation and away from *sectation.*

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[2] Nariman Youssef, "Egypt's Draft Constitution Translated," *Egypt Independent,* April 29, 2013, http://www.egyptindependent.com/news/egypt-s-draft-constitution-translated

1. Sectarian Politics

Lebanon, once the Phoenix[3] of the Mediterranean, now lies dormant in the ashes that have accumulated over its history. What happened to the great Lebanon? It was an inside job, and the perpetrators were none other than the ones who loved it most: its residents. Religious affiliation had blinded them taking precedence over all other loyalties. The confessional political system has failed to address Lebanon's needs, foreclosing any possibility for unity among the Lebanese people. Sectarian conflict has emerged from its emphasis on the religious sect. Can Lebanon rid itself of sectarianism and build for itself a common identity, a nationalistic ideal that captures every sect's aspirations? The problem of sectarianism persists due to the confessional system; through its abolition Lebanon may find stability and unity.

Sectarianism is defined as religious particularity. It is synonymous with Lebanese history, born out of the introduction of confessional politics during the nineteenth century. Extrinsic powers, mainly the French, established a silk trade with the coastal region of Mount Lebanon inside the Ottoman Empire. According to Leila Tarazi Fawaz, "Beirut became the center of a new trade with Europe in which raw silk was the principal export and manufactured goods were imported. Consulates were opened in Beirut to promote economic interests and allow them to

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[3] The Phoenix was the god of the Phoenicians that was said to rise from its ashes reborn.

play a role in local politics."[4] The French found potential allies in the Maronites: a peasant group with affiliations to the pope, and later claimed itself as their protector.

During the 1830s, the Maronites were growing in wealth due to this newfound affinity and concurrently in number as a result of their population explosion. They challenged the Druze, an offshoot of Isma'ilism,[5] who were granted a higher status in society by the Ottoman government. Fawaz states, "In the course of the nineteenth century, trade with Europe grew at the expense of the ancient caravan routes of Syria... The decline in trade and the competition from the Christians favored by the Europeans meant that Muslim merchants began to lose ground."[6] With French assistance, the Maronites were competing with Muslims economically and very soon politically.

In 1842, the French pressured for the creation of the Double Qaymaqamate[7] that according to Fawaz, "divided the Mountain into two self-governing districts, each under a district governor (or qaymaqam): a northern district under a Maronite, and a southern district under a Druze."[8] So what was the Double Qaymaqamate? Was it a new political structure that would increase stability and unity within Mount Lebanon? It was rather a confessional system that emphasized division in the

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[4] Leila Tarazi Fawaz, *An Occasion for War: Civil conflict in Lebanon and Damascus in 1860* (Berkeley: University of California, 1994), 22.

[5] Isma'ilism is the second largest branch of Shi'a Islam. Isma'ilis accept Isma'il ibn Ja'far as-Sadiq as the true successor to Ja'far as-Sadiq as opposed to Musa al-Kazim, his younger brother.

[6] Fawaz, *An Occasion for War: Civil conflict in Lebanon and Damascus in 1860*, 25

[7] On p. 27 in her book: *An Occasion for War: Civil conflict in Lebanon and Damascus in 1860* Fawaz says the Double Qaymaqamate took effect in 1843 and, with a revision in 1845, remained in place until 1861.

[8] Fawaz, *An Occasion for War: Civil conflict in Lebanon and Damascus in 1860*, 27-8

political realm and on the ground. The Double Qaymaqamate divided the region along sectarian lines, Druze and Maronite. The seeds for conflict had been planted pitting one sect against the other.

Small skirmishes transformed into large-scale battles between the northern and southern villages of Mount Lebanon identified as the Civil War of 1860. It resulted in the defeats of loosely organized Maronite forces by the Druze. Although significantly less in number, the leadership of the Druze surpassed that of the Maronites and they gained massive victories. Ultimately, the Maronites lost and were unable to resist the devastating massacres that followed. Thus, the example of the Double Qaymaqamate, created under French influence, identifies confessional politics as the root of sectarianism in Mount Lebanon.

The Ottoman government and the Western powers ended the violence with the establishment of the Mutasarrifiyya[9] in 1861. It ended the Double Qaymaqamate integrating the divergent religious sects within one common council based upon proportional representation and was "administered by a non-local Christian governor or *mutasarrif*."[10] Future Lebanese political systems evolved out of its design after the defeat of the Ottoman Empire in World War I. Its territories were mandated amongst the major European powers with the province of Syria falling into French hands.

The French demarcated the State of Greater Lebanon and on May 23, 1926 it was granted a Constitution. It was now the Lebanese Republic and it had adopted a

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[9] It was adjusted in 1864 with minor modifications and remained in place until World War I.
[10] Fawaz, *An Occasion for War: Civil conflict in Lebanon and Damascus in 1860*, 216

slightly reformed version of the Mutasarrifiyya. The Maronites received the presidency and almost every seat in parliament other than the role of prime minister, which was held by the Sunni Muslims. Could Lebanon be classified as a nation (or *watan*)? A nation is a community with a common identity. The confessional political system with its emphasis on religious affiliation prevented Lebanon the nation and permitted Lebanon the *sectation*.

A *sectation* is a country consisting of individual parts with disparate identities. For the Maronites and many other Christians, "regardless of the extent to which the outside world might choose to classify them as Arabs… theirs was the heritage of Ancient Phoenicia, which antedated the heritage they had come to share with the Arabs by thousands of years."[11] Muslims and even some Christians believed the opposite holding firmly to their rich Arab history. Thus, the creation of Lebanon had its advocates and adversaries. With Lebanese independence from French rule in 1943, the confessional political system became the arena where religious sects attempted to advance their ambitions.

Lebanon was in question. The Maronites maintained their support for the Lebanese state while the Muslims proclaimed, "it was not permissible to accord the French-created Lebanese Republic recognition as a nation-state separate and distinct from Syria."[12] The result of this disagreement was the National Pact. According to Kamal Salibi, it was "an unwritten gentleman's agreement to

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[11] Kamal Salibi, *A House of Many Mansions: The History of Lebanon Reconsidered* (Berkeley: University of California, 1998), 27
[12] Ibid., 29

supplement the formal Constitution of the country and have equal effectiveness."[13]

It was a settlement giving more representation in government to the Muslims as

long as they agreed to preserve Lebanon's independence from the rest of the Arab

world.

As for the government's composition, the Maronites would continue to

occupy the presidency and administer the army while the Sunni Muslims retained

the seat of prime minister and the Shiite Muslims held the position of speaker of the

parliament. Representation in parliament was determined through the results of the

census taken in 1932 and was fixed at the ratio of six Christians for every five

Muslims. Ultimate decision-making remained in the hands of the Maronites

perpetuating division amongst the religious groups in the future. According to Salibi,

"the decisions the Muslim Lebanese always pressed for were of a dimension that

frightened the Christians. They were pressing the Lebanese state to throw all

caution to the winds in the full and unconditional espousal of pan-Arab causes, such

as that of the Palestinian revolution of 1967."[14] They criticized the isolationist

stance taken by the Maronites. Sectarian feelings were rising and the confessional

system defined the boundaries. Marc Lynch states, "The rise of Nasserist pan-

Arabism had triggered a sharp conflict between the Western-oriented, politically

dominant Christian community and the Arab-oriented Muslims."[15] Muslim groups

used social and economic disparities to fuel resentment among their population for

the Maronites.

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[13] Salibi, *A House of Many Mansions: The History of Lebanon Reconsidered*, 185
[14] Ibid., 197-98
[15] Marc Lynch, *The Arab Uprising: The Unfinished Revolutions of the New Middle East* (New York: Public Affairs, 2012), 37

Lebanon had become the bridge between East and West, taking full advantage of the prosperity that trade brought. The Maronites, since the silk trading days had been the privileged group benefitting from their relationship with France. A divergence in wealth among the religious sects was apparent. Joseph Chamie states, "With whatever reasonable criteria one chooses to utilize, the social and economic differentials between the religious groups are unmistakably clear: non-Catholic Christians and Catholics at the top, Druze around the middle, Sunnis near the bottom, and Shi'as at the very bottom."[16] In addition to this, Muslim demographics were steadily increasing due to a rise in fertility rates.

The split on the ground resembled the sectarian division in the government structure. Peoples of the various religious sects aligned themselves with the correspondent representative sect in parliament. Salibi states, "In the absence of real political parties with national followings among the masses, political life in the Lebanese Republic became the preserve of shifting alliances among politicians who formed parliamentary or extra-parliamentary fronts or blocs."[17] The Lebanese Civil War of 1975 ensued with "Lebanese groups flying different historical banners: the Lebanese particularist and Christian on one side, the Arab nationalist and Islamic on the other."[18] Lebanon was a battlefield in which brotherhood was forgotten and sectarianism was preeminent.

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[16] Joseph Chamie, "The Lebanese Civil War: An investigation into the causes," *World Affairs Institute,* no. 3 (1976/77): 180, accessed February 15, 2013, http://www.jstor.org/stable/20671682
[17] Salibi, *A House of Many Mansions: The History of Lebanon Reconsidered*, 188-89
[18] Salibi, *A House of Many Mansions: The History of Lebanon Reconsidered*, 17

By partitioning the Lebanese into sects politically, the confessional political system had encouraged *sectation* as opposed to nation. According to Hassan Krayem, "Confessional segregation reached its peak and the confessionally based militias ruled the various regions in closed and semi-closed enclaves. In the 'Christian areas' the militias spread slogans of a 'Christian republic,' 'Christian security,' federalism and partition. In the 'Muslim areas," the emerging radical Islamic movements raised the slogans of an Islamic republic."[19] Lebanon became an arena for foreign wars such as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Krayem states, "The various Lebanese factions had, repeatedly, attempted to exploit their associations with one or another of the conflicting regional parties to promote their own internal interests."[20] The Lebanese Civil War lasted for fifteen years and by the end of it Lebanon had turned into ash.

It was not until the Taif Accords that the conflict finally subsided. According to William Cleveland, "The essential problem was that the power allotted to the main religious communities in Lebanon's confessional political system no longer reflected the country's demographic realities."[21] The Taif Accords rearranged the political dynamic in favor of the Muslims by shifting the powers of the presidency to the prime minister in addition to the redistribution of parliamentary seats "by adding nine new Muslim seats, three of which were assigned to the Shi'a

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[19] Hassan Krayem, "The Lebanese Civil War and the Taif Agreement," *American University of Beirut,* accessed on April 6, 2013, http://ddc.aub.edu.lb/projects/pspa/conflict-resolution.html
[20] Ibid.
[21] William Cleveland, *A History of the Modern Middle East* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 2004), 390

community."[22] Was this the essential problem as Cleveland stated? The Accords ended the fighting, but it did not end sectarianism. The confessional political system continued to augment rifts among the divergent religious sects.

The government's emphasis on religious affiliation had securitized Lebanon forcing this distinction upon its citizens. For example, Salibi states, "The religion and sect of every person had to be clearly indicated not only in the government registers, but also on the individual identity card. This meant that every Lebanese citizen regardless of personal wishes, was officially recognized as having two identities, one national, the other confessional."[23] In addition, territorial markers and checkpoints literally divide Lebanon's landscape into sectarian zones. Access to these zones by members of other religious groups is hindered and often times restricted.

After a study they conducted on Lebanese students' experiences, Fawaz, Harb, and Gharbieh stated, "Being asked for one's papers is hence often the prelude for either a welcoming note or a harsh dismissal, especially when names (as they increasingly do) reflect belonging to a religious sect."[24] They add to this statement in their finding that, "More visible signs of religiosity, such as crosses, veils (and how they are worn), or whether a man has long hair or not, whether he/she is tattooed,

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[22] Ibid.

[23] Salibi, *A House of Many Mansions: The History of Lebanon Reconsidered*, 195.

[24] Mona Fawaz, Mona Harb, and Ahmad Gharbieh, "Living Beirut's Security Zones: An Investigation of the Modalities and Practice of Urban Security," *City & Society*, no. 24 (August 23, 2012): 185, accessed March 12, 2013, http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/store/10.1111/j.1548-744X.2012.01074.x/asset/j.1548-744X.2012.01074.x.pdf?v=1&t=hg2xz9qn&s=3ddd450e8b0f10a26abb4d5e64ffcadd302f6eb3

or wears flip-flops, can often be interpreted as indicators of a political position and used to identify the 'outsider' as friend or foe."[25] In this sense, is the confessional political system authoritarian? By confining Lebanese citizens to their respective zones, the confessional system has placed them at the mercy of sectarianism.

Recently the Lebanese government has proposed the Orthodox Gathering Law, a voting law that allows Lebanese citizens to vote only for candidates of their corresponding sect. Patrick Galey writes, "It is not about what religion one believes in, it is about where one votes, which is determined by the sect they are registered with."[26] This case provides evidence to the fact that sectarianism is a by-product of the confessional political system and it also demonstrates the system's authoritarian tendencies. As Galey precisely put it, "The most ardent Atheist could proclaim there is no god, march up to a polling station in Zahle, and brandish their sect-free ID. But thanks to the fact that even voters without a sect are allocated to voting stations based on their registered family number, she would still find out she can only vote for candidates belonging to the sect she was born into."[27] If passed, the Orthodox Law will literally fragment society setting it on route to federalism.

The Lebanese confessional political system emphasizes sect and advances a *sectation* denying the establishment of a nation based on community. Sectarianism on the ground in the form of the Civil Wars of 1860 and 1975 emerged from its composition up top. It persists to this day due to the restrictions the confessional

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[25] Ibid.
[26] Patrick Galey, "Lebanon's Sect Addiction," *Jadaliyya,* March 2, 2013, http://www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/10425/lebanons-sect-addiction
[27] Ibid.

political system places on its peoples. The Lebanese citizens are trapped and limited by this society that is so embedded in religious particularity.

In order to renew Lebanese society and set it on the path to nationhood the confessional political system must be abolished. In the next section, the case is made for why an Islamic government provides an alternative, an opportunity to counteract sectarian division. Islam in theory demonstrates the potential for peace in a part of the world that has been afflicted by so much turmoil and instability. Unity must take precedence over division and sectarianism. This objective is attainable through Islam's fundamental precepts and principles such as *tawhid* (or the Oneness of God), plurality, egalitarianism, and justice. Islam presents an opportunity for the Lebanese Phoenix to rise from its ashes reborn.

2.   A Way Out

An Islamic government provides an alternative, a way out, an opportunity to counteract sectarian division. It has the potential to free Lebanon from the self-imposed constraints resulting from its autocratic government. The confessional political system has embedded Lebanese society in religious particularity. Through an Islamic government, Lebanon can build for itself a nation and shake off the ashes of *sectation*.

In Islam, politics is a sacrament. It emphasizes the principles of *tawhid*, plurality, egalitarianism, and justice over sectarian ideals. According to Muhammad Iqbal, the political Islamist thinker that inspired Muslims to create the independent Islamic state of Pakistan separate from India, "The state, from the Islamic standpoint, is an endeavor to transform these ideal principles into space-time forces, an inspiration to realize them in a definite organization."[28] Thus, Islam is dynamic in the sense that it transforms ideology into practicality. In addition Abu-L-'Ala' Mawdudi, another Islamist thinker in India that advocated for the creation of Pakistan states, "It is clear from a careful consideration of the Qur'an and the Sunna that the state in Islam is based on ideology and its objective is to establish that

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[28] Muhammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam,* (London: Oxford UP, 1934), 147

ideology. The state is an instrument for reform and must act likewise."[29] The tools

for the creation of an Islamic government are found in the Qur'an and Sunnah.

Tawhid is a central theme in the Qur'an. Mawdudi states, "The belief in the

Unity [*tawhid*] and the sovereignty of Allah is the foundation of the social and moral

system propounded by the Prophets. It is the very starting point of the Islamic

political philosophy."[30] The Qur'an adds:

> Do you not know that to Allah belongs the dominion of the heavens and the
>
> earth and [that] you have not besides Allah any protector or helper?[31]

> Indeed, your Lord is Allah, who created the heavens and earth in six days and
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> then established Himself above the Throne. He covers the night with the day,
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> [another night] chasing it rapidly; and [He created] the sun, the moon, and
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> the stars, subjected by His command. Unquestionably, His is the creation and
>
> the command; blessed is Allah, Lord of the worlds.[32]

Islam means submission, surrender, and obedience to God. Sovereignty belongs to

Allah alone. Thus, an Islamic government is a theocracy. Alastair Crooke states, "It is

possible to foresee a re-thinking of the traditional sacral community with God at its

apex, acting as an informal model loosely connected to the legitimacy of the *Umma,*

and characterized by networked, semi-autonomous Islamist movements operating

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[29] Abu-L-'Ala Mawdudi, *Political Theory of Islam*, quoted in John J. Donohue and John L. Esposito, *Islam in Transition: Muslim Perspectives* (New York: Oxford UP, 1934), 256-57
[30] Ibid., 252
[31] Qur'an 2:107
[32] Qur'an 7:54

not under a Caliph but under poles of Muslim leadership."[33] A theocracy as will be exhibited later does not limit Islam's ability to consolidate other styles of political thought.

In contrast and as has been expounded upon in the previous chapter, the confessional political system has steadily begun to resemble an authoritarian government. In its persistent emphasis on religious affiliation, it has restricted the Lebanese citizens to a rigid style of thought. Seyyid Qutb, an Egyptian Islamist thinker during Gamal Abdel Nasser's rule states, "It is clear that only such a society is civilized in which human associations are based on free choice, and that society is backward in which the basis of association is something other than free choice; in Islamic terminology, it is a *jahili* society."[34] Qutb is speaking in opposition to the authoritarian system in Lebanon that disregards free choice and confines its citizens to sect.

The confessional political system has subjected the Lebanese people to unlawful rule. Mawdudi states, "If you understand the true character of a Muslim, you will be convinced that he cannot live in humiliation, abasement or subjugation. He is bound to prevail and no power on earth can overwhelm him or subdue him. For, Islam inculcates in him the qualities which cannot be overshadowed by any charm or illusion."[35] The earth is God's dominion and His rule only is lawful. The message of Islam is: "that human beings should recognize that their true Sustainer

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[33] Alastair Crooke, *Resistance the Essence of the Islamist Revolution,* (London: Pluto, 2009), 154
[34] Seyyid Qutb, *Milestones,* (Indianapolis: American Trust, 1990), 96
[35] Syed Abul 'Ala Maudoodi, *Towards Understanding Islam,* (Lahore: Islamic Publications, 1970), 19

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and Lord is One God, that they should submit to Him Alone, and that the lordship of man be eliminated."[36] Islam recognizes the diversity of Lebanon and its message is not limited to Muslims. The Qur'an states:

> Say, "O People of the Scripture, come to a word that is equitable between us and you—that we will not worship except Allah and not associate anything with Him and not take one another as lords instead of Allah." But if they turn away, then say, "Bear witness that we are Muslims [submitting to Him]."[37]

This message exemplifies the plurality of Islam. An Islamic theocracy is not sectarian in essence as the confessional political system is. It emphasizes communalism through the destruction of *sectation* and the construction of a nation. As was defined in the previous chapter, a nation is a community with a common identity. In an Islamic theocracy, Islam is that all encompassing identity.

Social justice is a virtue in Islam. The centrist (or *Wassatteyya*) New Islamist party in Egypt, led by Yusuf al Qaradawy, Fahmy Huwaidy, and Sheikh Muhammad al Ghazzaly, advocates this fact. Raymond Baker states, "The New Islamists state categorically that a strong national community requires complete equality between Muslims and non-Muslims in their civil and political rights as citizens."[38] In the Islamic state, non-Muslims are granted rights and privileges. They are regarded as *dhimmis* (or protected peoples) but also as citizens. Mawdudi states, "Islam does not recognize any geographical, linguistic or color bars in this respect. It puts forward

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[36] Qutb, *Milestones*, 45
[37] Qur'an 3:64
[38] Raymond William Baker, *Islam Without Fear: Egypt and the New Islamists,* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 2003), 108

its code of guidance and the scheme of its reform for all men. Whoever accepts this program, no matter to what race, nation or country he may belong, can join the community that runs the Islamic state."[39] An Islamic theocracy predicates justice. This statement is supplemented by this verse from the Qur'an:

> Indeed, Allah orders justice and good conduct and giving to relatives and forbids immorality and bad conduct and oppression. He admonishes you that perhaps you will be reminded.[40]

God forbids injustice and the oppression of non-Muslim citizens in the Islamic state. Therefore, minority groups such as the Maronites and other Christian groups in Lebanon will not be prejudiced against and will receive fair treatment.

Thus, the Islamic state promotes a movement away from religious particularity and *sectation.* Crooke states, "The Islamist vision sees the human to be integral to a wider existence; intractably linked, and not separated, as 'an individual', from others and the world that surrounds him or her; which sees the human as a multi-dimensional creature—larger than the sum of his or her desires and appetites, whose ability to access innate moral values, as the basis of his or her responsibility to the community, becomes the organizational principle for economics, society, and politics."[41] Sectarianism is rejected and the individual is no

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[39] Abu-L-'Ala Mawdudi, *Political Theory of Islam,* quoted in John J. Donohue and John L. Esposito, *Islam in Transition: Muslim Perspectives* (New York: Oxford UP, 1934), 257
[40] Qur'an 16:90
[41] Crooke, *Resistance the Essence of the Islamist Revolution,* 30

longer an individual but rather a part of a greater whole: a community, a nation.

This inclusive nature is ever present in the Qur'an and the hadith:

> Indeed, those who believed and those who were Jews or Christians or
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> Sabeans [before Prophet Muhammad]—those [among them] who believed in
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> Allah and the Last Day and did righteousness—will have their reward with
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> their Lord, and no fear will there be concerning them, nor will they grieve.[42]

> The Prophet Muhammad said: "An Arab has no superiority over a non-Arab
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> nor a non-Arab over an Arab; neither does a white man possess any
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> superiority over a black man nor a black man over a white one, except in
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> point of piety."[43][44]

The exclusiveness of sect and race and ethnicity, as demonstrated in the hadith is

forgotten when communalism is all that is advertised. Mawdudi states, "The

theocracy built up by Islam is not ruled by any particular religious class but by the

whole community of Muslims including the rank and file. The entire Muslim

population runs the state in accordance with the Book of God and the practice of His

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[42] Qur'an 2:62

[43] The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), quoted in Dr. 'Abd al-Salam ibn Burjis ibn Nasir Al-'Abd al-Karim, *Prophetic Ahadith in Condemnation of Racism,* (Grand Rapids, MI: Sunnah Publishing, 2012), 28

[44] On p. 28 of *Prophetic Ahadith in Condemnation of Racism*, Al-'Abd al-Karim says this quote is: "Sahih: Related by Ahmad in al-Musnad (5/411), 'Abdullah Ibn al-Mubarak in al-Musnad (no. 239) and al-Bayhaqi in Shu'ab al-Iman (4/289). Refer to al-Fath al-Rabbani (2/226) of al-Sa'ati. It was authenticated by al-Albani in Ghayah al-Maram (no. 313)."

Prophet."[45] In agreement, Iqbal states, "Islam is a universal ideology… Islam makes no discrimination on the basis of race, country, color, language or the like. Its appeal is to the entire humanity and it admits of no narrow-minded discriminations."[46] The universality of Islam implies a purely egalitarian and just society.

In addition to this, God provided man with a law of conduct further demonstrating Islam's practicality. Mawdudi defines Shari'ah as "the detailed code of conduct or the canons comprising ways and modes of worship, standards of morals and life, laws that allow and prescribe, that judge between right and wrong."[47] Shari'ah law's objective is to "show the best way to man and provide him with the ways and means to fulfill his needs in the most successful and beneficial way."[48] Thus, it guides man in his journey. Through Shari'ah religion and the state are united. For example, Article 2 of the Egyptian Constitution states:

> Islam is the religion of the state and Arabic its official language. Principles of
> Islamic Shari'ah are the principal source of legislation.[49]

As stated in the Egyptian Constitution, Islam should become the religion of the state of Lebanon and the Shari'ah as the principal source of legislation establishing a common identity for the Lebanese.

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[45] Abu-L-'Ala Mawdudi, *Political Theory of Islam,* quoted in John J. Donohue and John L. Esposito, *Islam in Transition: Muslim Perspectives* (New York: Oxford UP, 1934), 254

[46] Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam,* 188

[47] Maudoodi, *Towards Understanding Islam,* 152

[48] Ibid., 160

[49] Youssef, "Egypt's Draft Constitution Translated"

Thus, Shari'ah law becomes the entryway into reimagining an Islamic government. At heart an Islamic government is a theocracy, but its limbs are democratic. The Qur'an states:

> [Believers], you are the best nation singled out for mankind. You enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong, and you believe in Allah...[50]

> Allah has promised those who have believed among you and done righteous deeds that He will surely grant them succession [to authority] upon the earth just as He granted it to those before them and that He will surely establish for them [therein] their religion which He has preferred for them and that He will surely substitute for them, after their fear, security, [for] they worship Me, not associating anything with Me...[51]

The *Umma* (or community of believers) is the organic extension of God's rule on earth. According to Iqbal, "[Islam] is animated by an ethical ideal which regards man not as an earth-rooted creature, defined by this or that portion of the earth, but as a spiritual being understood in terms of a social mechanism, and possessing rights and duties as a living factor of that mechanism."[52] In this manner, it is proper to declare an Islamic government as Mawdudi would: a "theodemocracy, that is to say a divine democratic government, because under it the Muslims have been given a

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[50] Qur'an 3:110

[51] Qur'an 24:55

[52] Muhammad Iqbal, *A Separate Muslim State in the Subcontinent,* quoted in John J. Donohue and John L. Esposito, *Islam in Transition: Muslim Perspectives* (New York: Oxford UP, 1934), 92-3

limited popular sovereignty under the suzerainty of God."[53] With God at the apex of human society, the community of believers acts as His vicegerent. Thus, Islam is not limited to one mode of thinking as is the confessional political system. Through *ijtihad* (or interpretation through the use of independent judgment or reason) of the sacred texts, Islam has the ability to adapt to its surroundings. In this case an Islamic theocracy has incorporated democratic elements.

Muslims will administer the Islamic state, but which Muslims will wield the power of *ijtihad*? For example, in Egypt Article 4 of President Morsi's Constitution states:

> Al-Azhar is an encompassing independent Islamic institution, with exclusive autonomy over its own affairs, responsible for preaching Islam, theology and the Arabic language in Egypt and the world. Al-Azhar Senior Scholars are to be consulted in matters pertaining to Islamic law.[54]

Al-Azhar Senior Scholars (Sunnis) wield the power of *ijtihad* in Egypt. However, Egypt's religious composition is not as diverse as Lebanon's. It includes Sunnis, Shiites, and Druze as well as many other groups affiliated with Islam. So who would be in charge? In response to this matter, the Qur'an states:

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[53] Abu-L-'Ala Mawdudi, *Political Theory of Islam,* quoted in John J. Donohue and John L. Esposito, *Islam in Transition: Muslim Perspectives* (New York: Oxford UP, 1934), 254

[54] Youssef, "Egypt's Draft Constitution Translated"

> Hold firmly to the rope of Allah all together and do not become divided. And
>
> remember the favor of Allah upon you—when you were enemies and He
>
> brought your hearts together and you became, by His favor, brothers…[55]

This message advocates public dialogue among Muslims in interpretation of the

sacred texts. However, this discussion is not limited to Muslims as Christians are

invited to take part further demonstrating the inclusiveness and plurality of the

Islamic state. As Jesus (peace be upon him) says in the Qur'an:

> "And indeed, Allah is my Lord and your Lord, so worship Him. That is a
>
> straight path."[56]

Unity must take precedence over division in determining *maslahat al-'am* (or public

welfare). And the final decision should be based on majority rather than a single

authoritative voice, eliminating sectarian division up top while also emphasizing the

democracy in "theodemocracy."

Through this emphasis of communalism, an Islamic government may set

Lebanon on the path to nation and a movement away from *sectation*. Sectarianism

emerged from the confessional political system's authoritarian promotion of sect.

An Islamic government in contrast to a confessional political system is very flexible

demonstrated by its ability to integrate elements of other political systems within its

design. As demonstrated above, it transforms ideology into practicality. Crooke

stresses this point by saying, "[The Islamist project] represents a system that is

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[55] Qur'an 3:103
[56] Qur'an 19:36

predicated on a realistic view of human nature. It does not aim to transform humans through human action, but believes that behavior is influenced by the experience of living in a just and compassionate community, and by humans behaving with each other, as God directed."[57] Thus, an Islamic government is a "theodemocracy."

In the next chapter, a present day version of an Islamic government is examined. The Arab Spring has reformulated the political makeup in Egypt. However, Egypt as a whole remains unchanged because the newly elected Islamic government has simply filled Mubarak's empty shoes. The goal of an Islamic government after the abolition of the confessional political system in Lebanon must be renewal and not regression. God willing, by following this path, the Phoenix of Lebanon will rise from its ashes reborn.

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[57] Crooke, *Resistance the Essence of the Islamist Revolution,* 276

3.   Don't Regress, Renew

The abolition of the confessional political system and the implementation of an Islamic government in its place should set Lebanon on a path away from *sectation* and towards nation. In Egypt's case, the newly elected Islamic government has failed in its mission of renewal extending Mubarak's authoritarian rule over the country. This problem of regression must not be replicated in Lebanon.

The actions exhibited by President Morsi and the Muslim Brothers since their ascendancy have reflected the authoritarian nature of the regime they replaced. For example, according to Seifeldin Fawzy, Morsi's constitutional decree "[rendered] him as 'above the law,' meaning that the jurisdiction of Egypt's courts no longer applies to the Egyptian president, or any of his Islamist-controlled executive bodies—an unprecedented move that not even Hosni Mubarak himself dared to employ."[58] The Supreme Court could not check Morsi's powers, effectively changing his status from democrat to dictator. Fawzy continues, "Morsi declared the upper chamber of Parliament immune from judicial dissolution at a time when the Egyptian judiciary was widely expected to issue rulings that would adversely affect

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[58] Seifeldin Fawzy, "Democracy, Democracy, but the Courts Can't Touch Me," *Jadaliyya,* November 25, 2012, http://www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/8611/democracy-democracy-but-the-courts-can't-touch-me

the Muslim Brotherhood, such as the dissolution of the upper house of Parliament, the Shura Council, and possibly a declaration that the Constituent Assembly was unconstitutional."[59] It can be argued that President Morsi's decisions were an attempt to combat the Mubarak-appointed heads of the Supreme Court that were stifling progress. However, the way he went about doing so was very un-Islamic by nature. The Egyptian response should have been dialogue rather than monologue and authoritarianism.

In contrast to the denial of the Supreme Court's right to judicial review, President Mohamed Morsi and the Muslim Brothers have attempted to respect the rights of minority groups. Article 3 of their draft Constitution states, "The canon principles of Egyptian Christians and Jews are the main source of legislation for their personal status laws, religious affairs, and the selection of religious leaders."[60] Although it gives minority groups certain rights, this Article actually preserves sectarianism rather than prevents it by literally separating the Christians and Jews from the rest of the Islamic state. It labels them more so as *dhimmis* (or protected peoples) than as citizens and President Morsi's actions have been indicative of this. For example, Ellis Goldberg states, "He promised to choose vice presidents (he can have more than one) from among Egypt's women and Copts, but in the end chose one conservative Muslim judge… He has been very visible at mosques around the country for communal prayers, but has never visited a church, and refused to attend

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[59] Fawzy, "Democracy, Democracy, but the Courts Can't Touch Me"
[60] Youssef, "Egypt's Draft Constitution Translated"

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any of the ceremonies for the recent installation of a new Coptic pope."[61] Morsi and the Muslim Brotherhood have also failed to prevent the mistreatment of Coptic Christians by Muslims.

Recently, Christians at St. Mark's Cathedral, the main cathedral of the Christian Coptic Church were attacked. Nina Shea quotes Coptic Orthodox Pope Tawadros II reaction: "'The church has been a national symbol for 2,000 years,' he told a television interviewer. 'It has not been subjected to anything like this even during the darkest ages... There has been no positive and clear action from the state, but there is a God. The church does not ask for anyone's protection, only from God.'"[62] Raymond Baker argues, "According to the manifesto [of the New Islamists], the proper Islamic solution to the sectarian conflict requires first of all 'a guarantee of complete freedom of creed and worship,' and second, adherence to the principle of 'the right to majority rule' with 'full rights to the minority.'"[63] Full rights include certain protections that President Morsi and the Muslim Brothers have failed to administer. Thus, sectarianism and sectarian conflict persist.

The Islamic government in Egypt has also mismanaged justice. While Morsi has declared general amnesty for all the imprisoned protestors, he still has not made good on his promise of retribution for the crimes committed by the military against Egyptians during the 2011 revolution. Evan Hill quotes President Morsi in

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[61] Ellis Goldberg, "Morsi and his Adversaries," *Jadaliyya,* November 29, 2012, http://www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/8676/morsi-and-his-adversaries
[62] Coptic Orthodox Pope Tawadros II, quoted in Nina Shea, "Egypt's Copts Need Protection: What's Morsi Waiting for?" *The Christian Post,* April 15, 2013, http://www.christianpost.com/news/egypts-copts-need-protection-whats-morsi-waiting-for-93936/
[63] Baker, *Islam Without Fear: Egypt and the New Islamists,* 108

his victory speech on June 29, 2012, "'I will not give up the rights of our martyrs and wounded. Fair retribution for them is my responsibility, which I will not shirk,' he said. 'I will always be the first supporter of the revolution, so it should continue everywhere in the farthest corners of the homeland.'"[64] In addition, "Six days after his speech, Morsi issued presidential decision No 10, appointing the fact-finding committee and empowering its members to investigate violence from the beginning of the revolution until his election and make recommendations to the government."[65] While President Morsi has promised and even implemented certain measures for reprisal, Egyptians still wait in anticipation of the results.

Even after the latest findings, injustice prevails. Patrick Kingsley and Louisa Loveluck state, "According to the new material, senior interior ministry officials were responsible for the order to use live ammunition to disperse large gatherings, resulting in the deaths of 24 protesters. It claims that high-level officials including Ashraf Abdallah–the ministry's most senior representative in the region–remained in Suez for the opening days of the uprising, and were present in the city as gunmen stationed on the roof of a police station shot 'extensively and indiscriminately' into crowds of demonstrators."[66] An article from Al-Jazeera adds to this point stating that Morsi and the military have "closed ranks to deny charges that soldiers had

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[64] Evan Hill, "Egyptian Protestors are still waiting for Justice over Army Violence," *The Guardian,* April 10, 2013, http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2013/apr/10/egypt-protesters-justice-army-violence
[65] Ibid.
[66] Patrick Kingsley and Louisa Loveluck, "Mubarak Forces 'had Official Approval' to Fire Live Rounds at Suez Protestors," *The Guardian,* April 11, 2013, http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2013/apr/11/mubarak-forces-suez-protesters

killed and tortured protesters, following leaks of an inquiry report implicating officers."[67] Adding to this, in a display of his support for the military, President Morsi promoted three military officers from "major-general" to "lieutenant-general."[68] Against the wishes of the Egyptian citizens, President Morsi has granted the military considerable immunity from prosecution. Thus, the military rule that Egyptians fought so hard to expel during the revolution has returned. In a way, Morsi *is* Mubarak reincarnated.

As Egypt has, Lebanon is currently facing an authoritarian regime: Mubarak in the form of the confessional political system. Its abolition must result in the establishment of an entirely new system, not a carbon copy. The authoritarian actions of President Morsi and the Muslim Brothers' Islamic government have given rise to protest movements similar to the ones Mubarak faced. Moreover, if an Islamic government in Lebanon were to continue where the confessional political system left off, sectarianism would persist. It must treat minority groups differently than Egypt has. In addition to upholding their rights, an Islamic government must include minorities in its makeup rather than isolating them. The latter would only create a greater divide between the communities encouraging sectarian conflict and limiting the capabilities of a common Islamic identity. Also the lack of justice in Egypt has caused its citizens to equate Islamic government with authoritarianism. In

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[67] "Egypt Army Denies Torture Allegations," *AlJazeera,* April 12, 2013, http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2013/04/2013412231054460317.html

[68] Patrick Kingsley, "Mohamed Morsi Backs Egyptian Military after Malpractice Allegations," *The Guardian,* April 12, 2013, http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2013/apr/12/mohamed-morsi-backs-egyptian-military

Lebanon, an Islamic government without justice would be both un-Islamic and confessional. The establishment of a new Islamic government must renew Lebanese society. If it does not commit to this, Lebanon will enter a regressed state like Egypt, diverting it from its path to nation classifying it as a *sectation*.

But one question remains: How will the Lebanese abolish the authoritarian confessional political system? It is time for the Lebanese to say *Kefaya* (or enough) to this authoritarian ruler as the Egyptians have. On January 25, 2011 protests erupted in Tahrir Square demanding Hosni Mubarak's resignation. After a few weeks his Vice-President, Omar Suleiman announced on television that "the president was 'waiving' his office, and had handed over authority to the Supreme Council of the Armed forces."[69] The 2011 Egyptian revolution was an adaptation of the *Kefaya* protest movement[70] "that formed in 2003 to challenge Mubarak's son Gamal's presumptive inheritance of power…*Kefaya* pioneered protest methods, organizational forms, and communications tactics that were adopted by later Egyptian and wider Arab protest movements."[71]

The revolution rid the country of authoritarianism and elected an Islamic government in its wake. David Kirkpatrick states, "The Muslim Brotherhood, the 84-year-old group that virtually invented political Islam, had won about 47 percent of

[69]Omar Suleiman, quoted in "Hosni Mubarak Resigns as President," *AlJazeera,* February 11, 2011, http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2011/02/201121125158705862.html
[70] On p. 57 of *The Arab Uprising: The Unfinished Revolutions of the New Middle East,* Marc Lynch states, "The spark for the *Kefaya* protest wave was international, as huge numbers rallied in support of the second Palestinian Intifada, the 'Al-Aqsa Intifada' (2000-2002) and against the U.S. invasion of Iraq (2002-2003)."
[71] Lynch, *The Arab Uprising: The Unfinished Revolutions of the New Middle East,* 56-7

the seats in the first Parliament elected since the ouster of Hosni Mubarak. An alliance of ultraconservative Islamists won the next largest share of seats, about 25 percent."[72] Their candidate, Mohamed Morsi, won the presidential election picking up "13.2 million votes out of just over 26 million, giving him about 51 per cent of the vote. His competitor, Ahmed Shafik, the final prime minister under Hosni Mubarak, received 12.3 million. More than 800,000 ballots were invalidated."[73] Mohamed Morsi of the Muslim Brotherhood became the "first Islamist elected as head of an Arab state."[74]

Why hasn't this happened yet in Lebanon? According to Marc Lynch, "Lebanon proved largely immune from the Arab uprisings… The sectarian system meant that there was no obvious central focus for youth opposition, with no unifying figure such as Mubarak or Assad all could agree to oppose."[75] But that's just it: the sectarian political system in its entirety *is* Mubarak. Its emphasis on sectarian division has led to two civil wars and the fragmentation of Lebanese society. The Lebanese should stand up for their rights and should demand change.

The revolution should be called *Project Phoenix: the revolution for renewal*. It is more than possible as the Lebanese are no strangers to revolution. For example,

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[72] David D. Kirkpatrick, "Islamists win 70% of Seats in the Egyptian Parliament," *New York Times,* June 21, 2012, http://www.nytimes.com/2012/01/22/world/middleeast/muslim-brotherhood-wins-47-of-egypt-assembly-seats.html?_r=0
[73] "Celebration in Egypt as Morsi Declared Winner," *AlJazeera,* June 24, 2012, http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2012/06/201262412445190400.html
[74] David D. Kirkpatrick, "Named Egypt's Winner, Islamist Makes History," *New York Times,* June 24, 2012, http://www.nytimes.com/2012/06/25/world/middleeast/mohamed-morsi-of-muslim-brotherhood-declared-as-egypts-president.html?pagewanted=all&_r=1&
[75] Lynch, *The Arab Uprising: The Unfinished Revolutions of the New Middle East,* 123

the Cedar Revolution on March 14, 2005, sparked by the assassination of Prime Minister Rafik Hariri brought "a million people to Beirut to demand justice… and the departure of Syrian troops from their country."[76] Syria had dominated the political sphere since the end of the Lebanese Civil War in 1990 and Assad's military administered the daily life of the Lebanese citizens. After Hariri's death, they no longer accepted Syria's authoritarian presence in Lebanon. The Lebanese clamored for a "clear timetable for a complete withdrawal of Syrian armed troops and intelligence services (armed troops are estimated to be around 14,000), the removal of Lebanese intelligence chiefs, the appointment of a 'neutral' government with the task of preparing parliamentary elections for May 2005, and the initiation of an international investigation into Hariri's death."[77] Hope for Lebanon rested in the displacement of Syria; now it lies in the abolition of the confessional political system and potentially through the establishment of an Islamic government.

Project Phoenix will be a peaceful revolution that will take Lebanon by storm. The Lebanese citizens of every religious background will form a single community protesting against the crimes of the confessional political system. They will meet in Martyr's Square in Beirut chanting: "Down with Sectation, We want a Nation!" The result of the revolution will be the abolition of the confessional political system. If implemented, an Islamic government has the ability to counteract the sectarian

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[76] Lynch, *The Arab Uprising: The Unfinished Revolutions of the New Middle East*, 31
[77] Karim Knio, "Is Political Stability Sustainable in Post-'Cedar Revolution' Lebanon?" *Mediterranean Politics,* no. 13 (2008), accessed on April 12, 2014, http://ej4da6xn7z.scholar.serialssolutions.com/?sid=google&auinit=K&aulast=Knio&atitle=Is+Political+Stability+Sustainable+in+Post-'Cedar+Revolution'Lebanon%3F+Profile&id=doi:10.1080/13629390802387000&title=Mediterranean+politics+(Frank+Cass+%26+Co.)&volume=13&issue=3&date=2008&spage=445&issn=1362-9395

division that has plagued the country. Thus, an Islamic government can set Lebanon

on the path from *sectation* to nation.

Conclusion

The confessional political system's emphasis on sect has created a culture of sectarianism detrimental to Lebanon's unity and stability. In order to renew Lebanese society and set it on the path to nationhood the confessional political system must be abolished. As was demonstrated in this essay, Islam presents an alternative, an opportunity to counteract sectarian division. But is it the best alternative, why not a secular or even a Christian state?

A secular state according to James Wood "is one in which government is limited to the *saeculum* or temporal realm; the state is independent of institutional religion or ecclesiastical control and in turn, institutional religion is independent of state or political control."[78] Thus, secularism is unable to completely renew Lebanese society. By limiting it to the political sphere, sectarian remnants of the confessional political system will persist socially. Under the confessional system, "matters of personal status involving marriage, divorce and inheritance were left to the religious courts of the different sects which were officially recognized as part of the Lebanese judiciary."[79] A secular state can be expected to undertake a similar policy. This is because, "From the Muslim point of view, removing the family from

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[78] James Wood quoted in Rex J. Ahdar, "A Christian State?" *Journal of Law and Religion,* no. 2 (1998-1999): 455, accessed on April 7, 2013
[79] Salibi, *A House of Many Mansions: The History of Lebanon Reconsidered,* 194-95

the rule of the Shari'ah could not be permitted. Even the idea of giving Muslims the free choice between civil or religious courts to conduct their family affairs was considered totally unacceptable."[80] Thus, a secular state is unable to completely eliminate sectarianism, as Muslims are required to maintain Shari'ah law in family matters. In contrast, an Islamic government abolishes sectarianism at both the political and social levels by institutionalizing Shari'ah law. As the political Islamist thinker Seyyid Qutb states, "Islam is not a heritage of any particular race or country; it is God's religion and it is for the whole world."[81] Thus, Christians are not excluded as they have the right to take their affairs to Shari'ah courts.

Also total secularization is completely out of the question, as it can be regarded as an attempt to suppress religion. Conflict is highly probable in this scenario as it rejects the sovereignty of God and His right to rule and promotes *Jahiliyyah*: "the deviation from the worship of One God and the way of life prescribed by God."[82] The Qur'an adds:

> ...And whosoever does not judge by what Allah has revealed—then it is those who are the wrongdoers.[83]

The implementation of a secular state would surely meet with a hostile response from the Islamic community in Lebanon. Advocating this point Qutb states, "Islam uses force only to remove these obstacles so that there may not remain any wall between Islam and individual human beings, and so that it may address their hearts

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[80] Salibi, *A House of Many Mansions: The History of Lebanon Reconsidered,* 195
[81] Seyyid Qutb, *Milestones,* 75
[82] Ibid., 129
[83] Qur'an 5:45

and minds after releasing them from these material obstacles, and then leave them free to choose to accept or reject it."[84] Thus, the abolition of the confessional political system in favor of a secular system would result in a regression back to sectarianism. In this manner, a secular state will not renew Lebanese society but rather maintain its path of *sectation.*

On the other hand, a Christian state has the potential to move Lebanon towards nation. Similarly to an Islamic government, it recognizes the sovereignty of God and promotes a communal identity versus an emphasis on sect. Reverend Cahill writes, "The state, according to Christian teaching, is for the good of all, and must defend and assist each and every individual living within it, 'Jew or Gentile, bondman or free,' rich or poor, in proper order and in proportion to each one's needs."[85] The Church is regarded as the "guardian and interpreter of [God's] laws"[86] and "the state is bound to rule the people in accordance with Christian principles."[87] However, the real problem is that a Christian government is not applicable in Lebanon as the current demographics place Muslims as the majority.

Thus, it seems that an Islamic government is the best alternative for Lebanon if the goal is to renew and not to regress. The abolition of the confessional political system will result in a movement away from *sectation* and an Islamic government will be the bridge to nation. The beautiful Phoenix that is Lebanon will finally shake

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[84] Qutb, *Milestones,* 72
[85] Rev. E. Cahill, *The Framework of A Christian State* (M.H. Gill and Son, LTD, 1932), 455
[86] Ibid., 607
[87] Ibid.

off the ashes of its past. It will be reborn, as the country is set on a path towards

unity and stability.

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