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Lebanon's 'Arab Spring':  
Exploring Identity, Security,  
And Change

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# Lebanon's 'Arab Spring': Exploring Identity, Security, And Change

Dima Smayra

## The Backdrop

The Arab uprisings were received with enthusiasm, support and optimism across the whole spectrum of the Lebanese political leadership and society. Many even went so far as to say that the 'Arab spring' originated and was inspired by the 2005 Lebanese 'Independence Uprising' which successfully ended a 30-year Syrian occupation.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, even in the earlier stages, voices of concern over minority issues were heard.<sup>2</sup> While Lebanon had long been the centre of attention, it seemed to be watching the events sweeping across the region from afar. Was Lebanon to glide through the regional instability? And, was Lebanon not to have its own radical Spring? Different media outlets hypothesised as to why Lebanon seemed to be unaffected by the regional events. Ultimately, however, a ripple effect from the regional instability slowly built up and challenged the initial enthusiasm.

As the uprisings reached Syria, anxiety soon took over the political rhetoric in Lebanon. The uneasy relationship that binds these two countries would aggravate an already precarious situation. The two leading political blocks in Lebanon had been in a stand-off since 2005. Simply put, Lebanon has been at a crossroads, and the direction forward has been fiercely fought over. As regional showdowns continue to be vividly mirrored in Lebanese politics, the Syrian events were seen as the perfect opportunity for the two leading blocks to entrench their positions and escalate their mobilisation.

Repercussions of the regional situation were felt in Lebanon when the uprisings appeared to take over Syria; this paper, therefore, focuses on the impact of the Syrian events over Lebanese politics and security. In doing so, it highlights the mobilising effect of sectarian identities and the intricate relationship between identity and security. In addition, drawing on 'critical security studies' school, this study attempts to suggest a more comprehensive approach to reconstructing a common identity, but remains cautious about its prospects.

## The Background

The 2005 assassination of former Prime Minister Rafic Hariri had seismic effects on a long-stagnant domestic political scene. Armed with international support, Lebanese people marched the streets in protest at the prolonged Syrian presence. What was then dubbed the 'Beirut Spring' was soon met with counter-demonstrations in support and recognition of the stabilising Syrian role and in rejection of Western influence. This created a schism in Lebanese society and gave birth to what would become known as the March 14<sup>th</sup> and the March 8<sup>th</sup> blocks. The Lebanese political scene has since been deeply polarised. This polarisation has had important socio-economic, political and hard security effects; these have manifested themselves through one stalemate after another, government paralysis, politicisation of every aspect of the public sector, and unresolved remnants of war and of 30 years of Syrian presence, such as weak public institutions and security services. Meanwhile, justice and development have slipped further



down the priority list, armed clashes or security incidents have maintained a relatively steady presence in everyday life, and the whole public service seems to have been put on hold.<sup>3</sup>

In the aftermath of the Syrian withdrawal, several ‘historical’ and long overdue reconciliations necessary in war-to-peace transitions took place.<sup>4</sup> The ‘Independence Uprising’ brought together an unlikely alliance between Hariri, Gemayel, Geagea, Jumblat, and for a brief period of time Michel Aoun.<sup>5</sup> These individuals are historical giants of Lebanon’s political landscape. For many Lebanese, it finally seemed that the civil war was behind them. Moreover, in spite of the rift with other factions, the 2006 ‘Memorandum of Understanding’ between Hezbollah and the Free Patriotic Movement was another important step in this direction. Christian representation in both camps meant that the divide was no longer between Christians and Muslims as clearly as it had been in the case of the civil war; the tension was more visible in Shia-Sunni relations.<sup>6</sup> However, that is not to say that the Arab uprisings did not spur old threat perceptions.<sup>7</sup> The dividing lines were merely redrawn between two divergent political paths: those of March 14<sup>th</sup> and March 8<sup>th</sup>.<sup>8</sup> That being said, the concerns, representation and the mobilisation remained largely sectarian.

By examining the different Lebanese reactions to the ‘Arab spring’, this paper highlights endemic attitudes and fears which have prevented a break from traditional politics. Traditional politics in Lebanon have focused on sectarian identities and, sectarianism had long been institutionalised – under the Ottoman Empire, the French Mandate and since independence. Security, for each of the communities, has been equivalent to a zero-sum game. Securing sectarian identity continues to be the main referent.<sup>9</sup> However, since 2005, the reconfiguration of power conceded to alliances which recognised the dynamic between interests and identities. It has been argued that “identity and interests (...) are dynamically interrelated” and “cause each other”;<sup>10</sup> these new alliances illustrate this argument, as the rallying of different sectarian groups with some and against others consequently created new umbrella identities – March 14<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>.

## Sectarianism and Identity in the Lebanese System

George Corm writes of a ‘torn identity’;<sup>11</sup> Hassan Krayem notes that “polarization among the Lebanese and their efforts to defend or promote their interests invited and facilitated external intervention”.<sup>12</sup> Allegiances and identities in Lebanon have not been bound by territorial borders.<sup>13</sup> Throughout the years, it has required the intervention of the same foreign powers that supported the crisis in the first place, in order to put the “Lebanese ‘Humpty Dumpty’ back together”.<sup>14</sup> The different sects have required outside powers to support their position in the distribution of power, and have survived as extensions of larger regional and international forces.<sup>15</sup> Since 2005 the cards have been reshuffled; as Lebanon is ‘in the middle of a showdown’ between Iran and Syria on the one hand, and most of the international community on the other hand,<sup>16</sup> these unlikely alliances changed the face of the power composition – giving way to a more complex and diverse one. That is not to say that sectarianism is withering; Karim Knio speaks of neo-sectarianism where “it is clear that ‘old/new’ cleavages that characterise Lebanese politics is omnipresent”.<sup>17</sup> Fawaz Gerges, however, disagrees with the one-layered depiction of Lebanese politics. He notes that “far from being sectarian-based or driven, the power struggle in Lebanon is multi-layered and complex. Sectarianism is used and abused to mask vested interests and differences”.<sup>18</sup> Nizar Abdel-Kader also underscores the complexity of the Lebanese system, but he reminds us of its duality: feudal and sectarian.<sup>19</sup> In any case, sectarianism is undoubtedly part of Lebanese politics; as part of identity politics, since 2005, it has been fused with new political labels. Therefore, constellations of sectarian identities make





up the two main factions struggling over the future of Lebanon: one representing the so-called ‘axis of moderation’, the other representing the ‘axis of resistance’.

In her discussion of the ‘New Wars’, Mary Kaldor sheds light on the manipulation of identity politics in the conduct of conflicts.<sup>20</sup> It is not contentious to note that (sectarian) identity politics is an entrenched characteristic of the Lebanese context. And although, within the timeframe of this paper, conflict within Lebanon did not escalate into a fully-fledged war, we can appropriate Kaldor’s depiction of identity politics to conflict, mobilisation, and political violence in Lebanon. According to Kaldor, ‘New Wars’:

"are fought in the name of identity – a claim to power on the basis of labels. These are wars in which political identity is defined in terms of exclusive labels (...). Labels are mobilised for political purposes; they offer a new sense of security (...) They provide a new populist form of communitarian ideology, a way to maintain or capture power, (...) nevertheless, it is the deliberate manipulation of these sentiments (...) that is the immediate cause of conflict."<sup>21</sup>

Violent conflicts based on identity are globalised and unregulated, dependent on “support from neighbouring states, diaspora groups”, and not bound by ‘time and space’ or actors.<sup>22</sup> Therefore, as in the Lebanese case, these are protracted conflicts which revolve around ‘access to state power’, and protagonists resort to ‘exclusive identity claims’ in order to mobilise supporters based on ‘fear and hate’. Such conflicts are characterised by a “lack of authority of the state, the weakness of representation, the loss of confidence that the state is able or willing to respond to public concerns, the inability and/or unwillingness to regulate the privatisation and informalisation of violence”; and these characteristics legitimise the recourse to violence.<sup>23</sup> Furthermore, with regards to the Lebanese context, one may add the failure, as Saoud al-Mawla notes, of the Lebanese parties to break from the traditional feudo-sectarian system and to create a national project.<sup>24</sup> Farid Khazen has the same view regarding post-war political parties: that is, they contribute to the status quo and fail to provide alternatives to traditional politics.<sup>25</sup> This opinion has spilled to grass-roots levels; despite the dynamism of Lebanese civil society, several groups have lamented that, overwhelmingly, the Lebanese ultimately favour sectarian politics.<sup>26</sup>

Despite the many years of conflict and the many attempts to patch the domestic ‘mosaic’,<sup>27</sup> it is not contentious to note that the Lebanese domestic canvas remains incomplete. Pinning this to threats to identity is no novelty; nevertheless, this paper examines how the ‘Arab spring’ further exacerbates the already precarious stability of Lebanon.

## Perceptions, Representation and Resistance

There is a long-standing belief that Lebanon is “affected positively or negatively by the regional situation”; Interior Minister Marwan Charbel warned that the “repercussions [of the Arab spring] will not be easy on Lebanon”.<sup>28</sup> March 14<sup>th</sup> member and head of the Phalange Party Amine Gemayel distanced himself from the coalition by stating that “we sympathize with the Arab people calling for freedom, but we believe Lebanon should not be involved, other parties’ interferences in our affairs affect our country [negatively]”.<sup>29</sup> There have been many positions of caution regarding the situation in Syria, expressing the idea that any spill over could spiral out of control. Charbel reminded both camps to be “aware that we are on the same boat together and if the boat sinks all of us will drown”.<sup>30</sup> Weakness, orders a political choice, or a security measure: the March 8<sup>th</sup> government has taken several tangible steps to dissociate itself, as it claims, from any role in the Syrian crisis.<sup>31</sup> The first of these was to abstain from voting for



Syrian expulsion from the Arab League, another was the reservations over the Arab League's decision to send a joint Arab-UN peacekeeping mission, and a third was the refusal to participate in the 'Friends of Syria' conference. "Our best decision is to disassociate Lebanon from the developments in Syria", reiterated Prime Minister Miqati;<sup>32</sup> his position was reinforced with the French and American 'understanding' of the government's position.<sup>33</sup> However, these moves have not been popular across the spectrum of Lebanese society – that is, the opposition and a large portion of the Lebanese population – not the least for humanitarian reasons. Druze leader Walid Jumblat, although part of the current government, has consistently condemned Assad's regime and called to intensify assistance to Syrian refugees.<sup>34</sup> The scene in Lebanon is nuanced and complex and the dividing lines are unclear, but it is not the purpose of this paper to develop this aspect further. Nevertheless, it is worth to note that March 14<sup>th</sup> has taken an opposite stance. For Sunni leader former PM Saad Hariri, the Lebanese have 'a national duty and a responsibility' to stand by the Syrian people. Furthermore, as he noted that the regime in Syria is "engaged in the last battle to defend a *regional axis*", he called on the international community and Arab countries to "take practical steps beyond condemnation, and even beyond imposing economic sanctions".<sup>35</sup> His alliance recognised the Syrian National Council "as the legitimate representative of the Syrian people".<sup>36</sup> March 14<sup>th</sup> alliance is very optimistic as to the fall of the Syrian regime. Hariri believes that "the establishment of a pluralistic democratic system in Syria will give great immunity to the Lebanese democratic experience". The head of the Lebanese Forces, Samir Geagea, agrees; it "means a stable Lebanon that has demarcated borders and its arms limited to the state (...) a democratic regime in Syria supports Lebanon's independence".<sup>37</sup> However, Amal and Hezbollah, the two main Shiite parties, do not agree; they have accused the international community of targeting Syria because of its support to the Palestinian and the Lebanese resistance.<sup>38</sup> Furthermore, Hezbollah is convinced that March 14<sup>th</sup>'s manoeuvring is aimed at changing the domestic distribution of power.<sup>39</sup> There are now two opposite but concrete directions taken by the two camps; this further reduces chances for near-term pacification and stabilisation.

In brief, all parties were initially excited about the 'Arab spring'. Categorisation and the sectarian narrative are both too simplistic and reductionist a method, but mainstream assumptions identify Sunni-Shia tension as a standing issue;<sup>40</sup> therefore, the Syrian events, and to a lesser extent those in Bahrain, have received contradictory responses.<sup>41</sup> In addition, Christians have expressed some concerns over unintended repercussions of the 'Arab spring'.<sup>42</sup> However, there have also been many reassurances. Hariri<sup>43</sup> and Nasrallah<sup>44</sup> reiterated their keenness for civil peace,<sup>45</sup> and both singled out a common foreign enemy but no domestic one. This said, it is also noteworthy that both camps continue to slam each other as the Syrian events magnify the political rift.<sup>46</sup> And, in the face of regional changes, perceptions of identity threats are spreading.

## Manifestations

The heightened political tension has manifested itself on the ground through a number of security incidents. Since the start of the uprisings, a number of demonstrations and counter-demonstrations have been staged and have gone through peacefully. However, in the south, Tyre has been the site a number of bomb explosions; the UNIFIL force was targeted, a number of rockets were launched into northern Israel thus threatening the cessation of hostilities, and the Palestinian camps have witnessed a number of serious armed clashes.<sup>47</sup> On the north-eastern borders, arms smuggling has raised concerns over the role that Lebanese and non-Lebanese factions could be playing in the Syrian crisis; the Defence Minister's warning that al-Qaeda members have crossed over to Syria has raised fury.<sup>48</sup> Whether and to what extent



these incidents were orchestrated one cannot say; nevertheless, compounded with a divisive and accusatory rhetoric,<sup>49</sup> a large part of the population is increasingly mobilised along what seem like apocalyptic lines.

Meanwhile, calls – such as Ayman al-Zawahiri’s – for Muslims to support the Syrian revolution have received concerns despite initially questioning the timing and the possible role the Syrian intelligence might have had in them.<sup>50</sup> His call and others like it – including domestic ones – seem to have resonated in some Sunni circles. This is attributed to a number of reasons: one, because of the proximity of some of the Syrian rebel cities to Lebanese territory; two, because political and sectarian affiliations match most of the Lebanese northern border area; three, because cross-border activity has been an integral part of the formal and informal economies of the two border areas; four, because the historical conflict between the Sunnis and the Alawites in Tripoli has repeatedly escalated into armed clashes; five, because the increased spread of weapons amongst the various Lebanese factions as well as the Palestinian camps, and its flow to Syria constitute further challenges to the control of the use of force. Hence, the north of Lebanon, in particular, is mirroring a flared version of the domestic and regional political polarisation. Fears that Syrian instability is spilling further into Lebanon have been escalating. “Residents [are] increasingly seeing themselves as part of the conflict”;<sup>51</sup> in Tripoli, anti-Assad Sunnis and pro-Assad Alawites fought several rounds of armed battles along what is conveniently called ‘Syria Street’.<sup>52</sup> Furthermore, earlier in 2012, a special report by *al-Akhbar* newspaper investigated border cities such as Wadi Khaled used as a safe house for the Free Syrian Army (FSA).<sup>53</sup> The issue of weapons and fighters crossing borders, Syrian incursions into Lebanese territory, cross-border fighting, safe-havens for Syrian rebels, Syrian refugees,<sup>54</sup> the disappearance of a number of Syrian opposition figures, the kidnapping of Lebanese in Syria, and the extension of security events and clashes to various other parts of the country – including Beirut, Sidon and the Palestinian camps – are all part of the polemic. Both blocks, March 8<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>, have called for the deployment of the army along the Lebanese borders. The request by the former is aimed at preventing arms smuggling, fighters crossing and using Lebanon as a ‘launchpad’,<sup>55</sup> while the latter’s request aims at protecting refugees, defectors, the FSA and preventing further incursions.<sup>56</sup> Meanwhile, as mentioned, at the grassroots level, sectarian tension is sweltering; Sunni circles increasingly speak of their forced subordination to a Syrian and a Hezbollah-led government,<sup>57</sup> and have expressed their resentment towards the “humiliation of the Sunni communities”.<sup>58</sup> The failure of the state or even the opposition to respond to their grievances and to protect ‘their’ rights has encouraged groups to move towards more organised responses and, in some cases, to take matters into their hands.<sup>59</sup> The emergence of this third actor has presented a new challenge to the political elite—one they are struggling to control. The ensuing instability has allowed for a kidnapping spree to emerge and for a return to road-side bombings; state institutions are clearly overwhelmed; in response, a security plan here, deployment there, the use of good offices etc., have been among the patchwork measures employed. Domestic actors, the international community and the media have moved to warn against the further spill-over of the Syrian war on Lebanon; some have even gone as far as to re-introduce the term ‘civil-war’ into the discourse.<sup>60</sup> Nevertheless, thus far, the traditional approach to ‘consensual security’<sup>61</sup> has managed to keep the lid on the security flare-ups, and many domestic actors dismiss and challenge the media’s usage of the ghost of the civil war.

## Alternative Voices

As events are unfolding, and amid fears that the Syrian crisis further exacerbates Lebanese politics and security, there have been calls to renew dialogue between the two camps. The



Muslim-Christian Summit urged, to quote, “officials in Lebanon to be in agreement for the sake of peace and stability in Lebanon and the unity of the people”, and it called “for a unified stance and a nationalistic rhetoric at a time when Lebanon and the region are going through these difficult and complicated times”.<sup>62</sup> President Michel Suleiman has tried to bring the two sides back to negotiation, noting “Lebanon is in dire need for dialogue”.<sup>63</sup> Sunni Grand Mufti Qabbani praised the president’s efforts to prevent further deterioration, noting that a return to dialogue would “boost trust and cooperation”.<sup>64</sup> And, Maronite Patriarch Beshara al-Rahi called for a “new National Pact to neutralize Lebanon”, stressing that the “advancement of Lebanon is a joint mission”.<sup>65</sup>

While the Lebanese public seems to be divided along two broad lines, the reality is much more nuanced. There are voices trying to break free; left on their own, however, they might wither or be co-opted. Pockets of light can be seen in MP Tueini’s words: “it is time to start thinking of the rights of the individual ahead of the rights of minorities”.<sup>66</sup> In a sense, Tueini is referring to human security concerns; but, despite enthusiasm over the ‘Cedar Revolution’, the Lebanese youth has not emulated its neighbours in standing up against socio-economic, development as well as political injustices. Instead, sectarian mobilisation continues as a manifestation of segregation, underdevelopment and manipulation.

Having said this, one is also aware of positive grassroots efforts from outside the ruling establishment, which are worth considering. Matters of personal status in Lebanon fall under the jurisdiction of religious courts. With 18 recognised sects, there are 15 religious codes. A person only exists in Lebanon as a member of a sect. However, following a popular ‘National Campaign’ beginning in 2009, the Lebanese gained the right to remove their sect from their identity cards.<sup>67</sup> An article in *Now Lebanon* captures sentiments shared by a growing number of Lebanese: “I’m here today to say that I am aware of what sect on ID means” said Nader Jaafar. The campaign, however, has not been received with much optimism: “some saw the move as purely symbolic, others saw it as the beginning of a wider change in Lebanese attitudes, conceding that it will take time for the full benefit to be felt”. Even this campaign was eventually politicised as groups affiliated with different coalitions refused to work together.<sup>68</sup>

Another symbolic voice comes from the popular movement ‘*Laique Pride March*’.<sup>69</sup> It is an annual march held since 2010 in protest against Lebanon’s sectarian system.<sup>70</sup> As one journalist said, “you probably didn’t hear news of this demonstration, though”.<sup>71</sup> A number of reasons can explain this: no violence ensued from either the state or demonstrators, and it did not represent any of the major and traditional parties, oligarchs or leaders. Although phrases such as ‘revolution against the regime’ and ‘people want the fall of the regime’ were chanted, as in Egypt and elsewhere across the region,<sup>72</sup> it was not seen as a threat to the ruling establishment.

## Reinventing Identity and Security

Over the past few years, Lebanese society has been involved in many forms of resistance and protest, ranging from the peaceful to the armed and violent. However, authority and power in Lebanon are fragmented; therefore, aside from the Israeli occupation, the Lebanese have not had a centre to rally against. There has never, therefore, been a unified large-scale movement for change in Lebanon.

Richard Wyn-Jones notes that identity is “a central aspect of the human experience”;<sup>73</sup> and Ken Booth argues that “the issue of identity – what makes *us* believe we are the same and *them* different – is inseparable from security”.<sup>74</sup> For most Lebanese, threats to identity or societal security<sup>75</sup> are the main impediments to organised and wide-scale calls for change. Lebanese





society remains highly entrenched in a traditional security discourse that has monopolised Lebanese politics since and before independence. Despite widespread acceptance of the unsustainability of the system, Lebanese society remains subordinate to traditional leaders and imprisoned by a stringent identity discourse.

Needless to say, a state as weak as the Lebanese one struggles in managing a common national identity when its legitimacy and its monopoly over the use of force are contingent on sectarian leaders. Although, as some claimed, “the very weakness of the centre has protected the country from replicating the regional unrest”,<sup>76</sup> it could also be argued that this same weakness hampers genuine progress and replicates survivalist strategies and threat perceptions.

May Chidiac<sup>77</sup> said “today’s protests across the Arab world echo the spirit of the Lebanese model”; that is fair until she alluded that Lebanese, like “Arab youths have abandoned traditional ramblings... for legitimate demands: economic opportunities, political freedom, and an end to corruption and regime exclusivity”. Sadly, the day has not yet come where Lebanese youth put these ‘legitimate demands’ ahead of their sectarian and political affiliations. In the February 2005 demonstration, in a bid to showcase the diversity of groups taking part against the Syrian presence in Lebanon, “sending out ‘shout outs’ to the shiites, the Sunnites, the Druzes, the Maronites, and the Greek Orthodox Lebanese” was part of the rally.<sup>78</sup> While noting that the masses remarkably and unprecedentedly rallied around a common cause, their identification remained sectarian, and when leaders diverged, so did the youth. This divergence can be attributed to the construction that the different groups are a threat to each other’s existence, which in turn is hampering progress towards a common goal and identity.

Fear or insecurity is not unjustified given the history of conflict in Lebanon. Nevertheless, it needs to be acknowledged that identities are social construct;<sup>79</sup> they are ‘collective phenomena’ each of which is “created, negotiated, ascribed, and denied through interaction with others”;<sup>80</sup> and even though they seem to transcend other considerations, they are not the only value worth securing.<sup>81</sup> Although they seem structural and embedded in the system, they can be deconstructed and reconstructed, and eventually reinvented in an inclusive and comprehensive manner.<sup>82</sup> Identities and security that hold the individual as their referent are the alternative; these are not individualistic, exclusivist or restrictive. Such an approach emphasises the reciprocity of rights and the reverence of the individual above all;<sup>83</sup> and the individual is understood in the sense of the human being rather than ‘the man as such’.<sup>84</sup> The corollary to this is that the security of other collectivities – society, groups, minorities and the state – can be guaranteed. Drawing from critical security studies, it is possible to put forth a vision of security that is deeper, wider, and non-deterministic.

The role of international and regional powers is essential. The Lebanese cannot do it alone.<sup>85</sup> As in the Northern Ireland peace process and in European integration in the aftermath of WWII, they will require an enabling environment.<sup>86</sup> Instead, regional action has instrumentalised fears, and has intensified the pressure on the government’s stance.<sup>87</sup> This has contributed to further polarisation and has highlighted the government’s failure to effectively cope with the crisis. Regional action has fed and contributed to the increasingly widespread perspective that the situation in Lebanon is volatile and heading towards an uncontrollable vacuum. There have been calls for domestic reconciliation, and the president’s visits to Gulf monarchies as well as the revival of the National Dialogue are meant to dissuade the boiling tension and buy time for the immediate regional situation to unfold; however these steps remain symbolic in light of the larger regional context.<sup>88</sup> As long as regional and international powers do not support, push, finance, and provide the appropriate atmosphere to dissuade



tension, the Lebanese quest to climb out of the cycle of identity threats will remain a marginal effort. I should note that international pressure was instrumental in 2005 in pressuring Syria out of Lebanon. Subsequently, however, foreign intervention aggravated the rift between the Lebanese communities and created two opposing blocks contending for the future of Lebanon. A different type of regional and international role is required, therefore: not impositions or ‘Chapter 7’ resolutions, not isolation or an ultimatum between a Western versus an Iranian axis, and not a widening of the divide between the two groups by setting them against each other. The strategy currently adopted is reminiscent of the Cold War – one of standoffs and proxies. It is unsustainable but unlikely to change in the near future. This study instead advises engagement, rapprochement, incentives and a common vision – ‘a seduction model’.<sup>89</sup> Believing in the duality of identity and interest, Bill McSweeney argues that “it is idealistic to imagine individuals or collectivities, socialized by habit and history into a particular sense of self, will choose to change without the *incentive or pressure of self-interest*”. This ‘seduction model’ encourages actors into a ‘new school of learning’ to forge a ‘cooperation habit’ or a ‘coordinated reflex’.<sup>90</sup> A new strategy for Lebanon therefore needs to address deep rooted fears and identity threats, while identifying common interests and shared values for the purpose of reconstructing an inclusive common national identity.<sup>91</sup> Nevertheless, as Lebanon is locked in the midst of a fierce regional and international showdown – even construed as an existential one – prospects of such a project remain slim.

This being said, the domestic scene is dynamic, and there is room for continued effort at the individual, societal, and state levels. Some initiatives at the grass-roots level contribute to the positive transformation of society, making sure that the time is ripe for change and that the social infrastructure is receptive and capable of supporting a new vision for security. Eventually, it will rest on, not the state as such, but on individuals in the ruling establishment – sectarian, state, and social – to champion this cause, for it might be the least costly path to sustainable security. The most difficult task, however, is for the youth of Lebanon to liberate themselves from the grips of traditional sectarian and feudal leaders, and to recognise that their interests are intertwined. McSweeney notes that “security depends on how we choose our identity and interests”;<sup>92</sup> the Lebanese can choose a more inclusive conception of security, based on a long-term vision that their future is shared and their security mutually reinforcing and interdependent. Change can start through a bottom-up approach until leaders are convinced there is no safer or long-term alternative. This paper does not claim to suggest a detailed plan to overcome some of the structural and historical obstacles to stability in Lebanon; however, it does suggest that a “process by which participants (...) come together actively to transform it, and in the process transform themselves”,<sup>93</sup> is highly desirable.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, it is apparent that the Arab uprisings are exacerbating an already precarious situation by providing the two political camps in Lebanon with more reasons to ossify their positions. In light of the two camps’ fixation on political gains to secure their separate identities, the Lebanese system is unsustainable. The current situation prevents human security concerns such as development, access to justice, rule of law, social injustice and security from being addressed. Having said that, the Lebanese experience is not one to dismiss entirely; Lebanon remains the most democratic state in the region, with periodic elections, a relatively free media and an open opposition.<sup>94</sup> Furthermore, the system has been flexible enough to thwart several near fatal relapses into civil war.<sup>95</sup> Those who are optimistic such as UK ambassador to Lebanon – Tom Fletcher – note that the Lebanese have shown resilience and are used to grey shades rather than black and white.<sup>96</sup> Another Western diplomat in Lebanon noted that the



Lebanese experience could be seen as “an enabler for the region rather than a disabler”.<sup>97</sup> Therefore, Lebanon’s power-sharing experience and its relatively consensus-based approach constitute a valuable base. As such, this paper contends that some of the pillars for cooperation and integration are there; now the Lebanese need to run the extra mile.



## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Phalange Party leader Amin Gemayel: “The Cedar Revolution changed the face of Lebanon, and the people of the region [looked up to it] (...) so they decided to take our path”. ‘March 14 Leaders Express Solidarity with Syrian People’, Now Lebanon, 15 February 2012, From: <http://nowlebanon.com/NewsArticleDetails.aspx?ID=364919> (accessed on 17 February 2012). Also, Mischa Benoit-Lavelle, ‘Robert Fisk Gives Talk in Tunisia, Says Arab Spring Started in Lebanon’, Tunisia Alive, 18 February 2012, <http://www.tunisia-live.net/2012/02/18/robert-fisk-gives-talk-in-tunisia-says-arab-spring-started-in-lebanon/>. (accessed on 19 February 2012).

<sup>2</sup> Concerns were voices following the incidents of violence perpetuated against the Copts in Egypt. In response, ‘Lady of the Mountain’ Christian gathering, for example, announced its stance towards the Arab spring: it reiterated the participants’ support for the quest for justice, freedom and democracy; reiterated their belongingness to and their role in the region; rejected their association with the ‘oppressive regimes’; and emphasised their common destiny with their Muslim compatriots. ‘Lady of the Mountain Gathering Rejects “Bids to Link Christians Fate to Oppressive Regimes”’, Naharnet, 23 October 2011, <http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/18308-lady-of-the-mountain-gathering-rejects-bids-to-link-christians-fate-to-oppressive-regimes> (accessed on 27 October 2011).

<sup>3</sup> There has not been an agreement on a national budget since 2004; appointments and promotions in the public sector have been suspended for months and years at a time; and the National Dialogue was suspended from 2006 until June 2012, only to be boycotted again by July 2012.

<sup>4</sup> Druze representative MP Walid Jumblatt, head of Progressive Socialist Party (PSP) finalised his “last step in the reconciliation process he started with opposition figures. ‘Enough is enough. My meeting with Aoun brings the reconciliation process to an end’”. ‘Jumblatt Says Reconciliation Complete after Aoun Meeting’, Saida Online, 12 January 2010, <http://www.saidaonline.com/en/print.php?go=fullnews&id=17081> (accessed on 11 February 2012).

<sup>5</sup> I.e., the heads of the major Sunni, Christian and Druze parties.

<sup>6</sup> This is illustrated by clashes in Tripoli, Beirut, and Sidon, as well as in several quotes mentioned below.

<sup>7</sup> Maronite Patriarch Beshara al-Rahi emphasised: “We are not with the ruling regimes, we are with the reforms that are essential for the Arab peoples”. In 2011, he also voiced his concerns over a possible Sunni-Alawite civil war in Syria that “might lead to displacing the Christians from the region, like in Iraq”. ‘Al-Rahi Fears Possible Syria Civil War, Displacement of Christians’, Naharnet, 21 October 2011, <http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/18159-al-rahi-fears-possible-syria-civil-war-displacement-of-christians> (accessed on 27 October 2011).

<sup>8</sup> For example: “We have chosen the path of justice”, said Hariri, while Nasrallah emphasised the path of resistance: “we confirm firmly that we insist on adopting the choice and discipline of the resistance... Our way to dignity, prosperity, security is achieved by clinging to the option of resistance”. ‘Hariri: I will Bear Responsibility of my Solidarity with Syrian People’, Naharnet, 14 February 2012, <http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/30061> (accessed on 17 February 2012). And, for Nasrallah: ‘Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah’, Now Lebanon, 14 January 2012, <http://www.nowlebanon.com/NewsArchiveDetails.aspx?ID=352470> (accessed on 7 February 2012).

<sup>9</sup> As representation in the political system is on a sectarian basis, positions taken are viewed on a sectarian basis. MP Nayla Tueini said: “the current system means I only represent my sect... I hope one day this would change, and therefore represent my country and not my sect”. Al-Jazeera Documentary, Lebanon: the Family Business, 31 May 2009, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vesotrAN5g&feature=channel> (accessed on 10 February 2012).

<sup>10</sup> Bill McSweeney, Security, Identity and Interests. A sociology of International Relations. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 172 and 197.

<sup>11</sup> Georges Corm, Le Liban Contemporain, Histoire et Société (Paris: La Découverte, 2005), p. 21.

<sup>12</sup> Hassan Krayem, ‘The Lebanese Civil War and the Taif Agreement’, in Paul Salem (ed.) Conflict Resolution in the Arab World: Selected Essays (Beirut: American University of Beirut, 1997), p. 419.

<sup>13</sup> Maronite Patriarch: “Pluralism is a big treasure for Lebanon ... But we have another illness (...). It is our loyalty to outside Lebanon... We can’t live and have loyalties abroad both in the East and West”. ‘Al-Rahi: We Can’t Survive if we Have Loyalties Abroad’, Naharnet, 11 October 2011, <http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/17186-al-rahi-we-cant-survive-if-we-have-loyalties-abroad> (accessed on 15 October 2011).

<sup>14</sup> Patrick Clawson and Michael Eisendadt (eds.) The Last Arab-Israeli Battlefield? Implications of an Israeli Withdrawal from Lebanon (Washington: The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 2000), p. 6.

<sup>15</sup> The Christians have traditionally looked towards France and the West, the Shia to Iran, the Sunnis first to Syria and now to KSA, and the Druze have been more pragmatic.

<sup>16</sup> Corm, Le Liban, p. 21.





<sup>17</sup> He notes that “behind the simplistic and short-term distinction between an anti- and a pro-Syrian camp lies a clash of a multitude of different Lebanese national projects tailored around the interest of every sect respectively”. Karim Knio, ‘Lebanon: Cedar revolution or Neo-Sectarian Partition?’ Mediterranean Politics, 10 (2), 2005, p. 226.

<sup>18</sup> Fawaz Gerges, ‘Lebanon is Staring into the Abyss. Whatever the Tribunal into the Death of Rafik Hariri Decides, it will Pour Petrol on Lebanon’s Raging Fire’, The Guardian, 31 December 2012, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2010/dec/31/lebanon-brink-rafik-hariri-tribunal-hezbollah> (accessed on 7 March 2012).

<sup>19</sup> Nizar Abdel-Kader, *Tachkil wa Haykaliyat al-Jaysh al-Loubnani wa Souboul Tanzimih Dimna ‘aqida ‘askariya Haditha’* (Organizing the Lebanese Armed Forces according to a Modern Military Doctrine). In Riad Kahwaji (ed.) Oussous Sivassat al-Difa’ al-Loubnaniya (The Basis of Lebanon’s Defence Strategy) (Beirut: Dar An-Nahar Publishing, 2009), p. 117.

<sup>20</sup> ‘New Wars’ are considered as an increasing feature of world politics since the demise of colonialism and the Cold War. Mary Kaldor, ‘Cosmopolitanism and Organised Violence’, Conceiving Cosmopolitanism, Warwick, 27-29 April 2000.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> He says “the Lebanese parties did not succeed in transforming the Lebanese idea into a project for a state, a society and a nation”. Saoud al-Mawla, *Al-Awamel al-Dakhiliya wa al-khariyya al-Mouathira bi Wihadat Saff al-Kiwa al-Amniya wa al-‘Askariya’* (Internal and External Factors influencing the Unity in the Ranks of the Security and Military Forces). In Riad Kahwaji (ed.) Oussous Sivassat al-Difa’ al-Loubnaniya (The Basis of Lebanon’s Defence Strategy) (Beirut: Dar An-Nahar Publishing), p. 162.

<sup>25</sup> He notes: “parties have failed to promote integration and were not able to establish mechanisms for cooperation”. Farid Khazen, ‘Political Parties in Postwar Lebanon: Parties in Search of Partisans’, Middle East Journal, 57 (4), 2003, pp. 605-624.

<sup>26</sup> One activist maintained that “there is no silent majority in Lebanon (...) what we have experienced is that the majority of the Lebanese people have chosen to ally themselves with one political group or the other. Communal ties have become stronger and it is difficult to ignore their impact. This poses a serious challenge to our efforts”. Omayma Abdel-Latif, ‘Lebanon’s Civil Society says “No More Silence”’, Carnegie Endowment, 13 December 2007 <http://www.carnegieendowment.org/sada/2008/08/13/lebanon-s-civil-society-says-no-more-silence/2uhs> (accessed on 12 June 2012).

<sup>27</sup> A term used by several Lebanese specialists (Corm, Michal Hudson etc.). For Halim Barakat, a mosaic society differs from a pluralistic one; as is the case in Lebanon, the level of integration between the different groups is considerably lower in the former than it is in the latter. Halim Barakat, ‘Social and Political Integration in Lebanon: A Case of Social Mosaic’, Middle East Journal, 27 (3), 1973, pp. 301-318.

<sup>28</sup> ‘Arab Unrest will Not be Easy for Lebanon: Charbel’, The Daily Star, 09 August 2011, <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Politics/2011/Aug-09/Charbel-to-submit-bill-for-proportional-representation.ashx#axzz1mt2bq2S7> (accessed on 17 February 2012).

<sup>29</sup> ‘March 14 Leaders Express Solidarity with Syrian People’ Now Lebanon, 15 February 2012, <http://nowlebanon.com/News/ArticleDetails.aspx?ID=364919> (accessed on 17 February 2012).

<sup>30</sup> ‘Arab unrest’, 2011.

<sup>31</sup> In taking up this role, the government has been seen by some as an accomplice to the Syrian regime. For example, the deployment of the LAF along the border has received mixed responses, going as far as MP Moein al-Merehbi condemning the deployment of the army as “Syrian orders to President Michel Suleiman, Prime Minister Najib Miqati, and Army Commander General Jean Qahwaji”. ‘Jumblat Asks State to Aid Syrian Refugees instead of Flexing Military Muscle in North’, Naharnet, 6 February 2012, <http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/29112> (accessed on 17 February 2012).

<sup>32</sup> ‘Miqati Confident Army Will Restore Order in Tripoli, Hails Lebanese-French Ties’, Naharnet, 12 February 2012, <http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/29728-miqati-confident-army-will-restore-order-in-tripoli-hails-lebanese-french-ties> (accessed on 11 February 2012).

<sup>33</sup> ‘Connelly Says U.S. Understands Lebanon Stance on Syrian Crisis’, Naharnet, 28 February 2012, <http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/31634>. And, ‘Mikati, in Paris, Says France Understands Lebanon's Syria Sensitivities’, Daily Star, 10 February 2012, <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Politics/2012/Feb-10/162800-mikati-in-paris-says-france-understands-lebanons-syria-sensitivities.ashx#axzz1oBdYUvl3> (accessed on 3 March 2012).

<sup>34</sup> ‘Jumblat Asks’, 2012.

<sup>35</sup> (Emphasis added) ‘Hariri: Arabs Must Recognize SNC as Legitimate Representative of Syrian People’, Naharnet, 10 February 2012, <http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/29646> (accessed on 17 February 2012).



<sup>36</sup> March 14<sup>th</sup> alliance announced at the 7<sup>th</sup> commemoration of the Hariri assassination its alliance with the SNC. 'Hariri's Murder Anniversary to be Marked by Announcement of Alliance with Syrian Opposition', Naharnet, 14 February 2012, <http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/29972> (accessed on 17 February 2012).

<sup>37</sup> 'March 14 Leaders Express Solidarity with Syrian People', Now Lebanon, 15 February 2012, <http://nowlebanon.com/NewsArticleDetails.aspx?ID=364919> (accessed on 17 February 2012).

<sup>38</sup> 'Hizbullah and Amal Back Assad's Reform to Consolidate Syria', Naharnet, 18 February 2012, <http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/30478> (accessed on 20 February 2012).

<sup>39</sup> Deputy Secretary General Qassem: "To the March 14 bunch I say: stop betting on regional developments to alter the balance of power in Lebanon, you betted on America, Israel, the West and all the outside schemes to no avail". 'Qassem to March 14: Stop Betting on Regional Developments', Naharnet, 15 February 2012, <http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/30179> (accessed on 21 February 2012).

<sup>40</sup> Both Hariri's and Nasrallah's statements quoted throughout this paper allude to this.

<sup>41</sup> Nasrallah had differentiated between the popular uprisings (such as in Tunisia and Egypt) and the 'conspiracy' against Syria or the 'injustice' in Bahrain. He noted that "the Arab Spring was against the regimes run by (former U.S. secretary of state Condoleezza) Rice, (Assistant U.S. Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs Jeffrey) Feltman and (U.S. Secretary of State Hillary) Clinton, the same people who were supervising you in 2006". 'Nasrallah Slams March 14, Says Hizbullah Won't Kill "Ordinary" Israelis to Avenge Mughniyeh', Naharnet, 16 February 2012, <http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/30320> (accessed on 22 February 2012).

<sup>42</sup> Several Christian leaders have expressed this concern but also reiterated their Arab affiliation and integration to Muslim society. The Pro-March 14 Lady of the Mountain gathering and repetitive al-Rahi statements of a common future and the fear of Christian displacement illustrate this.

<sup>43</sup> In terms of Sunni-Christian relations, Hariri repeatedly reaffirmed his commitment to *Mounassafa* (parity). As for Sunni-Shiite relations: "we do not hold our Shiite brothers responsible for the assassination of Rafic Hariri", and that "Israel is our only enemy and let us defend our country together and be victorious for Lebanon". 'Hariri: I will Bear Responsibility of my Solidarity with Syrian People', Naharnet, 14 February 2012, <http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/30061> (accessed on 17 February 2012).

<sup>44</sup> Nasrallah states: "it is true that in 1982 we had made speeches calling for the rise of an Islamic state in Lebanon, but that objective has long been abandoned just like others from the opposite camp have abandoned partition". 'Nasrallah Rules Out Govt. Collapse, Urges "Real" Dialogue in Syria', Naharnet, 7 December 2012, <http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/29255> (accessed on 17 February 2012).

<sup>45</sup> Nasrallah: "I would like to confirm our keenness on civil peace". Hariri: "I am ready to bear the responsibility of preventing strife between the Lebanese, *Sunnis and Shiites* in particular". (Emphasis added) 'Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah', Now Lebanon, 14 January 2012, <http://www.nowlebanon.com/NewsArchiveDetails.aspx?ID=352470> (accessed on 17 February 2012). And, 'Hariri: I will Bear Responsibility of my Solidarity with Syrian People', Naharnet, 14 February 2012, <http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/30061> (accessed on 17 February 2012).

<sup>46</sup> Nasrallah to March 14: "You are not in a position that allows you to put conditions (...) to give guarantees in Lebanon concerning the developments in the region". As for Hariri, he held the government responsible for "the frequent Syrian violations against Lebanese citizens and Lebanese sovereignty". Former Prime Minister Saniora labelled the current government as the "government of assassination". And, Aoun, on his part, is frustrated with the political deadlock: he is "the one who represents Christians in power"; he "must select the Christian (civil servants) and until now we haven't gained anything in the administrative appointments". 'Nasrallah Slams March 14, Says Hizbullah Won't Kill "Ordinary" Israelis to Avenge Mughniyeh', Naharnet, 16 February 2012, <http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/30320> (accessed on 20 February 2012). 'Aoun: We Won't Leave Government, Let the PM Quit', Naharnet, 12 February 2012, <http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/29854> (accessed on 17 February 2012). And, Rami Khoury, 'Lebanon's Troubles don't Include Civil War', Daily Star, 24 October 2012, <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/Opinion/Columnist/2012/Oct-24/192516-lebanons-troubles-dont-include-civil-war.ashx#ixzz2DF4JAGRB> (accessed on 24 November 2012). And, 'Hariri: We Hold Govt. Responsible for Syrian Violations against Lebanese', Naharnet, 28 January 2012, <http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/24702> (accessed on 17 February 2012).

<sup>47</sup> UNIFIL Commander Major General Alberto Asarta noted his concern: "after I have praised for a year and a half the ideal security situation in the South, saying that that this region is the most stable, the situation deteriorated". 'Asarta Fears a Deteriorating Security Situation in the South', Naharnet, 14 December 2012, <http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/23244> (accessed on 20 February 2012).

<sup>48</sup> Several days later "44 people were killed in Damascus bombings that the Syrian regime blamed on terrorist organizations". 'Mansour: Ghosn, Charbel's Information on Al-Qaeda is not Contradictory', Now Lebanon, 2 January 2012, <http://nowlebanon.com/NewsArchiveDetails.aspx?ID=348076#> (accessed on 17 February 2012).

<sup>49</sup> Nasrallah on March 14<sup>th</sup> rhetoric: "anyone keen on preventing *Sunni-Shiite strife* must right now stop the statements of their MPs and media outlets that are full of *despicable sectarianism*". (Emphasis added) 'Nasrallah Slams March 14', 2012.



<sup>50</sup> For example, Ayman al-Zawahiri “appeal[led] to every Muslim and every free, honourable one in Turkey, Iraq, Jordan, and Lebanon, to rise to help his brothers in Syria with all that he can”. ‘Zawahiri Urges Lebanon’s Muslims to Help Syrian Rebels’, Naharnet, 12 February 2012, <http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/29781-zawahiri-urges-lebanon-s-muslims-to-help-syrian-rebels>. And, ‘Jumblat: Syrian Intelligence behind Zawahiri’s Support for Syrian Revolt’, Naharnet, 14 February 2012, <http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/30038> (accessed on 17 February 2012).

<sup>51</sup> Today “Bab al-tabbaneh... could be mistaken for a free Syrian Army enclave across the border: scrawled graffiti..., the green, white and black flag of the Syrian opposition hangs on walls and bullet casings litter the street”. Josh Wood, ‘Military in Lebanon is Caught in the Middle’, New York Times, 15 February 2012, <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/02/16/world/middleeast/syrias-unrest-felt-by-military-in-lebanon.html?pagewanted=all> (accessed on 17 February 2012).

<sup>52</sup> Earlier drafts of this paper attempted to keep track of the number of casualties but the recurrence of security incidents render this futile.

<sup>53</sup> For recuperation, medical attention and hospitalisation, as well as a base for media outreach and “political activis[m]”. Radwan Mortada, ‘Wadi Khaled: The Free Syrian Army Base in Lebanon (III)’, Al-Akhbar, 8 February 2012, <http://english.al-akhbar.com/content/wadi-khaled-free-syrian-army-base-lebanon-iii> (accessed on 17 February 2012).

<sup>54</sup> The flow of refugees into Lebanon has been continuous, and more were expected as winter approached. By November 2012, the UNHCR had registered 127,420 refugees in Lebanon. It is worth noting that Lebanon stands ahead of Jordan (at 125,670) and Turkey (at 123,747), that the total number of refugees has “trippl[ed] in three months” (between August and October), and that a considerable number of refugees have not registered with the UN agency. The refugees issue is a sensitive one as it is reminiscent of the Palestinian experience—the ghost of security incidents and an eventual permanent claim over the territories of the camps is omnipresent; therefore, the Lebanese government refused to erect refugee camps; instead refugees reside with relatives, welcoming families and charities, others are housed in public buildings and schools etc. ‘U.N. Says 127,420 Syrian Refugees Registered in Lebanon’, Naharnet, 23 November 2012, <http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/61984>. And, ‘Registered Syrian Refugees in Surrounding States triple in Three Months’, UNHCR Briefing Notes, 2 October 2012, <http://www.unhcr.org/506ac00c9.html> (accessed on 25 November 2012).

<sup>55</sup> Hezbollah deputy Secretary General Naim Qassem said: “We reject to transform Lebanon into a *launchpad* for attacks against others, a place where to score *political gains or implement the projects* of the United States and Israel”. (Emphasis added) ‘Qassem Lauds Army Deployment in North, Stresses Government Provides Stability’, Naharnet, 12 February 2012, <http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/29798> (accessed on 17 February 2012).

<sup>56</sup> Wood, ‘Military in Lebanon’.

<sup>57</sup> “We are demanding the fall of a government sponsored by Bashar Assad”, said Ahmad Hariri. ‘Mustaqbal Holds Rally Commemorating al-Hasan in Tripoli, Vows to “Smash” Rivals in 2013 Elections’, Naharnet, 2 February 2012, <http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/63032> (accessed on 2 February 2012).

<sup>58</sup> Words of a Sunni Sheikh from Akkar (north of Lebanon). International Crisis Group, ‘A Precarious Balancing Act’, 22 November 2012, p. 4.

<sup>59</sup> For example: Sheikh Asir’s sit-in in Sidon culminated in a violent clash between his and Hezbollah’s supporters, a number of demonstrations in Tripoli have been staged in protest against the lengthy detention of Islamists, and self-defence militias have surged. See: Mostafa Adib, ‘Perspectives for a Reform of the Security Sector in Lebanon’, Arab reform Initiative, February 2012, p. 5. And ICG, A Precarious, pp. 4-5.

<sup>60</sup> See for example: ‘Arab League Leader Fears that Lebanon Would Go up in Flames’, Naharnet, 10 June 2012, <http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/42983> (accessed on 15 June 2012). Or, Martin Chulov, ‘Lebanon Aghast as Return of Sectarian Kidnappings Raises Spectre of Civil War’, The Guardian, 15 November 2012, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2012/aug/15/lebanon-syria-sectarian-kidnappings-warnings>. And, Avi Issacharoff and Amos Harel, ‘Lebanon sees Threat of Civil War, as Syria Violence Spills Over’, Haaretz, 22 October 2012, <http://www.haaretz.com/blogs/east-side-story/lebanon-sees-threat-of-civil-war-as-syria-violence-spills-over.premium-1.471409> (accessed on 24 November 2012).

<sup>61</sup> Whereby political, sectarian and local leaders broker a cessation of hostilities.

<sup>62</sup> ‘Muslim-Christian Summit Urges Unity and Nationalistic Rhetoric’, Naharnet, 7 February 2012, <http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/29163> (accessed on 17 February 2012).

<sup>63</sup> Both camps announced that they are in support of resuming the National Dialogue, but while March 14<sup>th</sup> wants to restrict the discussion to Hezbollah’s arsenal, the latter refuses this condition and is in favour of discussing a general defence strategy. ‘Suleiman: Lebanon in Dire Need for Dialogue’, Naharnet, 10 February 2012, <http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/29644>. And, ‘Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah’, Now Lebanon, 14 January 2012, <http://www.nowlebanon.com/NewsArchiveDetails.aspx?ID=352470> (accessed on 17 February 2012).



<sup>64</sup> ‘Mufti Qabbani: Lebanon Cannot Progress Without Dialogue’, Daily Star, 30 May 2012, <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Politics/2012/May-30/175124-mufti-qabbani-lebanon-cannot-progress-without-dialogue.ashx#axzz2DA10wj2x> (accessed on 15 October 2012).

<sup>65</sup> ‘Al-Rahi Preaches New National Pact to Neutralize Lebanon’, Naharnet, 9 February 2012, <http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/29490> (accessed on 17 February 2012).

<sup>66</sup> Nayla Tucini, Kalaam al-Nass. Interview with Marcel Ghanem (Beirut: Lebanese Broadcasting Company (LBC), 22 December 2012).

<sup>67</sup> Also a clause in the 1989 Ta’if Agreement, which ended the civil war and laid down the terms of the post-war phase.

<sup>68</sup> Marc Daou explained that “during the civil war, several people were killed because they carried their sect on their identity cards. They were stopped at checkpoints of opposing factions and were killed for the simple reason that they belonged to a certain sect and had that sect stated on their ID cards”. 21-years-old Hani Adada said: “I’m here to fight the war that is living in us and among us”. And, as 87-years-old Nader Jaafar noted that the war “was built on sectarian differences that serve only those in power, who keep on fuelling it”, he emphasised that he is participating in the campaign “to encourage the younger generation ... to overcome these traditional differences”. Nadine, ‘Politics Split Anti-Sectarian Memorial’, Now Lebanon, 14 April 2009, <http://nowlebanon.com/NewsArchiveDetails.aspx?ID=88812#> (accessed on 17 February 2012).

<sup>69</sup> *Laique* meaning secular.

<sup>70</sup> Patrick Galey and Josie Ensor, ‘Thousands to Join the Laique Pride March in Name of Secularism’, Daily Star, 23 April 2010, <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Local-News/Apr/23/Thousands-to-join-Laique-Pride-march-in-name-of-secularism.ashx#axzz1mgj1mLz9> (accessed on 20 February 2012).

<sup>71</sup> Justin D. Martin ‘Amid Arab Spring Fires, Why isn’t Lebanon in Flames?’, CSMonitor, 31 May 2012, <http://www.csmonitor.com/Commentary/Opinion/2011/0531/Amid-Arab-Spring-fires-why-isn-t-Lebanon-in-flames> (accessed on 17 February 2012).

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>73</sup> Richard Wyn-Jones, Security, Strategy, and Critical Theory (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1999), p. 114.

<sup>74</sup> Ken Booth, ‘Security and Self: reflections of a Fallen Realist’, in Keith Krause and Michael C. Williams (eds), Critical Security Studies: Concepts and Cases (London: UCL, 1997), p. 6.

<sup>75</sup> Identified by Barry Buzan and defined by the Copenhagen School as the ‘the ability of a society to persist in its essential character under changing conditions and possible or actual threats.’ Societal security referred to the perceived threats to societies, rising from migration and European integration in the early 1990s. Ole Waever, Barry Buzan *et al.*, Identity, Migration and the New Security Agenda in Europe (London: Pinter, 1993), p. 23.

<sup>76</sup> Rodger Shanahan, ‘Arab Spring or Lebanese Summer?’, The Interpreter, 9 May 2011, <http://www.lowyinterpreter.org/post/2011/05/09/Arab-spring-or-Lebanese-summer.aspx?p=true>. (accessed on 11 August 2012).

<sup>77</sup> A vocal anti-Syrian and pro-West journalist who survived a targeted car bomb in September 2005.

<sup>78</sup> Maya Mikdashi, ‘Tunisia, Egypt, Lebanon?’, Jadaliyya, 15 February 2011, <http://www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/648/tunisia-egypt-lebanon> (accessed on 17 February 2012).

<sup>79</sup> “The constituents of identity (...) are not given by nature or fixed by history”, says McSweeney; identity is a human fabrication; it is fluid, changeable and adaptable. McSweeney, Security, Identity, p. 211; and Wyn-Jones, Security, Strategy, p. 116.

<sup>80</sup> Wyn-Jones, Security, Strategy, p. 115.

<sup>81</sup> McSweeney, Security, Identity, p. 70.

<sup>82</sup> Within the constraints of “history, ignorance and the imbalance of power”. *Ibid.*, p. 216.

<sup>83</sup> Ken Booth, ‘Security and Emancipation’, Review of International Studies, 17(4), 1991, pp. 313-326.

<sup>84</sup> Wyn-Jones, Security, Strategy, p. 115.

<sup>85</sup> Michael Kerr and Brendan O’Leary also argue that conflict regulation in Lebanon requires external facilitation. Michael Kerr (ed.) Imposing Power-Sharing: Conflict and Coexistence in Northern Ireland and Lebanon (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2006).

<sup>86</sup> The role of foreign facilitation in the Northern Ireland and European experiences is illustrated by McSweeney and supported by Wyn-Jones. McSweeney, Security, Identity, and Wyn-Jones, Security, Strategy, pp. 67-68.

<sup>87</sup> Such pressure comes from both sides: on the political level for example, Syria reported Lebanon’s failure to control its borders to the UN, whereas Gulf monarchies issued travel warnings to Lebanon before the Tripoli clashes extended elsewhere and before the wave of kidnappings developed. On a more tangible level, on the one hand, Syria’s actions on the border areas and through its agents in Lebanon, and on the other hand, Arab provision of support to the Syrian rebels in and through Lebanon have placed the Lebanese government in an untenable situation.

<sup>88</sup> The Arab-Israeli conflict, the Iran-West confrontation, and the war in Syria.

<sup>89</sup> McSweeney, Security, Identity, p. 172.





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<sup>90</sup> (Emphasis added). Ibid, pp. 172, 197, 210

<sup>91</sup> Deconstruction “expose[s] the contingency of all social arrangements, and the human choice and interests which gave rise to them, thereby advancing the *possibility of constructing alternatives*”. (Emphasis added). Ibid, p. 219.

<sup>92</sup> He stresses human agency and choice to defy determinism. Ibid, p. 214.

<sup>93</sup> Authors in this quote are referring to ‘emancipation’. Joseph Ruane and Jennyfer Todd, The Dynamics of Conflict in Northern Ireland: Power, Conflict, and Emancipation (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 15.

<sup>94</sup> Julia Choucair, Finding a Path from Deadlock to Democracy (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2006), p. 3.

<sup>95</sup> Clashes associated with the Syrian events as well as with the lingering domestic divide have been largely contained.

<sup>96</sup> On December 30, 2011, the ambassador tweeted that despite the obstacles, he is optimistic that the “forces holding this unique country together” will remain strong.

<sup>97</sup> Personal interview, Beirut, January 2012.



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