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**Ethnic Cleansing as Military Strategy: Lessons from Lebanon, 1975-1990**

A dissertation presented

by

Nils Hägerdal

to

the Department of Public Policy

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

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**ABSTRACT**

The Lebanese civil war is routinely invoked in social science as a key case study of ethnic cleansing where coercion and violence divided an intermixed society into Muslim and Christian enclaves. However, I introduce novel micro-level data on demographics, migration and violence which reveals that displacement was less extensive or comprehensive than commonly believed. To explain this puzzling variation in outcomes I highlight a paradoxical aspect of ethnic cleansing: it is a very powerful strategy but also involves major political risks and economic costs. Whenever armed groups can access better information about their adversary they can moderate violence by more narrowly targeting strategies of displacement, or by substituting selective violence for collective displacement. Armed organizations which sustain their operations by mobilizing public support can rely on loyal supporters in intermixed areas to provide local information and thus implement selective violence in such locations. However, in homogenous non-coethnic areas militias struggle to discriminate among locals and are more likely to resort to ethnic cleansing. To support this argument I rely on novel countrywide micro-level data on over 1,400 villages or neighborhoods as well as over 60 interviews conducted during 14 months of fieldwork.

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# Introduction: Ethnic Cleansing in Lebanon

The central theme of this book is ethnic violence in Lebanon.[1] This is an important topic to study because the Lebanese civil war of 1975-1990 is widely viewed as a prime example of ethnic cleansing.[2] The history and area studies literature describes how violence separated the country into Christian and Muslim cantons, and these narratives influence a substantial body of work in political science as well. In contrast, I argue that displacement was much less comprehensive than is commonly appreciated. New data reveals an empirical puzzle: why did militants use violence in some villages or urban neighborhoods but not others? And why did violence take the form of selective assassinations in some places but ethnic cleansing in others? Since existing explanations are based on an incorrect assessment of the historical record we need to rethink the phenomenon of ethnic cleansing. To do so I draw on insights from literatures on international security, the dynamics of violence against civilians in civil wars, and the industrial organization of violence.

[1] In these pages I use the terms "ethnic" and "sectarian" interchangeably as the former is more common in the literature on conflict and violence while the latter is more common in discussions about the Arab world in general and Lebanon in particular. Both terms refer to social identities that are perceived as ascriptive and descent-based categories that individuals cannot easily manipulate or change. See Kanchan Chandra, "What is Ethnic Identity and Does It Matter?", *Annual Review of Political Science,* 9, 2006 and Melani Cammett, *Compassionate Communalism: Welfare and Sectarianism in Lebanon* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2014), chapter 1. Sectarian identities became mobilized into salient political cleavages in Lebanon during a period of political change in the 19th century when new leaders claimed legitimacy as champions of their communities in relations with European powers intent on undermining Ottoman rule. See Ussama Makdisi, *The Culture of Sectarianism: Community, History, and Violence in Nineteenth-Century Lebanon* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000).

[2] The United Nations defines ethnic cleansing as "a purposeful policy designed by one ethnic or religious group to remove by violent and terror-inspiring means the civilian population of another ethnic or religious group from certain geographic territory". See *Final Report of the Commission of Experts established pursuant to Security Council Resolution 780* (United Nations, 1994), paragraph 130.

In 1975 the civil war pitted a coalition of almost exclusively Christian militias against a coalition of left-wing and Muslim groups allied with the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), which commanded overwhelming support among Lebanese Sunni Muslims.[3] As a result many journalists and historians have described the war as a sectarian conflict between these two communities. This badly misunderstands the armed organizations and their political objectives, their constraints, and their strategic behavior. I argue that the militias were systematically breaking down political and armed opposition in areas they controlled. However, sectarian identity was not a consistently reliable predictor of political sympathies and often intersected with other loyalties based on secular ideology, material interests, individual leaders, and historical contingency. Most violence and displacement occurred across sectarian lines but it is ironic that these incidents are described as primitive or savage. Conversely, what is remarkable about the Lebanese militias in a comparative perspective is their sophisticated intelligence capabilities.

**The Puzzle**

In January 1976 Christian forces attacked the Karantina slum area in Beirut. This neighborhood housed thousands of poor residents who worked as day laborers in the nearby port facilities. While mostly housing Lebanese Sunni Muslims, the area was located in East Beirut which is otherwise the predominantly Christian side of the city. After facing light military resistance the militias eventually entered the neighborhood and razed it to the ground. Most residents survived

[3] Chapter 1 discusses Lebanese history in more detail. The best accounts of the outbreak of civil war in Lebanon are Kamal Salibi, *Crossroads to Civil War: Lebanon, 1958-1976* (Delmar: Caravan Books, 1976) and Farid el Khazen, *The Breakdown of the State in Lebanon, 1967-1975* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000).

the attack but were not allowed to stay. Instead, they were placed on trucks and buses and transported to the frontlines. Christian leaders telephoned PLO chairman Yasser Arafat in advance and at a pre-arranged time the combatants observed a brief cease-fire so the civilians could cross on foot into permanent exile in PLO-controlled territory. The Christian militias engaged in a number of similar attacks during the first two years of the war. Some number of people was killed in these attacks but the majority of residents in the targeted neighborhoods were forcibly displaced rather than killed.

Nearby Sunni residents in the Ashrafiyeh neighborhood, a short distance from Karantina, somehow escaped this treatment. The area was controlled by the same Christian militia groups and also hosted several thousand Sunni residents. This neighborhood was just as close to the frontlines as Karantina and is a central commercial and residential district of East Beirut. However, it did not witness any political violence or forced displacement. Records indicate that a small number of individuals or families chose to leave during the first two years of the war because of political and security issues but that a large majority of Sunni residents remained. This shows not only that they were permitted to stay but also that they felt sufficiently safe to choose not to move elsewhere. The local mosque remained open for Friday prayers every single week throughout fifteen years of civil war and local Muslims attended openly without hiding themselves or their identity.

We observe the same variation in PLO-controlled areas. Within days of the Karantina attack Palestinian and left-wing forces overran the mostly Christian coastal town of Damour south of Beirut. Most inhabitants escaped the area by boat prior to the attack and went into permanent exile in Christian-controlled areas of the country. The remaining civilians in the conquered town “were lined up against the walls of their homes and sprayed with machine-gun

fire" before the perpetrators went on to demolish the local church and desecrate its cemetery.[4] However, the nearby town of Deir el-Qamar had a similar number of Christian residents but was entirely spared from violence. Christians in both towns were overwhelmingly Maronite Catholic with small numbers of Greek Orthodox and Greek Catholic residents as well. Both towns are in strategic locations, comparably wealthy, and were under military control of allied militias who fought together at the frontlines.

In addition, both Christian militias and the PLO controlled mixed neighborhoods where certain individual members of the other community were attacked while the majority was not. For instance, in West Beirut neighborhoods like Mosaitbe Palestinian and left-wing militants attacked particular Christian individuals and families but the majority of Christian were left in place and many remained in the area throughout the war. The local church remained in operation throughout. Likewise, Christian militants in East Beirut neighborhoods like Sin el-Fil targeted specific Muslim residents while the majority not only escaped violence but also felt sufficiently safe to remain in place. Targeting was not always lethal and was sometimes preceded by explicit verbal or written warnings. In other cases militants would blow up a car or a house with dynamite as a gentle indication that the owner was no longer welcome in the neighborhood. Some individuals heeded early warnings to alter their behavior or to leave the area but many never received a warning in the first place.

These pages contain the first empirical micro-level study of ethnic violence in the Lebanese civil war using comprehensive nationwide data on demographics, migration and violence at the level of individual villages or urban neighborhoods. With data on over 1,400 villages or neighborhoods we can study variation in outcomes across locations in a systematic

[4] Robert Fisk, *Pity the Nation: The Abduction of Lebanon* (New York: Atheneum, 1990), 99

fashion and the results are quite surprising given prevalent narratives. In the Christian-controlled part of the country about half of all Muslims were displaced but almost half remained in place at the end of 15 years of civil war. In the PLO-controlled territory a slim majority of Christian residents remained in place until the Israeli invasion in 1982 seven years after the war broke out. These patterns are not explained by breaking down Muslim and Christian into sub-groups like Maronite Catholic versus Greek Orthodox or Sunni versus Shia Muslim, nor are they explained by distance to the frontlines or other major battle sites, and the country contains few important or contested religious sites. The next section shows how this variation contradicts conventional explanations for violence in the Lebanese civil war.

## Four Perspectives on Violence in Lebanon

Most of the literature in history and area studies describes massacres and other processes of ethnic cleansing in great detail and then constructs a political narrative around these events. These works describe how ethnic violence caused a previously mixed country to become largely segregated along sectarian lines. Many accounts blame this on hatred and intolerance between communities.[5] Hatred could reflect primordial animosities between groups, although most political scientists are disinclined to believe such claims.[6] On the other hand there are credible studies of the conditions under which people can learn to hate or to develop deep popular

[5] See for instance David Gilmour, *Lebanon: The Fractured Country* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1983) or Jonathan Randal, *Going All the Way: Christian Warlords, Israeli Adventurers, and the War in Lebanon* (New York: Viking Press, 1983).

[6] The classic statement on ethnicity as a primordial identity is Clifford Geertz, "The Integrative Revolution: Primordial Sentiments and Civil Politics in the New States" in Clifford Geertz, ed., *Old Societies and New States* (New York: Free Press, 1963). On the contrary Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983) and Ernst Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983) show how most nationalist ideologies have more recent origins.

resentments. One example is situations where self-interested elites perpetuate hate-creating narratives to maintain their own grip on power.[7] Rather than hatred, violence could also be driven by deep popular resentments connected to status hierarchies.[8] For instance, many Muslims felt deep resentment over how Christians dominated government while many Christians felt resentment over how Palestinian militants violated Lebanese sovereignty. However, hatred and resentment offer little guidance for explaining variation with costly and organized collective displacement in one neighborhood but an absence of violence in its neighbor.

Second, we might expect to find an answer in the sprawling literature on the dynamics of violence against civilians in civil wars.[9] A central claim in this literature is that it usually does not make much of a difference whether a war is fought across an ethnic cleavage because in the presence of even minor cross-cutting political cleavages ethnic identity ceases to be a reliable proxy for political loyalty and behavior.[10] However, it is impossible to argue that ethnicity was not a central factor in overt campaigns of ethnic cleansing. A recent paper by two civil war experts, which appears heavily influenced by the conventional historiography, therefore discusses how "full-fledged ethnic war of the Lebanese or Bosnian type" of "massive proportions and comprehensive extent" are relatively rare exceptions where entrepreneurs of violence rally and mobilize entire ethnic communities into wartime service and therefore spark

[7] See for instance Edward Glaeser, "The Political Economy of Hatred", *Quarterly Journal of Economics,* 120(1), 2005, James Fearon and David Laitin, "Violence and the Social Construction of Ethnic Identity", *International Organization,* 54(4), 2000, Edward Mansfield and Jack Snyder, "Democratization and War", *Foreign Affairs,* 74(3), 1995 and Stuart Kaufman, *Modern Hatreds: The Symbolic Power of Ethnic War* (Cornell: Cornell University Press, 2001).

[8] See Roger Petersen, *Understanding Ethnic Violence: Fear, Hatred, and Resentment in Twentieth-Century Eastern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

[9] Key foundational pieces of this literature are Stathis Kalyvas, "Wanton and Senseless? The Logic of Massacres in Algeria", *Rationality and Society,* 11(3), 1999 and Stathis Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence in Civil War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

[10] Stathis Kalyvas, "Ethnic Defection in Civil War", *Comparative Political Studies,* 41(8), 2008 argues that identities are shaped by violence and are at least somewhat endogenous to conflict.

"communal civil war" that split a country into homogenous enclaves.[11] This explicit prediction overstates the extent of displacement, which was far from comprehensive.

Third, scholars of international security argue that under certain conditions ethnic cleansing is a rational military strategy even in the absence of ethnic hatreds or other political motivations.[12] In a warzone security is scarce, and fear and insecurity become powerful motivations. Individuals often trust members of their own ethnic group more than non-coethnics, especially if there is a history of interethnic conflict and mistrust. This provides powerful incentives for individuals in intermixed areas either to relocate to an area settled exclusively by their own group or to displace non-coethnics to render the neighborhood homogenous. These dynamics can cause members of one ethnic group to attack and displace members of another group causing ethnic cleansing through security-seeking and fear. Violence should be very extensive especially unless the groups are already somewhat separated by natural barriers such as rivers or mountains. Again, this prediction contradicts the empirical record.

Fourth, the literature on industrial organization of violence relates civilian victimization to how armed groups organize and fund their operations.[13] Organizations that rally and mobilize preexisting social networks, institutions or organizations as a social and economic foundation for building an armed organization are less likely to victimize civilians than those who rely on predatory behavior to recruit fighters and sustain combat operations. There is a strong empirical

[11] Stathis Kalyvas and Matthew Kocher, "Ethnic Cleavages and Irregular War: Iraq and Vietnam", *Politics & Society,* 35(2), 2007, 187 make these claims.

[12] Examples include the ethnic security dilemma model introduced by Barry Posen, "The Security Dilemma and Ethnic Conflict", *Survival,* 35(1), 1993 and Chaim Kaufmann, "Possible and Impossible Solutions to Ethnic Civil Wars", *International Security,* 20(4), 1996 as well as the argument by Benjamin Valentino, *Final Solutions: Mass Killings and Genocide in the 20th Century* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004).

[13] The two key works are Jeremy Weinstein, *Inside Rebellion: The Politics of Insurgent Violence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007) and Paul Staniland, "Organizing Insurgency: Networks, Resources, and Rebellion in South Asia", *International Security,* 37(1), 2012.

correlation between the extent to which militias rely on easily available loot and the amount of violence they perpetrate. However, the same author points out that Lebanon is one of four key exceptions to this general trend since its war combined a high mortality rate with a low availability of natural resources.[14] The author explains this by pointing to the destruction of conventional warfare and the fact that Lebanon was invaded by both Syria and Israel during the war. Yet while these factors might explain a high mortality rate they are less convincing as an explanation for vast campaigns of intentional displacement especially since much of it took place before either the Syrian or Israeli invasions.

## The Argument

Most established explanations fail to explain variation in outcomes because they argue that some form of conflict pitted the Muslim and Christian communities against each other as two monolithic entities. In contrast I choose to study this war with armed groups as the key actors instead of ethnic communities. I argue that violence represents a process whereby two military coalitions systematically tried to establish and pacify zones of control. Both sides mobilized considerable support among loyal civilians who therefore became targets for enemy violence. Since the two coalitions mostly drew support from two different ethnic communities, violence usually occurred across ethnic lines as well. However, ethnic identity was not a consistently reliable predictor of political loyalties and armed groups often had access to more detailed intelligence. I engage with three distinct literatures to capture the strategic calculus of how armed groups employed violence.

[14] See Weinstein, *Inside Rebellion,* chapter 8.

First, the literature on international security shows that ethnic cleansing is sometimes a rational military strategy in situations when armed groups participate in a violent conflict fought largely across an ethnic cleavage. If the enemy recruits predominantly from among its coethnics then an armed group can improve its security and strategic position by displacing members of this community. On the other hand, this literature mostly focuses on the benefits of ethnic cleansing without considering the costs and risks that it entails for its perpetrators. I argue that when militants engage in this practice they face both political risks, such as the risk of delegitimizing your own party for post-conflict rule or the risk of international military intervention, and economic costs, such as disruptions to economic production and the partial loss of their tax base. This reveals a central paradox about ethnic cleansing: it is a powerful military strategy but militants simultaneously have strong incentives to moderate its use. I therefore argue that militants should try to target violence as narrowly as possible and to substitute other strategies for ethnic cleansing when possible. There are strong incentives to avoid harming non-coethnics who are not in fact disloyal.

Second, the literature on the dynamics of violence against civilians in civil war shows that armed groups often use violence against civilians who are known or suspected to support or aid the enemy in various ways. In situations where militants do not have sufficient information about civilians in areas they control they struggle to implement selective targeting and often resort to other strategies, such as indiscriminate violence, even if these are not as effective and can even be counterproductive. Nonetheless, as we learn from the literature reviewed in the previous paragraph, in certain situations ethnic cleansing is just as effective of a strategy for dealing with threats from a disloyal local population as is selective violence. In these situations the choice between the two strategies is indeterminate and depends primarily on access to

detailed and fine-grained information. If militants can procure such information at relatively limited cost they should engage in selective targeting but if information is costly or unavailable then ethnic cleansing becomes more attractive.

Finally I draw on the literature on industrial organization of violence which shows how armed groups behave differently depending on organizational aspects such as how they recruit and how they finance and sustain their operations. Armed groups that recruit fighters and finance their operations through predatory behavior tend to cause great civilian victimization. In contrast, other groups rely on public support to construct a military organization by mobilizing existing social organizations and institutions. These organizations have deep social roots in their communities, often recruit fighters using ideological appeals, and solicit resources through taxation or donations. I argue that Lebanese militias conform more closely to the latter model. One interesting and understudied aspect of this organizational structure is that a militia with broad and deep ties across a particular community should be able to tap into these social ties to collect intelligence. I explore this argument in detail.

The Lebanese civil war was fought through conventional warfare where most battles took place across clearly demarcated military frontlines. Both sides also engaged in violence and displacement against some members of the other community in areas they controlled. This furthered their objective of winning a decisive military victory by neutralizing active supporters of the enemy. Both sides collected and processed intelligence and in this process they marshalled two key resources: a centralized political decision-making process that coordinated military efforts according to political goals and constraints, and deep public support in particular segments of the Lebanese population. One consequence is that in areas with a high concentration of loyal residents the militias could collect very extensive, detailed and reliable information

about political and military activities and loyalties. However, when loyal civilians informed a militia that a particular village or neighborhood contained enemy activists but had no further information about its residents because the location contained exclusively members of the other community militias were more likely to resort to ethnic cleansing. The remainder of this study develops this argument and shows how it offers a superior explanation for ethnic cleansing during the Lebanese civil war.

### The Road Ahead

Chapter 1 introduces the reader to Lebanese history and shows why its patterns of violence constitute an empirical puzzle. The chapter begins by explaining why the country suffered from such intractable conflict between its Christian and Muslim populations. Armed Palestinian organizations relocated to Lebanon after the wars in Israel in 1967 and Jordan in 1970-71 and their arrival tipped the balance of power in favor of Muslim and progressive groups. These developments spurred several Christian politicians to develop military capabilities of their own. The chapter describes and summarizes the important phases and major turning points of the war. While it lasted for 15 years it is perhaps more correct to describe it as a series of distinct armed conflicts with quite different characteristics that engaged different military actors. I explain why displacement during the first few years of the war represents a particularly challenging empirical puzzle and consider six alternative explanations which I find unsatisfactory.

Chapter 2 refines the argument about ethnic cleansing as a military strategy. Unlike most existing studies of micro-level violence in civil war I disaggregate violence and displacement and argue that they represent distinct strategies for dealing with political opponents. Armed

groups choose among them according to various criteria, chiefly access to reliable and detailed information. I argue that the best source of information is from local people who support the militia. Most established accounts of the relationship between demographics and ethnic violence do not disaggregate violence and displacement and as a consequence argue that both outcomes should be more common in areas of some particular demographic configuration. In contrast, if armed groups receive detailed information in areas where supporters live intermixed with non-coethnics they are more likely to engage in selective violence in intermixed locations but to perpetrate ethnic cleansing in homogenously non-coethnic locations.

Chapter 3 addresses data and quantitative methods. It describes the various challenges involved in collecting data in Lebanon in general and about its civil war in particular. The chapter explains the sources and nature of data I compile and various decisions involved in constructing a comprehensive data set. It then establishes and verifies two key statistical correlations: while only a minority of areas at risk actually experienced violence, selective violence was more common in demographically intermixed villages or urban neighborhoods and ethnic cleansing was more common in homogenous ones. Using various robustness checks I show that these results are not merely driven by the presence of particular sub-groups, such as Maronite Catholics or Palestinians, and that they are not only a statistical mirage of spatial autocorrelation. Despite the challenges involved in compiling and analyzing this data it provides a considerable measure of support for the argument I advance in these pages. However, the data is not comprehensive enough to show either causality or mechanisms and the following two chapters therefore turn to qualitative work based primarily on interview material.

Chapter 4 provides an analytic narrative of the political objectives, constraints, command structure, and funding sources of Lebanese militias and makes several important points. First, no

party to the conflict had secessionist ambitions or other political reasons to homogenize the territory they controlled. Militias in fact had various incentives to moderate ethnic violence. Second, both coalitions placed political leaders in firm control of the war effort and therefore deployed violence according to political objectives and constraints. Third, militias emerged and established military control mostly in areas where they had genuine popular support. While the PLO maintained a professional military fighting force, most Lebanese militias relied on temporarily mobilizing otherwise civilian communities and their resources into wartime service. Contributions from loyal communities were critical for sustaining these armed organizations. This process demonstrates how and why militias possessed such impressive intelligence capabilities.

Chapter 5 contains a structured comparison of a small number of locations chosen according to specific criteria so that we can use them to establish mechanisms connecting demographics and political loyalties to violence and displacement. I introduce the reader to two seemingly similar suburbs of Christian-dominated East Beirut, Sin el-Fil and Jdaideh. The former experienced selective violence while the latter remained peaceful and I show that the main difference concerns political organization. In Sin el-Fil various left-wing and Palestinian organizations had tried to organize Muslim workers into political action whereas in Jdaideh local Muslims were organized through clientelistic machine politics run by Christian municipal leaders. Similar differences separate Nabaa, a Shia slum which was ethnically cleansed, from the Jbeil villages which were also homogenous Shia locations but experienced no violence. The former became a PLO stronghold in the years before the war while the latter remained in the orbit of local patronage machines and were therefore not perceived as a threat by Christian leaders.

The conclusion considers Lebanon in a comparative perspective. Research on numerous ethnic conflicts and civil wars has established that violence generally results from strategic processes. Many other studies also argue that variation in intelligence is a primary factor affecting variation in violation because it determines the kind of strategies militants can use. Yet what stands out about the Lebanese militias is how well-informed they were about political and military opponents. As a result they could target violence in quite sophisticated ways when compared to armed organizations in many other conflicts. This research also adds to debates about the role of ethnicity in civil war and shows how it can vary even within the same one conflict: sometimes ethnic identity is a useful source of intelligence, but sometimes it is not. These insights motivate the second part of the chapter which considers avenues for future research. Finally, the conclusion discusses how this argument can inform discussions about contemporary sectarian conflicts in other Arab countries, in particular Syria and Iraq.

# Chapter 1 – From Conventional Wisdom to Empirical Puzzle

*Lebanon was possessed and could only await exorcism. Long-suppressed hatreds, resentments, fear, and loathing coursed through the enfeebled body politic like some debilitating scourge from which no remission could be expected.*

Jonathan Randal, *Going All the Way*

*"Over here is the Baydoun mosque. It was open for Friday prayers every single week throughout the civil war. We would take foreign journalists there sometimes to show them that we weren't at war with Islam or Muslims. They usually didn't listen."*

Interview with former member of the executive committee of the Lebanese Forces

## Introduction

This chapter introduces the history of the Lebanese civil war and explains why variation in ethnic cleansing during this war represents an interesting empirical puzzle. The established literature largely fails to appreciate this fact, as somewhat illustrated by the two contrasting quotes at the top of this page. Major works in history and area studies describe how Lebanon descended into sectarian warfare in the 1970s with vivid accounts of the horrific violence militias on both sides wrought on civilians from the opposing group. As a result, many civilians who remained in areas controlled by militias from other sects no longer felt safe and chose to flee. Some accounts blame these processes on sectarian hatred and a lapse into primordial animosity.

Others argue that the process was driven by rational security-seeking under the fog of war in a setting where interethnic trust collapsed. Either way, the established literature claims that these twin processes of displacement and escape caused what had previously been an intermixed society to separate along sectarian lines into two mostly homogenous cantons.

The problem with this account is that it rests more on anecdotal evidence than on systematic micro-level data. Providing such data is one of the main goals of this book. Chapter 3 describes this process and its results in full detail and explains how we can gather systematic data on this conflict despite a number of challenges and what this data teaches us about demographics, displacement and violence in the Lebanese civil war. Data collection is difficult because of the dearth of reliable official statistics on any interesting variable but there are some alternative sources we can use to produce reasonably reliable estimates. These estimates contradict established narratives of comprehensive communal separation. They reveal that much of Lebanon's dizzyingly complex social mosaic survived the violence, whether we study the country as being mixed between Muslims and Christians or consider the full array of its 18 sectarian sub-categories. This puzzle motivates the rest of this book.

This chapter begins with an introduction to the history of Lebanon and its civil war. It proceeds to discuss the new data and show how patterns of violence and displacement are inconsistent with the two main explanations in the established literature in history and area studies, which inform the established political science literature as well. Finally, I go through six additional potential alternative explanations and explain why these are unsatisfactory as well.

## A Brief History of the Lebanese Civil War

Lebanon descended into civil war in 1975 because of domestic political conflicts that interacted with the Arab-Israeli regional conflict and the politics of Palestinian dispossession.[15] After gaining independence from France in 1943 Lebanon adopted democratic governance with an elected parliament and a free press. However, parliament operated under a rigid sectarian power-sharing formula and power was concentrated in the presidency, reserved for a Maronite Catholic.[16] The economy grew substantially for several decades, partly fueled by the status of Beirut as a financial conduit between Gulf oil producers and Western markets, but Lebanon was not a free market economy. Most economic activity was highly regulated and government monopsonies dominated large sectors of commercial agriculture. Corruption was endemic and business opportunities were restricted to those with money and political connections.[17] One particularly cynical account describes how local bosses "whom the Lebanese would describe as 'honoured families' but whom the average Western would quickly identify as mafiosi" ran individual electoral constituencies as their personal fiefdoms where their "conspicuous wealth,

[15] The best accounts of the outbreak of civil war in Lebanon are Kamal Salibi, *Crossroads to Civil War: Lebanon, 1958-1976* (Delmar: Caravan Books, 1976) and Farid el Khazen, *The Breakdown of the State in Lebanon, 1967-1975* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000). Samir Makdisi and Richard Sadaka, "The Lebanese Civil War, 1975-1990" in Paul Collier and Nicholas Sadaka (ed.), *Understanding Civil War: Evidence and Analysis, Volume 2: Europe, Central Asia, & Other Regions* (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2005) offer a very brief but highly worthwhile summary of the war and its main phases. Two sources that discuss violence against civilians are Elizabeth Picard, *Lebanon: A Shattered Country* (New York: Holmes & Meier, 2002) and David Gilmour, *Lebanon: The Fractured Country* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1983). A good introduction to modern Lebanese history, including but not limited to the civil war, is Fawwaz Traboulsi, *A Modern History of Lebanon* (London: Pluto Press, 2007). A good general introduction to modern Middle East politics is William Cleveland, *A History of the Modern Middle East* (Boulder: Westview Press, 2004).

[16] The best account of the history of sectarian politics in Lebanon is Ussama Makdisi, *The Culture of Sectarianism: Community, History, and Violence in Nineteenth-Century Lebanon* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000). The struggle for independence, which became interlinked with sectarian politics, is detailed in Patrick Seale, *The Struggle for Arab Independence: Riad el-Solh and the Makers of the Modern Middle East* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

[17] Most other Arab countries at the time experimented with various forms of socialist planning and major industrial initiatives through state-owned enterprises. Lebanon did not, and the economy remained dominated by private capital and by sectors such as banking and finance.

bodyguards, cruelty, education and private armies proved more efficacious than any electoral appeal".[18]

The Maronite community was not substantially better off in economic terms under this kleptocratic regime even though the powerful presidency was reserved for a member of its ranks.[19] Beirut had historically been a city divided mostly between Sunni and Greek Orthodox residents and many of its traditional business elites came from these communities while the Maronite heartlands were the farmers and craftsmen of Mount Lebanon. Nevertheless, the overwhelming majority of Maronites supported the regime because they are Lebanese nationalists and reject the right of any other entity, in particular rival Arab countries or movements, to dictate its affairs.[20] By contrast, Lebanese Sunnis had historically been strong proponents of Arab unity and pan-Arab nationalism.[21] Admiration for Nasser was widespread and concern for Palestine was universal. This was less true of the Shia and Druze who tended to support Lebanese sovereignty but wanted radical redistribution of power in favor of their communities.[22] Many Lebanese, not least Christians from the educated middle class, also

[18] Robert Fisk, *Pity the Nation: The Abduction of Lebanon* (New York: Atheneum, 1990), 75

[19] Traboulsi, *A History of Modern Lebanon* shows that among the tiny number of very wealthy Lebanese there is a strong overrepresentation of Christians, although many are Greek Orthodox or Greek Catholic rather than Maronite. In general the Christian and Sunni communities had relatively similar distributions of their members across different social classes; see Edward Haley and Lewis Snider, *Lebanon in Crisis: Participants and Issues* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1979). The Shia community had noticeably smaller shares of middle class, upper-middle class and wealthy families.

[20] Many Maronites and some other Lebanese Christians even reject their Arab heritage and claim to be descendants of the ancient Phoenicians, a claim that has been as politically salient as it is contradicted by historic research. See Kamal Salibi, *A House of Many Mansions: the History of Lebanon Reconsidered* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1998). Ottoman-governed Mount Lebanon had civil wars in 1840 and 1860 with horrific massacres between Maronite and Druze and these experiences also contribute to Maronite desires for Lebanese sovereignty.

[21] Seale, *The Struggle for Arab Independence*

[22] For a description of contemporary Shia politics in Lebanon see Augustus Richard Norton, *Amal and the Shia* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1987). Note that Hezbollah had not yet emerged at this point and did so only after the Israeli invasion in 1982. A good introduction to this political movement, which does not feature prominently in these pages because of their late development during the war, is Augustus Richard Norton, *Hezbollah: A Short History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007). A good source for understanding the Druze perspective is Kamal Joumblatt, *I Speak for Lebanon* (London: Zed Press, 1982).

questioned sectarianism altogether and placed their faith in secular Socialist or Communist doctrines or in the mythological visions of the Syrian Social Nationalist Party.[23]

These conflicts became intertwined with the Palestinian refugee problem. Hundreds of thousands of Palestinian refugees reside in Lebanon since the 1948 war and this community, lacking work permits and citizenship rights, mostly subsists in squalid UNRWA-run refugee camps with limited prospects for socio-economic advancement.[24] Fatah and other constituent organizations of the PLO emerged in the 1960s, thrived on Lebanese freedom of the press and the 1960s intellectual and cultural atmosphere, and began to attract many Lebanese members as well.[25] After the 1967 war Palestinian militants left the West Bank for Jordan, Syria and Lebanon but both King Hussein of Jordan and Hafez al-Assad of Syria feared the long-term consequences for their regimes of an armed Palestinian presence.[26] King Hussein quashed the militants in a civil war in 1970-71 and Hafez al-Assad effectively relocated the bulk of Palestinian military forces to Lebanon by allowing transit through Syrian territory but denying them a base of operations. After 1971 all major armed Palestinian groups were operating primarily on Lebanese soil.

[23] The Syrian Social Nationalist Party espouses a mythical, pre-Islamic Syrian nationalism and wants to unify Lebanon with Syria, Palestine, northern Iraq and Cyprus. The party is fiercely secular but gathers most of its support among Greek Orthodox Christians; coincidentally, the areas it wants to unify would constitute the largest concentration of Greek Orthodox in the Eastern Mediterranean.

[24] The history of the Palestinian movement for national self-determination in general and the PLO in particular is told by Rashid Khalidi, *The Iron Cage: The Story of the Palestinian Struggle for Statehood* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2005) and Yezid Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for State: The Palestinian Movement, 1949-1993* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

[25] The Palestine Liberation Organization is an umbrella organization for Palestinian political organizations. Fatah, the party of Yasser Arafat, grew in significance during the 1960s and eventually propelled Arafat to chairmanship of the entire PLO. Fatah is a secular Palestinian nationalist party while many of the other prominent Palestinian groups espoused revolutionary Marxist doctrines.

[26] Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for State* provides a comprehensive history of the Palestinian movement and its armed struggle.

The Palestinian struggle, Muslim frustrations, and secular left-wing currents formed a powerful informal alliance in Lebanon after the 1967 regional war. Sunni and Druze leaders saw the PLO as natural allies in their struggle to radically reform the Lebanese state, and the Lebanese state as a natural ally in the Palestinian struggle against Israel. However, many Lebanese Christians perceived the armed Palestinian groups as akin to a foreign military occupation violating Lebanese independence and sovereignty. Palestinian militants operating in South Lebanon were developing considerable conventional military capabilities with which they hoped to join the armed struggle to recapture their homeland south of the border. These groups staged raids into Israel which provoked Israeli retaliation deep into Lebanese territory with terrible consequences for local communities. The Lebanese Army tried to contain these operations and intermittently clashed with the militants. Clashes escalated in the 1970s and spread from the South into the Palestinian refugee camps elsewhere, including in Beirut, partly as different organizations pushed for political dominance of the Palestinian community.[27]

Lebanese nationalists, which included most Maronite Catholics, followed these events with increasing alarm. During a particularly dramatic encounter in 1973 the Army failed to subdue Palestinian militants despite a two-week campaign which underscored that the Army lacked both the military muscle and the political backing of parliamentary Muslims to decisively subdue Palestinian armed groups. After 1973 the Army suffered from political paralysis and defections and played only a minor role for the rest of the decade.[28] Prior to these events a few

[27] The PLO is an umbrella organization consisting of many political parties and other organizations and its constituent parts have at various times been fierce rivals over influence and power. See for instance Peter Krause, "The Political Effectiveness of Non-State Violence: A Two-Level Framework to Transform a Deceptive Debate", *Security Studies* 22(2), 2013.

[28] It did deploy locally to act as a buffer between rival militias at various points during the 1970s. In the mid-1980s the Army started to fracture entirely as various units came under informal control by whichever militia controlled the local area. In the late 1980s Army general Michael Aoun made an ultimately unsuccessful gamble to reunite the Army and defeat the militias.

nationalist parties with an almost exclusively Christian following had organized minor paramilitary training sessions but only as local initiatives, mostly by university students, and while somewhat encouraged they were not formally sanctioned by senior leadership. There was no central military organization and the parties and their supporters had limited access to arms and ammunition. In 1973 several nationalist politicians and political parties began procuring arms and organizing military training for their Christian supporters.

*1975-1976: war breaks out.* Tense political clashes gradually turned into a spiral of violence during the spring of 1975 and erupted into armed combat in April of that year. On one side of the divide were the armed Palestinian organizations as well as several progressive and radical Lebanese political parties. This side commanded overwhelming support in the Sunni and Druze Muslim communities but also had sympathizers among the Shia as well as many Christians with an ideological commitment to secular government, particularly among the Greek Orthodox. On the other side stood a coalition of Lebanese nationalist parties fighting for Lebanon to remain an independent and sovereign nation. They sought an end to the armed Palestinian presence, a position which commanded a remarkable degree of support among Maronite Catholics and many other Christians as well. Both sides committed massacres and other atrocities as part of intentional displacement campaigns. Palestinian forces eventually gained the upper hand but the prospect of PLO control over Lebanon alarmed the Syrian regime of Hafez al Assad who intervened in late 1976 and ended the first phase of the war through a de facto occupation of big swathes of the country.[29] The next several years featured an array of

[29] For a history of Syria under Hafez al Assad see Patrick Seale, *Asad of Syria: the Struggle for the Middle East* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1988). Assad thought that Arab states, in particular his own regime, should represent and organize Palestinian aspirations against Israel and did not support Palestinian nationalism or the PLO as an independent and autonomous movement.

notable local flare-ups, and sparked a couple of international diplomatic crises, but did not see a return of open warfare.

*1982-1985: the Israeli invasion and its aftermath.* On June 6th 1982 Israel invaded Lebanon in an attempt to eliminate the PLO as a military force and install a friendly regime in Beirut.[30] Yasser Arafat and key PLO personnel were evacuated from Beirut to Tunisia under American protection, but subsequent Israeli plans unraveled when a key ally, Maronite leader Bashir Gemayel, was assassinated. His supporters massacred an estimated 800 Palestinian civilians in revenge during an Israeli-organized incursion into the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps. The Israeli public rapidly soured on the war and in late summer of 1983 the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) withdrew to a security buffer zone in south Lebanon.[31] However, one result of this hasty withdrawal was to rearrange the military balance among Lebanese militias. Under IDF protection Christian militias had entered an area south of their east Beirut stronghold, the Shouf Mountain previously controlled by Druze fighters, which they could not hold militarily on their own. Many Christian fighters and families moved back to the area but after the Israeli withdrawal Druze fighters proceeded to evict Christian forces and in this process to kill at least 1,155 civilians and displace the local Christian population almost in its entirety.

*1986-1990: from military stalemate to the Taif agreement.* The last few years of the war were marked by mostly stable frontlines between the main combatants coupled with severe

[30] The history of Israeli foreign policy in general, including toward Lebanon as well as its other neighbours, is told by Avi Shlaim, *The Iron Wall: Israel and the Arab World* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2000) and Benny Morris, *Righteous Victims: A History of the Zionist-Arab Conflict, 1881-1998* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1999). The two best accounts of the invasion of Lebanon in particular are Zeev Schiff and Ehud Yaari, *Israel's Lebanon War* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1984) and Jonathan Randal, *Going All the Way*.

[31] The Israeli invasion also sparked the emergence of Hezbollah as a serious political and military actor in the mid-1980s. At first they were a small, radical set of loosely organized cells and could not compete with the other militias for control of territory. During the second half of the 1980s, boosted by Iranian money and weapons, they became a serious challenger to Amal for control of the Shia and to Israel for control of southern Lebanon. See Norton, *Hezbollah*.

infighting among technically allied militias on both sides. In the predominantly Muslim coalition conflicts were particularly severe between the Shia Amal movement and various Palestinian groups for control of the refugee camps, an episode known as the War of the Camps, as well as between Amal and the newly-emergent Hezbollah for control of the Shia community. On the Christian side open warfare ensued in East Beirut as Lebanese Army commander Michael Aoun tried to revive the Lebanese Army and use it to impose the authority of national state institutions over the militias. However, none of these efforts had much impact on the frontlines and none of the violence had either the primary intention or consequence of causing interethnic displacement. The war eventually ended with the Taif Agreement drawn up under Saudi auspices and signed in 1990 under heavy pressure on the militias by their foreign patrons. The 1991 Gulf War forced outside powers to cooperate and Syrian hegemony over Lebanon was a price paid by the United States for support against Saddam Hussein.

### Ethnic Violence in Lebanon: an Empirical Puzzle

When the war broke out in 1975 both sides used extensive and brutal violence against civilians from the other community as part of intentional displacement campaigns. The introduction to these pages describes a few such incidents and the history literature describes a number of other episodes in grueling detail. One contemporary observer describes violence as the work of "neo-Fascist" militias motivated by hatred of other groups.[32] Another prominent account emphasizes rational security-seeking over emotional appeals. It describes how militia attacks followed a

[32] Gilmour, *Lebanon.* Hatred could be either See for instance Edward Glaeser, "The Political Economy of Hatred", *Quarterly Journal of Economics,* 120(1), 2005, James Fearon and David Laitin, "Violence and the Social Construction of Ethnic Identity", *International Organization,* 54(4), 2000, Edward Mansfield and Jack Snyder, "Democratization and War", *Foreign Affairs,* 74(3), 1995 and Stuart Kaufman, *Modern Hatreds: The Symbolic Power of Ethnic War* (Cornell: Cornell University Press, 2001).

"logic of forming homogenous cantons" of "communal exclusion" aimed at "creating defensible enclaves", and how "hostilities prompted a reversion to ancient solidarities that linked individual survival to fusion with the group of origin".[33] Most established works describe both how militants attacked civilians and how, in response, other civilians preemptively chose to flee. These processes largely completed by the summer of 1976.[34]

But a major problem with the historiography of the Lebanese civil war is that it focuses on describing actual instances of violence and displacement instead of conducting a systematic micro-level investigation into the fate of all mixed communities. It therefore fails to notice variation in outcomes. As a consequence the history and area studies literature typically describes the Lebanese civil war as a process of coercive and terror-inspiring violence resulting in the near-complete geographic separation of its Christian and Muslim communities from what had previously been an intermixed society. This understanding of the war informs most commentary in political science. One of the main goals of this book is to undertake a systematic micro-level empirical study of demographics, migration and violence. Chapter 3 describes this work which is based on a range of data sources including detailed studies by Lebanese academics working before, during and after the war.[35] The new data reveals some surprising facts.

[33]Picard, *Lebanon*, 109-110

[34] The other major campaign of displacement in the war took place in the Shouf Mountain in 1983. As noted above it resulted indirectly from the Israeli invasion, as Christian and Druze militias came to be present in the same geographic space. When the IDF withdrew Druze forces attacked Christians without distinguishing civilians from militants and displaced this community in its entirety. The scale of human rights abuse in this 1983 displacement episode easily matches that of 1975-76; however, its occurrence is less puzzling.

[35] Two key academic studies are Selim Nasr, *Sociologia Al-Harb fi Lubnan: Atraf As-Seraea Al-Ijtimaaeaiy wa Al-Iqtisadiy 1970-1990* (Beirut: Dar Al-Nahar, 2013) and Boutros Labaki and Khalil Abou Rjeily, *Bilan des Guerres du Liban 1975-1990* (Paris: Éditions L'Harmattan, 1993).

Lebanon had distinct regions dominated demographically by different confessional groups, meaning that the country inevitably became somewhat polarized merely because wartime control reflected peacetime settlement patterns. However, almost half of all Muslim residents in areas controlled by Christian militias remained in place throughout 15 years of civil war. Likewise, a majority of Christian residents in PLO-controlled areas remained in place until the Israeli invasion in summer of 1982. The PLO intentionally displaced about 20% of all Christian residents in areas it controlled. Roughly another 20% of Christians in such areas fled their homes during 1975 and 1976 but the majority of those returned once a cease-fire agreement was introduced in late 1976 and the country briefly returned to a semblance of normalcy.[36] There is also a third category of neighborhoods in the two military zones where non-coethnics were neither displaced in their entirety nor fully spared from violence as they witnessed selective assassinations of individuals or sometimes entire families. This was particularly common in the areas controlled by the PLO and its allies, but civilians who were not targeted often remained in the area regardless of their confessional identity.

These patterns cannot be easily explained by either hatred or security-seeking. If hatred caused violence then we would not expect such large shares of ethnic others to both avoid displacement at the hands of militants and feel safe and comfortable enough to elect to stay instead of relocating elsewhere. Security-seeking is equally unconvincing as an explanation since so many non-coethnics remained in intermixed regions. Neither are there any natural boundaries such as rivers, lakes or impenetrable forests or jungles separating ethnic groups in the country. The one natural barrier that does exist in the country, the peaks of Mount Lebanon, does not primarily separate ethnic groups from each other and is not correlated geographically with where

[36] Those who left the country to seek refuge in Western countries like France, Britain, Canada and the United States were less likely to return. However this was a relatively small number of mostly affluent families.

violence took place. The pattern of violence is quite puzzling, especially given the prevailing explanations that social scientists have offered. The next section shows that it remains puzzling even after considering a range of other alternative explanations as well.

### Alternative Explanations

Before concluding that ethnic cleansing in this war represents a significant empirical puzzle we need to consider several other alternative explanations. This section considers six additional potential explanations and states why they are unsatisfactory. These explanations focus on, respectively, sectarian sub-identities beyond Muslim and Christian, the dynamics of violence in irregular warfare, nationalist ideology and conceptions of sacred territory, considerations of military operations or proximity to the frontlines, insufficient capabilities on behalf on the militias to fully implement strategies of exhaustive cleansing, and predation or looting as motivations for violence and displacement. The first explanation concerns what the correct category of analysis is for understanding ethnic violence in Lebanon. All of the other explanations hail from the established literature and help explain violence or displacement in other important conflicts but none of them are compelling in this particular case for reasons I will state below.

First, Muslim and Christian might not be the correct identity categories to study. Perhaps violence primarily targeted sub-categories such as Maronite Catholics and Palestinian Sunni Muslims rather than others, such as Greek Orthodox Christians or Lebanese Shia Muslims. Lebanon contains a bewildering mosaic of social diversity with 18 officially recognized sects and each group contains a different mix of political preferences and behavior. Chapter 3

addresses this issue using data and quantitative methods. While Maronite Catholics were more likely to be targeted than Greek Orthodox, and Palestinians were more frequently displaced than Lebanese Muslims, there were individuals and villages targeted from all sub-groups just as there were members of all sub-groups who remained in place. Sectarian sub-groups are somewhat correlated with violence and displacement but do not offer a compelling explanation for variation in either outcome.

Second, a large literature on the dynamics of violence against civilians in irregular civil wars aims to explain precisely the kind of micro-level variation in outcomes that Lebanon displays.[37] Most of this literature focuses exclusively on the dynamics of insurgency warfare and explains violence as the outcome of a game played between a weaker rebel militia hiding among civilians. Rebels struggle against a militarily much stronger army in a setting of unclear and contested zones of military control where both sides are trying to influence the behavior of noncombatants.[38] The incidence of violence is highly influenced by differential levels of military control. However, wars such as Lebanon and Bosnia were fought through conventional warfare with militias on both sides that started to approximate regular armies and with clear military frontlines. They do not prominently feature the kind of fragmented military control that influenced violence in wars such as Greece or Algeria. Key authors in this literature therefore argue that wars such as Lebanon fall outside of their scope conditions and should rather conform

[37] The key works are Jeremy Weinstein, *Inside Rebellion: The Politics of Insurgent Violence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007) and Stathis Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence in Civil War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006) which discusses micro-level variation.

[38] There is no reason to assume that irregular, conventional and symmetric non-conventional wars would have the same dynamics of violence. See Stathis Kalyvas and Laia Balcells, "International System and Technologies of Rebellion: How the End of the Cold War Shaped Internal Conflict", *American Political Science Review,* 104(3), 2010 for a discussion of differences.

to the logic of an ethnic security dilemma, a model discussed in the introduction which does not explain the witnessed variation in Lebanon.[39]

A third possibility is that cleansing was primarily aimed at clearing areas of religious or national significance.[40] This could be either because militias wanted to preserve sacred sites for the exclusive settlement of coethnics or because they pursued partition of the contested country into new and homogenous states. There is no evidence that either was the case in Lebanon. The country contains few religious sites of any significance.[41] No armed group aimed to create a new country or otherwise partition Lebanon into different sovereign entities and it is even difficult to envision any sub-divisions of this tiny country that would form a viable new state.[42] Some Christian politicians have at various times suggested different federal solutions to Lebanon's political predicaments yet even staunch proponents of federalism argue that this is a policy intended to organize family law, taxation and welfare, education, and public security but should not be understood as a call for independence. Violence and displacement were not limited to the Christian zone, nor were all Muslims displaced from it.[43]

[39] Stathis Kalyvas and Matthew Kocher, "Ethnic Cleavages and Irregular War: Iraq and Vietnam", *Politics & Society,* 35(2), 2007 make these claims.

[40] Even territory of dubious material value can become perceived as invaluable when linked to nationalist identity politics. For prominent accounts of this process that focus on demography, intra-ethnic outbidding, and evolutionary psychology, respectively, see Monica Toft, *The Geography of Ethnic Violence* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), Stacie Goddard, "Uncommon Ground: Indivisible Territory, and the Politics of Legitimacy", *International Organization,* 60(1), 2006, and Dominic Johnson and Monica Toft, "Grounds for War: the Evolution of Territorial Conflict", *International Security,* 38(3), 2014. The desire for communal self-determination involves a refusal to be dominated by the out-group but all ethnic groups have socially bounded membership and self-determination is not necessarily coupled with ill will against ethnic others. See Donald Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985).

[41] Arguably its most significant religious site, the Qadisha Valley, is a secluded site deep into Mount Lebanon that was already exclusively settled by Christians and did not play any role in the civil war.

[42] Chapter 5 contains an extensive discussion of this point.

[43] About half of Muslim residents in the Christian zone at the outbreak of war remained in this area at its conclusion 15 years later.

Fourth, displacement could be connected to military operations and occur mostly in proximity to military frontlines or in connection to territorial contestation.[44] Armed groups have both tactical and strategic incentives to displace civilians loyal to a rival during military operations so as to ease conquest and minimize the number of disloyal civilians in areas coming under their control. The quantitative chapter below investigates this hypothesis as well but finds only limited support. On the one hand, violence and displacement are both more common closer to central Beirut which was arguably the most strategically important site of the conflict and the center of some of its most intense combat operations. But significant shares of both Christians in predominantly Muslim West Beirut and Muslims in predominantly Christian East Beirut remained in place throughout the war, and many sites of cleansing were located outside of greater Beirut and removed from other combat frontlines as well. Proximity to military frontlines or sites of particular strategic importance or military value is at best a partial explanation.

Fifth, limited military capabilities could prevent armed groups from fully implementing strategies of exhaustive displacement and give rise to geographic variation.[45] Displacing a non-coethnic population from a certain area is typically a demanding logistical undertaking that could prove too taxing for an armed group that also has to devote its resources to frontline combat,

[44] See Laia Balcells and Abbey Steele, "Warfare, Political Identities, and Displacement in Spain and Colombia", *Political Geography*, 51, 2016, Abbey Steele, "Seeking Safety: Displacement and Targeting in Civil Wars", *Journal of Peace Research,* 46(3), 2009, Abbey Steele, "Electing Displacement: Political Cleansing in Apartado, Colombia", *Journal of Conflict Resolution,* 55(3), 2011 and Abbey Steele, "Massive Civilian Displacement in Civil War: Assessing Variation in Colombia", Households in Conflict Network working paper no. 29, 2007.

[45] See for instance Ola Olsson and Eyerusalem Siba, "Ethnic Cleansing or Resource Struggle in Darfur? An Empirical Analysis", *Journal of Development Economics,* 103(2), 2013 and David Yanagizawa-Drott, "Propaganda and Conflict: Evidence from the Rwandan Genocide", *Quarterly Journal of Economics,* 129(4), 2014. The former studies displacement in South Sudan where the government relied on the local Janjaweed militias to carry out its displacement policy but these local militias did not have the capabilities to enact the policy across the entire area in question. As a result they targeted primarily wealthier villages, most likely because militia members were financially incentivized to do so by the prospects of looting for personal gain. The latter study investigates the Rwandan genocide where, again, Hutu militants did not have the capabilities to kill the Tutsi population in its entirety and therefore relied on means such as propaganda hate radio to instigate violence by local Hutus. Exogenous variation in radio coverage helps explain local variation in homicidal violence.

surveillance, logistics and other duties. Yet this is not a compelling explanation in Lebanon. Both parties to the conflict rapidly developed their military capabilities until they resembled regular armies. The distances involved are small and transportation of civilians is therefore relatively easy. The war lasted for 15 years. Armed groups had no particular difficulty identifying who belonged to what group. Those who remained in an area dominated by another group did so openly and without hiding their identity or their whereabouts. It is inconceivable that variation in ethnic cleansing sprung from an inability on behalf of armed groups to displace non-coethnic populations in their entirety had they desired to do so.

Sixth, violence and displacement could be merely a by-product of predation for financial gain.[46] Lebanese militants certainly engaged in predation and at various points in the war succumbed to temptations such as "looting, confiscation of private property, imposing taxes in regions under their control, cultivation and trading of drugs, trading in contraband, outright thievery [...], bank robberies, and fraudulent banking practices".[47] The militias became more corrupt over time, especially in the second half of the 1980s as many fighters lost hope of winning the war. Senior commanders used their position for racketeering in all sorts of business enterprises, legitimate or otherwise, but recurring favorites were smuggling drugs and running private casinos. Mid-level commanders defrauded their superiors by payroll fraud and by selling off weapons and ammunitions. Virtually all foreign trade transferred through ports controlled by militias who levied excise duties. The same ports "were also engaged in the import of toxic

[46] Militants could be stealing either as a means to sustain their combat operations or for private financial gain or some combination thereof. The most refined arguments for these processes are Weinstein, *Inside Rebellion* and Jeremy Weinstein and Macartan Humphreys, "Handling and Manhandling Civilians in Civil War", American Political Science Review, Vol. 100, No. 3 (August 2006). John Mueller, "The Banality of 'Ethnic War'", International Security, Vol. 25, No. 1 (Summer 2000) makes a similar argument.

[47] Makdisi and Sadaka, "The Lebanese Civil War, 1975-1990", 32 estimate that predation allowed militants to steal a combined grand total of $15 billion of wealth by the end of the war and contributed to its long duration.

waste from Europe, dumped inland in return for large sums of money".[48] A businessman in the south used militia protection and "engaged in the reexport business: Israeli merchandise destined for Arab markets, camouflaged as Lebanese products".[49] Members of the Lebanese Forces allegedly collaborated with the Italian Mafia on major acts of piracy in the Eastern Mediterranean.[50]

Acts of violence or displacement were often followed by looting and perpetrators were frequently intoxicated by drugs and alcohol. However, there is little evidence that the large instances of mass displacement that occurred were ever motivated by economic gain. In fact, there is every reason to believe the opposite. Some of the targeted areas were slums and shantytowns on the outskirts of Beirut that were among the poorest neighborhoods in the country yet required a concerted military effort to conquer. Other areas that were both wealthier and undefended saw much less predation and sometimes no significant violence or displacement at all. If armed groups were primarily motivated by greed then why would they attack more challenging and less rewarding targets instead of less challenging and richer neighborhoods nearby? In addition, by far the most lucrative crimes were the vast wartime racketeering rings which generated unbelievable fortunes but were mostly non-violent.

## Conclusion

The conventional wisdom states that Lebanon, which had been demographically intermixed between Muslims and Christians, quickly separated into two homogenous cantons during the

[48] Traboulsi, *A History of Modern Lebanon*, 235
[49] Ibid., 236
[50] Ibid., 235

opening salvos of civil war in 1975-76. However, a systematic investigation of data on demographics and migration reveals a different picture with substantial geographic variation in displacement. Almost half of all Muslim residents in areas dominated by Christian militias remained in place throughout 15 years of civil war, and a majority of Christians in PLO-controlled territory remained in place by the Israeli invasion of 1982. The Lebanese civil war is an important case in the debate on how to understand ethnic cleansing but the conflict in fact presents its own empirical puzzle: how can we make sense of this variation in displacement? This book seeks to answer this deceptively simple question which forces us to engage with several large literatures in political science as well as to wrestle with new empirical evidence. The next four chapters contain the results of these efforts.

How did the established accounts get this key aspect of the war so wrong? In their defense, most of these authors penned their books during the actual war and did not have the same opportunities to travel throughout the country or consult the number and breadth of Lebanese sources as one does today. Contemporary intellectuals confidently predicted that sectarian and confessional identities would soon be replaced by other and supposedly more modern and rational identities based on some kind of civic nationalism.[51] Yet sectarianism undeniably played an important role in this conflict and in their eagerness to explain its continued relevance these early chroniclers of the civil war might have overstated its importance and effects. In addition, these books deal with a number of topics ranging from why the war broke out to why Israel invaded in 1982 but none of them purport to offer a coherent theory or a comprehensive account of violence and displacement.

[51] It is dubious whether there is such a thing as civic nationalism. We know today that even the most iconic civic nationalisms of Western nations like France and Britain arose from religious wars of the early modern period. See for instance Anthony Marx, *Faith in Nation: Exclusionary Origins of Nationalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

There is also a more cynical explanation. Augustus Richard Norton, an academic who served as a United Nations peacekeeper in southern Lebanon during the war and is one of few Westerners who witnessed events primarily from a location outside of the capital, laments the conditions under which most reporting from Beirut took place. "Journalists, often poorly prepared in the first place, found that the requisite column inches could easily be written from a relatively pleasant base like the Hotel Commodore in West Beirut [whose] well-stocked magazine shop in the lobby was itself an important news source [and] has no doubt shaped many 'original' reports from Beirut".[52] Reporters "could leave the Commodore at 8:30 A.M., travel to the PLO headquarters in Fakhani, perhaps stop by an embassy or two, look up a news source, and return by late afternoon to write an article, transmit it by telex in time to make a deadline, and still have time for a few drinks, a dip in the pool, and a nice meal".[53] Working in Beirut is certainly enjoyable but I hope readers will not finish these pages concluding that it inevitably leads to sloppy research.

[52] Norton, *Amal and the Shia*, 3
[53] Ibid, 3

# Chapter 2 - Ethnic Cleansing as Military Strategy

*What do we mean by the defeat of the enemy? Simply the destruction of his forces, whether by death, injury, or any other means – either completely or enough to make him stop fighting.*

Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*

## Introduction

War is a process where two opposing military organizations try to achieve victory by systematically destroying each other's forces. This process is more complicated in civil wars than in international ones because civilians and militants are so closely intertwined. This is true both in the physical sense that they often occupy the same space and in the conceptual sense that many supporters aid militias with logistics or information in ways that make them difficult to classify according to a simple civilian-militant dichotomy. Destroying enemy forces often involves attacking civilians who support them. The central problem in this process is identifying political and military opponents who typically live comingled with innocent civilians. Militants in ethnic conflicts sometimes solve this problem by using ethnicity as a heuristic device to indicate individual loyalties and indiscriminately target members of other communities. Yet ethnic identity is often a poor predictor of both preferences and behavior, and excessive violence carries risks and costs. For instance, a leader or movement perceived as genocidal risks

provoking international intervention and would struggle to gain legitimacy in post-war governance.

This chapter makes two central arguments about ethnic civil wars. First, it introduces a paradoxical result: ethnic cleansing is a very powerful military strategy but armed groups simultaneously face strong incentives to moderate its use. The best strategic response to this dilemma is to acquire more information. This allows militants to more narrowly target political and military opposition, rather than indiscriminately attacking members of other ethnic groups, and to substitute selective violence for ethnic cleansing. Second, the chapter discusses the conditions under which armed organizations can solicit information from local residents in areas where they operate. The literature on industrial organization of violence teaches us that some organizations rely predominantly on predation to sustain their operations while others mobilize local communities where they command public support. One overlooked aspect of this debate is that organizations which rely on local volunteers for recruits, supplies and logistics can also exploit such relations to collect intelligence.

These arguments have clear empirical implications: ethnically intermixed villages or neighborhoods are more likely to experience selective violence while segregated locations homogenously populated by a militia's non-coethnics are more likely to experience ethnic cleansing. Militants use their intelligence capabilities to determine where they face active opposition and use violence to target such areas, rather than any area that contains non-coethnic residents. They will likely target both intermixed and segregated areas. However, when they target opponents in an ethnically intermixed village or neighborhood they can more often rely on local resident supporters to provide detailed intelligence. In areas where supporters and opponents of the militia mixed extensively throughout everyday pre-war social, professional and

community life the two groups learn about individuals' political loyalties, sympathies and activities. When militants can tap into such local networks of intelligence they can use selective violence to deal with opponents. Conversely, when militants learn of a threat from a segregated village or neighborhood where they have limited ability to collect intelligence they are more likely to perpetrate ethnic cleansing.

The chapter proceeds in three sections. The first section explains both why ethnic cleansing is sometimes an attractive strategic option and why it carries numerous risks and costs. Militants can substitute other strategies – and especially selective violence - in areas where they have access to more detailed and reliable information about individual non-coethnics. Second, I explain why one of the best sources of such information comes from loyal coethnic civilians who support the militia in its war effort. Third, I show how this leads to different outcomes in villages or neighborhoods that are intermixed such that loyal coethnics will live in close proximity to non-coethnics and ones that are segregated and contain only residents from one ethnic group. The chapter concludes with a few thoughts on how these arguments compare with the existing literature.

## Ethnic Cleansing and Its Strategic Alternatives

Ethnic cleansing is conceptually distinct from certain other forms of mass killings, such as genocide.[54] Nationalist ideologies often include narratives of how particular territory forms part

[54] Genocide is a process that aims to exterminate another ethnic or religious community in its entirety. Since ethnic cleansing is primarily about displacement there can be more variance in lethal violence employed. This variation is discussed at length in Benjamin Valentino, *Final Solutions: Mass Killings and Genocide in the 20th Century* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004). For a discussion of genocidal mass killings with prominent cases, see Michael Mann, *The Dark Side of Democracy: Explaining Ethnic Cleansing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

of an imagined ancestral homeland which sometimes motivate ethnic cleansing.[55] Many wars have been fought over such claims.[56] Ethnic cleansing can also take place in peacetime for instance in relation to partition, state formation or imperial breakdown.[57] Alternatively, ethnic cleansing can be a military strategy for securing a decisive victory in war. Its rationale is to 'catch the fish by draining the sea', or in other words to target militants contained within an otherwise civilian population by displacing this population in its entirety.[58] Ethnic identity serves as a heuristic device because cross-cutting cleavages can cause members of one ethnic community to remain neutral or even support leaders from the other group over ideological issues or economic interests.[59] But in general it is much easier to identify the ethnic identity of a person than it is to identify their ideological beliefs, political loyalties, or propensity to act on

[55] Even territory of dubious material value can come to be perceived as invaluable when linked to nationalist identity politics. For prominent accounts of this process that focus on demography, intra-ethnic outbidding, and evolutionary psychology, respectively, see Monica Toft, *The Geography of Ethnic Violence* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), Stacie Goddard, "Uncommon Ground: Indivisible Territory, and the Politics of Legitimacy", *International Organization,* 60(1), 2006, and Dominic Johnson and Monica Toft, "Grounds for War: the Evolution of Territorial Conflict", *International Security,* 38(3), 2014. The desire for communal self-determination involves a refusal to be dominated by another group but all ethnic groups have socially bounded membership and self-determination is not necessarily coupled with ill will against ethnic others. See Donald Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985).

[56] See Jack Levy and William Thompson, *Causes of War* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010).

[57] See Zeynep Bulutgil, "War, Collaboration, and Endogenous Ethnic Polarization: the Path to Ethnic Cleansing", in Chenoweth et al (ed), *Rethinking Violence: States and Non-State Actors in Conflict* (Cambridge: Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, 2010). Kelly Greenhill, *Weapons of Mass Migration: Forced Displacement, Coercion and Foreign Policy* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2010) presents an exhaustive list of cases where authoritarian rulers have created or manipulated migration flows for strategic purposes, many of which occurred along ethnic lines and all in peacetime.

[58] Barry Posen, "The Security Dilemma and Ethnic Conflict", *Survival,* 35(1), 1993 and Chaim Kaufmann, "Possible and Impossible Solutions to Ethnic Civil Wars", *International Security,* 20(4), 1996 assume that ethnic identities are both sticky and visible. While proponents of this view agree that ethnicity ultimately is a socially constructed identity they argue that change is historically rare to the point where we can treat ethnicity as fixed in empirical studies of ethnic violence. See Stephen van Evera, "Primordialism Lives!", *APSA-CP: Newsletter of the Organized Section in Comparative Politics of the American Political Science Association*, 12(1), 2001. In this view ethnic identities shift only with rare and powerful historical processes such as industrialization, the introduction of mass literacy, or mass conscription as emphasized, respectively, by Ernst Gellner, *Nations and Nationalisms* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press: 1983), Keith Darden and Anna Grzymala-Busse, "The Great Divide: Literacy, Nationalism, and the Communist Collapse", *World Politics,* 59(1), 2006, and Barry Posen, "Nationalism, the Mass Army, and Military Power", *International Security,* 18(2), 1993.

[59] See for instance Fotini Christia, "Following the Money: Muslim on Muslim in Bosnia's Civil War", *Comparative Politics,* 40(4), 2008 or Stathis Kalyvas, "Ethnic Defection in Civil War", *Comparative Political Studies,* 41(8), 2008.

either, which is why it remains a potential informational cue in situations where more detailed information is costly to procure.[60]

The established literature succinctly captures these reasons why armed groups use ethnic cleansing as a military strategy, but falls short in systematically considering its political and economic costs. I consider five political risks. First, the targeted group will consist primarily of innocent civilians and such attacks will likely serve to increase the motivation and resolve of enemy forces and sympathizers. A second, related risk is international intervention either on behalf of the enemy or for humanitarian reasons. Third, any side that lacks separatist ambitions will inevitably keep the post-war outcome in mind and causing deaths and displacement is a political liability once the fighting ends and negotiations begin. Fourth, moderating violence reduces the risk that the enemy will retaliate by escalating violence on loyal civilians in zones they control, effectively a kind of mutual hostage-taking situation. Fifth, premeditated human rights abuse could sap the morale of troops and loyal populations. As for economic incentives there are four main ways that armed groups secure funding during civil wars: levying taxes, seizing and operating firms, soliciting donations, and through predation.[61] Whichever method an

[60] Correctly identifying ethnic identities is not always a trivial task. James Habyarimana, Macartan Humphreys, Daniel Posner and Jeremy Weinstein, "Placing and Passing: Evidence from Uganda on Ethnic Identification and Deception", working paper, 2007 make this point and find experimental evidence in its support. Armed groups have devised numerous ways to deal with this challenge such as by asking individuals to pronounce certain words or to recite nationalist or religious phrases. In general ethnic identity is a much cheaper type of information to gather than most feasible alternatives. Displacing the full population of non-coethnics also removes the risk that they will mobilize in future, a process that can be sudden, rapid, extensive and unpredictable. For more on this process see the literature on cascade effects as explained by Mark Granovetter, "Threshold Models of Collective Behaviour", *The American Journal of Sociology,* 83(6), 1978 and Timur Kuran, *Private Truths, Public Lies: The Social Consequences of Preference Falsification* (Cambridge: Harvard university Press, 1995).

[61] For a discussion of these options and how they influence rebel organizations, see Robert Bates, "The Industrial Organization of Violence", unpublished research memorandum (Harvard University, 2011), Jeremy Weinstein, *Inside Rebellion: The Politics of Insurgent Violence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007) and Jeremy Weinstein and Laudemiro Francisco, "The Civil War in Mozambique: The Balance Between Internal and External Influences" in Paul Collier and Nicholas Sambanis, ed, *Understanding Civil War: Evidence and Analysis, Volume 1: Africa* (Washington, D.C.: World Bank, 2005).

armed group uses to extract resources they should prefer to maintain as large, stable, and productive of a civilian tax base as possible.[62]

Armed groups have a range of other strategic alternatives to ethnic cleansing but many are difficult to implement successfully. Containment involves committing military forces to systematically isolate and control a local area through surveillance, military patrols, checkpoints and fixed walls but requires a large commitment of disciplined manpower. It is particularly challenging to implement if soldiers and targets are not from the same ethnic group.[63] Indiscriminate violence serves as a form of collective punishment to convince militants to desist from their activities although it remains contested whether this is an effective strategy.[64] The best available evidence points to a bounded answer: indiscriminate violence can be effective, but primarily in situations of pure insurgency warfare where both the government and rebels are

[62] Even in cases of widespread abuse there is usually restraint in areas of firm military control so as not to destroy the economic base of production. See Jeremy Weinstein and Macartan Humphreys, "Handling and Manhandling Civilians in Civil War", *American Political Science Review,* 100(3), 2006. It is hard to generalize on the economic value of non-coethnics. In some cases a dominant group relegates minorities to low-status jobs or reduced pay, but in other situations minorities use tight networks, in-group trust and resource pooling to dominate lucrative trades or product markets. See for instance Anthony Marx, *Making Race and Nation: A Comparison of the United States, South Africa and Brazil* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998) and James Sidanius and Felicia Pratto, *Social Dominance: An Intergroup Theory of Social Hierarchy and Oppression* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999) for the case of white domination of blacks in select societies versus the case of Chinese traders in the Caribbean in Orlando Patterson, "Context and Choice in Ethnic Allegiance", in Nathan Glazer and Daniel Moynihan (ed), *Ethnicity: Theory and Experience* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1975).

[63] See Jeffrey Friedman, "Manpower and Counterinsurgency: Empirical Foundations for Theory and Doctrine", *Security Studies,* 20(4), 2011 for a discussion of manpower requirements. Jason Lyall, "Are Co-Ethnics More Effective Counter-Insurgents? Evidence from the Second Chechen War", *American Political Science Review,* 104(1), 2010 shows that counter-insurgency operations are more challenging when conducted across an ethnic boundary.

[64] Stathis Kalyvas and Matthew Kocher, "How Free is "Free Riding" in Civil Wars? Violence, Insurgency, and the Collective Action Problem", *World Politics,* 59(2), 2007 argue based on theory and empirics that indiscriminate violence should be inherently flawed as a strategy. Jason Lyall, "Does Indiscriminate Violence Incite Insurgent Attacks? Evidence from Chechnya", *Journal of Conflict Resolution,* 53(3), 2009 argues that it is efficient, supposedly based on a natural experiment from the war in Chechnya although there are concerns over both the process of randomization and the timeframe of measurement in this study.

using brutal levels of violence in a competition to control a population.[65] Armed groups can try to change the loyalties or preferences of a governed population to "win hearts and minds" by providing social services but this process requires considerable time and treasure from armed groups that have constraints on both resources.[66]

Other strategic alternatives involve gathering detailed and reliable information about the political loyalties and potential militancy of non-coethnics. This can change two things. First, armed groups can target non-coethnics in only some particular local areas and leave others untouched. The better the information the more narrowly militants can focus violence.[67] Second, if an armed group obtains detailed, reliable, and fine-grained information about non-coethnic individuals in some location, and if this information tells them that certain individuals are disloyal while others are not, they can respond using selective violence.[68] Selective violence involves threats, physical abuse, material destruction, kidnappings, or lethal violence and can target either every single disloyal non-coethnic or some subset believed to serve as key instigators or leaders. The latter option, leadership decapitation, can target either senior leadership of a rival organization or local organizers.[69] The next two sections discuss the

[65] Yuri Zhukov, "A Theory of Indiscriminate Violence", doctoral dissertation, Harvard University, 2014. This does not mean that militants will not engage in this practice otherwise but rather that in the absence of such conditions the strategy will likely fail.

[66] See for instance Andrew Beath, Fotini Christia and Ruben Enikolopov, "Winning Hearts and Minds through Development: Evidence from a Field Experiment in in Afghanistan", working paper, 2012 and Eli Berman, Jacob Shapiro and Joseph Felter, "Can Hearts and Minds be Bought? The Economics of Counterinsurgency in Iraq", *Journal of Political Economy,* 119(4), 2011.

[67] For instance, if one source of information allows the group to target one region but not another an even better source would allow militants to target only some villages within such a region but not others.

[68] The classic formulation of this process is Stathis Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence in Civil War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006). Laia Balcells, "Rivalry and Revenge: Violence against Civilians in Conventional Civil Wars", *International Studies Quarterly,* 54(2), 2010 shows that this happens also in civil wars fought through conventional warfare and not only in insurgencies, and that militants typically target those it deems politically disloyal.

[69] The academic literature on assassinations is very limited but there is some evidence that high-profile assassinations can produce large political change, including in wartime settings. See Benjamin Jones and Benjamin Olken, "Hit or Miss? The Effect of Assassinations on Institutions and War", *American Economic Journal:*

conditions under which militants can use loyal civilians as a source of information and how this source of information varies across different types of localities.

### Loyal Civilians as a Source of Information

I argue that loyal civilians are one of the best sources of information that an armed group can access, in particular when the information originates from loyal civilians who have contributed to the war effort and whose professed loyalty is therefore highly credible. However, not all armed organizations have the same opportunity to access this resource because organizations differ in the extent to which they possess a loyal civilian base of support. The literature on industrial organization of violence shows why.[70] Creating an effective military fighting force is a huge enterprise involving recruiting, training, equipping, motivating, directing, and disciplining a large organization which takes great time and expense. Yet we typically observe that instigators of civil war somehow manage this in a remarkably short period of time. Some organizations solve these problems by using predation to recruit and motivate fighters and to fund logistics and military operations. Other organizations mount and sustain their military operations with widespread public support in some community and mobilize preexisting social organizations, institutions, and networks into wartime service.[71]

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*Macroeconomics,* 1(2), 2009. Conversely, Jenna Jordan, "When Heads Roll: Assessing the Effectiveness of Leadership Decapitation", *Security Studies,* 18(4), 2009 argues that leadership decapitation as a strategy for eliminating militant groups rarely succeeds but fails to deal with the selection issues that arise when the strategy is more commonly used against particularly persistent groups.

[70] The two key works are Weinstein, *Inside Rebellion* and Paul Staniland, "Organizing Insurgency: Networks, Resources, and Rebellion in South Asia", *International Security,* 37(1), 2012.

[71] Staniland, *Organizing Insurgency*

Armed organizations of the latter type rapidly assemble a powerful military fighting force by using a foundation of preexisting organizations such as political parties, religious organizations, private businesses, and other mundane organizations of everyday community life.[72] Individuals are usually recruited into militia service through social ties such as family members, neighbors, workplace colleagues, fellow parishioners, political connections, or classmates from schools and universities.[73] When whole segments of a community are mobilized into military service a large number of individuals make costly sacrifices to create, support and sustain the armed organization across a range of differentiated roles. Systematic overlap between the military organization and its underlying social base of support can become so comprehensive that it is difficult to separate the two analytically.[74] As a result it is sometimes difficult conceptually to distinguish civilians from militants because many individuals will serve in roles such as logistics, intelligence, finance, and political relations. These functions are critical for sustaining the armed organization and form an integral part of its operations.

Armed groups which sustain their operations by mobilizing a large civilian community can also exploit this social and economic base of support as a source of intelligence. The literature on civil war violence shows that militants often receive their most useful information from local residents, who are usually the most knowledgeable sources about political loyalties and military activity in their immediate social and geographical vicinity. Civilians have agency over their own actions and organizations which operate in areas with little public support often

[72] Elizabeth Wood, "The Social Processes of Civil War: The Wartime Transformation of Social Networks", *Annual Review of Political Science,* 11, 2008
[73] Roger Petersen, *Resistance and Rebellion: Lessons from Eastern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001)
[74] Sarah Parkinson, "Organizing Rebellion: Rethinking High-Risk Mobilization and Social Networks in War", *American Political Science Review,* 107(3), 2013

develop creative ways to solicit collaboration.[75] Many collaborators aid militants for self-interested reasons unrelated to the political macro-level cleavages of the civil war, such as targeting a personal or professional rival for private gain or as revenge for past misdeeds. This is different for armed groups with deep ties across a population where considerable numbers of people participate in pre-war social networks and structures which now form integral parts of militia operations. It is likely that these loyal supporters will truthfully report hostile activity on behalf of political and military enemies because they are devoted to the military prospects of the militia, make costly personal sacrifices to aid it, and providing intelligence is one of the most low-cost ways to help.

This does not mean that armed groups with wide social support lack challenges in gathering and processing intelligence. For instance, members of a community might believe things which are not true and mistakenly perpetuate rumors and misinformation. Even loyal civilians could still face the temptation to report mendaciously for private gain as well, even if this concern is somewhat alleviated simply by having numerous sources of information. However, the larger point is that an organization whose very existence owes to broad and deep loyalties in a community will develop much more sophisticated intelligence capabilities than an armed group which fights primarily in territory where they command little public support. Loyal supporters also play an important role when local non-coethnic residents attempt to signal neutrality to a militia, by informing about non-coethnics they know well, trust, perceive as neutral and want the militia to leave in place. The next section discusses this process and its empirical implications.

[75] Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence in Civil War*

### Policing Intermixed and Segregated Communities

This section explains how the processes outlined above have very different implications in intermixed and segregated communities.[76] The literature is divided on which type of community is the most prone to conflict, violence and displacement. One argument is that intermixed areas are the most likely to witness all three because members of different ethnic groups in close physical proximity experience inherent mutual vulnerability whereas segregated communities are less vulnerable and thus conflict-prone because of their physical separation.[77] A second argument makes the opposite claim: vulnerability, akin to situations of mutual assured destruction in nuclear strategy, should induce both groups to exercise the utmost restraint and police the behavior of in-group members making intermixed neighborhoods more peaceful.[78] In contrast to both, I argue that the key variable is not vulnerability but information, that we should disaggregate violence and displacement as separate outcomes, and that intermixed locations are more prone to selective violence while segregated ones are to ethnic cleansing.

I study villages or urban neighborhoods as the geographic unit of analysis rather than more aggregated units, such as regions or electoral districts, or more disaggregated ones such as streets or apartment buildings. A region can be intermixed even if it only contains homogenous villages while an intermixed village could consistently contain homogenous streets or apartment buildings. The key mechanism is whether ethnic groups mingle in everyday life in such a manner that individuals interact, make connections, and establish relationships across ethnic boundaries. Regardless of settlement patterns within a village or neighborhood residents at this level of

[76] By segregated communities I refer to ones which are homogenously populated by one group but militarily controlled by the other.
[77] Kaufmann, *Possible and Impossible Solutions to Ethnic Civil Wars*
[78] James Fearon and David Laitin, "Explaining Interethnic Cooperation", *American Political Science Review,* 90(4), 1996.

aggregation usually encounter others through daily community life in neighborhoods, schools, markets, transportation and workplaces. The village or neighborhood is therefore the most appropriate empirical level to study.

We can think of violence as a two-step process. Armed organizations receive information from loyal civilians about potential threats and hostile activity and make a decision to target some areas but to leave others untouched. As a second step militants then decide whether to use selective violence or ethnic cleansing in a particular area they wish to target. The most important variable influencing this choice is whether they have access to reliable and detailed local information. The demographic configuration of an area, in turn, influences whether militants can access such information. The reason is that in intermixed areas militias have more opportunities to rely on loyal civilians to provide detailed information about local non-coethnics and their sympathies and activities. This is possible because of how information transmits across ethnic boundaries in an intermixed society during peacetime communal life. Areas where members of different ethnic groups mixed extensively in pre-war society are the types of areas where individuals from one group learn about the political sympathies, activities and behavior of individuals from the other.

Individual members of different groups learn about each other when intermingling socially as neighbors in intermixed residential settings.[79] The same is true when groups mix in academic and social life in integrated schools.[80] Professional and business life opens up an array

[79] One common impediment to inter-group cooperation is precisely a lack of these informal contacts and connections across ethnic lines that allow individuals to learn about each other and hold each other accountable in social and economic transactions. See James Habyarimana, Macarthan Humphreys, Daniel Posner and Jeremy Weinstein, "Why Does Ethnic Diversity Undermine Public Goods Provision?" *American Political Science Review,* 101(4), 2007.

[80] The importance of schools has been established empirically by Mark Alexander and Fotini Christia, "Context Modularity in Human Altruism", *Science,* 334(6061), 2011.

of opportunities for contacts and connections among individuals across ethnic boundaries.[81] As a result coethnics of the militia in wartime military control will often know the political loyalties of non-coethnics who are their neighbors, their friends, their former class mates from schools and universities, and their workplace colleagues. They might know what political party these non-coethnics support in general, who they voted for in the last election, whether they consume media sources with a particular political affiliation or outlook, whether they have any formal party membership or other ties, and what they think about the militia which is now in control of their village or neighborhood. They know who is an ideological firebrand or a true believer in the enemy cause and who has a history of political activism or for other reasons makes a potential militant.

However, equally important, loyal civilians will likely know non-coethnics in their community who are politically apathetic or maintain neutral positions, who have no desire to engage with the politics of civil war, and who desire nothing more than to be left in peace. When loyal coethnics transmit this information to a militia it can selectively target particular disloyal individuals. Loyal civilians generally have an incentive to truthfully report signs of hostile activity. In addition, coethnics of the militia who value their local non-coethnic friends, neighbors, class mate, colleagues, customers, shop keepers or other community members who they believe to be neutral rather than disloyal have an incentive to report this to the militia in control of the area so that those non-coethnics may remain in place. Information from local supporters, whose loyalty is credible because of their contributions to the war effort, is therefore both the main way for the militia to learn about non-coethnics and for non-coethnics to signal

[81] Ashutosh Varshney, *Ethnic Conflict and Civic Life: Hindus and Muslims in India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002) discusses the role of economic life in sustaining interethnic cooperation and information flows.

their neutrality. The greater the share of residents who are loyal supporters of the militia, the greater its ability to access local intelligence and implement selective violence.

Policing a segregated community follows a different logic. It is possible that local non-coethnic elites and leaders might have pre-war ties to local co-ethnic leaders in nearby locations, or that there are interethnic elite-level ties from pre-war politics or business life.[82] However, if the militia learns that a homogenously non-coethnic location hosts militant activity and forms a military threat but it does not possess detailed information about local residents then the best option might be to displace all of its residents as potential enemy sympathizers based on nothing more than their ethnic identity; in other words, to ethnically cleanse the location. Coethnics in nearby locations might report overt signs of militant activity such as the presence of arms and fighters, rudimentary fortifications and manned checkpoints, regular patrols of uniformed personnel or similar indicators. Other overt signs of political activity might be a local party branch or headquarters of a political party. Intelligence of this kind allows an armed organization to target a particular village or neighborhood but not to do so in a selective manner. For this reason I predict divergent outcomes among intermixed and segregated locations.

Finally, what about a militia that faces disloyal coethnics? This is an important point since cross-cutting cleavages mean not only that non-coethnics can be neutral but also that not all coethnics will be loyal supporters of a militia that poses as their communal guardian. Militias can generally respond to disloyal coethnics using selective targeting. This is because even politically disloyal coethnics will be embedded in the kind of coethnic networks and structures based on family, church, school, community and professional life that armed organizations typically mobilize to create a military fighting force. For this reason armed organizations should often find

[82] Varshney, *Ethnic Conflict and Civic Life*

it relatively easy to identify disloyal coethnics. However, this does not mean that they will always use selective violence against such individuals precisely since they come from the same ethnic community. The militia might go to great lengths to use threats and other inducements to get disloyal coethnics to refrain from political activities, particularly if they have other family members who are loyal contributors to the struggle.

## Conclusion

This book started with an empirical puzzle: why would militants in an ethnic civil war use violence against non-coethnics in some places but not others, and why would violence take the form of selective assassinations in some places but ethnic cleansing in others? This chapter provides a novel explanation centered on military strategy. Militant groups strategically employ violence to systematically break down political and armed opposition in areas they control, contest or conquer in order to weaken and ultimately defeat their enemy. This is analogous to international wars where states often target civilian populations and centers of economic production.[83] Wars are fought by armed organizations and military victory involves diminishing or destroying the enemy's forces and their capabilities to produce and project military power. When armed sub-state conflicts occur across an ethnic cleavage then violence tends to do so as well, but political loyalties rarely overlap completely with ethnic identities. For this reason militants need access to more sophisticated intelligence.

There is consensus in the literature that the best source of intelligence is local residents with intimate knowledge about friends, neighbors and community members in their social and

[83] See for instance Alexander Downes, *Targeting Civilians in War* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008) or Robert Pape, *Bombing to Win: Air Power and Coercion in War* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996).

geographic proximity. Militants use a range of tactics in different wars to solicit collaboration in order to tap into local sources of intelligence. But somehow we have not sufficiently explored the simplest explanation of all: civilians might truthfully provide militants with information because they believe in their cause and want them to succeed militarily and win the war. This is a surprising blind spot since we have learnt in recent years that many entrepreneurs of violence are only able to construct military forces and contest civil wars because they mobilize preexisting mundane civilian networks or organizations. When the same local civilians who are friends, neighbors and colleagues of disloyal individuals are the same local civilians who are housing, feeding and transporting militia fighters it requires no great feat of imagination to understand how the militia learns of their opponents.

This argument also adds complexity to debates over the role of ethnicity in civil wars, which appear dominated by two polar opposite extremes. One school of thought holds that ethnic identities are visible, sticky and uniquely predictive of political loyalties and behavior.[84] The alternative view is that ethnic identities not only intersect with cross-cutting political cleavages and material interests but are themselves shaped by violence and even somewhat endogenous to conflict.[85] The former view sees ethnicity as the central defining aspect of conflict while the latter argues that it is often inconsequential. The argument in these pages is that "it depends". Gathering information is a costly process and ethnicity is a cheap source of an expensive good. Ethnicity might be superfluous when the local family members of a Christian militia fighter tell them that Khaled and Mohammad are the village PLO firebrands while Ali is a Lebanese

[84] Examples include the aptly named van Evera, *Primordialism Lives!* as well as Posen, *The Security Dilemma and Ethnic Conflict,* van Evera, *Hypotheses on Nationalism and War* and Kaufmann, *Possible and Impossible Solutions to Ethnic Civil War.*

[85] The classic formulation is Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence in Civil War* although earlier skeptics of the salience of ethnicity also include Mueller, *The Banality of 'Ethnic War'.*

nationalist and Hassan does not care about politics. But if they say that “the Muslims” from the next village over are coming to kill them, ethnicity becomes a category of vital importance.

# Chapter 3 – Demographics, Migration and Violence

*"Our archives? They were destroyed by Syrian shelling in 1986."*

Former militia press spokesperson

## Introduction

This chapter addresses data, quantitative methods, and what we can and cannot learn from this evidence. Few of the established accounts of the Lebanese civil war in political science contain meaningful statistics or anything that even remotely resembles systematic micro-level analysis. One of the main contributions of this book is to introduce a nationwide village-level data set that covers demographics, migration and violence for over 1,400 villages or urban neighborhoods. As I explain in the preceding chapter, existing theories of demographics and ethnic violence tend to argue that both violence and displacement should be more common in demographic configurations of a particular kind.[86] Conversely, I suggest that we should disaggregate violence and displacement as theoretical quantities and treat them as two separate and distinct empirical outcomes. This chapter provides evidence that strengthens this argument. In particular, it establishes and verifies two key statistical correlations: selective violence was more common in

[86] See in particular Kaufmann, *Possible and Impossible Solutions to Ethnic Civil Wars* versus Fearon and Laitin, *Explaining Interethnic Cooperation* and Toft, *The Geography of Ethnic Violence*.

demographically intermixed villages or urban neighborhoods while ethnic cleansing was more common in homogenous ones.

Compiling data on the Lebanese civil war is a major challenge. Lebanon has not conducted a census since 1932 and its true demographic situation remains the subject of heated political disagreements. The country passed a blanket amnesty law after the civil war ended and has not tried perpetrators for war crimes or compiled the kind of comprehensive official documentation on truth and reconciliation that characterized transitions to post-conflict governance in countries such as Colombia or South Africa. Many of the political and military organizations that contested the war no longer exist, at least not within the country. This chapter outlines my approach and defends various choices involved. It subsequently estimates a number of statistical models and discusses results, implications and shortcomings. The findings are robust to a number of robustness checks concerning spatial autocorrelation as well as considerations of differential effects among sectarian subgroups, for instance by disaggregating Christians into Maronite Catholics and Greek Orthodox or Muslims into Lebanese and Palestinian Sunnis.

The chapter proceeds as follows. The first section describes the sources and nature of the data I compile and how I have used it to create a systematic nationwide micro-level data set covering demographics, migration and violence. The second section contains descriptive statistics. The third section discusses model choice, specifications, and results for the main empirical test using a conditional logit model. The fourth section introduces and explains a set of robustness checks. The fifth section contains Geographic Information Systems (GIS) illustrations of the main results and the sixth section concludes by discussing what we learn from this

statistical evidence and explains why we need to proceed with the kind of qualitative work that the next two chapters delve into.

### Independent, Dependent and Control Variables

This section describes how I collected systematic data on the dependent and independent variables and a battery of relevant controls.[87] The result is a cross-sectional data set at the level of an individual village or urban neighborhood that covers the first period of the war, 1975-1976. As Chapter 1 explains I focus on this time period because it has both some of the most extensive campaigns of violence and displacement against civilians and the most puzzling variation in outcomes. The two dependent variables are selective violence and collective displacement, respectively. The independent variable is the demographic share of residents in a local area who are coethnics of the militia that controls it militarily. This information is based on estimates of the number of residents from each sectarian subgroup in each area and information about the location of military frontlines. The unit of analysis is one individual village or urban neighborhood. The main control variables are total population size for each location, its distance to Beirut, which of the two coalitions was in military control, and dummy variables for each electoral district and administrative region. The rest of this section explains each variable and its coding and sources in more detail and provides some descriptive statistics.

*Demographics.* Because of the elaborate and rigid sectarian nature of electoral competition in Lebanon its voter registration rolls contain the sectarian identity of each voter.

[87] This work took place during the 2013-14 academic year which I had the pleasure of spending in Lebanon as an affiliated researcher at the Center for Arab and Middle Eastern Studies at American University of Beirut generously funded by a grant from Sixten Gemzeus Stiftelse in Stockholm, Sweden. All work in Lebanon was approved by Harvard University Internal Review Board, protocol IRB13-3097.

This register, maintained by the Interior Ministry, is also used as the source of registration on all other official paperwork such as birth certificates, marriage licenses and death records. The country is split into more than 1,400 inhabited units, each representing one separate village or urban neighborhood, which are aggregated into 28 electoral districts as well as six administrative regions.[88] The complete set of nationwide voter registration rolls for both the 1953 and 2009 elections are available to researchers in a combination of German, French and Arabic.[89] Each source contains information for every village or urban neighborhood on the exact number of registered voters, aged 21 or older, who belong to each demographic subgroup. There is at present 18 officially recognized sectarian subgroups of voters of which five are Muslim and twelve are Christian with Jews constituting the final group. Several tiny subgroups are aggregated into "Other Christian minorities" in the data (1.5% of voters). The number of Jews present in Lebanon is extremely small.

One shortcoming of the data is that it does not contain Palestinians. Palestinian refugees arrived in Lebanon in waves starting with the war of 1948 and this population has since then fluctuated in estimated size from about 260,000 to 425,000 at various times.[90] Small numbers of Palestinians have received Lebanese citizenship but the overwhelming majority has not and without citizenship, work permits or the right to own property they mostly remain in decades-old

[88] For an introduction to the electoral system and districting, see the International Foundation for Electoral Systems, "Lebanon's 2009 Parliamentary Elections: The Lebanese Electoral System" (Washington, DC: IFES Lebanon Briefing Paper, 2009).

[89] The 1953 data comes from Klaus-Peter Hartmann, *Untersuchungen zur Sozialgeographic Christlicher Minderheiten in Vorderen Orient* (Wiesbaden: Ludwig Reichert Verlag, 1980). Data from 2009 comes from Information International, *Al-Intakhabaat An-Niyabiya Al-Lubnaniyya 2009: Wafqan Lil-Aqlaam wa Al-Murashiheen wa At-Taouaaif* (Beirut: Kutub Ltd, 2009) and Francois Eid, *Le Liban-Mosaique: Interpretation Graphique des Listes des Électeurs 2010* (Beirut: Byblos Modern Printing Press, 2010).

[90] The best available evidence on the socio-economic realities of Palestinians in Lebanon is Jad Chaaban et al, "Socio-Economic Survey of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon", Report published by the American University of Beirut (AUB) and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), 2010.

refugee camps run by UNRWA of which 12 are in operation at present.[91] Current estimates indicate that 62% of Palestinians live inside such camps and that the majority of the remaining 38% live in improvised gatherings directly adjacent to established camps. Since only small numbers have advanced in socio-economic standing information on the camps can be used to determine where most Palestinians live. Together with the Lebanese voter registration rolls this provides a full demographic picture of the country save for migrant workers and a small number of stateless Bedouin.

Finally, to help assess the accuracy and reliability of this data set and make a few necessary modifications I have compared it extensively to the best sources available in the academic literature on Lebanese demographics. This is a small but highly competent literature, mostly in French and Arabic, that relies on a vast range of material compiled over many decades by the government, academic studies, original surveys, NGOs and other actors and which paints a nuanced picture of Lebanese demographics and how these have changed before, during and after the civil war.[92] The resulting data set is far from perfect but I believe that it represents the best opportunity for producing a micro-level estimate of pre-war demographics in 1975 which is a prerequisite for gaining insight into ethnic violence in this conflict using quantitative techniques.

*Migration.* To study migration patterns I rely on a report issued in the 1990s by the Ministry for the Displaced, a government ministry set up after the war to work on returning and

[91] UNRWA makes this information available on its web site at http://www.unrwa.org/where-we-work/lebanon/
[92] The key works are Selim Nasr, *Sociologia Al-Harb fi Lubnan: Atraf As-Seraea Al-Ijtimaaeaiy wa Al-Iqtisadiy 1970-1990* (Beirut: Dar Al-Nahar, 2013), Boutros Labaki and Khalil Abou Rjeily, *Bilan des Guerres du Liban 1975-1990* (Paris: Éditions L'Harmattan, 1993) and Eric Verdeil, *Atlas du Liban: Territoires et Société* (Beirut: Institut Francais du Proche-Orient, 2007).

compensating those displaced by the war.[93] The report was compiled by teams of researchers interviewing displaced and returned populations to record their original residence and the circumstances of their displacement. The report is in practice an event-level data set with individual entries for each village- or neighborhood-level episode of displacement. For each data point it provides a date, what combat episode it was related to, an indication of whether the displacement was individual or collective in nature, whether it concerned Christians or Muslims or both, and whether it was accompanied by active violence against civilians or general security concerns on behalf of migrants. The report does not provide numeric estimates of the number of displaced in each episode and it does not cover parts of southern Lebanon that remained under Israeli occupation at the time it was compiled. Nevertheless it allows us to construct dummy variables at the village or neighborhood level for whether an area experienced forced migration of either select individuals or of the full location in its entirety. As explained above I subset the data to the period of 1975-76 and use one dummy variable each for whether a village experienced any instance of selective or collective victimization, respectively, at any point during this period.

*Violence.* To code civilian victimization, and in particular selective victimization, it is useful to study violence and displacement as separate outcomes. There can be lethal violence against select individuals that does not cause any displacement as well as forced displacement of select individuals that is not accompanied by an incidence of violence. Fortunately this disaggregation is possible because of a systematic report on individual acts of wartime abuse against civilians. The report was published in 2013 as a private initiative by the International Center for Transitional Justice, an American NGO with a local Lebanese office, in collaboration

[93] Ministry for the Displaced, "Qadayat At-Tahajir fi Lubnan 1975-1990: Thuruf At-Tahajir", Ministry publication, 1996

with the Center for the Study of the Modern Arab World at Université Saint-Joseph in Beirut.[94] The report is based on a rich material including but not limited to the full set of wartime reporting from newspapers Al-Nahar, Al-Safir and L'Orient-Le Jour, abbreviated and organized in chronological order, and is available in English and Arabic. The report corroborates the instances of collective displacement found in the migration report and also provides data on many instances of selective violence that did not generate meaningful displacement. I use a dummy variable that is coded as positive for any area that experienced selective displacement, selective violence or both for the period at hand.

*Control variables.* From the demographic material we can also derive some control variables including total population size of each village or urban neighborhood, dummy variables for which sectarian subgroups were present, and which electoral district and administrative region it is located in. In addition, using the individual GPS coordinates of each village or neighborhood and a reference point, we can determine the distance of each unit to central Beirut. Finally I include a variable to capture whether a village or neighborhood was under military control of either a Christian militia or by the PLO and its Lebanese allies. Since the war was fought predominantly through conventional warfare with clear frontlines every village is coded as controlled by one of the two coalitions, using a dummy variable. Military frontlines are available in some secondary sources but I also asked former militia members in interviews to draw the frontlines on a map for the time period in question. Since the war was fought through conventional warfare with military units facing each other across established frontlines there are few controversies about where those frontlines were located.

[94] International Center for Transitional Justice, "Lebanon's Legacy of Political Violence: a Mapping of Serious Violations of International Human Rights and Humanitarian Law in Lebanon, 1975-2008", ICTJ Report, 2013

**Descriptive Statistics**

The data set contains a nationwide set of 1,453 inhabited villages or urban neighborhoods of which 955 were controlled by the PLO and its Lebanese allies (66%) and 498 by Christian militias (34%). The mean distance of a location to central Beirut is 51 kilometers. The size of the total population of registered voters aged 21 or above in each location is distributed as per table 3.1 below. Note that there are a handful of outliers at the top of the distribution, mostly neighborhoods of Beirut, which dwarf the typical village or neighborhood in size. The modal location is smaller than the mean or median with 350 registered voters.

Table 3.1: Population distribution

| Min. | 1st Quarter | Median | Mean | 3rd Quarter | Max. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 50 | 450 | 1,000 | 2,444 | 2,250 | 81,700 |

A majority of locations are homogenous but 24.7% are intermixed with both Muslim and Christian residents. The category "Muslim" includes both Lebanese Muslims, regardless of subgroup, as well as all Palestinian residents regardless of their confessional identity.[95] The category "Christian" includes all Lebanese Christians regardless of their subgroup. For every location I measure the share of the local population which is coethnics of the militia that controlled it militarily. One feature of the data is that a majority of locations have 100% coethnic members, meaning that they are either homogenous Christian areas controlled by Christian militias or homogenous Muslim ones controlled by the PLO. We would not expect such areas to be prone to ethnic violence and I therefore define "areas at risk" as ones which contain members

[95] About 10% of Palestinians globally are Christian. However in Lebanon the number of Christian Palestinians who support Lebanese Christian parties is infinitesimal.

of one ethnic group but is controlled by another. There are 638 such areas of which 479 were controlled by the PLO and 159 by Christians.

As for the dependent variables there are 98 areas that experienced selective victimization, of which 58 at the hands of the PLO and 40 at the hands of Christian militias. 15 locations were ethnically cleansed in a systematic manner of which six by the PLO and nine by Christians. The 98 victimized areas have a total combined population of about 980,000 residents and many of those fled their residences during the first two years of the war because of the general security situation especially in areas close to the frontlines. However most of those residents could return once the first phase of military combat ended. This is the key difference with the 15 areas coded as experiencing ethnic cleansing. Not only were civilians driven out at gunpoint and sometimes even physically removed by being placed on buses and trucks and transported across the frontlines, but these areas were also either systematically destroyed or the homes and buildings were confiscated and settled by new residents. In none of those 15 cases were civilians allowed to return at any point. This coding rule provides a clear and transparent condition for classifying cases in a chaotic setting of armed conflict. The areas that were ethnically cleansed tended to have larger populations with mean and median values of 9,300 and 5,000, respectively; in total at least 140,000 people were forcibly displaced during this episode.

Figure 3.1 below shows how violence is distributed among locations with different characteristics. Notice how violence is generally more common in locations which are closer to Beirut. Ethnic cleansing is clustered in areas where the militia in control had a smaller share of coethnics, and in particular among the 40% of at-risk locations where zero percent of the population were coethnics of the militia in control. Selective violence is considerably more common in areas where the militia in charge had a higher share of coethnics.

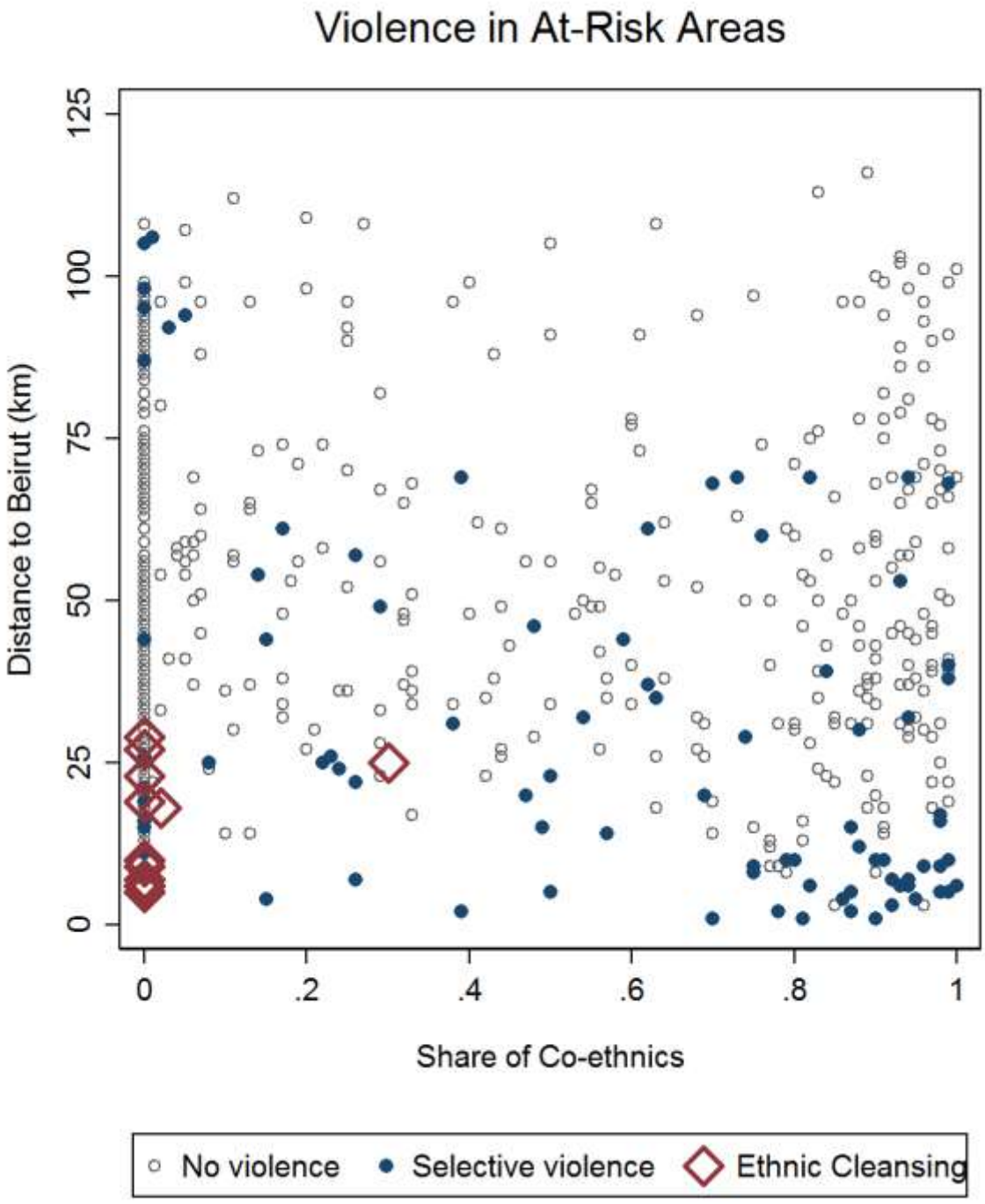



Figure 3.1: Violence in At-Risk Areas

This chart highlights one concern: if selective violence frequently occurred in locations where non-coethnics were a relatively small share of the population, how do we know that this violence did not de facto cleanse these locations even if the total number of targeted people was relatively limited simply because the non-coethnic population was very small? To alleviate this concern I produce table 3.2 below with information on numbers killed and total population of the targeted ethnic group for the ten instances of selective violence with the largest body count. We do not have body counts for all instances of selective targeting, which is why I coded it as a binary dummy variable, but we do have this information for a majority of incidents. As the table below confirms the total number of non-coethnics killed by militias in each of these attacks is only a fraction of the total non-coethnic population.

Table 3.2: The ten largest body counts among instances of selective violence

| **Location** | **Body count** | **Size of non-coethnic population** | **Share of non-coethnic population killed** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Chekka | 100 | 4,200 | 2% |
| Hamat | 100 | 2,200 | 5% |
| Mtein | 53 | 2,500 | 2% |
| Bashoura | 50 | 1,800 | 3% |
| Rahba | 50 | 5,800 | 1% |
| Taalabaya | 35 | 2,100 | 2% |
| Minet el Hosn | 30 | 2,700 | 1% |
| Salima | 29 | 850 | 3% |
| Tal Abbas | 24 | 2,000 | 1% |
| Kab Elias | 16 | 3,600 | 0% |

Sources: ICTJ (2013), Francoid Eid (2010)

### Model Choice, Specifications and Results

I estimate conditional logit regressions on whether violence occurred for each location in the sample and, conditional on violence occurring, whether it took the form of selective violence or

ethnic cleansing. The conditional logit model is the most suitable since I have coded the key outcomes as binary dummy variables and because my theoretical argument implies a two-step process. First, militias gather intelligence from loyal coethnics on where there is militant activity on behalf of the enemy and thus a need to respond by violence. Subsequently, in each place where they employ violence, they choose between selective violence and ethnic cleansing depending on how much information they possess about this local area which is in turn a function of demographics. The conditional logit model mirrors this process since we can estimate first the correlates of whether violence occurs and then, conditional on violence occurring, what kind of violence militants employed.

Table 3.3: Conditional logit regressions on violence and ethnic cleansing

| | (1) | (2) | (3) |
|---|---|---|---|
| VARIABLES | Violence | Ethnic cleansing | Ethnic cleansing |
| Share Co-Ethnics | -1.045*** | -4.834** | -5.056** |
| | (0.132) | (2.048) | (2.373) |
| Distance (km, log) | -0.807*** | | -0.322* |
| | (0.0928) | | (0.172) |
| Population (log) | 1.133*** | | 0.0564 |
| | (0.150) | | (0.425) |
| Christian control | 0.136 | | 0.936* |
| | (0.125) | | (0.537) |
| Constant | 3.931*** | -0.220 | 2.501 |
| | (1.039) | (0.216) | (2.544) |
| Observations | 1,403 | 113 | 113 |

Robust standard errors in parentheses
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

The first column of table 3.3 establishes the correlates of violence and shows that it is more likely to occur in locations with a smaller share of coethnics, ones that are closer to Beirut, and those with a larger population. Controlling for these factors we do not find a statistically significant difference in the likelihood of violence occurring in areas controlled by the PLO or by Christian militias. None of these results change if instead of using the full sample of 1,453 locations we restrict it to the 623 areas deemed most at risk. Note that the sample size falls from 1,453 to 1,403 observations once we add controls because 50 areas do not have GPS coordinates and thus have missing values for distance. These tend to be some of the smallest villages in the sample as they are small enough not to appear in Google Maps. There is no record of any of them experiencing violence or otherwise playing a strategic or noteworthy role in the war.

The second and third columns show the correlates of ethnic cleansing occurring in a location, conditional on violence taking place. This means that every location in this group experienced either ethnic cleansing or selective violence. The second column includes only the independent variable, the share of local residents who are coethnics of the militia in charge of the area, while the third includes control variables as well. The statistical correlations are clear: ethnic cleansing was more likely to occur in locations where a militia had fewer coethnics, whereas selective violence was more likely to occur in locations where a militia did have a high share of coethnics. Including controls do not change these results. Being closer to Beirut and under Christian control are weakly correlated with an increased probability of ethnic cleansing occurring instead of selective violence but the result is not statistically significant at conventional levels.

**Robustness Checks**

At this point we need to assess the robustness of these results to demographic subgroups and spatial effects. An appendix at the back of the book contains regression tables estimating the following models. One concern is that the results above could result from differential effects of different demographic subgroups. For instance, perhaps the PLO targeted predominantly Maronite Catholics rather than Greek Orthodox Christians and the Christian militias targeted Palestinians rather than Lebanese Muslims. There are numerous ways to estimate this but I chose to control for the effects of Maronites being present in areas controlled by the PLO and of Palestinians being present in areas controlled by the Christian militias. Furthermore, we can do this both by using dummy variables for whether Maronites or Palestinians were present in some area as well as using these groups' share of the local population to assess the impact of their presence. None of these modifications to the specifications change the main results in any meaningful ways.

Second, we need to verify that these correlations are not merely a statistical mirage of spatial autocorrelation. The best way to assess the robustness of our results to spatial clustering is to re-run the models using either region fixed effects or clustered standard errors. Models with region fixed effects aim to control for unobservable region-specific factors. Clustered standard errors correct for effects that occur when errors are correlated across observations. I re-ran the main specifications introduced above using both region fixed effects and block bootstrapped standard errors clustered at the district level, a useful technique when there are insufficient clusters available. This is a valid concern since Lebanon has only 28 electoral districts and conventions dictate that we should use at least 50 clusters. However, none of the results change

in meaningful ways in either specification which shows that the results are robust to spatial autocorrelation.

### Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Mapping

To further convey these results I use the data to produce illustrative GIS mapping. The map below focuses on the greater Beirut area because it witnessed more violence than other regions and because in order to map effects at the neighborhood or village level it is difficult to map too large of an area. The green line indicates the military frontlines that separated Christian militias in the northeast section from the PLO and its allies in the southwestern section. There are several noteworthy things about the map. On the Christian side we notice that militants emptied all homogenously Muslim neighborhoods in East Beirut but did not systematically empty a single one of the intermixed neighborhoods. Many of these witnessed selective violence, but some escaped violence altogether. On the PLO-controlled side we notice that not a single neighborhood in thoroughly intermixed West Beirut was cleansed, although almost all did witness selective violence. On the other hand PLO-affiliated militants cleansed several villages south of the capital, most of which were homogenously Christian. Why were some villages and neighborhoods targeted but others left intact? To arrive at an answer we must turn to qualitative work.

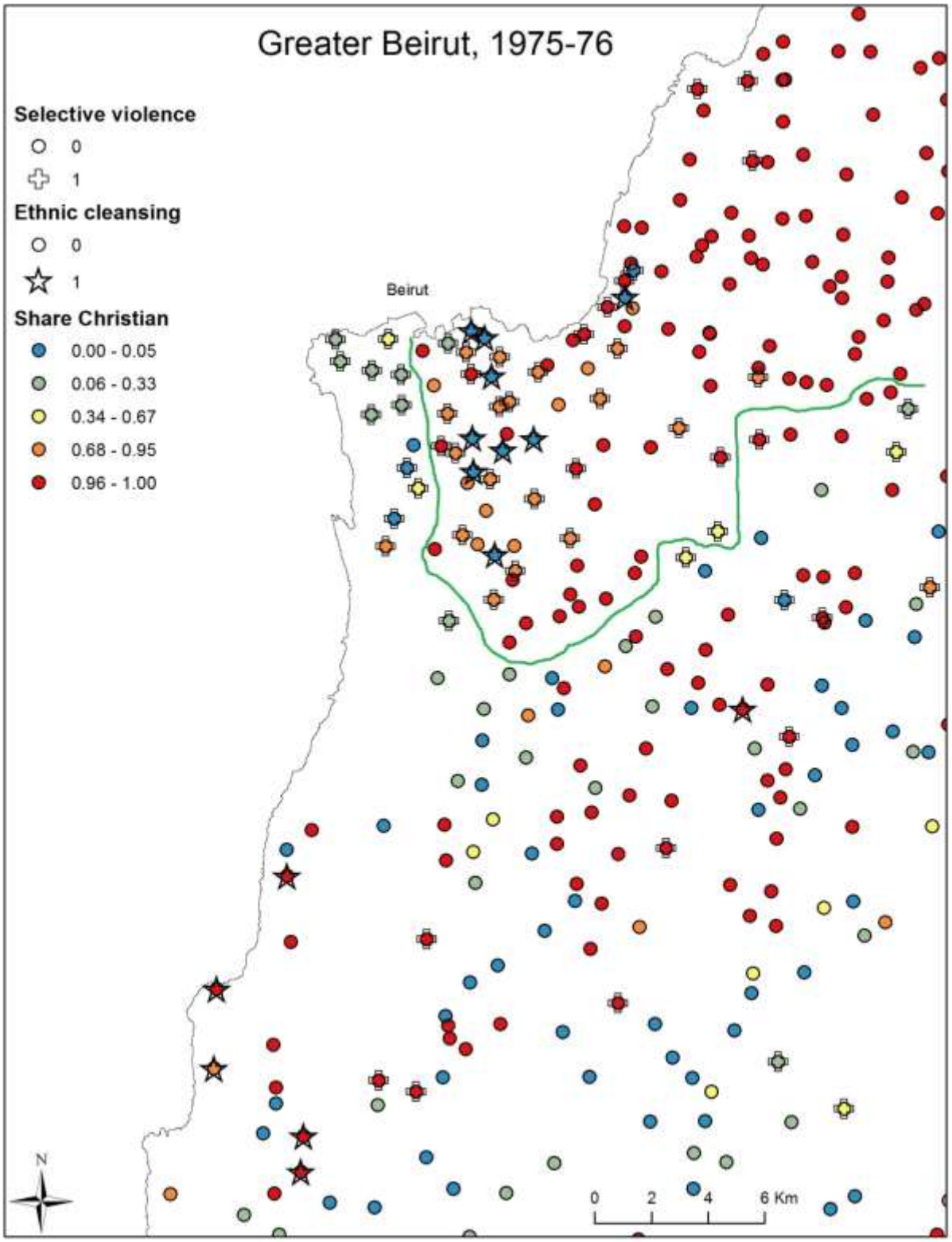



Figure 3.2: Violence and Displacement in Greater Beirut, 1975-76

## Conclusion

This chapter establishes a set of correlations consistent with the information argument I advance in the preceding chapter. However, these correlations do not allow us to establish causal relationships or to disentangle different mechanisms. We need to think critically about this evidence and its limitations and how to proceed with other kinds of evidence to strengthen the argument. One shortcoming of the data set in this chapter is that it does not contain systematic data on the local presence of the various political and military organizations. Therefore we cannot test statistically whether militias used violence and displacement to target locations where hostile political organizations maintained a presence, which is unfortunate since this is an important part of my argument. And even if we had such data and could show that violence correlated with local presence of competing political or military organizations this would still not prove conclusively that variation in information was the key mechanism influencing the choice between selective violence and ethnic cleansing. For these reasons we need to turn to qualitative methods which I do in the next two chapters.

One alternative interpretation of these statistical results is that they could result from an economic logic instead of a political one. If armed groups moderate ethnic violence partly because of political incentives and partly because of the economic benefits that non-coethnics bring then how do we know that these correlations are driven by information rather than resource extraction and greed? Perhaps intermixed areas are wealthier and more economically productive while homogenous non-coethnic neighborhoods were poor. There could even be a selection effect at work whereby intermixed areas became intermixed over time because they are attractive places to work or own a business and therefore attract members of different groups to settle there. In that case militias would have strong incentives to moderate violence in intermixed areas

but not in homogenous ones. This would be a major concern for any militia that relies heavily on taxation or predation to fund and sustain its efforts.

The next two chapters address these and other concerns using qualitative methods and material from about 60 interviews with civil war participants. Chapter 4 uses insights from the literature on industrial organization of violence to analyze Lebanese militias and their relationships with both coethnic and non-coethnic civilians. The chapter shows how both coalitions placed political leaders in firm control of the military effort and as a result were able to design and implement unified strategic planning according to certain political constraints on violence. I also show how militias relied on a remarkable degree of popular support among their coethnics to organize and sustain the war effort and how as a result they could rely on locals to provide intelligence. Chapter 5 uses a structured comparison of a small number of villages and neighborhoods to address the question of why militants targeted some locations but not others, and why they used selective violence in some places they targeted but ethnic cleansing in others.

# Chapter 4 – Objectives, Decision-Making and Intelligence

*"The militia wasn't separate from the local population. That's who we were, we were a part of the neighborhood. Guys who knew each other from school. The militias didn't fall down from the sky!"*

Former military commander of the Lebanese Communist Party

*"So you kept arms in the house?"*

*"I still keep arms. I have a gun under my shirt right now."*

Interview at Café Paul, Beirut, April 2013

## Introduction

Many accounts of the Lebanese civil war discuss its utter chaos, its madness, and its seemingly disorganized violence perpetrated under the fog of war. Conversely, in this chapter and the next I present a different narrative that emphasizes order, structure and rational planning. I argue that we should understand patterns of violence and displacement in wartime Lebanon as outcomes of a strategic process whereby armed organizations targeted political opponents. Militias relied on loyal supporters in areas they controlled to provide them with intelligence on active political or military opposition. The previous chapter establishes empirical correlations between demographics, violence and displacement consistent with this explanation. However, these

correlations alone cannot establish causal relationships. How do we know that political opposition and access to information caused these patterns? Another explanation could be that intermixed areas were wealthier and that militias were more careful about avoiding mass displacement in such areas because they needed to extract economic resources from local communities to sustain their operations.

This chapter and the next rely primarily on interviews with militia fighters, senior political decision-makers, and other participants in the civil war to show why the argument that militias targeted political opponents provides a superior explanation. This chapter describes how the militias were organized and how their behavior was affected by their political goals and constraints, their command structure, and the resources they mobilized. I devote particular attention to the way militias mobilized resources from supportive local communities as these processes are very revealing both about how militias funded their operations and why and how they could rely on local supporters to provide them with intelligence. The best evidence for the depth of this support comes when we consider how important contributions from loyal segments of society were to organize and sustain the war effort in the first place. In contrast, there is little to support the view that extracting resources from non-coethnics was sufficiently important to influence strategic violence.

Militia structure and organization is a challenging topic to study for several reasons. Early in the war the conflict involved a staggering number of different organizations and each organization was responsible for its own financial and operational arrangements. Some organizations still exist today and some do not. Some organizations were notoriously secretive and non-transparent, including the PLO where it appears that no one beyond Yasser Arafat and a

couple of his closest associates ever knew many details about its finances.[96] For these reasons I focus here primarily on the specific financial and operational details of the Christian militias which contested the war from 1975 and which gradually coalesced as the Lebanese Forces starting in 1976. I believe that most of the relevant insights obtain also to other organizations from across the political divide, as illustrated throughout with material from relevant sources, and that the dynamics of violence uncovered in this chapter and the next pertain to both military coalitions. While the PLO had a short history as a political movement in Lebanon its Lebanese allies had deep roots in various segments of the population that long predated the war.

This chapter begins by describing the interview material and subsequently makes three major points. First, decision-makers on both sides openly admit in interviews that they did sometimes engage in ethnic cleansing. They claim that they did so because it was an effective strategy and that it was sometimes an unavoidable outcome given the military situation. However, reviewing the strategic and political environment in which these militias acted makes it clear that they also had powerful political incentives to moderate violence against non-coethnics. Second, I show how both coalitions very rapidly consolidated and developed central decision-making processes once the war began. As a result they placed political decision-makers in firm control of the military effort and were able to design and implement unified strategic planning according to political constraints on violence. Third, I show how in their quest for intelligence the militias could rely on a remarkable degree of popular support among loyal coethnic segments of the Lebanese population.

[96] Khalidi, *The Iron Cage*

### Interview Material

Between early summer 2013 and late summer 2014 I spent 14 months as an affiliated researcher at American University of Beirut partly to identify, approach, and interview individuals with deep knowledge about various aspects of the Lebanese civil war and its militias.[97] In total I conducted interviews with over 60 individuals. I interviewed most people only once but some I spoke with two times or more. Each session lasted from one to three hours. About 30% of interviews were conducted in Arabic and the rest in English, although many also included a smattering of French. I did not work with a translator. Having an introduction was usually critical to secure an interview and many individuals I interviewed suggested others for me to talk to as well. As a result the majority of interviews were obtained through this method, known as snowball sampling. Table 4.1 below contains a list of all major military actors operating in Lebanon at the outbreak of war in 1975.

[97] All work in Lebanon was approved by Harvard University Internal Review Board, protocol IRB13-3097.

Table 4.1: Military Actors in Lebanon, 1975

| **Military actors in Lebanon, 1975** | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Lebanese Front** | **Lebanese National Movement** | **Others** |
| • Katayyib Party<br>• National Liberal Party & the Tigers militia<br>• Marada Brigade<br>• Others (minor nationalist or Christian organizations) | • Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO): Fatah, PFLP and others<br>• Progressive Socialist Party<br>• Lebanese Communist Party<br>• Al-Mourabitoun (pan-Arab Nasserists)<br>• Syrian Social Nationalist Party<br>• Others (left-wing, Baath, and Nasserist parties and militias) | • Lebanese Army<br>• Amal Movement |

About half of the people I interviewed served in a militia and most of those served in mid-level or senior leadership positions. I managed to secure interviews with at least one and often several representatives from all these militias except one minor organization.[98] The other half of interviewees represent a broad spectrum of positions in academia, media, think tanks, NGOs, private sector research organizations, and clergy from some of Lebanon's 18 officially recognized confessional communities. Some of the individuals in this second category have very strong political ties to a party or a militia and in these instances I try to indicate these relationships throughout the text below. I approached different individuals in this second group for different purposes but the most common motivation was to speak to someone with intimate knowledge of the history, demographics, and politics of particular local areas that I was

[98] The exception being the Marada Brigade, a regional Maronite militia associated with the Frangieh political dynasty.

interested in because of its wartime patterns of violence and displacement. Interviews with former militia members and with experts on local demographics were semi-structured to allow comparisons across organizations and locations.

### Motivations and Constraints on Violence

When the war broke out both military coalitions used extensive campaigns of violence to displace non-coethnics from areas they controlled. Senior decision-makers on both sides argue that displacement was necessary for military reasons. "It was self-defense. We closed our sector", says a senior Christian politician who played a key role in militia efforts. A former deputy head of military intelligence for the largest Christian militia offers the following answer to why they preferred displacement instead of using surveillance or guards to control Muslims in their area: "We were not organized enough. It would have required thousands of troops. We didn't have it. Frontline battles were very intense. Displacement was lower risk". A Palestinian source likewise argues that the PLO needed to militarily defeat the Christian forces and claims that displacement of Christians became "inevitable" as part of this military confrontation. However, neither side pursued complete geographic separation of Christians and Muslims or desired this outcome.

"The PLO did not take any [general] decision to kill Christians or to displace Christians", says a Palestinian academic with ties to the organization. "It doesn't even make any sense. Ten percent of all Palestinians are Christian. The PLO is non-sectarian". A former PLO press spokesperson concurs: "It is not true that it was a Muslim-Christian war. Many Christians were on our side. The two wartime secretary generals of the Lebanese Communist Party were

Christian, as were many of their fighters when the war broke out. The Syrian Social Nationalist Party is heavily Christian. Many Lebanese Christians joined Palestinian organizations, especially left-wing organizations like the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine and the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine. Some Muslims also supported [Christian political parties] like Kamal Assad, Sabri Hamad, the Zaiter bloc, the Khalil family." This latter list of groups and individuals is an assortment of established politicians with a vested interest in the Lebanese political system whose positions were threatened by Palestinian and left-wing goals.

Christian political leaders echo the same sentiments. "[The party] had a clear policy: no to general displacement of Muslims, no to destruction of mosques. It was a formal decision by the party executive committee. It was by consensus, there was no real opposition within the party", says a senior politician from the largest Christian political party and subsequently largest militia. The Christian militias aspired to defeat all competing militias on Lebanese soil and to reestablish the Lebanese state as an independent and sovereign entity. "Ultimately it was about reestablishing the Lebanese state. The state had to take back its place. We were with the Government, with the State, with the Army", explains a former party chairman. Their conception of how independent Lebanon should be governed might differ from Muslim desires, and they intended to retain the presidency for one of their own leaders at least in the immediate post-war situation. However, they were well aware that the country would remain demographically mixed and that accomplishing this goal would require making compromises with its Muslim population to reach a mutually acceptable post-conflict political settlement.

It is important in this regard to understand that neither party to the conflict desired partition of Lebanon into new homogenous nation states based on sectarian identities. One major

reason is geography: Lebanon is a tiny country.[99] Furthermore, "Christian Lebanon" of East Beirut and part of Mount Lebanon has insufficient arable land and water resources to be self-sustaining. Its major resource and economic engine, the port of Beirut, would lose most of its significance if the country was divided into hostile entities and it would entirely lack land borders with friendly countries. Likewise, "Muslim Lebanon" would suffer economically if separated from the port and industry of East Beirut. If separated into independent states on hostile terms it also seems likely that war would have quickly reoccurred. In addition, these neat divisions into "Muslim" and "Christian" hide the fact, highlighted in these pages, that even in the midst of the war the country remained somewhat intermixed. As a result both parties understood that when the conflict ended they would have to forge a new political compromise across the sectarian divide. "Lebanon will always be a mixed country. Whatever happens we will always have to deal with the Muslims in a political solution", says a former chairman of the largest Christian party.

Both parties also had to be sensitive to how their actions affected outside powers. This was particularly the case for the PLO as excessive violence against Christians would likely have caused an intervention by the United States, France, or Israel. Christian leaders were very aware of this dynamic and frequently tried to convince audiences in these three countries that Christians were facing certain genocide. American evangelicals were a favorite target.[100] The Christian

[99] With just over 10,000 square kilometers it is smaller than all US states other than Delaware and Rhode Island, or less than half the size of New Hampshire or Vermont. Even the most remote inhabited village is only 119 kilometers (74 miles) from central Beirut. Furthermore, Mount Lebanon alone does not have enough water resources and arable land to sustain its population which is the main reason why French imperial planners extended Lebanon's borders beyond the mountain even though Muslims who dominated the east, south and north of the country did not necessarily desire this arrangement.

[100] In 1978 Christian militants even staged a minor round of fighting with the Syrian Army around the city of Zahle solely to provoke the kind of violence against Christians they thought would motivate Western powers to intervene, although American diplomats called this bluff. Theodor Hanf, *Coexistence in Wartime Lebanon: Decline of a State and Rise of a Nation* (London: Centre for Lebanese Studies, 1993).

militias were somewhat less bound by this political constraint with regards to violence against Palestinians as neighboring Arab countries like Syria and Jordan had poor relations with Yasser Arafat and did not want to see the Palestinian national movement succeed as an independent political entity. However, excessive violence against Muslims would have risked diplomatic intervention by countries like Egypt or Saudi Arabia who aspired to a leadership position among Sunni Arab states. Campaigns of displacement therefore aimed primarily to remove civilians with political loyalties to the enemy. “It was political cleansing, not sectarian cleansing”, argues a senior Christian politician.

### Horizontal Consolidation and Centralization of the Decision-Making Process

This section shows how both opposing blocs consolidated, centralized a formal decision-making process with a degree of separation between political and military wings, and implemented an element of political control over their military apparatus. When the war broke out “militias were little more than neighborhood groups”, says a Christian fighter. Military mobilization usually involved local people. “We were volunteers, not employees. We were not an invading army. People fought in their own neighborhoods”, continues the former militia fighter. Those who supported the Christian militias unfailingly refer to their efforts as self-defense. “It was self-defense, of their own houses, their own neighborhoods, their own families”, argues a researcher at an NGO with political links to senior Christian politicians. This assessment is correct in the narrow military sense that several early operations of the war involved Palestinian groups trying

to encircle East Beirut, and Christians who militarily opposed these maneuvers fought defensive battles in their own neighborhoods.[101]

Many different groups, in particular political parties, organized military activities in Christian neighborhoods by 1975. The largest actor was the Katayyib which was the closest thing to a modern mass party in the Christian community and by far the organization with the widest geographic presence within it.[102] It had party activists in many Christian areas who became focal organizers of military activities and in some cases local branches of the party or its youth league served as platforms for creating military organizations. Many other organizations contributed to this process and organized militia forces under their own banner as well, such as the Tigers militia and Marada Brigade associated with the Shamoun and Frangieh political dynasties. Smaller organizations include ideologically ultranationalist Guardians of the Cedars and the Tanzim which was set up clandestinely by renegade Christian personnel from the Lebanese Army opposed to the PLO. Many neighborhoods also had unofficial "Youth Committees" organizing local military initiatives. "Decision-making was chaotic, fractured, anarchic", says a Christian fighter.

Much like the Christian fighters, most activists of the Lebanese Left claim that they were local residents acting in self-defense to protect their own neighborhoods. "The Communist Party was strong in Nabaa. Militia members were overwhelmingly locals", argues a Communist fighter from this East Beirut neighborhood. "Most fighters knew each other from high school". Aside from the Communist Party the neighborhood hosted several allied organizations such as the

[101] Lewis Snider, "The Lebanese Forces: Their Origins and Role in Lebanon's Politics", *Middle East Journal,* 38(1), 1984

[102] The party is called Al Kataeb Al Lubnaniya in Arabic, Les Phalanges Libanaises in French, and The Lebanese Phalanges Party in English but is most commonly known as "Katayyib" in Lebanese vernacular.

Syrian Social Nationalist Party, the Organization for Communist Action, and the Progressive Socialist Party. These were all radical political organizations, predominantly staffed by locals, which rapidly developed into rudimentary militias once the war broke out. Both Christian and left-wing fighters also understood that their counterparts shared their sentiment and experience of being local residents engaging in self-defense. “The other militias were the same as us”, confirms a Christian fighter. “Except the Palestinians. They came here organized”.

“The PLO had maintained a standing military organization since 1969”, explains a Palestinian academic. “It had a full command structure with a unified military command and a political command in control of the military. It was more organized [than the Lebanese militias]. It understood combined arms, in particular with infantry and artillery. It was well-informed and skilled in professional military intelligence. It was well-trained and had maintained full-time soldiers since the 1960s. Many had battle experience from the West Bank and Jordan. It could operate outside of its own neighborhoods by moving reserves and reinforcements long distances with professional logistics. The right-wing [Christian] forces really began in 1973. Prior to that they had some intelligence, they were close to the security services, they had some arms and training. They had the structure, the organization. But they were not a professional fighting force”.

Christian political and military leaders quickly realized that they needed a more coordinated approach to mobilize their resources at the strategic level and to acquire and deploy heavy weapons. In response they established a political command, named the Lebanese Front, to coordinate all allied militias. The organization included senior politicians, intellectuals and religious figures and it had three primary purposes: to establish political control over the military effort, to develop and implement unified strategic planning, and to coordinate military activities

among the disparate militias. This political body made key strategic decisions, and military strategy was subject to its political goals and considerations. Military operations were subsequently planned and implemented by a unified military command consisting of commanders from all allied militias. Eventually most of these militias merged into a single military fighting force known as the Lebanese Forces.[103] "There was a need for coordination", says a former chairman of the largest political party in this constellation.

Lebanese left-wing and Muslim forces also came to operate under a unified political command but for a different reason: none of these organizations had the military capabilities to act as an independent fighting force and in practice all of them relied on the PLO to organize their joint war effort. The PLO is itself an umbrella organization with constituent parts such as Yasser Arafat's secular nationalist Fatah party, the left-wing revolutionary Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, and others. By the late 1960s the PLO had established stable internal power-sharing arrangements under Yasser Arafat's chairmanship. This allowed unified political and military planning. "Officially there was a unified military command [of all left-wing and Palestinian forces]. Unofficially, there was a PLO war room where planning and decisions took place. The other parties couldn't fight on their own", says a Palestinian source with knowledge of PLO planning. The PLO planned the war effort and other parties supplied some fighters and other resources. As we shall see, perhaps the most important such resource was fine-grained and reliable intelligence in areas with a high concentration of loyal civilians.

[103] This process started in 1976 and completed in 1980. See Snider, *The Lebanese Forces* for full details.

### Mobilizing Resources among Loyal Coethnics

This section discusses how Lebanese militias funded, organized and sustained their military operations. In particular, this discussion highlights how militias mobilized a tremendous range and depth of resources from loyal coethnics. The militias were deeply interwoven with the social fabric of the areas where they operated and their ability to mobilize resources in these communities was critical to their military performance. Understanding this aspect of their organization explains three things about their intelligence capabilities: why local civilians with deep knowledge of local conditions in various locations chose to provide information to militias, why militias typically found such information to be credible, and how in areas with a high concentration of local supporters militias obtained a wealth of credible intelligence from numerous trusted sources. To understand the important role of loyal civilians in the war effort we need to consider their contributions in comparison to other resources, such as taxation or donations.

By 1980 most Christian militias had unified as the Lebanese Forces. Their major sources of funding include the following:

- **Transaction taxes** on property deals, gasoline, restaurant bills and other goods
- **Operating ports**, collecting (i) excise duties (ii) shares in smuggling profits
- **Operating casinos** and other gambling businesses
- **Donations** from foreign states
- **Contributions** from Lebanese Christian society

All powerful militias muscled in on state activities such as tax collection and operating ports. The formal institutions of the Lebanese state continued to exist throughout the war and to perform a limited number of public services but became decreasingly relevant as militias took over most prominent operations of public management and social services.[104] All militias also accepted donations of arms and money from foreign states motivated by regional security concerns. "The enemy's enemy is a friend", says a former member of the executive council of the Lebanese Forces. "You'd sit down with them and they'd ask, so, what do you need? And then things started arriving. Heavy weapons came in fits and pieces, over time, from many places. Foreign security services aided us versus the PLO. Arab governments aided us. First it was Syria, when we were against the PLO, and then later on Iraq and Libya gave aid when we were against Syria. And there was Israel, of course." Israel was by quite some margin the largest foreign donor to the Christian militias.[105]

Foreign donors started sending minor arms consignments to Lebanese Christian parties in 1973 but it took about a year after the initial clashes in April 1975 before substantial quantities and heavy arms arrived from abroad. It took even longer until the militias successfully established quasi-states with taxation, social services and port facilities. However, already before the first bullets were fired all Lebanese militias drew heavily on support from sympathetic populations and from local civilians in contested areas. The rest of this section explains the

[104] The history and strategic logic of social services provision by Lebanese militias is covered in Melani Cammett, *Compassionate Communalism: Welfare and Sectarianism in Lebanon* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2014). See also Judith Harik, *The Public and Social Services of the Lebanese Militias* (Oxford: Center for Lebanese Studies, 1994).

[105] This relationship began with informal contacts between the Mossad and individual Maronite politicians but expanded into major arms consignments and personal meetings between militia leaders and senior Israeli politicians including Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin. Israeli journalists estimate that Israel spent $150 million on aiding the Christian militias during the Rabin government alone. See Schiff and Yaari, *Israel's Lebanon War*.

nature and sources of this support. Important contributions from society included all of the following.

- **Recruitment:** both through formal and informal channels
- **Money:** small contributions from locals, large from wealthy benefactors
- **Weapons:** many supporters bought their own arms and ammunition
- **Information:** supporters who lived near enemy positions would supply intelligence
- **Public relations:** producing posters, spraying graffiti, flying flags
- **Media consumption:** follow sympathetic radio and TV stations, read party newspaper
- **Entertainment:** organize feasts, ceremonies and parades for fighters
- **Food:** improvised or organized cooking for fighters, especially near frontlines
- **Vehicles:** local businesses often provided cars and trucks for military operations
- **Housing:** assigning squatting rights, house politically displaced
- **Storage space:** barracks, garage space
- **Training grounds:** providing and maintaining space for fighters to train

The most important contribution was recruitment and a striking feature of militia warfare is the extent to which it relied on temporarily mobilizing community members who otherwise maintained normal civilian lives. “When there was a cease-fire, everyone would go home. Most weapons were individual, in the closet”, says a Christian fighter. “As were uniforms. [Many] people fought locally so there was no need for transport. The militia could disappear and reappear in a day”. One important resource in the Christian community was the Voice of Lebanon radio station operated by the largest Christian political party which mixed pop music

with political news. Reports about military incidents were an important tool for mobilizing sympathizers. “Everyone listened to it. When it reported about incidents people did not wait for orders, they just showed up.” Many militia fighters with regular jobs would only join the fight if and when it affected their own neighborhood, but more dedicated militia fighters would travel from other parts of the country to join a local fight if often only for a few days at a time. This second group of fighters included both men and women and most of them were unmarried students who lived with their parents.

The PLO paid its fighters a regular salary. “It was important for some who joined”, says a public intellectual with political ties to the organization. On the Christian side the situation was more mixed. Many received a salary, especially if they would not otherwise be able to fight. Many others received little compensation and fought as volunteers because the fighting involved their local area, out of ideological commitment, or because they hoped to benefit in future from either promotions or other opportunities for financial gain. Some had other interesting financial arrangements: “We could not afford to pay everyone”, says one fighter. “So I maintained my regular engineering job at the factory. When I needed to, my boss would let me go to do my duties. I did not ask for this arrangement, he offered. My salary was part of the aid society was giving to what we were doing”. All militias also recruited heavily in high schools. “We would have regular lectures on [nationalist] ideology”, explains a Christian fighter who was recruited by her high school headmaster. “It was like an extracurricular activity”.

Other logistical issues also highlight the complex relationship between militias and their communities. “Most fighters got guns from the militia but some also bought their own. The party made a profit by connecting its supporters to arms dealers. Everyone knew this. It was a double contribution”, explains a Christian fighter. Heavy weapons like mortars and machine guns were

mounted on otherwise civilian trucks when needed. “The trucks could be painted and re-painted to play alternatively civilian and military roles”. The vehicles usually belonged to small businesses who sympathized with the political cause and once fighting ended along some particular stretch of the frontlines the trucks were returned to their civilian owners. Contributions extended to all kinds of logistical matters necessary to sustain combat operations. “The locals cooked for us”, says a Communist fighter. “They would make a hot lunch and then bring it to the frontlines, in the middle of battles, at great personal risk. Then they would come back, bring us tea, bring us coffee”.

In light of these myriad contributions, including some very costly sacrifices on behalf of community members, it is hardly surprising to learn that sympathetic locals also informed militias about suspicious activities in their communities. The next chapter addresses this transmission of information in more detail and in particular how this process differed with regards to information in intermixed areas versus information about homogenous non-coethnic locations. It is also important to understand that intelligence gathering was not always a difficult task. For instance, speaking of one neighborhood with a Palestinian presence in mostly Christian East Beirut, a Christian fighter says about the PLO: “Things were not hidden. They were there openly. Civilians who lived nearby would inform us about their activities, about their movements. They had an official party headquarters there patrolled by uniformed soldiers. There were flags and posters. They had formal checkpoints to enter the area. These were well-designated areas.”

## Conclusion

Israeli intelligence agents visited Beirut in early 1976 to meet with senior Christian leaders.[106] The professional spies compiled a comprehensive report for Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin about these potential allies which included a litany of complaints. They found the Christian forces poorly trained and equipped, mostly unable to stage military operations outside of Christian areas where they commanded popular support or to otherwise conduct offensive military operations, and had severe misgivings about the character and competence of some of their leaders. However, they did note that these forces were thoroughly committed to the fight against the PLO and that they commanded a remarkable degree of popular support in the Christian community, in particular among Maronite Catholics. This popular support had one key but often overlooked consequence: Lebanese militias mostly operated in areas where they had genuine popular support and were incredibly well informed about conditions in these areas because loyal coethnics provided them with information.

This chapter showed that both parties to the conflict tried to target political and armed opposition in areas they controlled and that their most important resource was intelligence they received from loyal coethnics. The next chapter extends this argument by studying how variation in intelligence influenced variation in outcomes of violence and displacement. In particular it discusses the role of demographics in this process. In villages or neighborhoods where loyal coethnics lived intermixed with non-coethnics, and where the two groups mixed socially in normal everyday community life, militias could normally rely on locals to supply them with detailed, reliable and fine-grained information about the political loyalties and activities on non-coethnic individuals. However, when locals approached a militia and warned that a particular

[106] Schiff and Yaari, *Israel's Lebanon War,* chapter 1 recounts the episode.

area populated solely by non-coethnics hosted hostile militants, militias typically had less information about individual residents and preferred to displace the community in its entirety.

# Chapter 5 – Ethnicity and Other Information

*"Why were the Druze in [intermixed towns] Broummana and Beit Mary not displaced?"*

*"Well, most Druze were with the Progressive Socialist Party. But in those towns the locals were mostly with the Syrian Social Nationalist Party."*

*"But that party was also an enemy of yours?"*

*"Sure. But the party had four wings. They were pro-Syrian, anti-Syrian, pro-Iraqi… Some were pacifist. Only two advocated armed struggle. Those local Druze were mostly with one of the other branches. We knew them, they were good people. So they could stay."*

Interview with former deputy head of military intelligence for the Lebanese Forces

## Introduction

Previous chapters highlighted both the puzzling geographic variation in outcomes across wartime Lebanon and how the incidence of violence and displacement correlates with a location's demographic configuration. To target political opponents the militias needed detailed and reliable information and compared to armies and militias in other civil wars the Lebanese militias developed quite impressive intelligence capabilities. The key factors in this process were that they developed highly centralized command and control functions and that they could collect information from loyal segments of the population. However, despite this analysis we have still not seen empirical evidence that answers the two fundamental questions of this study: why were some locations targeted while others were not, and why were intermixed locations more likely to

witness selective violence while homogenous ones were more likely to experience ethnic cleansing? Without fine-grained data on more relevant variables it is difficult to arrive at a satisfactory answer using quantitative methods.

This chapter investigates these questions using qualitative methods and in-depth studies of a small number of locations chosen according to specific criteria. The four resulting case studies present striking tendencies. In general, militants targeted particular locations because they received intelligence from loyal supporters that these particular areas contained active political or military opposition. Conversely, they refrained from targeting locations that they did not perceive as a threat. In intermixed neighborhoods local community members usually learnt about others' political loyalties through densely intermixed social and community life in pre-war years. When militias were able to tap into such local networks by accessing information from local supporters they could target political opponents using selective violence. However, in homogenous non-coethnic neighborhoods militias were less likely to find local supporters who could supply them with this type of detailed and reliable intelligence. As a result militias often acted in a risk-averse manner and chose to displace the community in its entirety.

The chapter begins by describing the method and the case selection and introducing the reader to the cases. It proceeds by comparing two socially intermixed suburban locations in East Beirut, one of which experienced selective violence while the other remained peaceful. Third, it compares two sets of locations all of which are homogeneous Muslim locations under Christian control. Finally, it concludes with some thoughts on the political and economic development of Lebanon in the last few decades before the civil war, and how it shaped the patterns of political loyalties that had such a dramatic effect on wartime violence.

### Demographics and Violence: a Structured Comparison

A structured comparison helps us understand mechanisms by providing more in-depth analysis of a small number of select locations chosen according to specific criteria. I select four cases that allow us to ask the two central questions: why were some areas targeted while some were not? And why were intermixed areas more likely to experience selective violence while homogenous ones witnessed more ethnic cleansing? We want to select cases that are as similar as possible except for variation in these quantities. This section introduces four cases and justifies why they are suitable. To ensure that the cases are comparable, and because I have better information and more extensive interview material about the relevant organizations, all cases are drawn from areas controlled by Christian militias. I argue that similar dynamics obtained also in areas controlled by the PLO and its Lebanese allies. Table 5.1 below contains the four case studies and how they vary in demographic composition and outcomes of violence.

Table 5.1: Structured Comparison of Areas Experiencing Peace and Violence

| | **Violence** | **Peace** |
|---|---|---|
| **Intermixed locations** | East Beirut suburb Sin el-Fil (selective assassinations) | East Beirut suburb Jdaideh |
| **Segregated locations** | Nabaa and Haret el-Ghwarneh neighborhoods (ethnic cleansing) | Jbeil villages |

The two intermixed areas, Sin el-Fil and Jdaideh, are both suburbs of East Beirut with a majority Maronite Catholic population but in 1975 Muslims constituted about 10% and 20% of local residents, respectively. Muslim residents in both areas were a mix of Sunni and Shia Lebanese with a majority of the latter. Both areas were controlled by Christian militias organized through the Lebanese Front and both were close, but not adjacent, to the military frontlines, as well as close but not adjacent to each other. Most Muslim residents in both areas had migrated from rural areas during the 1950s and 1960s in search of gainful employment and had healthy employment rates although predominantly low to moderate incomes. Christian residents in both areas spanned the full socio-economic spectrum from low-income to upper-middle class. As a result private schools in East Beirut were predominantly Christian but public schools in these two areas were mixed with student bodies drawn predominantly from low and middle income families that were both Muslim and Christian. However, Sin el-Fil witnessed selective assassinations during 1975 and 1976 while Jdaideh was entirely peaceful.

As for the segregated locations I study, all are homogenous Shia villages or neighborhoods which were controlled by Christian militias. Nabaa was a low-income neighborhood located in East Beirut and Haret el-Ghwarneh was a slum area next to Antelias, about 15 kilometers east of central Beirut; both were ethnically cleansed and their populations were forcibly removed from Christian areas and transported to the frontlines where they crossed into permanent exile in PLO-controlled territory. In contrast, the Jbeil district about 40 kilometers northeast of Beirut contains a string of homogenous Shia villages which did not witness a single incident of political violence throughout 15 years of civil war. The two sets of locations are somewhat different: while they are all mostly poor or low income, only Haret el-Ghwarneh was an outright slum. Nabaa and Haret el-Ghwarneh were established after

independence by poor rural migrants seeking urban employment opportunities while the Jbeil villages have been present for centuries. Nevertheless, all of them are strategic locations as Nabaa and Haret el-Ghwarneh are close to Beirut and located by major highways while the Jbeil villages bifurcate the mountainous Christian heartlands that form the demographic backbone of Maronite Lebanon.

### Intermixed Areas: Assassinations in Sin el-Fil versus Peace in Jdaideh

Selective assassinations in Sin el-Fil targeted specific political activists of the Lebanese Communist Party and other left-wing and pro-Palestinian organizations, including both Muslims and Christians. The difference between Sin el-Fil and Jdaideh is that the former was a major center of left-wing and pro-Palestinian political activity while the latter was not. This section tells the full story of how and why these communities differed in their degree of political mobilization and how this caused these two divergent outcomes. The East Beirut suburbs are the center of industry and manufacturing in Lebanon and both Sin el-Fil and Jdaideh attracted many rural migrants in the 1950s and 1960s looking for work, particularly poor Shia.[107] As the rural poor migrated to Beirut in large numbers, and sometimes found little but low wages and neglect from formal state institutions, many different parties and organizations stepped in to organize these communities for political action. Christian migrants were often attracted to Christian-dominated nationalist parties and leaders, but among Muslims political mobilization was more multifaceted.

[107] See Traboulsi, *A History of Modern Lebanon*, 159-164 and Norton, *Amal and the Shia*.

Many Lebanese Muslims, both Sunni and Shia, joined Palestinian organizations because they saw their own struggle as allied to or even intertwined with the Palestinian cause. Others joined left-wing organizations such as the Lebanese Communist Party, the Progressive Socialist Party, or the Organization for Communist Action because they saw ethnic tensions as rooted in economic inequality and the capitalist system. Some Shia also joined the explicitly sectarian Amal Movement which sought to further their interests as members of this sectarian group. These organizations usually co-existed in the same geographic space although with occasional conflicts over recruitment or other issues. Many people joined particular organizations for ideological reasons but others joined whichever outfit provided them with a job, social services, camaraderie or arms. Finally, all of the above organizations, except some explicitly sectarian Shia groups, had Lebanese Christian members as well particularly among their committed activists and senior leadership. However, since left-wing and Palestinian movements had little mass appeal among Christians these organizations did in practice focus mostly on mobilizing Muslim communities at the mass level.

In Sin el-Fil the Lebanese Communist Party had a notable presence and often staged demonstrations. Among locals it was typically known who was a Communist. “It started in schools. From [the age of] 14 or 15 students would often start to identify with one party or the other. And neighbors knew each other”, says a contemporary left-wing activist. A Christian militiaman who worked in military intelligence discusses how his organization used to identify Communists: “We got information from locals about who was a known Communist, who had been in demonstrations, who used Communist language, who received Communist newspapers in the mail. We would interrogate them and, if the suspicion was strong, search their house to see if they had Communist literature, if they had weapons.” In some instances they obtained lists of

formal party members. In intermixed areas, where people mixed throughout social and residential life, locals often knew the political loyalties of other community members. "Communists were very loud. Everyone knew who we were. It was easy to identify", says a contemporary Communist party member and political activist who participated in East Beirut demonstrations and meetings in the early 1970s before the war broke out.

The militias or other people in the community sometimes warned individual Communists to cease their activities or to go into exile in order to avoid violence and some heeded these warnings. "[Christian militia leader] Bashir Gemayel came to my house and had tea with my mother. He said I had to leave the area, that I wouldn't be safe anymore, because of my activism. But they wouldn't target me without warning since I was from a political family", says a contemporary Communist whose mother was a Member of Parliament and who sought refuge in France during the war. Speaking of Muslims in East Beirut a senior Christian politician says: "The original inhabitants, those who were peaceful, they could stay. Those who fought had to go. It also affected Christians, it wasn't sectarian". Speaking of Muslims who remained in these areas throughout the war another senior Christian politician says: "There was nothing written. It was an understanding. You can remain in this part of the country and you will be protected. But you cannot take up arms".

The major difference in Jdaideh was that there was no local presence of left-wing or Palestinian organizations and Muslims in this area were not politically organized outside of clientelistic ties to local Christian politicians who ran the municipal government. According to the current president of the municipality, who has worked for the organization since the early 1970s, Muslims have been present in decent numbers since at least 1955 primarily as low-income menial workers. As the national political situation changed in the late 1960s the

municipality negotiated with Shia leaders to reach an explicit understanding. “An oral agreement was reached in 1970 or 71 between the municipality and [Shia leader] Moussa Sadr that Shia can live and work in the area, they will have full rights, they will enjoy public services, no violence, no problems. In exchange they would stay out of the political conflict and organizations”. Muslim workers remained in the area and continued to have access to job opportunities and social services, including access to public schools which remained mixed. They did not organize politically in any ostensible manner.

Both Communist and Christian militia leaders share this assessment. “There were some Communist [sympathizers] in Fanar, in Jdaideh, in Nahr el-Mout. But they didn’t carry guns. They weren’t organized”, says a former military commander of the Lebanese Communist Party. “They made a deal. That’s why they could stay. That’s how it worked”, argues another Communist activist. “In Jdaideh, in Nahr el-Mout, they were not aggressive. They had no weapons. Nice people, not annoying anyone” says a Christian fighter. There was no political violence in this area during the first phase of the war and only a small number of Shia chose to leave while the majority remained in place. From the late 1970s the number of Shia present in the area fluctuated wildly during the war as people would leave and return depending not only on the general security situation but also on economic conditions and access to employment opportunities which obviously suffered from the armed conflict.

### Segregated Areas: Ethnic Cleansing in East Beirut versus Peace in Jbeil Villages

Analogously to the processes outlined above, Nabaa and Haret el-Ghwarneh neighborhoods were ethnically cleansed by Christian militias because they were social and military bases of support

for the PLO and its allies while the Jbeil villages were spared from violence and displacement because they were not politically organized outside of their clientelistic ties to local Christian-dominated political parties. However, unlike in Sin el-Fil, Christian militias did not have very much information about local residents in Nabaa and Haret el-Ghwarneh because no local residents sympathized with them or provided them with detailed information for other reasons. As a result the militias cleansed these neighborhoods in their entirety while the Jbeil villages were spared from violence because they did not pose a threat. To understand these different outcomes we need to study the political and economic development of these areas in the last few decades before the war.

Nabaa and Haret el-Ghwarneh were a low-income neighborhood and a shantytown, respectively. Both areas sprung up in response to, and consisted mostly of, poor rural Shia migrants who arrived during the 1950s and 1960s searching for urban employment opportunities. Industry and local politicians were grateful for this source of cheap labor but for various reasons worked to prevent the newcomers from registering to vote in their new locations. Since newcomers were registered in their original rural locations they faced little but neglect from formal government institutions and the patronage machines of established politicians. As a result these areas became fertile grounds in the late 1960s for progressive, Communist, Palestinian and sectarian Shia movements looking for exploited subjects to mobilize into political action for social change. “Nabaa, Karantina, Maslakh, they were ignored by the government, so the PLO moved in and took control. They provided benefits to all who lived there without discriminating”, says the director of a Palestinian NGO.

“The poor were heavily Muslim. They faced neglect by the state. And they also cared about Palestine. The PLO was seen as an ally. It was the 1960s atmosphere, these were

revolutionary movements. It's where the action was", says a Palestinian intellectual. When these activities began in places like Nabaa in the 1960s they aimed primarily at organizing communities for political action towards social change and to provide public services in poor and disenfranchised communities. However, in the early 1970s activities quickly took on a military dimension. "The Communist Party had some secret arms caches but also relied heavily on the Palestinians", says a Communist fighter from Nabaa. "It was a dual process. Those communities and organizations went to the PLO and asked for arms and training. But the PLO also reasoned strategically. By pouring in arms, training, setting up organizations, making those organizations dependent on the PLO, the PLO strengthened its strategic grip", says a former PLO mid-level military commander.

While many Muslims and some Christian left-wing activists saw the PLO as an ally to be leveraged for political change, most Christians took a diametrically opposed view. "It was a military occupation", says one Christian fighter. Left-wing and pro-Palestinian militants grew increasingly bold and often ventured into nearby neighborhoods. "In 1969-70 kidnappings became a big issue", says the director of a Lebanese think tank. The East Beirut suburbs are the center for industry in Lebanon and militants would enter these areas to erect checkpoints and arbitrarily impose fees on commercial traffic. Many local businesses paid protection money to various groups. "Palestinian rackets and extortion was a huge cost", says a Christian fighter. "Criminal elements, murderers, rapists, would escape into Haret el-Ghwarneh and disappear. The police couldn't go in there", says another Christian fighter who grew up in a nearby neighborhood.

Nabaa and Haret el-Ghwarneh were located within otherwise Christian East Beirut and once the war broke out Christian leaders saw conquest and control of these neighborhoods as a

military necessity. Both areas fell under Christian control after brief spells of military combat. Once the militias had conquered the areas they opted to displace all of the residents. “We didn’t know that they wouldn’t start again in 24 hours. There could still be cells active”, says a Christian fighter when asked why they chose to displace these communities in their entirety. Nabaa was located relatively close to the frontlines and its residents left by foot or by car and, on an occasion agreed in advance with PLO leader Yasser Arafat, crossed the frontlines into exile in PLO-controlled territory. Haret el-Ghwarneh was slightly further away so the Christian militias arranged to transport the residents using trucks and buses. As they did not have many trucks themselves they borrowed from others including from the Lebanese Army, the Red Cross, and sympathetic business owners.

The Jbeil villages were also homogenous Muslim locations with a primarily Shia population but their political situation was radically different which explains why they escaped violence. The villages had been present for centuries and local Shia villagers were politically connected to the local patronage machine of a Christian-dominated national political party. As a result Muslims in the area were a known quantity to Christian leaders based on their long-standing relationships. Muslims were not perceived as a threat because of the absence of major left-wing or Palestinian organizations or mobilization. For these reasons this electoral district, despite being 20-30% Muslim, escaped wartime violence and destruction. “Not a single house was destroyed”, says a former Member of Parliament for this electoral district. The systematic data sources upon which I rely in Chapter 3 for quantitative work do not register a single incident of political violence in the Muslim villages of this district throughout the entire civil war.

While settlement patterns are fairly segregated in Jbeil both Christian and Muslim sources describe how social life before the war was densely intermixed. Religious intermarriages

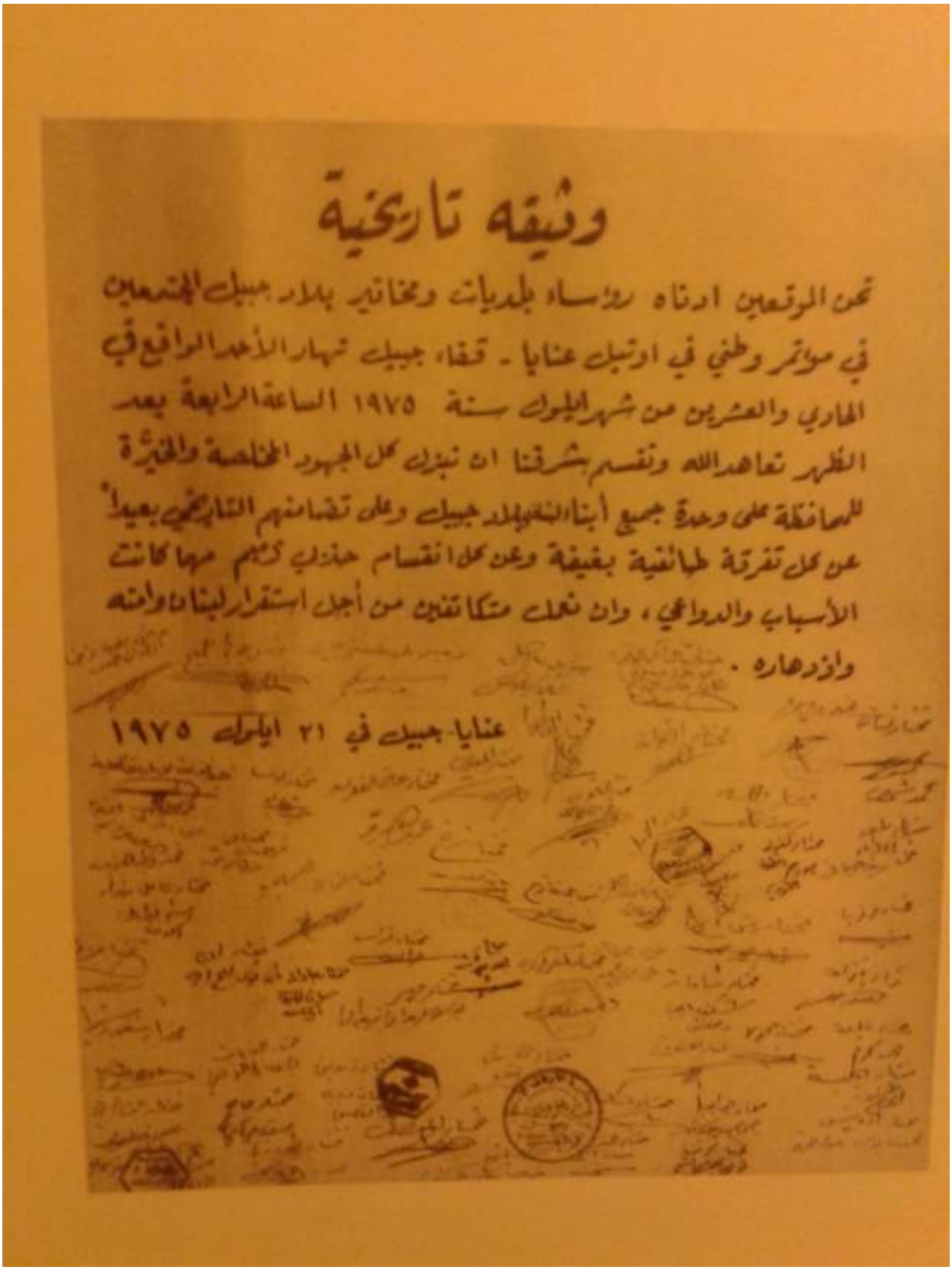
did not generally occur but members of both sects would visit weddings, funerals, religious feasts and other special occasions of non-coethnic friends and acquaintances. Schools, workplaces and commercial establishments were intermixed as the villages are relatively small and most people would move beyond their own village as part of regular everyday life. "Everyone trades favors, in social life, in politics. The Shia were poor. They needed help getting government jobs, services, if they wanted an Army job, licenses, permissions. They would go to a Christian notable", says a Christian politician who describes local politics as a fairly typical clientelistic exchange of votes for services. "It was not a war, not in Jbeil", says a Christian political activist.

In fact, local Christian and Muslim leaders in Jbeil even signed a formal agreement to keep the war away from the district. "In 1973 things began to change. [Militias] emerged in the Christian community. There was a general feeling [in Jbeil] that 'we need to do something'", says a former secretary-general of the National Bloc, the Christian-dominated political party that had a tight electoral lock on Jbeil. The result came to be known as the Annaya Agreement, after the village where it was signed. "It was a written agreement. An honor pact", says a Christian former Member of Parliament. "The idea of the agreement was: we are not an island. We are affected by the war. But we don't want the war here. Go fight if you must, but don't bring the war back to Jbeil." The secretary-general of the local party drafted a written document and circulated 200 copies to prominent members of the community, both Muslims and Christians, along with an invitation to attend a one-day conference in September 1975 as an opportunity for all who agreed with these principles to sign the document.

"We sent out 200 invitations. We didn't know what the response would be. There were no phones, no newspapers operating because of the war. Over 2,000 people showed up! There

were few cars in the district then. People rode horses or walked all the way to attend." A picture copy of the agreement is included below and its numerous signatories witness that there was a particularly strong commitment to make coexistence work in this region. Signatories include all 70 Christian and 8 Muslim mayors of the district, the one sitting Member of Parliament who still remained in the district, and prominent residents like senior and well-known public servants. Of course, reaching agreement among all these different actors is slightly less impressive once we remember that they all formed part of the same electoral machine. Nevertheless, the Annaya Agreement stands out as a successful local initiative to prevent conflict, violence and displacement in an intermixed area during a long and destructive civil war. And implementation was not without its challenges.

"The principles were simple but the daily application could be challenging", says a Christian former Member of Parliament from the district. "Small things, simple quarrels, traffic incidents always risked blowing out of proportions and spark violence". Local leaders, neighbors and friends of aggrieved persons would try to settle the conflicts. "People would come to my house every Sunday. We would listen to complaints. Plus I'd spend time traveling the district by car to meet with villagers and maintain relationships", says the party secretary-general who drafted the agreement. A fair number of local residents did leave the district to join the fight, both Christians and Muslims who usually went to Beirut to join various militias. In theory the agreement said that anyone could remain or return to the district even if they had fought elsewhere, so long as they did not "bring the war back with them". However, in practice this came to apply only to Christians, and Muslims who went to fight elsewhere did not return to Jbeil again during the war.



وثيقة تاريخية

نحن الموقعين ادناه رؤساء بلديات ومخاتير بلاد جبيل المجتمعين في مؤتمر وطني في اوتيل عنايا - قضاء جبيل نهار الأحد الواقع في الحادي والعشرين من شهر ايلول سنة ١٩٧٥ الساعة الرابعة بعد الظهر نعاهد الله ونقسم بشرفنا ان نبذل كل الجهود المخلصة والخيّرة للمحافظة على وحدة جميع أبناء البلد جبيل وعلى تضامنهم التاريخي بعيداً عن كل تفرقة طائفية بغيضة وعن كل انقسام حذري ومهما كانت الأسباب والدواعي، وان نعمل متكاتفين من أجل استقرار لبنان وامنه وازدهاره.

عنايا جبيل في ٢١ ايلول ١٩٧٥

Figure 5.1: the Annaya Agreement

## Conclusion

One misconception about Lebanon is that it is somehow a free market economy. This is incorrect as the economy always labored under various regulations, including government-sanctioned monopolies in commercial agriculture, which limited economic opportunities to the privileged few. This economic structure resulted in a corrupt regime perpetuated by an alliance of senior political leaders and a small number of major business owners. In rural areas old feudal bonds remained after independence as local land owners dominated their local societies based primarily on agriculture. As economic development progressed, the old feudal elites recast themselves as parliamentary powerbrokers and business tycoons but their relationship to local subjects did not always change in correspondence. Most citizens accessed economic opportunities and social welfare services through clientelistic ties to local political families and elections rarely produced real change as the same families tended to win in the same districts every time.

The forces of urbanization and economic growth undermined this old model of politics and Beirut was the epicenter of change. Rapid economic growth attracted poor rural migrants many of whom advanced in socioeconomic standing. This fluid and evolving social landscape created many opportunities for political entrepreneurs. Many Christians moved into new working-class suburbs south and east of Beirut and found new urban patrons in mass parties espousing Lebanese nationalism. While technically secular these parties deny Lebanon's Arab heritage which is a position with virtually no support among Sunni Lebanese and the parties increasingly developed a Christian identity and following over the years. Many Muslims ended moved into working class suburbs around the capital as well although some with less success in the labor market ended up in neighborhoods best described as slum areas or shantytowns. Many had only improvised dwellings of corrugated iron and deplorable sanitary conditions. With the

revolutionary zeitgeist of the late 1960s the PLO and various left-wing and Muslim organizations stepped in to organize underprivileged communities for political action.

Political conflict occurred to a large extent along ethnic lines but there are powerful limitations to understanding Lebanon as an ethnic war between Muslims and Christians. The predominantly Christian militias ultimately fought for Lebanon to remain an independent and sovereign country, a cause that also rallied some Muslims with a vested interest in the political and economic status quo. The PLO controlled a more variegated coalition whose members had different and sometimes opposing goals, but many Christians supported progressive and radical left-wing parties which wanted economic change and secular government. Beyond ideological appeals, parties and organizations on both sides of the political divide had also developed deep ties to various local communities based on clientelist ties and provision of economic opportunities and social services. These ties often cut at least somewhat across sectarian cleavages.

Patterns of violence and displacement during the civil war largely mirror these patterns of political loyalties which developed over several decades prior to it. Both military coalitions tried to systematically break down the social and military base of support that the other side enjoyed in particular segments of the population. The Christian forces systematically destroyed a string of PLO-controlled slums and shantytowns across East Beirut, displaced their populations, and labored to break down the operations of the Lebanese Communist Party and others across the intermixed eastern suburbs. The PLO used the same treatment on their side of the frontlines in towns and villages like Jiyeh, Damour and Saadiyat. These prosperous seaside towns were the electoral base of the Shamoun dynasty, a Maronite political family who were in the process of turning their vast electoral and clientelist machine into a powerful militia. As PLO forces

stormed the town family scion Camille Shamoun escaped the attack in a helicopter. The invaders responded by blowing up his family mansion with dynamite, perhaps an apt illustration of what they ultimately hoped to accomplish.

# Conclusion: Lessons from Lebanon

This concluding chapter addresses three separate topics. First, how the Lebanese demographic situation has changed over the last several decades and the extent to which this does or does not reflect violence. Second, what this research enterprise teaches us about current and future scholarship about ethnic cleansing, the dynamics of violence in civil wars, and the industrial organization thereof. Third, how findings from Lebanon might influence policy debates about political instability and armed conflicts in the contemporary Arab world.

## Demographic Change in Lebanon

I travel to Sour, a relatively poor coastal city in the south of the country, to meet with the Maronite archbishop of the region and ask how this city escaped political violence despite being demographically intermixed with about 25% Christian residents when the war broke out. “No militias or other forces were present among the Christians in Sour. The Christians were with the Khalils, a wealthy, prominent Shia family. They controlled the electoral list. The Palestinians took control in 1975. Later on it was [the sectarian Shia party] Amal, it was Hezbollah. But we always had good Muslim-Christian relations. Today, when we need something, we go to Hezbollah and they fix it”. The archbishop informs me that I have offended him by addressing

him as “mister” (*Ustaaz*) instead of “father” (*Ab*) but in Christian fashion he turns the other cheek and offers me chocolate.

“The economy is and always has been our greatest problem here”. Sour has been continuously inhabited since 2750 BC and used to be an important port city and an economic hub into modern times. This changed virtually overnight in 1948 as new international borders cut off Sour from its natural agricultural hinterlands in northern Palestine and turned its port from a major commercial thoroughfare into a minor regional center for fishing. The city never adapted to this new reality. “There are no good schools. Those who wanted opportunity traveled elsewhere, will go to Beirut, to get a higher education, a career, a professional job”. This affected many Muslims as well as Christians although the rate of emigration has been higher among Christians. Aside from economic pressure many also left in 1978 and 1982 because of security concerns when Israeli forces entered Lebanon. “Those [Christians] who left never returned”. The population of Sour has also grown rapidly as Shia villagers from the region moved into the city. Today the share of Christian residents is much smaller than it was before the war, perhaps no more than 5%.

A few weeks later I have the pleasure of interviewing a senior official in the Greek Orthodox Church in Tripoli, Lebanon’s second most populous city located in the north of the country. Tripoli is different from Sour in that it has rarely been dominated by a single political organization or alliance and its political scene has always been quite fragmented. I ask about political violence that occurred after the war started in 1975. “It was a mix of everything. Communists were attacked by Islamists. Islamists were attacked by Communists. Most victims were linked to politics or militias. For the average Christian, uninvolved in politics, life did not change much”. The prewar parliamentary strongman of Tripoli, Sunni Member of Parliament

Rashid Karameh, did not maintain a militia or armed forces of his own although he spent considerable time mediating between different factions to maintain stability in the city.

After the PLO was expelled from Lebanon in 1982 the Islamist Tawaheed party dominated Tripoli for a few years. "There were horseback religious police controls". Tawaheed enforced strict Islamic codes of public conduct and policed public dress codes and banned alcohol and public eating during Ramadan. "The Tawaheed had no policy of displacing Christians. But they were clear on 'dhimma', on Christians being second class citizens". Dhimma is the term for submission of non-Muslims in Islamic law and has been invoked ever since the days of the prophet. In Tripoli this came to mean that Christians could not be involved in politics and had to accept rule according to a strict conservative interpretation of Islamic law. "This was a huge change for Christians. This is the time period when Christians start to leave. But it was young people leaving so it took 20 years before you noticed. They old stayed. They had homes, shops, they had jobs. So the same houses, the same streets, neighborhoods, shops, churches were all in place".

The civil war and militia and Islamist rule accelerated Tripoli's economic decline but this was a process that had started at least as early as 1943 when Syria and Lebanon gained independence as separate states. Tripoli is a majority Sunni city where local Sunnis identified strongly as being part of Syria.[108] Until 1943 international mail delivered to Tripoli was addressed to "Tripoli, Syria". Lebanese independence cut Tripoli off from its natural hinterland in present-day Western Syria and diminished the value of its port. The city was still quite prosperous owing to the presence of a major refinery run by the Iraqi Petroleum Company but these operations declined after 1973 when the Iraqi government nationalized the company.

[108] Historically, Greater Syria comprised present-day Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and Israel.

"There were both push and pull factors for young Christians [leaving Tripoli]. There was Tawaheed and economic decline. But also the economic, social, and educational opportunities were in the new Christian suburbs [of Beirut], like Jounieh". The share of Christians in Tripoli has more than halved from about 25% in 1975 to around 10% today.

There is no question that Lebanon is more segregated along sectarian lines today than it was in 1975, or that part of this segregation occurred because of intentional violence used by militias during the civil war. However, it is important to realize that demographic change often results from complex but highly mundane processes many of which are at most tangentially connected to political conflict or violence. Ubiquitous forces like educational and career opportunities can have an equally if not more powerful demographic impact. The civil war of course contributed to these pressures as it hastened the economic decline of various parts of the country which accelerated some of these processes. But the larger point is that in some parts of the country that have witnessed large demographic changes these processes were not driven by violence, typically started before the civil war and continued well after it ended, and rarely separated different communities completely.

**Industrial Organization of Violence**

It is ironic that Lebanon has gained a reputation as a place of mindless, savage and primitive killing since the two aspects that stand out about violence in its civil war is that it was strategic and well-informed. The strategic nature of violence is less surprising as two decades of research in political science has uncovered the strategic nature of violence in conflicts ranging from Bosnia and Chechnya to Greece, Algeria, Sierra Leone, Spain and Colombia without finding any

conflict where violence conforms to simplistic narratives of ancient hatreds. In some ways it is also not surprising to learn that access to information is a key variable influencing outcomes in Lebanon as this is arguably the most common variable explaining variation in civil war violence in other countries. Militants in Spain and Greece collaborated with local civilians who had various private motivations to target other individuals in their own communities[109]. Russian forces in Ukraine and Chechnya resorted to indiscriminate violence in settings where they had very poor access to information[110]. Right-wing Colombian militants targeted localities that had high rates of left-wing voters in pre-war elections[111].

What is noteworthy about Lebanon in a comparative perspective is how well-informed the militias were about their political and military opposition and as a consequence how precisely they were able to target violence. There are several reasons for this including that the war was fought mostly through conventional warfare where combatants do not necessarily try to hide their military presence, the small geographic size of the country, or the fact that all organizations which fought in the war had been active in politics before the war broke out for quite some time. But I argue that the single most important reason is that both major coalitions which contested the war at its outbreak commanded a loyal following among large segments of the Lebanese population and members of these communities actively contributed to the militias. One very important aspect of this support was that they informed on the enemy, both in terms of where and when they noticed troop movements or other major military developments and that they informed militias about disloyal members of their local communities.

[109] Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence in Civil War* and Balcells, *Rivalry and Revenge.*
[110] Lyall, *Does Indiscriminate Violence Incite Insurgent Attacks?* and Zhukov, *A Theory of Indiscriminate Violence.*
[111] Steele, *Electing Displacement*

Most militias had deep ties across and within particular communities and often relied on temporarily mobilizing an otherwise civilian community to mount an effective military fighting force. This was particularly the case in defensive battles when either coalition tried to prevent the other from shifting the military frontlines by conquering more territory inhabited by locals sympathetic to the defender. Local residents constituted the backbone of most defensive militia operations and provided a staggering array of support and services. Some militia fighters and supporters even reject the notion that militias and the local communities where they fought are separate entities and argue that militias emerged organically from villages and neighborhoods sympathetic to a political cause. Whether this is a correct assessment or an overstatement, it is nevertheless fair to say that bonds were very strong between the two. Once we fully appreciate this fact it is no longer difficult to understand why or how militias received so much information and other support from local residents in areas they controlled.

My argument is that the structure, organization and resources of Lebanese militias endowed them with tremendous intelligence capabilities which allowed them to target violence in quite sophisticated ways. There is a burgeoning literature on the dynamics of violence against civilians in civil war and one of the most important variables determining variation in outcomes across conflicts is access to information. By studying organizational structure as a source of information we can make a direct connection between these two literatures that relates to central themes in both. One avenue for future research is to study how common this organizational dynamic is. Such a project might reveal whether Lebanon is a true outlier in this regard or part of a common pattern among many conflicts which share similar characteristics. This novel result also suggests that we have not yet discovered all the ways in which militants solicit information and gather intelligence in civil war. Finally, it conforms to the trend that progress in

understanding the dynamics of violence in civil wars generally requires access to fine-grained micro-level data.

These insights add to a growing literature on how the industrial organization of violence shapes the causes, conduct and consequences of civil wars. A few things stand out about this research agenda. First, it is interesting to note what a broad range of outcomes are affected by how armed groups organize and produce violence. We know that this aspect influences recruitment, civilian victimization, military effectiveness, participant role differentiation, and now intelligence capabilities as well. There is no reason to assume that this is an exhaustive list but rather a sign of a fertile research agenda. Interestingly, all major contributions to this literature have come from scholars using ethnographic work and committing to extensive fieldwork. This is a little surprising since the research agenda is inspired by microeconomics and explicitly draws inspiration from studies in other fields. This suggests that theoretical or formal work alone could produce interesting insights into how armed organizations operate, which has rarely been the case. Perhaps the reason is that armed organizations are so complex that it becomes difficult to predict much about their operations without studying specific organizations in great detail.

The implications for future research are clear: we can learn a great deal about important outcomes in civil wars by doing fieldwork and using ethnographic methods to study specific organizations and how they operate. Lebanon proved to be an ideal case in this regard for several reasons. The war has been over for some time but is still a sufficiently recent event that surviving participants are alive and can give first-hand accounts. The country passed an amnesty law after the war which protected all parties from legal charges for their war crimes, meaning that perpetrators are not in prison nor do they face major risks from talking openly about their

actions. In fact the opposite proved to be the case as most participants feel misunderstood by prevalent narratives and were eager to present their perspective. Some years have also passed since the war and we have several commendable NGO initiatives to help complement participant narratives. This aspect was critical for securing comprehensive micro-level data. Finally, while Lebanon continues to suffer the effects of regional conflicts the security situation is manageable and does not prohibit fieldwork. To expand our understanding of civil wars we should identify and study other conflicts which share similar characteristics.

### Sectarian Conflict in the Arab World

Much like the civil war in Lebanon, contemporary conflicts in Arab countries like Syria and Iraq are often described as ethnic wars. This is as much of an oversimplification in the case of Syria as it was in Lebanon. Most Alawi support the Assad regime while the anti-Assad forces are predominantly Sunni. However, the Sunni community is politically divided and many, particularly more economically privileged groups in major cities such as Damascus, support the regime. Kurdish forces are locked in a bitter struggle with the Islamic State but maintain what can best be described as a position of neutrality versus the Assad regime. The Christian community appears committed to remain outside the military conflict. Nevertheless, there is considerable overlap in both Syria and Lebanon between sectarian identity and political loyalties. Political loyalties in Iraq are even more clearly delineated by sect with fewer cross-cutting

cleavages across sectarian lines. This is likely because the two actors who strengthened their positions in the post-invasion chaos, mosques and tribes, both have a clear sectarian following.[112]

Since all three countries face seemingly intractable sectarian conflict various proposals have surfaced over the years for how to partition them into new entities. The logic is simple: if different ethnic groups do not share a sense of community and have no desire to be ruled by one another, conflict could be resolved if each group had its own nation state. This argument becomes particularly persuasive when we note how all three countries are artificial constructions created by Britain and France in secretive agreements aimed to serve no interests other than their own. The Sykes-Picot agreement and San Remo conference drew up a set of artificial 'lines in the sand' with almost complete disregard for local conditions and desires.[113] According to this logic, re-configuring the Arab Middle East according to sectarian settlement patterns could create conditions for peaceful coexistence by correcting these mistakes. It is a common pattern in the post-colonial world that conflicts occur among ethno-religious groups who were forced into coexistence by imperial designs.

There is a rich academic literature on partition as scholars have long contemplated the conditions promoting peaceful co-existence in multiethnic societies and the best institutional arrangements for facilitating such conditions.[114] One school of thought promotes separation of

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[112] See Nir Rosen, *The Triumph of the Martyrs: A Reporter's Journey into Occupied Iraq* (Washington, DC: Potomac Books, 2006).

[113] See James Barr, *A Line in the Sand: Britain, France and the Struggle for the Mastery of the Middle East* (London: Simon & Schuster, 2011). The main exception is of course the Maronite Catholics of Mount Lebanon who were granted domination over independent Lebanon by construction by France.

[114] The two classic pieces on this question are Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict* and Arend Lijphart, *Democracy in Plural Societies: A Comparative Exploration* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977). A more recent treatment is Benjamin Reilly, *Democracy in Divided Societies: Electoral Engineering for Conflict Management* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001). These pieces deal with the fundamental questions of maintaining peace and avoiding armed conflict but there is also a related, if more mundane, literature on how to manage social and economic governance in multiethnic societies represented by for instance Alberto Alesina, Reza Baqir and William

different groups, and partition as the main solution to ethnic wars, because it assumes that different ethnic groups are animated with different and competing nationalist ideologies defining group membership and purpose.[115] Trying to merge two such ethnic groups into one coherent nation is a naive, futile and even potentially dangerous exercise as they lack the required kind of unifying identity or ideology forging an inclusionary citizenship and desire for social equality.[116] The other school of thought emphasizes the instrumentality of ethnicity as a tool for building and sustaining successful communities rather than its ideological content.[117] If intra-ethnic cooperation is driven more by shared language, preferences, culture, knowledge, or social capital than by ideology then there is more scope for designing institutions that can include other groups.[118]

On closer inspection partition appears as unattractive in Syria and Iraq today as it did in Lebanon in the 1970s, for four reasons. First, while all three conflicts witnessed processes of

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Easterly, "Public Goods and Ethnic Divisions," *The Quarterly Journal of Economics,* 114(4), 1999 and Alberto Alesina and Eliana La Ferrara, "Participation in Heterogeneous Communities", *The Quarterly Journal of Economics,* 115(3), 2000.

[115] The classic statement in favour of partition as a general solution to ethnic war is Chaim Kaufmann, "Possible and Impossible Solutions to Ethnic Civil Wars", *International Security,* 20(4), 1996. However, while partition is a possible and sometimes successful method for ending ethnic wars it does have a mixed history including failed partitions with renewed hostilities in cases such as India, Palestine, Cyprus and Ireland. For a full discussion, see Radha Kumar, "The Troubled History of Partition", *Foreign Affairs,* 76(1), 1997, Nicholas Sambanis, "Partition as a Solution to Ethnic War: an Empirical Critique of the Theoretical Literature", *World Politics,* 52(4), 2000 and Alan Kuperman, "Is Partition Really the Only Hope? Reconciling Contradictory Findings about Ethnic Civil Wars", *Security Studies,* 13(4), 2004.

[116] This view is often influenced by Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso Editions, 1983) which views nationalism as an "imagined community", an ideology whereby group members enjoy full solidarity and horizontal equality in a national community that commands loyalty and sacrifice but whose membership is restricted and exclusionary.

[117] Much of this literature draws implicit or explicit inspiration from theoretical work on how to establish and sustain cooperation under difficult circumstances such as in the absence of central authority. The key works are Robert Axelrod, "The Emergence of Cooperation among Egoists", *American Political Science Review,* 75(2), 1981 and Ernst Fehr and Simon Gachter, "Cooperation and Punishment in Public Goods Experiments", *American Economic Review,* 90(3), 2000.

[118] As a result this literature tends to be more optimistic about the possibilities of designing institutions that can mitigate the challenges of multiethnic societies and are less sanguine about partition as a peacetime or post-conflict solution. This is the argument of James Habyarimana, Macartan Humphreys, Daniel Posner and Jeremy Weinstein, "Better Institutions, Not Partition", *Foreign Affairs,* 87(4), 2008.

displacement along sectarian lines, neither country is at present neatly divided into homogenous blocs. In Syria and Lebanon this is because displacement was not complete and perpetrators targeted particular communities in certain locations but not in others. Displacement was more extensive in Iraq but often occurred at the level of villages or neighborhoods rather than regions or provinces. For instance, Baghdad remains an intermixed city even if most neighborhoods are today homogenous Sunni or Shia enclaves. This means that partition into nation states based on sectarian identity would still require extensive forced population transfers to turn scattered enclaves into homogenous demographic blocs. The horrid history of partition between India and Pakistan shows that the cure of partition is sometimes worse than the disease of ethnic tensions.[119] This gets particularly problematic in places such as Syria where communities are divided and regime-supporting Sunnis would have no natural home.

A second and related problem is that while theories of partition often assume conflict between two groups, all three countries have numerous ethno-religious communities. This is particularly the case in Iraq which has a rich tapestry of religious groups with ancient roots in the region. Most proposals for partition would divide the country into Sunni, Shia and Kurdish homelands. However, the small but non-trivial communities of Christians, Yazidis, Mandeans, Turkmen and other minority groups would not have a natural home or guaranteed rights in any of those three enclaves. In addition, while major realignments of ethnic and religious identities are rare historical processes, the salience of different cleavages change more frequently. For instance, the natural division of Lebanon in 1975 might have seemed partition between Christians and Muslims. Ironically, today the most explosive conflict in the country is between

[119] Estimates vary but up to one million people may have been killed during partition of British India. See Kumar, *The Troubled History of Partition.*

Sunni and Shia Muslims who under partition would constitute even larger blocs of an even smaller country. This would likely have made that conflict more intense and more severe[120].

Third, economic issues make partition difficult to implement. This is widely understood in the case of Iraq where oil wealth is unevenly divided among areas settled by different groups. The problem in Lebanon and Syria is more subtle: neither the mountainous heartland of "Christian Lebanon" nor that of "Alawi Syria" is an economically viable entity. French imperial planners extended independent Lebanon beyond the Christian heartlands, at the expense of incorporating more Muslims unsympathetic to this enterprise, precisely because the mountain did not contain enough water and arable land resources to sustain a population[121]. In Syria, poor Alawi villagers became a backbone of the armed services partly because there were no jobs or economic prospects in their mountainous region[122]. Both regions were historically poor and underdeveloped areas and suffered widespread famine as late as during World War One. Neither region, if severed from nearby cities and agricultural areas, has any major industries or particularly appealing economic prospects.

Fourth, history shows that partition does not always solve underlying political conflicts and risks merely extending old rivalries into international disputes. India and Pakistan have fought several wars since 1947 and remain in open conflict over Kashmir. 'The Troubles' in Northern Ireland began 50 years after partition of Ireland in 1921. Cyprus remains a source of intense diplomatic tension between Greece and Turkey and still requires oversight by United Nations peacekeeping personnel. Partition of Arab states would likely cause similar tensions. For

[120] See Jose Montalvo and Marta Reynal-Querol, "Discrete Polarisation with an Application to the Determinants of Genocides", *The Economic Journal,* 118, 2008.
[121] See Picard, *Lebanon,* chapter 2 for historical background.
[122] Seale, *Asad of Syria*

instance, an independent Iraqi Kurdistan would face tensions with Turkey over its relations with Turkish Kurds. An independent Sunni country of present-day eastern Syria and western Iraq might remain dominated by the Islamic State. Iran would likely dominate an independent Shia Iraq but Saudi Arabia and its Gulf Cooperation Council allies would not tolerate an Iranian client on its doorstep. These are just a few examples of the tensions and instability that would follow from creating new states. Partition in the Arab world would create as many problems as it solves.

This last point touches on another fundamental problem: the role of outside powers. All militias in Lebanon quickly acquired foreign sponsors who were motivated primarily by regional security rivalries. As a result, no side could hope to score a decisive military victory. No party desired partition and with a considerable number of internal and external potential spoilers it was difficult to reach a negotiated settlement. This situation has many parallels with Iraq and Syria today. Only a regional settlement that involves all major stakeholders has any chance of putting an end to political instability and armed conflict. In Lebanon this happened in 1991 because of an entirely unrelated event, the Gulf War against Saddam Hussein. The United States granted Syria hegemony over Lebanese affairs in return for participation in its UN-sanctioned international coalition. Hafez al Assad took control over Lebanon both through an overt military occupation and alliances with Hezbollah and other Lebanese actors.

It is more difficult to envision how we can reach such a deal on Syria or Iraq as both conflicts engage a much larger number of outside powers facing more intractable conflicts among each other. However, since partition is such an unattractive alternative the main policy option remains to reform existing Arab state structures. Unless international and regional diplomacy makes progress towards this end it appears likely that several of these states will deteriorate further into a string of failed or failing states running from Beirut to Baghdad.

Competing militias, many openly hostile to the West, will carve out fiefdoms in a patchwork of fragmented military control. Outside powers will have few tools and little leverage to stop international terrorism, and deteriorating standards of living will continue to fuel an unmanageable level of migration towards Western countries. For these reasons policymakers will continue to grapple with these issues for the foreseeable future and we need to sharpen our understanding of ethnic violence and sectarian politics in the Arab world. These pages are intended as a modest contribution to these debates.

# Appendix: Technical Supplement to Chapter 3

The following pages contain regression tables estimating a range of robustness checks for the results introduced and discussed in Chapter 3.

Table 7.1: Interacting Maronite (Palestinian) presence with PLO (Christian) control

| VARIABLES | (1) Ethnic cleansing | (2) Ethnic cleansing | (3) Ethnic cleansing | (4) Ethnic cleansing |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Share Co-Ethnics | -0.0288*** | -0.0328*** | -0.0322*** | -0.0395*** |
| | (0.00917) | (0.00973) | (0.0124) | (0.0104) |
| Distance (km, log) | -0.0280*** | -0.0142*** | -0.0214*** | -0.0175*** |
| | (0.00842) | (0.00506) | (0.00711) | (0.00587) |
| Population (log) | 0.0135** | 0.0124 | 0.0150** | 0.0181** |
| | (0.00684) | (0.00762) | (0.00701) | (0.00834) |
| PLO control | -0.103*** | | -0.0493*** | |
| | (0.0372) | | (0.0174) | |
| Maronite (dummy) | -0.121*** | | | |
| | (0.0403) | | | |
| PLO * Maronite | 0.101*** | | | |
| | (0.0366) | | | |
| Christian control | | 0.00522 | | 0.00959 |
| | | (0.00590) | | (0.00651) |
| Palestinian (dummy) | | -0.0196* | | |
| | | (0.0112) | | |
| LF * Palestinian | | 0.745*** | | |
| | | (0.178) | | |
| % Maronite | | | -0.0565*** | |
| | | | (0.0192) | |
| PLO * % Maronite | | | 0.0552** | |
| | | | (0.0269) | |
| % Palestinian | | | | -0.0212* |
| | | | | (0.0122) |
| LF * % Palestinian | | | | 0.634** |
| | | | | (0.321) |
| Constant | 0.398*** | 0.144*** | 0.262*** | 0.166*** |
| | (0.113) | (0.0542) | (0.0867) | (0.0607) |
| Observations | 1,403 | 1,403 | 1,403 | 1,403 |
| R-squared | 0.127 | 0.244 | 0.086 | 0.139 |

Robust standard errors in parentheses
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table 7.2: Including region fixed effects

| VARIABLES | (1) Violence | (2) Ethnic cleansing | (3) Ethnic cleansing |
|---|---|---|---|
| Share Co-Ethnics | -1.156*** | -4.953** | -4.797*** |
| | (0.146) | (1.949) | (1.762) |
| Distance (km, log) | -1.003*** | | -0.126 |
| | (0.143) | | (0.217) |
| Population (log) | 1.249*** | | 0.409 |
| | (0.163) | | (0.505) |
| Christian control | 0.197 | | 0.649 |
| | (0.127) | | (0.598) |
| North | 0.612* | | |
| | (0.362) | | |
| Beirut | -1.126* | 2.814** | 2.379 |
| | (0.654) | (1.103) | (1.595) |
| South | 0.0581 | | |
| | (0.417) | | |
| Beqaa | 0.549 | | |
| | (0.378) | | |
| Mount Lebanon | 0.239 | 1.975* | 2.443* |
| | (0.395) | (1.198) | (1.433) |
| Constant | 5.315*** | -2.011 | -2.757 |
| | (1.784) | (1.231) | (4.077) |
| Observations | 1,403 | 85 | 85 |

Robust standard errors in parentheses
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table 7.3: Using block bootstrapped clustered standard errors

| VARIABLES | (1) Violence | (2) Ethnic cleansing | (3) Ethnic cleansing |
|---|---|---|---|
| Share Co-Ethnics | -1.045*** | -4.834*** | -5.056*** |
| | (0.224) | (1.115) | (0.998) |
| Distance (km, log) | -0.807*** | | -0.322 |
| | (0.184) | | (0.476) |
| Population (log) | 1.133*** | | 0.0564 |
| | (0.233) | | (0.231) |
| Christian control | 0.136 | | 0.936 |
| | (0.185) | | (0.737) |
| Constant | 3.931* | -0.220 | 2.501 |
| | (2.320) | (0.221) | (4.894) |
| Observations | 1,403 | 113 | 113 |

Standard errors in parentheses
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

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