Political Culture and Conflict Resolution
in the Arab World

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Lebanon and Algeria

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Introduction

Research for this project began as an examination of the dynamics of civil war and conflict resolution amongst the community of Arab states, specifically Lebanon and Algeria. In an effort to explore the various factors affecting the form and the success and/or failure of resolution processes, it was evident that a variety of structural and material forces had come to bear on the timing, shape and outcome of the agreements. For instance, in their investigation of the 1975–1990 Lebanese civil war some analysts have provided persuasive arguments as to the influence of structural forces, namely the distribution of political power in the Lebanese political system as a source of the conflict. The nature of the Lebanese political system as a form of compromise between the country's main confessional groups made it vulnerable, as it could not mitigate the competing claims to political authority in the country leading Lebanon into a 'a zero-sum, distributive conflict over the nature of the state'.[1]

This view draws on what are labelled here as "structuralist" perspectives on the causes and resolution of conflict, in particular a focus on the presence of a 'mutually hurting stalemate' whereby parties involved in a conflict are driven to view a negotiated settlement as more advantageous than continued violence. This stalemate, in turn, provides a 'ripe moment' in which the belligerent parties can be brought together for potentially fruitful negotiations.[2] Thus, it is the "structures of conflict" that determine if and when parties enter into

a conflict resolution process and how much they are willing to nego-
tiate in this process.

Similarly, "materialist" or interest-based arguments have been
presented. Employing an analysis of the voting patterns in Algeria's
elections between 1989 and 1991, Chhibber has sought to explain
how largely secular middle classes in Algeria came to support the
Islamic Salvation Front, propelling them to stunning electoral victo-
ries and positioning the party at the brink of assuming power.[3] The
economic reform measures employed by the single party regime of
the National Liberation Front in the 1980s led to the exclusion of the
formerly loyal body of state employees, many of whom lost their live-
lihoods during this period. This group threw their weight behind the
Front Islamique du Salut (Islamic Salvation Front—FIS) in the elec-
tions of 1989, 1990 and 1991.

Thus, material interest rather than ideological affiliation or spir-
itual compulsion was a potent force in compelling many Algerians to
support an overtly religious party. This argument complements sim-
ilar themes in conflict and resolution studies where it is argued that
the violation of individual interests, what Burton has defined as 'basic
human needs', are the key factors in explaining why violence is pur-
sued and conflict resolved.[4] Civil war as a form of 'deep-rooted
conflict' emerges when the basic human needs of people, notably
'response, security, recognition, stimulation, distributive justice,
meaning (and) rationality' are denied or violated.[5] It is only through
an effort to restore basic human needs that the underlying causes of
conflict can be addressed and conflict resolved.

However, such explanatory tools, whilst revealing crucial factors
affecting resolution processes during civil war in the Arab world, do
not tell the whole story. For instance, several peace agreements failed
in Lebanon that reflected mutually hurting stalemates for the bellig-
erent groups in the conflict before the final agreement in 1989, the
Taef Agreement. In addition, the final agreement did not offer any
substantial reform to the confessionally based political structure of
the country that would satiate the needs-based grievances of parties
who were formally excluded or restricted prior to the outbreak of war
in 1975. Similarly, the timing of the peace initiative of Algerian
President Abdel Aziz Bouteflika, the Civil Concord, was not at a so-
called ripe moment where a mutually hurting stalemate forced parties
to the negotiating table. In addition, the need for distributive justice

for those affected by the conflict in Algeria was not contained within this initiative.

More broadly, since the end of the Cold War there have been well-documented trends toward the prevalence of internal, identity-based conflicts in the developing world. These 'conflicts of proximity' revolve around definitions of political community and identity.[6] That is, conflict emerges over how the political community, over which the state has authority, is defined. Structural influences compelling contestations for power and material interest in ensuring that one's community has a stake in political authority are important explanatory factors. However, those values and assumptions that underpin or characterise a political community, the political culture, require exploration in terms of what compels a community to both engage in conflict and seek the resolution of conflict at a particular time.

It is from here that the research focus increasingly shifted to explore other sources of influence on the processes of conflict resolution, and the influence of political culture emerged as a factor that also played an affective role in giving shape to the resolution processes in Lebanon and Algeria. In pursuing this, there is a set of conceptual tools for understanding the role of political culture in conflict resolution. For instance, formative studies in the area of political culture and conflict resolution proposed the development of resolution ethnopraxes based on single case studies as the foundation for broader comparative studies.[7] However, there has been minimal development in terms of case-based, comparative studies that focus on the impacts and influence of political culture on the conflict resolution process.

Those studies that have sought to engage with this issue have tended to focus on the particularities of each case. Whilst providing thorough details of particular conflicts and resolution processes, these approaches lacked comparative quality, an attribute that is essential for the development of broader theoretical tools. Inversely, attempts to develop theoretical perspectives on the role of political culture and conflict resolution have lacked sharpness, an ability to be formally applied to a specific cultural environment to gauge their explanatory capacity. This book addresses such a need whereby a specific understanding of political culture is developed in relation to the processes of conflict resolution in the Arab world. In particular, the book explores those areas left unexplained by the two dominant

analytical modes of conflict resolution analysis, structuralism and materialism, through examining the affective and explanatory role of political culture.

The seminal works of Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba provide a suitable starting point in conceptualising political culture as a community's 'orientations to political action' that operate in constraining or promoting political decisions and behaviour.[8] These orientations or "assumptions" about political behaviour and possibilities place emphasis on 'certain features of events, institutions, and behaviour, define the realm of the possible, identify the problems deemed pertinent, and set the range of alternatives among members' where decisions are made.[9] Political culture is therefore understood as linked to structural and material forces but affecting them to the extent that, alone, structural and material examinations do not provide complete explanatory factors in relation to conflict resolution. It is here that the central question of the study emerges: does political culture affect conflict resolution in the Arab world and, if so, how?

The first step in exploring this question is the delineation of the space that political culture can 'call its own' as an explanatory analytical tool.[10] Almond himself recognised the difficulty in specifying the areas in which political culture operates as it is often posited as being in an 'interactive' relationship with political structures and material interests.[11] That is, the ambiguous dependence or independence of political culture has led to its criticism in terms of its analytical and explanatory value. To address this, political culture is employed here as a "relational dynamic" whereby the form and legitimacy of political events and structures are, in part, responsive to orientations, assumptions, priorities, and values relating of a community. In addition, these factors are "cultural", *per se*, in that they differ between communities.

In order to grasp the complexity of political culture during a particular period and in a particular setting, it is useful to take heed of Geertz's 'thick description' whereby the display and observation of surface character traits and behaviour is inadequate for understanding the influence of political culture.[12] Instead, individual and social behaviour needs to be understood in terms of the 'web of significance' in which the behaviour takes place, a web that is 'constructed' in combination with the dominant material and structural pressures and interests within a given society at a given time

where 'meaning varies according to the pattern of life by which it is informed'.[13] Thus, the definition of political culture offered here seeks to create room for the concept in those areas where exclusively material and structural explanations as to the form of conflict resolution processes and peace agreements fall short, but still affect the "cultural web" of behaviour and action. In order to achieve this, this book argues for an emphasis on the contextualisation of conflict resolution cases as an essential step in constructing any theoretical approach to understanding the processes.

Practical limitations of the definition of political culture are important here to further the process of rendering the concept operational. Specifically, in order for political culture to be used in an explanatory capacity, it must be conditioned by two factors. First, political culture should be examined in relation to other possible explanatory factors. As stated, for conflict resolution these are structural and materialist approaches. When these approaches are exhausted, then political culture can be used to explain what these forces cannot. This use of political culture as a 'second-order explanation' creates room for its application.[14] Secondly, as political culture is defined as a collective property, it will be examined through a comparative method. That is, by examining comparative cases one can identify the differences in cultural influence outside of the areas explained by structuralist and materialist investigations. The second criterium presents a potential problem for this investigation in that a single "cultural unit" has been chosen for analysis, that of Arab society. However, the division of Arab society into 22 states (by membership of the League of Arab states) allows for comparative analysis within the broader cultural unit.

Chapter Structure

To explore these themes, chapter 1 develops the definition of political culture, particularly in terms of its application to the field of conflict resolution studies and its explanatory potential. In terms of its capacity as an explanatory factor, political culture is most effective in bringing to the fore the "values" and "assumptions" that may shape political processes, including the resolution of conflict and post-conflict reconstruction. From this, chapter 1 moves to identify the variation in political culture amongst a particular community and how this affects its explanatory ability. Political culture in Arab society

varies most along socio-economic lines, in particular between lower socio-economic groups, middle classes and elites.[15] As this study is centred on the text of peace agreements as an examination of conflict resolution processes, focus is on elite political culture. This elite political culture is drawn together by specific elements, particularly an emphasis on 'dominance, stability and perpetuation' designed to reproduce the conditions that maintain their positions as elites.[16]

However, rather than just an expression of material interest, elites use particular mechanisms to pursue this dominance, and promote certain values that they deem important to their status as elites. For instance, this form of status quo maintenance manifests itself in the political process through the lack of state hegemonic power leading to a reliance on physical coercion of the citizenry, what Ayubi describes as a form of 'fierce' state authority.[17] Additionally, Arab political elites are focussed on the reproduction of such vertical, 'neo-patriarchal' social relations as the best guarantee of their dominance.[18] Thus, structural influence and material interest are key factors in shaping elite political attitudes, but they are tempered by particular values and assumptions to political authority.

This book examines two case studies: the Taef Agreement in Lebanon and the Civil Concord in Algeria. Chapter 2 examines Lebanon's Taef Agreement, the document formulated between 1989 and 1990 that served as the final resolution process for the conflict that had gripped Lebanon since 1975. Two themes are brought forth. First, the agreement was subject to pronounced influence from pre-war political elites who sought to enshrine the principle of political confessionalism (quotas allocating representation in parliament according to religious communities) within the document. Second, the position of Lebanon vis-à-vis Israel as well as between Lebanon and Syria was negotiated almost exclusively by external powers, particularly Syria and the members of the "Higher Tripartite Committee" (Saudi Arabia, Algeria and Morocco), not by Lebanese delegates to the Taef conference. In this, non-Lebanese interests decided crucial elements of Lebanon's foreign policy.

The enshrinement of confessionalism as the continuing political logic in Lebanon, it is argued, is a manifestation of elite political influence over the resolution process in the country. However, rather than simply being a demonstration of elite material interest, this maintenance of the status quo has focussed on particular forms of political

organisation. Especially the maintenance of political authority by community leaders, many of who were active in the civil war, highlights the resilience of 'pseudo-aristocratic' rule in Lebanon, enshrined through the confessional basis for the political system in the country.[19] This pseudo-aristocratic rule corresponds to the form of neopatriarchal vertical authority dominant amongst Arab political elites.[20] Additionally, the determination of Lebanon's foreign policy direction by non-Lebanese delegates is reflective of long-standing patterns of Lebanese politics where the state has been susceptible to pressures from stronger regional and global interests.

Chapter 3 examines the second case, Algeria's Civil Concord, the government-sponsored peace initiative first released by President Abdel Aziz Bouteflika in 1999. The Civil Concord provides an interesting contrast to the Taef Agreement in that it was not the outcome of a multi-party and interstate negotiation process, but was issued as a government edict. A sliding amnesty programme, which is the core of the Civil Concord, offers insurgent groups clemency, probation orders or mitigated sentencing if they lay down their arms. A state-appointed commission determines the application of this amnesty.

The Civil Concord reveals an alternative form of the maintenance of elite dominance. In particular, the Concord is reflective of a security measure rather than a standard peace agreement in that it did not result from a negotiation process and did not receive any parliamentary debate. Instead, it was drafted and rubber-stamped by Parliament before being put for public referendum on 16 September 1999. The Concord sought to portray the insurgency as criminal or deviant elements, denying them and their grievances any legitimacy. It was implemented as a security measure, a tool of the state's coercive apparatus that denied any investigation into the crimes of either the insurgency or the state. In this, it was the act of a 'fierce' state and state elite seeking to protect itself rather than address the grievances that had sparked the conflict in 1992.

Finally, chapter 4 draws these two cases together. When examined in relation to the existing literature on conflict resolution and civil war in the community of Arab states, this study provides new perspectives in terms of sharpening political culture as an explanatory tool. This is facilitated through its location as a secondary, relational factor. Specifically, it is the values and assumptions to political processes that emerge as unexplained when primary explanatory

tools are exhausted. The significance of this approach permits a measure of generalisation for broader understandings of political culture in conflict resolution studies. This is particularly so in terms of the development of a method through which a viable analytical 'space' for political culture can be delineated across cultural contexts.

However, it is also important to outline the limitations of this examination. In particular, this study shows how certain elements of political culture exert influence whilst other elements, especially those that are representative of disempowered members of society, are neglected.

Notes

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2   Zartman, I. William (ed.), *Elusive Peace: Negotiating an End to Civil Wars*, The Brookings Institution, Washington D.C., 1995, pp. 11–18.

3   Chhibber, Pradeep K., *Democracy Without Associations: Transformation of the Party System and Social Cleavages in India*, University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbour, 1999; Chhibber, Pradeep K, 'State Policy, Rent Seeking, and the Electoral Success of a Religious Party in Algeria', *Journal of Politics*, vol. 58, no. 1, 1996, pp. 126–49.

4   Burton, John, *Conflict: Resolution & Provention*, Macmillan, London, 1990, p. 20.

5   Sandole, Dennis, 'The Biological Basis of Needs in World Society', in Burton, John (ed.), *Conflict: Human Needs Theory*, Macmillan, London, 1990, p. 64, parenthesis added.

6   Holsti, Kalevi J., *The State, War, and the State of War*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1996, p. 14; Lederach, John Paul, *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies*, United States Institute of Peace, Washington D.C., 1997, p. 13.

7   See particularly Avruch, Kevin and Peter Black, 'The Culture Question and Conflict Resolution', *Peace and Change*, vol. 16, no. 1, 1991, p. 32.

8   Almond, Gabriel, 'A Comparative Study of Interest Groups and the Political Process', *American Political Science Review*, vol. 52, no. 1, 1958, pp. 276; Almond, Gabriel and Sydney Verba, *The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations*, Little, Brown and Company, Boston, 1963, p. 3.

9   Elkins, David and Richard Simeon, 'A Cause in Search of Its Effect, or What Does Political Culture Explain?' *Comparative Politics*, vol. 11, no. 2, 1979, p. 128.

10 McFalls, Laurence, 'Political Culture and Political Change in Eastern Germany: Theoretical Alternatives', *German Politics and Society*, vol. 20, no. 2, 2002, p. 78.

11 Almond, Gabriel, 'Communism and Political Culture Theory', *Comparative Politics*, vol. 15, no. 2, 1983, p. 127.

12 Geertz, Clifford, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, Basic Books, New York, 1973, p. 6. See also Avruch, Kevin, *Culture and Conflict Resolution*, United States Institute of Peace, Washington D.C., 1998, p. 12; Wilson, Richard W., *Compliance Ideologies: Rethinking Political Culture*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1992, p. 251.

13 Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, pp. 5–14.

14 Elkins and Simeon, 'A Cause in Search of Its Effect', pp. 130–38.

15 Barakat, Halim, *The Arab World: Society, Culture, and State*, University of California Press, Los Angeles, 1993, pp. 8–15.

16 Barakat, Halim, 'Beyond the Always and the Never: A Critique of Social Psychological Interpretations of Arab Society and Culture', in Sharabi, Hisham (ed.), *Theory, Politics and the Arab World: Critical Responses*, Routledge, New York, 1990, p. 145.

17 Ayubi, Nazih N., *Over-Stating the Arab State: Politics and Society in the Middle East*, I.B. Taurus, London, 1995, pp. 449–50.

18 Sharabi, Hisham, *Neopatriarchy: A Theory of Distorted Change in Arab Society*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1988, pp. 2–7.

19 Barakat, *The Arab World*, p. 88.

20 Sharabi, *Neopatriarchy*, pp. 3–5.

Conflict Resolution and the Explanatory Capacity of Political Culture

This chapter conceptualises political culture for use as an explanatory factor in the formation of conflict resolution processes, outlining the difficulty in its operationalising for explanatory purposes in several steps. First, political culture is understood as both a "multi-layered" and "fluid" concept to counter tendencies toward and criticisms of the use of political culture as a concept that leans toward essentialisation and determinism.

Second, political culture is understood as a secondary tool, employed in relation to key modes of conflict resolution theory, namely "structuralism" and "materialism". Employing this concept in such a way is most useful in correspondence to the resolution of civil or internal wars. In particular, the resolution of such conflict needs to address notions of community and legitimacy, factors related to political culture as an expression of community values and assumptions.

Finally, this book employs a "context sensitive" analysis where emphasis is placed on the symbolic meaning of phrases in terms of the values and assumptions constitutive of regional political culture. An overview of the uses of political culture in conflict resolution studies is given as a means to access key relevant aspects of Arab political culture, particularly that of elites in the region. By determining the key "values" and "assumptions" directing the preferences and priorities of these groups, their similarities and differences across

the region, this chapter sets the scene for the investigation of conflict resolution in Lebanon and Algeria.

Unpacking the Complexity of Political Culture

Before simply asserting that highly nebulous and, indeed, controversial concepts such as political culture have an effect on politics and the mechanics of political life, such as the resolution of conflict, a working definition must be clearly outlined. The first steps need to focus on the multi-layered and dynamic nature of the concept. Indeed, it is important to presuppose that political culture is not a singularity, corresponding to all social levels within a political structure, such as a state. Nor is it a static phenomenon, existing in the same singular form across different historical environments. In terms of variation between groups, a cue is taken from Halim Barakat when arguing that it is possible to identify relatively consistent perspectives on political culture within socio-economic groups in Arab states. For Barakat, such values vary within Arab society, conditioned by 'social class, patterns of living, social affiliations, and isolation or exposure to the outside world'.[1]

In this, it is possible to identify values within social groups, such as lower socio-economic groups, middle classes and elites, which are likely to be deployed. For the study of conflict resolution, focus here is on *elite* values and assumptions, as it is this group which is involved in the formation of peace agreements. "Values" and "assumptions" present within Arab political elites include efforts to emphasise continuity, stability, and distinctiveness from other social groups, influence and hierarchy. In essence, this is a political culture of 'dominance, stability and perpetuation' designed to reproduce the conditions that maintain their positions as elites.[2] However, rather than just as an expression of material interest in maintaining such a dominant position, elites use particular mechanisms to pursue this dominance, and promote certain values that they deem important to their status as elites.

In addition, there is variation between communities and their elites in terms of how dominance, stability and perpetuation are promoted and legitimated. To illustrate, for many Arab elites before and after independence, the use of Arab nationalist rhetoric has been one such particular dynamic. To varying degrees, the idea of regional unity has been a point of reference for Arab elites aimed at enhancing

the legitimacy of their regimes even where concrete actions toward this goal are sorely lacking. The motivation and form of this regional unity has varied between state-based elites from the radical, socialist-influenced nationalism of Egypt's Gamal Abd Al-Nasser to the attempt to extend Saudi-based regional influence through Wahhabist religious institutions and values. It is these orientations, or postulates of oriented action, that guide members of a community in terms of favouring particular methods of political activity. As is historically evident, the actual achievement of Arab political unity has not manifested itself outside the failed union of Egypt and Syria through the United Arab Republic between 1958 and 1961. However, what is important here is that the use of the symbolic value of Arab unity in its various forms as a goal helped elites legitimate their rule. It also gave rise to a peculiar dynamic through the 1950s, 1960s and onwards where many Arab elites, whilst entrenching the state-based divisions in the Arab world, never fully accepted the legitimacy of the state-based political system in which their power and prestige was grounded.

This characterisation of elite political culture in the Arab world can be extended further, when the relational nature of the concept is introduced. This is particularly so when seeking to note the variation between regional elites and how this affects their values and assumptions. For instance, the ruling elites in Lebanon have their roots in a form of pseudo-aristocratic rule enshrined through the confessional basis for the political system in the country. That is, political representation in Lebanon is formally divided in terms of assigned parliamentary seats, parliamentary roles and ministerial portfolios for each of the country's main religious groups. These groups, in turn, are dominated by particular families who have been the principal forces within each community's politics for several centuries. For instance, the Jumayyil and Franjieh families in the Maronite community, the Jumblatt family in the Druze community, and, more recently, the al-Hariri family amongst the Sunni community.[3] This differs in relation to Algeria where the political elites have a much more recent pedigree, tracing their roots not to landed aristocracy and familial patronage networks but to their place within the military and state bureaucratic machines after the departure of the French in 1962. Early on, this had territorial roots where the vast majority of the military high command came from the 'BTS triangle', an area between

the towns of Batna, Tebessa and Souk Ahras in the east of Algeria.[4] However, this has shifted in recent years to officers from the Algiers *wilayat* (province).

In terms of the difference between these two groups, the most visible expression is their relationship to non-elites. In a more 'traditional elite' society such as Lebanon, political values focus on an equilibrium between the communities and detachment from non-elites.[5] There is an increased attachment to kinship and patronage networks that also serve as relatively autonomous units from the state. In a less traditional elite structure, such as Algeria, elites seek a more direct relationship with non-elites in terms of expressions of values. That is, populist identity politics through revolutionary imagery, efforts at mass social mobilisation through single party politics and large-scale development programmes are central to the regime's efforts to enhance its legitimacy.

However, there is also convergence between regional elites in terms of issues and in terms of characteristics. As noted above, the issue of Arab nationalism is a common discursive and ideological theme amongst the majority of regional elites. In addition, the issue of attaining elite status and social mobility has increasingly coalesced in recent years where lineage has assumed less importance while wealth accumulation has increased in significance. Lebanese society, a clear example of a lineage and patronage-based society, has recently moved in this direction. For instance, Rafiq al-Hariri, the former Prime Minister and symbolic figurehead of the movement to end the Syrian occupation after his assassination in early 2005, was not born into a prominent Sunni family but attained his status through the success of his construction company, Oger International, in Saudi Arabia during the 1970s and 1980s.[6] As the war depleted the assets of many of Lebanon's elite, Hariri's fortune from Oger International, alongside oil, banking and media interests, surpassed four billion US dollars by the 1990s. His transfer from business tycoon to political elite was facilitated by his wealth, enabling him to donate large sums of money for social services, scholarships and reconstruction. He also served as the primary sponsor and financier of the 1990 Taef Agreement.

Outside patterns toward wealth accumulation as the source of elite status, there is a general correspondence of social relations on which elite authority is built. The most useful characterisation of this

comes from Hisham Sharabi's notion of neopatriarchy and the neo-patriachal elite. In a basic form, neopatriarchy is the 'deformed' outcome of a hijacked modernisation process where 'material modernisation' in the Arab world failed to undermine traditional forms of vertical social relations.[7] Patriarchal authoritarianism persists despite the trappings of modernity where 'paternal will', Sharabi's euphemism for state authority, is the 'absolute will, mediated in both society and the family by a forced consensus based on ritual and coercion'.[8] Thus, while traditional elites maintain a visible distance from non-elites and non-traditional elites seek to legitimate their rule through populist politics and mobilisation, each operates through vertical systems of relations where their will is imposed.

Nazih Ayubi takes this point to a more explicitly political conclusion in his characterisation of the Arab state and state elites as 'fierce'.[9] Common conceptualisations of state capabilities are often related to weakness/strength or the state being soft/hard. However, the fierce state differs in that its interests are often contradictory to that of the society over which it rules. A strong state, for instance, is able to establish its authority through, using the Gramscian conceptualisation, a combination of coercion and legitimacy. Coercion serves as the 'raw power' of the state while hegemony is the process of state interests being assumed by civil society.[10] Thus, the state need not rely on coercion as its interests are taken on by the citizenry as their own through civil society. However, this 'capacity for social penetration' is lacking in most if not all Arab states, leaving them to rely on their coercive apparatus to enforce their interests.[11] The state is therefore fierce because it relies on coercive tools and enforces them through vertical social relations, social relations that have been hijacked from pre-existing forms and, as Sharabi contends, given a modern face.

The values of Arab political elites, therefore, have points of difference and points of similarity. In particular, differences lay in the origins of elites in Arab states and how this conditions the values that they develop and seek to pursue in relation to the types of political structures seen as preferable. Similarities rest on the vertical, neopatriarchal modes of social relations that frame their relations to non-elites, characterised particularly by a reliance on the coercive apparatus of the state and the assertion of dominance over non-elites and the transfer of dominant values and assumptions to new

generations. Here, socialisation, or 'induction into the political culture', works where the values and assumptions of a political community and a political system are 'inculcated and reinforced' through education, popular culture, state influence and family structure.[12] This socialisation process has within it an expectation of continuity due to the influence of 'orientational cumulativeness', a process where early experiences condition modes of later learning where 'actors tend to seek orientational consonance'.[13]

This presents a difficulty in terms of analysing political culture during times of conflict and war, where the rapidly changing and uncertain environment 'generally involves upheavals in social contexts'.[14] However, conformity with authority during such times of 'cultural discontinuity' is likely to persist due to the tendencies toward what some observers have noted as 'ritualist' and 'self-serving' motivations during times of conflict.[15] Behaviour tends towards ritualism as there is compliance with authority without genuine commitment and it also tends to be self-serving in that this lack of commitment often leads to the manipulation of norms and rules for private advantage in an uncertain environment. Cultural discontinuity can also result in a process of retreating to a smaller cultural unity for protection. Therefore, political culture can be adaptable to changing circumstances whilst remaining useful in explanatory terms. Understanding the move toward different bases for entry into the elite of Arab political society as well as the lingering influence of political culture during times of high fluidity, such as during conflict, is indicative of this.

The Relationship between Conflict Resolution Theory and Political Culture

As conflict resolution theory crystallised into a distinct area of academic inquiry after WWII, it has been directed by "macro" theory. That is, theoretical approaches to conflict resolution have focussed on standard, universally applicable models for generating conflict resolution techniques. Within this broad set of ideas, two main streams have largely dictated the focus of analysis during and immediately after the Cold War. Firstly, *structuralist* resolution theory, one that takes its prompts from the realist and neo-realist traditions in international relations and, secondly, *materialist* resolution theory, one influenced by models and practice from psychology and law.[16]

The question remains, however, as to how one can draw conclusions from cultural observations, i.e. how to operationalise political culture for explanatory purposes in resolution analysis. By investigating the dominant forms of conflict resolution, structuralist and materialist approaches, this book proposes a method of incorporating political culture into conflict resolution studies in a way that enhances its explanatory capacity whilst utilising the primary illustrative ability of these dominant approaches, which have served as the primary explanatory factors for the timing, form, and success of conflict resolution. However, these tools exhibit limitations in terms of particular values and assumptions in relation to the resolution of conflict, and a more comprehensive approach to conflict resolution analysis can be achieved by employing political culture as a secondary explanatory tool.

Structuralism

Structuralist understandings of conflict and resolution stem from the idea of system-level forces dictating the form of human organization and interaction. As such, focus on security and thinking about security has been targeted at the interstate level as the most potent realm of structural activity. For instance, the notion of the "security dilemma" is a common analytical tool used to highlight structural forces perpetuating conflict in the anarchic international environment. The security dilemma focuses on the 'perception' of threats in the international setting where 'the self-help attempts of states to look after their own security needs' leads to other states perceiving such actions as threatening.[17] This 'unresolvable uncertainly' is due to the structural nature of world politics, leading to an 'ever-present' threat of conflict.[18] However, the recent proliferation of internal conflict challenges the structuralist doctrine. At a general level, structuralists sought to counter this through a focus on the dynamics of state weakness as a manifestation of systemic pressures leading to insecurity and conflict.

The approach I. William Zartman represents an attempt at adjusting structuralist explanations toward these changing conflict dynamics.[19] In order to subvert the perpetuation of conflict, Zartman highlights key elements to be recognised and seized upon, the 'mutually hurting stalemate' providing the 'ripe moment' for resolution.[20] As structural asymmetry defines the conflict dynamic, stalemates are

difficult to achieve as they usually require 'two equal and checking powers' to force an impasse.[21] However, an asymmetric conflict may produce a softer, no-win stalemate through the intervention of a third party on the side of the opposition. This can serve as an alternative measure to bring the conflict to a less asymmetric dynamic, leading to a stalemate that both parties find untenable.

Structuralist perspectives contain important lessons for understanding the organisational imperatives driving conflict. In particular, the pressure on states to establish authority and security within their borders, the efforts of state elites to eliminate potential forms of opposition, and the role of those with an investment in the continuation of conflict are all key factors in understanding the difficulties faced when attempting to develop conflict resolution mechanisms. However, there are problematic assumptions within the structuralist approach that weaken its applicability in general terms. For instance, the notions of asymmetry and the conceptualisation of participants are questionable points of reference when studying contemporary conflict. Asymmetry is conceptualised in terms of material means, that is, 'legitimacy, sovereignty, allies, armies, and access to resources' with an opposition deficient in these.[22] According to this logic, such a structure leads to conflict escalation and perpetuation in that government forces often seek to turn this asymmetry into the destruction of the opposition whilst the opposition sees this and generates a harder form of compensating commitment.

This is a difficult assumption in that it takes for granted the idea of the state as possessing the necessary capacity to achieve a total victory. However, the majority of contemporary conflicts have occurred in states where such capacity is highly deficient, due to a lack of either physical capacity (military forces, access to resources, external backing, etc …) and/or 'capabilities' (legitimacy, cohesive political communities, viable political institutions, etc …).[23] The inability of the Government of Sudan, for instance, to impose its authority over the south of the country and its final recognition of the legitimacy of the insurgent Sudan People's Liberation Movement in 2004 shows how military ascendency does not necessarily translate into an asymmetrical relationship in conflict. This is a pattern also seen in the early years, particularly 1991 to 1995, of the Algerian civil war, as well as the repeated attempts by the Syrian Government

with its large military force, to gain hegemony during the Lebanese civil war.

Even in cases where the state may have a clearer dominance in terms of military power, such as the Algerian government after 1995, this does not necessarily equate to a disempowered insurgency. This highlights the questionable definition of power used by structuralist resolution theory. Power is presented as a commodified, zero-sum quality that is possessed by either party; something that one party can gain only at the other party's expense. Even where an insurgency seeks to compensate through total commitment, it lacks those tangible elements of sovereignty, allies and resources. However, parties within a conflict have a variety of means to act even if they are at a military or strategic disadvantage.

For instance, the legitimacy of insurgent movements amongst the population they seek to represent provides the groups with crucial resources in terms of support, logistics, and even arms.[24] Moreover, the motivations of the parties to continue resistance despite their apparent disadvantage remain unexplained by structuralist theory.

Therefore, structuralist approaches to resolution provide important insights into the causes of violence in particular settings. Specifically, they capture well the difficulty in bringing to resolution a conflict where the state is dominant, facing a disempowered insurgency, and where both parties see little value in entering negotiations. However, there is little offered in terms of understanding conflicts where the state is severely weakened or collapses altogether, as in the cases of Lebanon, Somalia and Iraq prior to 2008. Nor does structuralism address the key notion of legitimacy and its potential as a resource for a materially disempowered insurgency. It is touched on in terms of the claims of the state to sovereign authority, endowing it with international legitimacy. However, the ideological direction of the state, or the exclusion of particular communities from the state structure, undermines the domestic legitimacy of the state.

The insurgency makes alternative claims to legitimacy that appeal directly to the citizenry. For instance, the Government of Algeria, whose legitimacy had been based on their links to the defeat of French colonialism in 1962, had become illegitimate by the late 1980s due to political and economic mismanagement combined

with the lack of a clear ideological direction for the future of the country. In response, the Islamist opposition sought to fashion a place as not only critical of the government's mismanagement, but also as the legitimate successor to the regime. This was done using similar rhetoric to that of the revolution-era movements, placing the Islamists in a consistent pattern with Algerian history.

The issue of legitimacy is crucial because it represents an area where political culture analysis can provide insight outside strictly structural approaches. Their structural environment in part affects the response of people to political movements, and also their priorities in relations to political values, orientations and assumptions. The Islamist opposition in Algeria was able to harness this at a time of widespread disaffection to the regime. This issue of legitimacy and its role in affecting behaviour in conflict is also seen in Lebanon where the conflict was often described as one between different confessional groups. However, the attitudes of different organisations within each community to the confessionally based political structure in the country often led to armed conflict. This was most starkly seen in the "war of the brothers" between the Maronite Lebanese Forces who supported the maintenance of the confessional structure and the supporters of Maronite General Michel Aoun who opposed this form of political organisation.

In addition, structuralism provides important insights into the cycles of conflict and its perpetuation, as well as the activities of groups that *may* lead to negotiations. However, it does not fully explain why parties may choose not to negotiate, or persist in fighting. The question of motivations is crucial because it not only addresses the perpetuation of conflict but also the possibilities for future conflict. That is, if the grievances causing the conflict and those arising during the conflict are left unaddressed, there is little stopping the outbreak of violence in the future.

Materialism

This question of motivations is taken up by materialism. Prescribing the same macro analytical mode as structuralism, materialist or interest-based approaches take a different methodological direction, focussing on material interests as the source of conflict and the locus for resolution. John Burton's conflict resolution theory has arguably been the most influential series of ideas in this contemporary debate.

In particular, his notion of deep-rooted conflict, stemming from issues related to basic human needs (BHN) and the necessity of problem-solving approaches to conflict *pro*vention have shaped both subsequent resolution theory and practice.[25] These BHN, it is argued, are possessed by all individuals and their violation or denial is the catalyst for conflict. BHN, defined as the 'need for response, security, recognition, stimulation, distributive justice, meaning, rationality (including the need to be seen as rational, and in control)' are essential for human existence.[26] Resolution processes, in this view, need to get to the 'root of the problem' leading to conflict by identifying the BHN that have been violated or denied. The identification of relevant 'needs deprivation' enables a resolution practitioner to tackle the grievances leading to conflict.[27]

There is a long tradition of needs thinking in Western philosophy and social sciences.[28] The perspective has its roots in biology and psychology, such as Abraham Maslow's 'hierarchy of needs'.[29] However, Burtonian theory develops this approach further and identifies social forces as a constituent part of the essential human needs structure in addition to Maslow's focus on biological needs. That is, whilst biological needs are present within all beings, needs theory seeks to identify those elements that are particularly "human" needs for survival.

Rational-choice theory is a prominent theme here in that, if needs are met, an environment is created that allows humans to act 'rationally'.[30] Only by understanding needs violation can the real causes of conflict, involving 'cases that arise out of demands on individuals to make certain adjustments in behaviour that are unacceptable, and probably beyond human tolerance and capabilities', be uncovered.[31] In this way, deep-rooted conflict stems from the denial of BHN as it represents unacceptable challenges to the "instinctual" nature of humans to survive. Thus, conflict resolution can work towards not only a cessation of violence but also an active prevention (*pro*vention) of future conflict. This differs from the structuralist approach where emphasis has been placed on an attempt at "conflict management" over active attempts at resolution. Here, Burton makes his most radical departure from these 'traditional' methods of mediation towards the problem-solving approach.[32]

The problem-solving approach to conflict resolution revolves around the logic of 'teleological functionalism'.[33] As conflict, at its core, is caused by a denial of BHN, the problem-solving approach to

resolution and *pro*vention is best suited to addressing these causes as it creates an environment where people can relate through their common innate rationality and build understanding through cooperation on particular problematic elements (problem-solving). The Burtonian model of problem-solving conflict resolution evolved through the 1960s and 1970s, being institutionalised through its influence over "track-two" diplomacy. "Track-two" diplomacy refers to the activity of non-government organisations (NGOs) facilitating informal (non-official/diplomatic) contacts between parties in a dispute. Often, these good offices supplied by NGOs are designed to foster preliminary negotiations intended to lead to a formal settlement of the dispute. Such a model is seen to 'support official diplomacy by offering a framework for the innovative search for solutions which lay stress on social-psychological factors of conflict'.[34]

The problem-solving approach highlights the ability of the third party to manage and manipulate the physical and psychological environments as a way of promoting communication within the resolution process. That is, the workshop conveners attempt to create an environment that is conducive to the promotion of each individual's objective rationality. This is a marked departure from the structuralist emphasis on the influence of state strength on the conflict. The state can maintain power and avoid conflict in and with society *only* where BHN are satisfied. Indeed, it is the facilitation of needs fulfilment that gives a state its legitimacy.

The problem-solving model working with track-two diplomacy was implemented in the early negotiations after the Turkish invasion of Cyprus in 1974. Workshops were established between Greek and Turkish Cypriot military and political leaders.[35] These leaders were each given a chance to discuss, face-to-face, their perceptions of the conflict and the workshop conveners sought to articulate these perceptions in terms of common themes through the rubric of BHN. One convener stated that when these perceptions were probed, each inevitably corresponded to needs of 'security, recognition of identity, distributive justice and so on'.[36] Similar workshops were also convened in the negotiations for the 1993 Oslo accords in the Israeli-Palestinian dispute.[37] The efforts of materialist approaches to focus on "deeper" causes of conflict than structuralism are a significant advantage for the approach. This advantage lies in the prospect of instigating change in conflicting societies that may prevent the

outbreak of violence in the future, a prevention that works on the promotion of people's quality of life rather than suppression of violent potential.

However, for materialist approaches, the employment of needs as an explanation of human behaviour is problematic. Needs theory argues that violent and destructive behaviour is premised on a denial of needs. This is based on the assumption that behind every act one could find a corresponding drive. This is a difficult assertion in that, empirically, it requires a list of drives that correspond to all acts. By premising needs/drives as the engines of behaviour, the theory forms a class of 'prescriptive end-state explanations of human behaviour'.[38] In this, it is diluted beyond usefulness without a set of specific drives corresponding to specific acts. Discussion is reified to the point of claiming everything is the result of inherent needs/drives without the corollary detail on which to pinpoint what needs/drives motivate what actions. There is a clear implication of a general theory of human behaviour in needs-based approaches, such as Burton's, through claims that all acts are the result of needs/drives. If needs are so central, they must, therefore, affect the totality of human behaviour, not merely "deviant" behaviour.

This brings us to the core of the problem of macro theory in conflict resolution where humans are seen as having their 'behaviour … causally determined rather than intentional'.[39] That is, there is no latitude given to different types of individual or group responses to the same or similar events. Instead, a human is placed at the mercy of either structural forces or needs and drives, with no control over their own actions and choices.

This leaves one short of understanding why certain conflicts end and others do not. Why is it that certain conflicts with little change to the political and social dynamics cease (such as Lebanon in 1990) and why others, where the material gain from the continuing conflict is negligible (such as Algeria) continue? This prompts the question of whether there is more at play in terms of formulating appropriate and effective resolution processes than just examining needs and drives. It is therefore important to examine the way people as individuals and members of society understand and interpret the events of conflict and what is required to bring this conflict to resolution. Structural and material explanations go a way to achieve this; however, they neglect the importance of interpretation and its impacts on factors

such as legitimacy, motivations and behaviour. This is where the utility of political culture can be employed to enhance conflict resolution studies.

Political Culture

Political culture as an explanatory concept has been used to explain how the presence of particular modes of political participation is essential for the development of certain political structures. For instance, Almond and Verba's pioneering study sought to show how democracy is possible only with the presence of a 'political culture consistent with it'.[40] This relates to the broader concept of 'civic culture', a 'coherent syndrome of personal life satisfaction, political satisfaction, interpersonal trust and support for the existing social order'.[41] Putnam defines civil culture as a community marked 'by an active, public-spirited citizenry, by egalitarian social relations, (and) by a social fabric of trust and cooperation'.[42] That is, the presence of institutional structures alone is not sufficient to explain particular forms of political participation. Instead, it is essential to look to cultural attributes of political participation to explore why participation takes the form that it does.

Similarly, political culture has been applied to explain conflict within political structures. Kamrava has argued that the post-Cold War conflict in "Third World" states can be understood in relation to the political cultures of these states embodying 'one central characteristic: each political culture is either socially accepted by an overwhelming majority of its citizens or it is not'.[43] Where a political culture is 'socially accepted', it has been 'internalised' at 'the popular, mass level'.[44] Where there is no agreement, the 'political orientations' of the country are subject to bitter dispute. The most prevalent form of this dispute is between 'regime orientations' and popular political orientations.[45] In the "Third World", one can witness the prevalence of situations where there is little agreement and active contestation over the understanding of the community's political orientations. Kamrava puts this dysfunctionality of political culture down, essentially, to the state building enterprise in much of the non-Western world.[46]

Despite these and other valid contributions, efforts have been made to put limits on the use of political culture as an explanatory tool due to its potential misapplication that has promoted tendencies towards essentialisation, a tendency that holds no analytical or

explanatory value. Alternatively, political culture in the study of conflict resolution should be viewed as a collective, not individual, property. This enables the use of comparative examination, an important step, as it is only through comparison that the effects of political culture can be delineated. Complementing this, the explanatory capacity of political culture is enhanced when applied as a 'second-order' explanation 'after institutional and structural explanations have been ruled out'.[47] This is a process of placing limits on its use to counter its inherent ambiguity whilst refining its valuable explanatory. In terms of refining the relational standing of the concept, some have taken issue with earlier applications, such as that of Almond and Verba, where this explanatory value is undermined by the inability to find a clear primary explanatory role, i.e. situating political culture in relation to other explanatory factors. If located in relation to other subjective forces, political culture becomes 'indistinguishable from individual consciousness, knowledge or psychology' whereas if it is situated in relation to objective forces, political culture becomes 'indistinguishable from social structure'.[48] In addition, if it is situated as both subjective and objective, then it loses any explanatory capacity and becomes a mere descriptive tool. In an effort to overcome this, McFalls has advocated a hermeneutic approach whereby political culture 'is the set of intersubjective meanings that simultaneously establish particular social relationships and forge conscious understanding that individuals have their place in those relationships'.[49] That is, it can be used in an explanatory capacity through the observation of social relations over time and identify how cultural change can accompany 'different objective manifestations of social structure and different forms of subjective consciousness'.[50] These objective manifestations are taken here as post-conflict peace agreements that enable political elites to establish their values and assumptions whilst also needing to pragmatically account for structural influences and necessities.

Following on from this, political culture need not be isolated but instead functions positioned as a relational dynamic between an individual and society. It can be observed in terms of examining the 'unpredictable but explicable relational dynamic' between individuals and social groups that are relationally situated that 'shapes the values and assumptions of groups and communities to political decisions and events'.[51] In this, political culture holds explanatory value for

assisting the understanding of political processes, such as conflict resolution, within designated groups and communities with a recognition that it is not a primary determining factor; instead it serves as a second-order explanatory force.

Other criticisms have centred on the difficulty of locating political culture for explanatory purposes as well as on its assumptions of continuity. The difficulty in overcoming the ambiguity of political culture's effective role deals with its relational element. Indeed, the ambiguity of how culture affects political structures or how political structures affect culture remains a crucial limitation of the approach. Several methods have been employed to counter this ambiguity. For this study, Geertz's thick description or contextualisation can serve to mitigate the ambiguity associated with pinpointing the effects of culture on political actions. Drawing broader lessons from any form of cultural analysis is notoriously difficult, and any attempt to develop a 'general theory of cultural interpretation' from a cultural or ethnographic interpretation is necessarily limited.[52] Instead, political culture analysis is designed more to enhance thick descriptions *within* cases. That is, political culture serves as a complementary explanatory concept, contextualising existing examinations. By understanding the differences between political cultures in, for instance, methods of conflict resolution, an analyst can thicken their description of particular cultural attributes and influences. This can also inform broader understandings of the influence of culture over conflict resolution, but it does not necessarily lead to definitive conclusions about the general role of culture in all situations.

Therefore, in an effort to thicken the description of political culture, it is important to identify the 'culture-bearing unit' relevant to different processes and situations,[53] that is the elements or members of a community that lead to distinctive patterns. Two factors are identified here in relation to the processes of conflict resolution, those of values and assumptions related to political processes. Values and assumptions bear particular importance for conflict resolution processes and, specifically, peace agreements as these official texts seek to implement a specific set of mechanisms for future political development. Such a blueprint for future political organisation and political action is responsive to the values and assumptions of those who create it.

Values are expressed in relation to those structures, organisational types, decisions and institutions that are seen as preferable or desirable. They are fluid in that they are expressive of a community's priorities in a particular historical and structural environment. For instance, the unrest in Algeria in the late 1980s was heavily influenced by the severe economic decline with attendant job and housing shortages.[54] In addition, the ideological underpinnings of the regime's legitimacy, namely, attachment to the war for independence, had deteriorated due to governmental mismanagement and demographic changes.[55] Thus, community values in relation to preferred political structures at this time focussed on the generation of economic stability and a new sense of political legitimacy. It was these elements that the opposition *Front Islamique du Salut* (Islamic Salvation Front —FIS) were able to position themselves as representing during the electoral process of 1989–1991.

The pressures of material stability intertwined with the absence of a cohesive community identity to affect the community's values and priorities. However, for these to be addressed, an organisation had to draw on existing themes of Algerian political culture. The FIS was able to position itself to achieve this, linking itself to the revolutionary heritage of the Algerian state, popular anti-regime sentiments, as well as offering a familiar narrative for many Algerians through Islamic political activism. In terms of assumptions, political culture operates in a limiting capacity. That is, political culture consists of assumptions about the political world where it 'defines the range of acceptable alternatives from which groups or individuals may … choose a course of action'.[56] More specifically, the assumptions stemming from a particular political culture promote certain types of political decisions and behaviour and demote others. Assumptions, therefore, relate to a focus on particular 'events, institutions, and behaviour, define the realm of the possible, identify problems deemed pertinent, and set the range of alternatives among which members of the population make decisions'.[57]

In each of these conceptualisations, political culture operates to affect the structure of a society and the material interest of its citizens. However, it does not act in an autonomous way. Where certain events are emphasised, such as the war for independence in Algeria, action and behaviour are framed in a way that enables actors to

emulate the memory of these events, in turn affecting the actors' legitimacy. Additionally, patterns of colonial intervention in the Arab Middle East have affected the attitudes taken by political elites to European states, and, later, the United States. The lack of colonialism in Saudi Arabia compared to, for instance, Algeria or Iraq, has made political elites in the former less reticent to allow foreign business and security interests to operate within their borders whilst it has increased the impact of rhetoric and symbolism related to their history for the latter states. This is not a deterministic stance, as pragmatic security and economic concerns do assume a prominent place in the Saudi government's calculations, but the lack of a history of colonial occupation makes these decisions easier. Algeria's long and brutal experience with French colonialism, by contrast, fosters a reserved attitude toward external intervention. The Gulf States, particularly the United Arab Emirates, have only recently emerged from their colonial experience in the 1970s. However, the more benign patterns of British domination in the Gulf allow for a less antagonistic attitude than exists between France and Algeria.

Returning to the discussion of values, these principles can be deployed 'as mechanisms of adjustment to specific situations'.[58] Thus, what is presented as a "value" needs to be interpreted within its context. This echoes the assertion made by some observers that 'political culture is not always what it appears to be'.[59] That is, observable public displays of political preferences, as an exhibition of political culture, do not necessarily equate to a genuine representation of political culture. One may view the public displays of support for the regime of Saddam Hussein both in Iraq and across the Arab world during the 1990s, for instance, with reasonable scepticism as the genuine popularity of this administration or popular support for authoritarian rule. In addition, popular support for the FIS during the Algerian crisis of 1989 to 1991 was not necessarily popular support for the creation of an Islamic state. Here, the contextualisation of political culture assumes importance, a factor linked to the relational nature of the concept.

Using Political Culture to Enhance the Potential Resolution of Civil War

From clarifying the working definition of political culture, it is imperative to establish both the temporal and theoretical context into which

it is applied. Specifically, a focus on "civil war" or "internal conflict" that is characterised by violence, the contested relationship between the state and society, links to regional and global politics, the intractability and perpetual nature of civil wars, the many and varied participants and effects on the non-combatant population is highly useful. In this, key elements of this designation, particularly the contested relationship between state and society, along with the complex and ambiguous nature of such conflict, necessitate an investigation of the role of political culture.

Civil war is violent confrontation between the state and society or between elements of society. This "violent group conflict" is different from other types of violent conflict, such as inter-personal conflict or inter-state conflict. It is the confrontation between organised, self-identifying groups (political parties, militias, insurgent groups) between each other and/or the state located predominantly within the borders of a state that is particular.[60] In addition, the state can sponsor other armed groups who are engaged in confrontation with insurgent groups.

The idea of *violent* conflict is crucial in that civil war is not merely a disagreement between parties, but is a manifestation of a breakdown of non-violent relationships within a state, i.e. negotiations through political and social practices, norms, and institutions. This is not referential to a particular type of political framework, such as electoral democracy, but instead to that framework which maintains non-violent relations between the state and social groups. When groups bypass these institutions and violent means are pursued, civil war results.

The contested relationship between state and society is a key source of civil war. The interrelated notions of state "strength" and the definition and formation of political communities are crucial here. Moving beyond notions of state strength measured in physical (military) or instrumental (revenue extraction, autonomy) terms, Buzan and Holsti offer a definition of state strength in terms of a 'two-dimensional' view of state strength as a key ingredient in civil war. Put simply, if a state is deficient in either 'vertical legitimacy' or 'horizontal legitimacy'[61], then it is susceptible to the outbreak of violent group conflict, or civil war.[62]

The two cases analysed here offer an example of deficiencies in state strength representative of both "types". Lebanon's political

community was defined by the 1943 "National Pact" (*al-mithaq al-watani*), granting Lebanon's confessional communities specific roles within the government and parliament: Maronite Catholic Presidency, Sunni Muslim Prime Ministership, and a permanent Christian majority in parliament. This distribution was based on census figures gathered two decades prior to Lebanese independence in 1943. However, major demographic changes, primarily a growth in the Shi'a Muslim population and the settlement of large numbers of Palestinian refugees, including the PLO leadership, challenged this balance. The rigid and fragile nature of the National Pact led to the exclusion of these groups, heightening grievances and laying the foundations for civil war.

Deficiencies in state strength also contributed greatly to the outbreak of violence in Algeria, but through a different dynamic. The Algerian state, particularly since the mid-1980s, lost claims to popular legitimacy. There was no distinction between the ruling military-bureaucratic elite and the institutions of the state. The state was perceived only to serve the interests of the elite in extracting resources and maintaining their pre-eminent political position.[63] The erosion of the legitimacy gained from the regime's association with the war for independence against France (1954–1962) had become evident with the passing of the wartime generation and the arrival of a new generation who had only known single party rule. This disconnection between the state and its claims to rule Algerian society perpetuated the malaise that resulted in the outbreak of the first armed clashes between society and the state in the late 1980s.[64]

State weakness does not operate in a vacuum, however. Links to regional and global politics are also crucial ingredients that contribute to such conflicts, ingredients that undermine the definition of civil war as the inverse of inter-state war. Again, in relation to Lebanon, at the time of community tension in the early 1970s regional competition, particularly between Syria and Israel, contributed to the shattering of non-violent political relations in the country. Israel invaded and occupied Syria's strategically important Golan Heights in 1967. Syria sought to counter-balance this through extending its influence in Lebanon, a territory it has traditionally claimed as historically part of "Greater Syria" (*bilad al-Sham*). This positioned Lebanon as a 'front-line' state in the Arab-Israeli dispute, a status compounded by the use of Lebanese territory to conduct cross-border

resistance against Israel.[65] Lebanon was caught in the orbit of heightened regional tensions at a time when its own internal cohesiveness was fraying, each factor contributing to the outbreak of war in 1975.

This is a crucial point in that it introduces the concept of community identity. Where multiple community identities exist, or the dominant identity is contested, state capacity is weakened and vulnerability to conflict heightens. More specifically, where political orientations are contested, political culture operates as a source of conflict.[66] This is not to say that certain communities possess "traits" that make them more conflict-prone. Instead, regardless of the community, if the idea of what that community sees as its values and assumptions are contested, then the chances of conflict become more likely.

Despite specific causes related to the origins of civil wars, once underway they gather their own momentum, making them very difficult to bring to resolution. Combatants and victims must exist within the same society, a situation that requires more substantial and immediate reform than a withdrawal 'behind the borders'.[67] In addition, conflicts related to control over state structures often lead to zero-sum goals being presented by both parties.[68] Such perspectives are evident in the efforts toward ethnic cleansing in parts of Lebanon through the 1970s and 1980s or the hard-line religious doctrine presented by the Algerian opposition in the early 1990s. These zero-sum perspectives serve to impair to the process of conflict resolution.

Participants or belligerent groups within civil wars are another distinctive element. In particular, the very multiplicity of combatant groups characterises contemporary civil war. Apart from the confrontation between conventional forces characteristic of inter-state war and the insurgent-state dichotomy of "traditional" understandings of civil wars, it is crucial to recognise the wide range of forms and aims taken by belligerents in civil war. Mary Kaldor, in her outline of these 'new wars', pinpoints 'paramilitary units, local warlords, criminal gangs, police forces, mercenary groups and also regular armies including breakaway units of regular armies' as some of the key belligerent forces involved.[69] Such varied groups are indicative of the range of forces active in contemporary civil war. For instance, as the Algerian government faced imminent collapse in 1993 and 1994, it armed a series of "self-defence groups" (*groupes d'autodéfense*) in rural areas as proxy forces against the Islamist insurgency. However,

in time, these groups came to replace the regular security forces in many parts of the country and not only waged war against the Islamists, but also established virtual fiefdoms in which they controlled a burgeoning black market.[70] In Lebanon, a more obvious case of alternative military forces is observable with the collapse of the state through the late 1970s and the activities of the various armed militias through the country. In addition, Lebanon also witnessed the activity of foreign armies (Israeli, Syrian, American, French and Italian) as well as Iranian security agents within its borders between 1975 and 1990.[71]

The effects of civil wars on the non-combatant population are the most adverse aspect of this phenomenon. Deaths, displacement, hostility, as well as the destruction of state institutions facilitating improved quality of life are most often the primary outcomes of civil war. It is the cyclical and intractable nature of civil wars that hits the civilian population hardest.

Thus, civil war is defined as characterised by highly specific elements. It is violent, group-based conflict focussed on state-society and intra-society relationships and power structures. It is intractable and self-perpetuating, involves a variety of belligerent forces from many social and political environments, and has the greatest effects on the civilian population. Additionally, these dynamics highlight the significance of values and assumptions in the construction of conflict. This raises the question of how to enhance the ability of conflict resolution theory and practice to understand these factors in working toward effective forms of solution or at least mitigation.

Political Culture, Conflict Resolution and the Arab World

The Uses of Political Culture in Conflict Resolution Analysis

There have been several constructive efforts at incorporating culture into the study of conflict resolution. For instance, Avruch, Black and Scimecca have documented how conflict resolution practitioners, particularly prior to the 1990s, avoided attempts at creating a theoretical framework for the field in favour of a case-by-case approach.[72] In this, attempts at generalisation were foregone in favour of taking each conflict on its merits in terms of understanding the context and sources of grievances through violent conflict. This theoretical marginalisation of culture was reinforced as the construction of conflict

resolution studies through the 1970s and 1980s and was increasingly monopolised by macro approaches, such as structuralism and materialism. However, since the early 1990s, there has been an effort to introduce political culture into the emerging theoretical framework of conflict resolution studies.

David Augsburger marked the beginnings of a transformation in conflict resolution studies in 1992 when he claimed that the 'practices of resolving differences within various cultures, and the ways of facilitating interactions between cultures, have received inadequate research and development as a field'.[73] Such statements were important due to the relative neglect of culture in the analysis of conflict resolution studies in the preceding decades. Throughout the Cold War, conflict resolution theory focussed its attention on interstate conflicts, with a particular concentration on ideological conflict. What focus on culture did exist tended toward a macro approach centred on cross-cultural studies particularly in relation to elite-level, diplomatic negotiations. For instance, Brehmer and Hammond sought to show how 'bargaining behaviour' as the expression of negotiation exhibits no core differentiation across cultures.[74] Zartman expanded on this by claiming that in formal negotiations between states, culture is further marginalised as there has been the creation of a unified 'diplomatic culture', a universal understanding as to the processes and etiquette of interstate relationships.[75] The transformation marked by Augsburger's statement sought to challenge this through a redefinition of culture in conflict resolution studies as well as an attempt to formulate conflict resolution theories and processes that are responsive to cultural influences. This challenge has been labelled the 'culture question' or culture debate within conflict resolution studies.[76] In conceptualising this debate one may be able to place the approaches of resolution theorists to culture on a continuum from dismissive through more accommodating approaches to those primarily rooted in particular cultural and contextual environments. Whilst macro theorists vary in their perspective on the role of culture in conflict resolution, they coalesce around the need for a focus on standard resolution practices. As a result, macro perspectives emphasise approaches to conflict resolution whereby generalisations about all conflicts can be made and standard resolution processes applied. An inductive approach to conflict resolution merely treats the 'symptoms' of conflict.[77] In other words, the particular cultural expression

of injustice is merely a cover for deep-rooted grievances, grievances that are consistent within all human conflicts as they are grounded in violations of "basic human needs".

The distinction within the culture debate in conflict resolution is most marked when one examines the literature relating to conflict resolution and civil war. International conflict resolution in terms of culture is focused on cross-cultural elements that may foster inter-state understanding and accommodation in what is known as "track-one" diplomacy. "Track-one" diplomacy refers to the conventional patterns of inter-governmental diplomacy. Such interaction is conducted through either bilateral or multilateral relations between countries or within the institutions of inter-governmental organisations (IGOs). Track-one activity displays great variety in terms of purpose and motivation, from coercion through sanctions and intimidation, to cooperation through treaty negotiation and mediation. At its core, it is a 'technique of state action, (which) is essentially a process whereby communications from one government go directly to the decision-making apparatus of another'.[78] However, the debate between these perspectives is more intense in relation to conflict resolution in civil war as these conflicts are largely defined in terms of identity and the determining of state identity. Several of the key definitional elements of civil war, such as the contested relationship between the state and society, links to regional and global politics, the intractability and perpetual nature of civil wars, and the many and varied participants show the need for a reappraisal of both resolution techniques and the role of culture in such techniques.

The application of culture in conflict resolution analysis has sought to create a standard theoretical framework across cultural contexts. Such generality is difficult as a central element underpinning the explanatory capacity of political culture stems from its comparability. Thus, efforts to develop general approaches to political culture require the development of contextualised and comparative case studies to facilitate the explanatory capacity of political culture. What is required is an effort to address the gap in conflict resolution studies where contextualised, thickly described cases are lacking. This is a departure from earlier analyses of political culture in conflict resolution studies that have sought to jump ahead and develop general, 'etic' studies of political culture on which general theories can be built. Instead, this study focuses on political culture in terms of an

'emic' approach, a micro study of political culture and conflict resolution in a specific context (the community of Arab states), through specific mechanisms (the texts of peace agreements), and on specific groups (political elites).[79]

This contextualised, emic process draws from the specific events of cases rather than from the starting point of generalised theoretical perspectives. From this basis, it seeks to delineate the limits of primary explanatory tools before exploring where political culture sits and what explanatory power it may hold. For instance, the Algerian regime has refused to acknowledge its role as a party to the conflict, instead framing the dispute as a criminal act with the insurgency as simply outside the law. In addition, the multiple participants in such conflicts make the identification of valid spokespeople an extremely difficult task. The multiplicity of forces active in the Lebanese civil war is archetypal of such a difficulty, with the final peace agreement resorting to virtual external definition and implementation through the Higher Tripartite Committee (Saudi Arabia, Algeria and Morocco) with Syrian, United States, and French backing. The fluidity of these conflicts highlight the need to move beyond the rigid and formalised structures offered in macro models of conflict resolution to ones that can be responsive to different cultural contexts. This has led to shifts within debates over both the understanding of contemporary conflict as well as approaches to the resolution of contemporary conflicts. For Tarja Väyrynen, these changes highlight how 'the habits of thought which have guided two generations of political and military leaders as well as scholars and citizens need to be reformed'.[80] Such a reformation requires the incorporation of political culture as a key factor of analysis as, according to Ernesto Laclau, the 'death of subjectivity' and the 'multiplication of new—and not so new—identities' forms a central element of contemporary conflict.[81]

This debate has mirrored developments in other fields, particularly international relations, where focus is increasingly placed on 'internal' sources of insecurity.[82] For example, Kalevi Holsti has documented the shift of patterns of war since 1945 showing the rise to prevalence of conflicts stemming from insecurities located within state structures. Such discussion extends to investigations of the links between political structure and conflict as well as the issues of political reform, pluralism, and civil society. For example, having already outlined the diversity of contemporary civil war, several of the key

factors linking them together stem from the internal processes of states. The challenge to the precarious power-sharing arrangement in Lebanon pushed the country to civil war when combined with the interference of external powers. In Algeria, the fragility of state legitimacy left it vulnerable to challenge when the political process was opened up in the late 1980s, fragility stemming as much from the devaluing of previously potent symbols of legitimacy as it was from changing demographics and economic weakness.

Thus, political culture can be incorporated into the study of conflict resolution through focussing on the contextualisation of particular resolution scenarios. The development of a "thick", contextualised emic description of cases is positioned on the understanding of political culture as relational, secondary, multi-layered and fluid.

Engaging with Arab Political Culture and Conflict Resolution
In terms of the examination of political culture in the community of Arab states, there has been an intense focus on the region, with a particular spin placed on the role of culture in conflict. For instance, historian Bernard Lewis has argued that the notion of a 'corporate or majority decision' through electoral means is an 'alien' concept in many Islamic societies.[83] Instead, violent contestations over state power are seen, in this perspective, as the norm. This type analysis of regional politics often suffers from an exceptionalist perspective, a hangover from Orientalist thought that tends to view the politics of the Arab world as a unique and often negative set of circumstances. This is particularly so in the case of Western studies of regional conflict (both academic and those in the popular media) where, as Halim Barakat contends, justification for the political status quo is enforced through a contradictory view of the region and its political culture as at once possessing a unified 'group mentality' whilst also riven with a 'mosaic' of difference identities and loyalties.[84]

For conflict resolution, scholars have perpetuated the view of these states and societies as unable to deal with and resolve conflict, contrary to their counterparts in the West. Instead, Arab communities are trapped in a permanent state of conflict *management* in which various groups within this "mosaic" seek to dominate and repress other groups in a volatile and perpetual struggle for power. Such a view is presented by Eric Nordlinger and his outline of patterns of

conflict management or 'regulation' in the Arab Middle East.[85] This, argues Barakat, strays from analysis and spills over into political influence in an attempt to manipulate cultural analysis in the service of legitimising the division of the Arab people.[86] As a result, from the 1960s to the 1980s, many analysts of Arab politics rejected political culture. Disconcerted by the reductionist impulses of many of their colleagues and the impact of Edward Said's critique of uses of cultural analysis, many academics sought to reject political culture analysis.[87] Here, an increased focus on structural pressures related to modernisation and development took centre stage as explanatory tools for the analysis of political culture in the community of Arab states.

Despite this, there has been momentum toward the reintegration of culture in investigations of various political and social issues, including conflict resolution in the Arab world. To illustrate, there has been an effort to move beyond conducting political culture analysis in the Arab world where 'unfamiliar or unexpected political institutions or inclinations [are] attributed to the influence of Islamic thinking'.[88] This perspective was tied to modernisation theory where traditional Middle Eastern modes of social organisation were categorised as outdated and to be replaced by modern political structures. Modernisation theory took from political culture the idea that attitudes and behaviour were crucial to the modernisation process, similar to the causal analysis tied to the notion of "civic culture". Thus, traditional modes were seen as an obstacle to modernisation. This method of political culture analysis focussed on a post-colonial 'new middle class' in the Middle East that was grouped together not by ideology but by modernising behaviour, such as the correlation between Egypt's Nasser and Tunisia's Bourguiba.[89] The army was seen as the driver of this process. However, as became apparent, the military in many Middle Eastern states perpetuated traditional allegiances through the promotion of particular social groups, most notably in Syria, Iraq, Algeria, and formally in Lebanon.

Some scholars saw this apparent resilience of tradition in the face of modernisation processes as not only undermining modernisation theory in the Middle East but also legitimising a return to exceptionalist perspectives. Huntington's civilisational thesis, alongside the arguments by Bernard Lewis, as to the supposed inappropriateness of democracy in Middle Eastern and Islamic societies represents this trend.[90] The army, or the "new middle class", did

not prove to be the mechanism that would implement Western-style modernisation processes in the Middle East; instead, single-party rule was instituted as the norm. Initially, however, there was reluctance to either move away from the use of existing patterns of political culture analysis or employ other explanatory models for this process. Thus, the entrenchment of authoritarianism in the Middle East during the 1960s and 1970s was examined in 'psychological and cultural terms: explainable by the pull of traditional ties of family and religion'.[91]

The rise of "Islamic politics" since the early 1970s has also been interpreted in political culture terms where Islam is seen to have provided 'solace' in the wake of the defeat by Israel and the decline of Arab nationalism.[92] Thus, there was a continued focus on attitudes over structural explanations. During the 1980s, institutional analysis gained ground, with a particular emphasis on the Middle Eastern state. Political culture was still present, but increasingly it had to contend as one of many explanatory factors. This has been a beneficial development as political culture, particularly for critical observers, now sits as a secondary explanatory factor. For Lisa Anderson, only when structural, institutional, and material interests and explanations have been exhausted, can we examine the real significance of political culture.[93] Therefore, instead of applying political culture as a primary explanatory tool, as has been the pattern, the approach offered here departs in terms of contending that political culture has explanatory capacity, but only as a secondary explanatory tool. Whereas previous analyses sought to situate political culture as central in shaping political processes including conflict resolution processes, or they sought to neglect the explanatory capacity of political culture altogether, this analysis argues that political culture interplays with structural forces and material interest in affecting the values and assumptions that conflict resolution processes exhibit.

Implicit within political culture analysis is the assumption that the values and assumptions of one community in relation to political processes are different from other communities. To illustrate, the issue of national identity in the community of Arab states has been explored on a variety of levels, including political culture. Hudson outlines these in relation to the concepts of *asabiyya*, *qawmiyya*, *wataniyya*, and the *umma*.[94] The notion of *asabiyya* relates primarily to kinship and group feeling, something prevalent in smaller

communities bound together through a common lineage. The notions of *qawmiyya* and *wataniyya* are often used interchangeably but have distinct meanings in the context of community in the Arab world. *Qawm* refers to an ethnolinguistic unity as the basis for a communal concept of peoplehood. This is similar to the German idea of *volk* where there are ties between a community/nationality based on the use of a common language and common cultural signifiers. Therefore, *qawmiyya* is referential to allegiance to a community tied together through linguistic and cultural bonds. *Watan* refers primarily to community through territorial congruity and is more akin to the French concept of *patrie*. Therefore, *wataniyya* refers to allegiance to a community based on the coexistence within a designated territory. Finally, the concept of the *umma* is inherited from Islamic thought and is referential to the idea of a supranational community tied together by an overarching allegiance to a particular religious identity. While it has been used primarily to refer to the global Islamic community (*umma al-Islamiyya*) it has also been used, primarily in official statements, to refer to the broader Arab community (*umma al-arabiyya*). This usage is interesting to note, as the concept of the *umma*, unlike the concepts of *asabiyya*, *qawmiyya* and *wataniyya*, does not necessarily imply the need for institutional links to unify the community.

Each of these elements has received currency in terms of the conceptualisation of Arab identity and Arab political culture. The core elements of Arab identity (shared history of unity, language, cultural signifiers, and aspirations of political unity) relate to one or several of these elements and work together to promote consciousness of membership to an Arab community, even if it remains politically divided and culturally dynamic and diverse. In this exploration, Hudson argues that the consistent reference to regional issues by Arab leaders as a way to build popular legitimacy is evidence of the importance of the broader community to Arab identity.[95] Similarly, the aforementioned outline of the prevalence of "vertical" links in Arab society has also been a focus of contemporary political culture analysis. Sharabi has outlined the near absence of horizontal allegiances in Arab society where both family and state authority dominate.[96] Barakat has elaborated on this by focussing on the prevalence of authoritarian political structures in the community of Arab states. This authoritarianism is not just an 'attribute of the political system' but stems from 'interpersonal and social relations' in the Arab world.[97] In such a view,

authoritarian political structures are not just the result of instrumental forces, but stem from particular attitudes toward the functioning of political authority.

Therefore, studies of Arab political culture have revolved around a series of approaches, each with strengths and deficiencies that have not been integrated into a comprehensive approach. These approaches include a focus on segmentary politics where politics in the Arab world is organised by communal relations and loyalties; a focus on the dynamics of patriarchal and patrimonial factors where rule is arbitrary, highly centralised and the state is detached form society similar to the Marxist perspective of Oriental despotism; and social structural approaches where there is a focus on interaction between economic, domestic and regional political factors where a hierarchy of status exists alongside an economic hierarchy with clear correlations between the two.[98] The starting point for this examination of Arab political culture is 'Arab value orientations in their social and historical contexts'.[99] This is a way to capture the influence of political culture as an intervening variable between social structure and human attitudes and behaviour in taking note of its development at a particular time and place. In this, political culture is recognised as a dynamic force but not robbed of its explanatory capacity.

This returns the discussion to the core units of values defined in terms of desired or preferred objects, goals and forms of behaviour. These can be understood in two forms: instrumental and terminal values. Instrumental values are those forms of behaviour considered preferable to others in the political role of an individual or an institution in a particular cultural setting, while terminal values are ideal goals for the community (such as unity, justice, etc …). For instance, the emphasis in Arab society on shame as opposed to guilt is often posited as a key instrumental value orientation in Arab society. This has been particularly pronounced in 'conflict resolution and mediation, the goal of which is to encourage opposing parties to cease their fighting without dishonour or shame',[100] and is often translated into interpretations of Arab culture as focussed on conformity to avoid shame.

It is here that specific resolution techniques stemming from these factors are illustrative of culturally informed approaches to conflict resolution. Formalised techniques for conflict resolution have a long tradition in Arab and Islamic societies. For instance, the

tradition of political arbitration (*tahkim*) has its roots in the original Islamic communities of Medina and Mecca. Indeed, the Prophet Muhammad himself was known as an honest arbitrator. Upon the establishment of the Muslim community, the various groups within it (including the non-Muslim groups), accepted his political authority and the use of arbitration to settle disputes, whilst not necessarily accepting Muhammad as the religious head. The model of arbitration followed by the Prophet Muhammad and his contemporaries took a clear form, one where respected social figures would engage as representative of the broad social interest, an interest that was threatened by the outbreak of conflict. If agreement is reached through this procedure, a ceremonial process of reconciliation (*sulh*) takes place as a formal end to the dispute.[101] This is not to make claims as to the static nature of Arab and Islamic society whereby millennia-old resolution practice can simply be transported to the contemporary environment. Nor is this study making claims that such processes are mutually exclusive to the processes present in alternative forms of conflict resolution, such as those in Western Europe or North America. By contrast, the processes present within the context of Arab communities need to be recognised and critically evaluated as to their influence over the conflict resolution process.

Conclusion

When political culture is investigated in relation to conflict and resolution its controversy stems not only from its fluid range of definitions and understandings, but also from the immense political baggage it contains. For instance, the highly contested nature of political culture leads to often vague definitions employed in the name of research. Such ambiguity dilutes the usefulness of the concept. Therefore, the clarification of the operational definition enables the elaboration on how the cases are explored in this study, particularly in terms of challenging the sceptical view of political culture's explanatory capacity in relation to conflict resolution.

This book argues that one can gauge "attributes" of political culture related to conflict resolution, with a particular focus on actions, symbols, language and modes of behaviour. Political culture is displayed in observable behaviour and expression. Here, focus is on one mode of elite social expression in relation to conflict resolution, that of peace agreements. This is where the definition of conflict

resolution employed assumes significance. If local elite values and assumptions in relation to conflict resolution maintain exclusionary visions of the conflict and for post-conflict reconstruction, this does not bode well for the resolution process. However, by making a resolution process able to channel alternative, inclusive, but culturally legitimate visions of post-conflict reconstruction then the resolution process is more likely to have longer-term positive effects.

Notes

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Lebanon and the Taef Agreement

This chapter explores the details of the Taef Agreement, before moving to an examination of the influence of political culture over the shape of the agreement. Through this, two themes become evident. First, the agreement was subject to pronounced influence from pre-war political elites who sought to enshrine the principle of confessionalism within the document. Whilst there are provisions for a move to de-confessionalisation, primary emphasis is placed on a reshuffling of powers within the confessional political structure, principles that had been agreed upon as early as 1976. Indeed, the heavy focus on institutional reform in the document leaves other areas of resolution unresolved, particularly reform in terms of decentralisation, economic and social reconstruction, education, as well as the restoration of public spaces.

Second, whilst there was some flexibility in terms of the negotiation over the internal political reforms, the position of Lebanon vis-à-vis its two powerful neighbours (Israel and Syria, both of whom had invaded the country more than once since 1975) was negotiated and decided by outside parties, particularly Syria. There was no latitude for the Lebanese to determine their own fate in terms of the place of this small country within the region, a situation stemming from broader regional security issues, namely the tensions between Israel and Syria, the continuing Israeli occupation of the Golan

Heights, and the Syrian desire to counter this through a strategic hold in Lebanon.

During this discussion, the pressures toward the maintenance of the status quo through political confessionalism emerge as paramount. This pressure has been promoted in terms of the maintenance of community cohesion. In addition, the role of Syria as the main third party is shown in the Syrian government operating in an interventionist way, imposing itself through direct arbitration rather than detached mediation. Finally, the importance of collective memory is explored in reference to the Lebanese education system as well as the issues of justice, reconciliation and the role of rituals.

The Lebanese Civil War

When examining the political history of Lebanon including the 1975–1990 conflict, contrasting tendencies are evident. On the one hand, there is a focus on the patterns of continual conflict between the various sectarian groups that have constituted this small state, from its diminutive pre-Mandate form to the expansion of its boundaries in 1920 as a result of the Sykes-Picot agreement. On the other hand, there is an effort to posit Lebanon as the regional miracle of economic development and political accommodation between diverse groups. What is harder to grasp is how Lebanon encapsulates both tendencies, how diversity and fragmentation have given the country its rich and celebrated character whilst also leading it down the path of conflict more than once. Such complexity emerges when approaching Lebanon's place in the regional state system. In particular, Lebanon suffers more than most from the ability of external powers to exert influence over it. Indeed, when trying to understand the causes of conflict in the country, the manipulation of communal tensions by both local and regional powers is a constant. This manipulation has come at the expense of the development of Lebanon as a viable and vibrant regional state.[1]

Certain features stand out in relation to the outbreak of war in Lebanon in 1975. In particular, efforts to accommodate sectarianism and diversity within the political structure of the country have been Lebanon's defining political feature. Within the Ottoman Empire, the settlement establishing the nucleus of the Lebanese state (*mutasarrifiyyeh*) in 1860–61 represented an attempt to ensure the wellbeing of the Christian inhabitants of the Mountain after the massacre of

Christians in Damascus and further west around Mount Lebanon.[2] The expansion of the boundaries of the state in 1920 caused consternation amongst the Christian inhabitants of the Mountain who feared losing their local predominance within the broader, predominantly Muslim, region. Attempts to find accommodation for such a need was enshrined in the "National Pact" (*al-mithaq al-watani*) of 1943, the defining organising principle of the Lebanese state.[3] Indeed, the Pact's institutionalisation of confessionalism as the basis for political organisation has had such resonance that it was essentially repeated in all other major social contracts in the country, including the Taef Agreement.[4]

The National Pact was built on the 1926 constitution promulgated by the French Mandate authorities. This constitution sought to enshrine the principle of confessional representation within the nascent Lebanese political system based on a rather questionable census in 1922 that declared the Christian population the majority in the country.[5] Up to 1943, the Lebanese Sunni population was the most cohesive in their opposition to this basis for political organisation in the country (calling for union within a structure of "Greater Syria"— *bilad al-Shams*), as well as being opposed to the French Mandate rule. However, with the fall of France during WWII, there was an opening for a compromise agreement between the Maronite and Sunni communities, resulting in the unwritten 1943 National Pact. The National Pact itself was based on a speech delivered by Lebanon's first independence Prime Minister, Riyad al-Solh, in the Lebanese Parliament on 7 October 1943. Simply, the Pact established two compromises between the communities. First, it allowed for a permanent Christian parliamentary majority (the 6:5 principle, based on a second census in 1932 that declared the Christians a six to five majority in Lebanon) in return for a somewhat ambiguous Maronite acceptance of Lebanon's Arab identity. The specific wording of the text stated that "Lebanon is a homeland with an Arab face" whereas later documents, such as the Taef Agreement, are more explicit in stating that "Lebanon is Arab in belonging and identity". Second, the Pact saw the Sunni renunciation of calls for union with Syria in return for Maronite renunciation of Western sponsorship/protection, effectively calling for political neutrality.

This 'double negation agreement' became the Lebanese political recipe in the years leading up to 1975.[6] Despite its ambiguity, it

allowed for some measure of accommodation, particularly for the most politically active communities at this time, the Maronites and Sunnis. These patterns of pre-1975 politics in Lebanon have been described as a model of 'equilibrium confessionalism' whereby there is no one group dominant enough to impose, for any length of time, its exclusive vision on society.[7] Thus, there has been a state of self-preserving communal balance in the country that has oscillated between various groups, at various times, rising then falling in terms of influence over the Lebanese state and political system. Initially, this oscillation has shifted between the Druze and Maronite communities before and immediately after 1920. The political advantage enjoyed by the Maronite community was increasingly challenged after WWII, particularly from the Sunni community.[8] Within the Muslim community, Sunni predominance was more and more disputed up to the 1970s by the Shi'a and leftist organisations.

The failure of this model in such a dramatic fashion after 1975 led to a reappraisal by some of the viability of pluralist political societies in the Middle East. This has been damaging for the development of objective analysis in relation to the Lebanese conflict. As Samir Khalaf outlines Lebanon became an 'ugly metaphor', often 'no more than an allegoric figure of speech, a sobriquet, a mere byword to conjure up images of the grotesque and unspoken'.[9] Khalaf is charging that volumes of works and hours of media attention have done little more than to reduce the conflict in Lebanon to a series of tragic events, complex and only explainable in terms of a so-called patchwork of identities and loyalties. The notion of "Lebanonisation" entered the popular lexicon during the 1980s as a byword for internal conflict and brutality; a label applied to subsequent conflicts in the Caucuses, sub-Saharan Africa and the Balkans. However, Lebanonisation referred more to the outbreak of conflict between private militias rather than contest between large ethnic groups.

In this, examinations of the development of the Lebanese state and the civil war focus almost uniformly on the confessional political structure. The work of Arend Lijphart and the discussions of the consociational model of Lebanese democracy are central to this discussion. Arend Lijphart's model of consociational democracy is characterised by the grand coalition, mutual veto, proportionality and autonomy.[10] This is an attempt to bypass models of majority democracy in favour of balance and ensuring a voice for various

social elements. This form of consociational or 'consensus democracy' is designed to produce 'multi-party coalition cabinets and an executive-judicial balance of power' based on a proportional voting system where 'plurality systems', based on standardised voting, tend to produce 'two-party systems, one-party majority cabinets and executive dominance'.[11]

Lebanon has an institutionalised proportional voting system where, since 1990, Parliament is divided equally between Christian and Muslim members.[12] Such a model was seen as well suited to Lebanon, particularly in light of the desire to ensure Maronite representation in and control over the destiny of this Arab state. Arguments as to the need for preserving Lebanon's sectarian basis of political organization have been dominant here, using Lijphart's model to place Lebanon in a context different from that of its Arab neighbours. Farid el-Khazen, one of the most prominent advocates of Lebanon's confessional particularity, captures such a sentiment when he states that:

> in Lebanon, democracy is a function of communal diversity which, in turn, is a function of the demographic structure of Lebanese society … Lebanon's sectarian democracy is better than no democracy, as is the case in other Arab countries. In a divided society, in Lebanon and elsewhere, what preserves stability is consensual government rather than majority-based rule.[13]

It is here that the crux of the discussion lies concerning the origins of the Lebanese conflict and the resolution process. These analyses of the origins of the Lebanese civil war are rooted in discussions concerning the role and legitimacy of the confessional system and its alleged conflict-prone tendencies. El-Khazen argues that the confessional system is the most capable system for dealing with the diversity of Lebanese society, despite its shortcomings. However, this form of argument does not stand in light of either historical events or the stated intentions of Lebanese political elites. The rigidity of the confessional system in Lebanon, an effort to assuage Maronite fears of being subsumed within a broader regional Muslim state system, was at the core of the grievances leading to conflict in both 1958 and 1975.[14] Confessionalism was an *ad-hoc* solution preserving minority

rule and neglecting the realities of a changing demographic structure within the country. It was unable to accommodate changing demands and new developments such as the growth of the Shi'a population as well as the arrival of the Palestinian refugee population.

The shifting of the balance of power within the delicate structure of the Lebanese political system was not tenable as the National Pact did not contain provisions enabling it to respond to the demands of communities whose growth in numbers and influence was not represented within its tenets. The Pact was designed only as a transitionary measure, something that would 'naturally' be overcome as the various groups within Lebanon developed mechanisms for sharing power until the confessional system would become obsolete.[15] This did not manifest itself and by the 1970s many of the groups who were most disenfranchised (particularly the Shi'a and, to a lesser extent, the Sunni communities) or were excluded (the Palestinian refugee population) by the National Pact sought a radical change to the political arrangement in the country. That is, each community endeavoured to enforce its particular vision for what Lebanon should be rather than continue the attempt to maintain communal balance. However, this was counter-balanced by the drive for community autonomy within any prospective political system. In addition to the increasing disenchantment with the Pact as the basis of Lebanese politics, the large increase in numbers of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, including the PLO leadership, was a crucial factor in pushing the country to war. Lebanon proved an effective base for PLO resistance to Israel, particularly after 1969, when an agreement was reached between the Lebanese Army and the PLO that legitimised Palestinian military activities against Israel from Lebanese soil. This treaty, the 1969 Cairo Agreement, was negotiated by Egyptian President Gamal Abd al-Nasser in the wake of the resignation of then Lebanese Prime Minister Rashid Karami.

The pressure for legitimising Palestinian military activities was given greater momentum by the emergence of Palestinian guerrilla organisations after 1967 and attempts to situate them in a state adjoining Israel. Jordan, where the groups operated with virtual impunity from the Jordanian authorities, became the focus of Palestinian activities, which saw multiple Israeli reprisal attacks between 1968 and 1970. By mid 1970, the tension between the Palestinian organisations and the Jordanian government had reached

breaking point. This tension erupted with the hijacking of three planes by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine on 1 September and their televised destruction a week later. This coincided with the effort to declare "liberated zones" of Palestinian control inside Jordan. On 15 September, King Hussein declared martial law and ordered the military to confront the Palestinian groups. The subsequent confrontations, subsequently christened "Black September", led to between 3000 and 5000 deaths and the removal of the Palestinian military command, which sought refuge in Lebanon. By the early 1970s, the PLO leadership had moved its entire base to Lebanon whilst the National Pact itself was under a 'frontal assault' from the Muslim-leftist alliance of the National Movement (NM) as well as the increasingly politically active Shi'a population.[16] Israeli assaults on Palestinian camps in Lebanon and open confrontations within the government as well as between the Lebanese Army and the PLO in 1973 signalled the eventual spiral into conflict in 1975 with a resulting disintegration of the Army along sectarian lines.

The date most noted for the outbreak of the conflict is 13 April 1975 with retaliatory strikes between the Maronite Phalange and Palestinians. This event served as the catalyst for the eruption of sectarian tensions that had grown since the late 1960s, inflamed by the machinations of local political elites and external powers. Syrian forces entered Lebanon to avoid the collapse of the Christian militias in 1976. However, their support of the primarily Maronite militias had the effect of radically altering the strategic balance on the ground to the point where the NM and the PLO faced total defeat by their opponents. Here, ceasefire negotiations stuttered as the LF in particular saw an opportunity to impose a total defeat on the NM, leftists, and the PLO. This was compounded by the Israeli invasion of southern Lebanon in March 1978 (the "Litani River Operation") that, although only lasting some three months, further weakened the strategic stance of the NM-PLO alliance. The Litani River Operation resulted in UN resolution 425, demanding a full withdrawal of Israeli forces from Lebanon, a resolution cited in the Taef Agreement in terms of the continued presence of Israel in southern Lebanon up to 2000. In addition, it resulted in the arrival of a UN peacekeeping force in southern Lebanon (United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon— UNIFIL) in 1978. The presence of two foreign armies on Lebanese soil, alongside UNIFIL, created a situation in which both parties

increasingly sought to find a military solution to the conflict. Subsequently, the years 1978 to 1982 saw Lebanon slip further away from the political solution that seemed imminent during 1976.

The key event in pushing the country over the precipice was the full-scale Israeli invasion of Lebanon in June 1982.[17] The Israeli invasion, along with the Syrian presence in the country, was an act that perpetuated the conflict through the 1980s. It also gave rise to a variety of new political and military streams in Lebanon, notably Hezbollah and the increasing role of Iran.[18] Here, Iraq also became an interested player towards the end of the conflict, seeking to counter the direct influence of Syria and the semi-covert influence of Iran. The militias, therefore, had at their disposal a wide variety of external players from whom to source arms and support, each not wanting a total victory of any side, thus willing to help continue the conflict. What is evident here is that despite the collapse of the National Pact as a key instigator of the conflict, the violence itself quickly took on its own momentum. Indeed, the original logic for the outbreak of violence was seemingly forgotten and, in the words of René Girard, the 'creature that excited its fury is abruptly replaced by another, chosen only because it is vulnerable and close at hand'.[19] These patterns of conflict were compounded by the constant involvement of external powers within the conflict, whether they were Syrian, Israeli, American, Iranian, Iraqi, or French. Indeed, such a sentiment was captured by the Lebanese daily, the Daily Star when it reported that, for regional powers, 'when in doubt, [they] just bomb Lebanon'.[20] By the time of war's end in 1990, from a pre-war population of between three to four million, an estimated 150,000 people had died, 300,000 had been internally displaced, and over 500,000 people fled the country to various parts of the globe. However, little had changed in terms of the grievances that were at the core of the outbreak of the conflict in the first place. The agreement that emerged at the end of the conflict needed to account, not so much for why this took place, but the damage it wrought on community relations within the country, a country that had balanced on the knife-edge of "confessional equilibrium" for many years.

The Taef Agreement

There were multiple attempts to bring about a resolution to the Lebanese conflict after 1975. The first came as early as 1975–1976

with the formation of the National Dialogue Committee. The Committee was constituted by several prominent groups in Lebanese society, drawing largely from the elders of the main confessional groups but with no representatives from the main Shi'a group and no Palestinian representatives.[21] Syria mediated the deliberations of the National Dialogue Committee that culminated in the Constitutional Document of February 1976. The Constitutional Document focussed on the shifting of powers within the Lebanese political structure and became the blueprint for the Taef Agreement. However, violence escalated during the meetings of the National Dialogue Committee highlighting how none of the sides sought to negotiate without first strengthening its position strategically. The Constitutional Document was fully undermined later in 1976 with the collapse of the Lebanese Army and the strengthening of the position of the Muslim National Movement (NM) and the Palestinian forces. In reaction to this, the Syrian military entered Lebanon in April 1976, an action that was later validated through an Arab League mandate.

The second major effort came in 1983–1984 with meetings between five Christian and five Muslim representatives in Geneva and Lausanne. The strategic environment had changed markedly for this meeting with the destruction of Palestinian military force by Israel in 1982 and the presence of over 30,000 Syrian troops in Lebanon. Syrian dominance shaped these negotiations where the central issue discussed was the cancellation of a security agreement signed between the Lebanese government and Israel in May 1983.[22] The outcome of the negotiations focussed on the abrogation of this agreement, the demonstration of Syrian dominance in Lebanon, the reiteration of Lebanon's Arab identity, and the formalisation of calls for full Israeli withdrawal from Lebanese territory.[23] These final two elements would become enshrined in the Taef Agreement.

The third attempt came in 1985 in Damascus in the form of the Tripartite Agreement. Similar to the National Dialogue Committee, there was broad representation at the 1985 Damascus negotiations, however, as the agreement neared formalisation the LF were thrown into turmoil with the ousting of their leader Elie Hubayka by President Amin Jumayyil and militia leader Samir Gea'gea'. Hubayka was removed from the leadership of the LF when he signed the Tripartite Agreement. Whilst the Tripartite Agreement was finalised and contained provisions that would also be echoed in the Taef Agreement,

it became a dead letter as Lebanon entered a state of political paralysis between early 1986 and the end of President Jumayyil's term in late 1988. This paralysis stemmed from the inability of Jumayyil to find a viable successor in light of conflicting interests between Christian leaders (as the office of President is reserved for the Maronite community), Syria and the United States. The United States and Syria reached an agreement in early 1988 over the candidature of Mikhael al-Daher for the presidency after Syria moved away from backing its preferred candidate, Sulayman Franjieh. However, all major Christian leaders rejected al-Daher, particularly the leadership of the LF due to his links with Syria. As Jumayyil's term neared its end, he nominated General Michel Aoun, head of the Lebanese army, as candidate to head a provisional government as Prime Minister. However, this caused great controversy in that the appointment of Aoun, a Maronite, violated the reservation of this post for the Sunni community from the 1943 National Pact. In reaction, prominent Sunni leader Salim al-Hoss established an alternative government, taking the post of Prime Minister for himself. This led to a crisis whereby Lebanon had two competing governments with no head of state. Aoun's government had alienated itself from the Lebanese political elites; however, it received a high degree of popular support, both Muslim and Christian, in its efforts to move beyond confessional politics in the country. The al-Hoss government enjoyed the support of the elites as well as from the major militia groups, including the LF under the leadership of Gea'gea'.[24]

Tension mounted through 1988 and 1989 as clashes between the LF and the Aoun-led army brigades increased throughout Lebanon, focussed on the Ba'abda Presidential Palace, where Aoun based his operations, as well as Aoun's base of support in East Beirut. This fighting escalated in February 1989 when al-Hoss dismissed Aoun as head of the army and Aoun reacted by targeting militia activity through Beirut by closing the illegal militia ports, an important source of supplies, particularly for the LF. Aoun's position became increasingly untenable through 1989 as he turned his attention to confronting both Syria and the United States, launching what he termed as a 'war of liberation' against the former. This led to the final violent spiral of the Lebanese conflict around Beirut.[25] Through 1989, Syria turned its attention to dislodging Aoun and launched a massive artillery

bombardment of East Beirut. This led to calls for negotiations, culminating in the meeting of the last 62 deputies of the final pre-war Lebanese parliament in the Saudi city of Taef in September 1989. The meeting was convened by the Arab Higher Tripartite Committee (HTC), established by the Arab League in May 1989, and made up of the foreign ministers of Saudi Arabia, Algeria and Morocco, and led by chief negotiator, the Algerian Lakhdar Brahimi.[26]

The Taef Agreement was released in early November and was immediately dismissed by Aoun who responded by calling for the disillusion of parliament. This led the deputies present at the Taef negotiations to call on Syria to impose a military solution to Aoun's resistance.[27] Aoun was finally removed after he opposed the al-Hoss government's appointment of Rene Mua'awad as President. Mua'awad was assassinated later that month and replaced by the less conciliatory Elias al-Hrawi. Al-Hrawi immediately called for Aoun's resignation leading to a final confrontation between Aoun's supporters at Ba'abda, the LF and the Syrian army. Syria's position was strengthened in August 1990 when Iraq, Aoun's last external supporter, invaded Kuwait. This provoked a substantial American response and also allowed Syria, in return for support for the Americans in the Persian Gulf, to be granted the right to control the situation in Lebanon.[28] Thus, although the HTC theoretically directed the negotiations, Syria would prove to be the dominant force in shaping and enforcing the agreement.

The al-Hrawi government ratified the Taef Agreement in September 1990, and Aoun found himself in a position where he was forced to recognise this government as the legitimate government of Lebanon. This removed the controversy of the two competing regimes; however, Aoun continued to occupy the Ba'abda Palace. Consent for the Syrian storming of the Palace was given in October, leading to Aoun's arrest and exile to France and the imprisonment of the Aoun loyalists.

The Taef Agreement emerged after negotiations that began in May 1989 in Casablanca, Morocco. The initial meeting formed the HTC, a group who sought to take direct charge of the ailing resolution process in the country. The meetings were held between 31 Christian and 31 Muslim deputies of the 71 surviving members of the 1972 Lebanese Parliament. Syria was not present at the negotiations;

however, it did have observer status and was consulted on every part of the agreement as the major international power in Lebanon.[29] The final agreement was built on four points dealing with general principles and reforms, issues of internal sovereignty, Israeli occupation, and the Lebanese-Syrian relationship. The first section was the most detailed, divided into three sub-sections focusing on general principles, political reforms, and other reforms. It is important to clarify the main themes of the agreement. In particular, the opening sections of the agreement represent an effort to balance key demands of the Christian and Muslim communities in terms of Lebanese political identity.

For instance, section I, article A declares Lebanon a 'sovereign, free and independent country', a central part of the Maronite platform for negotiations and their emphasis on Lebanese independence and regional particularity.[30] The next article states that Lebanon is 'Arab in belonging and identity', a central part of the Muslim platform and its emphasis on the connection between Lebanon and the regional state system, particularly its relationship to Syria.[31] Following on from this, the agreement sought to introduce specific institutional reforms as a way to address the balance of power within the confessionally based political system. In particular, there was a shifting of power away from the Maronite-held office of the President towards the Chamber of Deputies and the Parliament, investing greater power in the Sunni-held office of Prime Minister and Shi'a-held Speaker of the House.

The final three sections dealt largely with the role of external powers in Lebanon, particularly Israel and Syria. First, the issue of internal sovereignty focussed on the effort to gradually replace Syrian custodianship with a Lebanese presence throughout the country as the central element of extending Lebanese internal sovereignty. The controversy surrounding the continuing Syrian presence in Lebanon reached a head in early 2005 with the assassination of former Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri and the growing civil and political unrest against the Syrians in Lebanon. Backed by UNSCR 1559, pressure on the Syrians became overwhelming seeing their final withdrawal from Lebanon in April 2005.[32]

The Taef Agreement was stark in its declaration of the Lebanese relationship with Israel, calling for the government to assist in 'liberating Lebanon from Israeli occupation'.[33] There is no reference to attempts to normalise relations between Lebanon and Israel. Instead,

the Taef Agreement called for a reinstatement of the truce lines between the two states drawn after 23 March 1949, the implementation of the 1979 UNSCR 425, which called for the withdrawal of Israeli forces from Lebanon, and the introduction of a UN peacekeeping force.[34] This stands in contrast to the position of Lebanon vis-à-vis Syria as outlined by Taef, emphasising the 'special relationship' between the two states.[35] Here, the Syrians had seemingly locked Lebanon into a state of a 'disguised protectorate' where it may use the status of the special relationship to enforce itself on its smaller neighbour.[36]

Whilst there is an abundance of views on the Taef Agreement, they can be loosely grouped into three perspectives. Firstly, those hostile to both the content of Taef and subsequent Syrian military occupation of the country; secondly, those relatively favourable to the content of the agreement and the Syrian military occupation; and thirdly, those who view the content of the Taef Agreement in a favourable light but are antagonistic toward the Syrian presence in Lebanon. It is important to note the political correlations in these perspectives. For instance, there are parallels between anti-Syrian sentiment in Lebanon and many of the Maronite parties within Lebanon, Maronite groups outside the country, as well as perspectives from within many Western governments.[37] To illustrate, the George W. Bush administration had been active in terms of pressuring Syria in line with its broader Middle Eastern policy. The clearest reflection of this has been a two-pronged effort at, firstly, seeking to force a Syrian withdrawal from the country and secondly seeking a full disarmament of Hezbollah.[38] These views are consolidated by a body of academic and popular views critical of the Syrian role and supportive of maintaining the confessional system in Lebanon.[39] Alternatively, there are groups favourable to the agreement as the key tool to move beyond the confessional structure, particularly many Muslim and leftist parties, as well as Hezbollah.[40] For the latter, the agreement allowed for the maintenance of the Hezbollah militia as a 'resistance force' to Israeli occupation. Also, with the dismantling of proportional representation in the Lebanese Parliament as well as the Executive, Hezbollah stands as the single most powerful political party in the country. The third perspective seeks to emphasise the useful functional elements within Taef, particularly relating to the stated intention toward de-confessionalisation.[41]

However, there is a prominent theme in this literature antagonistic to the former Syrian occupation of Lebanon. In particular, Joseph Maila and Sami Ofeish see Lebanon as being unnecessarily drawn into the continuing tensions between Syria and Israel, with the latter sections of the agreement enshrining this.[42] This was damaging to Lebanon, a state that has been at the mercy of regional and global political influence and manipulations since independence. The continuation of international exploitation of Lebanon, according to this perspective, has contributed to the perpetuation of instability in the country.[43] The key theme to note in terms of these analyses of the Taef Agreement is their almost uniform view that the settlement does not change the structure of the political institutions in Lebanon. Difference occurs at the level of opinion over the legitimacy of these institutions and the effects of the particular tenets of the agreement in terms of validating the Syrian presence in the country. Whilst there are links between these issues, with those less critical of the Syrian presence as tending to be the most adverse to a continuation of the confessional political system, this is not necessarily a uniform view. Maila echoes this when he challenges both the Syrian presence and the reinforcement of the confessional system through Taef as the key to true Lebanese 'independence'.[44]

The Details of the Taef Agreement

The Taef Agreement was an effort on the part of the Arab League to 'Arabise the solution of the Lebanese crisis'.[45] This was an important step on the part of the community of Arab states to articulate a response to the crisis that had received pronounced international attention through the 1970s and 1980s. Compared to earlier negotiations (1976, 1983 and 1985), the Taef Agreement was the least representative as it was constituted predominantly by pre-war parliamentarians with no major militia figure present.[46]

The Taef Agreement was heavily influenced by the 1985 Damascus agreement. In particular, it echoed the desire to affirm the independence of Lebanon as well as the interconnectedness between internal and external factors contributing to the conflict. However, where the leaders of the major militias in Lebanon signed the Damascus agreement, only the 62 surviving members of Lebanon's 73-seat 1972 parliament signed the Taef Agreement.[47] This represented a particular element to the agreement where it was, more than

earlier agreements, the product of external negotiation and agreement than a generic, local form of negotiated settlement. This was most symbolised by the role of Syria as the enforcer of the agreement due to its predominant position within the country with the backing of the United States, France, and the HTC. All parties, however, did not uniformly accept Syrian dominance in Lebanon. It was, superficially at least, a comprehensive agreement in that it contained elements pertaining to both internal reforms and foreign affairs. To address these factors, the Taef Agreement was built around four issues dealing with both internal and external elements relevant to the resolution of the conflict: general principles and reforms, the establishment of Lebanese sovereignty, Lebanon and Israel and Lebanon and Syria.

The first section of the Taef Agreement, "General Principles and Reforms", was the most detailed including elaborate sections on "General Reforms" (article I), "Political Reforms" (article II), and "Other Reforms" (article III). The general reforms reiterate the key elements of Lebanese identity and represent those issues most debated during Lebanon's political history, namely the status of confessional politics as the central organising principle as well as Lebanon's place within the regional and global system of states.[48] However, they did not present any major break with the pre-existing elements constituting the Lebanese political system, as it existed before the war. Instead, they reaffirmed the elements of confessional diversity within the country, its relative separateness from the other states within the Arab state system as well as the stark free-market liberalist basis of the Lebanese economy. Each of these elements was tempered with seemingly contradictory statements seeking to move away from internal divisions within the country, efforts to emphasise Lebanon's Arab identity, as well as to institute programmes of social justice in the country.

Opening the agreement, there was a declaration of the independence of Lebanon as well as its Arab character 'in belonging and identity'.[49] This was an attempt to balance between the desire of many Christian groups, which sought to detach Lebanon from the direct influence of powerful Arab neighbours, particularly Syria and many Muslim groups, which sought to maintain the place of Lebanon within the community of Arab states. The text of article I is close to the declaration made during the National Dialogue Committee in

1983 between major militia and political leaders.[50] Thus, it represented controversial but familiar elements to the major political players. This also echoed the "double-negation agreement" underlying the 1943 National Pact, which balanced these elite interests in Lebanon. Concerning this central issue of identity and the place within the regional and global system of states, the Taef Agreement embodied the principle that Lebanon was 'as Arab as it was independent'.[51] This was a central theme in Lebanese politics since 1943 and has continued to underline contemporary debates. The Taef Agreement, therefore, was very much in the tradition of settlements influenced by Lebanese approaches to political balance and compromise.

The Taef Agreement sought to take great care in defining Lebanon in this opening section. The territorial boundaries of the state were clearly demarcated in article 1 of the Lebanese constitution; however, this has been subject to contestation from Israel and Syria, both before and after 1990. More controversial is the definition of Lebanese society, particularly the role of confessional identity in relation to national and regional identity. Again, the Taef Agreement sought to compromise between the major strands within Lebanon that called for either the maintenance of confessional identity or a move to de-confessionalism. Article I of the Taef Agreement advocated for respect for diversity within the Republic, but sounded out the move away from institutional representation protecting confessional diversity. This is taken up in article II of the document. However, each step toward the de-confessionalisation of Lebanese politics is conditioned with statements highlighting the ideology of cultural pluralism (*al-ta'adudiyya al-thaqafiyya*) as the defining element of the Lebanese political community.[52]

Outside the political realm, article I makes specific reference to the economic system in Lebanon, also an element of considerable controversy. The freewheeling economic activity of the late 1950s and 1960s led to the accumulation of immense wealth in Lebanon, but also highlighted the great income disparities in the country. Muslim, particularly Shi'a, political groups that emerged at this time focussed on this wealth gap in the country with many of these groups developing distinctly leftist political ideologies.[53] Thus, the Taef Agreement again sought to compromise between maintaining Lebanon's economic system as a 'free system that guarantees individual initiative

and private ownership' whilst also advocating an 'economically balanced development' programme with an emphasis on achieving 'comprehensive social justice through fiscal, economic, and social reforms'.[54] The continuation of wealth concentration in the Maronite-Sunni economic and political elite after 1990 and the blowing out of Lebanese state debt during the 1990s belied the genuine commitment towards this end.[55]

Thus, the "General Reforms" did not present *reforms* as such; instead, they presented a reiteration of the key compromises that had underlined the Lebanese social contract since 1943. In particular, they were a reiteration of Lebanon's distinct political and religious diversity and democratic heritage as well as its place within the broader system of Arab states. They also emphasised Lebanon's independence, a questionable assertion in light of the Syrian occupation of the country. In addition, article I proposed the maintenance of the country's liberal economic system, a system to be mitigated through efforts toward the institution of a programme of social justice and balanced economic development.

This opening section highlighted how the Taef Agreement was framed as a concerted effort to please all parties, leaving it caught between contradictory tensions and interests. It reflected the will of the external sponsors to the agreement to end the fighting but not to thoroughly address the key elements of discord fracturing Lebanese society. Indeed, the inability of the Taef Agreement to achieve these seemingly contradictory stated aims was compounded by the Syrian occupation that undermined Lebanon's independence, the continued domination of Lebanon's economic and political elites as well as it still being at the mercy of regional political developments.

The tension between emphasising the diversity and unity of Lebanon is the central element of strain between both the parties to the agreement as well as the warring factions. This manifested itself in the form of debates over the effort to institute forms of political de-centralisation in Lebanon as a compromise between the extreme position of some Maronite groups advocating secession and those Muslim groups advocating full political centralisation and de-confessionalisation.[56] Article II of the Taef Agreement sought to balance between these in the form of institutional changes that were aimed at redressing the balance of power within the confessional

system away from the dominance of the Maronite-held Presidency toward the Parliament and Cabinet. However, they did not introduce any specific reforms that would give a firm commitment toward the de-confessionalisation of the Lebanese political system.

The "Political Reforms" enshrined in article II were divided into seven sections dealing with reforms to the major political institutions in the country as well as de-confessionalisation.[57] Two key reforms lie at the core of the Taef Agreement's modification of parliamentary powers. First, there was an increased role given to the position of Parliamentary Speaker, a role allocated to a member of the Shi'a community. The Speaker's term was extended and the ability of either Parliament or the President to remove the Speaker was reduced.[58] The increased powers allocated to the Parliament and the Cabinet also increase the influence of the Speaker. Other Parliamentary reforms include two modifications to the system of proportional representation established by the National Pact in 1943; first, a redistribution of seats from a permanent six to five Christian majority to equal Christian–Muslim representation as well as an increase in the number of Parliamentary seats from 73 to 108.[59] In addition, there were calls for the creation of a Senate to complement the existing one-chamber Parliamentary system.[60]

These final political reforms again highlight the counterbalancing tendencies within the Taef Agreement. The shift from the "6:5 principle" to equal Christian–Muslim representation in Parliament is only a marginal reform in terms of the overall political landscape. Certainly, with the Parliament invested with increased powers, the larger Muslim representation within the institution allows the various Muslim groups an increased voice. However, it also worked to enshrine the institution of religiously based political sectarianism within the country. Indeed, this comes through with the proposal for the creation of a Senate. An upper house in the Lebanese Parliament would be the confessional safeguard with direct representation in the existing lower house. However, without any steps to remove the sectarian basis for lower house seat selection the creation of an upper house is an irrelevant gesture.

This maintenance of pre-existing political tendencies also comes through in the issue of the expansion of the parliament. The 1985 Damascus agreement sought to expand Parliament to 198 seats whilst the early drafts of the Taef Agreement proposed an expansion to

128 seats.[61] The limiting of Parliamentary expansion was a product of the Lebanese representation at the Taef negotiation. The Lebanese delegation, as previously mentioned, was made up of pre-war Parliamentarians. These members of the Lebanese Parliament sought to maintain their position in the political hierarchy, an effort to limit calls for increased political representation from wartime figures. Therefore, capping the number of new seats as low as possible ensured, at least in the short-term, they would dominate the early post-war Lebanese Parliament.

Before the reforms of the Taef Agreement, the Presidency was an office reserved exclusively for the Maronite community and held considerable powers within the political structure. In particular, the President not only held the symbolic role as Head of State, but also had a host of mechanisms by which to direct the political functioning of the country. In this, the President could operate largely separate to the aims of the Parliament.[62] However, the key institutional reforms of the Taef Agreement aimed at shifting these specific powers away from the executive and investing them in the legislature. In particular, the President must now pass all proposals through the Parliament for ratification as well as seek Parliamentary approval for the selection of Cabinet Ministers.[63] The President also lost voting power within the Cabinet as well as final decision-making on the promulgation of laws, a power transferred to Parliament.[64] Therefore, the Presidency suffered the most in terms of the institutional reforms outlined in the Taef Agreement, which stripped it of most of its independent powers, now serving largely as a symbolic institution within the Lebanese political system. This was a highly symbolic act in that it removed a considerable amount of institutional power from the Maronite-held office toward the Muslim-held institutions and the Parliament. Indeed, the upheavals of early 2005 led not only to the Syrian withdrawal from the country, but also a devaluing of the Presidency in the eyes of the population. The June 2005 Parliamentary elections have now invested this institution with a body of delegates seemingly eager for change.

The office of Prime Minister, along with the other institutions outside the executive, also benefited from the powers removed from the President. In particular, the Prime Minister gained from the increased powers of the Parliament that 'he represents … and speaks in its name'.[65] The Prime Minister heads the Cabinet (the Council of

Ministers), now the most empowered institution in the Lebanese political system.[66] The empowerment of the Cabinet at the expense of the Presidency represented the most radical political reform in the Taef Agreement. Indeed, the issue of the power balance between the Cabinet and the Presidency was a central element of debate between the Muslim and Christian deputies at the various negotiations through the late 1970s and 1980s.[67] Thus, within the framework of the Taef Agreement reforms, this is the most significant modification to the Lebanese political system resulting from the peace agreement.

Despite this rearrangement of powers within the political structure of Lebanon, the Taef Agreement did little to fundamentally change the foundations of the system that fell apart so dramatically after 1975. Indeed, the shifting of powers away from the Maronite-held Presidency to the institutions of the Parliament and especially the Sunni-held role of Prime Minister (who also acts as the head of the Council of Ministers) simply reinforced the logic of the confessional system. Even the stated aims to remove the confessional system echoed those in the Pact. As early as 1943, confessionalism was intended as a transitional basis for the Lebanese political system, a guarantee of short-term stability designed to ensure Christian participation in and a high degree of control over politics in Lebanon.[68] However, the enshrinement of the principle through the 1950s and 1960s continued in the Taef Agreement even after a 15-year war between the confessional communities.

Broader political reforms were briefly covered in article III of the Agreement, namely administrative decentralisation, the judicial, electoral, and education systems, as well as statements on socio-economic development and information laws. Unfortunately, these reforms were dealt with in an overly brief manner neglecting many important areas of social reconstruction. In particular, encouraging as it is that the issues of national education and public space are addressed, their treatment in a more thoroughgoing manner would have helped the strength of the agreement immensely.

In terms of administrative decentralisation, the Taef Agreement worked against its own statements. It called for a programme of decentralisation; however, the provisions of the Taef Agreement actually fostered an increased centralisation of power. For instance, whilst the powers of 'governors and district administrative officers shall be expanded' they actually became more accountable to the central

authority.[69] In addition, they are supplanted 'at the level of the smaller administrative units (district and smaller units) through the election of a council, headed by the district officer, in every district'.[70] The Taef Agreement sought to transfer power to local authorities (*caza*), bypassing the regional-level authorities (*mohafazat*); however, the representatives of the various *caza* 'are headed by agents of the central power'.[71] The *caza* also became the focus of central government activity in its development plans.[72] Therefore, a true decentralisation based on giving autonomous powers to the local and regional-level representatives is absent.

The electoral law was also briefly dealt with in this section, treatment that required considerable clarification after the agreement for elections to be held. The principle modification that stemmed from the brief statement led to the move toward the *mohafazat* rather than the *caza* being the main electoral district. However, many electoral law changes through the 1990s and into the early 21st century drew criticism as manipulations designed to stifle the anti-Syrian opposition.[73]

In terms of the judicial system, there are points that both reinforce and work against confessionalism. First, the Taef Agreement established a constitutional court where the right to revise the constitution is extended to the President, the Speaker, the PM, certain members of Parliament, as well as 'the heads of the Lebanese sects' in order to 'ensure the principle of harmony between religion and state'.[74] Here, the heads of the sects have influence over issues including institutional moves toward de-confessionalisation. However, appointment of some members to the court is done through peer selection, a move that can be interpreted as seeking to move away from a stacking of the court with confessional representatives.[75]

Education and information were the final two factors dealt with in this section. Whilst there is some mention of the detail of education reform in the Taef Agreement, particularly statements as to the need to develop 'curricula (that) shall be reviewed and developed in a manner that strengthens national belonging, fusion, spiritual and cultural openness, and that unifies textbooks on the subjects of history and national education', more detail is again required to address this crucial issue.[76] The need to develop a national education programme has been identified by many prominent Lebanese academics

and political figures as a crucial step toward moving beyond the divisiveness of confessional politics in Lebanon. Similarly, the statement on the necessity for reforming the Lebanese information laws to promote inclusiveness and not act as sectarian mouthpieces is dealt with in too vague a manner. This is particularly disconcerting when one examines the broad and incredibly vibrant scale of the Lebanese press.

Overall, this section, whilst dealing with some crucial issues such as education, electoral reform and the judiciary, is sorely lacking in detail. Such ambiguity allowed the manipulation of elements by the dominating forces after the war, particularly the Syrians in relation to the electoral law. In addition, it allowed for the relegation of important factors, particularly educational reform.

Issues relating to both the establishment of Lebanese sovereignty (section two) and the relationship between Syria and Lebanon (section four) were negotiated differently to that of the rest of the Taef Agreement. Syria, whilst not being an official representative to the Taef Agreement had agreed on the text of sections two and four prior to the final negotiation period.[77] Here, the influence of Syria over the outcome of the agreement becomes evident in that it required that both sections be admitted verbatim with no debate or they would not accept the agreement. These sections had no input from the Lebanese deputies at the Taef Agreement negotiations and were designed to protect Syrian interests in Lebanon after the agreement.[78]

Two factors are paramount in this section. First is the establishment of Lebanese authority over its entire territory, and second is the role of Syria in restoring Lebanese sovereignty. The establishment of Lebanese sovereignty is premised on the creation of a national unity government, the disarming of militias, the creation of an internal security force and the restoration of the Lebanese army.[79] Here, the Taef Agreement was insistent on the role of the Lebanese government in acting to restore state sovereignty. The Agreement set a timeline for the restoration of Lebanese sovereignty where the government was to establish state authority 'with the state's own forces' within one year.[80] In addition, the militias had six months to disarm after the creation of the national unity government. However, the status of Hezbollah as an armed militia is ambiguous in light of its role in relation to section three of the Taef Agreement. There is mention of 'non-Lebanese militias' and their disarmament but no mention of the requirement to

expel non-Lebanese armed forces.[81] Exception was made in section three regarding Israel; therefore, the Taef Agreement did not call for the expulsion of the Syrian army despite the requirement of the Lebanese state to extend Lebanese sovereignty. This may be differentiated from the efforts to remove the Iranian *Pasdaran* militias operating in Lebanon since the early 1980s.[82]

The Taef Agreement explicitly guaranteed 'the right of every Lebanese evicted since 1975 to return to the place from which he was evicted' as well as the issuing of 'the means of reconstruction'.[83] This wording was initially part of the 1984 Lausanne Document; however, reference to this group appears to neglect the émigré community.[84] That is, reference is made to the displaced Lebanese resident population (*Lubnan al-muqim*) but not those who fled the country (*Lubnan al-mughtarib*).[85] This is a very controversial issue as there was the attempt to displace people and create homogenous confessional enclaves in various parts of the country throughout the war, thus, any settlement of this conflict needed to be far more thorough in its treatment of this issue.

Finally, this section dealt with the role of Syria in relation to the re-establishment of Lebanese sovereignty. The Taef Agreement gave Syria a major role in post-war Lebanon. Indeed, Syria consistently presented itself as external to the dispute rather than a participant. Its exclusion from the negotiation process leading to the Taef Agreement was only acceptable to the Syrians in light of the acceptance of the standing forms of sections two and four of the agreement. Here, the Syrian presence in Lebanon was *de facto* legalised after eight years of illegal presence in the country. Initially, Syria entered Lebanon as part of the Arab Deterrent Force (ADF) created at the first summit on the settlement of the Lebanese conflict in Cairo in 1976. By 1983, the mandate of the ADF had expired and the Syrians remained on Lebanese soil in an illegal capacity. However, the Taef Agreement saw the legalisation of the Syrian presence through calls for 'the Syrian forces [to] thankfully assist the forces of the legitimate Lebanese government to spread the authority of the State of Lebanon'.[86] This was a limited arrangement with the presence of the Syrian forces to last only two years after the formation of the National Unity government. From this point, the Syrians were to withdraw to the Beka'a Valley before a final withdrawal date to be negotiated between the Lebanese and Syrian governments.[87] As events were to

show, the Syrians largely ignored the two-year limit and maintained a direct military presence as well as economic and political domination and surveillance by the Syrian intelligence forces (*mukhabarat*) until April 2005.

Section three of the Taef Agreement relating to Lebanon and Israel is by far the most definitive. The Taef Agreement calls for the 'liberating [of] Lebanon from Israeli occupation' with three key clauses.[88] First, efforts were to be made to 'implement resolution 425 and the other UN Security Council resolutions calling for fully eliminating the Israeli occupation'.[89] Security Council Resolution 425 was passed on 19 March 1978 after the first Israeli invasion of Lebanon.[90] Along with the subsequent resolutions 508 and 509 (passed 26 May and 6 June 1982 respectively, after the second Israeli invasion), the resolution called for a full Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon as well as a ceasefire between the two states. Israel occupied southern Lebanon from the end of the war in 1990 until May 2000.

Outside of this, Israel continues to occupy the 25 square-kilometre Sheba'a farm district in southeastern Lebanon. This territory, internationally recognised as part of Syria, was occupied by Israel after the June 1967 war along with the Golan Heights. The Lebanese government's claims to sovereignty over the farms district with Syrian compliance can be seen as a way to assert that Israel has not fully complied with Security Council Resolutions 425, 508 and 509 even after their withdrawal from the south of the country. This gives Hezbollah tacit exemption from disarmament called for in the Taef Agreement, as they can claim to be acting under section three of the agreement in 'liberating Lebanon from Israeli occupation'.[91] Further to this, section three of the Taef Agreement called for a restoration of the ceasefire agreement between Israel and Syria, concluded on 23 March 1949. Here, it is important to note that the Taef Agreement did not call for a peace treaty with Israel but for a restoration of the ceasefire that stood from 1949 to 1976. Therefore, Lebanon is not removed from the broader regional tensions but remains technically in a state of war with Israel.

The final paragraph in section three is the starkest in calling for 'taking all the steps necessary to liberate all Lebanese territories from the Israeli occupation, to spread state sovereignty over all the territories'.[92] The Lebanese army and the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) were given the mandate to extend Lebanese

sovereignty, and to ensure the full withdrawal of Israel from Lebanon. However, the statement that 'all necessary steps' be taken to remove the Israeli presence has also been used by Hezbollah and its backers to legitimate their continued status as an armed group outside direct state authority.

Therefore, section three is direct in its intent to remove all Israeli forces from Lebanon. It also seeks to position Lebanon as a "front-line" state in the broader Arab-Israeli conflict in that it did not call for a peace treaty between the two states, as has been established between Israel and Egypt as well as Israel and Jordan. Whilst there are provisions in both section two and three calling for the full disarmament of non-government militias in Lebanon, there was sufficient latitude for the main anti-Israeli group, Hezbollah, to maintain its armed forces as a resistance force to Israeli occupation.

Section four, dealing with the relationship between Lebanon and Syria, highlights how this relationship is the most important element relating to external factors in the agreement. As outlined above, the text of this section was decided upon before the tabling of the agreement, and was not open for alteration or accommodation. The central element of this brief section focussed on the 'special relationship' between Lebanon and Syria, a concept outlined before the civil war and reiterated in most of the agreements reached during the conflict. For instance, the 1985 Tripartite Agreement described Lebanon's 'inevitable, fateful link to Syria'. In the Taef Agreement, the relationship is described in terms of 'blood relationships, history, and joint fraternal interests'.[93] In this, Lebanon's links to the system of Arab states was reaffirmed over its separateness, also highlighting the influence of Syria's wishes to maintain Lebanon as an ally in the tension with Israel.[94] The emphasis on the 'special relationship' between Lebanon and Syria resulted in the gradual intertwining of the political and economic lives of the two countries. For instance, in 1991 Syria and Lebanon signed the "Strategic Pact of Coordination, Cooperation, and Complementarity" covering the areas of political, economic, social, cultural, military and security matters.[95] This agreement tied Lebanon to Syria in all facets of state activity, essentially giving Syria power to veto any decisions taken in Lebanon that would be contrary to its interests.

In terms of security interests, section four established a relationship between Lebanon and Syria whereby Lebanon must ensure that

it does not 'allow itself to become a pathway or a base for any force, state, or organisation seeking to undermine its security or Syria's security'.[96] In addition, Syria is enabled not to 'permit any act that poses a threat to Lebanon's security, independence, and sovereignty'. Therefore, whilst Syria is not permitted to act as a threat against Lebanese 'security', it is able to intervene in Lebanon to protect its own security. Lebanon is not given reciprocal rights in this regard, and it is here where the crux of Syria's special position vis-à-vis Lebanon resides. Its military presence in Lebanon is legalised for the first time since its intervention in 1976 under the auspices of the Arab Deterrent Force. The controversy surrounding the continuing Syrian presence in Lebanon came to a head in early 2005 with the assassination of al-Hariri and the growing civil and political unrest against the Syrians in Lebanon. Backed by Security Council Resolution 1559, pressure on the Syrians became overwhelming, seeing their final withdrawal from Lebanon in April 2005.[97]

The Enshrinement of Confessional Politics in Lebanon

The Taef Agreement was a reaffirmation of the principles underlying the 1943 National Pact, and whilst it did allow for a redistribution of power relationships within the political structure of the country, there was no major overhaul to the confessional system. The influence of political culture has buttressed the control of pre-war political elites and regional states in the formation of the document in terms of enshrining the pre-war political structure rather than addressing necessary areas of reform. Despite reference to the need for the de-confessionalisation of the Lebanese political structure in the Taef Agreement, no mechanism was put in place nor was any timetable established to achieve this end.[98] Instead, there was an inversion of the pre-existing power structure in the country. Where the Maronite-held executive was once the seat of dominance, power was shifted to the Sunni Prime Ministership as head of the empowered Council of Ministers. This was a dangerous proposition in that it continued to work against the collegial philosophy that is needed for a consociational model to function. That is, the Taef Agreement continues to exclude the Shi'a and Druze groups from positions of real authority, although the Shi'a position is somewhat increased with the new powers for the Speaker of the House. It also undermined the basis for Maronite participation in the Republic, creating an ironic situation

where the confessional system, designed to ensure their inclusion in the republic in the first place, became a tool for their political disempowerment.[99]

The lack of mechanisms for bringing about an end to political sectarianism in the Taef Agreement also worked to reinforce the political status quo in Lebanon. The Taef Agreement required a two-thirds majority for Parliament to pass legislation on 'fundamental issues', such as removing allocated seats and positions within the political system.[100] Therefore, agreement over the issue of de-confessionalisation must come from the leadership of the confessional communities. The representatives of these confessional communities in the Lebanese parliament are community elders who owe their positions to the system of confessional patrimony. Thus, those who are often the most vehement defenders of confessionalism are charged with deciding when and how this process will eventuate.

The investing of increased powers in Parliament represents a manifestation of cultural influence within the emphasis on the maintenance of the status quo and community cohesion over change. Both Lebanese and Arab political culture has sought to emphasise the 'practice of compromise' within the political structure over direct political contestation.[101] In Lebanon, the primacy of compromise over the facing of direct questions relating to the viability of the confessional structure is seen in the reinforcement of the confessional structure and the move of powers within this system to Parliament. This was reinforced through the move to representation within Parliament being based on equal Christian and Muslim seat allocation.[102] However, those who originally designed the confessional system, institutionalised in the 1943 National Pact, 'warned against the inherent dangers of the confessional system and stressed its temporariness'.[103] For Lebanon to find itself at the same point 50 years after the National Pact shows how the confessional system is fully entrenched as the only model that political elites are able to agree on. That these elites are themselves representatives drawn from their standing within the confessional communities is testament to the self-fulfilling logic of such a system.

The heavy focus on institutional reform in the document leaves little space for resolution of other issues, particularly reform in terms of decentralisation, economic and social reconstruction, education, as well as the restoration of public spaces. In this way, the Taef

Agreement clung to the logic for political organisation that not only undermined its own stated intentions for future reform but also undermined 'civic consciousness and commitment to Lebanon as a nation-state. Indeed, the forces that motivate and sustain harmony, balance and prosperity are also the very forces that can pull the society apart and contribute to conflict, tension and civil disorder. The ties that bind, in other words, also unbind.'[104]

This is a contradictory process, whereby groups seek shelter within communal solidarities due to the course of violent conflict. Yet, this very act reinforces the solidarity and insularity of community identities. Indeed, there is another irony here, one that centres on the fact that these communal groups, perpetually drawn apart, are united through the common suffering of each group.[105] During the period of French Mandate in Lebanon, a 'coherent constitutional philosophy' framed the development of political rule toward the accommodation of confessional realities in Lebanon.[106] That is, confessionalism was predicated on the rules of constitutional politics to ensure inclusion and participation. However, after the civil war, the confessional structure has dictated the remodelling of state institutions. The logic for assigning political roles and functions to confessional communities was at the dictates of pre-war confessional elites who have merely shuffled powers between them rather than worked towards removing the confessional yoke from Lebanese politics. Therefore, the war 'ended as if it had never happened' in terms of its impacts on the Lebanese political structure.[107] The war had destroyed the country, its physical and social environments, yet the logic for confessional politics remained. The emphasis on returning to a level of community cohesion and a status quo of social harmony has enabled the confessional system to be re-established despite the fifteen years of destruction that are evidence of its shortcomings.

The collapse of the Lebanese state resulted from the inability of the country's sectarian communities to agree over Lebanese identity and the exploitation of this by external powers. This dynamic exacerbated the centrifugal tendencies within the state and, combined with a lack of centralised institutional mechanisms to prevent communal confrontation, violent contestation ensued. Thus, state collapse was the result of social weakness and division, an element fostered by regional and global interests. The collapse of the state removed any mechanism for checking the development of armed conflict, leading

it to spiral out of control. In this, the Taef Agreement was heavily influenced by the need to bring back civil relations between the communities, even if that meant a restoration of the pre-war political order. However, the dysfunctional nature of sectarianism as a basis for political community weakens the Taef Agreement as a resolution mechanism in that it further enshrines division in Lebanon. Conversely, the weakness of the Lebanese state has enabled the development of local practices of conflict resolution and social management, particularly within the Shi'a community.

The Taef Agreement does not resolve the question of Lebanon's political identity. Instead, there is a continuation of the trade-off between those who promote Lebanon's links to the Arab world and those who focus on Lebanon's separateness from the region.[108] This latter factor would not be controversial in other regional environments; however, in the context of Arab politics it presents an explicit refutation of the idea of pan-Arab unity. Such an issue was central to the political platforms of all the major groups, particularly the Christian groups who questioned the ability of being able to separate Arab and Islamic identity. This debate over Arab identity in Lebanon continues to be divisive. Muslim organisations and many leftist parties placed Arab identity as a core guideline in many of their platforms where other groups were intensely focussed on the particularity of Lebanese identity. This 'insistence of defining Lebanon's identity seemed to separate the Lebanese into two different value systems leading to two types of national orientations'.[109] This created a dynamic in Lebanese politics whereby the Christian and Muslim communities each enforced or retracted their respective stances on Lebanese identity in line with the other side. That is, if the idea of a definitive Lebanese "identity/nationality" was enforced then so was the idea of Lebanon's place in the Arab world, and vice versa.

Thus, the "definition of Lebanon" in a regional context remains ambiguous, even contradictory as outlined by the Taef Agreement. It is mirrored at the domestic level, where inclusion in the community is not based on a clearly defined overarching idea of Lebanese identity, but on one's membership within one of the country's eighteen confessional communities. This is what Kalevi Holsti has defined as the 'horizontal basis of legitimacy' underpinning state strength.[110] That is, for a state to be legitimate, it must have a clear idea of the society over which it rules, with this society accepting the state's right

to rule based on inclusion within its community. This is something echoed in Arab perspectives on state strength and legitimacy. As early as the 14th century, Arab historian Ibn Khaldun highlighted how 'authority is derived from a group feeling (*'asabiyya*) through the continuous superiority over competing parties. However, the condition for the continuation of this authority is for the subservient parties to coalesce (*iltiham*) with the group who controls leadership.'[111]

In an environment where group feeling is continually divided through sectarian loyalties, the state is unable to generate sufficient legitimacy to enforce its authority. In this, a kind of 'war fatigue' has dominated the political environment where key issues of political, social, and economic reform are pushed away.[112] In this, the Taef Agreement is not a definitive document in bringing about such reform; instead, it led the country back to where it had started. It left society divided and the state at the mercy of sectarian interests. However, one must assess this bleak assessment of the document in relation to its ability to foster a more unitary sense of Lebanese political community. The Taef Agreement, for all its faults in this regard, can serve as a platform in fostering, for the first time, a working idea of Lebanese identity and a sense of Lebanese self. For novelist Elias Khoury, Lebanon has constantly been at war with itself, particularly over disagreements concerning what Lebanon should be. However, he contends that for the first time in its history, post-Taef Agreement Lebanon now understands 'that this is a country which can be built and can be accepted' by all its citizens.[113]

The upside of a focus on community cohesion over reform in the Taef Agreement is that it has held the country together, even if it is in stasis. If important initiatives are taken in the form of promoting an inclusive future for all Lebanese, the Taef Agreement may stand the test of history not as an accord that simply sought to please political elites, but held the country together in those vulnerable years after the war, and provided a basis for reconstruction and reconciliation.

Reform of the Lebanese Economy

The Lebanese economy mirrors the political system in the way it has maintained its pre-war form despite the attempts to alter its direction. Unlike political reforms, the Taef Agreement was brief in its dealing with economic adjustment, both stating that the 'economic

system is a free system that guarantees individual initiative and private ownership' whilst also calling for 'comprehensive social justice through fiscal, economic, and social reform'.[114] In essence, the Lebanese economic elite has clung tenaciously to its control over the economy undermining efforts in bringing about a comprehensive programme of social justice.

Lebanon has traditionally been a service-based economy, with smaller agricultural and industrial roots. The economy had grown steadily from the 1950s; however growth was unbalanced in terms of 'sector, region and social stratum'.[115] Whilst the economy experienced long periods of GDP growth, the benefit of this was received only in limited circles within Lebanese society, particularly the urban Christian and Sunni elite. Large sections of society, particularly the Shi'a and Palestinian communities, were excluded from accessing the benefits of Lebanon's economic vitality.

The war devastated the Lebanese economy. The loss of population due to both civilian deaths as well as the massive population flight out of the country (estimated at some 28 per cent of the pre-war population) was compounded by the destruction of the country's infrastructure, the education system as well as any investment interest from outside the country.[116] Despite this, the immediate post-war years were ones of optimism for the Lebanese economy. The establishment of the Council for Reconstruction and Development (CDR) in 1992 led to the generation of considerable funds for the reconstruction of the country. In addition, many of those Lebanese who had left sought to return with new skills learnt abroad during the fifteen years of war. The lead in the reconstruction programme was taken by Rafiq al-Hariri, who developed the "Horizon 2000" reconstruction programme as a coordinating body for the CDR. Al-Hariri also established the real estate company Solidére in 1994 as the primary tool for the reconstruction of Beirut. Solidére was given considerable 'tax privileges and other advantages to rebuild the central district of Beirut'.[117]

Until 1994, the Lebanese economy grew rapidly, achieving GDP growth of 8 per cent in that year. However, the growth of the Lebanese economy, and the optimism that came with it would soon dissipate. Due to the concentration of economic powers in the hands of al-Hariri and a small clique of wealthy business leaders, a lack of a coordinated economic policy between the successive governments,

the influence of Syria over the Lebanese economy, and the resultant explosion of public debt in the country. These factors, particularly the concentration of economic power in the hands of a few, represented the hijacking of the financial control of the country.[118] The domination of the reconstruction programme by a leading political and economic figure was a clear conflict of interest. After 1992, al-Hariri took close control over the purse strings of the Lebanese economy, directing funds for the reconstruction effort to Solidére's reconstruction programme in downtown Beirut, diverting funds away from statewide reconstruction. Decision-making powers for the reconstruction programme were taken out of the hands of Parliament and given to the CDR. This was a direct violation of the 'economically-balanced development' called for in the Taef Agreement.[119]

The Lebanese economy suffered repeated bouts of inflation that the government sought to counter by raising interest rates. However, to service its growing debt for reconstruction, the government borrowed more funds at these higher rates, leading to increased levels of debt.[120] However, many of the banks that funds were borrowed from were owned by al-Hariri, such as the Saudi-Lebanese Bank and the *Banque de la Mediterrannée*. Thus, the deterioration of the country's economic situation actually increased the wealth of the country's Prime Minister. Thus, al-Hariri's economic legacy sits in difficult relationship with his political legacy. Indeed, the economic activities of al-Hariri are reflective of elite political activity in Lebanon rather than a transformation of Lebanese political dynamics. Economic disparity has continued after the Taef Agreement. The Taef Agreement has not so much re-instigated the manipulation of the Lebanese economy by a small elite, but its lack of provisions to ensure the promotion of social justice has left the fragile post-war economy open to manipulation.

External Intervention and Manipulation

The Taef Agreement was negotiated largely separate from the major militia leaders in Lebanon. In its final form, local input was most pronounced in section one, with the other three sections negotiated primarily between Syria and the Tripartite Council. This model of third party arbitration and action is reflective of the practices of third parties in Arab resolution approaches; in particular, the model of the third party as interventionist and directive, as an intermediary

between belligerents, a party with an active interest in the conflict, as well as a party whose legitimacy stems, in part, from its authority.

However, the third party model, particularly in relation to Syria, differs from dominant cultural practice in the implementation that emphasises just outcomes. As has already been outlined, the Taef Agreement is shaped by a desire to reiterate the tenets of the pre-war political system as an effort to revive community cohesion in Lebanon. This has come at the expense not only of political reform but also of the need for justice. In this, Lebanon was caught in the broader patterns of regional politics where it was pulled into the direct orbit of a powerful neighbouring state through direct and legitimised military occupation, an occupation that only ended after fifteen years and a popular uprising.

Here, models of third party behaviour in the shaping of the Taef Agreement and the correspondence of this to normative patterns of conflict resolution in the Arab-Islamic context are outlined. In addition, the effects of this on post-war politics are explored through the selective implementation of the Taef Agreement through both the loss of Lebanese sovereignty as well as opposition to the Syrian presence forming a nucleus around which a political consensus could emerge. Thus, the third party role in the Taef Agreement has had both positive and negative effects for the country.

The Syrian government sought to play the role of third party in the Lebanese conflict since the very beginning of hostilities in April 1975. Its role changed from that of a mediator between the warring factions in the first year of the conflict before shifting to a stance of more direct involvement, positioning itself as an arbitrator as early as 1976. However, its claims to be an 'external party' to the conflict were belied from the very outset of the war. Early Syrian involvement was predicated on their claims to be seeking to calm the nascent crisis, however, the Syrian government had been active in arming the Palestinian militias in the country prior to 1975 and, by proxy, helping to arm the Muslim and leftist organisations also.[121]

Even with the steady escalation in violence through 1975, Syria believed that it could solve the conflict through passive mediation and, later, active intervention and arbitration. It was the latter model that would dominate the Syrian method of third party activity in Lebanon, ultimately succeeding in enabling an end to violence and the provision of short-term stability through the Taef Agreement.

However, its role in the final cessation of violence in Lebanon came after several unsuccessful attempts at direct action in settling the dispute. The activity of the Syrians in 1976, 1983/84 and 1985 differed from their role in the Taef Agreement negotiations. The Syrian stance in regards to Lebanon has always been based on the premise of contesting the separation of the two states. For instance, former Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad once stated that:

> historically, Syria and Lebanon have constituted one state and one people. And for that reason they have genuine common interests and close relationships … and this gives rise to a common security. This also gives rise to a close relationship between the peoples of the two countries. Thousands of families in Syria have branches in Lebanon, and thousands of families in Lebanon have branches in Syria.[122]

Whilst it was actively involved in the various attempts at conflict resolution during the Lebanese civil war, Syria was not an official party to the final negotiations of the Taef Agreement. In May 1989, an Arab League summit held in Casablanca called on the 'Arab nation … [to] help Lebanon emerge from its crisis', a statement that resulted in the formation of the HTC and direct negotiations to end the conflict.[123] The influence of Syria over the negotiations and the post-war settlement can be seen in several instances.

First, a draft of the agreement negotiated by the HTC and the pre-war Lebanese deputies, issued in June 1989, contained explicit reference to the role of Syria in the conflict. However, Syria claimed that it was an external party to the conflict, simply acting under the auspices of the Arab League's declaration from May 1989.[124] Here, Syria rejected the June draft of the Taef Agreement and forced the parties back to the negotiating table. Syria thus had unofficial control over acceptance of the agreement even though it was not officially a party to the negotiations. This position was put under pressure between June and September, when the HTC openly criticised Syrian intransigence particularly in regards to the tenets of the agreement dealing with Lebanese sovereignty. However, a series of meetings between HTC officials and the Syrian leadership up to September saw a compromise position emerge where Syria would be asked to assist

Lebanon in the extension of state sovereignty.[125] In regards to these negotiations, *Al-Hayat* reported how the Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad was asked two questions by then Algerian Foreign Minister Sid Ahmad Ghozali. The first being 'Would you like the Tripartite Committee to take up its mission?', the second being 'Is Syria prepared to withdraw from Lebanon some day?'. Asad answered yes to both questions, a simple exchange forming a key tenet of the Taef Agreement.[126]

Second, despite the fact that the Taef Agreement was, in theory, a settlement negotiated by parliamentary deputies and representatives of the Arab League through the HTC, Syria became the enforcer of the document. In particular, it actively sought to quell the remaining pockets of opposition to the agreement in the form of the Aoun loyalists. In this, it benefited greatly from regional and global events. The implementation of the Taef Agreement took place at the same time as the end of the Cold War, a development that occupied global attention and allowed Syria a freer hand in enforcing itself on Lebanon. Also, the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in August 1990 deprived Aoun of his last external backer and allowed the Syrians to manoeuvre into a position where they could facilitate United States support through participation in the anti-Iraq coalition.

Thus, it is possible to conclude that the most influential player in the formation and implementation of the Taef Agreement was Syria. In this, Syria was the arbiter, the third party to the end of the war in Lebanon. The strategies followed in this role closely mirror the third party roles reflective of certain trends in local resolution practice. In particular, Syria acted as an arbitrator, rather than in a mediator role, where it forged and implemented the tenets of the agreement as opposed to simply facilitating agreement between the belligerent parties. It had an active interest in the conflict despite its claims to be an external player. In addition, it enjoyed a measure of legitimacy in terms of its position as the most powerful force in the country. However, its place was undercut initially by the lack of consistent justice imposed through addressing the activities of the major militia leaders. Its legitimacy was damaged most of all by its efforts to cling on to Lebanon as a satellite state, undermining its position as a genuine defender of the tenets of the agreement.

In this, the success of the Taef Agreement in bringing about an end to the violent cycle in Lebanon was a function of this final Syrian

intervention accompanied by the backing of the major international players (the United States, the Arab League, Algeria, Morocco, Saudi Arabia and France), as well as the willingness of the major Lebanese groups to adhere to the agreement. This adherence was, in part, buttressed by the imposition of the solution rather than through a lengthy mediation process, a process closer to local patterns of resolution practice. However, the short-term stability provided by the Syrian military occupation of Lebanon came at the expense of civil liberties and the promotion of true national reconciliation. This latter factor was also precluded by the unwillingness of the political and economic elites of the country to engage in a concerted effort in moving toward a de-confessionalisation of the political structure of the country.

Thus, Syria's role as a third party leaves a mixed legacy. It did provide the immediate stability needed to end the conflict and establish state authority through most of the country. It also moderated the extreme elements within Lebanese society calling for a renewal of conflict or secession. However, the Syrian forces in Lebanon have avoided the implementation of much needed political reform as well as having a damaging effect on the Lebanese economy. Ironically, it was the efforts of the Syrians to remain in Lebanon, a factor undermining Lebanese sovereignty, which has provided the Lebanese people with a key issue around which a more cohesive national sentiment may be born. In this, the local third party model that shaped Syria's involvement in the formation of the Taef Agreement and activity in Lebanon later had initial positive effects. When it strayed from particular elements of this, especially the just implementation of the tenets of the Taef Agreement, its legitimacy fell away and it became seen as simply an occupying force, one that was eventually forced out of the country.

Collective Memory and Forced Forgetting in Lebanon

The Taef Agreement lacks specific processes to accommodate a move to a new understanding of Lebanese political community. Here, the document does not address the need for confronting the memory of the war and the total disruption of society. The question of Lebanese political identity, the parameters of what defines the community, is not resolved in light of the events between 1975 and 1990. Instead, the neglect of the need to remember the legacies of the war leaves

the post-war Lebanese generation in a vulnerable position. For the former leader of the Lebanese Communist Party, George Hawi, the war has left a legacy where '… nothing had changed. Actually, none of the Lebanese had won. Some principles, values and lessons had triumphed, if only the Lebanese could understand them'.[127]

In this, patterns of division have begun to re-emerge in Lebanese society despite the stated tenets within the Taef Agreement relating to the creation of a unitary political culture, a unified education system focussed on the development of a cohesive national history curriculum, and the establishment of economic reform centred on the idea of social justice.[128] The reassertion of elite interests, buttressed by cultural influences toward the forgetting of division and the denial of grievances, has hampered efforts to promote these goals. The following section explores these issues: the lack of movement towards the reintegration and clear definition of Lebanese identity, the restructuring of the Lebanese education system, and reform of the Lebanese economy.

The reforms of the education system in Lebanon contained in the Taef Agreement are key elements in assisting the development of community reconciliation and the de-politicisation of confessional identity.[129] In particular, the education system can be a vehicle in promoting the idea of a unitary and cohesive political community in Lebanon; developing an understanding of the war through a school curriculum is vital. This can help address the concern that the memory of the war, and the legacies it contains for Lebanon's post-war generation, are not relegated to a forgotten past.

Two elements in the Taef Agreement stand out in this regard, pertaining first to the strengthening of 'state control over private schools and textbooks', and second to a review of education curriculum 'in a manner that strengthens national belonging, fusion, spiritual and cultural openness, and that unifies textbooks on the subjects of history and national education'.[130] The fulfilment of these stated aims can be an important step in promoting both understanding and healing in Lebanon. Indeed, forgiveness through the recognition of past wrongs resonates in important local understandings of resolution and reconciliation.

Since 1990, there has been considerable effort to restructure the national education system by imposing state control over curriculum development in the country. Before 1990, education curricula had

largely been developed and implemented by representatives of sectarian groups with minimal state intervention. Public schools only provided services to a minimal percentage of the population. Religious education, even in public schools, was conducted in a segregated environment, where Muslim and Christian students were separated and given education only in their religion by theologists.[131] The suggestions made in the Taef Agreement were designed to modify arrangements such as these.

Throughout the 1990s, attempts were made to develop a unified national curriculum in less controversial areas of mathematics and the natural sciences. This was taken further in 1997 when Presidential Act No. 10227 called for the creation of standard textbooks for national education throughout the primary and secondary school systems.[132] This act also provided for the removal of compulsory religious education from schools. However, heavy lobbying from both Christian and Muslim religious leaders saw the quick retraction of this element of the law. Indeed, to date no unified secondary textbook has been produced. The development of the textbook was hindered by further objections from religious leaders, resulting in another revision to the education reform act in 2001 that saw the production of two textbooks, one Christian and one Muslim.[133]

There has been a backlash against the continued division within the national history curriculum and its neglect of sharing common understandings of the events of the war. In July 2005, a student committee from the American University of Beirut, the Université Saint Joseph, and the Lebanese University released a report which called for, amongst a series of political reforms, the development of a 'national consensus on the history of Lebanon by establishing a representative committee in the Ministry of Education responsible for developing a common history book to be taught as part of the national curriculum'.[134]

Such statements highlight the benefit of more institutional weight being given to developing a unified national curriculum, particularly in relation to national history and the history of the war. This process can be enhanced in the medium- and long-term by a large-scale re-education programme for the respect of individual and inter-group rights beginning at the primary school level. Without a re-education programme, competing interpretations of Lebanese

history and the legacy of the war will continue to divide Lebanese society, perpetuated in the youth of the country through political socialisation. Therefore, focus on long-term, generational change is important as it provides the most viable avenue toward the development of an inclusive idea of Lebanese political identity and community. Illustrative of this, many have sought the promotion of a 'liberal mentality', currently absent in the region, as the result of this re-education programme helping to buttress state strength on the basis of law, order and legitimacy.[135]

The development of a unitary history curriculum as a method for understanding and integrating the experience of the war into the consciousness of the Lebanese community, however, would benefit from the avoidance of imposing a linear interpretation of events. The development of a 'common history' should be premised on what the student committee sees as 'an open dialogue', allowing for debate over interpretation of events while agreeing on the actual existence of this traumatic history.[136] This is closely linked to the need to further define the idea of the Lebanese political community based on an inclusive, non-sectarian, non-exclusivist premise. The empowerment of communities who have been excluded from this definition of national self and national history in the past, particularly the Shi'a and the first, second, and third generations of Palestinian refugees in the country, can enable the development of a shared collective memory of events. Shared memory can act as a tool for mutual understanding, empathy, and integration, particularly in a society that has historically defined itself in terms of its sectarianism.

The reform of curricula and the sponsorship of this from the student body itself draw attention to political culture playing a positive role in broadening and legitimising the resolution process. Reflecting on the inclusiveness of resolution practice in the Arab world, the task of reconstruction can be legitimised through the inclusion of broad reforms in education, the restoration of public spaces, even 'urban planning, architectural design, the rejuvenation of popular culture and the performing arts'.[137] It is the totality of these factors that generate a solid foundation upon which community cohesion can be established rather than focussing solely on institutional re-arrangements within the political structure. Indeed, such reforms draw upon cultural practices that enhance the legitimacy of

the overall resolution process and counter less productive cultural influences, such as the pressures toward the denial of collective memory of traumatic events.

Justice, Forgiveness and Reconciliation in Lebanon

The Taef Agreement was made possible through the patronage of external powers, particularly the Arab League through the HTC and the United States, the military backing of the Syrians, and the acquiescence of Lebanon's pre-war elite. In this, it was not a document aimed at radical reform, but a mechanism designed to end the violence in the country. It did not contain provisions for the punishment of people and groups who had been belligerent during the conflict, corresponding to 'some of the deeply ingrained traditions and defining elements that have long sustained [Lebanon's] political culture: its consociative attributes, and the ethos of no victor and no vanquished'.[138] In this, the Taef Agreement reiterated the 1943 National Pact in both form, as a reiteration of confessionalism, and aim, as a transitionary measure. Indeed, it also reflected the earlier agreement by enshrining a supposed transitionary measure as the political status quo.

As a compromise gesture, the agreement did not provide mechanisms for the prosecution of militia leaders who engaged in violence against civilian and other militia targets during the conflict. This has provided for a neglect of needed justice as well as stability in that the majority of Lebanon's political elite had connections to such activities during the war. However, despite these pressures reflected in the Taef Agreement toward avoiding recognition of the war and its legacy in Lebanon, the Taef Agreement has given rise to encouraging developments in terms of promoting inter-community forgiveness.

In particular, the Agreement has favoured the maintenance of political continuity over demands for justice, a factor that has undermined the effectiveness of the agreement for citizens affected by violence during the war. Despite this, the Taef Agreement did provide for some recourse against particular perpetrators, but this recourse was arbitrary and conducted primarily in the interests of Syria and its supporters. This can be seen in the prosecution of Lebanese Forces militia leader Samir Gea'gea' in 1994 while militia leaders from other groups were not indicted.

However, there have been encouraging developments in the establishment of local resolution processes, often instigated by political elites themselves, for instance the *sulh* (reconciliation) process initiated by Druze leader Walid Jumblatt in the Chouf Mountains since 1997. Jumblatt's reconciliation forum has proved successful because it allows communication between former combatants in a region that saw some of the most violent confrontations, as well as efforts at population transfer and expulsion. The success of *sulh* in the Chouf, it is argued, is attributable to its correspondence with local forms of resolution practice; particularly the recognition of wrongs committed contains important lessons for the future of reconciliation in Lebanon.

There is a lack of specific provisions within the Taef Agreement that enable people to pursue claims against those leaders who have committed crimes. Compounding the lack of mechanisms for the pursuit of justice for events during the war, the Lebanese parliament passed a general amnesty law on 26 August 1991. The General Amnesty Law, Law no. 84/91, pardoned all crimes committed by militias and armed groups during the civil war before 28 March 1991 with the exception of 'crimes of assassination or attempted assassination of religious figures, political leaders, and foreign or Arab diplomats'.

Despite the range of the amnesty law, it has been applied selectively and arbitrarily. In particular, it has allowed for the execution of political decisions through exemption from prosecution of particular individuals and groups as well as the arrest of others. This reflected an assertion of selective justice by those seeking to reclaim their hold over Lebanon's political life. For the former head of the Sûreté Générale, Major General Jamil al-Sayyid:

> usually, those who make trouble and engage in violence are punished, but Taef rewarded everyone who took part in the war … When we speak of the existence of a system of political-sectarian protection, even without a Syrian presence, and even with a US and French presence, or without their presence, there automatically arises a corrupt class that is stronger than the law and the people.[139]

It is this corruption within the political elite that has undermined the capacity of the Taef Agreement as a tool for the implementation of fair and equitable justice. Such forces have undermined the credibility of the agreement as a long-term settlement to the disputes that have rocked Lebanon, particularly in terms of the neglect of justice and its force as a legitimising factor in regional conflict resolution practice. The arbitrariness of the Taef Agreement's prosecution mechanisms can be seen through the example of former Lebanese Forces (LF) leader Samir Gea'gea'.

Samir Gea'gea' was the only militia leader prosecuted after the Lebanese civil war. Gea'gea''s arrest came after a bombing at the *Sayidat al-Najat* church in Jounieh, north of Beirut in February 1994. Before the investigation of the bombing had been completed, Gea'gea' had been arrested and the LF, the last militia group other than Hezbollah to retain their arms, had been banned. The investigation of the bombings led to a series of other charges being laid on Gea'gea' leading to his trial and conviction on four separate charges of murder for the 1987 killing of then Prime Minister Rashid Karami, the 1989 killing of LF official Elias Zayek, ordering the 1990 assassination of Dany Cham'oun and his family, and the attempted assassination in 1991 of then Defence minister Michel Murr. For these crimes, Gea'gea' was given four death sentences commuted to life imprisonment with hard labour. The sentences for these crimes were passed by the Justice Council, a special court established to preside over cases not covered by the amnesty law of 1991. The Justice Council received cases on the discretion of the Council of Ministers, particularly the Justice Minister where the decisions of the Justice Council are not subject to the 'normal judicial procedures … of judicial review'.[140]

Gea'gea', whilst initially supportive of the Taef Agreement, indeed, even engaging with Aoun and his loyalists for control of the Maronite community over the issue of the Taef Agreement's legitimacy, had turned away from the agreement by 1991. His prosecution was designed to set an example whereby justice would be applied only to those who challenged the prevailing political order where those who had committed similar crimes during the war were able to reintegrate into the political system. The Taef Agreement, in the words of General al-Sayyid:

saw the distribution of consolation prizes to those con-
cerned; thus, through Taef, a trilateral partnership arose,
made up of the 'princes' of the war … the militias, the
'princes' of traditional politics, and the 'princes' of money.
Therefore, the first practical translation of Taef, in the
initial stage, was a marriage of these three sides—militias,
traditional politicians and businessmen.[141]

Any efforts to challenge this were countered through a variety of
means. For Gea'gea', it was his removal from the political scene
through an arbitrary imposition of the law, a law designed to ensure
the public's trust in the just resolution of the conflict. Instead, the
need for justice was undermined by the prevailing interests seeking
to preserve the status quo.

The need for equitable justice was in reach of the Taef
Agreement. However, the 1991 amnesty law was only selectively
applied, allowing impunity for most militia leaders and the political
prosecution of selected figures. Despite this, public pressure on the
law came to bear during the unrest of early 2005 and the resultant
Syrian withdrawal before the June legislative elections. The new par-
liament amended the amnesty law in July, seeing the release of
Gea'gea' on 27 July 2005 after fourteen years in prison.

Gea'gea''s release is an encouraging sign in the development of
reconciliation in Lebanon. Whilst objections came from the family of
slain former Prime Minister Karami as well as from the two main
Shi'a groups, Hezbollah and Amal, popular reaction has been positive
to the decision. The decision should defuse claims of continued arbi-
trary persecution of wartime figures critical of the Syrian influence in
Lebanon and impunity for those wartime figures allied to Syria. It
does fall short in terms of the final imposition of justice. Despite this,
there have been encouraging grass-roots movements toward the
promotion of forgiveness and reconciliation in Lebanon. The most
prominent of these has been the *sulh* process established by Walid
Jumblatt in the Chouf Mountains since 1997 and Hezbollah's court
process in the Beka'a.

The Chouf Mountains saw some of the worst fighting of the civil
war, particularly between Jumblatt's Progressive Socialist Party (PSP)
militia and the Maronite LF. The Chouf has historically been a region

inhabited by both Maronite and Druze communities, and each side sought to purge the other from the region. Between 1982 and 1983, then LF commander Amin Jumayyil sought to re-deploy LF troops in the Chouf to act as a buffer between the Israelis advancing on Beirut and the anti-Israeli PSP. The Israeli army reinforced LF positions in the Chouf, however, withdrew in August 1983 leaving the LF positions exposed. In response, the PSP launched a full-scale assault on the LF positions, destroying around 60 Christian villages and killing over 1000 civilians.

The 'Mountain War', as it came to be known, of 1983–1984 was one of the most violent episodes of the conflict in Lebanon. Despite this, the region that witnessed such intense conflict has also seen some of the most tangible results of reconciliation since 1990. In particular, Jumblatt has initiated a *sulh* forum in the mixed Christian-Druze village of Kfarnabrakh. This *sulh* procedure instigates no formal investigation process; rather, the focus is on the recognition of the potential of 'injuries between individuals and groups [to] fester and expand if not acknowledged, repaired, forgiven and transcended'.[142]

Jumblatt hosts the process in the Mukhtara, his stronghold in the Chouf Mountains. Here, former local militia leaders and combatants converge to share stories of the war and break down the mutual mistrust and hatred that propelled them to arms. One participant sought to sum up the proceedings by explaining how these communities now 'stand united … ever since reconciliation [was made] possible in 1997 … now we have turned a new page and we are cooperating hand in hand for the good of the mountains and for the good of Lebanon'.[143] Another participant commented that:

> everyone believed that the other faction was the enemy, but nowadays … we have discovered that everything they were talking about in the past was a big lie. When we met here, we felt that this is our future, our freedom. And here is our real independence because in the end we have no-one else to go to but each other.[144]

These encouraging signs need to be moderated with a dose of realist assessment. Certainly, the interaction and building of mutual understanding between the community leaders through local

processes of resolution is an encouraging development. However, the actions of Jumblatt are conditioned by broader developments in the country. In particular, it has been commented on that the reconciliation process between the Druze and Christian populations in the Chouf is more an expression of pragmatism on the part of the Druze leadership who feel threatened by the influx of Shi'a communities into the region. The *sulh* process is thereby a means to encourage the return of the Christian communities to the area with which the Druze population has had a longer, if somewhat more tenuous relationship.

This presents a problem that would be overlooked if cultural influences on resolution processes are not accounted for. Specifically, there is tension between the success and effectiveness of a culturally viable form of resolution practice, namely *sulh*, and the tendencies of this process toward reinforcing the confessional status quo in Lebanon. Jumblatt has used the *sulh* process to great effect in reconciling communities in the Chouf Mountains; however, this process is also designed to manoeuvre the Druze community into a more viable position within the confessional structure vis-à-vis the emerging force of the Shi'a population.

Within the Shi'a community, an example of a successful local approach to conflict resolution in Lebanon has been resolution institutions established by Hezbollah in the Beka'a Valley since the early 1990s. Indeed, it is the very atmosphere of state weakness which has enabled this group to establish its own forms of resolution and maintenance of civil order in this predominantly Shi'a area. The role of Hezbollah in Lebanon's Beka'a Valley provides one with a valuable insight into how an environment of state weakness may be turned into a positive through allowing new political groups to practice such legitimate techniques of conflict resolution and contribute to the political pluralism of a weak state.

During the 1980s, Hezbollah has emerged as the primary political representative of Lebanon's large Shi'a population located in the east and south of the country as well as in the poor southern suburbs of Beirut. The organisation, a political party, armed militia, and civil service organisation, provides both informal resolution procedures or informal offices and a formal system of arbitral courts through which citizens can seek resolution of a variety of disputes. These systems are based on the models taken from the experiences of Islamic society

and highlight alternative, locally grounded modes of conflict resolution that have been successful in an atmosphere of state weakness.

Sheikh Na'im Qassim, a prominent Hezbollah judge (*qadi*), divides the conflicts dealt with by Hezbollah into categories of simple and complex. Simple conflicts (interpersonal, marriage difficulties, small-scale property disputes, etc …) are dealt with informally whilst complex disputes (felonies, theft, homicides, etc …) are dealt with through the formal procedures offered by the party. This court system has operated without reference to either the Lebanese civil court system (*adliyya*) or the state-sponsored religious courts (*jafari*).[145]

The Hezbollah court system evolved with the party after the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon. Since this time, it has come to form a key element in the maintenance of social order in the predominantly Shi'a Beka'a Valley amidst the chaos of the civil war. Indeed, after the end of the civil war in 1990, both the *adliyya* and *jafari* courts regained their jurisdictional responsibilities. However, Hezbollah still plays a very significant role in Shi'a areas in conflict management and resolution. Sheikh Qassim explains that 'despite the hesitant return of the state institutions to the Shi'a areas, the people still seek our services in resolving their conflicts. Our physical influence in enforcing conflict settlements may have declined but not our religious and spiritual means.'[146]

These religious and spiritual means were only able to develop in the absence of the state resolution institutions. Today, Hezbollah plays three key functions in terms of conflict resolution in Lebanon. Firstly, it operates the above-outlined *shari'ah*-based courts. Secondly, it provides avenues for arbitration in which participants are able to choose the arbitrator (*hakam*). However, the decisions of this are binding of the participants, carrying moral binding authority (*ilzam manawi*), not legal binding authority (*ilzam qununi*). Thirdly, it provides avenues for mediation, a process of facilitating negotiation between the parties where the disputants take a more direct role in resolving the dispute themselves.

Therefore, Hezbollah's conflict management and resolution techniques represent a fusion of Islamic conflict management and resolution techniques, notably arbitration and *shari'ah*-based courts, with Western forms, notably channels of mediation along the lines of Western-style resolution 'facilitation'. The fact that these systems operate free of charge and represent locally grounded techniques

makes them attractive options for people outside the often expensive and illegitimate systems offered by the state.

A lesson from this example is that whilst state strengthening is important, the absence of the state can allow for legitimate local forms of administration, such as conflict resolution, to operate. However, it must only be a short-term solution as this form of state weakness can perpetuate into a cycle that can all too easily degenerate into continued segregation and possible inter-group conflict.

Conclusion

The Taef Agreement has enshrined the pre-war political status quo in Lebanon. The precarious balance of confessional politics, a situation designed originally as a transitionary measure, has been enshrined in the resolution process to a conflict fought over the very nature of this system. The influence of status quo maintenance, particularly when justified in terms of maintaining community cohesion, has proved a powerful influential force here.

In addition, this status quo maintenance has been reinforced by the role of the most influential third party to the agreement, Syria. Even though it was not officially a party to the resolution process, the Syrian government dictated two of the four articles of the Taef Agreement, ones which enshrined its role as occupier of the country as well as positioned Lebanon as a front-line state in the on-going hostilities with Israel. Thus, the agreement suffered from the interventionist role of the third party in imposing its interests on the outcome of the process.

The trauma of the conflict allowed for the permeation of a form of collective amnesia in Lebanon, a turning away from pursuing much-needed reforms in the area of public education and economic reform. Justice was only imposed arbitrarily, and with political intent rather than toward all those who had been involved in the conflict. Despite this, positive examples of locally based resolution processes, such as the *sulh* rituals in the Chouf, have helped address the need for reconciliation through facing the past and recognising the damage that had been done to Lebanese society during the war.

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Algeria and the Civil Concord

Civil war resolution is as much about social and individual rehabilitation as it is about the cessation of violence. The need for healing and recognition of the need to heal is important in not only allowing a return to social cohesion but also in mitigating the outbreak of similar crises in the future. However, Algeria's Civil Concord (hereafter, the Concord) and the follow-up National Concord, implemented as the government's central resolution platform to the crisis that has assaulted the state and its citizens fails to address the necessity of rehabilitation, reconstruction, and the need for healing. Indeed, the Concord is more akin to a security measure, imposing a vision on society that does little to heal the deep divisions that have emerged in Algeria since 1992.

The Concord emphasises the criminalisation of the opposition within the country, seeking to grant absolution through amnesty for the insurgency. Here, both political and military elements of the Algerian regime seek to absolve themselves of any responsibility for the conflict, arguing that they are external to the conflict and seeking to play the role of third party to their own conflict.

The detachment of the Concord from local understandings of forgiveness, healing, as well as from local resolution processes has gone far to deprive the law of widespread legitimacy. This legitimacy gap is also rooted in the structure and patterns of Algerian politics as they have emerged since independence in 1962, particularly the

dominance of the military in Algerian political life, divisions within the political elite, the lack of constitutional rule, and a dysfunctional economy.

The resolution process in Algeria can be given increased positive momentum by targeting the multiple sources of the conflict through techniques that are both legitimate in the local context as well as able to affect necessary structural reforms. Here, the Concord can be critiqued for its lack of responsiveness to local understandings of conflict resolution, a factor that has undermined its legitimacy amongst the Algerian people as well as the Islamic insurgency.

The Algerian Civil War

The Algerian civil war erupted in 1992 after the cancellation of the nascent electoral process in January of that year. The conflict emerged at the end of a tumultuous period of civil unrest followed by hasty, ill-defined political reform. Algerian politics had been dominated by the single-party regime of the *Front de Libération Nationale* (National Liberation Front—FLN) since the end of French rule in 1962. This came after the Algerian population had suffered over 130 years of harsh colonial domination. Abdullah Laroui's seminal historiography of the Maghrib reveals how French colonial policy had been constructed around the idea of Algeria as part of the French *metropolé*, seeking to eliminate 'traditional' forms of Algerian social and political organization.[1] After the 1840s, the French colonial policy moved from a basis of limited to total occupation, with French military policy in Algeria aimed specifically at the destruction of all forms of local resistance to French conquest. The European settler population in Algeria (*colons*) gradually assumed control over the direction of French colonial policy with the introduction of such measures as the dispossession of Algerian landowners and the forced removal of populations. After the defeat of the 1870 uprising, the destruction of Algerian society accelerated along with the direct assumption of authority by the *colon* population. By the mid-twentieth century, only a small proportion of the local population had found their way into the colonial system, whilst the vast majority saw only increasing levels of poverty and social dislocation.

With the establishment of the independent Algerian state in 1962, the Algerian people had finally entered a period of optimism and promise. However, the vehicle that had championed their cause

for the last decade, the FLN with its armed wing the *Armée de Libération Nationale* (National Liberation Army—ALN), was designed from the very beginning, not to 'set up a political structure capable of permanently and organically linking the fragmented Algerian society', but instead was focussed on strengthening and enhancing its military and political programme.[2] This is a crucial point to note as the single party, the FLN/ALN, would not seek to forge a new social contract upon which the Algerian state-society relationship could grow, but was focussed on maintaining the predominance of a small elite (commonly known as *le pouvoir*, or 'the power').[3] Such an effort is most clearly seen in the management of the Algerian economy after independence.

The FLN/ALN state as it developed through the 1960s and 1970s gradually took over 'the most repressive parts of the colonial apparatus' as a means of maintaining direct coercive control over society, coupled with economic incentives promoting political apathy akin to the model of the 'rentier state'.[4] The concept of the rentier state focuses the generation of income largely from state ownership of natural resources.[5] "Rent" is accrued through the possession and/or extraction of such resources, in the case of Algeria hydrocarbons (oil and natural gas). A rentier state bases its economy on the revenues from these resources. The revenues, or rent gained from resources come, substantially, from external sources (sale on the world market) with the revenues gained concentrating in the hands of a small elite.[6] As a result, development and economic activity are largely state-directed. In addition, rents are employed by such states as a tool for establishing and maintaining legitimacy. That is, the state is able to support itself through total control over the sources of revenue, distributing revenue to garner the support of social groups. Such a process, prominent amongst the oil and gas-producing states of the Middle East, enables ruling elites to subvert popular political organisation and representation. One may illustrate this through inverting the maxim of the American Revolution, 'no taxation without representation'. In states based on the revenues of resource rents, there is no taxation, therefore, elites would argue, no need for representation.

In Algeria, the extraction and sale of these resources began in the 1930s; and boomed in the post-independence years of the 1960s and 1970s.[7] The oil price hikes of the early 1970s created a revenue boom for the Algerian economy, as it did for the other regional oil

producing states in the Arabian Gulf. Hydrocarbon revenues make up 96 percent of the total Algerian export sector. Such a policy proved unsuccessful, with the state-sponsored industrial sector becoming bogged-down in mismanagement whilst the political/military elite of the FLN/ALN regime was reluctant to step back from total control over the economy and such a valuable source of funds.[8] The dysfunctional economy, the lack of a cohesive social vision, a clear social contract, or even a consistent cultural vision led the Algerian state to rely on insufficient measures for the maintenance of rule through the 1970s and 1980s.[9]

The lack of elite cohesiveness and legitimacy is evident in the failure of the Algerian state to articulate a clear ideological direction. Such difficulty became pronounced during the Presidency of Chadli Bendjedid (1979–1991). Successor to long-serving President Houari Boumediene (1964–1978), Chadli sought to move the Algerian state away from its 'Third Worldist' and state-centric developmental patterns of the preceding decades to one of increased liberalisation and privatisation.[10] This changed direction marked an increasing dislocation with the past, particularly the legitimacy drawn from the regime's revolutionary links. That is, the single ruling party in Algeria had foregone the one thing that ensured some measure of ideological cohesiveness and legitimacy, its claims to be the winner of independence for the country. This detachment from the past, combined with a lack of a vision for the future, was compounded by the demographic shifts in Algerian society in which the 'revolutionary generation' was steadily replaced by a younger generation, one with little connection to Algeria's wartime heritage.[11]

During the 1980s, economic mismanagement, political stagnation and changing demographics weakened the Algerian state in terms of both its functional capacity and legitimacy.[12] The collapse of oil prices in 1986 led to soaring government debt levels and an undermining of the already weakened Algerian state sector. Such effects were highly detrimental for the state that had based its post-independence development plans on state management and state-led development. Therefore, the country found itself at the brink of crisis by the end of the 1980s due to the interaction between economic fragility, changing demographics, political uncertainty, as well as the manipulation of cultural symbols. Ratiba Hadj-Moussa has revealed how the patterns of rule implemented by the FLN between the 1960s

and 1980s emphasised a singular vision of Algerian political culture and political history.[13] This was displayed in the emphasis placed on the "revolutionary credentials" of the FLN as their leitmotif for claims to ruling legitimacy. The legitimacy of the Algerian state and its ruling elite was steadily undermined through the 1980s. Food and housing shortages as well as unemployment became endemic due to a burgeoning population and the influx of younger people into the labour force.

Anti-government unrest came to a head with the "bread riots" of October 1988, a disorganised but widely participated in series of protests against food shortages blamed on the Chadli regime's economic restructuring and political mismanagement. The unrest was sparked by a series of strikes led by the former pro-government *Union Générale des Travailleurs Algériens* (UGTA), leading to clashes with government forces and a state of emergency being imposed. By the end of October, 159 people had died with over 3500 arrests.[14] In response, the regime announced a series of political reforms aimed at addressing the rupture across the country. Constitutional reforms entailed a modification of the Algerian constitution in November 1988 to allow multi-party politics, including the scheduling of municipal, national legislative and finally presidential elections for the following years. These reforms led to the formation of a variety of political parties, from the Trotskyist *Parti des Travailleurs* (Worker's Party—PT), to the reappearance of the long-established Berber-based *Front des Forces Socialistes* (Socialist Forces Front—FFS), as well as the *Front Islamique du Salut* (Islamic Salvation Front—FIS) and FLN. It is important to note that the FLN as a party became increasingly estranged from the regime during this period, seeking to establish itself as a viable force in the multiparty system. This multiparty system included the creation of 46 new parties between 1989 and 1991. The FIS quickly emerged as the most powerful opposition group in the country, led by former wartime figure Sheikh Abassi Madani and the younger, more vitriolic Sheikh Ali Bel-Hadj. The FIS actively sought to harness the discontent lingering after October 1988 and channel it towards prospective support in the upcoming election. Contrary to popular opinion, and the claims of the FIS itself, the October 1988 unrest was not sparked by FIS organisation, but was subsequently harnessed by the FIS for its own political ends.[15]

The first round of municipal elections was held in June 1989, with the FIS taking 55 percent of the vote compared to the FLN's 32 percent.[16] With control over the bulk of the Algerian municipalities, particularly in the urban areas, the FIS began to actively campaign for the upcoming national legislative elections, also calling for presidential elections to be held at the same time. After clashes between the government and FIS supporters, including the imprisonment of the FIS leadership, the first round of legislative elections was held in December 1991. The government had made changes to the electoral system before this, increasing the number of seats in an attempted gerrymander. However, these policies backfired as the FIS swept the vote, claiming 188 of the 231 seats decided while the FLN won only 18.[17]

As the government faced collapse, the army's high command forced Chadli from office, postponed the second round of elections indefinitely in January 1992, and imposed a nation-wide state of emergency. The FIS was formally dissolved and its leaders jailed for indefinite terms.[18] These acts received international support, most notably from France, who feared the emergence of an Islamic government in Algeria would spark a wave of refugees to its southern shores.[19] The United States also gave tacit support to the Algerian government, support that would increase dramatically in the latter years of the war. As the military assumed control of political life in Algeria, supporters of the Islamists engaged in a series of armed attacks on security officials and government institutions.[20] However, this would mark the start of a spiral of violence that consumed all elements of Algerian political and social life by the mid-1990s. The violence moved more and more outside limited engagements to direct violence and the targeting of citizens, allegedly by both sides.[21]

The democratisation process of the late 1980s and early 1990s in Algeria has received the attention of many analysts in their attempts to understand the conflict in the country and how this process broke down and degenerated into a cycle of violence that continues to this day. Many of these studies after 1992 have sought to analyse the Islamist organizations in Algeria, why they succeeded in the elections of 1990 and 1991, and why they have turned to armed conflict.[22] The social and economic dislocation of the 1980s coupled with the ideological resonance of Islamist ideology, particularly in a state such as

Algeria where key national symbols and myths had lost significance, is a key theme here. Such perspectives are telling, providing useful comparisons with situations in other regional states, such as Syria in the early 1980s. Similarly, there have also been many studies on the role of the regime and the Algerian military in the current conflict and their involvement in the perpetuation of violence. Focus has been on the role of the Algerian military in politics as well as their alleged role in the subsequent violence. Such a role has controversially claimed to have been played out in attacks on the civilian population in the guise of Islamist insurgents, in order to force the local population into support for the anti-insurgency activities of the army (or, at least, acquiescence).[23]

However, when one examines analyses before the early 1990s, the lack of identification of the impending conflict and social malaise is notable. With the possible exceptions of Rachid Tlemçani, Hugh Roberts, and John Entelis, commentaries had not identified the extremely fragile foundation of the Algerian state and how susceptible it was to challenge and collapse.[24] Four key elements stand out here: a predatory political elite (*le pouvoir*); an ideologically deficient state; the lack of a constitutional tradition in Algerian politics; and a dysfunctional economy. Studies since 1992 do provide a valuable set of explanatory tools as to why the conflict in Algeria has perpetuated itself, and changed dynamics several times. However, these approaches almost unanimously start from structuralist or materialist perspectives, leaving political culture analysis an underdeveloped perspective in examining the origins and development of the Algerian conflict and attempts at its resolution. For instance, Pradeep Chhibber outlines a socio-economic argument for why the FLN government was abandoned during the electoral process of the early 1990s.[25] Economic reform in the 1980s led to the exclusion of the formerly loyal body of state employees, many of whom lost work during this period. This group threw their weight behind the FIS in the elections of 1989, 1990 and 1991. In addition, Robert Malley posits an argument concerning the ideological vacuum that consumed the FLN through the 1980s and the ability of the FIS to challenge them.[26] Hugh Roberts and his outline of the opportunistic way the FIS were able to capitalize on this ideological vacuum echo such a perspective. Roberts shows how Islamist support was not necessarily a 'religious revival' as such, but an expression of a broader political problem rooted within

a broader legitimacy malaise reflected throughout the Arab state system.[27]

Comparing these discussions one finds a set of valid tools for understanding the sources of conflict in Algeria. Chhibber's argument rests on a form of economic determinism, tracing the roots of the current conflict back to the mismanagement of the economy under the Chadli regime. An example of this is the focus on how the exclusive economy alienated the new generations in Algerian society.[28] However, as Ali Kouaouci argues, the Algerian economy was put under strain not in its mismanagement of the changing demographics in the country, but the changing demographics themselves undermined the fragile economy.[29] That is, economic mismanagement is an important element of the equation, but its failure was more a result rather than a catalyst for the malaise and ultimately conflict that afflicted the country by the early 1990s.

Unfortunately, the debate has regressed, in many respects, since September 2001 when some analysts have begun to link the conflict in Algeria to the broader global situation (America's so-called "War on Terror").[30] There has been an effort to link the radical *Groupe Islamique Armé* (Armed Islamic Group—GIA), the *Groupe Salafiste pour la Prédication et le Combat* (Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat—GSPC), and the *Ligue Islamique pour la Da'wa et le Djihad* (Islamic League for the Preaching and Holy war—LIDD) which emerged later in the 1990s, with the fabled al-Qa'eda network.

These links have been emphasised by the US State Department and elements of the Algerian press who represent the regime, such as the French-language daily *Liberté*. This is an effort to enable the hard-line members of the Algerian administration, the so-called *eradicateurs*, to reinforce a dichotomous view of the conflict in Algeria as one between secular defenders of democracy and Islamists bent on the creation of an Islamic state.

This has had significant implications for analyses of the Algerian civil war whereby attempts to create a multi-layered analysis (with a focus on social, political, economic, and cultural sources of conflict) has been foregone in favour of more deterministic explanations. For instance, many within the US State Department have highlighted the supposed innate violent tendencies of Islamist organisations. Richard Perle, Chairman of the Defence Policy Advisory Board for the Bush Administration between 2001 and 2003, has actively supported such

views. Perle has sought the 'de-contextualisation' of Islamist violence, an attempt to argue that these groups are unwilling to participate in any form of negotiated settlement due to their innate violent nature.[31] This has shaped US foreign policy and the assistance given by the United States to foreign governments, such as Algeria, that seek to position themselves as US allies in their international campaigns.[32]

This has also had a profound impact on the course of conflict resolution in Algeria. By claiming that these groups are not to be negotiated with, the Algerian regime, with increased United States backing, has sought to shape its approaches to ending the conflict progressively more around police measures, efforts to impose solutions through mitigated penalties and amnesties rather than through dialogue and recognition of grievances. Such an approach has been highly detrimental to the process of reconciliation, particularly for those most affected by the conflict, the Algerian citizenry, of whom more than 100,000 have died during the course of the conflict. This critique of the processes of conflict resolution in Algeria and how they are detached from these more thoroughgoing forms of resolution is explored in chapter 4. However, it is important to outline what perspectives exist on the core resolution approach offered by the Algerian regime to date, the Civil Concord.

There had been two notable attempts at the resolution of the conflict before 1999. First, in 1994–1995, a number of political parties, including the FIS, along with prominent civil society and human rights groups released what came to be known as the 'Rome Platform', a series of recommendations to the government for an end to the conflict.[33] These recommendations included recognition of the FIS as a legitimate political party along with calls for the military to leave political life in the country.[34] The second attempt has its origins in clandestine discussions between the military high command and the leadership of the armed wing of the FIS, the *Armée Islamique du Salut* (Islamic Salvation Army—AIS) between 1995 and 1997.[35] Then President Liamine Zeroual introduced a clemency (*rahma*) law in February 1995 as a counter-weight to the Rome Platform that the government rejected outright. High-ranking Generals Khalid Nezzar and Smain Lamari who secretly met with AIS leaders Madani Mezrag and Ahmed Benaïcha at this time, negotiations that led to an AIS ceasefire in October 1997, pushed this process forward.[36]

Zeroual announced his resignation in 1998, setting the scene for Presidential elections for April 1999. Initially, seven prominent candidates announced their intention to run for executive office; however, charges of government fraud saw the boycott of all candidates except the regime's candidate, Abdel Aziz Bouteflika. In addition to Bouteflika, the other candidates included former education minister, Presidential advisor and Foreign Minister Ahmed Taleb Ibrahimi, leader of the FFS Hocine Aït Ahmed, former Prime Minister Mouloud Hamrouche, Islamist Abdallah Djaballah, former Prime Minister Mokdad Sifi, and former parliamentary deputy Youcef Khatib.[37] Central to Bouteflika's platform was an amended version of Zeroual's clemency law, given greater range in terms of application and detail. Bouteflika's plan, the Civil Concord, focussed on a wide-ranging amnesty for Islamist insurgents with a variety of mitigated sentences for insurgents who had committed crimes of murder, rape, and public bombings.

The Algerian regime has been largely successful in arguing that the conflict is purely an internal, sovereign concern, particularly since September 2001.[38] The events of September 2001 have enabled the Algerian regime to position itself within the rubric of America's "War on Terror", sheltering it from overt international criticism and monitoring of its anti-insurgency activities. However, even before this point, international attention was reluctant to focus on Algeria, only hesitantly paying attention after the civilian massacres in 1997 and 1998. There has been some effort in this regard. For instance, as early as June 1999 Ignacio Ramonet philosophically sounded out the prospects for peace in Algeria on the back of the new political leadership.[39] Ramonet, whose hopes reflected a wider perspective of optimism, based his predictions on a decrease in the level of violence after the 1999 cease-fire between the government and the AIS and the apparent tensions within the hard-line elements of the military high command.[40]

The optimism of such observations was not well founded, however, as the lustre of the Civil Concord was quickly tarnished through late 1999 and early 2000. By this time, it became clear that Bouteflika's plan lacked resonance amongst the bulk of the population, was seen as a punitive measure by many Islamists, and had raised the ire of the military command that had previously been in support of Bouteflika's

presidency. The Algerian media quickly turned on the President, labelling the Concord a 'self-serving piece of legislation', one that received no debate within the Algerian parliament and was merely designed to grant impunity for the insurgency and give the regime the image of victory.[41] The Civil Concord was passed through the Algerian Parliament in July 1999 with no votes against in either the House or Senate. In terms of international coverage, such a view was captured by a July 2001 report by the International Crisis Group, which bluntly stated that the promises made by Bouteflika 'have not been kept and (his) reconciliation policy is discredited'.[42] Bouteflika promised peace for Algeria on the back of the Civil Concord, peace that would stem from bringing the insurgents 'out of the cold' through amnesty. However, other than the AIS (a group that had signalled their surrender as early as 1997), no other Islamist group took advantage of the amnesty. In addition, the amnesty and mitigated sentencing offered in the Civil Concord was of great concern to those families who had suffered at the hands of the insurgency. Even if the groups ceased their violent activities, there would be little justice for those who had suffered most.

Leaders of the outlawed FIS, Abassi Madani and Ali Bel-Hadj, periodically move between full incarceration, house arrest, and monitored release whilst the leaders of the more radical and currently more prominent groups such as the GIA and GSPC exist as renegade-style figures in *marquis* similar to that of their predecessors, the anti-colonial FLN. This has had implications for the analysis of the conflict as it is difficult to garner exactly what the demands of these groups are. Outside of calls for a removal of the regime, there is little detail offered in terms of the specifics of the GIA or GSPC platforms. The exclusion of grievances in this way, and the inability of analysts to access the source of the insurrection, damages attempts to construct thoroughgoing analyses of the Algerian conflict as well as furthering the domination of the regime in terms of the understanding of the conflict.

Gauging popular reactions to the Concord is somewhat easier. The growing scepticism of the war-weary Algerian people towards Bouteflika's initiative is reflected in the tone of these analyses. Ellyas and Hamani provide such an example in gauging the reactions of Algerian citizens in the lead up to the referendum on the Concord in January 2000.[43] The standout factor is the rejection of the plan by all

prominent individuals and groups affected by the violence. This rejection was based on what one Algerian citizen has labelled as the 'disdain towards the victims of violence' shown by the regime.[44] Most prominently, such a view has been advocated by the families of 'the disappeared', large numbers of Algerian citizens either detained by the regime with no further contact with their families or abducted by the insurgency.[45] Here, the lack of recourse for the pursuit of knowledge on the whereabouts of family members flies in the face of attempts by families to achieve a modicum of justice and begin the process of reconstructing their lives.

There are serious shortcomings of the Concord in relation to its lack of popular legitimacy as well as its disconnection from locally accepted forms of reconciliation and conflict resolution. For instance, the amnesty plan that forms the core of Bouteflika's Concord plan applies only to prisoners who have been tried and have served the bulk of their term and those insurgents still at large. Therefore, it ignores the bulk of insurgents who are detainees but have not had their cases processed prior to January 1999. In addition, this amnesty does not address the concerns of those families affected by insurgent violence in terms of legal redress.[46]

The Civil Concord

The Concord was the central policy of Abdel Aziz Bouteflika's platform during the 1999 presidential elections. It came at a time when two other peace processes had been forwarded and undermined. First, in 1994–1995, a number of political parties, including the *Front Islamique du Salut* (Islamic Salvation Front—FIS), along with prominent civil society and human rights groups released what came to be known as the "Rome Platform", a series of recommendations to the government for an end to the conflict. These recommendations included recognition of the FIS as a legitimate political party along with calls for the military to leave political life in the country.

The Rome Platform, issued on January 1995, was a track-two diplomatic proposal initiated by the Catholic community of Sant'Egidio, an association loosely connected with the Vatican who have planned similar acts in Mozambique and Guatemala.[47] The community held their first colloquium on the Algerian conflict in late November 1994, inviting all major parties to the dispute as well as other political parties and civil society groups.[48] The Rome Accord

represented the most comprehensive grouping of Algerian political parties and major civil society groups (secular, religious, leftist, and conservative) who all agreed over criteria for the cessation of violence and the introduction of a political solution to the crisis.

The provisions of the statement released by the Rome group call for a rejection of violence and a peaceful end to the conflict through a political solution. Specifics of the platform call for the institutionalisation of pluralist politics in Algeria, a respect for international norms of human rights, and freedom of religion and thought. The Sant'Egidio community did not play an interventionist third party role. This is most starkly illustrated in the wording of the 'invitation' by the community to the participants that stated that 'we … do not intend to create a dialogue, which should in any case be held among Algerians in Algeria, but rather a free and genuine debate in which each participant can express his or her political viewpoint'.[49] The community sought to act as a negotiation facilitator. However, reference to the need for a dialogue to be created by "Algerians in Algeria" is recognition of the need for the substantive elements of any resolution process to stem from the actors embedded in the context of the conflict.

The Sant'Egidio community established inclusion as a central platform of their activities, bringing together political parties which had garnered around 80 per cent of the vote during the 1990–1991 elections. The inclusion of the FLN in this process did not represent the participation of the regime. The FLN and the regime had formally 'divorced' during the late 1980s, with the interim leaders to 1994 and President Zeroual both operating as independent political players. President Bouteflika established an alternative state party in 1999, the National Democratic Rally (RND) whilst the FLN sought to establish itself as an increasingly independent political party through the 1990s despite having substantial representation in successive governments.[50] Whilst the flat rejection of the initiative by the Algerian regime deprived it of any substantive influence in terms of an ability to shape the direction of the resolution process in the country, the widespread international support it received did push the regime toward seeking articulation of an alternative approach.

The second attempt has its origins in clandestine discussions between the military high command and the leadership of the armed wing of the FIS, the *Armée Islamique du Salut* (Islamic Salvation

Army—AIS) between 1995 and 1997.[51] Then President Liamine Zeroual introduced a clemency (*rahma*) law in February 1995 as a counter-weight to the Rome Platform that the government rejected outright. This process was pushed forward by high ranking Generals Khalid Nezzar and Smain Lamari who secretly met with AIS leaders Madani Mezrag and Ahmed Benaïcha at this time, negotiations that led to an AIS ceasefire in October 1997.[52] These negotiations led to a series of agreements formalised between August and October 1997, the specifics of which remain secret. However, the Algerian Arabic-language daily, *Echarq el-Awsat* released the general themes of the agreements in December 1999. These included a general amnesty for all groups joining the truce; locating and concentrating AIS members and others under government authority; re-integration of former servicemen who had defected to the insurgency; creating legislation for a truce; release of FIS leaders; government compensation to victims of violence; most importantly, there was a provision for the FIS to return to the political scene under a different name.[53]

Zeroual announced his resignation in 1998, setting the scene for Presidential elections in April 1999. Initially, seven prominent candidates announced their intention to run for executive office; however, charges of government fraud saw the boycott of all candidates except Bouteflika.[54] The other candidates included former education minister, Presidential advisor and Foreign Minister Ahmed Taleb Ibrahimi (*Mouvement Fidélité et Justice*/Movement for Fidelity and Justice—WAFA), Hocine Aït Ahmed (*Front des Forces Socialistes*/Socialist Forces Front—FFS), former Prime Minister Mouloud Hamrouche (Independent), Abdallah Djaballah (*Mouvement de Reforme Nationale*/National Reform Movement—MRN), former Prime Minister Mokdad Sifi (Independent), and former parliamentary deputy Youcef Khatib (Independent), all of which withdrew from the electoral race on 15 April 1999. Central to Bouteflika's platform was an amended version of Zeroual's clemency law, where amnesty was offered to the insurgency in the form of exemption from prosecution, probation orders, or mitigated sentencing.

Bouteflika sought to harness an apparent momentum towards resolution in his electoral campaign. Indeed, despite the withdrawal of all other presidential candidates, Bouteflika received the support of ex-AIS leader Madani Mezrag, as well as Abassi Madani and other prominent FIS figures. This was confirmed after Bouteflika's election

in April when Mezrag sent Bouteflika a letter informing him of his 'desire to work towards a return to civil peace'.[55] Along with a series of provisions and promises of an end to violence, the leader of the AIS stated that 'we have high hopes of you as regards achieving peace and stability for the country'.[56] These were unprecedented moves toward a settlement of the crisis, a seeming coalescence of opinion toward resolution of the conflict between the government and the insurgency. This optimism characterised the election of Bouteflika and the introduction of his law to the Algerian parliament in July 1999.

The Details of the Civil Concord

The Concord drew on pre-existing patterns of resolution practice implemented by the government up to 1999. Here, the central tenet of the Concord was its development of an amnesty law for the Algerian Islamists. However, the Concord was presented simply as a piece of legislation designed to garner an Islamist surrender rather than as a form of negotiated settlement. Indeed, the Concord only provided benefits for the government in the form of absolution and the insurgency in the form of amnesty. The structure of the Concord was reflective of this, with almost the entire document outlining the various procedures for amnesty and neglecting all other elements associated with the processes of conflict resolution.

The Concord was passed through both Houses of Parliament and made law on 13 July 1999, months before the public had a chance to vote on it. In parliament, there was very little in terms of debate over the programme, instead it was being rubber-stamped. The Algerian media captured this well when they observed that 'the soulless debates devoid of passion and opposition did not even begin to question whether its vaguely worded provisions were workable'.[57] Indeed, it was not accepted by the people with a 'wave of enthusiasm, but with a weary shrug of acceptance that there is nothing better'.[58]

After parliament had passed the law, it was put for public referendum on 16 September 1999. The Interior Ministry placed turnout for the Concord referendum at 85 per cent (of seventeen million eligible voters), with a 98 per cent yes vote. The referendum asked a single question: 'Do you agree with the President's approach to restore peace and civilian Concord?' In this, it was not a vote on the details of the Concord, but on the general idea of an end to violence, something

very few Algerians would disagree with. Therefore, it was used by Bouteflika as legitimisation of his whole programme and as a way to garner direct legitimacy for himself in the wake of his suspect election rather than as a process of mutual consultation with the population over the provisions of the Concord.

The opening section of the Concord set the tone for the document, declaring itself as 'part of a grand design of restoring peace and harmony to society'.[59] This 'grand design' was to be achieved through making 'provision for a specific legal framework within which all persons who participate in, or have participated in, acts of terrorism or subversion, and who clearly express their desire to cease all criminal activity, are given the opportunity of acting upon their intentions and regaining a place within society'.[60] Those covered by this amnesty were permitted to seek three possible 'benefits' because of the act: exemption from prosecution; the granting of a probation order; or a mitigated sentence.[61]

Thus, from the outset the Concord showed itself as a piece of legislation declaring that the path to 'peace and harmony' can be achieved through a reintegration of the insurgency back into society. It was the granting of amnesty at the behest of the authorities that was seen as the mechanism through which peace could be achieved rather than through negotiated settlement or any recognition of opposition grievances. Here, the tone of the Concord as a security measure, a piece of legislation or governmental largesse, is stark. It merely sought to set out conditions through which Islamists could surrender rather than a process initiating dialogue that could give rise to a political solution to the crisis. This theme becomes increasingly evident through the entire document.

Chapter II of the Concord laid out the parameters for those who may benefit from an exemption from prosecution under the act. Those who benefitted from exemption are members of 'one or more of the organisations covered by article 87a, section 3 of the criminal code' who have not committed murder, rape, or public bombings.[62] These groups include the FIS as well as the smaller, but more extreme *Groupe Islamique Armé* (Armed Islamic Group—GIA), *Groupe Salafiste pour la Prédication et le Combat* (Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat—GSPC), and the *Ligue Islamique pour la Da'wa et le Djihad* (Islamic League for the Preaching and Holy war—LIDD). The latter

two groups have been the most active in armed confrontations with the state since the 1997 FIS/AIS ceasefire.

The three categories of crimes, murder, rape, and public bombings are established as the criteria by which the insurgency is 'rated' and placed within the categories of eligibility for exemption, probation, or mitigated sentencing. In addition, those seeking exemption must submit themselves to the relevant 'competent authorities' and notify them that they have ceased 'all terrorist and subversive activity'.[63] The scope of this provision was revealed in article 4 where those who have 'possessed firearms, explosives, or other destructive devices' are targeted for exemption.[64] Therefore, exemption from prosecution is aimed at those who have provided logistical and other support for the various armed Islamist groups but who have not participated in acts of violence.

Article 5 of the Concord outlined how those who fall within the parameters of articles 3 and 4 are 'deprived of the rights granted to them under the terms of article 8 of the criminal code for a duration of ten (10) years'.[65] Exemption was therefore extended to all citizens who have been accused of collaborating with the insurgency but refused to those who were active in the insurgency. It was a voluntary measure whereby people must come forth, admitting assistance to the insurgency or to lodge a confession in order to benefit from exemption if already charged with such acts.

The provisions relating to probation orders granted under the Concord are the most comprehensive element covered in the act. Generally, the probation covered 'the suspension of prosecution proceedings for a period of time sufficient in length to ascertain that the probationer genuinely desires to make amends'.[66] Again, it is clear from this opening statement that the Concord is designed and implemented as a government gesture to those it sees outside accepted society. In addition, it established an ambiguous frame of reference (the desire 'to make amends') by which those seeking to benefit from the amnesty are to be assessed.

In terms of those eligible for probation, chapter III granted such rights to members of groups outlawed in article 87a, section 3 of the criminal code who 'have neither participated in mass killings, nor handled explosives in public places, or places frequented by the public'.[67] Here, inclusion is broadened to those who have committed

other crimes during the conflict than those exempted from prosecution. The probation period is not to last less than three years and no longer than ten years.[68] This maximum probation period can be reduced if the individual participates in 'the service of the State and its fight against terrorism and subversion' to a maximum of five years.[69] However, the act also stated that the probation granted under the act is provisional on the decisions of the probation committee.[70]

The make-up of these 'probation committees' is highly controversial in that they are largely constituted of governmental representatives. They consist of a public prosecutor, a representative of the Defence Ministry, a representative of the Interior Ministry, a police commander from each district, a 'chief security officer' from each district, and the president of the district legal association.[71] Only the district legal representative is not an official representative of the state. Along with the power to bestow and remove probation orders 'considering the behaviour of the probationer', the probation committee can also attach special provisions to the probation order and assign a probation officer for each probationer.[72] In addition, probation can be revoked by the committee 'should any facts … come to light during the suspension of prosecution proceedings' that incriminate the probationer beyond the statements made in their initial application for probation.[73] Here, the committee, serving as an extension of the state, holds total power over the amnesty granted to the probationer, again reflective of the act as a police measure rather than a negotiated settlement between belligerents.

The rights granted to the probationer, despite being at the mercy of state decisions, are broad. Each probationer is granted a right to defence council, the right to appeal, as well as the ability to have the probation extinguished 'when a probationer distinguishes himself, or herself, by exceptional acts in the service of his, or her, country, or has sufficiently demonstrated his, or her, intention to make amends'.[74] Again, these ambiguous criteria would likely rest on the participation of the probationer in assisting the state in its anti-insurgency activity.

The final element of the amnesty arrangement comes in the form of mitigated sentencing. Again, applicants must have belonged to organisations specified in article 87a, section 3 of the criminal code who 'have neither participated in mass killings, nor handled explosives in public places, or places frequented by the public'.[75] A sliding

scale of mitigated sentencing is outlined whereby sentences can be reduced to a maximum of twelve years for previous life sentences or death penalties; a maximum of seven years for previous sentences between ten and twenty years; and a maximum of three years for previous sentences of up to ten years.[76] In all other cases, the maximum prison term is halved.

In addition, if the applicant has received a probation order as outlined in chapter III, they may have their sentence mitigated to a maximum of eight years for life sentences and the death penalty, a five year maximum for previous sentences of ten to twenty years, and a two year maximum for all other cases.[77] Finally, those who belong to the above-named organisations, regardless of the crime committed, can benefit from a mitigated sentence where a maximum sentence of fifteen to twenty years replaces a death penalty and a maximum sentence of ten to fifteen years replaces a life sentence.[78]

Again, it is evident here that both the state and the insurgency are the primary beneficiaries of this process. Members of the insurgent groups can gain significantly reduced sentences regardless of the crimes they have committed, even in the case of mass killings, bombings or rape. The state is able to further exonerate itself from participation in the conflict by acting as the distributor of clemency whilst the insurgency is given the chance to re-enter society with a reduced or removed punishment. However, the vast bulk of the population is left without any recourse to justice in the face of this measure.

The procedure of the execution of the Concord is straightforward, but also exemplary of the state-controlled basis of the process. The public prosecutor is charged with bringing each case before the 'competent judicial or governmental authorities' and the findings of these authorities are then transmitted to the authorities once made.[79] The public prosecutor, therefore, has discretion over the pace of the process as well as the priority with which cases are brought before the authorities. This means the state has control over the process from start to finish. It decides in which order the cases are to be reviewed and the pace with which they are taken through the exemption, probation, or mitigation process. There is minimal input from outside authorities, such as non-government observers, participants or independent legal observers.

In the final section relating to 'special provisions' of the Concord, three elements are discussed. First, the extension of amnesty to those already serving sentences for crimes prior to the introduction of the act in 1999; second, the issue of compensation for people who have had crimes committed against them during the conflict; and third, the relationship of the Concord to pre-existing laws relating to similar measures of amnesty and clemency.[80] Each of these sections was dealt with in an overly brief way, a manner which undermines the agreement in that the limited focus of the act is further constrained by such backhanded treatment of crucial issues relating to existing sentences, the need for recourse by those affected by the conflict, and the continuity of the resolution process in Algeria.

The opening provisions of chapter VI relate to the extension of amnesty to those covered by article 3 of the agreement. Insurgents 'on remand … or serving custodial sentences' are able to access the amnesty provisions of the Concord.[81] In addition, those who were 'serving a custodial sentence at the time of the enactment of the present law may benefit from immediate conditional release from the remainder of their sentence'.[82] Access to probation or mitigated sentencing was also extended to those who surrendered themselves to state authorities before the promulgation of the act even if they have committed crimes outside the limits set down in article 3 of the Concord.[83]

Here, amnesty is given retrospectively to those insurgents convicted before the introduction of the Concord. However, it is a selective implementation of amnesty in that it does not cover people imprisoned for crimes outside of insurgent activity. Thus, there is a repeat of the efforts to absolve the state and the armed insurgency whilst minimising avenues of recourse for citizens affected by the violence of the conflict or those arrested and detained for crimes outside the purview of article 3. Indeed, insurgents who engaged in crimes not listed in article 3 can benefit from levels of mitigated sentencing that reduce their time in incarceration to less than that of others. The issue of recourse for the crimes committed by the insurgency is dealt with briefly in article 40 of the act. Here, the government allows for 'civil action and … reparation for injury incurred' by groups named in article 87a, section 3 of the criminal code.[84]

Finally, article 41 of the Concord stands out as a key provision which effectively undercuts the other elements of the act. Three days

before the expiration of the amnesty (10 January 2000), Bouteflika issued an amnesty to 'organisations' regardless of the crime committed.[85] The amnesty was based on Presidential Decree No. 2000–03. The only restrictions put in place by the Concord in terms of retaining penalties against those who had committed crimes had been removed in favour of a last-minute decree in return for a cease-fire. However, there was no list released of the 'organisations' to be covered by this decree, as it does not reference those covered by article 87a, section 3 of the criminal code.

In the wake of the Concord, some 5500 Islamists were granted amnesty under the provisions of the act. Over 1000 of these came from the AIS with the rest from the LIDD, GIA and GSPC.[86] The smaller number of AIS combatants was due to the earlier cease-fire negotiated with the regime in 1997. Those from the other groups surrendered largely as individuals rather than in groups. In November 2004, Bouteflika hinted at the prospect of a general amnesty to be submitted for referendum, similar to that of the Concord.[87] This came to pass with the Charter for Peace and Reconciliation announced on 14 August 2005. This new charter extended the amnesty and, rhetorically at least, paid reference to the tragedy of civilian disappearances during the conflict. This was put to referendum on 29 September 2005 with a yes or no question on "Do you support the President's Charter for Peace and Reconciliation?" The charter passed with a 97 percent yes vote.

The faltering of the Concord after 1999 and 2000 was apparent in not only relations between the President and public opinion but also in terms of divisions between the President, members of *le pouvoir* and the Islamist leadership. For those within the regime, the President was seeking to exert influence outside what they saw as the limited sphere of executive power. These institutional forces working against the Concord were compounded by the inherent failings within the document. In particular, the document has four key deficiencies, all of which work together to undermine the legitimacy of the law.

First, the basis for the Concord itself is not a political solution, but a security measure, framed around a granting of leniency to a defeated force rather than as a negotiated process with an opposition. Second, the Concord sought to impose a solution to the conflict on the victims and families of the victims whilst ignoring the complementary and necessary aspects of recognition. That is, the Concord

compelled victims to simply "forgive and forget", without recognition of the wrongs committed. Third, the Concord was formulated and implemented without any process of public consultation. It was a predetermined document, full of ambiguity, and given to the people in a simplistically worded referendum for ratification. Fourth, there was no provision within the Concord for a viable third party, instead allowing the state to simply impose the tenet of the law, particularly relating to amnesty. Here, the regime has been successful in excluding any dissenting opinion either internally or externally as to the direction of the conflict resolution process in the country.

Each of these deficiencies is expressive of the general attitude of the Algerian political elite to any form of alternative vision for the future of the country. This attitude does not seek accommodation or acceptance of diversity; instead, it establishes the state's choice as the only choice. However, this choice denies the victims of the conflict any form of redress for the wrongs done or even any recognition of what they have suffered. In this, the Concord reinforces a destructive pattern of politics in the country that led it to such a violent and destructive place in the first instance.

The Insurgency and Criminality in Algeria

The efforts by elements within the Algerian government to pursue a military solution to the political crisis gripping the country have been evident from the very beginning of the conflict. On 9 February 1992, the government introduced a 12-month state of emergency that, in early 1993, was extended indefinitely. In addition, 'anti-terrorism' legislation was passed through the Algerian parliament in October 1992 giving the government impunity to act against all forms of what it saw as Islamist insurgency or anti-state activity. In 1995, this legislation 'was incorporated virtually in its entirety into permanent legislation'.[88] Despite government claims that the Concord 'had accelerated the normalisation of the security situation' to the point where the insurgency 'no longer constituted a serious threat to the country's institutions and people', the state of emergency remains in force.[89]

This gave the government a free hand in terms of not only suppressing the armed opposition in the country but also silencing internal dissent from journalists, NGOs, and academics as well as external interference. In terms of internal dissent, the regime has been astute in not only overtly suppressing political opponents, but

also silencing and manipulating the press. Algeria has one of the most vibrant private press sectors in the region, particularly in the realm of newspaper publication.[90] The private press in Algeria grew at a rapid rate after the end of the state monopoly on the printed press in 1990. However, the state has sought to exert overt pressure on the press since the 1992 state of emergency was introduced and covert pressure through holding a monopoly over paper supplies as a way to squeeze critical publications out of the market.[91] These pressures on the Algerian press are compounded by the threats and action against them from the Islamist groups that included the assassination of several journalists through the 1990s.

The stifling of external criticism has also been enhanced by the efforts of the Algerian and American governments to link policies concerning the US 'war on terror'. Through the 1990s, Western governments maintained a level of distance from the Algerian government, particularly during the worst violence between 1994 and 1998. However, Bouteflika embarked on a 'diplomatic offensive' in Africa, Europe and the United States, a tactic that would reap considerable benefits for the regime.[92] Bouteflika's first trip to the United States in July 2001 led to an agreement being signed only four days before the 11 September attacks supplying the Algerian army with US military hardware. The proximity of the attacks in New York and Washington with the visit by Bouteflika allowed him to successfully connect the anti-insurgency policy of his regime with the post–11 September foreign policy direction of the United States. Such a connection has further enabled the Algerian government to avoid concerted scrutiny of their activities vis-à-vis the insurgency and pursue a security rather than a political solution to the crisis.

The suppression of internal dissent, external observation, and alternative approaches to resolving the political crisis in the country are indicative of the government's view of the situation. This view ignores the political elements of the crisis, instead seeking to impose security measures and impose peace. In this regard, the Concord is expressive of how the government has sought to frame the conflict as a domestic security situation, one where opposition is treated as criminal activity and the regime can play the role of arbiter.

The most consistent critique against the Concord has been the attempt to frame what is a security measure as a political solution to the crisis. For instance, former Prime Minister Mouloud Hamrouche

(1989–1991) captured this when he stated that the Concord 'cancels the system of justice because it gives the security apparatus, not the legal system, the right to implement the law and decide who merits the amnesty and who doesn't'.[93] Here, Hamrouche captures the central problem with the Concord, that the state was allocating clemency, not negotiating a solution.

This was not unprecedented in the patterns of conflict in Algeria. Indeed, this emphasis on a security 'frame' for approaching the crisis stems from the military dominance of Algerian politics. During the conflict, such a perspective began to fully emerge in 1994, at a point where the state faced imminent collapse. At this time, the hard-line members of the military high command (the *eradicateurs*) began to change tactics so that they may gain the upper hand in the conflict. This became a policy of 'terrorising the terrorist' in order to 'make fear change sides', regaining the ascendency through monopolising fear in the country.[94] This policy extended to the arming of civilians throughout the country as a way of extending the army's authority, by proxy, to areas beyond its immediate physical capabilities. These self-defence forces (*groupes d'autodéfense*) became deeply involved in the growing conflict, often themselves accused of violence, black market activities, and used in settling local feuds.

This tactic, whilst leading to widespread human rights violations on both sides of the conflict, also led to the increasing marginalisation of the Islamists in security terms to the point where they finally agreed to negotiations in 1997 (in the wake of the *rahma* law). Indeed, one could claim that they saw this shift in their military capacity as early as 1995, prompting their participation in the Rome Accord. Despite this, the *eradicateurs* felt vindicated in their use of security measures as a means to bring about peace in the country. Such an attitude came to guide the Concord during its formation and implementation.

An additional example of the security focus of the regime can be seen in its treatment of crises outside its confrontation with the Islamist insurgency. The killing of an Amazigh (Berber) youth, Massinissa Guermah, in the Kabylia region of eastern Algeria on 18 April 2001 sparked a series of violent protests against the regime in the Kabylia region, which soon spread through the whole country.[95] From late April to early July, constant rioting gripped this section of eastern Algeria leaving over 120 dead and many more injured.

What was most disturbing about this violence was that a settlement to end the crisis was within reach several times between April and July; however, the gendarmerie broke the fragile truce and incited further violence by opening fire on peaceful protests. A government-sponsored investigation into the crisis, in surprising honesty, contended that the perpetuation of violence by the internal security forces had been the result of high-ranking military officials seeking to destabilise the President.[96] Indeed, the actions of the rioters, often framed as a response to cultural exclusion based on their Amazigh identity, was more reflective of the general malaise afflicting Algerian society, particularly the youth of the country. Despite these acts highlighting the glaring need for a thorough political approach to defuse the mounting animosity in the country, highlighted in the Islamist insurgency as well as the Kabylia uprising, the government has viewed all crises through a security lens.

As seen above, the Concord initially received a favourable response from the leaders of the FIS and AIS. However, the Concord shaped up less and less as a gesture of reconciliation and resolution and more akin to a police measure, an act of imposition by the victors over the vanquished. This comment was made by leader of the LIDD, Ali Benhajar, in November 1999 to French-language daily, *Libre Algérie*. He went on to say that the Concord 'is no longer a reconciliation but a security agreement, if it exists and is implemented in this manner'.[97] Such sentiments were captured by Mourad Dhina, spokesman for the Coordination Council of the FIS, when he stated that the Concord was flawed as 'it ignored the political nature of the crisis, it sole aim being to absolve the Generals and their allies of the crimes they are guilty of committing'.[98] In essence, the opposition claimed that the Concord needed to be a political solution to the crisis through a mutual recognition of wrongs, but a security measure fashioned to impose the will of *le pouvoir* on a defeated enemy.

The tenets of the agreement, particularly the absence of provisions for mutual consultation, investigation of crimes, and the continuing exclusion of the Islamists from the political arena were all designed around the premise of enforcing an agreement on a defeated enemy rather than a legitimate opposition. Therefore, the Concord, rather than establishing and describing the shared responsibilities of various actors in the Algerian crisis, 'simply laid down the conditions under which Islamists could surrender'.[99] This was increasingly

evident towards the end of 1999 as this direction of the Concord became more apparent to both the Islamists and the general population in the country. Then Justice Minister Ahmed Ouyahia confirmed this in less than diplomatic comments by stating that the Concord 'is a very good law for everyone, the FIS included. They no longer have control over the armed groups and violence has been reduced significantly. So they don't have much of a role to play. The law allows them to go back home.'[100]

This quote is revealing. It highlights how the regime viewed the opposition, as an illegitimate and defeated enemy. Rather than seeking to recognise the grievances of the opposition, and incorporate them into the political structure, the law was designed for them simply to accept government amnesty and 'go home', to remove themselves from the political life of the country which *le pouvoir* claims as its exclusive domain.

In its attempts to establish some form of legal basis for the reintegration of the Islamists into the life of the country, the Concord is ambiguous at best. It establishes a sliding scale for probations and mitigated sentences, but beyond this little is revealed as to how social rifts are to be healed beyond simply forgetting the effects of the conflict. Even the probations and mitigated sentencing are not based within the normal legal system; instead, they are run through the hastily established *ad hoc* committees set up in articles 14 and 15 of the Concord. Judges were left to make arbitrary decisions on who should benefit from the provisions of the law (a sliding scale of sentences depending on the crimes committed) without the presence of full evidence or the input of an independent inquiry into the crimes. The criticisms of the Concord in this capacity hold great weight. The law is reflective of a security policy rather than a genuine reconciliation policy. Indeed, the Concord has enabled the regime to bypass the Algerian legal system and implement the law through the state and security apparatus.

Justice, Memory and Forgiveness in Algeria

As stated above, article 41 of the Concord laid out a blanket amnesty for the insurgency. The lack of transparency of the probation committees enhanced the state's ability to act with impunity in granting exemption to individuals and groups who had committed the worst crime during the conflict. In addition, it allowed the state to exempt

itself from any role in the conflict. Such activity has been a guiding force in the government's activities regarding the resolution process in Algeria. However, this has contravened the need for justice and forgiveness based on recognition of wrongs committed within society.

Here, the efforts of the government to deny the grievances of those affected by the conflict are examined. In particular, focus is on the case of those citizens who have 'disappeared' during the conflict, allegedly at the hands of either the insurgency or the regime. The neglect of calls for justice and investigations into these cases has gone far to undermine public confidence in the President and his peace initiative. This discussion is used to highlight the broader patterns of grievance denial present in the Algerian government's conflict resolution programme.

The Concord contravenes well-established traditions in Arab political culture relating to the importance of justice.[101] Justice is a key principle of legitimacy in Arab political culture, defined particularly in terms of its equitable distribution. The bestowal of justice in equal measure for all society lays the foundation of legitimacy for a ruler or regime. When it is ignored, or given in a disproportionate manner (as in the case of no recourse for victims and full amnesty for insurgents), it is likely to be ineffectual. In the case of Algeria, the resolution process is built on such illegitimate foundations; thus, it is less likely to resonate amongst large proportions of the population. Such contextualisation of the Concord has been minimal. Ratiba Hadj-Moussa has provided a first step in this process in terms of the framing of the Concord and its connotations in Arabic political and legal culture. She highlights how the Concord is:

> an agreement between two parties, one of which [the state] does not want to recognise its status as a party to the agreement and projects itself outside the dispute … The state thus places itself above the fray; it occupies the position of adjudicator. In doing so, it reaffirms the separation that always characterised its relation to society.[102]

Thus, the Concord (*al-wia'm*) is offered as a political accord (*littifaq*) between two parties. However, in Arab legal tradition such a notion is referential to 'good ethical relations and only ethical

relations between individuals, clans or tribes', not to legal institutional or political mechanisms for negotiation.[103] Thus, the state is seeking to remove itself from association with the conflict, to grant amnesty to an insurgency defined in terms of criminality, and to exclude any other group from input into the resolution process.

This also contravenes the inter-related notions of justice and forgiveness. Forgiveness (*ghufran*) is an act that displays an individual's commitment to a virtuous life and their role in the construction and maintenance of a community based on social justice. However, forgiveness does not exist in a void, instead operating alongside the idea of recognition. It is the recognition by individuals and parties that they have committed a wrong that is essential for the establishment of a process of forgiveness to commence. However, the Concord does not address these complementary aspects; instead, it seeks to impose a 'forced forgetting' of the crimes committed. Such a forced forgetting can be seen throughout Algerian history, with its emphasis on linear, non-pluralist constructions of social identity. State authority has excluded alternative visions and interpretations of acts and events within the community's history. In regards to the Concord and the civil war that it seeks to address, the regime seeks to ignore the very fact that there has been a 'massive tear in the social fabric' of the country based on alternative ideas of what Algerian society actually means, where it has come from, and where it is going.[104]

A key example of this trend has been the government's attitude toward the families of the 'disappeared', those people taken by the insurgency as a form of forced recruitment or by state authorities under the pretext of cooperation with or participation in insurgent activities.[105] Governmental rejection of the attempts of families to seek knowledge of their relatives, and calls for them to simply 'move on' in the face of the imposition of the Concord ignore the necessity of recognition in order to achieve forgiveness. This is a process of needing to remember in order to forget and forgive. However, the Concord not only ignores this but also enforces the imperative of forgiveness over any recognition of wrongs that have been committed.

This has been an unfortunate consequence of the Concord and the presidency of Bouteflika. Initially, such recognition appeared to be a central part of the President's plan for conflict resolution and reconciliation. Most notably, the President was the first member of the Algerian executive to explicitly acknowledge both the phenomena

and scale of civilian disappearances as well as move toward the internationally accepted scale of civilian casualties since 1992. During the 1999 election campaign, for instance, Bouteflika put the number of civilian disappearances at 10,000 as well as the number of civilian deaths at 100,000.[106] Before this, the various Algerian regimes had not recognised the scale of civilian disappearances, and when referred to, only recognised those who had been taken by insurgent groups, not the security forces. In relation to the scale of civilian casualties, the official government line before the President's statements had been a very conservative 26,000.[107]

However, upon his election in July and ratification of the Concord in September, the tone of debate quickly changed to the point were the President told a public meeting that people must simply let go in order to move on. In his own words, he stated 'How can you put this war behind you if you do not forget?'.[108] Bouteflika's dismissive attitude to the issue of Algeria's disappeared sparked considerable controversy within the country. Weekly demonstrations by families of the disappeared in front of the Algerian parliament gained increasing domestic and international coverage, hindering Bouteflika's claims to be moving the country beyond the memory of the conflict. The most prominent group has been the "Committee of the Families of the Disappeared". Previously, the President had charged the *Observatoire National des Droits de l'Homme* (National Human Rights Observatory —ONDH) with investigation of the issue of disappeared citizens. However, in reaction to the mounting pressure he created the ad hoc *Commission Nationale Consultative de Promotion et de Protection des Droits de l'Homme* (National Advisory Commission to Protect and Promote Human Rights—CNCPPDH) focussed specifically on this issue. The members of the CNCPPDH board are judge Bencheikh al-Hachemi, physician Zoubir Zehani, former National Popular Assembly deputies Abdelkrim Sidi Moussa and Ahmed Bayoud, Red Crescent President Abdelkader Boukhroufa and journalist Nacéra Belloula. No member of a family of a disappeared person or any member of the various activist groups promoting the interests of family members of disappeared civilians is represented.[109]

The CNCPPDH has few powers enabling it to conduct independent investigations into the thousands of cases of disappeared persons. It was established with the simple intent of facilitating contact between those bringing cases to the authorities and the

Ministry of Justice. The establishment of a symbolic mechanism, devoid of prosecution or clear investigatory powers is in line with the President's efforts to further bury the grievances of those affected by the phenomenon of disappearances in Algeria. To illustrate, the head of the CNCPPDH, lawyer Moustapha Farouk Ksentini, stated that despite the findings of the Commission, all efforts should be made toward assisting the amnesty for those who had committed the crimes as it was 'the best way we can hope for to enable Algeria to turn the page and move forward'.[110]

This exemption of the insurgency was extended to the state authorities, also accused of conducting activities related to civilian disappearances. The state, acting under the provisions of the state of emergency law as well as the 'anti-terrorism' legislation of 1992, has conducted a series of arbitrary detentions.[111] However, the first report of the CNCPPDH declared that while individuals responsible for disappearances would be held responsible, state institutions would not be liable for prosecution.

There is also the issue of the questionable independence of the CNCPPDH in terms of its ability to investigate state involvement in disappearances. The CNCPPDH, in 2003, declared its intent to establish a 'body count' of those who have disappeared, an unprecedented move on the part of the government. However, the government is seeking to disown any involvement in this activity, instead claiming that rogue elements within the army committed the acts outside the purview of the state. The CNCPPDH head has only gone as far as to claim that the state bears responsibility for those disappearances where the state has failed to protect its citizens. This, according to Human Rights Watch, is an effort to exonerate those members of the upper echelon of the state who may have been responsible for actively pursuing a policy of detaining citizens. Such efforts greatly hamper any effort to uncover the events leading to the disappearance of some 6000 Algerian citizens since 1992.[112] Therefore, the mandate given to the CNCPPDH involves the dealing out of compensation to families of those disappeared, and in some instances offering apologies but it does not involve the investigation of issues of responsibility or of fact, questions that might, in Ksentini's view, aggravate Algeria's 'social ruptures'.[113]

Therefore, this process of forced forgetting can be seen in the lack of mechanisms within the Concord for thorough investigations

of crimes committed by the insurgency, the beneficiaries of the amnesty. The Concord institutes what amounts to a blanket amnesty for the perpetrators of some of the most severe crimes in the conflict with little or no reference within the document for the rights of victims. It is a short-term vision, designed outside the regular justice system and in violation of Algeria's domestic and international legal obligations. In this, it posits 'forgetting as the only alternative to peace', a forgetting that ignores the indispensable nature of memory in conflict resolution.[114]

The Algerian Government as the Third Party to Its Own Dispute

Unlike Lebanon, external groups have neglected the conflict in Algeria. The League of Arab States, the Maghrib Union, the United Nations, and the European Union have paid only marginal attention to this crisis, whilst individual states have largely supported the Algerian regime's policy toward the insurgency. This has enabled the Algerian government to position itself as the third party to its own dispute, resisting external interference through framing the dispute as a domestic security matter. Such a policy was enhanced by global events, particularly the 11 September, 2001 attacks in the United States that has allowed the Algerian government to link its conflict with the so-called "war on terror".

In its efforts to impose a solution to the crisis, the Algerian regime has consistently fought against what it terms as external interference in the domestic affairs of the country. This has precluded any attempts by external third parties to play a role in the conflict resolution processes. The European Union and the United Nations have both sent investigatory teams to the country in response to the upsurge in violence against civilians after 1997.[115] However, the recommendations that emerged from these reports (essentially expressing regret at the violence and hope that a solution could be found) were lacking detail in terms of suggested avenues for resolution as well as any intent on pursuing a meaningful dialogue for peace.

Outside of this, the Algerian regime has received support from France and the United States, with the latter increasingly supporting Bouteflika since 11 September 2001. For France, since the 1960s, its concerns have revolved around lingering connections with the largely

Francophone military high command as well as seeking to maintain some form of stability for fear of a massive influx of immigrants into the country. Successive French governments have supported the regime's policies almost without question, including the suspension of elections in 1992, without appearing too enthusiastic in their backing for the Algerian political elite.

The United States, as already stated, has increased its support for the Algerian regime, particularly the hard-line policy of the *eradicateurs* as part of the American-sponsored "war on terror". This policy, followed by high-level generals such as Mohamed ('Tewfik') Médiène and Smain Lamari, Khaled Nezzar, Larbi Belkheir, Benabbes Gheziel and Mohamed Touati,[116] corresponds to the zero-tolerance approach to Islamist insurgency advocated by many within the George W. Bush administration. This is most starkly captured through the doctrine of former Bush advisor and prominent neo-conservative ideologue, Richard Perle, who advocates a 'decontextualisation of terrorism'.[117] Such a doctrine calls for an elimination of insurgency at all costs, with attempts to understand the causes of such acts as misguided. 'Terrorism', it is argued, is at its core evil and is unable to be negotiated with.

The efforts of the Algerian government to totally exclude foreign intervention in the resolution process can also be seen in the direction of the state-run commission in civilian disappearances, the CNCPPDH. The seven-member board of the CNCPPDH has actively sought to preclude the inclusion of any non-Algerians. According to head of the CNCPPDH, 'it is out of the question to permit foreigners to interfere in our affairs. It is simply a matter of sovereignty and of principle. Besides, the problem of the "disappeared" is a purely Algerian problem. It is up to Algerians to resolve it'.[118] The Algerian state has managed to exclude other organisations from playing a third party role, seeing that role as reserved for itself. In effect, the state seeks to play the role of combatant covertly and mediator overtly. This was institutionalised through the Concord, particularly in the establishment of the probation committees.[119] Five of the six members of the probation committees are state-appointed. These committees, in a way, do correspond to elements of the Arab-Islamic third party model. The third party in such a model is embedded within the dispute, having an intimate knowledge of the participants and problems, as well as a stake in the resolution of the dispute.[120] In

this, the regime is deeply invested in the conflict, a central participant and not an external player. However, the third party in the region has 'high community status and considerable (recognised) power'.[121] The Algerian state cannot claim such legitimacy in its role as third party due to its widely perceived illegitimacy. Indeed, the merit born of such a third party role in the Arab-Islamic context stems from the attachment of the third party to the community. The very characterisation of the Algerian regime as *le pouvoir*, and the shadowy dominance of the military high command at the decision-making level of Algerian politics undermine any claims the state may make to authority of such a type.

This brings us to the crux of the problem of the Algerian state as third party in the dispute. Essentially, it is claiming that role within a conflict in which it is a participant. This reflects a broader view of the conflict held by the Algerian regime, something the Concord expresses. The regime does not see the conflict as a divergence of visions for the state, or even a resolving of differences between competing elements within the state, but as a series of criminal acts by groups who refuse to accept the total dominance of the state elite in setting the vision for the future of the community, even where that vision is tenuous, or totally absent. For Mohamed Lakhdar Maougal, the state 'does not want to recognise its status as a party to the agreement and projects itself outside the dispute'.[122] The Algerian state thus places itself outside the conflict, seeking the role of adjudicator and, by doing so, 'reaffirms the separation that always characterised its relation to society'.[123] Thus, by claiming this position, the Algerian state, in effect, undermines the very legitimacy it needs for such a position.

The exclusion of external interference, including the potentially valuable role of NGO third parties like the Sant'Egidio community, along with the suppression of potential internal third parties, such as the victim advocacy groups named above, along with others, such as the Algerian League for the Defence of Human Rights—LIDDH, deprives the conflict of any viable player. Indeed, external players with enforcement potential have proven ineffectual (EU and the UN) or complacent (France and the United States) in the face of the Algerian government's actions.

Reconciliation without Consultation

Along with the criminalisation of the opposition as well as the detachment from justice and forgiveness, the Concord lacked any form of consultative element in its formulation. Simply, the regime decided on the form of the agreement and presented it to the Algerian people for approval through a vaguely worded referendum. Disconnection from the imperative of consultation is evident here, particularly in terms of how it has damaged the credibility of the Concord, reinforcing the view of the regime amongst the Algerian people as an unrepresentative body. This has done nothing for the broader resolution process in the country except to broaden the legitimacy gap between the state and its citizens.

In addition to the process of recognition and forgiveness, Arab-Islamic approaches to conflict resolution emphasise the importance of mutual consultation (*shurah*) as a key element in establishing the legitimacy of any process. *Shurah* is a mechanism designed to recognise and accommodate for diversity within the community (recognition of the validity of difference—*ikhtilaf*), rather than to seek to impose total uniformity. Political authority, exercised with the process of *shurah*, endows any rule with legitimacy and decisions made with permanency. As with the absence of forgiveness and recognition within the Concord, there was little in the way of mutual or popular consultation during the formation and implementation of the law. The Concord was a *fait accompli* even before it was offered for referendum, as it was passed as law in July before being presented for referendum in September. In this, Bouteflika has 'followed in the footsteps of his predecessors by failing to seek the people's opinion on decisions that are to shape their future … [h]e merely handed them a ready-trussed package to which he expected them to give their blessing'.[124]

The most vocal opponents of the lack of consultation have been those in the Algerian legal system, as the law goes a long way to undermine the effectiveness of the country's legal structure. In effect, the army supported Bouteflika as the candidate who they thought would affect a transformation in international opinion of the Algerian regime through the introduction of his law. Thus, the Concord was formulated, backed, and implemented not with the purpose of consulting the population to formulate a legitimate and lasting solution

to the crisis. Instead, it was designed to forcibly end the conflict without any reference to redress for those affected by it. In this, it was essentially doomed to failure as it sought a 'compromise … without proper negotiation'.[125] Such an effort would not achieve success in a political environment where even the political elite had sharply divergent interests and the population was excluded from the decision-making process.

Therefore, there were too many interests left unanswered. In particular, whilst the Concord implemented a sliding scale for imprisonment, including probation, there were substantial loopholes. In particular, article 41 of the Concord gave the president discretion for the broadening of those eligible for the amnesty, including those who had committed murder, rape, or bombings. The article states that the provisions of the Concord do not apply to those 'who have belonged to organisations, and who have consciously, and of their own volition, decided to halt acts of violence and placed themselves entirely at the disposal of the state'.[126]

Here, the state is able to grant amnesty to any insurgent individual or group without any reference to public law or scrutiny. Bouteflika took advantage of this three days before the deadline for the amnesty when, on 10 January 2000, he issued Presidential decree 2000–03 that granted amnesty to 'persons who belonged to organisations which decided voluntarily and spontaneously to put an end to acts of violence and which put themselves at the full disposal of the state [as stated in article 41 of the Concord] and whose names are appended to the original of this decree'.[127]

The president had simply undercut what provisions there were in the Concord that maintained some level of accountability for the worst crimes committed (murder, rape, and bombing) in order that his peace initiative may seem as successful as possible. There was no consultation with either the Algerian legal system or the public in allowing those responsible for these crimes to benefit from the amnesty, and there was not even the provision of a list of names that would be released with the decree.

Thus, the Concord with its modest provisions pertaining to the accountability of those who had committed the worst crimes was formulated without any consultation. It was simply given to the Algerian people in the form of a question of whether they support an end to the violence or not, something very few would disagree with. Even

within this, the regime still had the right to manipulate the provisions of the Concord in order to broaden those eligible for amnesty to include individuals and groups who had committed the worst crimes of the conflict.

It was extremely optimistic for the regime to hope that the Algerian people without consultation would simply accept its 'ready-trussed package'.[128] Indeed, a regime that has had its legitimacy steadily undermined through the last two to three decades through mismanagement and elite self-interest is unlikely to be successful in simply expecting public support for its actions. This is particularly so where the regime still seeks to impose its vision on the community, a vision which grants impunity to individuals and groups who have committed serious violent acts.

Here, the state is again seeking to deny the importance of memory in community life and community healing. In essence, they are denying the community any way of being able to build a contextual framework through which they can understand the events that have happened to them. To use the words of John Ralston Saul, the denial of memory is destructive as 'functioning individuals and functioning societies require the context of memory in order to shape their thinking and their action'.[129] The process of *shurah* within conflict resolution is an important way of recognising the validity of memory for those who have suffered through the conflict, helping to give meaning and understanding to events by allowing civilians an avenue to articulate their grief and have some level of control over the response to the conflict.

However, in a situation where the government continues to deny the existence of social experience outside its own vision, *shurah* is repressed with the same vigour as is the insurgency. Indeed, such a process of mutual consultation would give rise to calls for the Concord to contain provisions for some form of investigation into the crimes committed. The government, seeking to absolve itself and, in effect, absolve the insurgency has sought to bypass such calls, negating the needed process of consultation, and introducing a law that essentially grants impunity. It is an unjust solution, one that benefits those who had committed crime and punishing those who are victims of crime. Such a "solution" also leaves the Algerian people bereft of tools for moving beyond the conflict. Consultation, recognition, and memory are needed to create some form of community

consensus, or even clarity, over what happened in order that people can then move on.

Memory is not something to be extinguished, and resolution not something to be imposed. Instead, fostering memory through consultation is needed to deal with the conflict and to move on. José Zalaquett captured this in stating that 'identity is memory … identities forged out of half-remembered things of false memories easily commit transgression'.[130] This is a warning against denying the population their need to remember and to consult them in such a need, for to deny this is to raise the danger of allowing such events to repeat themselves.

Conclusion

After more than a decade of living without justice, the Algerian people are not served in any substantive way by the Concord. The amnesty, for many, seems to confirm the patterns of brutal rule without impunity, whilst the victims (the citizenry) have to simply live with the consequences. In this, the state is not only exonerating the insurgents but also exonerating itself, not accounting for its own role in the violence and suffering as this would open up the broader issues of guilt and responsibility. This absence of responsibility and justice leaves the law bereft of legitimacy and popular support.

In particular, the resolution process in Algeria is focussed on criminalising opposition in all its forms not just the insurgency, allowing the regime to impose its own 'solution' to the crisis. This has been reinforced by the changed global environment since 2001. However, such a stance has undermined the state's already tenuous position as the legitimate authority where it acts with impunity and little reference to the needs of its citizens. The Concord reflects this attitude, a security measure formulated without consultation and neglecting the imposition of justice. The state has sought to impose its own linear version of events on the crisis, excluding its own role in the conflict, absolving the armed insurgency and, by extension, punishing those who have suffered most, the Algerian people.

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112 Ibid, p. 8.

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114 Hadj-Moussa, Civil Concord in Algeria, p. 6.

115 See European Union, 'Background Brief: Conflict in Algeria', Foreign and Commonwealth Office, London, August 1998; United Nations, 'United Nations: Algeria—Report of Eminent Panel'.

116 This group of generals came together, formally, in 1992 to implement the January coup and have been operating, in loose tandem, ever since.

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Conflict Resolution and the Perpetuation of Elite Structures in the Arab World

This chapter discusses the implications of this analysis in terms of the conflict resolution process in Lebanon and Algeria specifically as well as for conflict resolution in the community of Arab states. Two main themes emerge. First, an account of the effects of political culture on the civil war resolution processes in Lebanon and Algeria is designed to highlight elements of consistency and variation. It is argued that these elements of consistency and variation highlight the need to account for political culture but also to avoid placing political culture as the primary determining factor in the formation of peace processes.

Second, discussion shifts to examine how political culture can be harnessed to enhance the legitimacy of the peace agreements. This is a conscious effort to emphasise the positive elements of this study, particularly that of creating inclusive, politically pluralistic and peaceful communities in the Arab world.

Accounting for Political Culture in Conflict Resolution

This book has sought to emphasise that political culture affects civil war resolution processes in the community of Arab states and to outline how such effects manifest themselves. The primary implication of this, the need to account for political culture in a resolution process,

is evident. However, there is also another consequence associated with this investigation, that political culture does not serve as the primary defining element in the resolution process and, therefore, should not be the sole guiding factor in understanding and developing resolution processes.

Here, both of these factors are engaged with in order to highlight these as central implications of this study. The need to account for political culture is examined in terms of key consistent themes that are evident from the case studies. In particular, the influence of status quo maintenance, collective amnesia, and the role of third parties are evident examples of consistent cultural influence over the conflict resolution process in Lebanon and Algeria.

In addition, the possibility to account for political culture in relation to conflict resolution without positioning it as the determining factor is examined. Here, the variations in the influence of political culture highlight how it interacts with structural and material forces in conditioning the shape and process of conflict resolution in the community of Arab states. Specifically, particular reforms for each of the peace agreements will be outlined that bring them closer to legitimacy as well as addressing necessary structural reforms.

Finally, this section examines the implications of the scope and limits of this approach for the broader theoretical literature. In particular, it will be demonstrated that the use of political culture as a secondary explanatory tool in conflict resolution analysis works to strengthen primary explanatory modes (structuralism and materialism) in that such approaches are buttressed through contextualisation.

From the analysis of the case studies, it is evident that attributes of political culture relevant to conflict resolution are not consistent through the community of Arab states. However, there are commonalities. The most notable of these commonalities related to elite political culture in the Arab world are the maintenance of the political status quo, the tendencies toward collective amnesia in relation to the conflict, and the role of third parties.

In terms of status quo maintenance, neither agreement has suggested or implemented radical reform in either society. Instead, both agreements have been framed in terms of emphasising consistency with pre-existing political arrangements. Neither contains

thoroughgoing mechanisms for political, economic or social reform; reforms that are necessary to preclude the outbreak of similar crises in the future.

In Lebanon, the Taef Agreement further enshrined the country's confessional political system whilst also neglecting the issue of Lebanon's ambiguous political identity. That is, the intricate and precarious system of community balances, the system of 'equilibrium confessionalism', was enshrined in both political structure and the definition of the community.[1] Certainly, the Taef Agreement was the only pact reached during the conflict which the vast majority of groups agreed on; however, this agreement stemmed from a combination of 'war-weariness' and external pressures rather than from the quality of the agreement itself in forging a new direction for the country. The leaders of the confessional communities who were also, largely, the leaders of the wartime militias were content to accept an agreement that did not threaten their chances of retaining their dominance within the political structure of the country.

Even in the face of near revolutionary upheaval, as has occurred since February 2005, the old elites have managed to cling tenaciously to positions of political dominance in society. Either those new forces that have entered the political fray since the Syrian withdrawal in April are 'new/old' forces, such as Michel Aoun, or are inheritors of the political patronage system, such as Fouad Siniora. Siniora, the current Prime Minster of Lebanon, was the Finance Minister under former Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri as well as his personal financial advisor.

In Algeria, the Civil Concord reinforced the state's primarily security role in relation to opposition forces in the country. The role of the military in politics, the main obstacle to true pluralist development and community integration in the political sphere, has triumphed. The regime has managed to ensure that the main opposition tendencies in the country remain bogged down in ideological confrontation rather than presenting a real alternative to the Algerian people. That is, the legal political parties in Algeria are 'based on competing worldviews rather than competing programs for government'.[2] It is the confrontation between these views that has been at the core of the conflict over the last decade while the state has done nothing to promote a change in the political atmosphere that may foster peaceful political contestation.

Indeed, the regime has managed to ensure that the main ideological tendencies are represented in Parliament (FLN and RND as nationalist, MSP, MRN, and MN as Islamist, FFS and RCD as Berberist, PT and MDS as leftist) in order to defuse claims of exclusion. However, the regime has also ensured that these groups remain competitive, in order that one party or ideological tendency does not gain too much power. Therefore, since these parties are 'competitors rather than allies', the scope that the regime enjoys for exploiting their rivalries is enormous.[3]

In understanding the importance of this, it is critical to recognise how reform programmes are a crucial step in the reconciliation process in both a local and a general sense. In a local sense, the promotion of political reform can be legitimised through an emphasis on such reforms enhancing community cohesion.[4] In a general sense, reform leading to reconciliation provides a combination of closure and healing, 'closure in the sense of not reopening hostilities, healing in the sense of being rehabilitated'.[5] Closure for society entails a facing of the events of the past and dealing with them in the collective consciousness. The granting of blanket amnesties and the continued dominance of wartime political figures at the expense of new political elements does not facilitate an environment where such traumatic memories can be understood. Social healing stems from this, an ability to rehabilitate those members of society wrenched apart through the conflict back into a cohesive social unit. This is the core difficulty in resolving civil wars, where groups must learn to coexist again within the same society.

Thus, the maintenance of the status quo works against social healing and rehabilitation as well as weakening community cohesion. Such a tendency is reinforced by the pre-existing patterns of conflict resolution in Arab societies and is manifested in the two agreements analysed here. This tendency works in conjunction with the pressures toward forgetting the legacies of the conflict, a collective amnesia.

Memory is central in any conflict resolution process, particularly in a context where emphasis is placed on the complementary aspects of forgiveness and recognition. However, the need for recognition sits in tension with the pressure toward collective amnesia. This pressure has also manifested itself both in the form of the two peace agreements as well as what they have neglected to cover.

Some effort was initially made in Lebanon, where the imperative for the formation of a nation-wide standard history text would have provided the basis from which the country as a whole would have had to look at the events of the war and decide how they were to interpret them. However, continued inter-communal tensions prevented this from manifesting itself and the memory of the war has slipped back into a fragmented state, where each community has its own exclusive memory. Such pressure for collective amnesia in Lebanon is an effort to seek what Eric Sarner has described as 'the evacuation of one event from memory' in order to 'resist the next one'.[6] What Sarner is saying here is that the Lebanese have sought to avoid the memory of the conflict for fear that this memory would keep the tensions between the communities alive. However, in their neglect of the war memory, the political situation that had led to the conflict in the first place, that of confessional politics, has further entrenched itself.

In Algeria, tendencies toward collective amnesia are observable in the Civil Concord with the absolving of both the state and the insurgency through blanket amnesties. Opposition (violent and non-violent/political and civil society) is criminalised and dealt with through security channels rather than through the political framework. Indeed, the political framework is monopolised by the state and alternative interpretations of the conflict as a political crisis are excluded. The governmental rejection of the Rome Platform, which explicitly recognised the political elements to the crisis, puts this in stark relief.

The current political environment is still characterised by this state monopoly. It refuses to recognise any political parties who were behind moves such as the Rome Platform, instead seeking to dismember such opposition and co-opt them individually. For instance, the Platform calls for a reintegration of the Islamists into the political sphere. In the current context, the Movement for Fidelity and Justice (WAFA) of former Foreign Minister Ahmed Taleb Ibrahimi is widely recognised as the legitimate successor to the *Front Islamique du Salut* (Islamic Salvation Front—FIS) and the vehicle through which the ex-FIS Islamists can re-engage in Algerian political life. However, despite the fact that, through the Concord President Bouteflika appears 'willing to bring the FIS in', this is to be done individually.[7] That is, the regime recognises the strength of an organised opposition force such

as WAFA; therefore, they will seek to co-opt individuals within the movement in order to defuse it rather than face it through a legitimate electoral contest.

Here, it is clear that the Concord is a short-term vision, designed outside the regular justice system and implemented by state administrators. In this way, it is another attempt at forced forgetting imposed by the state where 'forgetting (is put forward) as the only alternative to peace'.[8] However, this mode of forgetting ignores the indispensable role of memory in conflict resolution, a role that ensures that the same events are not repeated.[9] Forced forgetting is being resisted within Algerian society, from civil society groups such as the 'Mothers and Families of the Disappeared' as well as the press. However, international attention outside of the scope of particular NGOs has validated the Algerian regime's efforts to simply break with the past.

The pressures toward maintaining the political status quo and enforcing collective amnesia have also been reinforced by the third party roles in these two conflicts. Whilst the particular third party has differed between the two cases, the method in which they have intervened reflects the model of third party intervention. In this, these roles have been the primary interests in shaping the peace agreements rather than facilitating negotiation between combating factions to reach agreement themselves.

In Lebanon, the Arab League through the Higher Tripartite Committee officially took on the third party role. This committee had the backing of major global powers (the United States and France) and acted in close consultation with the most interested regional player, Syria. Here, Syria was the proxy third party in the resolution process leading to Taef in that it was the guarantor of peace in the country due to its military occupation of the country as well as essentially dictating two of the four tenets of the agreement.

The consistent and overt external intervention in Lebanon sits in stark contrast to the situation in Algeria. Here, the regime has been able to resist external interference in the development of resolution processes in the country. However, the model of third party behaviour, one of an interested participant acting in an interventionist role, is observable. The state has sought to act as third party to its own dispute on which it can impose a security solution. The influence of status quo maintenance and collective amnesia assumes prominence

for the regime here as attempts at reform and accountability threaten its very existence.

These patterns correspond to third party practice evident in conflict resolution within Arab communities. The political and military power of the third party has traditionally served to enhance the credibility of third parties in both local disputes and civil wars in the region.[10] The role of both Syria and the Higher Tripartite Committee in Lebanon was backed by the physical power and legitimacy of these parties. Similarly, in local disputes within Lebanon, such as in the Beka'a Valley, the overwhelming influence of Hezbollah has allowed the party to act as the most viable third party for the settlement of disputes.

The embeddedness of the third party in the dispute is another characteristic exhibited in these cases.[11] Syria had been directly involved in the Lebanese war since 1976 and indirectly involved in Lebanese politics since Lebanese independence in 1943. The Algerian state, acting as third party to its own dispute, had an obvious interest in the conflict. Indeed, the state has had to evade charges of perpetuating the violence in the country whilst also seeking to position itself as the mediator to a conflict in which it is a disputant.

In this, the third party acts to enforce a decision, as an arbitrator, rather than to merely facilitate negotiation between parties who 'own' the resolution process.[12] In this, the third party holds a great deal of power in the resolution of the conflict and in the post-conflict settlement.[13] Here, Syria's post-war occupation of Lebanon is an example of such power being applied. The enforcement of settlement is accompanied by the responsibility of third parties to arrange and deliver compensation, often through ritualistic processes such as *sulh*.[14] This differs from the Western resolution process that focuses on the provision of compensation through a legal format.

It must be noted that some of these factors often act to 'prevent or obstruct the process of reaching a just resolution; instead, they may contribute to the preservation of an asymmetric power relationship that exists between the parties'.[15] This is most notable in the cases where the third party is not just an interested player, but a direct participant in the conflict as is the case with both cases examined in this discussion. In addition, where the third party fails to act in this role, the legitimacy of their role is undermined. The lack of compensation offered by the Algerian state to the victims of violence in the

conflict, particularly the families of the disappeared, weakens their claims to act as the legitimate third party in this conflict.

The Limits of Political Culture in Conflict Resolution and the Implications for Theory

Whilst political culture has been presented in this study as a valuable explanatory concept, this discussion also contends that there are limits to its explanatory capacity. Specifically, these limitations revolve around two areas. The first relates to the definition of political culture offered in this study, namely, it can only be employed in an explanatory fashion when it is conceptualised as a secondary and relational factor. Second, the explanatory capacity of political culture is limited by the variation within the political culture of a community where these groups emphasise values and assumptions different from other groups.

These limitations are important to note as such delineation refines the scope and explanatory potential of the concept. This analysis does not claim that political culture is a total explanatory tool, but one that exists in relation to more potent explanatory concepts and can enhance their analytical value.

The Secondary and Relational Limits of Political Culture

Central to developing political culture for explanatory purposes has been the argument that the concept is best employed in a secondary and relational manner.[16] Implicit in this is the notion that there are definite limits to the explanatory capacity of political culture. This has implications for conflict resolution theory in that the delineation of the limits of political culture analysis can highlight where political culture 'sits' in relation to the primary explanatory concepts of structural influence and material interest.[17]

The limits of political culture are best highlighted in relation to the reach of the primary explanatory concepts of structuralism and materialism. Structuralism is the key concept in understanding the intractability of conflicts, particularly civil war, as well as its perpetuation. Zartman's approach, highlighting how the structural imbalances in civil wars between the government and the insurgency (power asymmetry) mitigate the possibilities for negotiation, is a powerful explanatory concept in understanding the perpetuation of such conflict.[18]

As previously outlined, there are problems with Zartman's conceptualisation in terms of the assumption of a zero-sum relationship between the combatants in civil war. However, this perspective does have traction as a core explanatory concept that inspires regimes to seek a total victory and the insurgency to keep fighting as they, in the words of Henry Kissinger, 'win if they do not lose'.[19] Political culture is limited in relation to this as the understanding of and attempt at changing values and assumptions are not adequate in themselves to end the conflict. Attempts to alter values and assumptions can only be done in conjunction with adjustments to structural imbalances and inequalities that have helped shape these values and assumptions.

To illustrate, the Civil Concord in Algeria is characterised mostly by its efforts to exclude alternative parties from the decision-making process. Whilst the insurgency can be seen to benefit from the granting of amnesty measures, there is no redress to the power imbalances that characterise Algerian political life. The treatment of the insurgency as criminalised elements and the disregard of popular, non-insurgent grievances in the Concord perpetuates the structural inequalities that persist in the country. Political culture has shaped the methods used by political elites to maintain their position of power and has shaped the methods and rhetoric the insurgency has employed to gain popular support, but it has not dictated the source of grievances nor the underlying aim of the regime's resolution process. This is not to nullify the role of political culture but to show how political culture has operated in a secondary, relational role in the formation of the resolution process.

Alternatively, materialism is a powerful explanatory concept in terms of understanding the motivations of parties involved in the conflict. It is also potent in understanding what may drive parties to negotiate. This is particularly so in terms of understanding elite interest in the conflict. For instance, Stedman has developed a useful conceptualisation of those figures within a conflict who gain from its perpetuation, the so-called 'spoilers'.[20] Put simply, spoilers are those who enter a resolution process with the intent of manipulating it to their own ends, often in the recognition that they are more likely to maintain positions of power within a conflict situation than in any post-conflict settlement. Thus, the motivation for these types of combatants is not to address a perceived insecurity but to maximise their

gains from the conflict. The spoiler concept is a valuable materialist explanation for the varying motivations that drive combatants to the negotiating table. The issue of motivations is the strength of the materialist approach. Whilst structuralist approaches emphasise underlying insecurity as the key motivating factor for parties to negotiate, materialist approaches can locate how self-interest serves as a crucial motivating force.

In addition, the issue of motivations is not fully conceptualised by a political culture approach. However, materialism and the political culture approach can serve together in enhancing an understanding of motivations in terms of the issue of legitimacy. As previously outlined, 'basic human needs' are presented as core motivating factors in terms of material interest where 'needs fulfilment' defuses the potential of 'deep-rooted conflict'.[21] Political culture, serving in a relational and secondary capacity, can help clarify why certain needs are emphasised in particular political environments. The importance of political representation and institutional reform in Lebanon is of primary importance due to the consociational structure of the political system in the country. This is contrasted with the narrower base of regime composition in Algeria, where that country's resolution process focuses on the maintenance of this small elite's political dominance rather than institutional reshuffling. Thus, political culture as a secondary and relational explanatory module can provide valuable conceptual clarity to conflict resolution analysis. The identification of the limits of the approach in this respect is crucial as it enhances the potency of primary explanatory concepts.

Avoiding Continued Disempowerment through the Promotion of Elite Political Culture

Stemming from the concerns related to the suggested limitations of political culture, it is argued here that the development of any form of political culture analysis ought to acknowledge the multi-layered and fluid nature of the concept. Earlier, this study suggested a socio-economic division of Arab society as a constructive approach to this, situating political culture variance at the level of elites, middle classes and lower, disempowered classes.[22] The focus of this examination has been the effect of elite political culture in the Arab world on the conflict resolution process.

The recognition of different "locations" of political culture within a community raises another issue of limitations for political culture analysis. Specifically, it highlights the importance of avoiding the imposition of homogeneity on a community in terms of its political culture. Thus, any conclusions drawn from political culture analysis are limited to those elements within a community who had influence over the process rather than the community as a whole. This is an important qualification as it provides a curb on the conclusions to be drawn from political culture analysis in terms of generalisations about the broader community. To illustrate, Avruch has outlined two types of errors in the usage of culture in conflict resolution studies. The first is the underestimation of the influence of culture, an error that has been the dominant theme in what he and others have termed the 'culture question'.[23] The second is an overestimation of the influence of culture. Apart from the aforementioned rejection of political culture as a primary explanatory concept, there are other important reasons for the avoidance of overestimating the influence of culture and political culture in conflict resolution. In particular, conflict resolution and post-conflict reconstruction processes open up the question of 'who gets to define culture' in the new social formations. Thus, this question is ultimately a political question in terms of allocating 'power and privilege' where the assumption that elite political culture is reflective of the broader community's values and assumptions can be 'deleterious for the weaker, disempowered, or subordinate parties in the conflict (where) it can affect the equity of the intervention's outcome, its justice'.[24]

Regarding confessionalism in Lebanon, the maintenance of this political structure through the Taef Agreement, and seeing confessionalism itself as a product of Lebanese or Arab political culture, simply leads to a restoration of the system that proved untenable up to 1975. Such a view is illustrated in the mosaic perspective outlined earlier, one that emphasises the divisions and diversity within Arab society as a constant feature of Arab political culture.

Indeed, to highlight the security focus of the Algerian government as definitive of political culture in this state or the region is damaging. For instance, this has been an approach taken by Martinez in his argument for the dominance of a 'war-oriented *imaginaire*' (world-view).[25] This centres on the idea that the civil war destroyed the fragile political mechanisms for controlling and regulating

conflict in Algerian society. In its place has emerged a cycle in which violence has become 'a method of accumulating wealth and prestige and is, for that reason, constantly being readapted by the participants in the conflict'.[26] In other words, Algerian political culture has become dominated by the use of violence as a mechanism for social mobility for groups.

However, Martinez fails to account for how those in the armed insurgency willingly participated in the electoral process before 1992 and how multiple political parties and civil society groups still operate non-violently in the country in their pursuit of political participation. Certainly, Martinez captures the attitude of the hard-line elements within the state, as most clearly illustrated in the act of cancelling the electoral process and militarily engaging with the Islamists. However, other cultural forces, such as the calls for justice, the need for inclusion and the need for consultation, have also tempered the political environment in Algeria.

This does imply a positive side to the use of political culture also where such analysis should not be used simply to justify the maintenance of particular social structures, but as a tool to explain why certain groups emphasise particular values and assumptions in particular contexts. From this, it is possible to advocate change in terms of promoting the interests of those disempowered groups.

Harnessing Political Culture for the Successful Resolution of Civil War

With the above caveats pertaining to the negative effects of certain types of political culture influence as well as a warning against the over-emphasis of political culture in mind, it is argued that the implications of this examination are that political culture is not only present and needing to be accounted for in conflict resolution, but that it can also be harnessed to enhance the legitimacy and chances for success of any resolution process. Here, an examination of how such an effort can be taken both in regards to the two case studies as well as the civil war resolution process throughout the community of Arab states.

Utilising the role and importance of political culture in conflict resolution can enhance the legitimacy of the process. In Lebanon, the need for community cohesion to be linked to political reform, namely de-confessionalisation, is central. In Algeria, fighting the efforts to

grant absolution through amnesty in the form of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission can help promote the vital element of justice and introduce a political element to what is a security measure.

Political Reform, De-confessionalisation and the Taef Agreement

Despite the influence of maintaining the status quo predicated on the desire for a return to community cohesion in Lebanon, the two need not be inseparable. Indeed, the maintenance of community cohesion calls for an overhaul of the confessional system rather than its further enshrinement. The institutional reforms outlined in the Taef Agreement, along with the military occupation by Syria, provided the country with short-term stability needed to end the cycles of violence. However, events through the 1990s and early 21st century have shown how political reform, rather than status quo maintenance, is essential for the preservation of community cohesion in Lebanon. Thus, political culture can be harnessed to modify existing peace arrangements and move Lebanon to a more positive future.

Taking an alternative approach to confessional identity can sustain community identities whilst promoting constructive community interaction. In this, there is a need to de-politicise confessional identity where confessional identity can be 'extended and enriched to incorporate other more secular and civil identities'.[27] To this end it is constructive to make alterations in the political situation whereby mutual dependence is promoted. The creation of a coalition government based on the two or three largest parties in the country can help this process. This is not unprecedented in Lebanese history, where one witnessed alliances between, first, the Druze and Christians, and, second, the Sunni, Shi'a and Christians through the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries.[28] Indeed, during the war, there were unlikely coalitions including the leftist-Muslim block headed by Druze leader Kamal Jumblatt, Sunni groups, as well as factions of the PLO. Here, correspondence with the cultural practice of conflict resolution in the community of Arab states is evident whereby patterns of local resolution practice have emphasised inclusiveness of all community groups.[29] Rather than individualising the locus of discontent leading to conflict (focussing solely on the belligerents in terms of resolution processes), Arab conflict resolution practice focuses on how the

conflict affects all groups within society and includes all groups in the resolution process.

To illustrate, Abu-Nimer has documented the process of community-level resolution in northern Israel/Palestine, highlighting how conflict between groups in a religiously mixed Palestinian village was dealt with in an inclusive way. Tensions between Palestinian Druze, Christian, and Muslim communities in this village led to an outbreak of violence between family groups. However, in seeking resolution of the various disputes, emphasis was placed on the need to address the total disruption to community life rather than the specific grievances between the confessional communities. Indeed, there was an implicit pressure on the groups not to let the conflict spill-over into other villages that had similar multi-confessional demographics.[30]

Several themes are evident here in operating to preserve community identity whilst defusing the tension that stemmed from inter-community tension. The primary force was the effort to end the conflict whilst maintaining community cohesion. The elders from each group sought to emphasise commonality between the groups through common historical stories. These stories reinforced the lessons of the need for community cohesion and the need for forgiveness and a restoration of personal dignity between the conflicting members of the groups.[31] However, such processes need to be consciously tempered to resist the tendency for cyclical violence between communities. The culturally influenced mediation and resolution mechanisms in Arab society help to maintain a sense of total community cohesion, but in doing this, an untenable status quo is also reinforced. In societies marked by high levels of social stratification, such as Lebanon, such reinforcement can be dangerous. This is a difficult balance, where the culturally influenced resolution practice helps foster inclusion between all elements of society but does little to change the structures of that society.[32]

For Lebanon, the terms of debate need to be shifted. Rather than emphasising the relationship between community cohesion and change as dichotomous, the idea of community cohesion can be pegged to the need for change. In this, the memory of the war and its destructive legacy is crucial. In addition, there needs to be a shift away from a view of the political system as the bastion of defence for community identity. Cross-confessional political figures, parties, and

coalitions can take the lead in promoting a true 'Lebanese' political system rather than, for instance, a system of 'political Maronitism'.[33]

This has become evident since February 2005, when multi-confessional coalitions have formed in the wake of the assassination of Rafiq al-Hariri. As previously outlined, al-Hariri was somewhat of a novelty in Lebanese politics in that he did not come from any of the prominent political families in the country. Instead, he entered the Lebanese political scene after making a vast personal wealth in the Saudi building industry during the 1970s and 1980s. He remained connected to Lebanon through the sponsoring of building projects around his home town of Sidon (Tyre) in the south of the country during the war, rising to a level of prominence where he participated in the 1983–1984 Geneva and Lausanne conferences.

By 1989, he became one of the major sponsors of the Taef Agreement, helping draw in the concerted Arab backing needed to force the drafting of an agreement. After this, he held the post of Lebanese Prime Minister between 1992 and 1998, and then later between 2000 and 2004. Along with this, he launched a major reconstruction programme throughout the country, with the most visible project being the reconstruction of downtown Beirut through his construction company, Solidére. Hariri's handling of the Lebanese economy proved a source of immense controversy, particularly in terms of the alleged favouritism of close associates in business deals. In light of this, one Greek Orthodox member of the Lebanese parliament, Najah Wakim, once described al-Hariri and his close associates as the 'Black Hands' (*al-ay di al-s d*) in reference to the method in which they took direct control of the country and allegedly manipulated the economy to serve their own ends.[34]

However, despite al-Hariri's questionable handling of the Lebanese economy during his tenure as Prime Minister, his ability to operate across confessional boundaries enabled the facilitation of dialogue necessary to bring about an end to the conflict. More importantly, his legacy is one of a national unity figure initially separate from the confines of confessional politics in Lebanon. Between his assassination in February and the legislative elections in June 2005, al-Hariri's place as Lebanon's first 'national figure' has been the rallying point for an unprecedented level of co-operation between political parties and communities in the country. Al-Hariri's place as a leading critic of Syrian occupation of Lebanon in his latter years in

public life, a position blamed for his eventual assassination, saw his legacy drawn upon by most anti-Syrian groups during the elections.

The "Future Tide" (*tayyar al-mustaqbal*) coalition, headed by al-Hariri's son Saad, Druze leader Walid Jumblatt as well as several prominent Christian politicians swept the polls, gaining 72 out of 128 seats in the new Parliament. This electoral victory came after massive and repeated demonstrations in Beirut against the Syrian presence, culminating in the April 2005 withdrawal of Syrian troops. The Future Tide coalition now dominates the Lebanese parliament, representing all confessional groups (though dominated by Sunni and Christian groups) and has stated the desire for political reform in the country.

This can be contrasted with the political fortunes of the other prominent critic of confessional politics in Lebanon, Michel Aoun. Aoun returned from a 15-year exile in the wake of the Syrian withdrawal to contest the June elections. However, despite Aoun's calls for political reform in the country during his "war of independence" in the late 1980s as well as during his years in exile, he ran under the banner of the Maronite Free Patriotic Movement. Aoun's block was able to gain 21 seats in the new Parliament, but, as Lebanese politician Hussein Ibish stated, 'it's clear now that Aoun speaks for the Maronite interests'.[35]

The third bloc in the Lebanese parliament, the Amal/Hezbollah alliance, which won 35 seats, is the most clearly sectarian movement. Hezbollah and, now to a lesser extent Amal, has a monopoly on the representation of Lebanon's Shi'a community, the largest single sectarian community in the country. Aoun attempted to form a coalition with the Amal/Hezbollah alliance in the run-up to the elections but ran into objections from within the Maronite community.

Here, the distinction between al-Hariri and Aoun is put into stark relief. Aoun, despite claims to the reformist mantle still must rely on support from the leading figures of his confessional community whilst al-Hariri operated between and, at times, on top of these confines. This is not to say that al-Hariri was separate from the machinations of elite confessional politics in Lebanon, but that he was accorded a unique position due to his lack of involvement in the war, the years he spent outside the country, and his considerable personal wealth. Therefore, the mystique that has gathered around al-Hariri has crystallised into a legacy aimed at political reform in Lebanon.

It is reform aimed at enhancing inter-community interaction and dependence based on Lebanese independence and sovereignty.

Encouraging signs can be seen in terms of cross-confessional co-operation since the June 2005 elections. Agreement on the new cabinet led by in-coming Lebanese Prime Minister Fouad Siniora includes members from across the sectarian divide including, for the first time, a cabinet member from Hezbollah as well as a Shi'a foreign minister: Shi'a independent Fawzi Salukh was named as Foreign Minister and Hezbollah member Muhammad Fneish was given the energy portfolio. The new cabinet was named on 19 July 2005 after intense negotiations. However, Aoun's parliamentary bloc was excluded from the new cabinet.

The pursuit of concrete reform is important if this is to be achieved. Several key reforms to the political system promoting de-confessionalisation stand out here. The primary goal must be the adherence to the provision within the Taef Agreement seeking the abolition of political sectarianism. This must be done in a way that emphasises community cohesion rather than attacking the issue head on. The rights of every citizen to belong to community groups must be ensured, but institutionalised in a new Senate for the Lebanese parliament. In the Lower House, political parties should be encouraged to remove confessional identity as a basis for organisation. Reform of the electoral law is important here, moving away form the division of Lebanon into electoral units ensuring equal Muslim and Christian representation to one based on population concentration.[36]

Two factors can contribute to this. First, the implementation of a new national census conducted to identify the proportion of communities and how they will be represented in the Senate would be a difficult, but important development in recognising the new demographic realities of Lebanon. Second, the de-confessionalisation of the three executive offices (President, Prime Minister, and Speaker of the House) and their opening to direct election and/or Parliamentary appointment can empower Lebanese civilians. Indeed, this empowerment cuts across sectarian lines where such a process can aid in undermining not only the sectarian divisions in Lebanese society, but also subverting the benefaction of particular family representatives that is reinforced by the current system.

These are the most controversial elements of reform, but ones that can be executed in a way that adheres to the idea of maintaining

community cohesion. De-confessionalism should not be a zero-sum proposition. Instead, political reform in Lebanon ought to recognise the centrality of full community representation within the future political development of Lebanon. This is the only way for all Lebanese to feel involved in the reconstruction of their country, to avoid exclusion, and retreat into a securitised basis for identity rather than accommodating forms of identity.

Fighting Absolution through Amnesty: A Truth and Reconciliation Commission in Algeria?

Recognition of what has happened to society during conflict is an essential step in any conflict resolution process. However, Algeria's Civil Concord is an attempt to create absolution through amnesty for the insurgency and absolution through amnesia for the state. By simply framing the conflict in security, not political, terms the state seeks to operate outside justice and simply sever ties with the past. Despite this, certain practical steps can be taken to incorporate this within the existing document. The most notable is the creation of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), a forum through which individuals can express their experiences and recognise what has happened to them, their families, and their society. Second, we can look at the role of rituals, particularly the public recognition through such mechanisms as *sulh*, as adding legitimacy to the resolution processes in Algeria.

TRCs can be an important tool for the need to address the complementary aspects of forgiveness and recognition (*ghufran*). Here, the South African model is illustrative as it incorporated an element of amnesty. However, this amnesty was in exchange for those who came and testified before the commission, and before those on whom they had inflicted violence. The Promotion of National Unity and Reconciliation Act (1995) established the South African TRC and made provisions for this by including 'agreement of amnesty for those guilt of human rights violations who came before the Commission, who made a full confession and who could show that the acts for which amnesty was sought were politically motivated'.[37]

The details of this are important to note as, firstly, amnesty was not granted with impunity as is displayed in the Civil Concord. Instead, those who committed the acts must enter a public process of admission of their acts and how they had affected others. In addition,

those testifying must demonstrate how their acts were politically motivated. Whilst not condoning violence, this at least made some provision for pluralism within the political sphere. Violence stemming from apartheid was (and is) a crime, but it is a recognised part of South Africa's political history and heritage. The TRC sought to recognise this, based on the view that the only way to move beyond is through such recognition. For South African journalist and poet Antije Krog 'you have to face the memory straight on, not in order to resolve or structure or punish or to engage in measurements of guilt, or even to seek apologies in and of themselves. But the clear acknowledgement of what happened creates a communal starting point'.[38] This sentiment is echoed in official statements from the Chilean Rettig Commission, which declared that 'only on a foundation of justice (is) it possible to meet the basic demands of justice and to create the necessary conditions for achieving national reconciliation'.[39]

However, the South African example also contained important negative lessons for a similar mechanism in Lebanon and Algeria. In particular, Richard Wilson has outlined how the Truth Commission in South Africa has served in a liminal capacity, making it 'neither a legal, political, nor a religious institution', instead being an 'inter-structural' institution.[40] Whilst this has allowed the institution a measure of autonomy from the government, it has placed it in a position where it could implement only a 'narrow legalism and an emotive religious moralising'.[41]

The South African commission also drew criticism for falling far short of the demands for justice claimed by the victims of the apartheid regime. Reparations offered by the commission were only a fraction of what was promised upon their establishment and, more crucially, it was charged that the commission undermined the ability of the victims to achieve satisfactory justice, with their testimonies used for the purposes of 'political expediency'.[42] This criticism represented a broader dissatisfaction with the amnesty programme in South Africa, one seen as verging on the granting of impunity to those who had been at the forefront of the apartheid regime.

Here, the crucial aspect of coupling amnesty with accountability is evident. Algeria's Concord has been repeatedly criticised as a blanket amnesty for the Islamists (and, by extension, the regime) without any form of accountability. However, through providing an institutional mechanism through which citizens, the state and

insurgents can all confront the shared experience of civil war, those who have committed these acts begin to face accountability for their actions. Such a method of accountability is important, and potentially more effective than resorting to a criminal justice system that is arbitrary and subject to intense state interference. Whilst this may allow some level of exemption, as it did in the South African case, it is certainly a step beyond total impunity or the divisions widespread criminal prosecution may cause to the chances for an end to violence.[43]

It is important to also acknowledge that the radical programme of the South African TRC was only implemented after the collapse of the apartheid system and the changing of the political elite. Even then, the commission still faced concerted opposition from those conservative forces remaining within the state structure. In the case of Algeria, the political elite is more firmly entrenched than it has been in the previous ten years, particularly since it has marginalised the Islamist opposition since 1994–1995. Therefore, structural reform is an essential corollary to any such process, particularly a change in the upper levels of the Algerian political system.

Another example of a TRC process has been the work of international organisations and local groups with the Moroccan government. In January 2004, the Moroccan government, in conjunction with the International Centre for Transitional Justice (ICTJ), established the *Instance Equité et Réconciliation* (Equity and Reconciliation Commission—IER) to investigate human rights violations in Morocco between 1956 and 1999. The IER, whilst lacking juridical powers of investigation, has the obliged commitment of public institutions in its investigations of crimes against civilians.[44] The Commission will deal with issues on the 'legal, historical and political contexts' surrounding violations of human rights, such as 'disappearances, torture, and arbitrary detention'.[45] Witnesses and family members have given testimony during the hearings that are broadcast on state television and radio throughout the country.

The hearings are not designed as judicial or investigatory processes; instead, they are aimed at 'restoring dignity to citizens who have suffered state-sponsored human rights violations'.[46] Here, it is the process of allowing victims of events in the country to have access to a forum at which they can relieve themselves of the burdens of repressed memory. In this, it is hoped that the commission can

expose the events in order that the memory of the experiences can help prevent recurrence of such crimes.

However, the lack of prosecution powers contained in the Commission's brief has limited its ability to serve as a mechanism for further reconciliation. For Algeria, it is important that the living experience of the conflict and human rights abuses committed by both the state and the insurgency be brought to account through both an acknowledgement of events as well as the implementation of justice. The wounds of the conflict will fester and resentments in the country will continue to simmer unless, as Moroccan human rights activist and critic of the IER Mohammed al-Boukili states, 'responsibility [can be] … converted into justice'.[47]

In terms of catering for this in a resolution approach, it is important to confront and break the hold of the linear narrative over understandings of the dispute. Such a concern highlights how resolution processes must take account of the role of subjectivities, including the power of constructed understandings of any dispute. This is particularly so in terms of dealing with such a constructed understanding in relation to a regime that seeks to eliminate alternative understandings.

Rather than seeking to overcome perceptions of the dispute as a hindrance to the resolution process, as is part of the materialist approach advocated by Burton, the resolution process can recognise the problematic notions of such perceptions as central to the conflict itself, and seek to alter them. In particular, as Winslade and Monk emphasise, one should deconstruct the totalising descriptions that are often characteristic of conflict and open up parties to the possibility of alternative understandings of events.[48] For instance, the Civil Concord gives no legitimacy or credibility to any opposition grievance in its provisions. Indeed, it states in article 1 that amnesty is granted to those participating in 'acts of terrorism and subversion … who clearly express their desire to cease all *criminal* activity' giving them a chance to regain 'a place in society'. The role of the insurgency is simply placed as 'criminal activity', outside what the state has deemed to be the boundaries of the conflict. Opposition is not legitimate in any way. Instead, deviant behaviour must be foregone for its participants to regain their place in society.

Such exclusion may be seen, by many, as acceptable for the insurgency. However, a similar attempt to enforce a vision of events is

imposed on the victims of violence, particularly the families of the disappeared. Even as President Bouteflika acknowledged the events that have befallen many families, there was an explicit attempt to carve this from the collective memory of the community. This resolution process has not attempted to couple its granting of what amounts to impunity to the participants in the conflict with an attempt to clarify what had happened to the victims and to hold any individual or group accountable. This is a major failing of both the provisions of the Concord as well as the functioning of the state as the purported sole legitimate authority.

The Civil Concord, or any subsequent resolution process, would benefit from the incorporation of recognition and awareness of the conflict within its provisions. The third party is central in such a process, having an intimate knowledge of the 'problem-saturated descriptions' tied up with the totalising stories of disputants in order that they can be deconstructed and replaced with perceptions open to other possibilities.[49] In addition, this process is illustrative in the Arab-Islamic context whereby deconstruction is much less confrontational than critique (and the possibility of causing shame and loss of stature) whilst also maintaining the authority of the third party.

Viable third parties do exist for such a function. For instance, Algerian NGOs such as 'Families of the Victims of Terrorism' and 'Mothers of the Disappeared' have consistently, and in the face of threats from both the state and insurgent groups, pressured the state and the international community to establish truth and reconciliation committees in order to address the need for recognition and accountability. Indeed, models from other conflicts do exist, most notably the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in post-apartheid South Africa, as well as in Chile and Argentina. This is something also rooted in local approaches to conflict resolution, particularly in terms of the rituals of *sulh* and *musalaha*.

The *sulh*, in particular, provides such a mechanism of allowing victims of violence to remember in order to forget and forgive, acknowledging that 'recognition that injuries between individuals and groups will fester and expand if not acknowledged, repaired, forgiven, and transcended'.[50] It is here that such a process can transform an amnesty process to one closer to a judicial pardon. The distinction being that a pardon process rests on the granting of a reprieve after

'the truth is known' where amnesties grant forgiveness preventing 'the victims and society at large from acquiring the truth'.[51]

Thus, the Civil Concord would benefit from being reframed as a political rather than a security measure. Accountability measures would strengthen the Concord even if that still means the granting of freedom to those who have participated in the violence. In addition, it would also benefit from the inclusion of a mechanism for the re-inclusion of genuinely representative forces within the political structure in a way that allows for meaningful participation. This can be informed by the notion of *shurah* as the basis for the mutual consultation between the state and its citizenry who have for too long been excluded from the political structure. In its present form, the Civil Concord dose not address either of these necessities and will continue to be seen as little more than an imposition of the state's will to impose absolution for itself and the Islamist insurgency through amnesty and amnesia.

Conclusion

This comparative discussion of the case studies highlights consistencies that stand out with regard to the effects of political culture on conflict resolution in the Arab world. In particular, the pressure for the maintenance of the political status quo as a goal of the resolution process; the promotion of a collective amnesia where door is effectively closed on the memory of the war; and the role of third parties as interested participants in enforcing a settlement on the crisis. In addition, variation between the cases in terms of the effects of political culture is also evident, in particular the more inclusive nature of the process in Lebanon as opposed to the exclusivist, security-focussed process implemented in Algeria.

In light of this, the aim of this chapter has been to show how the application of the resolution approach developed in this study to the case studies of conflict resolution in Lebanon and Algeria highlights the need to balance between recognising and accounting for cultural influences whilst avoiding an over-emphasis on political culture. That is, political culture is an important explanatory tool in the study of conflict resolution processes but it must not serve as the sole explanatory factor in the investigation of peace agreements.

In terms of the implications for the broader field of conflict resolution theory, this study holds implications in terms of emphasising

the place of political culture as a secondary, relational concept. In addition, it also emphasises how the application of the concept of political culture can be used to avoid the continued disempowerment of people through avoiding the promotion of elite political culture as the definitive political culture of a community.

These implications also highlight the importance of political culture as a factor that can be harnessed to improve the legitimacy of resolution processes. There are possibilities available for achieving this. In particular, an enhancement of the process of political reform and ensuring accountability for acts committed during the conflict. These measures can be coupled with cultural norms and practices such as forgiveness and recognition; the importance of justice; the focus on community cohesion; and inclusion in the resolution process. The combination of structural reform with an enhancement of normative cultural values associated with this reform can maximise the chances of success for resolution processes in the community of Arab states.

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Conclusion

It is the necessity of building peaceful human relationships, both individually and collectively, that has formed the central subject of enquiry for countless thinkers in the fields of political and social inquiry and elsewhere. Enhancing the chances for a sustainable positive peace in the community of Arab states, this book has explored the relationship between civil war, conflict resolution and political culture in Lebanon and Algeria. In particular, it has sought to examine if and how political culture affects the form and success of the Taef Agreement in Lebanon and the Civil Concord in Algeria.

The persistence of conflict in the community of Arab states is a factor often posited as the region's defining feature. However, the danger of relegating the community of Arab states to perpetual cycles of conflict due to some form of cultural disposition is a danger that those investigating these issues must seek to avoid. Such avoidance is not served by the relegation of political culture to a non-entity in the investigation of conflict. Instead, this book has sought to show how political culture can and does play multiple roles in the resolution of conflict in two examples of civil war in the community of Arab states, Lebanon and Algeria. This investigation argues that political culture affects conflict resolution as shown in these two cases. Political culture plays a role in not only affecting the form, or shape of peace agreements, but that the neglect of key cultural understandings of issues related to the resolution of conflict can undermine the legitimacy, and by extension, the success of resolution mechanisms.

The difficulty in operationalising political culture for explanatory purposes has assumed central theoretical importance in this investigation. The achievement of this has required diligence in order to avoid the ambiguity inherent in political culture. The ambiguity of the concept stems not from what is included in any working definition but what is excluded. That is, where does the notion of political culture as 'orientations to political action' end?[1] Indeed, the positing of 'values and assumptions' as the core components of political culture still does not delineate, sufficiently, where political culture 'sits' and how it works in an effective capacity.[2]

Such ambiguity is best countered through placing clear and strict limits on the application of the concept. For Anderson, the Arab and Islamic world has too often been treated as 'congenitally defective' in its political development.[3] This type of diagnosis has often stemmed from the application of general and usually unsystematic observations of political behaviour in conjunction with generalisations of beliefs and behaviour.

However, recognising the value of political culture analysis in other contextual settings, this study has sought to tackle these developments not through neglect of the concept's explanatory capacity, but through working at refinement of political culture for analytical purposes. Thus, the use of political culture in this analysis has been modified by its utilisation as a secondary explanatory concept, one best employed in enhancing established primary explanatory concepts, such as structural influence and material interest.

Implicit in this secondary role is the status of political culture as a relational concept, one best understood in conjunction with more prevalent forces affecting attitudes to political behaviour. The influence of political structure, economic self-interest, and social standing affect and are affected by the fluid values and assumptions communities develop over time. When entering a conflict resolution process, these values and assumptions shape the form parties present their terms to peace and their ideals of post-conflict reconstruction.

To employ this alleviated understanding of political culture, a form of content analysis is proposed that emphasises contextuality, a 'latent reading' of texts where an analysis of the explicit content was combined with an effort to uncover the 'symbolic meaning' of messages.[4] This approach necessitated an elaboration on the political context within which each peace agreement was developed. Thus,

alongside an examination of the themes and wording of each text, the methodology employed in this study tempers the analysis of content with reference to the political and cultural context within which the texts are formulated.

Through the application of this theoretical and methodological framework, influences of political culture over the conflict resolution processes in Lebanon and Algeria emerge. In particular, the influence of elite political culture in both states was evident in the specific themes emphasised in each peace agreement. The most evident feature of political culture influence in the Taef Agreement was the influence of the pressure toward the maintenance of the political status quo in Lebanon. Very little had changed because of the resolution process in Lebanon despite the shifting of institutional powers within the confessional political system. The country's political and economic elites remained in control of the country even with their participation in the fifteen years of violence. The memory of the war was not a priority in the Taef Agreement. Indeed, even the modest stated reforms of the education sector designed to enhance community inclusion and unity became undermined after the war by the powers of confessional separation.[5]

Despite this, encouraging signs had begun to emerge in the postwar state. The local reconciliation and resolution processes conducted by Hezbollah in the Beka'a Valley as well as the *sulh* process of former militia leader Walid Jumblatt in the Chouf Mountains represented important steps toward the reintegration of divided communities. Such unity was also evident in the popular uprising against the Syrian presence after the assassination of former Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri in February 2005 that resulted in the Syrian military withdrawal in April of that year and the formation of a cross-confessional coalition government. These trends are important steps toward the rebirth of Lebanon as a vibrant, diverse but inclusive entity.

The analysis of the Algerian civil war and the Civil Concord raised similar, but less optimistic themes. Whilst the Taef Agreement contained at least reference to the political elements of the conflict, the Civil Concord was simply a security measure where the military-backed regime of President Abdul Aziz Bouteflika granted amnesty to the Islamist insurgency it had been fighting since 1992. The detail of the Concord focussed on the different amnesty provisions for the

Islamists but contained little reference to either the state's role in the conflict or the need to re-introduce the Islamists, who had been successful in the democratic process between 1989 and 1992, back into the political sphere.

The Concord, as a security measure, was influenced by the tendencies toward the criminalisation of opposition forces as well as tendencies toward collective amnesia. The insurgency was to be simply absolved and the citizenry told to 'close the door' on the events of the war. For the Algerian people, the questionable legitimacy of the government was confirmed as it neglected to address the grave crimes related to civilian deaths and disappearances. Indeed, the imposition of the Concord as a resolution process was influenced by the state's role as third party to its own dispute, an interested player who sought to impose rather than negotiate a solution. This role, despite nominally adhering to relevant cultural third party practice, did not recognise the need for consultation (*shurah*) in this process, simply giving the people a 'ready-trussed package' for approval.

The implications of these analyses for conflict resolution are important in two respects. First, the evidence of the influence of political culture over conflict resolution processes in these two Arab states highlights the importance of accommodating these factors in both the analysis of resolution processes and their formulation in the future. Being conscious of the influence of such factors can help resolution practitioners either temper or promote those factors that are likely to enhance the legitimacy of the process as well as promote constructive outcomes.

For instance, the enthusiasm with which former combatants have received the *sulh* process in Lebanon can serve as a blueprint for the fostering of a broader discourse amongst the country's confessional leaders. However, the efforts to exclude non-elites from this process is a factor that post-conflict reconstruction in Lebanon remains a source of tension between empowered and disempowered communities (such as the Shi'a and the Palestinian refugee population) as well as between individuals within communities.

Second, this holds implications for conflict resolution theory in terms of the role of political culture as an analytical and explanatory tool. Debates within conflict resolution theory and within political analysis of Arab states have differed markedly over the role of culture

and political culture. Rather than seeking to 'throw out the political culture baby with the Orientalist bathwater', the misapplication of such analysis in the past calls for more diligence and discipline in its application.[6]

The tendency to focus on the negative influences of political culture in relation to conflict resolution has not been the aim of this investigation. Where this study recognizes the damaging influence of, for instance the maintenance of an untenable political status quo, it also seeks to emphasise the positive role political culture can and does play in conflict resolution. Here, the discussion has stressed how political culture can be harnessed to promote healthy and inclusive social reconstruction and development in Arab states.

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