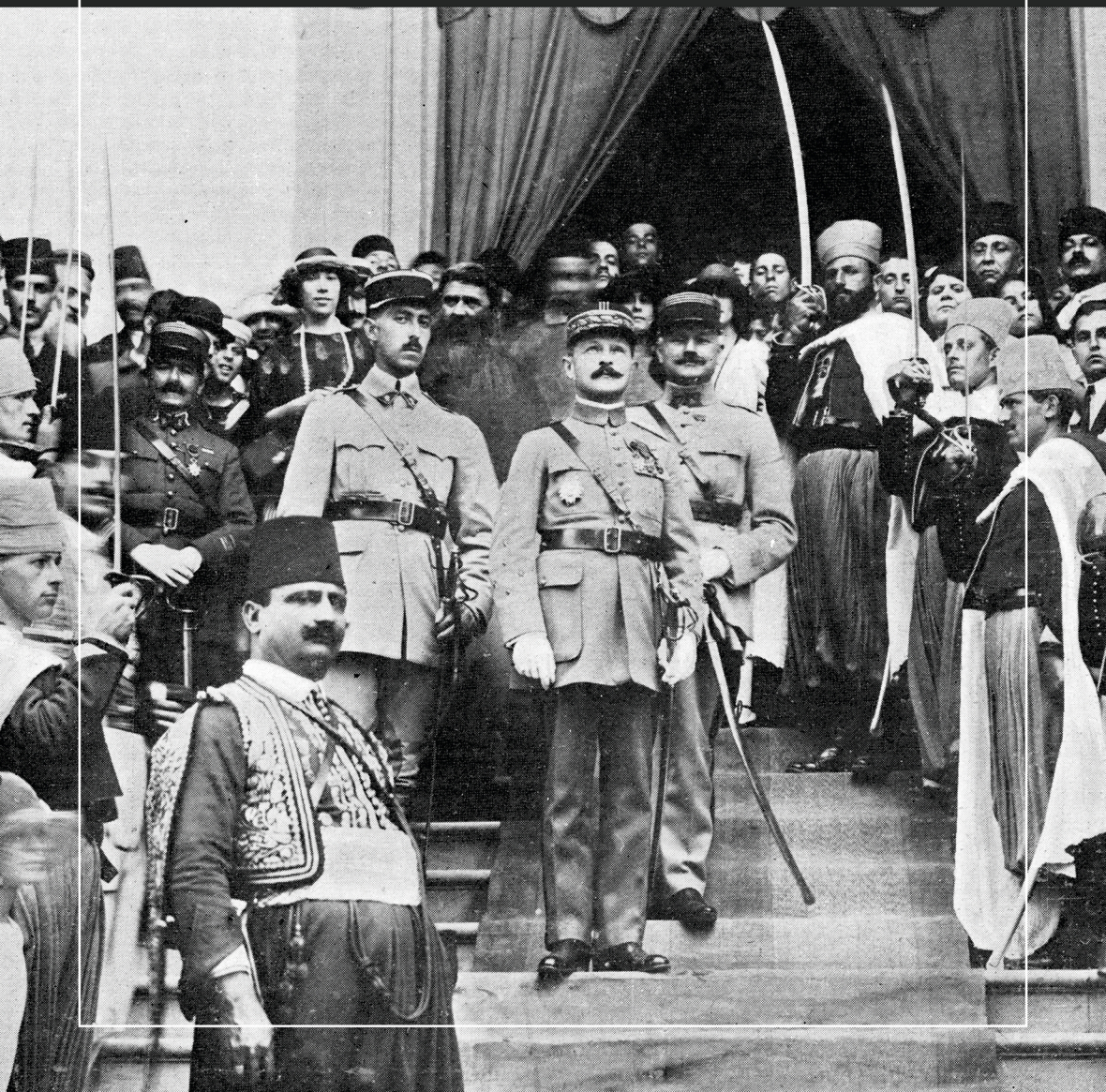# Stability and the Lebanese State in the 20th Century

Building Political Legitimacy

Tarek Abou Jaoude

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IN THE 20TH CENTURY

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Series design by Adriana Brioso
Cover image: General Maxime Weygand in Beirut,
Lebanon, 1923. (© Culture Club/Getty Images)

To my mother, who handed me my first book. Now, I hand her mine.

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INTRODUCTION

Over a hundred years after the creation of the Republic of Greater Lebanon, the functionality of the Lebanese state remains an enigma. At the time of writing, the country is going through what will potentially be its worst economic crisis, which is largely a result of the shortcomings of its political system. Overall, the post-war 'Second Republic' of Lebanon has been characterized by extensive clientelism, political sectarianism and systemic corruption, all of which engender ineffective public institutions and an inherently weak state. And, despite the Taif Agreement in 1990 declaring that the abolition of political sectarianism was a 'fundamental national objective', the post-war system has so far failed in decreasing confessional tensions and political polarizations. Instead, political relations have been established on an 'incentive structure operating at the structural, institutional, and individual levels [which] is distorted in a manner that serves the reproduction of the sectarian system and its concomitant dislocations'.[1] Still, the effects of the sectarian nature of Lebanese political culture have long been established, and it was long ago that its pitfalls were uncovered. In fact, almost sixty years ago, J. C. Hurewitz portrayed the issues with Lebanese sectarianism perfectly in this short anecdote:

> On the Lebanese front in the Palestine war of 1948 a Maronite Lieutenant found a Greek Catholic platoon in a state of complete inactivity despite the unabating and still vigorous exchange of fire. 'Sergeant,' bellowed the company commander, 'don't your men know that this is war? [W]hy aren't they fighting? If they do not take up their arms at once, I shall have you and them executed as deserters!' 'But one of our men was just killed, sir. We are therefore waiting for three Maronites, two Sunnis, two Shi'is, two Greek Orthodox, and one Druze also to be killed before we resume fighting.'[2]

Those acquainted with the Lebanese political scene – or with Middle Eastern politics more generally – will not find such satirical expressions surprising. What remains truly astonishing, however, is that long after the 1948 Arab–Israeli war, two subsequent civil wars, a redrafting of the constitution and concurrent occupations by both Syria and Israel, the application of such sectarian formulas to Lebanese politics in the 2020s remains as accurate as ever.

It is precisely the endurance and evolution of this political system in the face of such formidable aggression, a multitude of obstacles and demonstrably obvious deficits that form the central theme of this book. Like many of its counterparts in the region, the Lebanese state is still in the process of being built, and that state-building endeavour started more than a century ago. What is of interest here, however, is the central cog in any state-building project: political legitimacy. The aim of this book is to present a new lens through which one can look at a sequence of political events in and around Lebanon during the twentieth century, identifying a causal chain between them that can clarify many aspects of the Lebanese state's legitimacy (or lack thereof) over the years. It is the author's belief that much of the issues present in Lebanon today can be made clearer through a deeper understanding of the relationship between the state and political legitimacy. As such, the arguments developed throughout the book will need to rely on a specific understanding of the existing theories. Particularly, the analysis proposed will draw on the concepts of state-building, nation-building and stability to look at how these ideas manifested themselves in Lebanese twentieth-century politics.

The principal benefit of examining these concepts within one case study is the ability, and the space, to delve into as much detail as necessary. The freedom afforded by this approach will allow for a more rigorous examination of the nature between theory and practice, in a manner which appreciates the complexity and multifaceted nature of such concepts. In fact, this is the general advantage of single case studies, as Robert Yin showed: they are useful when dealing with 'how' questions 'because such questions deal with operational links needing to be traced over time, rather than mere frequencies or incidence'.[3]

In this regard, Lebanon serves as a perfect case study. The problematic interplay between state and society is naturally very apparent in an example like Lebanon: from its inception as a 'nation-state', questions of the identity of its 'nation' have been debated not only in the relevant literature but also by those domestic and foreign actors who have themselves been engaged in the state-building process.[4] As the book will later demonstrate, Lebanon's political history is drawn along the ambiguous line that links state-building with nation-building. To put it simply, those that were working towards building the Lebanese state were acutely aware of the imperative to work towards building the Lebanese nation. As such, the book will show the extent to which the relation between the two (nation and state) has shaped the legitimacy of the Lebanese state. Before emphasizing the importance of the book relative to the extensive work that has already been done on Lebanese political history, however, it is more immediately important to establish the conceptual framework within which this analysis will operate, thus elucidating the significance of the research which it includes.

State-building and nation-building

First of all, it must be stated that the general attention of this book will be directed towards Lebanese state-building. State-building itself represents a somewhat

timeless endeavour that looks to explain the development of the way in which humans choose, or are perhaps made to choose, the means with which to govern themselves. Practically, the modern conception of state-building became prominent through the emergence of the nation-state, and the development of the modern notion of the state and its institutions. The academic field of state-building has also grown concurrently, and as the conceptual elements of nation-state and public administration were developed, the twenty-first century saw the subfields of institution-building and nation-building emerge in their own right. Despite this evolution of state-building over the years, however, it is still quite difficult to shake off the original ambiguity found in the concept of the nation-state, an imperfect notion from the start that seemed to provide a solid-enough framework for political development, particularly in Western Europe. And so, it cannot be overlooked that there is still some confusion in the state- and nation-building literature over the terms of 'state-building' and 'nation-building'. Equally, it is not illogical to assume that an element of this confusion comes down to the ambiguous definitions of, and distinction between, state and nation. It therefore behoves us to establish some clear, albeit somewhat convenient, definitions for these concepts, if only for the purpose of clarifying what this book will mean when it uses those terms but, more importantly, to establish how these concepts fit in the framework of our study.

Partha Chatterjee described 'nation' as 'the one most untheorized concept of the modern world', though that hasn't stopped others from trying to tackle the issue.[5] Sarah Paine, for example, argued that the word has two usages: one related to a place, a territory with a sovereign government, and the second to a 'community of people usually with a shared language, religion, culture, and society'.[6] Paul James tried to link the word 'nation' back to its original Latin roots and then study the development of its use throughout the years. He found that the Latin concept of 'natio' has been a very flexible term over the years, ranging from the designation of 'communities of foreigners at the newly formed universities, in refectories of the great monasteries, and at the reform councils of the Church', to that of 'uncivilized peoples', later to mean the ruling classes, up until the sixteenth century when it began taking a more political meaning to refer to the 'whole people of a country'.[7] Guido Zernatto and Alfonso G. Mistretta had already confirmed this flexible use of the word, comparing it to a coin the value of which changes according to its context.[8] James believes that the joining of 'nation' with the state became generalized in the eighteenth century, when the term 'nation' came to replace the notion of 'kingdom', yet even then there was tension over whether the concept referred to a community tied together through genealogy or through sharing a somewhat similar culture and living within certain boundaries.[9]

The evolution of the word 'nation' is important to our study through its inherent link to what has come to be understood by state-building. In fact, it is clear that at one point, a 'nation' became so intimately linked to the state that they became intertwined. For example, Anthony Giddens defined the nation as a 'collectivity existing within a clearly demarcated territory, which is subject to a unitary [and uniform] administration, reflexively monitored both by the internal

state apparatus and those of other states'.[10] He then goes on to specify that in his definition, a nation 'only exists when a state has a unified administrative reach over the territory over which its sovereignty is claimed'.[11] Conversely, Timothy Mitchell highlighted how state theorists also struggle with finding the distinction between the state and the population it governs: 'a definition of the state always depends on distinguishing it from society'.[12] James acknowledged the advantages of Giddens's definition but does not agree with how Giddens conflates 'nation' with 'nation-state', his definition implying that there was no nation before nation-states, something which the history of the word 'nation' contradicts. In addition, James believes that Giddens's definition is too exclusive, focusing only on the institutional aspect of a nation, in the form of a nation-state. Similarly, Benjamin Akzin defined 'nation' as 'a certain type of ethnic group and the relations based thereon'.[13] Akzin accepted that nation has been and can be used 'to denote concepts intimately linked to the State', but also did not agree with this use.[14] John A. Armstrong attributed political consciousness to any group that wants to develop some form of 'ethnic identification', in his studies on pre-modern forms of nations. Additionally, symbolic boundaries play a crucial part in the self-identification of an ethnic community; specifically, the persistence of such symbols is what matters rather than the actual origins of them. According to Armstrong, individual mythic structures tend to become more legitimate as they fuse with other myths 'in a *mythmoteur* defining identity in relation to a specific polity'.[15] The problem that Armstrong runs into, according to Anthony D. Smith, is the lack of specificity and depth when it comes to distinguishing between 'ethnicities' and what differentiates one group (and their social boundary) from another, in terms of their development. Moreover, Smith believes that Armstrong was still not able to clearly establish what the relation is between pre-modern ethnic communities and modern nations. While one distinguishing factor according to Armstrong is the modern nation's conscious effort for establishing political structures based on group identities, he still credits the emergence of those nations to their pre-modern predecessors, indicating a more continuous relationship between the former and the latter. This, Smith believes, leaves the issue unresolved.[16]

It is clear through the examples touched on above that the relation between a nation's political consciousness and the establishment of its political structures proves to be the most challenging obstacle in defining the nation. Essentially, the use of 'nation' in modern times can be brought down to two main notions – one in which the nation is inherently linked to the state within which it exists, and another where nation refers to a community of people linked together, culturally, in one way or another. For the sake of this study, just as in Akzin's or James's, the former definition would not serve a purpose, and any such definition would lead to the very confusion that this research aims to avoid. So, whether it refers to an ethnic community, a linguistic one or simply a politically conscious community driven by 'constitutive myths', 'nation' in this sense cannot be synonymous with, or even dependent on, the state as a political institution. Ernest Gellner stressed this point: arguing that both state and nation are contingencies that cannot be said to be inevitable to mankind's social life. Crucially, he emphasized that they cannot

be seen to be the *same* contingency: their respective histories show that state and nation developed separately and independently.[17]

Thus, using the above distinctions between 'nation' and 'state', one can proceed to separate state-building and nation-building in the following manner: state-building concerns the establishment, maintenance and preservation of political institutions which aim to govern over a certain people and territory, while nation-building refers to the attempts at establishing and/or preserving strong cultural and identity-related ties between different sections of particular people, usually with the purpose of removing internal cleavages as obstacles to harmonious transactions and peaceful cohabitation. As such, this study will consider nation-building to be a subfield of state-building, and which can therefore be subsumed within the latter.

Legitimacy: Institutional and societal

Having established such terms, we must now consider the role of political legitimacy within state-building, and consequently its role in this book's study. After all, any approach to state-building strives to understand and explain the circumstances under which a *legitimate* state is built, while assuming that legitimacy is concurrent with stability. In other words, what is considered a successful state-building project? If the answer to this question is characterized by the definition of the state itself, then the answer becomes 'once a state is established', and one is then tempted to use a definition like Max Weber's: a state is a 'human community that successfully claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory'.[18] It is fairly easy to surmise that for Weber and his successors, stability was key for the establishment of the state, and use of force was the most direct way to ensure such stability. However, notwithstanding the more obvious criticisms that have formed over the years of this definition, the central and key term in Weber's characterization remains the 'legitimate' nature of this monopoly of the use of force: what characterized the state's use of force, apart from its monopoly, was its rightfulness in doing so compared to other users of this force. Weber's definition will be discussed later on in detail, but it will be sufficient to establish the centrality of legitimacy – seen as rightfulness – in his definition, which itself provides the objective of stability as a key purpose of the state.

As Talcott Parsons contended, however, no 'society can maintain stability in the face of varying exigencies and strains unless interest constellations of its members are grounded in solidarity and internalized loyalties and obligations',[19] and the last two notions in particular highlight another facet of legitimacy that is just as central to Parsons's contrary approach, as it was in Weber's definition. Parsons's approach to stability emphasizes the acceptability of this 'society' as a prerequisite for its stability in the face of adversity, which every society can be expected to meet in the long term. Naturally, the state is also affected by this and one can presume that the stability of the state is also in question in Parsons's point. Though the example of Weber and Parsons offers two contrary views on the stability of the

state, there is a unity in their schools of thought with regard to the *purpose* of the state, that is, its stability. And further still, they are also united by an emphasis on an additional element that is essential to this stable state: legitimacy as rightfulness and legitimacy as acceptability. In essence, all literature on political legitimacy will deal with those two concepts, and as a result, it becomes obvious that legitimacy can be broken down to those two values: rightfulness and acceptability. To return to the question asked: what makes a state-building project successful? The answer that can be provided is, 'when a legitimate – in other words, a rightful and an acceptable – state has been established'. It is through the legitimacy caveat that one can then make the argument that only in such a case can we expect the state to remain stable. It is with that information in mind that I propose a focus on this one element that is not only found at the heart of any approach to state-building but also found – in one way or another – in every governing apparatus: political legitimacy.

If, as deduced above, legitimacy represents the willingness of recipients (i.e. the people) to accept the governing body (i.e. the state) and its right to rule, and if the ultimate goal of any state-building endeavour is to establish a legitimate governing body, which is assumed to bring about stability, then new questions arise: is legitimacy a prerequisite for stability or can effective institutions bring legitimacy *through* their ability to maintain stability? In a sense, the question is also a temporal one: where does legitimacy come from *first?* Society or state? And can long-term stability come without legitimacy? As for what is generally meant by political stability, a summary of Leon Hurwitz's more extensive definition can provide a useful characterization: political stability can be understood as a dynamic phenomenon that involves one or more of the following: the absence of violence, governmental longevity or endurance, and societal harmony.[20]

Generally speaking, there are two approaches to state-building that are divided on this issue. The institutional approach operates under the assumption that political legitimacy originates *within* the state. Legitimacy, in that sense, is in the state's control, and serves as another tool which the state structure can make use of. From modernization, to liberalization, to war-making, the institutional approach identifies the tools which are at the disposal of the state to achieve a belief in its rightfulness to rule, and thus pave the road to internal stability. One can see in these institutionalist writings the influence of social contract theory: in institutional state-building, the state is founded on the specific will of a certain society and, in that sense, remains viable so long as that agreement is convenient.[21] Its convenience being defined by its ability to satisfy society's different demands, it then follows that the ultimate legitimacy of the state must lie in its institutional performance in relation to society's demands. The tools proposed by institutionalists serve to meet this purpose. Nonetheless, while political legitimacy is usually subsumed into the strong state apparatus by institutionalists, its implicit presence can shed enough light on the role that it plays in successfully building a stable state. In most institutionalist theories, legitimacy is 'claimed' by the state, and 'legitimation' – or the development of the belief in the rightfulness of the state – must come from the state itself.[22] De Jasay's criticism of Weber's definition of legitimacy illustrates

the state's role in achieving legitimacy: 'The use of physical force by the state is legitimate for no more fundamental and logically prior reason than that it *has* successfully claimed a monopoly of it and has thus become a proper state.'[23] Such a tautological understanding of Weber's concepts certainly highlights some of the institutional approach's shortcomings.

Meanwhile, the societal approach generally assumes that political legitimacy cannot be derived from within the state, since the state is merely a reflection of a particular idea, and will thus originate from outside it. Not only do the formal institutions of the state need to be adequately set up in the organizational sense, but they also need to embody 'the idea of the state', a notion espoused by Barry Buzan which refers to a common identity that the population feels somewhat close to and a broad set of values of social and legal justice which they accept.[24] The manifestations of that idea can vary: pragmatic agreements, ideological or religious conviction, or the support of one particularly dominant group within society. In all cases, the state can only derive the legitimacy it needs to remain stable from outside the realm of its own institutions. Therefore, the state must always remain conscious of this, and adapt both functionally and institutionally, or risk collapsing when its authority 'fragments or evaporates in direct proportion to the loss of governmental legitimacy in society and its component groups'.[25] So long as the objective of state-building is to provide a stable relationship between the state and its citizens, then societal legitimacy needs to be present. As Parsons argued, no 'society can maintain stability in the face of varying exigencies and strains unless interest constellations of its members are grounded in solidarity and internalized loyalties and obligations'.[26] The societal approach, in turn, can certainly risk underappreciating the role that strong institutions can play in ensuring a stable, even if temporary, environment in spite of the absence of 'internalized loyalties'. This limitation will certainly be highlighted in the Lebanese case study within this book.

In either approach, however, legitimacy shows itself to be the crucial analytical variable in state-building. If one understands where legitimacy originates in a certain state, the analysis of state-building that the latter has undergone becomes much more straightforward, in accordance with one approach or the other. But is it possible to really rely one approach irrespective of the other? With this dilemma in mind, this book will attempt to take both approaches in consideration when studying the Lebanese state. In other words, both the institutional and societal legitimacy of the Lebanese state will be analysed as the book traces the relevant Lebanese events. The most obvious purpose for including both approaches to legitimacy is to be able to definitively and accurately establish the relationship between legitimacy and stability in Lebanese state-building during the twentieth century.

The last issue to be addressed with regard to legitimacy in this case study is its measurement. Historically, to measure the degree of institutional legitimacy, certain variables have been taken into consideration: functioning democratic institutions, efficiency of service delivery, degree of monopolization of force, levels of corruption. Societal legitimacy, however, is much harder to measure and, in

this particular case, is best seen through a look at the history of political actors' actions and rhetoric, the vertical and horizontal divisions in Lebanese society, and the way in which state policy and messaging reflects the Lebanese identity (or lack thereof). These policies and this message are, especially in the case of Lebanon, related to particular actors whose actions need to be studied. In this book, these actors will include (but will not be limited to): community leaders, political parties and interest groups, external actors, public institutions and administration, and socio-cultural institutions. As for the required data to 'measure' both institutional and societal legitimacy, it will include (but will not be limited to): the manner of the creation of the power-sharing system, the level of group/individual representation, the performance of those institutions, the level of democracy and inclusive institutions, the degree of patron–client relationships, the discursive element of the media and the dependency of groups on external actors. For this purpose, a holistic and thorough approach is needed, because of the inherent need to take both hard data and the contextual political climate into account when analysing the state of legitimacy in a particular timeline. Additionally, the importance of contextualization pushes for the need to situate whatever political phenomenon is observed in its appropriate historical setting. By setting out a timeline a priori like this book has done, one can trace the relationship between the legitimacy and stability within the Lebanese state-building project for most of the twentieth century.

Lebanese history

It was mentioned above that the survival of the Lebanese system in the face of all manners of socio-political obstacles is at the heart of this book. That being the case, it is now appropriate to briefly assess the existing literature on Lebanese politics, in order to grasp the general ideas that have been developed around the political system. There has not been, for some time, any significant piece of research on Lebanon that deals with the concept of political legitimacy in pre-war Lebanon. As for the works that bring up such notions as state-building and nation-building, they simply do not go as far back as Lebanon's creation in the early twentieth century and focus instead on post-war Lebanon.[27] There are quite a few possible reasons for this that are not worth delving into, such as the trend in Middle Eastern countries of not 'opening up past wounds', which is seen as counterproductive.

On the whole, however, both historians and political analysts have completed extensive and detailed works on the development of Lebanese political life, and many have had the exceptional advantage of being personally connected with much of the political dealings that have affected, or have been affected by, the state's institutional and ideational development. These detailed accounts of the Lebanese state serve as an exceptionally helpful resource for those that want to understand where and why the state failed in grasping opportunities to better itself and avoid its own demise during the end of the twentieth century.[28] Through the

many works in the field written in English, Arabic and French, notable authors like Kamal Salibi, Albert Hourani, Hamdi al-Tahiri, Ali Abed al-Ftuni, Stephane Malsagne, Franck Salameh and Hassan al-Hallaq have done a tremendous job covering the different perspectives on Lebanese events pre-1975. Many of these historical studies, naturally, do not provide as much theoretical or analytical insight into the structural and systemic surroundings that might have affected the state (both internally and externally). And although there are some exceptions, particularly from more writers like Fawwaz Trabulsi,[29] most only marginally approach the subject of state-building – and specifically political legitimacy – through a description of the facts. Still, the historian's work, which involves the picking and choosing of specific events and accounts, does enough to shed light on a perspective on the obstacles to Lebanese state-building, and how such issues were dealt with.

Lebanese nation-building, however, and in particular the struggle to create an overarching and binding Lebanese identity, is one issue that repetitively comes up. As established above, nation-building is itself a part of state-building and functions as a useful indicator of societal legitimacy through its ability to affect the state's acceptability in the eyes of the population. Related works on Lebanon usually delineate the different nationalist movements and show the dynamic that has existed between these convictions, as well as their manifestations in Lebanese socio-political life. A recent example of such work would be Carol Hakim's *Origins of the Lebanese Idea*,[30] which looks at the development of local forms of nationalism in Lebanon prior to 1920. Hakim explicitly tries to 'disengage the historiography of Lebanese nationalism from past and current controversies and from nationalist ideological moulds'.[31] While not directly touching upon the concept, there is no doubt that works like Hakim's play a crucial role in elucidating some societal elements behind the Lebanese state's current legitimacy, and such extensive research will be helpful for this book's tracing of the development of that legitimacy. Other extensive works on Lebanese identity include Kais Firro's *Inventing Lebanon: Nationalism and the State under the Mandate*, Raghid el-Solh's *Lebanon and Arabism: National Identity and State Formation*, Ghassān Fawzī Tah's *Hawiyat Lubnān* and Asher Kaufman's *Reviving Phoenicia: In Search for Identity in Lebanon*.[32] Contrarily, there are also Marxist analyses of the development of Lebanese identity as an exploitative tool, most notably the works of Mahdī Āmil.[33] This book plans to make use of all such resources, particularly in its quest to establish the status of societal legitimacy – which itself heavily relies on the strength of, and the belief in, national identity – though there will be no need to delve too deeply into the theoretical elements on how Lebanese identity has grown or receded; what is of more importance is the actual degree to which that identity was ubiquitous at different points in time.

Among the many authors who have studied the different facets of Lebanese history and identity, a clear division emerges between those that see a natural development of Lebanese exceptionalism into the supposedly overarching national identity of the country, and those that attribute the imposition of that national identity to powerful actors that acted in their interests to rip much of the native

population from its existing cultural attachments. Eyal Zisser has outlined what he identified as these two schools of thought: one represented by scholars such as Kamal Salibi, Albert Hourani, Nadim Shehadi and Ghassan Salamé, who refuse to regard Lebanese history as having been decreed by fate. They interpret it in terms of continuity and coherence, consider the Lebanese state as legitimate and viable, and point to the many years of prosperity as evidence corroborating their view.[34] The second school was represented by writers like Meir Zamir and Elie Kedourie whose 'approach led to the conclusion that the Lebanese state … was an artificial creation lacking legitimacy and … was incapable of survival in the longer term'. Overall, a reasonable conclusion is that Lebanese historiography, just like so many others in the postcolonial world, cannot but touch on the viability of the country in which it emerges. While some writers, such as Eli Fawaz, have argued that the 'accumulation' of social, geographical and historical circumstances makes it so that the 'Lebanese experience must be reinforced and kept going',[35] others like Muḥammad Jamīl Bayhum have worked to 'uncover the veil on [Lebanon's] history which has been ignored by historians', due to the image 'intended by colonialism'.[36] Will this book be guilty of the same issue? Perhaps, since the research will make use of all the resources mentioned above, and this certainly seems to be the 'business' of historical studies, such a risk only highlights the importance of remaining aware of the existing literature, especially as one makes use of the extensive research that has already been conducted on Lebanese politics.

Another significant section of the literature is comprised of those who have explicitly undergone a study of Lebanese state-building, though most focus on specific institutions.[37] The majority of such work has centred around the dynamics of consociationalism as a political tool. Modernization theorists have usually found in consociationalism, and its effects, the main obstacle towards the progression of the state into a full-fledged, modern version of itself that can realistically deal with Lebanese society's evolving demands.[38] On the one hand, modernization and organizational theorists who advocate for a more systematic state unladen from the constant pressures of communal demands for representation run into the historical fact that the Lebanese communities had never accepted such a system, which would subsequently fall short of the democratic standards that they espouse. Pluralists, on the other hand, who attempt to show a way in which the state can adapt to its role as mediator, struggle to wrestle away the reality that state mediation has been historically extremely difficult in Lebanon, if not impossible. Overall, the theories provided in the literature fall short of accounting for many realities that have been witnessed throughout Lebanese history. Points of debate revolve around the nature of the confessional system that has remained in place in Lebanon, how inherent this power-sharing structure is to Lebanese political culture, if it has been imposed upon its population, whether or not it has actually been successful in the creation of social cohesion and/or a functioning democracy, and whether or not it *could* be successful in the future.

Eduardo Wassim Aboultaif's *Power Sharing in Lebanon* and Tamirace Fakhoury Mühlbacher's *Democracy and Power-Sharing in Stormy* are both recent works that dissect the system in place, tracing the history of Lebanese

confessionalism. Aboultaif suggests some lessons to be drawn from the Lebanese case, not least of which is the emphasis on the system's ability to strengthen itself internally. Such an argument can function as a response to the traditional analysis of consociationalism, such as the one found in Michael Kerr's *Imposing Power-Sharing*, which emphasizes exogenous variables in the development of consociational systems in Lebanon and Northern Ireland,[39] and Arend Lijphart's consociationalism theory which highlighted,[40] especially in the developing world, the role of 'government by elite cartel [which is] designed to turn a democracy within a fragmented political culture into a stable democracy'.[41] Similarly, Mühlbacher argues that confession-based consociationalism had shown signs of success in the past,[42] though she also believes that the 'power-sharing system which provided a basis for its strength and stability was in a self-contradictory manner at the same time a tool of disintegration'.[43] Still, she states, 'it is of paramount importance to highlight that the main danger did not lie in the power-sharing arrangements themselves, but in the fact that they remained unchanged'.[44] Though it is important to establish this recent literature on Lebanese power-sharing (and there are other older works, such as Helena Cobban's *The Making of Modern Lebanon*[45]), it must again be stated that, though inherently central to this book's study, our focus on political legitimacy means that the emphasis throughout this work will be on the effects of power-sharing on the state's legitimacy, both in the social and in institutional sense. As for the question of the system's improvement as a form of consociationalism, or its ability to satisfy the democratic needs for a successful system, these factors will only matter when they directly affected the state's overall legitimacy. In other words, the system's success or lack thereof will serve only as an indicator of political legitimacy in Lebanon, irrelevant of what could have – or could be – done to improve its efficacy.

In fact, a common characteristic in all sections of the literature is an underdeveloped analysis of political legitimacy. Indeed, the word 'legitimacy' as defined above doesn't come up often in the recent literature on Lebanese politics. This wasn't as much the case in the early to mid-twentieth century, when questioning the very existence or 'viability' of a state was a bit more common. When recently used, however, the word replaces terms such as 'sustainable' or 'legal', usually during discussions about particular (private or public) organizations or rules. While there are – in the political literature – general theories on legitimacy, its parameters, its origins, its indicators, its consequences and its relation to nation- and state-building, this has been largely overlooked in the literature on Lebanese politics. That is not to say that the literature does not come into contact with legitimacy; in fact, it could be argued (and this author would) that all the works mentioned so far do, though very rare are the instances where a theoretical discussion on legitimacy has been conducted beforehand, or an application of such theories to the Lebanese case has been effected. For example, Zisser himself argued that the Lebanese state remained legitimate after its independence since it embodied the only system that could function, and 'for all the weakness of the central government, Lebanon was a vital and viable state with broadly accepted concepts of legitimacy', though again, he fails to delve into what those accepted concepts of legitimacy

are and what they mean.[46] Michael Hudson's work is the closest to truly bring up legitimacy consistently. In his *Precarious Republic*, he mentions insufficient 'system legitimacy' in his introduction as a result of state deficiency in leadership and participation, though he does not define the terms of his wording. As he carries out his study, he continues to use 'legitimacy' many times.[47] Hudson also clearly believes in 'degrees' of legitimacy. Mentions of 'added legitimacy', 'sufficient legitimacy' and 'the little of what remained of the regime's legitimacy' point to such a conceptualization of legitimacy, though there is no discussion as to why this is the case. Most importantly, however, Hudson immediately equates legitimacy with stability: 'The legitimacy, and therefore the stability, of this "mosaic" system was being eroded by an insufficient broadening of political participation.'[48] Thus, in his search for stability, Hudson has to 'get past' legitimacy, since the two go hand in hand, and this particular connection with stability will appear throughout this book as more concrete conceptions of legitimacy are touched upon.

As mentioned above, this book's focus on political legitimacy means that it will touch upon many of the issues touched on in the literature on Lebanese politics, though its focus will remain on the effects of those issues when they are relevant to either institutional or societal legitimacy, in order to assess the Lebanese state's overall legitimacy. The aim of this undertaking is to look at the relation between legitimacy and stability in pre-war Lebanon, and to show how it varies from established understandings and expectations of how legitimacy and stability in and around the state interact. And while this study's logical and methodological presuppositions necessitate an in-depth, historical study into Lebanon's own struggle for legitimacy, there is another implicit aim to the book: to stress the need to reassess how we look at state legitimacy in developing countries in general, particularly ones with colonial pasts, especially if we are to start approaching the problems therein at their roots. This reassessment of conventional, Western-centric, concepts and their application in the developing world is certainly not a new one, and many, more established, authors have made immense strides in this effort. The internalization, and naturalization,[49] of political and legal structures has proven to be one of the bigger enforcers of the paralysed status quo in countries like Lebanon, so it is only natural to question those structures at their theoretical roots, and their practical transformations. As such, I hope that this study can add another piece to the wider puzzle.

The approach

This type of historical explanation can be quite complicated since it is almost impossible to account for all the causal relations that might be hypothesized in a relation between legitimacy and state-building. Without drawing on all the potential causal factors, I will attempt to uncover a link between the *illegitimacy* of the Lebanese state during its formation and the political instability that has followed since that application. It is also important to reiterate here that in the context of this book, I shall mean by instability that the very existence of the

Lebanese state has been questioned time and again by a group or groups of the population of Lebanon; that there has not been any real consensus over the Lebanese constitution, nor a resolution to the question of Lebanese identity; and that these fundamental disagreements resurface periodically in forms of conflict that often include armed violence.

With regard to the variables taken into consideration for this research, it is just as complicated to gauge the feelings and aspirations of the different Lebanese groups and communities. Surveys, polls and individual interviews were not as common an occurrence in Lebanese academic, or even journalistic, life as they might be nowadays (which is still relatively little). Instead, one must rely on the actions, decisions and internal policies of different groups and individuals that claimed, and have historically been proven, to speak in the name of their supporters and, in some cases, their communities. The validity of that claim is then assessed against the adjacent and relevant actions (and reactions) at the time. Still, there is some inevitable room for inaccuracy with regard to the exact line of thought which these actors possessed at the time. Thus, the reader must bear in mind that, though the evidence itself is accurate, it will also only be used when relevant, and does not necessarily dictate that the actors involved did not possess other, sometimes contradictory, convictions and plans. Indeed, the history of political Lebanon has been distinguished with unlikely alliances and paradoxical arrangements.

Hence, in order to conduct such a complex study, the structure of the book must reflect the above-mentioned aims while also allowing for as accurate as possible an investigation into the socio-political developments within Lebanon in the relevant timeframe. Chapter 1 analyses the political environment in which the state was built, so as to get a good understanding of the role that legitimacy played in the creation of the Lebanese state. Chapter 2 looks at the period from 1920 to 1943, in which the state of Greater Lebanon tried to stand on its own feet despite a struggle to overcome its own creation. Chapter 3 studies Lebanon's first independent presidential term, which provides the perfect timeframe to study the immediate effects of the infamous National Pact on Lebanese state-building. Chapter 4 follows the previous one by looking at the period immediately succeeding it: Kamīl Shamʿūn's presidential term between 1952 and 1958. Chapter 5 focuses on what many consider the only period in which the Lebanese state underwent a modernizing experience: the period that came to be characterized by a current known as Chehabism. Finally, Chapter 6 will study the sharp changes that characterized the transition from Chehabism to the civil war. The conclusion will then lay out the causal chain established throughout the book to show how the events covered are all interlinked through their relationship with the political legitimacy of the Lebanese state.

Notes

1   Bassel F. Salloukh et al., *The Politics of Sectarianism in Postwar Lebanon* (London: Pluto Press, 2015), 175.

2　J. C. Hurewitz, 'Lebanese Democracy in Its International Setting', in *Politics in Lebanon*, ed. Leonard Binder (New York: Wiley, 1966), 213.

3　Robert K. Yin, *Case Study Research: Design and Methods* (London: Sage, 2009), 9.

4　It is unsurprising that to this day, one is still likely to run into essays that include the title 'Parody of a Nation'. See *Lebanon: Parody of a Nation? A Closer Look at Lebanese Confessionalism*, by Turkmen-Dervisoglu, a 2012 essay for *The Yale Review of International Studies*: http://yris.yira.org/essays/316. Accessed on 27 March 2020. Similarly, as recently as December 2019, the essay *Is Lebanon Becoming a Real Nation?* was published by Amir Asmar for the Council on Foreign Relations: https://www.cfr.org/blog/lebanon-becoming-real-nation. Accessed on 27 March 2020.

5　Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993), xi.

6　S. C. M. Paine, *Nation Building, State Building, and Economic Development: Case Studies and Comparisons* (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2010), 7.

7　Paul James, *Nation Formation: Towards a Theory of Abstract Community* (London: Sage, 1996), 10–11.

8　See G. Zernatto and Alfonso G. Mistretta, 'Nation: The History of a Word', *Review of Politics* 6, no. 3 (1944): 351–66.

9　James, *Nation Formation*, 12.

10　Anthony Giddens, *The Nation-State and Violence: Volume Two of a Contemporary Critique of Historical Materialism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 116.

11　Giddens, 119.

12　Timothy Mitchell, 'The Limits of the State: Beyond Statist Approaches and Their Critics', *American Political Science Review* 85, no. 1 (1991): 77, https://doi.org/10.1017/s0003055400271451.

13　Benjamin Akzin, *State and Nation* (London: Hutchinson University Library, 1964), 10.

14　Akzin, 9.

15　John A. Armstrong, *Nations before Nationalism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982), 9.

16　Anthony D. Smith, 'Nations before Nationalism? Myth and Symbolism in John Armstrong's Perspective', *Nations and Nationalism* 21, no. 1 (2015): 169.

17　Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983), 6.

18　Max Weber, David Owen, Tracy B. Strong, *The Vocation Lectures* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 2004), xlix.

19　Talcott Parsons, *Societies: Evolutionary and Comparative Perspectives* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1966), 14.

20　See Leon Hurwitz, 'Contemporary Approaches to Political Stability', *Comparative Politics* 5, no. 3 (1973): 449–63.

21　See Robert M. MacIver, *The Modern State* (London: Oxford University Press, 1926), 447–8, for a brief criticism on the shortcomings of social contract theory.

22　Max Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 213.
　　Also see David Beetham, 'Max Weber et La Légitimité Politique [Max Weber and Political Legitimacy]', *Revue Européenne Des Sciences Sociales* 33, no. 101 (1995): 11–12.

23　Anthony de Jasay, *The State* (Indianapolis, IN: Liberty Fund, 1998), 74.

24　See Barry Buzan, *People, States and Fear: An Agenda for International Security Studies in the Post-Cold War Era* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1991).