RICHTMANN
PUBLISHING

Research Article

Nationalism and Economic Development in Lebanon: Challenges and Opportunities for Unity and Integration

Siti Mutiah Setiawati

Department of International Relations,
Faculty of Social and Political Sciences,
Universitas Gadjah Mada,
Yogyakarta,
Indonesia
*Corresponding Author

Abstract

Lebanon is a small country on the shores of the Mediterranean Sea, known as a country with a strategic position geographically and politically. It was a divided country full of endless conflicts. This paper analyses the obstacles and opportunities to build Lebanese nationalism to realize the nation's integrity. Lebanon's main obstacles are the heterogeneity of society, foreign interference, and intergroup affiliations with other countries. At the same time, the foremost opportunity to build Lebanese nationalism is that they have the same language and culture, namely Arabic. Strong nationalism is the capital to build lasting political stability. This research is qualitative research that will collect specific qualitative data to create generalizations. Arabic as a language, identity, and culture is the most vital cohesive factor that unites the country and originates Lebanese nationalism. The problem of building Lebanese nationalism is mainly dependent on a strong government that can control the people. The challenge is that the ruling government comes from a minority religion, namely Maronite Christians dealing with Sunni and Shia Muslims and other Christian groups. Hence, a strategy is needed to create common interests that can be accepted by all groups, namely economic development amid the current Lebanese financial crisis.

Keywords: Lebanon; nationalism; identity; heterogeneity; economy

1. Introduction

Lebanon is a small country in the Middle East with problems building nationalism concerning state building after its independence in 1920 (Mazzucotelli, 2022). The issue of nationalism arose because of the indecision to develop nationalism based on religion, ethnicity, language, culture, or nation (Bonikowski & DiMaggio, 2016). Uncertainty in determining the basis of nationalism has caused this beautiful country to be full of conflicts between groups in society and even led to war. Several disputes that have occurred and can re-emerge are between Christians and Muslims, fellow Muslims, and ethnic Arabs and non-Arabs. Therefore, the development of nationalism is an urgent matter for this country to prevent conflict. Maduchi states that historically, nationalism became manifest in Europe basically in two forms: in the first half of the 19th century as the affirmation of the historical

uniqueness of a people and consequently as an aspiration to the freedom and independence of all peoples; in the first half of the 20th century it changed into the ideology of the supremacy of a nation over others and in Europe degenerated into totalitarian and imperialistic regimes (Manduchi, 2017). New Some of the conflicts in Lebanon due to ethnic and religious differences are the most significant Lebanese Civil War, 1975-1991. Even though the competition has long ended, the potential conflict still exists. All disputes are related to inter-religious and ethnic relations, such as the explosion that occurred in 2020. On August 4, 2020, a massive explosion occurred in the Lebanese capital, Beirut. Outbreaks are not new in this country as there have been frequent explosions, such as the American Embassy explosion and the French Marine Headquarters attack in 1983. This explosion was the most powerful ever in the history of Lebanon. News from various sources said that the explosion of 2,750 tons of ammonium nitrate killed at least 220 people, injured more than 5000, and made 300,000 people homeless. The disaster is a chemical compound commonly used as an agricultural fertilizer, stored for six years at a warehouse port in Beirut. Aljazeera reported that 2,750 tons of highly explosive ammonium nitrate which is used in making fertilizers and bombs, had been stored for six years without safety measures (Bensemra, 2020).

Although this explosion had nothing to do with the conflicts between ethnic or religious groups that have been going on in Lebanon, later, many people speculated the primary cause. The question then arises why ammonia material is stored for a long time and in large quantities. The chemicals are materials for making weapons. The cause of the explosion can be anything; however, people may think this disaster is related to religious and ethnic interrelation. In the context of protecting their respective groups or just in case, they are attacked. With various possible causes of the explosion, this description explains that Lebanon is still vulnerable. Al Jazeera reports that there have been continuous protests demanding the Lebanese government to investigate the case, and there are suspicions that the Lebanese government has been negligent. Among those who protested, some wrote:

"We are war generation, we used to go to school under the bombs. Our kids are learning the best education here, they are cleaning the streets, they are recycling things, they never learn in school, this statement describes the bad beta of the situation in Lebanon."(Azakir, 2021)

Lebanon is fragile due to the heterogeneity of religion and ethnicity, making it challenging to be united. The diverse society has groups affiliated with different countries, such as the Christian community, oriented towards the West, especially France, Britain, and America. In contrast, the Muslim community is more oriented toward Iran, Saudi Arabia, or other Muslim countries. France's interest in Lebanon was based on three main concerns: the protection of Christian minorities, especially the Maronites, in the Orient, the confirmation of France's role as a Mediterranean power, and the reinforcement of France's domination over North Africa (El-Solh et al., 2004).

At the same time, the composition of the population and internal and external environment has changed. This fragmented society applies the old political system known as confessionalism as the sharing of power based on religion. This sharing of energy is known as the National Pact of 1943, a legacy of France. Some Lebanese political experts believe that the National Pact's origin has become a source of conflict. The story of the National Pact is the agreement between Christian Bechara Al Khoury and Muslim Riadhus Solh that the former would give up the Christian claim for the protection of France in return for the latter's giving up the Muslims' desire to unite the country with Syria. The agreement's implementation has been challenging because it does not represent the respective community.

Currently, Lebanon still has a state-building problem, especially in realizing national integration that leads to discovering everyday nationalism. Nationalism has various definitions, but broadly speaking, it is a person's loyalty to a group of people living in a particular area bound by similarities in ethnicity, culture, language, historical experience, and to some extent, united by religion. The religious ties in Middle Eastern countries are more vital than in other countries, especially Western countries, separate between religious and political affairs. State Building, Nationalism, and Identity are the main political science topics.

There are two major religions in Lebanon, namely Christianity and Islam, each divided into approximately 17 sects or schools for each religion. Maronite Christians are the dominant Christian group, while Sunni and Shia Ali are the chief sects of the Islamic group. Foreign powers see this fragmented society as an opportunity to divide, dominate, and control them. Lebanon's political history shows the difficulty of building nationalism and identity that differentiates it from Arab countries. The heterogeneity of its citizens' Lebanese society is a mosaic society. The Maronites are from Syria, whom the reverend St Maroon expelled. They are racial of Pre-Arabic Phoenician roots. After defeating the Muslims from the Arabian Peninsula along the Mediterranean coast, the Maronite Christians went to the Mountain Regions of Lebanon. Maronite Christians have traditionally been more attached to European Christians, especially France and the Vatican.

Being different ethnically leads to feelings of a different culture, which may cause barriers to developing nationalism (Rispawati & Sumardi, 2020). On the other hand, Sunni Muslim groups are generally more oriented towards the Arab world than Europe. Their nationalism is more based on ethnicity and Arabic as a common language. Mneimneh (2019) stated that the Sunnis never fully consented to their inclusion within Lebanon by the French. The Sunnis want Lebanon to be more oriented toward the Arab world than toward Europe. Moreover, when the Palestinian issue escalated, Sunnis showed their side with Palestine. This tendency resulted in Christian suspicion, which later turned into the War of 1956.

When the Ottoman Empire entered Lebanon, the Maronite Christians had the status of Mutassarifiyyah, who had special autonomy. The area of Mutassarifiyyah did not include Beirut, Sidon, Tripoli, Tyre, Baalbek, Beqaa, and Rashaya. Mutassarifiyya is a Maronite nation that enjoyed a long peace in Lebanon. Inglehart *at all* states, "The mutasarrifiyya ushered in what was appropriately called "the long peace"(Inglehart et al., 2015). Mount Lebanon experienced unprecedented political stability for fifty years during which it was able to develop culturally, politically and economically, especially in the areas of public works, utilities, public schooling, agriculture, and industry (Ellis, 2019).

After the fall of the Ottoman Empire on the eve of World War I, the Mutasarrifiyya region came under French control, which received the Mandate of the League of Nations over the Levant region. France then expanded the Maronite Christian area to be Greater Lebanon, including areas along the Mediterranean coast of Lebanon to the West Biqa' valley to the East, Akkar plain to the North, where there are areas inhabited by Shi'i and Sunni Muslims (Imady et al., 2021). This condition causes the Christians to be unhappy because they are part of the disproportionate power removed. Meanwhile, the Muslims feel threatened by being separated from their compatriots in Syria and entering a state where Christians dominate.

Researchers on the origin of nationalism can learn from the successes of European countries such as England, Germany, France, and the Netherlands, which have succeeded in uniting their nations politically to become solid nations. Meanwhile, Italy and Spain are still in the process of building nationalism, as stated by Jansen:

"The roots of nationalism do not attempt to give a comprehensive overview of the entire European continent. For instance, England, France, Spain, and the Netherlands are included, while Italy and Germany are absent. From the perspective of nationalism studies, the last two nations have received much attention because they became politically unified at a rather late date: in 1870 and 1871, respectively"(Omer et al., 2015).

Jansen also stated that nationalism is closely related to nation, identity, culture, and political behaviour. From the modern nationalism of these four factors, it is necessary to determine which one has the most potential to unify. For European countries, the nation and identity factors are unifying elements. From the background of the formation of the Lebanese society, the question then arises of how to realize nationalism in Lebanon based on the heterogeneity of its people, the strength of foreign interference, and the influence of neighbouring countries' conflicts in Syria and Israel.

2. Literature Review

The Hazbun (2016) offer three solutions of different discourses on Lebanon's conflict and resolution; First, the conflict between religions in Lebanon resolves by dividing the territory between Christians living in the Mountains and Muslims living in Southern Lebanon and along the Mediterranean coast (Kassis, 1985). Second, economic development benefits all parties, both Christians and Muslims. Third, by building Arab nationalism based on language and culture. The author tends to focus more on solutions two and three of the three solutions. The reason is that both parties will not accept the territorial division solution. From the Christian side, the division of territory will cause the Christian area to narrow, so it will be more challenging to join the neighbouring Arab countries. The space will also be narrower for Muslim groups, so it fears being co-opted by neighbouring Syria.

Drysdale and Blake (1985) argue that if the resolution of Lebanon's internal conflict dividing Lebanon between Muslim and Christian populations is otherwise accepted, it could offer the formation of a federal state such as Switzerland. If this solution is also not got, the resolution of the Lebanese conflict depends on solving the Palestinian problem as it is said: "If there is one thing that almost all Lebanese, regardless of their religious affiliations, agree on, it is that there must be a solution to the problem of the Palestinian' statelessness-but not at Lebanon's expanse.

The second book by the author in 2010 suggests that the Lebanese conflict is caused by a strong society against a weak state so that the state does not have the authority to resolve disputes between people. The Lebanese government has yet to succeed in carrying out national development properly. The leading cause of integration and national identity problems is that public facilities such as hospitals, schools, television stations, radio, and newspapers belong to individual sects. In theory, to unite the community, it is necessary to have shared facilities built by the government. A strong government can facilitate the community by carrying out economic development, namely managing money from the Lebanese diaspora abroad for economic growth.

The third piece of literature written by Kail C Ellis explains that secular and nationalist Christians choose to identify as Arabs because they will more easily integrate with Muslim groups at home and with Arab countries around them. Lebanon's Christian group will be isolated if they identify as the Levant, which is more European-oriented. However, the so-called Arabs live in Arab countries, speak Arabic, have Arabic culture, and are Muslim. This definition leaves Maronite and Orthodox Christians in doubt.

Arabs have an Arabic mother tongue and are of Arab ethnicity, then 95% of Lebanese are Arabs. However, some Lebanese Christians are reluctant to be referred to as Arabs. They prefer as Rightists or as Phoenicians, namely ethnic groups who come from Greece. Based on this background, Arabic is the official language in Lebanon for formal purposes such as science, state documents, and law. Meanwhile, the daily language of the Lebanese population has seven different dialects according to their geographical conditions.

Arabic is a significant language in both Christian and Muslim Lebanese society (ESSEILI, 2017). Arabic is the language of communication for Islam as a religion and for social and political purposes (Shlowiy, 2022). Islamic Holy book, the Quran, is also written in Arabic. Most Lebanese Christians speak bilingual English or French to reduce the influence of Arabic in their daily lives. However, it is unavoidable that Lebanese Christians use the language of Islam; they also use terms such as *Assalamualaikum* and *Insyaallah*. However, as an Arab country, Lebanon is different from other Arab countries because of the dominance of Christians in government and economy. In Arab countries, there are many mosques. In Lebanon, the view of the church alongside the mosque is standard.

From a religious point of view, the Lebanese population consists of 4 major groups: Sunni Muslims, Shia Muslims, Christian Maronites, and Druze. For example, most Sunnis live in North Lebanon, Shiites in the South, and Druze and Maronite Christians in mountainous areas. This difference in residence makes it difficult for the Lebanese leader to realize national integration (Hage & Posner, 2015). So, the choice to unite with the cohesive factor of the nation and the Arabic language is the most rational choice (Prayag & Hosany, 2014). Thus, Lebanon has a unified society with the

Arabic language and culture (Merhi et al., 2019). This cohesiveness factor must be developed and maintained. Do not let each religion create its nationalism, as Harik fears. According to Ilya F Harik, in Middle Eastern countries, including Lebanon, ethnic groups in one country are often considered nations to foster a sense of nationalism towards this ethnic group (Harik, 1972).

To answer how to develop nationalism in Lebanon, we can observe the theory of nationalism that nationalism is closely related to culture. It is how the country develops industrialization, mass media, capitalism, and democracy, how industry involves elements in society, ownership, and coverage of mass media, as well as the development of a fair democracy for all aspects of culture, and more importantly, the tendency to accept the ideology of capitalism. These factors can predict the opportunities and obstacles to developing nationalism in Lebanon.

3. Method

This research is qualitative research that will collect specific qualitative data to build generalizations. Interpretation of the data is crucial; nation-building, nation-state, nationalism, consociationalism, National Pact, and religious sect. Understanding and sequencing events with sequence event analysis apply to answer research questions.

The researcher collects the data through literature studies from various books, monographs, and interviews. The Ambassador of the Republic of Indonesia to Lebanon and several Middle East observers are the targets. After being collected, they will be classified based on the main factors in realizing nationalism: industrialization, mass media, democracy, and capitalism. After that, the researcher will connect so that they qualify as a sequence event analysis method.

The theoretical framework of the paper is based on understanding the motives and perceptions of young tourists from the United Arab Emirates, factors affecting nationalism, memory practices of settler colonial disavowal, and the internalization of multicultural-based Islamic education in Jepara one of local city in Central Java, Indonesia. The paper focuses on the main factors influencing nationalism, such as industrialization, mass media, democracy, and capitalism, and how these factors relate to culture and predict the opportunities and obstacles to developing nationalism in Lebanon.

It also delves into the relationship between nationalism, nation, identity, culture, and political behaviour, exploring the potential unifying elements for nationalism in Lebanon amidst its heterogeneity, foreign interference, and conflicts with neighbouring contribution. Additionally, the paper discusses the complexities of national identity in Lebanon, particularly regarding the identification of Christians as Arabs or Phoenicians, and the role of language in shaping ethnic and cultural identities in the country.

Another aspect of empirical evidence is the examination of the COVID-19 pandemic in Lebanon one year later, focusing on the lessons learned and the impact on the healthcare system and society. Additionally, the paper discusses the economic crisis in Lebanon during the COVID-19 pandemic, highlighting issues such as currency devaluation, failed government projects, and uneven wealth distribution, which have contributed to the country's economic challenges

4. Results

4.1 Arab is Cohesive Factor That Bound Lebanese People

Lebanon is tiny compared to its neighbors or other Middle Eastern countries. However, this country has significant differences from other middle eastern countries. First, it is the only Arab country in the Middle East with an almost equal non-Muslim population to its Muslim population. Second, this country has been implementing a Lebanese-style democracy known as consocation democracy, a legacy of France, namely the 1943 National Pact, which contains "Power Sharing" between Muslims and non-Muslims. The President must be a Maronite Christian, the Prime Minister a Sunni Muslim, and the Speaker of the Parliament a Shia Muslim (Bogaards, 2019). Third, Syria and Israel, which are

Lebanon's neighboring countries, always try to interfere in internal affairs and have even been present in Lebanon for many years. Fourth, the population is concentrated based on religion. Maronite and Druz Christians mostly live in Mount Lebanon, Sunni Muslims are mainly on the North Lebanese Coast, and Shiites live in South Lebanon, bordering Israel, making it difficult to achieve national integration (Saefudin et al., 2021). Although Lebanon has various religions, the Lebanese population is united by Arabs in ethnicity, language, and culture.

As a small country with a population of 6,8 million in 2020, Lebanon has experienced ups and downs of tense political stability. In the 1970s, after the 1967 War, Lebanon did not initially receive a significant impact from the Arab-Israeli War, especially regarding accepting refugees (Machairas, 2017). However, after the events of Black September 1970 when King Hussein of Jordan expelled Palestinian refugees from Jordan. They moved to Lebanon, which then changed the composition of the Lebanese population from Christians to Muslim majority to Sunni Muslims exceeding Christians. The conflict between Muslims and non-Muslims could not be avoided and even became a Civil War between 1975–1991.

Lebanon is inseparable from global problems involving several neighbouring countries and other countries that take advantage of the heterogeneity of Lebanese society. The composition of the Lebanese population in terms of religion is only Christian and Muslim. Still, the Christians are divided into several sects, and the Muslims are divided into two primary schools of thought. Geopolitically, they are concentrated in certain areas, so it is difficult to integrate them; Sunni Islam lives in the North, Shiites live mainly in the South and Northeast, and Maronite Christians live in the mountains in the Mountains in Northeast and Southwest of Lebanon. Look at the following map:
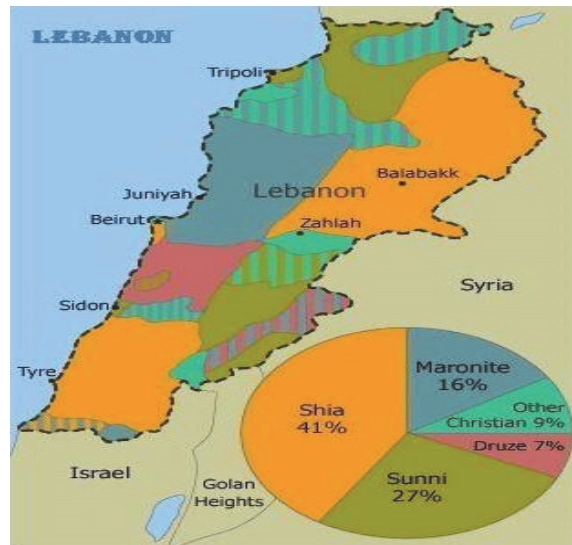

Figure 1. Lebanon and Population concentration by religion
Source: Map of Lebanon by Religious Sect (https://www.juancole.com/2010/12/map-of-lebanon-by-religious-sect.html)

If Arabs are defined as people who speak Arabic as their mother tongue, are of Arab ethnicity, and have Arab culture, 95% of Lebanese are Arabs. However, Lebanese Christians were reluctant to be referred to as Arabs, preferring to be referred to as Phoenicians, i.e., ethnic origins from what is now Greece. Nonetheless, Lebanese Christians speak Arabic, the state's official language. Lebanon's official state documents, legal, scientific, and colloquial terms, are in Arabic (Stel & Naudé, 2016). Slightly

different from the Arabic spoken in the Arabian Peninsula, Lebanese Arabic is a mixed language of Armenian, Canaan, Syrian, and Turkish or what is known as the "Aramaic Mix" or "Arabic Mix," which includes Semitic languages. Lebanese people's daily communication, such as television and print media, uses local Arabic, which is sometimes tricky for Arabs from other regions to understand. In the daily life of the Lebanese people, Arabic greatly influences the Lebanese culture, both Christian and Muslim. It is inevitable that because Arabic is used in the Al-Quran, the Christian Community often uses Islamic Arabic terms such as *Insya Allah* (with the permission of God), alhamdulillah (praise Allah), or *Assalamualaikum* (peace be upon you) (Hussin & Kamal, 2021). Therefore, Lebanese Christians are usually bilingual in English or French to reduce the influence of the Islamic language.

In the researcher's observation of the Lebanese case, Arabic is the identity of the Lebanese community. This language bond can be a capital to unite the Lebanese community, making it easier for the Lebanese government to govern its people. The bond with the Arabic language connects Lebanese citizens and unites Arabs in other countries. This trend will benefit Lebanese Christians, so they are not isolated from the Arab world. The Lebanese Arab identity will make it easier for the Lebanese government to cultivate a nationalism that is different from the nationalism of other Arab countries. As John Brevilly said, the "state is the main driving force behind nationalism" (Aveyard et al., 2016).

However, the weakness of making Arabs a political bond is that it provides opportunities for other Arab countries to interfere in the internal affairs of Lebanon. Lebanon's political development shows the tendency of neighboring Arab countries to be interrupted when Lebanese Prime Minister Saad Hariri was summoned to Saudi Arabia by King Salman bin Abdul Azis. There was an unusual incident because when Saad Hariri went to Saudi Arabia, he was not accepted as a Prime Minister who was supposed to be a state guest. King Salman asked Saad Hariri to step down as Prime Minister of Lebanon.

Meanwhile, Saudi relations with Sunni Lebanon have been harmonious. Saudi Arabia was instrumental in stopping the civil war between Maronite Christians and Lebanese Muslims in the 1989 Taif agreement. The results of the negotiations were more favorable to the Muslims because the ratio of members of Parliament, which was initially 6:5 for Christians and Muslims, became the same 5:5. In the political tradition in Lebanon, Sunni Muslims are always oriented to Saudi Arabia, Shia Muslims to Syria and Iran. Meanwhile, Christian groups, especially Maronite Christians, are always in contact with France in particular and European-American countries.

Lebanon's political instability is shown by Saudi Arabia's pressure on Saad Hariri to step down and peaceful demonstrations demanding that Hariri's government reduce debt, eliminate corruption and nepotism, and improve the domestic economy, which ultimately demanded Hariri's resignation. According to a 2019 New York Times report, the initially peaceful demonstration turned violent, bringing the death toll to 500. On 29 October 2019 Saad Hariri resigned. Lebanese President Michel Aoun, a Maronite Christian, formed a new government by appointing academician Professor Hasan Diab as Prime Minister of Lebanon in January 2020, sworn on January 21, 2020.

Continuous demonstrations or protests indicate that the people question the legitimacy of the ruler's leadership (Hudson, 1977). Lebanon is fragile in terms of legitimacy because the principle of "power sharing" cannot be enforced for too long. To become a modern state, Lebanon should replace the "power sharing" system with the "distribution of power," which divides power into Legislative, Executive, and Judicial powers (Juon & Bochsler, 2022).

The obstacle to making the Arab factor a bond of the Lebanese community is the Palestinian refugees, who are also categorized as Arabs. Maronite Christians feel differently from Palestinian Arabs, who are considered backward. As David Hirst said: That was implicit in the fact that they always referred to Palestinians as "Arabic" anyway; so when they said of one or other that they were, for example," backward," 'primitive,' 'nomad (Sabbagh-Khoury, 2022). The gradual presence of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon since the independence of Israel in 1948, the 1967 war, and culminating in 1970 when King Hussein expelled them from Jordan caused the Palestinian refugee to rise dramatically. The Lebanese Christian community is concerned about the arrival of Palestinians,

predominantly Muslim. Most likely, the presence of Palestinians will change the composition of the Lebanese population religiously while sharing power in the National Pact considers the majority Christian population. Meanwhile, the Sunni Muslim community positively welcomed the presence of Palestinian refugees. The Lebanese Muslim population feels attached to Palestinian refugees and feels they will defend Palestinian freedom from Israel.

Arab factors such as identity, culture, and language make it difficult to unify Lebanon because of their different origins. Maronite Christians who come from Greece are bound to Phonecian culture, and Sunni and Shia Muslims who come from the Arabian Peninsula are more able to mingle with Palestinian refugees who come from Palestine (Israel). A central problem can be solved that Arabs are ethnic groups who built Lebanon as a "nation" and then looked for the cohesiveness of the Lebanese people to make a nation and then "nationalism."

According to Michael Hudson, "Modern Lebanon" is not a nation but an uneasy association of communities and classes. Lebanese politics during the period of the liberal republic was primarily concerned with holding with this association (Karam, 2017). Considering the composition of Lebanon's main population, which has almost the same number, there is no absolute majority between Maronite Christians, Sunni Muslims, and Shia Muslims. Hence, sharing power should be more equitable for Shia Muslims who only have the position of speaker of Parliament. From an economic point of view, they are among the poorest among the other two groups, living in the mountains and lagging behind other parts of Lebanon. A strong state must deal with an increasingly crystallizing society with its group to realize strong nationalism (Stepan, 1980). A strong government can find a common interest that binds the community: sustainable economic development.

4.2 Strong State Towards Economic Sustainable Development

Lebanon experienced an economic crisis during the Covid-19 pandemic, marked by the fall of the Lira exchange rate from 1500 Lira/1 US $ to 22,000 Lira / 1 US % (Koweyes et al., 2021). Furthermore, the current Lebanese economic problems are water shortages, failed government projects, environmental destruction, uneven wealth distribution, and growing fears over currency devaluation. The financial institutions have also been not working well, for instance, the finance ministry, telecom companies, and the national electric company, which has failed to provide 24-hour electricity since the 1970"s despite receiving government loans and investments. This issue requires the attention of the central government of Lebanon, namely the power-sharing government between President Michael Aon and Prime Minister Najib Makati, which is traditional in modern life. If Lebanon joins the wider Arab Community, Lebanon will be more protected and integrated both economically and politically. The Arab world has been recognized as a vast region, prosperous because it has many natural resources, especially oil and gas, and has been alienated from the world. Making friends with the Arab world does have hostility and liability, but it also provides opportunities to solve problems (Hehir, 2016). Two institutions can facilitate the interests of Lebanon, namely the Arab League and the Gulf Cooperation Council.

The Arab League is a Middle Eastern regional organization with the Arabs as its member association. In this organization, Arabs are an identity that has shared values and norms that can unite its members. This association is still added to the Arabic language spoken by all its members so that only Arabic is the official language of the Arab League. This organization was founded in 1945 when there were signs that Israel would establish itself on Arab soil; The objectives of the Arab League are to (1) strengthen relations between member states: (2) foster cooperation and coordination between members, and safeguard their independence and sovereignty: (3) to promote the general welfare and interest of Arab countries (Dakhlallah, 2012). A group of countries that build cooperation and a community called the "international community." This international community has the following characteristics: a group of states conscious of specific common interests and shared values, form the society in the sense that they conceive themselves to be bound by a standard set of rules and their relations with one another and share in the working of common institutions. The Arab

League meets these criteria so that Lebanon, as a periphery Arab country, may rely on it without worrying about foreign interference. The Arab League, with a regional organizational mechanism, can provide political and security protection to its member states, just like NATO, the Warsaw Pact, CENTO, etc. Lebanon will gain many security and political benefits from relying on the Arab League.

Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that the Arab League is currently facing several problems; internal conflicts such as Syria and Iraq; Conflicts among members such as Saudi Arabia - Yemen. Unfreedom, such as Palestine; failed states like Libya, poverty, unemployment, and other economic problems. The problems do not mean that the Arab League has no role in uniting Arab countries. Since the Arab League was formed, Lebanon has joined so as not to be isolated from the Arab World. In the problem of building a solid state, the Arab League is the solution.

Before the economic crisis, the Lebanese economy was supported by a strong banking and financial sector and has long been the mainstay of Middle Eastern countries, especially the Gulf Region. During the global financial crisis, Lebanon was one of the countries that were less affected by the crisis. However, the banking sector was immediately destroyed during the last Lebanese economic crisis in 2019. From the aspect of several key economic indicators, the value of Lebanon's GDP in 2018 was recorded at US$ 55.0 billion. In 2019 it was recorded at US$ 51.3 billion, and in 2020 it was recorded to be US$ 33.4 billion due to the economic crisis (Youssef, 2020).

By understanding the condition of the Lebanese economy, which continues to deteriorate due to the prolonged Syrian conflict, and the chemical bombing last year, the least risky solution is to build cooperation with the regional economic organization GCC (Gulf Cooperation Council). This organization is a regional financial organization whose members are from the Gulf Arab countries except Iraq and Iran. The organization, founded in 1981, aims at building economic cooperation, coordination, and interconnectivity with fellow members and preventing the negative impact of conflict on economic conditions in the Gulf region.

In December 2011, King Abdullah, regent of the two holy cities of Islam, asked the GCC members to change this type of organization from "cooperation" to "union." Like the European Union, in addition to strengthening economic cooperation among members by removing trade barriers, the Union of Gulf States will also benefit non-member countries, including Lebanon (Guzansky, 2015). Union means a regional economic organization, a financial organization that aims to remove trade barriers, eliminate protection for domestic traders, and is non-discriminatory. In its development, this Union will be able to achieve a perfect union if it has been agreed that there is a "single currency."

By becoming a Union, they have the same trade rules for their members, and non-member countries will benefit from new trade opportunities. Lebanon will also benefit from collaborating with the GCC, especially in the field of oil and gas as the primary commodities of the GCC, as well as in tourism development. Especially now that the GCC is starting to open trade with Israel. Lebanon can use the GCC as the mediator to trade with Israel.

5. Conclusion

To overcome the sectarian conflict, Lebanon has a solution categorized as sectarian: a power-sharing mechanism based on religion known as the 1943 National Pact. This mechanism should have only been implemented temporarily but has been used until now. As a result, Lebanon is experiencing difficulties in realizing the integration of its nation and nationalism, which are the capital to achieve political stability.

Building nationalism as part of "state building" is the main task of state leaders. An unclear power-sharing mechanism makes the state appear weak and society strong. Most Lebanese population, 95 % of our Arab ethnicity, faces difficulties building nationalism, so the conflict constantly hits the country. The problem lies in determining whether nationalism is made based on religion, language, or ethnicity. Arab is the Lebanese identity for Muslims (Sunni and Shia) and Maronite Christians. However, this "Arabic" bond, despite being of Lebanese origin, contains many

weaknesses. The development of Lebanese nationalism with "Arab ties led" to the intervention or interference of other Arab countries in internal affairs: The Arab Palestinian refugee. Palestinian Arabs from Palestine are Arabic and often create domestic chaos and possible severance of good relations with France as a traditional Maronite friend.

As a country surrounded by Arab countries and the common enemy of Arabs, Israel, Lebanon cannot separate itself from the Arab world. Currently, there are two regional organizations of the Arab League and the GCC (Gulf Cooperation Council) that can be used, including Lebanon, to overcome problems, especially building nationalism based on Arab ethnicity. More affiliation with the Arab League to address political issues and more cooperation with the GCC to address economic problems would make it easier for Lebanon to connect with the Arab World. The most important thing, the Lebanese government can cause financial stability and a shared interest so that cooperation between Lebanese people is not just religious solidarity but also fosters common interests, more specifically, economic interests. It is considered that after the Beirut explosion on August 4, 2020, Lebanon suffered losses of around US$ 64.6 billion. This loss must be overcome by realizing a strategic economic policy involving all societal elements.

References

Aveyard, K., Jensen, P. M., & Moran, A. (2016). *The Roots of Nationalism: National Identity Formation in Early Modern Europe, 1600-1815* (L. Jensen (ed.)). Amsterdam University Press. https://doi.org/10.5117/9789462981072

Azakir, M. (2021). *Lebanon: Protests continue over political, economic crises.* 08-03. https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/3/8/protesters-paralyse-lebanon-in-anger-over-multiple-crisis

Bensemra, Z. (2020). *Senegal: Tonnes of explosive ammonium nitrate kept at Dakar port.* 21-08. https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/8/21/senegal-tonnes-of-explosive-ammonium-nitrate-kept-at-dakar-port

Bogaards, M. (2019). Formal and Informal Consociational Institutions: A Comparison of the National Pact and the Taif Agreement in Lebanon. *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics*, 27–42. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1080/13537113.2019.1565176

Bonikowski, B., & DiMaggio, P. (2016). Varieties of American Popular Nationalism. *American Sociological Review*, *81*(5), 949–980. https://doi.org/10.1177/0003122416663683

Dakhlallah, F. (2012). The League of Arab States and Regional Security: Towards an Arab Security Community? *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, *39*(3), 393–412. https://doi.org/10.1080/13530194.2012.726489

Drysdale, A., & Blake, G. H. (1985). *The Middle East and North Africa: A Political Geography.* Oxford University Press.

El-Solh, R., Ṣulḥ, R., & Raghid, E.-S. (2004). *Lebanon and Arabism: National Identity and State Formation* (Centre for Lebanese Studies (ed.)). Bloomsbury Academic.

Ellis, K. C. (2019). Greater Lebanon: The Problems of Integrating a Religiously and Ethnically Diverse Population. *Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies*, *42*(4), 1–16. https://doi.org/10.1353/jsa.2019.0017

ESSEILI, F. (2017). A sociolinguistic profile of English in Lebanon. *World Englishes*, *36*(4), 684–704. https://doi.org/10.1111/weng.12262

Guzansky, Y. (2015). Gulf States and Reform in the Middle East: Between Iran and the "Arab Spring." In *The Gulf Cooperation Council: From Cooperation to Unity?* (pp. 19–29). Palgrave Pivot. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137467836_3

Hage, J., & Posner, B. Z. (2015). Religion, religiosity, and leadership practices. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, *36*(4), 396–412. https://doi.org/10.1108/LODJ-07-2013-0096

Harik, I. F. (1972). The Ethnic Revolution and Political Integration in The Middle East. *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, *3*(3), 303–323. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020743800025034

Hazbun, W. (2016). Assembling security in a 'weak state:' the contentious politics of plural governance in Lebanon since 2005. *Third World Quarterly*, *37*(6), 1053–1070. https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2015.1110016

Hehir, A. (2016). Assessing the influence of the Responsibility to Protect on the UN Security Council during the Arab Spring. *Cooperation and Conflict*, *51*(2), 166–183. https://doi.org/10.1177/0010836715612849

Hudson, B. (1977). THE NEW GEOGRAPHY AND THE NEW IMPERIALISM: 1870–1918. *Antipode*, *9*(2), 12–19. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8330.1977.tb00707.x

Hussin, M., & Kamal, M. H. (2021). Translation of al-Quran into Malay Language in the Malay World. *International Journal of Islamic Studies and Humanities*, *4*(March), 33–51. https://doi.org/10.26555/ijish.v4i1.3 322

Imady, O., Commins, D., & Lesch, D. W. (2021). *Historical Dictionary of Syria* (Fourth (ed.)). Rowman & Littlefield.

Inglehart, R. F., Puranen, B., & Welzel, C. (2015). Declining willingness to fight for one's country: The individual-level basis of the long peace. *Journal of Peace Research*, 52(4), 418–434. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343314565756

Juon, A., & Bochsler, D. (2022). The two faces of power-sharing. *Journal of Peace Research*, 59(4), 526–542. https://doi.org/10.1177/00223433211037244

Karam, J. (2017). Beyond Sectarianism: Understanding Sectarian Lens. *Crown Center for Middle East Studies*, 107.

Kassis, H. E. (1985). Religious Ethnicity in the World of Islam. *International Political Science Review*, 6(2), 216–229. https://doi.org/10.1177/019251218500600206

Koweyes, J., Salloum, T., Haidar, S., Merhi, G., & Tokajian, S. (2021). COVID-19 Pandemic in Lebanon: One Year Later, What Have We Learnt? *MSystems*, 6(2). https://doi.org/10.1128/mSystems.00351-21

Machairas, D. (2017). The strategic and political consequences of the June 1967 war. *Cogent Social Sciences*, 3(1). https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2017.1299555

Manduchi, P. (2017). Arab Nationalism(s): Rise and Decline of an Ideology. *Oriente Moderno*, 97(1), 4–35. https://doi.org/10.1163/22138617-12340137

Mazzucotelli, F. (2022). On the Shores of Phoenicia: Phoenicianism, Political Maronitism, and Christian Nationalism in Lebanon. In *Histories of Nationalism beyond Europe* (pp. 53–71). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-92676-2_4

Merhi, M., Hone, K., & Tarhini, A. (2019). A cross-cultural study of the intention to use mobile banking between Lebanese and British consumers: Extending UTAUT2 with security, privacy and trust. *Technology in Society*, 59, 101151. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.techsoc.2019.101151

Mneimneh, H. (2019). *Sunni Lebanon: An "Oddity" at Risk*. 08-05. https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/sunni-lebanon-oddity-risk

Omer, A., Appleby, R. S., & Little, D. (2015). Religion, Peace, and The Origins of Nationalism. In *The Oxford Handbook of Religion, Conflict, and Peacebuilding*. Oxford University Press.

Prayag, G., & Hosany, S. (2014). When Middle East meets West: Understanding the motives and perceptions of young tourists from United Arab Emirates. *Tourism Management*, 40, 35–45. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2013.05.003

Rispawati, & Sumardi, L. (2020). Why does nationalism high or low? Revealing factors affecting nationalism. *International Journal of Scientific and Technology Research*, 9(2), 2539–2544.

Sabbagh-Khoury, A. (2022). Memory for forgetfulness: Conceptualizing a memory practice of settler colonial disavowal. *Theory and Society*. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11186-022-09486-0

Saefudin, A., Munip, A., & Ulfa, K. L. (2021). Internalization of Multicultural-Based Islamic Education: Sunni-Shia Synergy in Banjaran Bangsri Village, Jepara. *Edukasia : Jurnal Penelitian Pendidikan Islam*, 16(1), 37. https://doi.org/10.21043/edukasia.v16i1.8803

Shlowiy, A. S. Al. (2022). Language, religion, and communication. *Journal of Asian Pacific Communication*, 32(2), 198–213. https://doi.org/10.1075/japc.00040.shl

Stel, N., & Naudé, W. (2016). 'Public–Private Entanglement': Entrepreneurship in Lebanon's Hybrid Political Order. *The Journal of Development Studies*, 52(2). https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1080/00220388.2015.1081173

Stepan, A. (1980). The State and Society: Peru in Comparative Perspective. *Politics & Society*, 10(1), 120–121. https://doi.org/10.1177/003232928001000120

Youssef, J. (2020). Economic Overview Lebanon. *SSRN Electronic Journal*. https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3519485