



**Fragile States and the
Democratization Process:
A New Approach to Understanding
Security in the Middle East**

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Executive Summary

Middle Eastern nation states came into existence not as a result of naturally-evolving and unique historical, social, or political processes reaching a nexus of cohesion, but rather, they emerged as a manifestation of the fragility of colonial power in the region. This study provides an analysis of fragile states through two case studies: Lebanon and Palestine.

The history of statehood in the Middle East and its establishment by colonial powers has ensured that this remains a fragile and unstable region. The state structure of Lebanon, for example, was instituted to ensure the hegemony of the Christian Maronites, who were backed by the French in the 1930s and 1940s. The consequences of this structuring can still be felt today. Furthermore, external actors continue to provide support – either through foreign aid or their policies – to certain select actors within fragile state systems. Such a process of “choosing sides” only causes further instability and exacerbates state fragility.

This study is focused on the impact of democratization upon state fragility in the Middle East. Post 9/11, western governments have prioritized democratization in their foreign policy, in a bid to counter the rise of extremism within the region. Nonetheless, weak internal state structures, the absence of civil society institutions, a lack of freedom, the presence of competing trans-national sources of identity (ethnicity, religion or sect), and the failure of states to acquire the support and loyalty of their citizens can all be considered factors that, although largely ignored within policy circles, in fact contribute most significantly towards state fragility and to the success or failure of any democratization effort.

Introduction

Fragile states can generally be characterized as highly vulnerable in structural terms and prone to crisis due to external influences, internal political discord, underdeveloped institutional structures, and civil conflict. As a result, the governments of fragile states naturally face a high risk of losing effective control over parts of their territories and citizens, creating situations that are easily exploited by anti-regime or dissident political factions, not to mention criminal and terrorist networks, all of which further threaten state stability. Indeed, it is this sustained instability that is likely to have a negative impact on regional and international security.

This study bases itself on the hypothesis that there exists an inherent tension between western-led democratization efforts and fragile states in the Middle East. We argue that instead of contributing towards political liberalization and sustainable change, current democracy promotion efforts actually counter state stability. By examining how state fragility handicaps democracy and, inversely, how these efforts might actually increase instability in political systems already susceptible to crisis, this study aims to advance the development of a new approach to understanding security in the Middle East. Hence, this study also hopes to contribute to current debates among international scholars about governance in spaces of limited statehood and the inherent dangers of democratic transitions, the gravest of which is civil war¹.

Another goal of the study is to identify the key factors accounting for state fragility in the Southern Mediterranean, particularly in the Palestinian Territories and Lebanon. Both states² most vividly illustrate the inherent tension between fragile states and the push for political reform in the Middle East. The Palestinian Authority was selected as an example given that the 2006 elections and recent conflict among Fatah and Hamas provide illuminating case studies of power play among political elites and of how external foreign actors can greatly affect fragile state security. Lebanon was chosen because it is one of the most diverse societies in the region and also stands as an example of a fragile state highly affected by a confessional political system linked to its colonial history, as well as by external interests that have evolved over many decades.

Both states share three key commonalities: firstly, the central governments of both states fail to exert full control over their territories; secondly, severe conflicts, or rather power struggles between political elites, have deepened divisions already present within these societies, subsequently aggravating tensions among social groups; thirdly and finally, external powers – including the United States, Iran, and Israel, and certain European States within the European Union (EU) – are highly involved in the internal political processes of both states.

Chapter one analyzes the current definition of fragile states and argues that a new approach towards understanding security in the Middle East will require an interweaving of western perspectives on fragile state security with recognition of the complex socio-political dynamics within the region. In addition, the first chapter outlines the little understood impact of external shock upon fragile state systems, notably the shock of democracy promotion.

The second chapter assesses efforts undertaken by the European Union in the southern Mediterranean towards the promotion of democracy in Lebanon and Palestine. Despite the current apathy in relation to democratic reform in the Middle East, there *are* signs that the dynamics of democratic change are taking root. The chapter suggests that over the last decade, political liberalization and democracy promotion in the Middle East have figured relatively prominently in the discussions around the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership activities. Despite ups and downs in the EU's efforts, discussion of political reform issues is now considered as legitimate as more technical, economic and financial issues. Yet, the impact of EU democracy promotion policies towards the region is quite limited, mainly due to the fragile nature of politics in these countries.

The study continues with chapter three's brief historical account of how fragile state instability has evolved in Palestine and Lebanon. The subsequent chapters focus upon the dynamics of state fragility, with chapter four exploring the maneuvering of political elites in relation to political change and state security, and chapter five examining the significance of religious, ethnic and class identity in relation to state fragility.

¹ Empirical analyses prove that states in transition are most susceptible to the outbreak of internal conflicts and civil war. For example, as Hegre et al. (2001) show, regimes undergoing a transition process from autocratic to democratic rule (or the other way round) are statistically four times more prone to civil war than consolidated autocracies or democracies.

² The term "state" is used in relation to the Palestinian territories given that current negotiations between Israel and Palestine, as well as questions of long-term security, are already framed in a context of state to state relations. Moreover, in relation to Israel and to other states, the Palestinian Authority (PA) currently operates as an autonomous government.

Chapter One – Definitions of Fragile States

Although the term “fragile state” is a popular label allocated to states that pose a threat to international stability, there is no set international definition of what constitutes a fragile state. From the perspective of the World Bank, fragile states “share a common fragility in particularly weak state policies and institutions and a risk of conflict and political instability”³. For the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the term fragile state is reserved for states that are vulnerable and states that are in crisis. States that are vulnerable are characterized as being “unable or unwilling to adequately assure the provision of security and basic services (...) and where the legitimacy of the government is in question”, while states in crisis are “where the central government does not exert effective control over its own territory”⁴. Finally, according to the United Kingdom’s Department for International Development (UKDFID), fragile states are where the “government cannot or will not deliver core functions to the majority of its people, including the poor”⁵.

All the above definitions relate to two fields of research, namely development and security. Although each respective field encompasses a distinct set of issues, and is thus addressed via different policies, they have come together under the umbrella of the global war on terror. Following the 9/11 attacks, the United States and the European Union shifted their foreign policy focus, introducing development into a new approach towards global security. This expressed a shift among western nations in recognition that “when development and governance fail in a country, the consequences engulf entire regions and leap around the world”⁶.

Western governments now adopt a different approach to fragile states deemed a threat, as well as to internal groups seen as dangerous to international stability. The United States perceived Iraq as a clear danger to US and international security due to its supposed weapons of mass destruction. Yet, as post-invasion Iraq has painfully proven, an understanding of security must take into account not only military victory but also soft-security concerns, including the internal dynamics of culture, politics, economics, and religion.

Fragile States in the Middle East

Grasping fragile state security in the Middle East requires the adjustment of western frameworks of understanding regarding fragile statehood, in recognition of the complex history and contemporary socio-political dynamics in the region. As previously noted, fragile state security in the Middle East relates to two fields in which western perspectives on contemporary security are rooted: development and security; yet it must also take into account, in a more nuanced manner, how internal conflict and external interests have affected the region.

A state is made up of a government, an economy, and a culture linked together by its people. Middle Eastern states, however, were carved out by European colonial powers in the past century with little concern over the territories’ people, geography, or history, let alone their ethnic, religious, or tribal identity. Nation states in the region did not come into existence as the result of a natural evolution of unique historical, social or political processes that reached a nexus of cohesion⁷; instead, they emerged as a manifestation of the growing fragility of colonial power. Although colonial rule is not exclusive to the Middle East, the region’s colonial history, tied to its particular socio-political character and the strong impact of external actors, translates into a very specific set of circumstances as regards state security – therefore creating a type of fragile state security that is quite distinctive to the Middle East.

Indeed, there are many factors contributing to fragile state instability in the Middle East, yet for the purpose of this study we will focus on what we believe has the most tangible effect on the fragility of state security in the region, namely the little understood impact of external shock on fragile state systems.

External Shock

External shock comes in the form of war, significant economic crises, or major diplomatic policy shifts that have a major effect upon a given country or region. Most recently in the Middle East, external shock has come in the form of a push by the West for a liberalization of existing political systems in the region. The rationale behind this effort is that since political expression in the Middle East is too tightly controlled and freedom of speech limited, a tension develops amongst populations that are unable to achieve a political voice. As a result, these groups, especially a young “pool of politically and economically disenfranchised individuals”, turn to extremism and extremist groups in order to vent their frustra-

³ The World Bank (2007) Fragile States at a Glance.

⁴ USAID, January 2005. Fragile States Strategy.

⁵ UK DFID, January 2005. Why we need to work more effectively in fragile states.

⁶ Merrill, 29 June 2007. Foreign Aid in the National Interest. USAID.

⁷ Kumaraswamy, March 2006. Who Am I? The Identity Crisis in the Middle East.

tion⁸. The 9/11 attacks were a symbol of this frustration and were considered not simply a failure to stop Al-Qaeda, but a failure of the international community at-large to prevent the seeds of terrorism, extremism, animosity, hatred, and violence from taking root among the regions' restive populations.

The long-term impact of external shock is dependent upon the ability of a state system to absorb its consequences and instability. The shock of war, for example, is particularly devastating given that, on average, it costs a country nearly \$54 billion dollars and 20 years of lost development⁹. Moreover, the consequences of war are not limited to destruction alone, seeing as such conflict often results in a crippled economy, deep ethnic and religious divides, political disarray, and internal discord – all of which have a lasting destabilizing impact both upon a given state system, and often, throughout the entire region¹⁰.

The external shock of democracy promotion is particularly problematic in that it pushes for change in regions already fraught with state fragility, and within state systems that are poorly structured to handle successful shifts towards more liberal political systems. Moreover, the nature of the shift is largely rhetorical, pushing for political change, yet providing little support to achieve it.

As rhetoric, it arguably has little chance to have a tangible and sustained impact. Indeed, democracy is the result of a “learning process”, evolving from gradual and “largely unconscious and contradictory” developments “involving conflict, negotiations and compromises between diverse groups”¹¹. In addition, successful democratic change usually takes place most successfully once the requirements ensuring democratic rule have been implemented. These requirements include freedom of speech, the establishment of human rights and civil society groups, government accountability organizations, voting rights groups, and other staples of liberal governance that ensure a free and fair political process.

This is not to say that democracy promotion in the region is doomed for decades to come. On the contrary, there are signs that shifts toward liberal political reforms are occurring throughout the region. Yet these efforts will not prove successful if the push for democracy continues to juxtapose itself against existing authoritarian regimes. Tacit democratic change will likely come as a manifestation of reform within these state systems, and not as a response to external players that seek to manipulate them to their advantage. These efforts are easily labeled as foreign by both the governments and populations involved, and thereby inextricably tainted.

Presented in the form of rhetoric and broad policy initiatives, current democracy promotion efforts encourage political dissent but provide no tangible mechanisms to institute change. Largely unconditional, the shock impact of such diplomatic initiatives is not absorbed by existing authoritarian governments, but instead by the human rights organizations, politicians, moderate religious leaders, and community activists that seek to institute reform.

It should be underlined that this study is not concerned with the exact methods of successful transitional changes to democracy, but is instead more concerned with drawing the attention of policy makers to how state fragility in the Middle East will affect any potential democratization process. State fragility will arguably have the most tangible impact upon any democratization effort, no matter how developed or financially-backed the initiative is.

Within any discussion of democratic transition in today's interdependent world, it is impossible to omit the impact of external actors upon the transformation of state systems. Although often trumped by issues related to American foreign policy, we will focus upon the unique role of European interests in the region. To this end, chapter two points to the normative character of the European Union's democracy promotion, i.e. the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) and Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP), and considers the place of Lebanon and Palestine within these policies.

8 Al-Hayat, 13 February 2004, G-8 Greater Middle East Partnership Working Paper.

9 Speech delivered at the Council on Foreign Relations (Washington, DC) by Douglas Alexander, Secretary of State for International Development, July 12, 2007. <http://www.dfid.gov.uk/News/files/Speeches/council-foreign-relations.asp>

10 Johnson and Zweiri. RIEAS, Transnational Implications of Civil Conflicts in Iraq, Lebanon, and Palestine, No. 118, February 2008.

11 Berman and Lonsdale (1992) Unhappy Valley.

Chapter Two – The European Union and Democracy Promotion in Lebanon and Palestine

As the previous chapter makes clear, the concept of fragility accurately describes many states in the Middle East. Political reforms and the democratization process in the Middle East take place against a background of fragile state security. Therefore, reform efforts by external actors require utmost caution if they are to succeed in some measure. In this context, this chapter looks at the EU's efforts over the post-Cold War years to promote democracy in the region, particularly in Lebanon and Palestine, through a discussion of the EU's endorsed values and principles, its rhetorical action and application of conditionality, as well as an account of the factors that most relate to issues of state fragility.

As article six of the European Union Treaty highlights, the EU is founded upon the principles of “liberty, democracy, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and the rule of law”. These principles not only define the Union, but also influence its actions on the international stage in its bid to promote these values. Given that the EU seeks to solidify its standing as an important world actor, the Union undertakes the normative mission of democracy promotion not only as part of its enlargement strategy, but also of its neighborhood policy.

Since the military is not a dominant factor in EU policies, this had led the EU to pursue the status of “civilian superpower” by promoting stability, democracy, good governance and rule of law through various channels, including trade, foreign aid, etc. Due to its geographical location, the EU's civilian mission reaches beyond its potential members, expanding into neighboring countries in the Middle East, North Africa and Eastern Mediterranean – a strategy that has rendered democracy promotion a security issue for Europe.¹² In June 1992, and with this mission in mind, the foreign ministers of EU member countries suggested six basic objectives for EU external policies, including: “Strengthening democracy and respect for human and minority rights, encouraging regional cooperation, contributing to the prevention and settlement of conflicts, international coordination of emergency situations, promoting good government and international cooperation in areas such as the fight against arms proliferation, terrorism and traffic in illicit drugs.”¹³

The main objective of the EU's democratization efforts has been to help poor countries evolve, both economically and politically, in terms of human rights, rule of law, investment, democracy, and freer trade. The EU has focused on humanitarian and development programs in “impoverished” and “dysfunctional” regions, especially in countries that had a formal colonial relationship with EU members. Through these programs, the EU aims to encourage economic, political, judicial and administrative reforms by providing financial aid and technical advice.¹⁴

Without any incentives to stimulate development and democratization, the impact of EU efforts could only remain at low levels. Conditionality therefore emerges as a significant mechanism within democracy promotion, not only for Lebanon and the Palestinian Authority, but for countries throughout the region. Historically, EU policies concerning democracy promotion have varied from country to country. Consequently, and depending on the specific relations with the Union, the motivation of target countries shifts between convergence (the natural way of spreading norms) and conditionality, which offers a financial or political reward for achievements.¹⁵ In the cases explored in this study, namely those of Lebanon and Palestine, seeing as eventual EU membership is out of question, only conditionality could prove successful. As Schimmelfennig argues, “the positive impact of the EU on democracy in outsider states increases with the size and credibility of the EU's conditional incentives.”¹⁶

The European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) has proven an important vehicle for those EU democratization efforts that use partnership policy and conditionality. Through the ENP, the EU has attempted to secure prestige in the international arena by diffusing the message that EU integration and enlargement efforts do not seek to draw “dividing lines” with the “outside” world. Nevertheless, due to the fact that the EU has to deal with countries with distinctly different development levels and divergent ideological backgrounds, and given that it is difficult to determine the boundaries of the “wider” Europe, the process of policy implementation becomes quite complicated.¹⁷

In March 2003, when the European Commission initiated the ENP, it described the political systems of neighboring regions as having “autocratic and non-democratic governance and poor records in protecting human rights and freedoms of the individual.”¹⁸ As the Commission Strategy Paper indicates, the ENP has two basic goals: “Strengthening stability, security and wellbeing for EU member states and neighboring countries, and preventing the emergence of new dividing lines between the enlarged EU and its neighbors.”¹⁹ In ac-

12 Baracani, Elena, (n.d.) *The European Union and Democracy Promotion: a strategy of democratization in the framework of the neighborhood policy?* University of Florence: Italy, p. 8

13 Smith, Karen E. (2003) “EU External Relations,” in Michelle Cini (ed.), *European Union Politics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 229-245, on p. 240.

14 Dinan, Desmond (2005) *Ever Closer Union: an Introduction to European Integration*. Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 532-533.

15 Kubicek, Paul (2003) *The European Union and Democratization*. New York: Taylor & Francis Group, pp. 198-199.

16 Schimmelfennig, Frank, May 2007. “EU Democracy Promotion in the European Neighborhood: Conditionality, Economic Development and Linkage”. Paper for EUSA Biennial Conference, Montreal, p. 6.

17 Dinan, pp. 533-4 and 543.

18 “Communication on Wider Europe Neighborhood: A new framework for relations with our Eastern and Southern Neighbors”. COM (2003) 104 Final, 11 March 2003.

19 Ibid.

cordance with these objectives and defined parameters, the EU launches action plans for specific countries outlining strategies to promote shared values and prosperity through a wide range of policy tools. Conditionality is a main element of the ENP because in return for the construction of political, economic and cultural bridges through EU efforts, the assisted countries are asked to adopt democratic values, develop market economies, apply the rule of law, guarantee human rights, implement peaceful conflict resolution, and fight against terrorism. Moreover, they are encouraged to strengthen their civil society, cooperate with the International Criminal Court, organize free and competitive elections, and develop political pluralism and free media.²⁰

While “wider” Europe forms the framework of the ENP, the engagement between Euro-Med partners includes no incentive of future EU membership. The evolution of the Mediterranean policy goes back to 1972, as part of the so-called Global Mediterranean Policy. Although initially designed to respond to Mediterranean countries’ concerns over the EU’s single market program, the Mediterranean policy gained an expanded dimension in the following decades, as political problems in the region came to overshadow its economic relationship with the EU. For instance, although Israel sought to upgrade its economic ties with the EU, it was against the EU’s full participation in the Middle East peace process given that the Union was critical of Israel’s policies vis-à-vis the Occupied Territories. Alternatively, other neighboring countries, such as Egypt, Syria and Lebanon, which had trade agreements established with the EU since the 1970s, welcomed enhanced relations with the EU but were against it granting any further trade concessions to Israel.

These dynamics led the EU to initiate a new Mediterranean strategy in 1995 with the Barcelona Declaration, which created a general framework for relations between EU and Mediterranean neighbors. Also known as the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP), it involved twelve Mediterranean countries: Algeria, Cyprus, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Malta, Morocco, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey and the Palestinian Authority. Since Cyprus and Malta joined the EU in 2004, the EMP now boasts EU-27 plus 10 Mediterranean neighbours (Libya has had observer status since 1999). The EMP aims at achieving peace, prosperity and stability in the Mediterranean region, and promotes three main partnership areas: political and security dialogue; economic and financial partnership; social, cultural and human partnership; and migration (since 2005). The Barcelona Process mainly focuses on the regional / multilateral dimension of relations between the EU and non-member Mediterranean countries, while the ENP complements it through bilateral action plans agreed between the EU and each partner country.

One of the EU’s main motivations for these initiatives is enhancing regional security and creating cultural and educational ties – all necessary steps towards promoting overall stability in the region.²¹ The EU considers political reforms in the region as essential to eventual tranquility in the region. Middle Eastern countries’ resistance to democratization, and the instability that this creates, present significant security concerns for the EU. These concerns include the hostility of fundamentalist groups towards Western values, the likelihood that they might use democratic means to overcome “democracy” itself (through elections), and the potential increase in migration due to the high intolerance of Islamist rule, all of which motivate the EU to use the EMP and the ENP more efficiently in the region.²²

Relations between the EU and Lebanon go back to the 1970s, but they gained a new momentum following the signing of the EMP in 1995. Negotiations between the EU and Lebanon stretched over many years, culminating in an Interim Agreement in 2003 and the Association Agreement in April 2006. In all its dealings, the EU has strictly stipulated that the evolution of their bilateral relationship is dependent upon Lebanon’s commitment to the values promoted by the Union and its compliance with European norms and democratic principles. This approach originated with the EMP in the mid-1990s but continued throughout the period. For example, the Association Agreement, signed in 2002 and in force since 1 April 2006, includes a clause that states “relations between the two parties ... shall be based on democratic principles and fundamental human rights as set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which ... constitutes an essential element of this Agreement.”

The Lebanese Government made a Ministerial Declaration in 2005, which pledged a wide array of essential political and economic reforms with the objective of restoring Lebanon’s full sovereignty and territorial integrity, as well as advancing “the approximation of Lebanon’s legislation, norms and standards to those of the European Union”. It became clear that the EU could support the process through an increase in financial support and techni-

Lebanon

²⁰ Baracani, pp.13-18.

²¹ Dinan, pp. 537-538.

²² See for example Youngs, Richard, November 2002. “The European Union and Democracy in the Arab-Muslim World”. Working Paper No.2 of the CEPS Middle East & Euro-Med Project, pp. 1-13.

cal assistance, provision of advice for legislative reforms, and most importantly, the consideration of a new contractual relationship. The ENP Action Plan, which went into effect in January 2007, specifically mentions that the document is the EU's response to the country's own reform programme spelled out in the Declaration.

The 2007 Action Plan for Lebanon outlines ambitious objectives related to the institution of democracy and rule of law. Although they remain for the most part normative statements, the mention of these targets within a legal framework indicates how seriously the EU takes the task of democracy promotion. Among the Plan's many priorities, special emphasis is placed on working together to promote democracy, rule of law, transparency, good governance, increased public awareness, and cooperation with international organizations; to establish open political dialogue and measures against corruption; and to reform the electoral law to ensure a fair representation of women and an upgrade of the judiciary's efficiency.²³ Not only the EU, but also some of its member states have undertaken initiatives in Lebanon to encourage liberalization and democratization in the country. Unsurprisingly, all of these efforts lay stress on strengthening the rule of law, institutional reform (mainly legal and administrative areas), increasing the role of civil society and women, and inter-community dialogue. The chief instruments to achieve this have been staff training and NGO funding.²⁴

Despite all these efforts, success in Lebanon has been limited. An overview of the experience on the ground in Lebanon amply illustrates the limited external impact. Following the debt relief that Lebanon received from international donors (including France and Saudi Arabia) in the wake of Paris I & II conferences, of February 2001 and November 2002 respectively, the extant reform process came to a halt as the political bickering between Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri and President Emile Lahud thwarted the economic reforms promised to international donors in Paris, let alone the much more radical political reforms envisioned in the Barcelona Process. As EU negotiations with Syria faltered, the pro-Syrian Lebanese politicians began to obstruct the EU's reform projects in Lebanon. For example, when the EU sent a high-profile delegation to Beirut to discuss the participation of Lebanon in the ENP, no ministers or senior officials attended the meetings. Especially after the assassination of Hariri, on February 14 2005, and the UN-forced Syrian pull-out in April 2005, Lebanese politicians made it abundantly clear that they had no motivation to work with their EU counterparts. This indicated that the entire Barcelona Process was, at the time, in limbo.²⁵

As detailed in Chapter 4, despite the fact that the withdrawal of Syrian troops from Lebanon after nearly 30 years symbolized a new beginning for the country, the Lebanese political system remains highly fragile and caught in a stalemate. The impact of the ENP Lebanon Action Plan remains to be seen, but it seems safe to state that the intervention of external actors, including the EU, in transforming Lebanon into a stable, secure and democratic country have not produced any tangible positive results.

Palestinian Authority

Official relations between the EU and the Palestinian Authority developed from the Interim Association Agreement on Trade and Cooperation established with the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) in 1997. The ENP Action Plan for Palestine was adopted in 2005. The partnership between Palestine and the EU focuses on specific interest areas, such as "the development of political institutions based on the values of democracy, the rule of law and human rights", in addition to fiscal and structural reforms. The EU has officially encouraged the Palestinian Authority to institute reforms in the fields of fiscal redress, governance, and public finances, supported the advancement of rule of law, of the judicial system, and of transparency in its government systems, promoted greater cooperation with the EU Police Missions, and finally, offered technical assistance for public finance management and tax administration.²⁶

European Community assistance to the Palestinians began in 1971 with its contribution towards the budget of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East. However, the EU efforts picked up in earnest after the signing of the Oslo Accords in 1993, which marked the advent of the Palestinian Authority. Currently, the EU stands as "the most important financial donor to the Palestinians, providing humanitarian assistance, support to refugees and development assistance."²⁷ Not surprisingly, and as happens in its aid to Lebanon, the EU rests this financial and technical support on the condition of advancing administrative and judicial reform, as well as financial accountability.²⁸

²³ EU-Lebanon Action Plan, 19 January 2007.

²⁴ Goes, Eva & Leenders, Reinoud, 2006. "Promoting Democracy and Human Rights in Lebanon and Syria," in Daalder, Ivo, et al., *Crescent of Crisis*. Washington, DC & Paris: Brookings Institution Press & European Union Institute for Security Studies, p. 96-97.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 98.

²⁶ European Neighborhood Policy – The Palestinian Authority, 2008.

²⁷ Country Report, "Palestinian Authority of the West Bank and Gaza Strip". European Neighborhood Policy, Commission Working Paper, Brussels, 12 May 2004.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

Initially, the EU aid had been conditional almost exclusively on macroeconomic policy and fiscal reform. Since the EU Commission decision in 1999, the EU has promulgated benchmarks on a range of reform issues, such as reducing presidential powers, strengthening competences of local governments, judicial independence, press freedom, and financial transparency. Although the authority of the PA under Fatah was quite arbitrary in its rule, EU authorities did not make many waves for two reasons: namely, Hamas's surge in popularity and the shift of focus towards emergency service provisions as a response to Intifada and Israeli incursions. Thus, generous European support for infrastructure projects did not usually go hand-in-hand with more forceful conditionality.²⁹

It has proven difficult to achieve progress in the bilateral cooperation between the EU and the Palestinian Authority, within the scope of the ENP, due to the political situation afflicting the region. After the second Intifada began in 2000, the EU positioned itself to exert influence on the development and reform of the Palestinian political system. This was facilitated by generous financial support, which provided for emergency relief and the provision of basic services within the Occupied Territories. The EU used this support to leverage institutional changes improving the quality of Palestinian democracy. Yet, the EU was only able to influence second order reform issues, rather than changes to the fundamentals of the political system.³⁰

What were the pitfalls as regards EU efforts? First of all, the EU conditionality did not work properly. It is true that any EU policy approach to a sensitive issue like democratization is highly likely to have a rather humble impact; yet, the EU was so vague on its conditionality requirements that the Lebanese and Palestinian Authority officials did not even bother with them. Secondly, the heavy reliance on engagement with state authorities within the framework of the EMP/ENP dilutes the quality of contact and work with civil society. For example, the award mechanism for the MEDA funds, which NGOs can benefit from, gives leverage to government-appointed experts. In addition, many of the NGOs engaged by the EU, in Lebanon for instance, have been the same ones over time. In an environment of diverse and often hostile religious and sectarian discourses, the awarding of available funds is always a controversial matter.

In the context of fragile states, EU efforts have not been overly successful. The EU issues highly normative statements on the value of democratization and democracy. However, democracy promotion in fragile states requires attention to particular problems that may emerge in the process. For instance, as the EU had a difficult time coming to grips with Hamas' victory in the 2006 elections, the EU's much-hyped normative approach fell under scrutiny across the region. *Consistency* is thus of vital importance. Ultimately, it is crucial that an external democracy promoter such as the EU acquire some domestic allies before it can hope to generate a strong democratic momentum. If the targeted country's political elites instead remain skeptical of the democratization efforts, and if civil society is absent from the process, success is unlikely and such efforts will probably only further increase instability.³¹ Careful and fair treatment of the various civil society groups with fund awards is of high importance in diverse and fragile societies. This will help boost the *credibility* of these efforts. Finally, neither conditionality nor other incentives are likely to work in authoritarian states unless the EU cooperates with pro-democratic domestic actors and addresses divergent domestic needs and characteristics of each state under consideration. Thus, *flexibility* in approaching the nuances of each country is essential. The following chapter traces how specific issues linked to inherited state fragility factor into the current fragility evident in the cases of Lebanon and Palestine.

29 Youngs, Richard (2006) *Europe and the Middle East*. Boulder & London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, pp. 150-51.

30 *Ibid.*, p. 146.

31 Kubicek, p. 210.

Chapter Three – Lebanon and Palestine: Shared Fragile Security and History

To understand current state fragility within Lebanon and Palestine it is necessary to trace how history has evolved in relation to specific issues of inherited state fragility in both cases. Historians often argue that the state fragility of the Palestinian Authority (PA) and Lebanon stems from the chaotic history from which these states were born. A brief examination of the past of both states supports this assertion. Lebanon's history is rooted in its French colonial past, while the history of the Palestinian Authority is more recent, having only come into existence as a governing body with the 1993 Oslo Peace Accords. Although Lebanon and Palestine do not share the same history, the factors contributing towards state fragility in the region, including economics, the evolution of society, and the maneuvering of political elites, have all played important roles in the current internal dynamics of both nations³².

Lebanon

The state of Lebanon came into existence under French colonial rule with the creation of the Republic of Lebanon in 1926. France's claim to Lebanon was based on a combination of religious, economic, and strategic interests. On a religious level, France professed a moral duty to protect Christian communities in the Levant, especially the Catholic Maronites of Lebanon. On an economic level, France considered development in Lebanon and throughout the Levant as a means to counter growing British influence in the region. Finally, on a strategic level, French imperialists sought colonial interests that expanded their power not only in North Africa, but also well into the Middle East and beyond.

France ruled Lebanon directly through the presence of a large military contingent and a complex hierarchy of French civilian administration. French political elites recognized that the complex social diversity of Lebanon – encompassing a volatile mix of Christian Maronites, Shi'a and Sunni Muslims, as well as Druze – would be difficult to govern; yet they also utilized this diversity to maintain power by taking advantage of the disunity among sectarian factions³³. The introduction of a confessional system was motivated by the French desire to protect the Christian Maronites and to ensure that they would not be absorbed into a Syrian Muslim state. French protection of the Christians was supposed to develop Lebanon into a state that leaned towards European interests and adopted a Franco-Mediterranean cultural orientation. As such, it aimed to marginalize Muslims within Lebanon who demanded unity with Syria and sought support from the Arab world³⁴.

When Lebanon gained independence in 1941, the country found itself at a loss without the French hierarchy to maintain internal control and order. A new class of political elites, with little experience, was forced to discover ways to deal with the diversity of Lebanese society. It was with this in mind that the National Pact of 1943 was crafted. The Pact was based on the census of 1932, which determined that Christians outnumbered all Muslims by a six to five ratio, and political power was thus allocated according to the result of this census³⁵. Sectarian criteria were also used to determine cabinet composition, with more positions eventually being granted to Sunnis and Maronites than to other religious groups. The pact sought to address divisions among the Lebanese, but in the end, it would only serve to deepen them.

In the years after the Arab-Israeli War, the Palestinian-Israeli conflict landed on Lebanon's doorstep with the arrival of Palestinian commandos, under the umbrella of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), who had fled from Jordan following the events of Black September³⁶. Many Palestinian refugees, as well as militants, settled in camps in southern Lebanon, the legacy of which continues to influence Lebanese society. Militant organizations used these camps as both training grounds and bases from which to launch operations against Israel.

As the PLO began to intensify its raids into Israel, the Israeli Army increased its involvement within southern Lebanon. Israeli raids also triggered a significant migration of Shi'a from the targeted countryside to the suburbs of Beirut. In addition to the more immediate concerns as regards their own security, the Shi'a community lacked the agricultural and economic infrastructure to advance economically. Since the Lebanese government proved unable to provide the necessary infrastructure, many Shi'a began to move away from the countryside to seek out opportunities in Beirut³⁷. The migration of Shi'a to the capital heightened the already volatile mix of interests within the Lebanese political sphere. Ignored throughout the mandate years, the introduction of the confessional system saw the Shi'a fight for an equal voice alongside the Sunnis, Druze, and Maronites.

As Lebanese society became increasingly divided, individual sectarian groups began to arm themselves militarily through their own militia organizations. Today, these militias still

³² When discussing fragile statehood in relation to the Palestinian Authority (PA) it is impossible to ignore the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. However, instead of focusing upon the specific dynamics of the current conflict, we consider the factors (political elites, external power interests, and identity) that most tangibly contribute to state fragility within Palestine and ultimately lead to inertia in negotiations between Israel and the PA.

³³ Cleveland (2000) *A History of the Modern Middle East*, p. 220.

³⁴ Federal Research Division - Library of Congress (Edited by Thomas Collelo, December 1987).

³⁵ <http://www.country-studies.com/lebanon/the-national-pact.html>

³⁶ *Time Magazine*, 17 August 1981. Black September in August?

³⁷ Cobban (1987) *The Making of Modern Lebanon*, p. 94.

play a key role within the Lebanese security sphere. Christians formed the Phalange militia (linked to the current Lebanese Kataeb Party); the Amal movement emerged among the Shi'a and would, in the early 1980s, lead to the formation of Hezbollah; among Sunni, the al-Murabitun came into being, and finally, the Druze set up militias linked to the former National Movement.

Ultimately, the Palestinian presence within Lebanon acted as a trigger to the outbreak of civil war among all Lebanese factions. By the mid-1970s, coalitions formed among the Maronites, who were mostly against the Palestinians, were brought together by the Phalange militia in opposition to those who supported the Palestinian cause, including the Amal movement and the National Movement. Although Palestinian militants were the original cause of the war, it was sectarian interest and division that sustained the conflict well into the following decade.

The civil war was brought to a temporary end in 1976 when Syrian President al-Assad sent his army into Lebanon to protect the Christian militias. Al-Assad regarded his decision to invade as an opportunity to mediate the conflict and also to seize strategic power within Lebanon. On October 18 1976, Syria and the PLO reached a ceasefire agreement that provided for a significant Arab monitoring force, made up of mainly Syrian soldiers, to control the situation on the ground³⁸. This agreement sealed Syrian dominance within Lebanon and has had a lasting impact on the country well into the early 2000s. Nonetheless, the agreement did little to improve sectarian division and militia violence on the ground. The period from 1976 to 1982 was marked by extreme and senseless violence throughout Lebanese society.

During the civil war, the PLO resumed their operations against Israel. No longer able to ignore the presence of the PLO militants along its borders, Israel launched a full-scale military invasion of Lebanon in 1982. The operation, named "Peace for Galilee" and led by the late Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin, and former Prime Minister and at the time Minister of Defense Ariel Sharon, intended to meet three main objectives: the destruction of the PLO; the withdrawal of Syrian forces; and the forging of an alliance with the Maronite political factions to support the election of Bahsir Gemayel, which would ensure a Lebanon at peace with Israel³⁹.

By September 1982, international mediation efforts had formulated an agreement demanding the exit of Syrian forces, in addition to allowing PLO forces to flee to Tunisia under a monitoring force of French and American troops. Soon after the conflict, Bashir Gemayel was elected as Lebanese President and it appeared that the Israeli objectives had been met. But hopes were dashed by Gemayel's assassination, little more than a few weeks later, on September 14 1982.

The decades following the 1982 Israeli War continued to be marred by sectarian conflict and an international tug of war for Lebanon. By 1983, the Israeli Army decided to pull out from Lebanon under a protracted evacuation that lasted until 1985, leaving only a security zone south of the Litani River occupied in order to ensure the security of Israel's northern border. It would not be until 2005 that Israeli military forces eventually fully vacated this area⁴⁰.

Yet problems in southern Lebanon continued to fester after the 2005 Israeli withdrawal, as Hezbollah militants quickly filled the security void left by Israeli forces. Tensions along the border reached boiling point in July 2006 when Hezbollah militants kidnapped two Israeli soldiers, leading to a full-scale conflict between Hezbollah and Israel. The 34-day conflict caused the deaths of nearly 1,287 Lebanese⁴¹ and 43 Israeli civilians⁴², with both Israel and Hezbollah suffering significant tolls among their armies.

Tensions along the Lebanese-Israeli border have continued well into the present day, in light of suspicions that Hezbollah is rearming for any future conflict. Ultimately, the greatest consequence of the summer war can be understood in terms of power within Lebanon. Indeed, the summer 2006 war marked the advent of power for Hezbollah, both within Lebanon and throughout the region. Considering it is a non-state actor, and that Lebanese President Fouad Siniora was in power, Hezbollah acted with state authority.

This conflict reopened old wounds within Lebanese society, seeing as Hezbollah feels vindicated by the 2006 conflict and now seeks full recognition of its power. Moreover, state fragility is further deepened in a context where conflict has led to the intervention of external actors, each of whom have chosen sides in a dispute whose political and strategic consequences extend well beyond Lebanon. Chapter four will specifically explore how this

³⁸ Cleveland (2000) *A History of the Modern Middle East*, p. 375.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 377.

⁴⁰ Krayem, *The Lebanese Civil War and the Taif Agreement*, American University of Beirut Conflict Resolution in the Arab World. Selected Essays, Beirut: American University of Beirut, 1997, p. 427-29.

⁴¹ The Daily Star Online Timeline of the July War 2006., http://www.dailystar.com.lb/July_War06.asp.

⁴² BBC News Online, 8 March 2007. PM Says Israel pre-planned war.

taking of sides not only further destabilizes internal security within Lebanon, but moreover, dooms any potential chance at democratic change to failure.

Palestinian Authority

Although the Palestinian people trace their ancestral roots thousands of years back to the land that is today known as Palestine and Israel, the actual area known as the Palestinian Authority came into existence less than 20 years ago. The peace process with Israel began in Madrid in October 1991, where negotiations were to be based on UN Resolution 242⁴³ of November 1967. All parties involved in the conflict between Israel and the Palestinian Authority were invited to the Madrid Conference, including Syria and Jordan. The Madrid Peace Conference represents the starting point of reference for the Palestinian Authority's recent history, to then be followed by the Oslo Accord, Oslo II, the Camp David Summit, all of which were accompanied by a gradual return to insecurity.

A key turning point in the Oslo Accord negotiations was the tacit recognition from late Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin that the PLO would have to be acknowledged in any successful negotiation. This change of perspective on the part of Israel represented a revolution in Israeli thinking, which had for decades never recognized the legitimacy of the PLO led by the late Yasser Arafat. Moreover, the Israelis realized that as long as Yasser Arafat remained exiled in Tunisia, he would continue to represent the "outsiders" from the Palestinian Diaspora, slowing down the pace of negotiations⁴⁴. Despite all its difficulties and uncertainties, the Oslo Accords accomplished what no diplomatic effort had previously been able to achieve. On September 13 1993, the declaration was signed at the White House, marking the advent of the Palestinian Authority and a major step towards peace with Israel. The Oslo Accords saw the return of Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat to the West Bank, heralding a new era in the history of the region.

The Oslo Accords were essentially meant to facilitate future negotiations with Israel. They established the Palestinian Authority as the administrative authority of the Palestinian territories in the West Bank and Gaza, both in terms of civilian administration and security. Yasser Arafat faced stiff opposition to the Oslo Accords abroad, from Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, Jordan, and Syria, but more importantly, also at home, from various Palestinian Islamist militant organizations – including Islamic Jihad, Hamas, and the al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades – all of which launched significant terrorist attacks before, as well as after the implementation of the Oslo Accords. These organizations were opposed to both peace with Israel and to the sectarian character of how the Palestinian Authority was run. The level of control Arafat had over these organizations remains in dispute up to today.

In 1995, the Israeli-Palestinian Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, which came to be known as Oslo II⁴⁵, was signed in Washington DC by Palestinian President Yasser Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin. Oslo II was important given that it stipulated the elections for a Palestinian Council, the transfer of legislative authority to this same Council, the withdrawal of Israeli forces from Palestinian centers, and the division of Palestinian lands into three separately controlled areas.

Following the Oslo II Accords, the entire peace process was dealt a deadly blow by the assassination of then Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, on November 4 1995. This event also marked a significant shift within Israeli politics, with the entry into power of the more conservative Likud party, led by Benjamin Netanyahu, which sought to marginalize the Oslo Accords as much as possible⁴⁶.

After the election of Labour back into power in 1999, there were high hopes for renewed peace between Israel and Palestine. These hopes translated into the American Camp David Summit in September 2000. Although significant proposals concerning final-status agreements were put on the table, the Palestinian and Israeli delegations were unable to reach a compromise and the summit ended in failure. With the failure of the Camp David Summit, both the Israeli and Palestinian sides were polarized. Palestinians doubted the sincerity of Israeli intentions to provide them with statehood, while the Israelis were disillusioned with the results of the Oslo Accords and the expectations of the Palestinians.

The final straw was the much publicized 2000 visit of Likud Leader Ariel Sharon to al-Haram al-Sharif, the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, Israel. The provocative visit would eventually result in riots throughout the West Bank and Gaza⁴⁷, triggering the Al-Aqsa Intifada, or second Intifada, which marked a new and bloody chapter in the Palestinian Authority. The conflict lasted for years and resulted in the deaths of thousands of Israelis and Palestin-

43 CAMERA, 15 January 2007. Security Council Resolution 242 According to its Drafters.

44 Fawcett (2005) International Relations of the Middle East, p. 243.

45 Jewish Virtual Library, 28 September 1995. The Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

46 Fawcett (2005) International Relations of the Middle East, p. 254.

47 CNN, 28 September 2000. Israeli troops, Palestinians clash after Sharon visits Jerusalem sacred site.

ians. Chapter four will trace how the second intifada has had a lasting impact upon state fragility within Palestine, dividing Palestinian elites between moderate and militant camps with the evolution of political pluralism within Palestine and lasting peace with Israel.

Chapter Four – Choosing Sides and Fragile Security

A crucial aspect of the diplomatic inertia pervading the political systems of these fragile states is the friction that exists between the opposing forces of democratic reform, broad policy initiatives that fail to take into account socio-political realities on the ground, and existing authoritarian regimes. Instead of developing in unison, these forces currently work against one another. Key to any democratic change in the region will be the use of political elites to advance reform. Yet arguably, political elites in the region are as much an element of the problem as they are part of any eventual solution. As can be seen in both Lebanon and the Palestinian Authority, rhetorical support by the international community for democratic change may thus far have had a destabilizing, rather than stabilizing effect upon internal stability in both states.

The Palestinian Authority (PA)

During the past decade, Palestine has been internally and externally scarred by conflict. Political elites within the PA have played a significant role in the propagation of this violence. Returning to where we ended the previous chapter, the 2000 visit of former Prime Minister Ariel Sharon to the Temple Mount marks the beginning of the Al-Aqsa Intifada or second intifada. It is often argued that one of the drivers of the second intifada was the sense of despair expressed among Palestinians towards the prospects of peace with Israel, coupled with internal frustration over the inability of the Fatah dominated government to broker a lasting peace. An August 2000 poll, conducted just prior to the start of violence, found that 44.1% of Palestinians did not support any of the existing parties within the Palestinian Authority (PA). This figure represented a marked increase from the 27% of those polled who expressed a similar sentiment eight years earlier, in 1992⁴⁸.

Although the Oslo Accords provided the Palestinians with a central governing authority, it also allowed the ruling party, Fatah, to consolidate its power. By 2001, nearly half of all PA employees performed a security related function, thus protecting the Fatah hierarchy through a complex web of administrative authority. Through fragmentation and the duplication of security forces, Fatah guaranteed that no alternative leadership would emerge from within its ranks. Moreover, the late Palestinian President Yasser Arafat also attempted to quash any threat posed by the Islamic opposition within the PA, particularly from Hamas. To this aim, the government established the Ministry of Waqf and Religious Affairs, which appropriated religious issues and grassroots Islamic causes under the jurisdiction of government control. By doing so, the PA, like many other governments in the region, established an “official Islam” that was tightly monitored and managed by the state.

2006 Parliamentary Elections

A UK Department for International Development report argues that there is a strong correlation between the presence of a relatively democratic state system and a per capita income level above \$6,000 in a given country⁴⁹. On a macro-level, people who have nothing to lose are more likely to become involved in a conflict that may seem to present a potential gain or escape from the status-quo. This is particularly true in the Palestinian Authority, which has been in a consistent state of decay since its inception in 1993.

In the period just prior to the 2006 parliamentary elections, nearly four out of ten Palestinians were living below the poverty line, on less than \$2.10 dollars a day. Official unemployment had reached nearly 23.5%, although in reality it was most likely as high as 40.7%. Moreover, the climate within the PA was characterized by intense political dissatisfaction with the Fatah elite and general malaise towards the prospects of peace with Israel.

For the average Palestinian, the 2006 elections presented a choice between maintaining political norms with Fatah at the helm, or conversely, introducing a new player into the political process through the election of Hamas. When polling stations closed on 26 January 2006, Hamas had won 76 of the 132 parliamentary seats that were up for election. 43 seats went to Fatah and the remaining handful was distributed amongst a collection of leftist, nationalist, and independent parties⁵⁰.

Following the elections, the United States requested that the PA return \$50 million dollars that had been earmarked for development projects in Gaza, and it froze nearly all of the \$400 million dollars it annually provides to the PA. Moreover, the European Union also froze its funding, putting on hold parts of the nearly \$600 million that it had been providing directly to the PA up until then⁵¹. Finally, the Israeli government prevented the transfer of \$55 million in tax receipts to the PA, an amount that accounted for 1/3 of the PA budget and provided for the wages of nearly 160,000 Palestinian civil servants.

⁴⁸ Middle East Review of International Affairs Journal, Volume 6, No. 3, September 2002. Palestinian Economy Society and the Second Intifada.

⁴⁹ Vallings and Moreno-Torres, April 2005. Drivers of Fragility: What Makes States Fragile. UK, DFID.

⁵⁰ BBC News, 26 January 2007. Hamas sweeps to election victory.

⁵¹ BBC World News, 7 April 2006. EU suspends aid to Palestinians.

The Arab world adopted a wait-and-see approach to the election of Hamas. At a press conference held with US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, Egyptian Foreign Minister Ahmed Ali About Gehit argued that it was necessary to “give Hamas time...(and that)...Hamas will develop, will evolve”. Moreover, in response to the pulling of Hamas’ international funding, Iran gave the organization a \$50 million dollar grant to help fund the authority⁵².

Before funds were pulled, the PA had operated on a budget where nearly its entire annual \$1 billion of locally generated revenue was spent just on salaries. During this same time period, it ran a monthly deficit of more than \$50 million dollars. For everyday Palestinians, the pulling of PA funds was seen as a fly in the face of previous rhetoric for democratic change and, by some, as a rejection of the democratization process. Saed Siyam, a Hamas politician, stated that the “Americans and the Europeans have an interest in this also. They will be embarrassed in this part of the world if they punish a people simply for expressing their democratic wishes”⁵³.

After Hamas’ rise to power, foreign aid provided by western nations, and the rhetorical push for democratic change have both been frozen. Indeed, this freeze has had different consequences for the West and the Middle East. For the United States and the European Union, the paralysis of funds and the lack of support for the 2006 Palestinian elections were mere policy matters, dictated not by realities on the ground, but by choices influenced by external interests. Yet for Palestine itself, these policy decisions have had devastating short-term consequences on the Gaza Strip and throughout Palestine, as a political chasm between Fatah and Hamas grew into a full-scale civil conflict. The impact of an isolated Gaza Strip has also presented the region with tough questions concerning humanitarian security and, more importantly, may have arguably negative effects upon perceived consequences of democratic reform throughout the region.

As previously noted, although Hamas was officially labeled a terrorist organization by the United States and the European Union, this had little bearing on the vote of average Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza. It can be argued that the international community’s response to the 2006 election (intended to isolate Hamas both politically and financially) has largely failed. Since these elections, Palestinian society has fractured into separate camps – those aligned with either Fatah or Hamas, and those who favor neither side. Most Palestinians fall into the latter category, finding themselves caught in the crossfire of a civil conflict directed primarily by the interests of political elites, rather than those of the Palestinian populace.

During the summer of 2007, civil conflict scores were hard hit and now many others have suffered as the Gaza strip embargo continues well into 2008. A recent report by the World Bank found that nearly 35% of Gaza Strip residents live in deep poverty⁵⁴. Gaza’s industrial sector, which had generated more than 50% of the region’s employment, has now come to a standstill with the suspension of nearly 96% of its operations after Israel’s embargo on the Strip. This same report found close to 33% unemployment in the region. Yet nearly over a year after the conflict first erupted, Hamas’s public support has not suffered from Gaza’s isolation; instead, it seems that Hamas has been able to maintain its resolve in the face of significant pressure exerted from Israel and the international community. Why? The words of a young Palestinian voter provide insight into the underlying appeal of Hamas, both during the 2006 election and into the present day: “Hamas was created by the people and belongs to the people (...) it has clean hands, puts the poor before the rich and will resist the occupier.”⁵⁵

The West’s inability to force Hamas towards greater moderation, despite nearly a year of seclusion, has been largely due to the sustained inertia fuelled by forces that are found in the fragile state model. The response to the election of Hamas has been to try and push Hamas into abandoning its support for terrorism and to recognize Israel’s existence. The consequence of not having succumbed to these pressures has been a justifiable rejection by western governments to negotiate with Hamas. Yet it could equally be argued that the response of the West to Hamas has not been nuanced enough to promote a sense of moderation neither within its ranks, nor among the Palestinian people themselves.

Ultimately, any solution to the political inertia within the PA must be achieved in a manner that implements the two forces of the fragile state model in a mutually advantageous manner. From a policy standpoint, the objective should be reconciliation coupled with a flexible advancement of democratic change within the PA.

Hamas and the International Community

⁵² BBC World News, 16 April 2006. Iran pledges \$50m Palestinian aid.

⁵³ PBS News Hour, 30 January 2006. Hamas Victory in Palestinian Election Surprises World.

⁵⁴ Deep poverty, as defined by the World Bank, is a budget of \$500 dollars a month for a family of six or more.

⁵⁵ Erlanger, 26 January 2006. Victory Ends 40 Years of Political Domination by Arafat’s Party. The New York Times.

Any break in the current stalemate will require committed efforts on the part of political elites from both sides of the fold within the PA. This recommendation was recently highlighted during former American President Jimmy Carter's controversial visit with Hamas leadership in Syria to promote the peace process. Following his visit, President Carter published an opinion piece in the *New York Times* that argued against the isolation of Hamas and in favor of dialogue, signaling Hamas' willingness to negotiate such crucial issues as the fate of kidnapped Israeli soldiers, the disbanding of its militia, control over its borders, and even a mutual ceasefire agreement.

In closing, post-Oslo and Oslo II history, in addition to the extreme violence that marked the second intifada and the present day conflict between Hamas and Fatah, has effectively constrained the advance of the PA, and subsequently, of Palestinian society. As noted in the introduction, democratic development is the result of a "learning process", a gradual and "largely unconscious and contradictory historical process involving conflict, negotiations and compromises between diverse groups"⁵⁶. The attainment of tangible peace within the PA will have to be rooted in this largely unconscious process – one that can only mature with the investment of the necessary time and effort by all parties involved.

Lebanon

Although Palestine and Lebanon's internal political dynamics differ greatly, they ultimately relate to the same factors contributing towards fragile state insecurity throughout the Middle East, which include ill-planned democratization efforts and the corruption of foreign aid. Both factors just mentioned have played a significant role in shaping the contemporary political situation in Lebanon.

Lebanon serves as a unique example as regards democratization and fragile state security in the region. Arguably, the current dynamics of fragile state security in Lebanon are not being dictated by Lebanese interests, but rather by the broader external policy aims of foreign parties such as Syria, Iran, Israel, and the United States. This situation is particularly problematic for the prospects of long-term and lasting stability within Lebanon. Although sectarian politics have been an influential reality since Lebanon became a fully independent state in 1941, they have taken on a new shape in an environment defined by the post 9/11 context and by three main evolutions, namely the 2005 assassination of former Lebanese President Rafik Hariri, the 2005 withdrawal of Syrian military forces, and Hezbollah's rise to power in Lebanon.

The assassination of Rafik Hariri lies at the heart of the political stalemate that currently plagues Lebanon. Syria, as was previously examined, has long been a key player in Lebanese politics. In 2005, around the time of Hariri's assassination, the extension of current President and pro-Syrian General Emile Jamil Lahoud's term triggered significant domestic turmoil. Hariri was opposed to this extension but Syria considered Lahoud key to their control over Lebanon. Druze leader Walid Jumblatt recounted a visit that Hariri had made to Damascus to meet with Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad in 2005. During this visit, Hariri was reportedly told by Al-Assad that "Lahoud is me. (...) If you and Chirac want me out of Lebanon, I will break Lebanon"⁵⁷. Lahoud eventually stayed in office and Hariri was assassinated soon after, on 14 February 2005.

Hariri's assassination resulted in a United Nations-backed investigation that focused the world's attention on the role of Syria in Lebanon, overturning Lebanese society in a manner not seen since the civil war. For many Lebanese, Mr. Hariri represented a stable force in their national politics, someone "seen by many as the country's political weather vane – consistently changing allegiances to emerge on the winning side of the issues *du jour*, throughout the turmoil of the 1975-90 civil war and its troubled aftermath"⁵⁸. His assassination forced Lebanese society to look within itself and to question a political landscape clearly dominated by Syria. In March 2005, the Cedar Revolution brought nearly one million people onto the streets of Beirut with the aim of forcing the withdrawal of Syrian troops from Lebanon. Protestors also called for the formation of an international tribunal to investigate Hariri's death. These protests represented one of the few times since the conception of Lebanon in 1946 that the country was truly united. One month later, in April 2005, Syria fully withdrew its forces from Lebanon, marking the first time in nearly 30 years that Lebanon was free of a large direct foreign presence on its soil.

The period following the withdrawal of Syrian troops was touted as a key turning point in Lebanese history. Yet the succeeding years have ended up bringing Lebanon's deeper political ills to the surface, as the country has become locked in a potentially violent standoff

⁵⁶ Vallings and Moreno-Torres, April 2005. Drivers of Fragility: What Makes States Fragile. UK, DFID.
⁵⁷ International Herald Tribune, 21 March 2005. A threat in Damascus, later, a bomb in Beirut.
⁵⁸ BBC World News, 4 September 2000. Hariri's comeback in Lebanon.

among its political elites. Historically, the composition of the nation's top three political jobs had sought the equal representation of Lebanon's major religious groups, which resulted in a Christian President, a Shi'a Muslim speaker, and a Sunni Muslim Prime Minister. The current political stalemate between the March 14th movement, an alliance made up of political groups opposed to Syrian influence, and Hezbollah affiliated pro-Syrian and Iranian groups, stems from their disagreement over the make-up of a national unity government and new electoral laws. Both sides recently managed to reach a compromise that saw the appointment of Army Chief General Michel Suleiman as President, yet great divisions still remain.

External interests tearing at the fabric of Lebanese society have had a palpable effect upon contemporary questions of socio-political reconciliation and fragile state security within Lebanon. The West has largely supported the March 14th movement, led by Fouad Siniora and his Current for the Future party movement, while Iran and Syria have supported Hezbollah and its allies, led by Hassan Nasrallah. A recent poll of Lebanese public opinion, conducted by the Pew Research Center, found that ideological persuasion was highly affected by perceptions of external power. For instance, the poll found that 82% of Lebanese Christians see the United States in a positive light, while only 7% of Lebanese Shi'a express the same opinion. Lebanese Sunni occupy a middle ground, with nearly 52% supporting the United States. Moreover, the same poll revealed that opinions of Iran were also highly fractured along sectarian lines, with only 14% of Lebanese Christians and Lebanese Sunni holding a favorable opinion of Iran, versus an overwhelming 86% of Lebanese Shi'a⁵⁹. Such a stark division of opinions within Lebanese society may reflect a constant friction among the Lebanese over visions of the country's identity and future, which may be further bolstered by external powers. These deep divisions create a conflict of interests that has led to significant turmoil within Lebanon's already fragile political system and has prevented political elites from focusing on issues of shared domestic interest. Political elites in Lebanon are not only dealing with questions of domestic policy, which are complex for any country, but also grappling with foreign policy interests that extend far beyond Lebanon's own borders. The combined effect of these competing interests on an already weak confessional political system breeds inertia, as can be seen in the political stalemate that has characterized the past year.

Concerning the fragile state model, it can be argued that current political change in Lebanon is failing to bring new options to the political table and is instead likely to only further entrench existing political inertia. What is more, the two-track division between various parties, already fractured along sectarian lines, is being reinforced by the competing power plays for control in Lebanon. This two-track approach has assured continued diplomatic malaise, hindering the democratization process that the West so hopes to institutionalize within Lebanon.

A primary target of western foreign policy within Lebanon is Hezbollah, labeled a terrorist group by the United States and much of the West. Within Lebanese society, Hezbollah is considered many different things depending on the perspective assumed, simultaneously being seen as a legitimate organization of resistance to Israel, a voice for the under-represented Lebanese Shi'a population, a provider for the poor, as well as an anarchist organization seeking to establish a state within a state in Lebanon.

For western policy makers, the Hezbollah dichotomy creates extremely difficult questions over how to balance questions of security with long-term democracy-building interests. Similarly to the approach adopted towards Hamas in the Palestinian Authority, western foreign policy makers in Lebanon are faced with the challenge of crafting policy that acknowledges the presence of Hezbollah in Lebanese political affairs. In order for the country's political system to advance from its present state of inertia, tangible changes must be made to the electoral list system, which does not reflect Lebanon's demographic reality. These electoral lists are based on the 1932 census, being both extremely complicated and failing to accurately represent Lebanese society. The absence of fair representation within a system based on sectarian quotas only further contributes to the inherent tension on which the entire political process is based.

It can be argued that Hezbollah succeeds in using the west's rejection of its political platform to its advantage. Diplomatic stalemate in Lebanon breeds government malaise at all levels, not simply on the political level, but also on the administrative level as regards social, educational, health, and infrastructure programs. Indeed, since 1988 Hezbollah has taken advantage of the political malaise pervading the Lebanese central government to

Hezbollah's Grip on Lebanon

build up a network of its own social, health, and infrastructure programs that has grown to surpass 100,000 projects. Following the 2006 summer war, for example, Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah pledged to rebuild any homes damaged or destroyed in the conflict and continues to spend several hundred thousand dollars a day to maintain varied projects throughout the country⁶⁰.

The improvement of social welfare programs may stymie the popularity of groups such as Hezbollah, who find their strength in the inability of host governments to meet the needs of their people. From a policy-making standpoint, grass-roots and community group projects addressing these needs should be encouraged and brought into the fold of Lebanese society. Within a framework of increased government involvement in civic affairs, the ability of Lebanese society to contribute towards political reform is likely to become more promising.

Furthermore, solutions to remedy fragile state security in Lebanon may also be found in areas not previously explored by western policymakers. As was illustrated, policy efforts must include cross-referenced diplomatic efforts coupled with foreign aid targeting multiple levels of Lebanese society. It should also be stressed that similarly to Palestine, political change within Lebanon will ultimately only emerge slowly, based on socio-political dynamics operating on the ground and not the policy choices of external powers.

Although sectarian divides are often deemed absolute in Lebanese politics, in the end, these divisions between groups may not be as black and white as is often portrayed. It should be remembered that there is in fact room for compromise, as was shown in a 2006 Pew Research Center poll⁶¹ that found that Muslims in Lebanon were less likely to identify with their religion over their country. More specifically, nearly 30% of respondents stated they thought of themselves first and foremost as Muslim, while 30% stated they identified themselves primarily as Lebanese. In addition, Lebanon's Muslim community perceives diversity within Lebanese society in a more positive light than is often believed, with nearly 86% of those Muslim respondents polled expressing a favorable opinion of Christians. 82% of those Christians polled also had a positive view of Muslims, demonstrating that although divides may be accentuated, there still exists a tangible historical foundation of shared Lebanese identity. The following chapter concludes the study with an examination of the role played by identity in fragile states. The co-existing influences of religion, ethnicity, and class within Palestine and Lebanon will also be explored, elaborating on how these issues link to the success or failure of current democratization efforts.

⁶⁰ Cammett, August 2006. Habitat for Hezbollah.

⁶¹ Pew Research Center, July 2006. Lebanon's Muslims: Relatively Secular and Pro-Christian.

Chapter Five – Identity Politics and Fragile State Security

Although often ignored in favor of other aspects of fragile state security, identity plays a crucial role in the success or failure of any given state. As previously noted, state lines in the Middle East were fabricated by colonial powers seeking a quick fix to the partition of the region that would also advance the incoming regimes' ability to govern. Little concern was granted to questions of ethnicity, class, religion, or society. As in the past, peoples in the Middle East are still drawn together by bonds rooted in tribal, ethnic, and religious identities that transcend state boundaries. This is not to say that there is no sense of loyalty to states, yet trans-national allegiances cannot be ignored and are having an increasingly important impact on the internal stability of states throughout the region.

The issue of political reform in the Middle East must therefore be approached recognizing the role of identity in the advancement or destabilizing of fragile state security. This is especially true when considering how the democratization process within fragile states has been advanced or hindered by identity politics.

Identity politics have played an important role within Palestinian society and in its political evolution. The current split between the West Bank-based Fatah and Gaza-based Hamas stems from a long-running historical divide between secular and non-secular identity within the Palestinian resistance movement. We will briefly examine the manifestations of these identities and trace their linkages to the oppositions currently in evidence within the PA.

After the 1982 expulsion of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) from Lebanon following the Israel-Lebanon War, Palestinian resistance identity became framed within the contrast between the secular PLO members of the old guard, exiled in Algeria and Tunisia, and new "inside" guard members, based in the West Bank and Gaza⁶². Old and new guard identities began to evolve most tangibly during the first intifada, from 1987 to 1993. The intifada was a manifestation of resistance, spearheaded not by the Tunisian-based PLO leadership, but instead led by popular committees based in the West Bank and Gaza under an umbrella organization, the United National Leadership of the Uprising (UNLU).⁶³ It marked a shift in the gravity center of Palestinian politics, from the PLO leadership in Tunis towards the occupied territories. It also resulted in Palestinian demands that the PLO adopt a clear political program to guide resistance efforts towards independence.

During this same time period, Islamic identity as defined by the new guard resistance became increasingly visible in Palestinian affairs, with the formation of multiple Islamist militant groups, including the Islamic Jihad and Hamas. Islamic organizations drew support away from the secular-nationalist PLO since they offered the religio-nationalist option that resonated with pro-Islamist orientations. These groups used the already existing network of mosques and charitable networks established by the Muslim Brotherhood to conceive, convey, and inculcate this new religio-nationalist outlook⁶⁴.

The intifada generation therefore reflected the identity-split within Palestine, the effects of which have continued well into the present day. Lines were drawn between a secular and non-secular identity. These divisions were further engrained when the PLO leadership, dominated by old-guard Fatah members, returned from exile with the creation of the Palestinian Authority and the 1991 Oslo Accords. Although the Accords established an administrative authority to oversee internal Palestinian affairs, these structures did not guarantee the rule of law, freedom of speech, political and intellectual expression, or the fundamental structures allowing for democratic rule. This has given Fatah a free-hand to rule the PA as it sees fit and to consolidate its own power within the territory.

It can be inferred that internal Palestinian affairs have been guided by a desire to entrench Fatah identity and maintain its authority, rather than by what is best for the people of Palestine. Following the Oslo Accords, Fatah came to dominate life by seeping into the very fabric of Palestinian society through business, security, and religious sectors. A complex hierarchy of administrative control has allowed it to maintain a tight grip on the economic advancement of individuals within the territories, with preference given to Fatah loyalists. Moreover, as concerns Islamist opposition, Fatah followed the example of other regimes in the region by establishing an "official Islam", whereby the government allows its citizens to advance their own religious beliefs, but within a strictly monitored framework.

Islamist identity in the PA is characterized by a resistance to Israel, but also by internal opposition to the autocratic practices of the Fatah leadership in the Palestinian territories. Resistance tied to Islamic symbolism channels Palestinian Islamic politico-identity into

Identity Politics in the Palestinian Authority

62 These terms were termed by Khalil Shikaki. See Shikaki, January/February 2002, *Palestinians Divided*.
63 The UNLU consisted of four separate PLO-linked political parties, including the PFLP, the DFLP, and the PPP.
64 Lybarger (2007) *Identity and Religion in Palestine*.

groups such as Hamas and the Islamic Jihad. Using an Islamic politico-identity that speaks to everyday Palestinians, combined with the generalized disenchantment with the political process, Hamas was able to advance Islamist identity to the point where it was considered a viable political alternative to Fatah in the 2006 elections. The election of Hamas to power and the associated civil conflict can be traced back to tensions created by the process of political liberalization. As duly noted, the democratization process often represents a shock to fragile state systems lacking the institutions to keep check on the parties elected into power and to provide viable socio-political alternatives to deeply-entrenched political regimes. Realizing this, and being the only viable alternative to the political status-quo, Hamas took advantage of the shock to the system presented by the democratization process to achieve power.

This shock was further enhanced by the international community's response to Hamas' rise to power following the 2006 election. By pulling the PA's funding, internal perceptions of identity towards those within Palestine who represented resistance versus submission were further engrained, seeing as Palestinian voters inferred that their votes had not been counted. Although the West sought to weaken Hamas and bolster Fatah, its efforts merely ended up strengthening Hamas, which succeeded in standing firm in Gaza in the face of external international and Israeli pressures.

The current international standoff between Hamas in Gaza and Fatah in the West Bank can be linked to wider tensions within the democratization process, found expressed in the West's unease with Islamist political leanings. As previously mentioned, Islamist political identity represents not only a challenge to the status-quo power dynamics in the region, but could also be deemed a revolution of sorts. Islamist political tendencies will continue to manifest themselves as both a resistance to the entrenched political regimes in the region and as a home-grown alternative to western imposed democracy efforts. It is therefore important that Islamist identities are understood in the context of local realities – with Hamas in Palestine being a case in point – and with reference to how they relate to the broader wave of Islamist identity emerging in the Middle East.

The election of Hamas to power may either be seen as a threat or as a significant opportunity for the West to advance its understanding of Islamic political identity and perceptions of resistance identity, both within the Palestinian Authority and throughout the region at large. Although Hamas has largely failed in its aim to transform the Palestinian political landscape, and will ultimately have to cede power and pursue internal reconciliation with Fatah in order to ensure its own survival, western efforts to marginalize Hamas will most probably prove insufficient to truly compromise its influence on Palestinian internal affairs.

Through the means of a give and take process, there is the potential to pull Islamic political identity out of the foray of militant extremism and violence towards an arena of tangible political advancement. This can only happen by exploring the areas previously discussed as regards the democratization process, especially those concerning the need for democratic institutions in developing a system of political checks and balances. As of present, no such system exists within the Palestinian Authority that could force Fatah or Hamas to cede control, or to come together in reaching a compromise. The result is an exercise of power that seeks to guarantee survival, and not to advance the interests of the people.

Identity Politics in Lebanon

Internal discord within Lebanese society was exploited by the French to maintain colonial power, using the divisions among Maronite Christians, Shi'a, Sunni, and Druze to their advantage. By pitting these groups against one another, the French colonial authorities were able to prevent the emergence of any tangible resistance to the colonial status-quo. Little changed with Lebanon's independence and the long-pitted alliances that the French had once used to dictate control became engrained in the political process through the confessional system of politics established with the National Pact of 1943. The division of power instituted by this Pact was founded on politics of identity, introducing quotas for the various hierarchical levels, from parliament members to senior leadership roles.

As earlier examined, the competing identities entrenched within Lebanon's political system would eventually lead to civil war throughout the decades that succeeded the establishment of the National Pact. Even once the full-blown civil conflict had ended, sectarianism percolated deeper into Lebanese society during the late 1990s due to four main drivers. Firstly, the civil conflict permanently fractured once diverse communities, as a result of forced displacements and segregation. Secondly, the economic malaise pervading the

country reinforced sectarianism, as income inequality and immense corruption⁶⁵, coupled with national debt reaching nearly \$40 billion due to damaged infrastructure, led the country into a state of economic paralysis. Thirdly, the revival throughout the country of religious institutions during the war increased their ability to exert influence during the post-conflict period. The leaders of these institutions included Maronite Patriarch Mar Nasrallah Sfeir, The Sunni Grand Mufti Muhammad Rashid Qabbani, and finally, the head of the Supreme Islamic Shi'a Council Shaikh Abd al-Amr Qabalan. Fourth and lastly, regional developments linked to Shi'a-Sunni divisions and the 2003 war in Iraq naturally also affected internal sectarian division within Lebanon⁶⁶.

It is within this context that tensions over sectarian identity have intensified within Lebanon since the end of civil conflict in 1990. As noted, these tensions came to a fore in recent years aided by three events, namely the 2005 assassination of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri, the 2005 withdrawal of Syrian troops, and the 2006 summer war between Hezbollah and Israel. These events dragged the world's attention back towards Lebanon in a manner not seen since the early 1980s, and within a post 9/11 foreign policy context, brought western-led democratization efforts straight to the Lebanese doorstep. In recent years, the West has sought to adopt a more hands-on approach in Lebanon by attempting to broker stable power relations between the March 14th Movement, led by current Sunni Lebanese Prime Minister Fouad Siniora of the Current for the Future party, and Christian Maronite pro-Syrian President Emile Jamil Lahoud. The present impasse is directly related to questions of identity politics, which in turn have fuelled unending debate about who will be the next president of Lebanon.

One can argue that current efforts at mediation have only served to entrench questions of identity, and furthermore, that these questions have translated into a power play between external actors such as the United States, Iran, Syria, France, and Israel. This is particularly true as regards Hezbollah who, similarly to Hamas, presents an alternative to the political malaise within the Lebanese political system and appeals to Shi'a, both in Lebanon and throughout the Middle East, by referring to Islamic symbolism, and more importantly, to resistance identity in its internal power-broking efforts, as well as in its relations with external players.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ A 1991 UN study estimates that corruption revenues exceed nearly \$1.5 billion a year within Lebanon.
⁶⁶ Norton (2007) Hezbollah, pp. 120-123.
⁶⁷ EM FALTA

Conclusion

This study has argued that fragility in Middle Eastern state systems is exacerbated by the external shock associated with the democratization process. Chapter one outlined different definitions of a fragile state and argued that the main driver contributing towards state fragility is the external shock of democratization. As was illustrated, current democratization efforts run counter to the foreign policy agendas of western governments – a situation that fuels an inherent tension between opposing processes and interests, further deepening state fragility.

Chapter two focused on the EU's crucial role in the region, taking stock of the various policies it is currently pursuing in the Middle East and recommending that unless the EU realizes that democracy is part and parcel of development, its policies will not achieve their potential maximum impact.

Chapter three presented a historical overview of the two countries discussed in this paper: Lebanon and Palestine. The fragmented nature of society in both countries was highlighted, as well as the significant role played by external actors in the creation of these states.

The fourth chapter emphasized the fact that political elites within fragile states have done little to improve the stability of their states, and are in fact often worsening it. Chapter five argued that transnational identity, as portrayed through ethnicity, sect or religion, remains a strong influence in the Middle East. The historically tribal nature of society in the region has not faded away and fragile states have failed to acquire the absolute loyalty of their citizens.

Policy Recommendations

- Fragile state security in the Middle East relates to the two fields in which western perspectives on contemporary security are rooted, namely development and security; yet a full understanding of the concept must also take into account how internal conflict and external interests have affected the region.
- Although colonial rule is not unique to the Middle East, its colonial past, combined with the evolution of politics, economics, and society in the region, as well as the role played by external actors, molds a very specific set of circumstances vis-à-vis state security that translates into an expression of fragile state security very specific to the region.
- In the Middle East, external shocks to the system represent the primary driver of state fragility. External shock can be inflicted in the form of war, major economic crises, or major diplomatic developments. Most recently in the Middle East, external shock has resulted from the strong push for democratic transition.
- The external shock of democracy promotion is particularly problematic in that it pushes for change in regions already fraught by state fragility, and within state systems that are poorly structured to handle successful shifts towards more liberal political systems. Moreover, the nature of the shift is largely rhetorical, pushing for political change while providing little support to do so.
- If the West is truly committed to the advancement of democracy in the region, it must recognize two key realities relating to fragile state security. It should first consider whether it is willing to accept all potential outcomes of these efforts, especially the Islamic character that they may assume; and secondly, the West must assess whether the fragile states in the Middle East have a sufficiently developed institutional structure, capable of successfully managing a transition towards democracy at this time.
- Support for democratic reform in the region should not be opposed to the political systems of fragile states, but should rather work within existing state frameworks, backed by foreign economic aid, which can be used as leverage for reform. This process would allow established regimes to maintain power, while also helping to advance western foreign policy interests.
- The EU should back up its normative statements on democracy with a stronger willingness to offer both financial aid and expertise towards efforts establishing institutions that help sustain democratization and eventual democracy. It should back its rhetoric with practical action in the field of democracy promotion in the region, stressing *consistency* in its policy approach to a greater degree. The EU should develop its policies keeping in mind that as an external democracy promoter it must preserve *credibility* by supporting and consulting domestic allies when generating momentum for democratization.
- Democracy promotion policies developed by the EU should identify and adapt to the diverse characters and needs of pro-democracy actors in the target country – they must be *flexible* without losing consistency. If these policies do not suit the intended context, they risk further weakening the already fragile status of the pro-democracy forces in these countries.
- Concerning the two state models used to explore the state fragility of the Palestinian Authority and Lebanon, it is important that policy makers keep in mind that the Palestinian Authority was born of the Oslo Accords, yet that these accords did not establish any provisions for free speech and expression, strong civil and human rights organizations, strict public accountability, or any other semblance of a structure upon which a true democracy could be built. Moreover, current democracy promotion efforts within Lebanon do not promise to bring any new options to the political table. The taking of sides by external players has assured continued diplomatic malaise and ultimately hinders the democratization process that the West seeks to institute within Lebanon and other countries in the Middle East.

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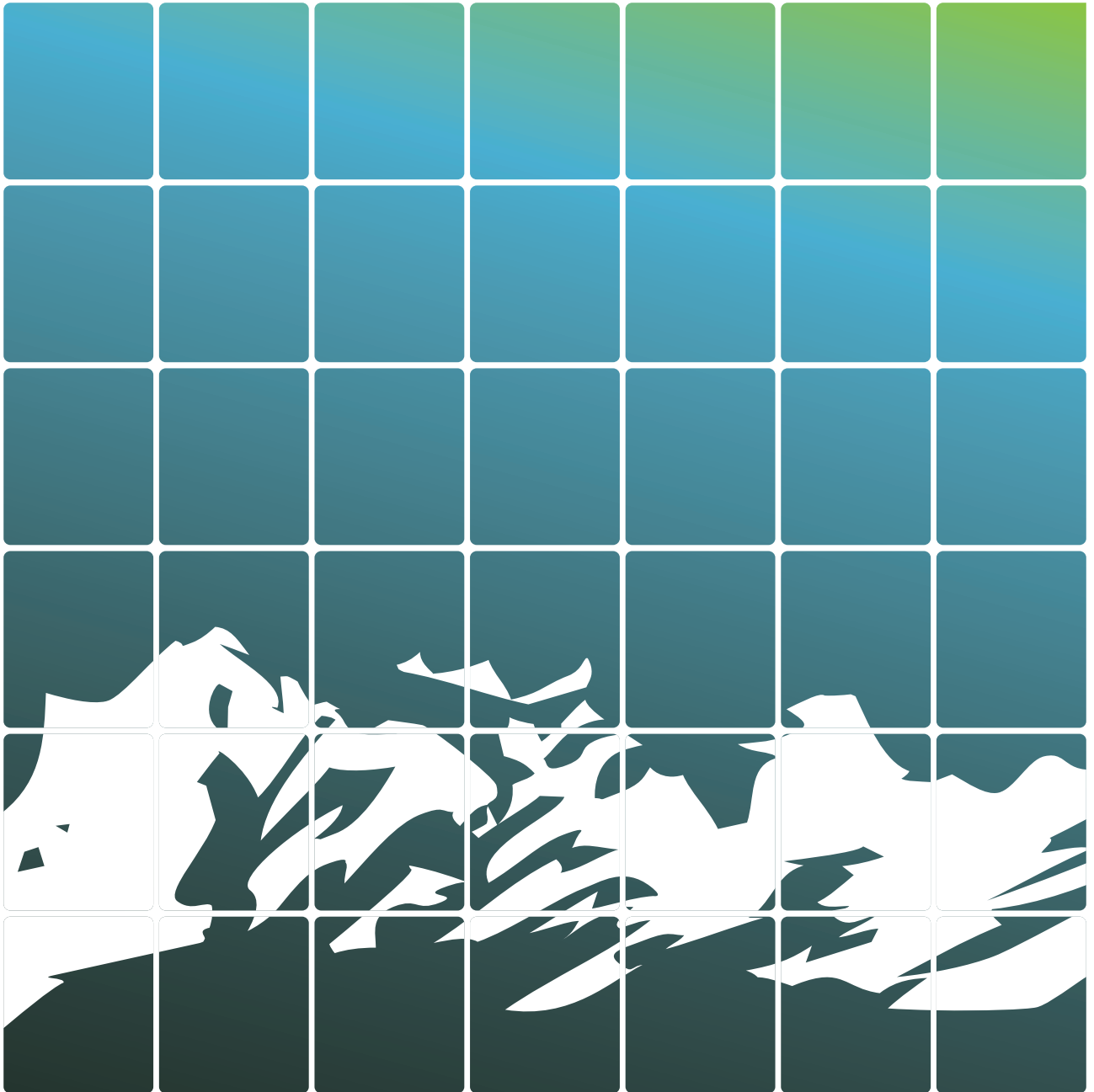
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