



**The Interplay between Policy and Politics in Combatting Terrorism
The Case of Lebanon (2011-2015)**

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Abstract

This article is an exploratory study on the interplay between politics and policy in combatting terrorism in Lebanon. It aims at investigating the contributing factors to the absence of counterterrorism policies by analyzing the relation between the peculiar Lebanese politics and policy formulation in the country. Based on the three most widely used definitions of terrorism, this article starts by offering an operational definition of terrorism followed by a brief history of terrorism within Lebanon through the lens of what we conceive to be the two main factors or drivers behind terrorism in the country. This contextual description provides the background to enter into the discussion of the field of counterterrorism and what policies, if any, Lebanon is undertaking to counter these ever persisting threats arising both from within its borders and just beyond. After briefly identifying the political, social and economic factors that perpetuates terrorism in Lebanon, this research will answer the following two key questions: *what role does the Lebanese government and civil society play in combatting terrorist acts?* And *what are the main obstacles (political and administrative) that hinder developing comprehensive counterterrorism policies in the country?* This is the first academic study that has investigated the interplay between politics and policy as it relates to domestic and transnational terrorism from a governance perspective. The analysis undertaken in this article lays the foundation for much needed future studies on the country's and the region counterterrorism policies by identifying some of participants, mapping out the process and providing policy recommendations for a more effective and efficient policies.

Keywords: Counterterrorism policies, Lebanese politics, terrorism, Middle East

"You have to be lucky all the time. We only have to be lucky once."-IRA (1984)

Introduction

Lebanon, with its peculiar history and fractious political environment, was susceptible to acts of terrorism prior to the outbreak of the 2011 Syrian Crisis and even before the Arab Spring. Depending on who is analyzing its history, Lebanon's history has included either many or few instances of domestic terror. In addition, while most terror activity is domestic, the new threat facing the country, more recently, is primarily transnational in nature- mainly by groups such as ISIS (referred to also as ISIL or IS -the Islamic State) and *Jubhat al-Nusra* that have been crossing the border from Syria to commit acts of terror within the Lebanese territories.

Generally speaking, defining terrorism in the literature is controversial. Sandler's definition (2014) covers most of the agreed upon aspects of what constitutes terrorism: "Terrorism is the premeditated use or threat to use violence by individuals or subnational groups to obtain a

political or social objective through the intimidation of a large audience beyond that of the immediate noncombatant victims.” (p. 1). Terrorism, therefore, is a tool used by non-state actors to try to force societal change outside the normal channels of the political system. This definition covers any subnational group committing any act of violence against any target as long as it is politically motivated. The problem with applying this definition to Lebanon is that only recently—mainly ISIS—have groups operating inside Lebanon become truly subnational. It would be fallacious to call historical groups that have carried out terror attacks in Lebanon exclusively subnational.

For instance, The *Kataeb* political party controlled the presidency when their gunmen carried out the massacres at *Sabra* and *Shatila* Palestinian refugee camps in Beirut in 1982. Also, though *Hezbollah* has been implicated in numerous terror attacks, including the 2005 assassination of former prime minister Rafic Hariri, it is still a legitimate political movement with 14 seats in the Lebanese parliament during the last elections in 2014 and is part of ‘March 8’ which represents one of the two main political coalitions in the country (Masters and Laub, 2014)—the other one being March 14.

Regarding counterterrorism, much of the literature about counterterrorism strategies, programs and policies is based on how western countries, specifically the United States, fight terrorism. Because of these complications and the gap in the literature on counterterrorism in the region and in Lebanon, and given the complexity of Lebanon’s political system as well as the overlapping states and non-states functions of some actors, this article uses a contextual view of terrorism and attempts to develop its own working definition of terrorism. This is done by giving a brief historical overview of the complications inherent in including domestic terrorism in that definition and focuses mainly on current transitional terror threats facing Lebanon today, specifically *ISIS* and *Jubhat al-Nusra*.

The article is an exploratory study on the interplay between politics and policy in combatting terrorism in Lebanon. It aims at investigating the contributing factors to the absence, though not total, of counterterrorism policies by analyzing the relation between the peculiarity of the Lebanese politics and the policy formulation in the country. After briefly identifying the political, social and economic factors that perpetuates terrorism in Lebanon, this research will answer the following two key questions: *what role does the Lebanese government and civil society play in combatting terrorist acts?* And *what are the obstacles (political and administrative) that hinder developing comprehensive counterterrorism policies in the country?*

The background information concerning the definitions on terrorism are derived firstly from the British intelligence agency MI5; although this one purports that, it is not meant to be a globally recognized and accepted definition. The second was conceived at the 1998 *Arab League's Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism*, and is the leading definition used in the Arab world. Lastly, we use the definition that the United State's Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) utilizes. Based on these three most widely understood definitions of terrorism, this article starts by offering an operational definition of terrorism followed by a brief history of terrorism within Lebanon through the lens of what we conceive to be the two main factors or drivers behind terrorism in the country. This contextual description provides the background to enter into the discussion of the field of counterterrorism and what policies, if any, Lebanon is undertaking to

counter these ever persisting threats arising both from within its borders and just beyond. It should be noted that, given the violent incidents that took place leading to the civil war and during the war as well as the factions that continue to perpetuate terrorism there was a unique tribunal formed in 2009 to deal with these cases. The Tribunal for Lebanon (STL) functions out of Den Haag, Netherlands and has incorporated a codification for outlining terrorism itself.

In relation to the history of terrorism in Lebanon, we have defined two main factors that led to the development and the perpetuation of terrorism within the country. The first is the creation of the state of Israel in 1948, which created an exodus of a large number of Palestinian refugees to Lebanon. The refugees inside Lebanon, attached to the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), played a large role in the events that led to the 1975 Lebanese civil war. The second is external forces such as Iran/Syria and Saudi Arabia's involvement in Lebanese politics. In addition, groups such as *Hezbollah* have grown to be a major player in political dynamics within the state. The efficacy of Lebanon's government remains a problem that has lent it the unfortunate status of being a failed state. The state apparatus is overrun by corruption and also exhibits other failures given that the government maintains little legitimacy and sovereignty in the presence of non-state actors, such as *Hezbollah*, and constant foreign influence.

This is the first academic study that has investigated the interplay between politics and policy as it relates to domestic and transnational terrorism from a governance perspective taking the case study of Lebanon. The analysis offered in this article lays the foundation for much needed future studies on the country's, and the region's, counterterrorism policies by identifying some of participants, mapping out the process and providing policy recommendations for a more effective and efficient policies.

Defining Terrorism: International and Domestic

Terrorist acts pose such a threat because they do not represent the free will of the people, it is always based on violence to impose a narrow ideology on the majority, and it aims to end all forms of free expression, rights and accountability. In essence, terrorism ends the legitimacy of the state and replaces it with the image of a Hobbesian society, where society is lawless and only the strongest survive at the expense of security, freedom and rights (Dawoody, 2015). With the exception of the 1998 the Arab League definition, most definitions often used in respect to terrorism and counterterrorism are western-centered.

The *Arab Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism* released a document in which terrorism is defined as: "Any act or threat of violence, whatever its motives or purposes, that occurs for the advancement of an individual or collective criminal agenda, causing terror among people, causing fear by harming them, or placing their lives, liberty or security in danger, or aiming to cause damage to the environment or to public or private installations or property or to occupy or seize them, or aiming to jeopardize a national resource" (Arab League, 1998, p.2). While the security service of the United Kingdom (MI5) states that there is no generally agreed definition of terrorism internationally, and that definitions are made by individual nations and distinguish "international terrorism" and "domestic terrorism", the 2007 Special Tribunal for Lebanon (STL) that consists of an Appeals Chamber whose judges argue that an international definition of terrorism can be found, despite societal differences. Based on reviews of state practice and

opinio juris, terrorism consists of three key elements: “(i) the perpetration of a criminal act (such as murder, kidnapping, hostage-taking, arson, and so on), or threatening such an act; (ii) the intent to spread fear among the population (which would generally entail the creation of public danger) or directly or indirectly coerce a national or international authority to take some action, or to refrain from taking it; (iii) when the act involves a transnational element” (Scharf, 2011). Nevertheless, widely accepted definitions are based off of those formed in nations such as the United Kingdom or the United States.

The most recent version outlined by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) defines international terrorism as activities with the following three characteristics: “(1) Involve violent acts or acts dangerous to human life that violate federal or state law; (2) Appear to be intended (i) to intimidate or coerce a civilian population; (ii) to influence the policy of a government by intimidation or coercion; or (iii) to affect the conduct of a government by mass destruction, assassination, or kidnapping; and (3) Occur primarily outside the territorial jurisdiction of the U.S., or transcend national boundaries in terms of the means by which they are accomplished, the persons they appear intended to intimidate or coerce, or the locale in which their perpetrators operate or seek asylum” (FBI, 2011). Terrorists have 3 main tactical goals; (1) they seek publicity in order to make their cause more widely known and prefer to undertake terrorist acts in cities, where they can be assured of media attention, (2) Terrorists seek to destabilize the polity as when the political system's legitimacy is eroded, the terrorists' chances of achieving their goal improve, and (3) they seek to damage the economy as they want to impose material cost on the population in order to make them yield to their demands; the more an economy is affected by terrorist acts, the higher is the terrorists' marginal benefit.

Counterterrorism: Theoretical Perspectives and Best Practices

As the threat of terrorism becomes more profuse and widespread affecting all nations regardless of their economic or political stature, it became necessary to both academicians and practitioners to explore what methods and approaches can be employed to counter these acts. Generally speaking, terrorist acts are a tried and true practice of steering attention to one's cause; actually, the attacks in New York City, fourteen years ago, have redefined the field of counterterrorism in how governments respond to such acts and how terrorists continue to carry them out. Given the colonial and client state history of the Middle East after the fall of the Ottoman Empire, the United States and major European countries have played a large role in the policies and calculations of Arab nations.

In order to avoid adopting solely western rhetoric and policies regarding the field of counterterrorism, it is important to uncover the range of literature on the subject from experts with experience in the regions that are most proliferated with terrorism. With incidents compounding in late 2015, it is vital to note that "Empirical work on counterterrorism remains a relatively unexplored research field" (Drakos and Giannakopoulos 2009, p. 135). The author details two reasons for this claim; the first is that research is being hindered by data and is being properly classified in its own category- as it is often delineated to areas of crime and other illegal instances.

The second reason is the larger context of terrorism and how governments and other acclaimed experts believe that counterterrorism means through increased surveillance and military means can elude threats, yet military means cannot even begin to tackle a specific paradox; He raises the following question "would-be terrorists need to be radicalized enough to die for their cause; Westernized enough to move around without raising red flags; ingenious enough to exploit loopholes in the security apparatus; meticulous enough to attend to the myriad logistical details that could torpedo the operation; self-sufficient enough to make all the preparations without enlisting outsiders who might give them away; disciplined enough to maintain complete secrecy; and—above all—psychologically tough enough to keep functioning at a high level without cracking in the face of their own impending death" (Mueller and Stewart, 2011, p. 88). Drakos and Giannakopoulos (2009) argue that there is an impediment to the adoption of a solid and objective counterterrorism performance measure.

While the study and accumulation of data for terrorism is large, the field of counterterrorism remains idealistic, in the sense that it is not yet effectively pre-emptory, but rather collective only after incidents have occurred and countermeasures have begun. The International Terrorism Attributes of Terrorist Events (ITERATE) organization classifies the logistical outcome of each terrorist incident in several categories and finds that the period of 1968-2003 had 12,569 recorded incidents, 1,755 of which were stopped by authorities (14%), and of that percentage, 23% were stopped at the planning stage, and 36.7% at the scene of the impending crime and 40% after initiation of the crime taking place (Drakos and Giannakopoulos 2009).

With the nature of threats evolving and the places and ways in which terrorists carry out their crimes, authorities have to be increasingly more effective than the terrorists themselves. In reality, not every effort to commit a crime or an act of terrorism can be thwarted, as the most authoritarian of governments cannot prevent all attacks. For instance, when looking at the case of counterterrorism policies in Morocco, Kapalkian (2008) argues that a more accurate measure of counterterrorism should be "the government's performance in their ability to prevent attacks and disrupt terrorist cells before they engage in attacks" (p. 454). In the case of Morocco, they have been able to disrupt at least two major terrorist organizations, with nearly a third, by focusing on the origins of terrorism within the nation and not on over applying authoritarian measures to otherwise deter those that are already radicalized or in another mindset to commit acts of terror. The Moroccan authorities found that, with al-Qaida as a foundation, "the best method to combat Islamist terrorism is to disrupt the social networks that radicalize cohorts of young Muslim men in the West" (Kapalkian, 2008).

His analysis is systematic in looking at the demographics of those accused, their ideology and interests, their targets and methods, justification and international links. The answers to these queries would assist in formulating policies that treated terrorism as a crime rather than as an ideological battle to be waged through the military means of a state and potentially its allies. While the measures come with their own criticisms, much like the USA Patriot Act adopted within the United States in the wake of the September 11, 2001 attacks, the government found these measures to be the most prescribed to address the threats. Reardon (2014) describes the western policy as paraphrasing Maslow's Law of the Instrument, "If your only tool is a hammer, you tend to see every problem as a nail." Unfortunately, this tends to be the rule when discussing counterterrorism strategies, particularly among political leaders, where all too often military or

law enforcement approaches are the only instruments in the toolbox - the "hammers" for most countries. Shapiro and Byman (2006) highlight the importance of using the resources of allies such as the case of the CIA's multinational counterterrorist intelligence center in Paris, France. The center is considered a critical component of at least 12 operations, including the capture of one of al-Qaida's most important European operatives (Shapiro and Byman, 2007).

However, the United States and Europe do not necessarily agree on policies or on the precise nature of the terrorist threat. In fact, there are also other instances of these allies disagreeing about the definitions of who is a terrorist such as the case of Hamas and Hezbollah. Shapiro and Byman (2007) note, "the EU as a whole, for example, has been reluctant to take steps to block the assets of charities linked to Hamas and Hizb'Allah in particular...and are hesitant to label such groups as terrorists because they fear the instability that might result" (p. 34). Furthermore, an official in the EU considers it a difficult issue to label Hizb'Allah as a terrorist organization. Despite the fact that Hizb'Allah has military operations that are deplorable to the international community, Hizb'Allah is also a legitimate political party in Lebanon; "...Can a political party elected by the Lebanese people be put on a terrorist list? Would that really help deal with terrorism?" (Weisman, 2005, 1). Shebley (2000) looks at specific policies adopted by nations in regards to domestic terrorism by focusing on the case of Hezbollah in Lebanon. Given Hezbollah's international links and origins of support, the policies adopted toward this organization are also international and not exclusive to Lebanon. While domestic factors led a number of Lebanese Shi'a to be radicalized and organized due to Lebanon's low cultural pluralism, the aims of the group remain focused on liberating other oppressed populations such as the Palestinians. The author takes a quantitative approach to uncover the tangible reasons why those who have joined Hezbollah, were convinced to do so. The findings concluded that wealth was a larger driver for those involved to commit terrorism than any religious belief or otherwise (Shebley, 2000).

Other experts in counterterrorism maintain that in order to produce effective policies to combat terrorism, there must be a shift from neutral explanation to recommendations for counterterrorist measures; the latter only implicitly assumes the perspective of the United States and its allies in the so-called war on terror, and a "pronounced tendency to invoke the global dimensions of terrorism when it comes to combating it while eluding the global factors that contribute to structural violence that lays the ground for political resistance and terrorist agency" (Brunner 2007, p. 958). She further argues that the "oppressed Muslim" narrative needs to be sidelined, as it does not paint a full picture of those who are carrying out acts of terrorism, especially when placing Islam as the core referent (Brunner, 2007). The United Nations Counterterrorism Center, founded in 2011, was established within the CTITF Office pursuant to paragraph 9 of the Global Strategy and General Assembly resolution A/RES/66/10.

UNCCT aims to support United Nations efforts to implement the introduced counterterrorism strategy at both national and regional levels, promote regional cooperation against terrorism, and build Member States' counter-terrorism capacities. The organization found, "several conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism, including, but not limited to, prolonged unresolved conflicts, dehumanization of victims of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, lack of rule of law and violations of human rights, ethnic, national and religious discrimination, political exclusion, socio- economic marginalization and lack of good governance (CTITF, 2013, p. 7).

Additionally, the organization and this particular conference, also focused on improving the national, regional and international legal basis to combat terrorism and harmonize counter-terrorism frameworks across national legislative systems from the regional perspective. They recommend that similar centers design model laws on counter-terrorism, on organizations and persons engaging in the support of terrorist activities in other states, on countering the financing of terrorism and on operational investigation activity.

The development of model criminal codes on the matters related to terrorism is also necessary to build a comprehensive framework. The rhetoric of using an already well-established justice system, internationally and domestically, is emphasized again by Soufan (2008). Soufan, who has led the United States efforts in dealing with incidents related to September 11th, contends that the Achilles heel of America's policy against terrorism is its failure to counter the narratives that inspire individuals to become extremists and terrorists. Again, such in the case of Morocco, identifying the root causes that lead terrorists to their paths is where attention should be focused in countering terrorism.

As long as the ideological and sociological causes exist and go untreated, extremists will be able to attract new recruits, they'll keep producing replacements for those killed or apprehended and the battle will never end (Soufan, 2008). Effective counterterrorism measures would be to include the communities involved rather than isolating them, as people are being recruited because of alleged local or tribal grievance, therefore it is community leaders who are the best messengers to counter that narrative. When it is a distortion of Islam, it is the duty of religious leaders to take the lead. Sometimes it is former extremists, who have taken the same path and have credibility, who can be the most effective messengers (Soufan, 2013). Worldwide, we can see instances where such measures have been implemented and rendered to be effective.

The best CVE programs, such as Singapore's, accomplished in addressing communities that are in direct contact with those governments are attempting to deter from terrorism. They have a focused aim of reducing the pool of potential recruits and the appeal of violence, and they target accordingly. When done correctly, CVE should not be an excuse for broad social work or for anthropological studies; it is a focused counterterrorism weapon. In 2011, in the interest of promoting the comprehensive and integrated implementation of the Global Strategy, participants in the United Nations Secretary- General's Symposium on International Counter-Terrorism Cooperation agreed that the appropriate response to terrorism is to increase cooperation, institutionalize collaboration, systematically share information and best practices and build capacities and capabilities across all sectors of national and regional setups in order to maximize practical steps and achieve tangible results.

Dawoody (2015) provides a comprehensive list of policy recommendations that includes the following actions and strategies: addressing the political, social and economic inequalities, inducing reforms in governance, providing economic opportunities, upholding rule of law, protecting individual rights, minority and women's rights, ending tribalism, ending the failed states, ending ethnic and sectarian divides and promoting a culture of respect, free exchange of thoughts and ideas, critical thinking and separating between religion and state . He adds that a military offensive to first route out the current militants, such as destroy their training camps, take down their financial network, is highly recommended. While he agrees that this does not

get at the underlying causes of terrorism because certain ideologies are spreading that cannot be retracted through wars, it might help in some specific situations. There needs to be other means to counter the ideology that breeds the fighters that are empowered to trade their lives for death. Defeating political Islam is another way to go as, "All forms of Political Islam are bad and must be eliminated by Muslims themselves and in cooperation with people around the world. Doing so is the only safeguard and means for defeating ISIS and its likes." (p. 21).

In addition, Dawoody (2015) observes that many Muslims also blame the problem of ISIS on the Shiite-Sunni divide, and particularly identify Iran and its hegemonic policies in Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Bahrain, Gaza and Yemen as the source of the problem. At least to the average Arab Muslims, ISIS appears as a natural consequence to Iran's policies of the Iraqi Shiite government, a satellite of Iranian influence in the region, and its marginalization of the Iraqi Sunnis during the past eight years, and plays a role in putting an end to the persecution of Sunnis in the Sunni dominated areas in Iraq; the same is true in Syria. Therefore, resolving Sunni grievances in Iraq and Syria and involving them in governance, and ending Iranian interferences in other countries' affairs in the region will undercut the popular support for ISIS (Dawoody, 2015). Finally, another area of cooperation lies in supporting agreed areas of cooperation in UN, Interpol, and other international efforts. These efforts generally involve very specific areas of action that do not present the same challenges as bi/multilateral, regional, or global agreements that have to deal with controversial targets and threats (CSIS, 2015).

Terrorism Roots and Counterterrorism Policies in the Middle East

Today, the threats of internal terrorism and the propensity for rulers who survived the 2011 Arab Spring to use repressive methods to further consolidate their power has led to further police states whose systems remain dysfunctional, repressive and censored. As we look at the Middle East today, we observe multiple states engulfed in civil wars and exacerbated by other states with their own interests in the outcomes. More and more, the borders drawn by British and French officials after the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire are becoming increasingly problematic. States such as Iraq, Syria and Yemen are heading in the direction of partition. Individual groups vying for independence are often doing so through means that fit within the definition of terrorism.

As central, albeit dysfunctional, governments fail to exemplify the needs of their entire population, offshoot groups are formed under the auspice of liberating a people within a territory. Such terror has now morphed from the periodic bombs and terrorist acts to state formation, from a condition depending on a state sponsoring of terror to a terrorist state that has nothing in common with any forms of governance in today's society (Dalacoura, 2011). Within the region, unconventional and unexpected trends, moving further from liberal democracy, due to the unnatural way in which these states were conceived, are becoming more evident. This gives way to the formations of governments that are predominately authoritarian, often with few smatterings of democratic practices.

Today, the threats of internal terrorism and the propensity for rulers who survived the 2011 Arab Spring to use repressive methods to further consolidate their power has led to further police states whose systems remain dysfunctional, repressive and censored. This reality has deep roots

in the artificial way in which these states were originally conceived. The origins of terrorism are rooted in constant wars, economic disparities, consistent foreign intervention, power struggles between the state and tribes, lack of proper education and unvarying poverty. While the existence of these conditions, and the degree of their intensity, varies from state to another in the Arab region, they remain a breeding ground for terrorism in any of these countries and have necessitated the development of counterterrorism policies in many of these countries. Thus far, 2015 has been a pivotal year for Arab states' antiterrorism initiatives. In the first three months of this year, a number of notable incidences seem to point to a turning point in how Arab states' governments will deal with terrorism in the coming years. Of course the challenges now are different than they were just a few years ago. The language denouncing terrorism is now totally unequivocal, as seen in the language from the program of the Muslim world league's conference against terrorism, held in Mecca in February 2015:

"These juveniles and fool dreamers provided the slanderers with what they have been dreaming of. With their reckless actions and careless audacity to spill innocent people's blood, they gave their enemies more than they have hoped to get. They have horrified under a banner adorned, falsely, by the testimony of monotheism (Kalimat at-Tawhid). Accompanying their hypocritical claim, they shout there is no god but Allah, and Allah is great. To these zealots these are empty slogans without any substance" (Muslim World League, 2015).

In the same month, the United States hosted a counter-terrorism summit in Washington, DC featuring both foreign and domestic leaders to discuss strategies to combat extremism (Caulderwood, 2015). Arab states, such as Jordan were represented (World Bulletin, 2015), though Lebanon declined an invitation due to the presence of Israel at the summit (Naharnet, 2015). In March of 2015, the month following the Washington and Muslim World Leagues conference in Mecca, the Arab League's member nations focused on expanding their effort to fight terrorism in the region. UN General Secretary Ban Ki-Moon spoke to the League about the importance of peace in the region (UN News Centre, 2015).

Following the beheadings of a large number of Copts in Egypt, Egyptian President Abdel Fatah el-Sisi told the official Egyptian TV channel that a pan-Arab military force and collaborative action would be necessary to defeat terrorism in the region (UN News Centre, 2015). At the 2015 Economic Summit in Sharm el-Sheikh, el-Sisi likened the effort to an Arab-nation NATO (Hiel, 2015). While the Egyptian government was active in pushing for a creation of such a force, it remains to be seen whether it will actually be created and whether or not Lebanon will be involved (Middle East Eye, 2015). This was not the first time the Arab League tried to deal with extremism. Referring back to the 1998 *Arab convention on the suppression of Terrorism*, the framework agreement lays out the responsibilities of signatory states. States cannot finance or support terrorist activities in their territory.

The Arab League has also convened to assist the international community in lowering the likelihood that terrorists will acquire a nuclear weapon. All Arab League nations are party to the *Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons Treaty* (NPT) and have been critical of Israel's semi-secret nuclear program urging the Israeli government to allow IAEA inspectors and to work towards disarmament and eventually signing the NPT. In 2013 the Arab League threatened to boycott an international meeting to support the NPT in Switzerland due to Israel's continuing

refusal to sign the treaty (Grossman, 2013). While the origins of terrorism remain relatively common, the recent counterterrorism initiatives would have an impact and would be implemented differently depending on the dynamics of terrorism and counterterrorism in each country. Lebanon is certainly no exception.

Setting The Lebanese Context: Terrorism and Counterterrorism

Lebanon's policymaking dynamics as well as administrative practices are rooted in the sectarian socio-political culture of the Lebanese politics which has long been organized around political parties beholden to one or another religious faction. The structure of power in Lebanon after the war years is as follows: troika, council of ministers, the presidency, prime minister, speaker of parliament, parliament, judicial branch, local government, the different political parties or coalitions, the confessional leadership, the media, trade unions, the opposition of current political divide, civil society, and Non-Governmental Organizations (Salem, 2007). The parliament is elected based on confessions (Traboulsi, 2007).

The main issue of Lebanese politics is no longer allegiance to the Lebanese State, rather to the scheme of power sharing inside the country, i.e., the political settlement. A broad consensus is constantly required to pass government decisions and laws. Despite the high number of political parties in the country, these have joined in two major coalitions since 2004: 'March 8 and 'March 14'. In an attempt to dismantle the sectarian structure of Lebanese politics, the Taif Agreement, also known as the National Reconciliation Accord, had set a 50-50 balance between Christians and Muslims in the Lebanese parliament and reordered the powers of the branches of government; however, the two major features of the Taif Accord have not been implemented since its signing in 1989.

Lebanese politics and administration are still marked by sectarianism. Each of the country's major politicians represents mainly the interests of his/her own clan—Christian Maronites, Sunni Muslims, Shiite Muslims, or Druze. This practice is even extended to the appointment of public officials and managers. Lebanon entered the 21st century with its administrative, institutional, and infrastructure frameworks dating back to the post World War II era. Makdisi (2004) explains that Lebanon has been facing two types of issues that he defines as 'political governance' and 'socio-economic aspects of development'. Under the first, he highlights the ascending trend in corruption in the country confirmed by several international reports. With a free-market economy and a strong laissez-faire commercial tradition, Lebanon has come a long way since the conclusion of its civil war.

Nevertheless, the Lebanese have some negative attributes in regards to the economy as regional disparities in living conditions are significant. There is also a widely recognized need to reform the public sector and ameliorate public infrastructure—electricity, Internet and telecom, transportation, water, and waste are amongst the most pressing needs. The institutional framework for most sectors in Lebanon is characterized by predominance of state-related actors. Additionally, since the end of the civil war, a number of international institutions have been regularly involved in the country's public sector.

The inefficacy of Lebanon's government remains a problem that has lent it the unfortunate status of being a failed state. The state apparatus is overrun by corruption and also exhibits other failures given that the government maintains little legitimacy and sovereignty in the presence of non-state actors and constant foreign influence. Since 1982, the presence of Hezbollah's and their ability to manipulate Lebanese politics means that Iran has a basis for which to extend its interests. In opposition to that, Saudi Arabia has allied with former Prime Ministers and other groups, to resist Iranian incursions.

Lebanon's confessional system, one that was intended to represent all factions of the population, with a Christian President, Sunni Prime Minister and a Shi'ite head of Parliament cannot be elected with Hezbollah's approval. With approximately a 27% population of Shi'ites in Lebanon, subjecting election's to Hezbollah's approval is surely not representative of the Lebanese people. Lebanon's borders are porous and regional conflicts almost always affect Lebanon internally. Following the assassination of former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri on February 14, 2005, the Lebanese government agreed to participate in the Special Tribunal for Lebanon (STL) in Leidschendam, the Netherlands. Lebanon's cooperation was seen as complying with UNSCR 1373 (STL, N.D.) which urged all states to fight terrorism. After further bombings in 2005 the UNSC passed UNSCR 1595 (UNSC, 2005), based on this the UN and Lebanon signed the agreement that created the STL in 2007 (STL, N.D.).

This creation marked the first international court to pursue legal remedies in cases of terrorism. This was unique for Lebanon, as the court was obliged to utilize Lebanese law regarding the case of terrorism and not international or customary law. International treaties or customary law would only be utilized in the event an inconsistency or a gap in the Lebanese law arose. In conjunction with defining terrorism the purpose of terrorism should also be defined and they are described as the following, the ultimate aims of terrorism are—among others—the redistribution of power and property rights and the extortion of rents.

When investigating the causes of terrorism in Lebanon, there are multiple factors/events that had, and continue to have, an impact on the dynamics of terrorism in the country. These include, though not restricted to: first, the longstanding Palestinian presence since 1948 and secondly, the direct Syrian involvement as a result of the official request by the Lebanese government in 1976. The latter is the direct result of the Iranian's political interests and its constitutional mandate and had many implications. Iran's foreign policy allied the Islamic Republic with Syria as well as with *Hezbollah* within Lebanon, to serve as a counter weight to Saudi Arabia influence in the region. Iranian Constitution's article 154 states that the government "supports the just struggles of the oppressed against the oppressors in every corner of the globe" (Samii, 2008, p.35)- this of course would include the Shi'a population in Lebanon. The Palestinian influx to Lebanon, estimated to be around one million refugees, after the establishment of the Israeli state in 1948 had many serious repercussions; this made Lebanon an open ground for the influence of those allied with the Palestinian cause- states and non-states actors. The Palestinian presence in Lebanon later led to the relocation of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) in 1970. This development has its political and social significance. Politically speaking, it changed the coalitional balance between the different political groups (ie Phalange Party, Amal Movement, etc.,) and is considered a main trigger to the Lebanese Civil War (1975-1990). During that period, Israel supported the Christian government led by Suleiman Frangieh (1970-1976) and then by

Bachir Gemayel in 1982 who was assassinated one month after he took office. The challenge that the Christian coalition faced contributed to the occupation of Lebanon by Israel five times (1978, 1982, 1993, 1996 and 2006). These events were related to expelling the PLO from Lebanon and also sidelining Hezbollah later. The Syrian domination and occupation of Lebanon also led to the formation of resistance groups that participated in violence on the Lebanese scene. The event involving the assassination Hariri, thought to be at the hands of the Syrian regime and in coercion with Hezbollah, is another incident. The Palestinian issue, or question as some scholars refer to, cannot be ignored as it played a large role in both the Lebanese Civil War and also in the establishment of Hezbollah, a non-state actor that has key terrorist incidents attributed to it over the last few years.

Building on that context and based on the mostly widely used definitions of terrorism and counterterrorism offered earlier in this article, the next section creates the framework that will then be filled by a modern history of terrorism in Lebanon and presents the ways in which the Lebanese government is addressing these specific acts. A thorough analysis of both the obstacles that the government faces as well as the available opportunities is followed by some policy recommendations for how Lebanon should move forward in order to secure its borders against expanding threats and to expunge those that come from within.

Opportunities and Obstacles

Lebanon's commitment with working in a bilateral framework to help fight terrorism was evident in a 2011 UN General Assembly report, which concluded the following: (1) Lebanon notes that its Council of Deputies approved the 1998 Arab Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism, and authorized the Government to ratify its Penal Code, as amended by law and (2) Item No. 11 of January 1958 defines, in article 314, terrorist acts as acts designed to create a state of alarm which are committed by means such as explosive devices, inflammable materials, poisonous or incendiary products or infectious or microbial agents likely to create a public hazard. Any terrorist act is punishable by hard labor for life and by the death penalty if it causes the death of a person or the whole or partial destruction of a building in which there are people, or when it causes the destruction, albeit partial, of a public building, an industrial institution, a ship or other installation, or the breakdown of means of communication or transportation. In 2001, 53 Law No. 318, together with its subsequent amendments, addresses money-laundering and financing of terrorism. Under this law, illegal funds include those derived from drugs and other activities, as well as terrorist crimes.

The law also establishes, within the Central Bank, the *Special Investigation Commission*, an independent, judicial entity, whose activities are not subject to the authority of the Bank. It is empowered to investigate money-laundering operations and oversees constraints against assets and the measures provided for in the Law 54. Lebanon regularly participates extensively in international cooperation to detect terrorist cells by exchanging information with relevant states through INTERPOL or other international legal institutions. In particular, Lebanon cooperates with Arab states in implementing the 1997 *Arab Counterterrorism Strategy*, as well as the 1998 Arab Convention on the *Suppression of Terrorism*. The Responsibility for investigating crimes or conspiracies of a terrorist nature and for pursuing, apprehending and bringing to justice their perpetrators, planners or participants rests with the Counterterrorism and Serious Crime Division

of the judicial police unit established pursuant to Law No. 17 of September 16, 1990, initially as an office and in 2008 as a division, within the Directorate General of Internal Security Forces. The *Counterterrorism and Surveillance Division* within the Ministry of National Defense has similar functions.

The Lebanese security apparatus has been successful in combating extremist and terrorist organizations and groups and has tracked down a large number of perpetrators of terrorist crimes. Through ongoing investigations, it is endeavoring to find other criminals who have committed terrorist crimes against humanity and the Lebanese people or on Lebanese territory and terrorists who are linked to regional and international networks (UNGA, 2011). In March 2015 during a meeting at the Wilson Center concerning terrorism in Lebanon Machnouk, Lebanese Interior Minister, said the three pillars of fighting terrorism in the country were: national unity, professionalism of security forces and theological courage. He went on to argue that there needs to be a religious revolution throughout the region wherein religious peoples refocus on peace as their goal (Wilson Center, 2015). Part of the problem that exists when addressing counterterrorism measures is the overall lack of knowledge amongst government officials regarding the main factors that lead individuals to carry out terrorist acts.

Meaningful counterterrorism policies cannot begin to be conceived of if the characteristics of terrorism are not first understood; this is also accompanied with a very complex political environment and history as well as institutions. In May of 2008, the Lebanese government shut down Hezbollah's telecommunications network leading to street battles and risking another Lebanese civil war (Worth & Bakri, 2008a). Battles between the Sunni Future Movement and Shia Hezbollah almost spiraled out of control, though a political compromise was eventually reached (Worth & Bakri, 2008b). There are also many active transnational terror groups currently operating in Lebanon including al-Nusra Front, al-Qaida in Iraq and the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), as well as less active groups like the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PLO), the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine General Command, Asbad al Ansar, Fata al Islam, Hamas, Abdullah Assam Brigades, among others (US State Department, 2013).

Understanding the risks of terrorism in Lebanon is impossible without understanding the context of Lebanese political institutions as was described above. While in the West, Hezbollah is seen as a terror organization, Hezbollah *cannot* be fitted with such a label- at least on a national level. Their position as a legitimate political movement and their place within Lebanese political life with 14 seats in the Lebanese parliament is too important, nuanced and ensconced to be considered simply a terror group.

Nonetheless, it is also important to note some of that worst acts in the below time line (table 1) include acts that Hezbollah has been directly implicated in. In addition, among the three different ways that states can engage in the use of terror (governmental or state terror, state involvement in terror, state sponsorship of terrorism and extremism), the third is the one that describes the Lebanese situation the most. State-sponsored terrorism is a type of terrorism where government supports violent non-state actors engaged in terrorism. However, it remains difficult to categorize the Lebanese government as such mainly due to the pejorative nature of the term in general as well as the identification of particular examples, both that are usually subject to political dispute,

particularly in the case of Lebanon. Also, to designate a country as a State Sponsor of Terrorism, the US Secretary of State must determine that the government of such country has repeatedly provided support for acts of international terrorism; even though it might be often the case, Lebanon is not listed as a State Sponsor of Terrorism.

Furthermore, The 2011 Syrian crisis has changed the situation for Lebanon as the collective will to avoid another civil war after the 1989 Taif agreement ended the 15 years civil war in Lebanon seemed to disappear; the threats were no longer internal. Nasrallah's announcement in 2011 that Hezbollah would enter Syria to support the government of Bashar al Assad (Saad-Ghorayeb, 2011) made Lebanon, and especially Shia areas in Lebanon, targets for the new transnational terror groups formed from the old Al Qaeda (The Rise of ISIS, 2014). The series of bombings in the Southern Suburbs of Beirut (Dahieh), bombings in the Bekka valley, and ongoing fighting in Tripoli are all directly related to the situation in Syria. Other recent bombings against prominent March 14 politicians have been attributed to Hezbollah and the Syrian government (The Daily Star, 2014). The rise of ISIS and the presence of Jabhat Al Nusra militants in Lebanon, especially in border towns like Aarsal in Bekaa and in Tripoli in the North remain the largest terror threat facing Lebanon (Karam, 2014).

The Lebanese Army has taken a proactive stance in fighting terrorism in Lebanon. Making large, and well publicized arrests (Barnard & Ghannam, 2014), and trying to fight back in the lawless areas of the country. The fight is likely to continue until a point when Syria has a stable government capable of preventing lawlessness within its own borders. The Lebanese army was able to stop four days of fighting in Tripoli in 2014 (Mortada, 2014). The ongoing battles in Lebanon seem to indicate a turning point for Lebanese political life. Having a common enemy is cementing support of Hezbollah within Lebanon's Christian minority as Lebanon pulled into war with ISIS (Leigh & Deeply, 2014). On November 4, 2014 during Ashura, Nasrallah stated he would be willing to work with the Sunni Future movement to protect Lebanon (Naharnet News Desk, 2014). However, no further development had been seen in reality and the position of Hizb'Allah remains unchanged.

19 October 2012: A VIBED (car bomb) detonates near Sassine Square in Achrafieh, Beirut. Killing 8, including the suspect target: Brigadier General Wissam al-Hasan, chief of the Intelligence Bureau of the Internal Security Forces. (Naharnet Newsdesk, 2012).
9 July 2013: A VIBED detonates in Dahieh (Bir Al-Abed) causing over 50 injuries. (Naharnet Newsdesk, 2013a).
On 15 August 2013 a VBIED detonated in Dahieh causing 21 casualties. (PressTV, 2014).
23 August 2013: two coordinated bombings outside of two Sunni mosques in Tripoli killed 42 people. (Holmes and Siddiq, 2013).
19 November 2013: coordinated suicide bombings outside of the Iranian embassy in Dahieh kill 23 people. (Bassam and Solomon, 2013).
28 December 2013: Mohammad Chata a vocal critic of Hezbollah and a potential future prime minister assassinated by large blast in the Beirut Central District. The bombing also killed 6 others and wounded 71. (Abedine, Yan, and Basil 2013).
2 January 2014: A VBIED kills 5 and injured 77 in Dahieh, South of Beirut. ISIS claims responsibility. (Holmes and Kalin, 2014)

16 January 2014 : a VBIED kills 5 and injures 46 in Hermel, Lebanon. Al Nusra front claims responsibility. (Al Akhbar English, 2014).
21 January 2014: a VBIED kills 4 in Dahieh, Beirut. (Lutz and Khraiche, 2014).
1 February 2014: a VBIED kills 4 in Hermel. Al Nusra Front claims responsibility. (Al Fakih and El Bashal 2014).
3 February 2014: A man wearing a bomb detonates it in a suicide terror attempt in a bus near Dahieh, Beirut. Bomber the only casualty. (Muir, 2014).
19 February 2014: two bombings in Dahieh, Beirut kill 8 and wound over 100. (Chulov, 2014).
23 February 2014: VBIED in Hermel, Lebanon kills 2 and wounds 17. Al Nusra Front claims responsibility. (Khraiche, 2014a).
29 March 2014: A VBIED kills 4 soldiers in Arsal, Lebanon. (Al-Fakih, 2014).
20 June 2014: A suicide bomber kills 1 and injures 32 in Dahr Al Baidar, Lebanon. (Khraiche, 2014b).
25 June 2014: A suicide bomber wounds 11 in a Hotel in Rouche, Beirut as security forces attempt to arrest him. (Khraiche, 2014c).
19 September 2014: A bomb in Arsal kills 2 soldiers and injures 3. (AFP, 2014).
12 November 2015: Two suicide bombers wound around 40 in Bourj-el Baraajeneh- a southern suburb in Beirut – claimed by ISIS (New York Times, 2015)

Table 1: Timeline of recent events (2011-2015)

In the second part of 2015, Lebanon faced a number of unique challenges when it comes to fighting terrorism; some are conceptual while others are tangible. The Syrian civil war has affected internal security in Lebanon following Hezbollah's continuous support for Bashar al-Assad and his regime (US State Department, 2013). These problems have not been helped by internal political struggles characterized by Lebanon's inability to elect a president. These are the very outcomes that a country experiences when the interests of regional powers have hijacked its political system. This is exhibited by the recent protests in Beirut, which originally arose due to what has been referred to as the "trash crisis".

This was one of the many incidents where Lebanon's ministers were unable to come to a unified decision due to political gridlock. The end result was trash piling up in street across Beirut pushing many residents into the streets in protest of the government's inability to provide such basic service. The social contract between the citizen and the state has been broken in Lebanon. The typical means of defining that contract include characteristics such as a citizen paying taxes in exchange for the government providing social services. The protests have evolved into citizens taking the streets asking for the abolishment of the current government and the institution of a system that is not subject to the same corrupt means as the current regime. The current Lebanese caretaker government is still influenced by the pro-Assad March 8th bloc, which continues to perpetuate instability in the region.

The political situation has not stopped agencies of the Lebanese government from cooperating with multilateral partners, including the Central Bank, ISF and Lebanese Armed Forces (US State Department, 2013). The political situation continues to make any progress unnecessarily difficult. Unfortunately, as long as the Syrian crisis continues, Iran would utilize Lebanon as a fertile ground from which to help maintain control of Syria through Hezbollah. The porous

border with Syria has made securing the country more difficult. Hezbollah uses some border towns to launch attacks inside Syria, while the rebel forces also attack Hezbollah back in these northern towns. Meanwhile, 25% of people currently residing in Lebanon are Iraqi, Syrian and Palestinian refugees, which have placed considerable strain on the government's resources (US State Department, 2013). These factors cripple Lebanon's sovereign right to progress socially and politically.

Forsaking where Lebanon fails on counterterrorism successes, there are ways in which the government and security services are contributing positively to this field. Lebanon has had a long history of joining international efforts to combat terrorism. These include United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1559 (UNSC, 2004), 1680 (UNSC, 2006a), and 1701 (UNSC, 2006b) that ended the 2006 Israel-Lebanon war. Lebanon is also a participant in the US Department of State's Antiterrorism Assistance Program (ATA) joining in 2006. The focus is working with the LAF and the ISF on border security and capacity building (US Department of State, 2013). Lebanon has had success in apprehending terrorism suspects as was seen in October of 2013 when the ISF arrested suspects in the Tripoli mosque bombings (Najab Mikati Official Website, 2013), and the widely reported raid of a Beirut hotel where the ISF arrested 17 suspected members of ISIS (Moore, 2014).

Additionally, given Lebanon's vast banking sector, Lebanon has also been proactively trying to stop the funding of terrorism. In 2013, Banque du Liban established a new compliance unit to help comply with the standards of the Middle East and North Africa Financial Action Task Force (Bank du Liban, 2013a). Also in 2013, Bank du Liban issued circular implementing new regulations through the *hawala* system (Bank du Liban, 2013b). *Hawala* is an informal system wire-transfer system that has been implicated for being one avenue terrorists use to move money from one person to another (El-Qorchi, 2002). Lebanon's Special Investigation Commission has statutory authority to investigate and stop financial crimes including money laundering and the financing of terrorism (Special Investigation Commission, N.D.). These measures are numerous and do amount to potentially effectively countering terrorism. However, the effects of these measures need to be carefully and empirically evaluated.

Conclusion: Policy recommendations and Future Studies

Lebanon belongs to a wide group of states whose stability is being threatened by continuous acts of terrorism, both domestic and transnational. However, Lebanon maintains a certain peculiarity due to the somewhat unique relation between policy and politics, its position in the Arab World, and its long history of political turmoil and instability as well as the influence that other countries have on it. The analysis undertaken for the purpose of this article provides an interesting insight into the challenges that a country such as Lebanon faces in the development and implementation of antiterrorism policies.

Although the issue is not totally absent from the governmental agenda, and there is an obvious interest in formulating an antiterrorism policy in Lebanon, government efforts and actions so far have been modest, most of which have not been successful mostly due to a lack of consensus both definitional and procedural as well as an absence of political will. In fighting terrorism, the government continues to suffer from a host of problems. This article identified many main

factors hampering development and implementation of antiterrorism policies; these include: sectarianism, corruption, lack of sound governance and the politicization of administration. Other contributing factors include: the current Syrian crisis and the longstanding Palestinian issue in addition the presence of organizations-mainly Hezbollah that is considered by the international community as a terrorist organization while locally is part of the official Lebanese government.

There is an urgent need for proposing a framework that will take these challenges into consideration and that could be actually applied in order of improving the current situation. The recommendations below form some preliminary reflections meant to advise both local policy makers and the international community, and are mostly based on suggestions in the reviewed literature. While a military offensive could present itself as a policy option, this does not get at the underlying causes of terrorism as most of the terrorism groups we see these days are in fact more ideologies than organizations and cannot be retracted through wars. It has become necessary to develop other means to counter the ideology that breeds the fighters that are empowered to trade their lives for death- mostly dealing with political Islam and changing the religious discourse in the Arab World.

In addition, addressing political (reducing sectarian divide and tribalism), social (protecting individual rights, establishing a culture of respect and freedom of expression) and economic inequalities (providing economic opportunities), and initiating reforms in governance (reinforcing the rule of law, insuring transparency and accountability) are some areas that require immediate governmental attention. Moreover, cooperation of these countries that are threatened by terrorism lies in supporting agreed areas of cooperation in UN, Interpol, and other international efforts. Finally, the Lebanese government must also develop a system for monitoring potential terrorist behavior. This includes state surveillance and border protection as well as monitoring any importation of potentially dangerous material. The government must also enhance diplomatic security of foreign government representatives in their countries and create a database of suspected terrorists.

This article offers a better understating of some of the key facets of counterterrorism policies, or the lack of, in Lebanon by briefly identifying the key participants (their resources, role, and influence) and highlighting the policy determinants and challenges and emphasizing the political nature of policy choices made by government officials and other actors. It offers a set of preliminary findings that can be used to better understand the dynamics of counterterrorism policies in Lebanon specifically, and in the region in general. While these findings can be used as building blocks for a theoretical model that describes and explains the dynamics of such process, more case studies are necessary to generate conceptual tools for research in terrorism and counterterrorism that is indigenous to the region.

A comparative examination of policy approaches in relation to terrorism and counterterrorism would enrich our understanding of the process and increase our capacity to conduct political and policy analysis. In analyzing this specific policy area, policy determinants and drivers as well as challenges can be identified. Further explanatory studies that examine policy dynamics in each of the stages of the policy-making process in that policy area using the five-stage model in addition to comparative studies that identify cross-regional trends in policy choices and policy outcomes

are needed. A systematic review of what we already know and what we now know is deemed necessary.

Early on in the Syrian armed conflict, and with so much of the tension in MENA centering on developments in Syria, a risk for the situation evolving into a wider conflict, spilling over to Lebanon, Turkey, and even Iran, was evident. The environment in the region is more dynamic than ever; more calls for containing terrorism threats and acts are spreading and religion has become a source of vibrant political competition. The countries in the region will need to implement policies that deal with these threats as well as address the underlying reasons behind it. Lebanon is first on the list.

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