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Abstract

How does emigration affect access to and struggles for power in sending states? For competing groups in the homeland, emigration presents a contradiction: demographic losses but possible economic gains. Wins and losses from this trade-off evolve with shifts in who migrates, to where, and when. I illustrate these relationships in the case of Lebanon since 1860, focusing on the balance of power among sectarian communities. The country's first migratory wave concentrated material benefits and population deficits in the Christian community. It also encouraged subsequent emigration that, over time, involved more Muslim Lebanese, as well. Such broadening diffused the profits of labor abroad. Due to changes in destinations and historical circumstances, however, many of these migrants remained more connected to their homeland. This aided social mobility for their communities without sapping resident strength. Outmigration thereby helped redistribute human and material resources among sects, and hence created the demographic and material foundations of the competition for power.

Keywords

immigration, emigration, Lebanon, Middle East, sectarianism, diaspora, demography, power

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International migration is increasingly shaping the contemporary world. Growing by more than 13 percent since 1990, the total number of people living outside their native countries was nearly 214 million in 2010.¹ In 2011 alone, officially recorded flows of remittances, the portion of migrant workers' earning sent home, reached \$372 billion to developing countries.² At the same time, polls suggest that more than one in four people around the globe wish to move abroad.³

Academic literature lags behind the magnitude of the phenomenon. Research on the effect of emigration upon developing countries remains limited, and has primarily focused on whether it is "good" or "bad" for economic growth, democracy, or civil peace. Those queries highlight the important question of whether emigration is harmful or beneficial in normative terms. Yet it fails to ask *for whom* emigration is beneficial in the sense of *realpolitik*. Studies of diaspora involvement in homeland politics and conflicts do consider such differential benefits. Nonetheless, their focus on the purposeful efforts of emigrants as actors leaves us to wonder about the unintended collective impact of emigration as a phenomenon. How do patterns of emigration from a country shape access to power within that country? Under what conditions does it aid groups in their competition for influence or have the opposite effect?

I argue that, for competing groups in developing states, outmigration can entail a trade-off between losing demographic numbers inside the country and accessing material resources from outside it. The effect of that trade-off on access to and struggles over power evolves in accord with patterns in who emigrates, to where they emigrate, and when. The first factor identifies the actors in question. The second and third condition is the type of earnings that they acquire, the character of their connectedness to the homeland, and their likelihood of returning. Depending on the interaction of these factors, emigration can contribute to generating, accentuating, or ameliorating disparities in the country of origin. For some groups at some times, permanent emigration decreases their presence in the polity. For others at other times, circular or return migration enables an empowered presence scarcely attainable had they or their family members not worked abroad. These differential benefits influence the distribution of social and economic resources in the polity, which can reshape the very foundations of competition for power.

This article investigates these relationships through an in-depth study of Lebanon, with the goal of theory building. Lebanon may seem an odd case from which to derive generalizable insight. Its governmental system is based on quotas for seventeen religious sects, which are the principal cleavages fragmenting the country's sociopolitical landscape. Few other nations have governance structures that rely on ethno-religious divisions to the same degree. Nonetheless, the particularities that make Lebanon unique also offer unique analytical benefits. Over the course of 150 years, different sectarian groups have migrated at different rates and to different destinations. This extreme heterogeneity is useful for revealing relationships that can be difficult to detect in settings where they operate with greater subtlety. A general correlation between sect and region within Lebanon facilitates analysis of these patterns.

The Lebanese case indicates patterns to which analysts should be alert in other countries where deep ethnic or regional differences are expressed in partisan loyalties,

if not the broader universe of developing countries in which demography and money shape struggles for power. As a preliminary effort to disentangle such patterns, I concentrate on Lebanon's largest sectarian communities, Maronite Catholics and Sunni and Shi'i Muslims. My intention is not to discount the significant competition that exists within sects. Nor do I seek to ignore voices against sectarianism or reify the coherence of sects as units. Nonetheless, there is no denying the salience of sect in a consociational system where seats are allocated by sect and political parties are typically distinguished by identity interests more than ideological programs. Residential geography is increasingly segregated along sectarian lines, personal status law is devolved to confessions' management, and most political discussions do not last long without some reference to sect, veiled or otherwise.

Scholars of Lebanon have probed the historical sources of sectarianism,⁴ sectarian violence or co-existence,⁵ sectarian narratives,⁶ and Lebanon's overall transformation from a state largely dominated by Maronites to one in which the main political fault line falls between Shi'a and Sunni Muslims.⁷ Yet no study to date has analyzed the rises and falls in sects' power through the lens of migration. To that end, I show how the start of mass emigration, primarily of Christians to the Americas, concentrated the economic benefits and demographic costs of migration in one community. It also contributed to a culture, economy, and norm of emigration that, over time, came to involve more Muslim Lebanese. Such broadening diffused the profits of labor abroad. Due to changes in destinations and the circumstances of new historical eras, however, many of these migrants remained more connected to their homeland. This aided social mobility for their communities without sapping resident strength, as had prior waves. Outmigration thereby helped redistribute human and material resources among sects, and hence the very foundations of competition for power.

This article connects these patterns and relationships in a single narrative of the full sweep of Lebanon's migratory history. It synthesizes diverse sources within a unified theoretical framework and draws conclusions to benefit research on other cases. I proceed with care, as data on Lebanese residents and migrants is famously incomplete and controversial.⁸ Lebanon has not conducted a census since 1932, and even that was highly politicized.⁹ Analyses are subject to bias because each confessional community has an interest in claiming a larger share of the population. The lack of authoritative figures leads some to recommend against study of this topic. Rather than dismiss the only information available, however, I have sought to compile decades' worth of research in multiple languages by authors of different backgrounds. Some are rare or unpublished sources that I gathered during five months of research in Lebanon in 2008 and 2010. I supplement this data with more than 100 interviews that I conducted with analysts, activists, businesspeople, and resident and expatriate citizens. These diverse sources converge on a general profile of migration from Lebanon from the mid-1800s until the present. Though not sufficiently precise for hypothesis testing, they offer a foundation for qualitative exploration of shifts in the who, where, and when of migration. This, in turn, stimulates new perspectives on how migration affects power struggles in the country left behind.

Emigration and Power

Research on modern migration from developing countries has tended to focus on the impact of immigration in countries where migrants settle. We know less about the impact of emigration on the countries from whence migrants come. Among examinations of the latter, most consider economic dimensions, producing oft-contradictory findings on whether outmigration and remittances aid development, alleviate poverty, or contribute to equality.¹⁰ With regard to political effects, studies ask how outmigration affects democracy and good governance in countries of origin. Some findings suggest that migration and remittances can empower the poor and marginalized in ways that enable them to demand greater democratic participation and rights.¹¹ Others suggest that they generate a moral hazard leading to civic disengagement, weak political accountability, and poor provision of public goods.¹² Moving from emigration to the diasporic populations in which it results, research examines how diasporas influence conflict in countries of origin. Many analyses argue that ethnic kin abroad sustain hostilities in the homeland with funding, fighters, arms, or propaganda.¹³ Other works find that diasporic populations have no greater propensity toward extremism than do compatriots back home,¹⁴ and may advocate democracy rather than exclusionary nationalisms.¹⁵

This research offers an important foundation for understanding the effect of outmigration on politics in developing countries. My research seeks to make two other contributions. First, I introduce into political science conversations a body of case study data that has typically not been examined through lenses other than history, anthropology, and area studies.¹⁶ A large portion of social scientific knowledge about contemporary emigration comes from statistical tests of macro-indicators or focused studies of countries in Latin America or the Caribbean. More analysis of subnational and over-time variation and evidence from outside the Western Hemisphere is necessary to evaluate new questions and the generalizability of existing knowledge. Second, I shift the focus from the impact of emigration in general to the puzzle of why emigration has mixed effects. Many studies compare communities with or without emigration, or households where people do or do not migrate. Such research designs do not enable scrutiny of variation within emigration patterns or among emigrants. In putting that variation in the spotlight, I diverge from the overarching political science debate on whether emigration is harmful or beneficial for sending countries as a whole. Instead I ask *who* within the sending country gains from emigration and for whom emigration might signify a net loss.

With this focus, I investigate how emigration affects access to and struggles over power in migrants' countries of origin. I conceptualize power as the sum of material, relational, and institutional resources that allow one to impose one's will upon others.¹⁷ I posit a two-part argument.

- 1) For competing social groups in developing countries, emigration entails a potential exchange between loss of human presence at home and**

increased access to material resources from abroad. This is a trade-off faced by those who compete for power, be they families desirous of informal influence in a small town or political parties seeking control of state institutions. Outmigration drains the number of resident loyalists that a group can rally to follow its directives, vote on its behalf, mobilize in the streets, or sustain a collective presence on the ground. Yet given limited economic opportunities in poorer states, emigration is often a prime path to wealth. This wealth has an impact back home when successful migrants return, send remittances, or spend earnings in their countries of birth.

2) The balance of these human losses and material gains from emigration evolves over time in accord with who emigrates, where they emigrate, and when. I consider these factors in turn:

Who emigrates: Existing research suggests that the impact of outmigration depends on the characteristics of migrants themselves. Devesh Kapur writes, “The effects [of migration] on the sending country depend critically on the selection effects: who leaves, how many leave, why they leave...”¹⁸ Of these selection effects, migrants’ level of education is particularly salient because it can affect where they go, the sector in which they work, and the kinds of socioeconomic mobility that they experience. Selection effects vary over time. Jones distinguishes between three stages of migration: the innovator stage, during which those with ambition and start-up resources are the first to seek their livelihood abroad; an early adopter stage, during which poorer families participate; and a late adopter stage, when continued migration creates a “migration class” that stands apart from households that did not produce migrants.¹⁹ In other contexts, factors other than personal initiative might be the engine driving different parts of the population to emigrate at different times. Nonetheless, the answer to the question “who migrates?” evolves, and typically broadens, over a nation’s history.

Where people emigrate and when: Destination countries vary in three dimensions that interact to affect migrants’ connectedness to their home countries: resources, integration, and proximity. First, host states differ with regard to the kinds of income that migrants are likely to obtain and save, both of which affect the resources that they transfer back home. This variation stems from differences in the basic structure of a political economy, level of development, competitiveness of the market, degree of state regulation, and tax structure. Second, destination countries offer varying opportunities for effective integration into the receiving society. These stem from different laws regulating citizenship and property ownership, as well as divergent ways of life, cultures of integration, prospects of stability and security, and opportunities for educating children. Third, destination countries vary by proximity to the homeland. This is not only a matter of physical distance, but also of transport and communications technology, and hence historical era.

I treat the effects of these dimensions as additive. For the purposes of this analysis, it is not necessary to distinguish between their relative importance, though this might

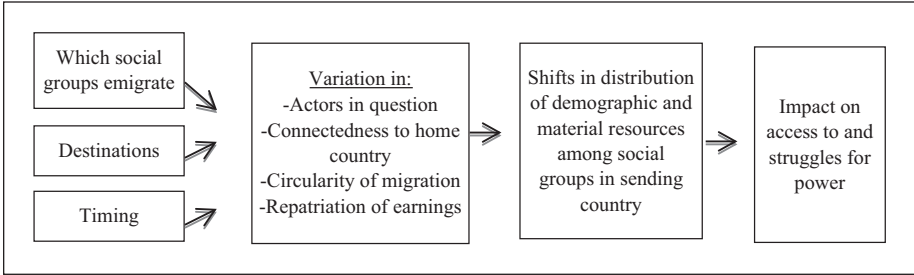


Figure 1. Effect of emigration on struggles for power in sending country.

be worthwhile for future research. Most relevant here is that these dimensions combine to influence the probability that people's migration is either permanent, temporary, or circular. Given their combined effects, migrants to some destinations are likely to make them a lasting home. Within a generation or two, their family's connection to the country of origin may be limited to nostalgia, foods, and tourism. In comparison, migrants to other destinations are more apt to remain actively connected to their countries of origin. It may be where they locate their financial investments, focus their political engagement, and eventually resettle. Under such conditions, migration can aid social mobility for the homeland groups to which migrants pertain, with limited demographic losses.

These factors—who emigrants are, where they go, and when—are not wholly independent. Different education and professional levels can lead migrants to different countries, though, in some cases, high- and low-skilled migrants enter different occupations in the same country. Chain migration often brings generations of family and acquaintances to the same place, sometimes recreating homeland communities in the receiving state. As a consequence, knowing basic facts about residents in a country of emigration offers clues regarding not only whether they are likely to migrate, but also to where. Destinations condition migrants' subsequent connectedness with the home country. The upshot is that patterns in who emigrates and where they emigrate can systematically affect the distribution of demographic losses and material gains among competing social units in sending countries (see Figure 1).

I illustrate these relationships through analysis of intersectorian struggles in Lebanon. Mirroring the general literature, scholarship on Lebanese migration has tended to focus on diaspora communities more than implications for the home country.²⁰ A few notable exceptions evaluate emigration's effects with regard to class, gender, identity, and institutions.²¹ Yet many topics still want for research and theorization, including struggles for power. On the flipside, studies of power politics in Lebanon rarely mention emigration and instead focus on sectarianism, clientelism, and foreign intervention.²² If there are links between emigration and power in Lebanon, these are often overlooked.

The Lebanese case suggests that the significance of outmigration to power struggles is filtered through the ways that institutions structure the role of demography and

money in power struggles. In Lebanon, the role of money comes into play in patronage politics, vote buying, and parties' abilities to mobilize or demobilize constituents as deemed necessary. Demography typically refers to the relative size of religious sects. In Lebanon's majoritarian block vote and multimember district electoral system, representation is allocated on a confessional basis. Direct competition for seats occurs within sects, not between them. The mandated ratio of Christian-Muslim seats has been modified only once since independence. Absent an amendment to the constitution, actual shifts in sects' sizes thus will not affect their share in Parliament. Where demographics are vital, however, is electoral districting. Lebanon has redrawn its electoral map four times since 1992 and the issue remains heated.

Beyond formal politics, the intersectarian demographic balance looms large in informal bargaining. Elites seek the largest number of loyalists to vote, protest, participate in militias, sustain land ownership, and occupy important economic and political positions. Demography is thus a "pressure card" that sectarian elites raise, or fear that opponents will raise, to demand greater control over national decision making or resources. In this setting, access to and struggles over power can turn on a battle for demographic and material advantage. Analysis of three historical eras reveals how emigration affected these struggles, evolving in accord with changes in who migrates, to where, and when.

The First Waves, 1860–1943

The link between sectarianism and power in Lebanon predates statehood. After civil violence in the mid-nineteenth century, European powers intervened in defense of Christian communities and helped establish the central area of Mount Lebanon as a *Mutasarrifiyya*. This was an autonomous district within the Ottoman Empire that had an executive council representing the area's various sectarian groups. France codified confessional power sharing in 1920, when it obtained League of Nations Mandates over what would become Lebanon and Syria. It established Greater Lebanon by adding to the Mutasarrifiyya districts that neighbored it from the north, south, and east. These borders dramatically changed sectarian demographics: while Mount Lebanon was predominantly Maronite, the newly added territories were majority Muslim (see Figure 2).

The history of Lebanese migration is similarly long. Greek Catholics were its pioneers, mainly leaving for Egypt in the early nineteenth century.²³ Mass outflow from Mount Lebanon gained pace by mid-century. Peasants may have fled religious persecution or conscription, yet emigration was mostly an outgrowth of the manufacture of silk for export to Europe.²⁴ Cash cropping gave access to new comforts. After the industry plummeted due to the development of rayon and other factors,²⁵ little alternative work satisfied peasants' material expectations. Many thus sought fortunes abroad.²⁶

Diverse sources agree on a general portrait of migration during this era. Between 1860 and 1900, some 120,000 persons emigrated from Mount Lebanon, or at least one-fourth of the population.²⁷ Migration increased from that average of 3,000 emigrants/

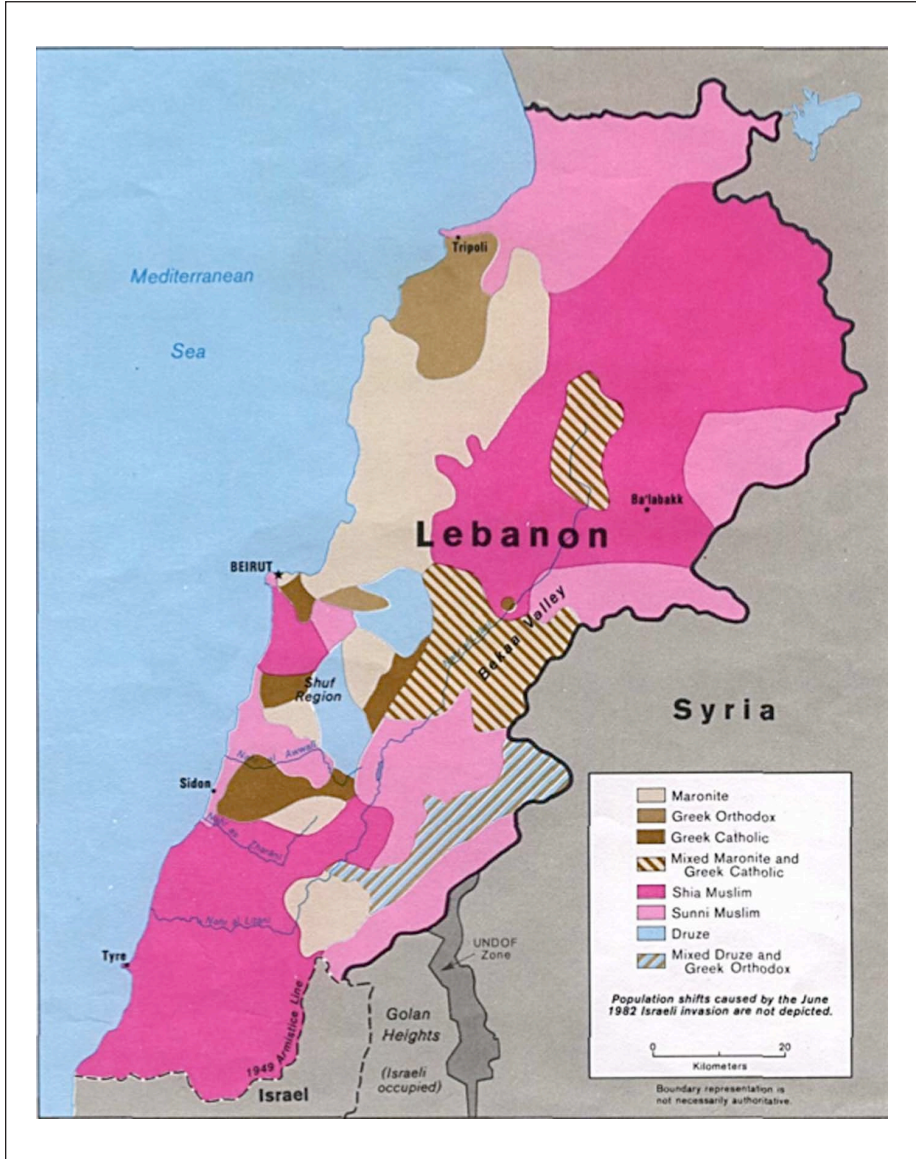


Figure 2. Distribution of Religious Groups in Lebanon.

Source: University of Texas Perry-Castadeña Library Map Collection, http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/middle_east_and_asia/lebanon_religions_83.jpg.

year to 15,000 emigrants/year from 1900–1914.²⁸ Most settled in South and North America,²⁹ and much smaller numbers settled in Africa and Australia or continued to Egypt.³⁰ Emigration practically halted when Lebanon was blockaded during World War I, but then resumed with another 80,000 migrating from 1921–1938.³¹

The vast majority of migrants were Christians from Mount Lebanon or the districts to its north.³² The collapse of the silk industry impelled peasants' migration, but its prior boom also left them resources with which to meet the high costs of the journey.³³ Apart from this, many believe that Christians had a cultural affinity with the West and greater access to foreign representatives, which likewise eased their voyage.³⁴ They also enjoyed greater access to education in Ottoman Lebanon due to the creation of missionary and church schools.³⁵ There was much less emigration by Muslim and Druze inhabitants of Mount Lebanon and surrounding provinces. Sunni Lebanese were traditionally more urban, which gave them greater opportunities for employment. They also may have felt more secure in the larger Sunni Ottoman and Arab worlds. Rural Sunnis, mostly in the North, had hardly participated in the silk industry. Developing economic and social links to the rest of Ottoman Syria, they did not cultivate a culture of emigration, as did their Christian neighbors.

Shi'a were concentrated in the Bekaa Valley and the southern region of Jabal 'Amil. They were generally a poorer and more deprived population, enjoying neither foreign protection as did Maronites nor shared orthodoxy with Ottoman governors, as did Sunnis. Some raised silkworm, but they did not engage in the more profitable activities of processing and export.³⁶ The boom and bust that triggered flight from the Mountain thus saw no equivalent there. Shi'a encountered the "push factors" of poverty, disease, and burdensome Ottoman taxation and conscription.³⁷ Migration was nonetheless rare, in part because the roads that linked Mount Lebanon to the Beirut port and Damascus bypassed Jabal 'Amil.³⁸ Those obstacles to migration decreased after the South was incorporated into Greater Lebanon and a common colonial power facilitated migration to French West Africa.³⁹ Though the first Lebanese in Africa were Christian, later migrants were predominantly Muslim and, from the 1920s and 1930s onward, Shi'a from the South.⁴⁰ In these early years, most Lebanese hoped to go to the Americas. Many who were instead routed to Africa were those who could not afford the fare to the West or did not meet its increasingly stringent immigration restrictions.⁴¹ Others were duped by agents and sent southward without their knowledge.⁴² The relatively disadvantaged position of Jabal 'Amil made its migrants susceptible to such deception, as did limited educational levels: in 1932, 83 percent of Shi'i Lebanese were illiterate, as opposed to 66 percent of Sunnis and 48 percent of Maronites.⁴³ Once in Africa, Lebanese worked as traders and intermediaries to European interests and some became major entrepreneurs.⁴⁴ They brought family and acquaintances to join them, spurring networks of chain migration.⁴⁵

Emigration during this era affected the intersectarian distribution of power in Lebanon in three main ways. First, the money that migrants sent home contributed to different levels of socioeconomic mobility. Remittances, overwhelmingly from the Americas, were equal to the domestic product of the Mutasarrifiyya.⁴⁶ In 1924, they

exceeded the value of commodity exports.⁴⁷ As elsewhere, remittances were used primarily for consumption, land purchases, and housing.⁴⁸ Though predominantly a private benefit, remittances also contributed to public goods, such as health services and infrastructure.⁴⁹ Received in some communities more than others, funds from abroad affected disparities in wealth and opportunity. This came to the fore in the main area where remittances assist mobility across the world: education. Because schooling during the Ottoman era was almost entirely private, access to cash was critical for access to literacy.⁵⁰ After the fall of silk, a relative abroad was a key to access to cash. Many in Mount Lebanon put remittances to use in educating their children,⁵¹ which had long-term implications for their families' ascendance.⁵²

Remittances also aided development in South Lebanon.⁵³ Early migrants sent nearly all gains back home, though they came to invest more in businesses in Africa, as increasing costs demanded it.⁵⁴ Beyond private transfers, migrants contributed financially to building institutions that supported and represented Shi'a in Lebanon. Community leaders such as Rashid Beydoun traveled to Africa to solicit expatriates' donations for these purposes.⁵⁵ These were critical in establishing vocational and agricultural schools, as well as the two major educational institutions: the 'Amilliya Islamic Benevolent Society school in Beirut in 1929 and the Ja'afariyya school in Tyre in 1938.⁵⁶ It is difficult to underestimate the importance of these societies in expanding opportunities and empowering community identity. They also established a tradition of linking Shi'a in the homeland and diaspora and institutions to sustain those linkages.⁵⁷

Second, return migration aided socioeconomic advancement. Most who left the Mutasarrifiyya did so hoping to come back with fortunes made abroad.⁵⁸ A conservative estimate holds that at least 19 percent of the population of Mount Lebanon in 1914 consisted of returned émigrés.⁵⁹ Successful returnees enjoyed freedom from toiling the land, and some initiated industry and manufacturing projects.⁶⁰ They also took the lead in education, as shown in higher number of schools and rates of enrollment in those areas where most returnees resided.⁶¹ Many whose educations were made possible by migrants' investments grew aspirations larger than their villages. They moved to cities like Beirut where, taking advantage of budding commerce, they and their children continued to reap the fruits of social mobility that emigration put in motion.

Third, no less significant than return migration was the absence of return and its demographic consequences. Only one-fifth of emigrants from Mount Lebanon returned, meaning that the lion's share did not. In every destination country during this era, some migration was permanent and some temporary. Nonetheless, sweeping conventional wisdom among both Lebanese experts and citizens holds that the circularity of migration generally differs based on where migrants go.⁶² Migrants to the Americas were (and remain) more likely to integrate and settle in their host societies, whereas those to Africa were and are more likely to maintain active ties to the homeland and ultimately return. These patterns were shaped by the identified dimensions of destination countries, namely their differing distances from the homeland, cultures of integration, and economic opportunities.

Although authoritative statistics are lacking, available information supports these distinctions. Figures from the United States Immigration Commission between 1908

and 1910 divide the number of Syrian-Lebanese travelers arriving by those departing. That logic estimates that 26 percent of emigrants to the United States returned home. Estimates from Argentina put the return rate at 29 percent.⁶³ Calculated in the same way, statistics from the port of Dakar from 1925–1929 and 1933–1937 put the return rate at 73 percent.⁶⁴ Diasporas' rates of obtaining Lebanese citizenship likewise demonstrated different levels of connectedness to the homeland. In 1926, approximately one in every 142 Lebanese emigrants in the United States applied for Lebanese citizenship. In comparison, one in seventeen emigrants in Brazil and one in three emigrants in the French colonies of Africa sought Lebanese citizenship.⁶⁵

Scholars' qualitative appraisals confirm these patterns. By World War I, Alixa Naff writes, "the Lebanese's general satisfaction with America virtually eliminated the bird-of-passage mentality and they began to settle down in communities ... Americanized children ... showed scant interest or knowledge in their ethnic origins."⁶⁶ This tendency redoubled when famine ravaged the Levant during the war, after which emigration to Americas increasingly involved whole families departing permanently.⁶⁷ By contrast, migration to Africa appears markedly circular. Networks connected villages in South Lebanon to communities in the diaspora, and people continually came and went in both directions.⁶⁸ Writing in 1938, a French colonial administrator described the Lebanese community of West Africa as "essentially mobile" and "constantly changing."⁶⁹ Recent archival research likewise finds them to have been "inherently fluid, constantly shifting shape and reconstituting themselves."⁷⁰ At the same time, even those who settled permanently retained an identity and orientation linked to their country of origin. A Shi'i journalist who visited Lebanese communities in Africa in the 1930s insisted that attracting them back to Jabal 'Amil would have been easier if they had settled elsewhere. "West Africa is not America, nor Europe," he wrote. "Ninety-five percent of our migrants hope to go back to their homelands one day."⁷¹ Some described the intentions of this diaspora in less flattering terms. A Senegalese writer argued that Lebanese regarded Africa not as a home, but "as nothing more than a hunting ground."⁷²

Early relationships thus crystallized between who emigrates, where they emigrate, and the effect of emigration on the country left behind. These relationships took on a sectarian character. During the Ottoman and Mandate eras, most Lebanese migrants were Maronites who went to the Americas, where migration was more likely to be permanent. Eventually, most migrants to Africa, where migration was more likely to be temporary, were Shi'i. The political salience of these distinctions was heightened when the creation of the state's modern borders increased the ratio of Muslims to Christians. In this new state, Maronites attained political, economic, and social predominance, and with it an ability to promote a vision of Lebanon as a Mediterranean culture with a Phoenician heritage.⁷³ Although Christians' relative power is often attributed to their special relationship to European parties, emigration also played a role. Christians in Lebanon were at the forefront of venturing abroad where many, often toiling tirelessly, netted earnings impossible at home. As a consequence, they most benefited from the role of remittances and return migration in improving living standards, health, infrastructure, and access to education.

Yet even as emigration offered a boost socioeconomically, it depleted the Christian community demographically. It thus created a fundamental vulnerability in its power vis-à-vis other sects. The need to forestall demographic decline hence became imperative for Christian politicians. They advanced legislation that expanded the inclusion of émigrés in censuses beginning in 1922. One quarter of the population established in the 1932 census were thus actually migrants abroad. Of these, 85 percent were Christian.⁷⁴ Based on the inclusion of migrants, the census determined that 34 percent of all citizens were Maronite, 18 percent Sunni, and 16 percent Shi‘i. Lebanon had an overall Christian majority of 58.5 percent. To date, no Lebanese government has conducted another census, wary of the political consequences of officially recognizing the radically different demographics that exist today.⁷⁵

The final impact of emigration in this era was the foundation it laid for subsequent emigration. Echoing Jones’ finding from Mexico, migration diffused “down the bell curve”⁷⁶ as residents followed acquaintances abroad and all sectors of society were moved by stories of the riches to be earned overseas. In Lebanon, this meant that emigration became decreasingly associated with just one sect. By 1936, one observer noted, “The example of fortunes made inspires all to emigrate in equal measure.”⁷⁷ Over time, migration became entrenched in Lebanon’s culture and political economy. For Lebanese thinker Michel Chiha, this was a Phoenician legacy. “We could not limit our undertakings to our territory which is so small and narrow without suffocating,” he wrote.⁷⁸ As another expressed it, “Leaving the country is as Lebanese as apple pie is American.”⁷⁹ Migration was not only deeply Lebanese but, through continued shifts in who left and to where, also profoundly shaped the country that Lebanon would become.

Migration and Independent Lebanon, 1943–1975

When Lebanon gained independence in 1943, it had already been governed by sectarian power sharing for nearly a century. Maronite and Sunni politicians affirmed Lebanon as a confessional democracy in the unwritten “National Pact.” Based on the 1932 census, Maronites gained permanent control of the presidency and command of the armed forces, Sunnis the position of prime minister, and Shi‘a that of speaker of the Chamber of Deputies. Parliamentary and high governmental seats were divided between Christians and Muslims on a ratio of six-to-five. No less determinative of political power was the merging of this formal system with an informal system through which sect combined with money. Those who occupied top governmental posts were typically political bosses. These patrons not only distributed services and opportunities to clients in exchange for electoral support. They also served as champions of their co-confessionals and their representatives in bargaining with elites from other confessions.

With the exception of civil violence in 1958, this system sustained general stability in Lebanon for three decades. This was aided by the country’s emergence as a major center for commerce, tourism, and especially banking. Though GDP growth averaged 3.7 percent from 1950–1960 and 5.6 percent, from 1960–1973, the services-oriented

economy did not produce development or sufficient employment.⁸⁰ An estimated 85 percent of the population could not afford a decent living.⁸¹ Government neglect of the country's urban and rural peripheries gave uneven development a character that was regional and sectarian.⁸² Shi'a areas, and the South in particular, ranked below the rest of the country on nearly every socioeconomic indicator, from health to income, schools, hospitals, doctors, electricity, roads, running water, and telephones.⁸³ Though redistributive reforms under President Fuad Shihab (1958–1964) extended infrastructure and services to “the other Lebanon,” severe inequities remained.⁸⁴

Outmigration continued during this era. An average of approximately 3,000 emigrants per year departed from 1945–1960, a rate that increased to 8,500/year from 1960–69 and 10,000/year from 1970–74.⁸⁵ These trends followed unemployment, which increased from 8.1 percent in 1970 to 15 percent in 1974.⁸⁶ Insufficient rural jobs propelled an exodus, contributing to a reduction of the portion of Lebanese living in the countryside from 70 percent in 1943 to less than 30 percent twenty-five years later.⁸⁷ Rural depopulation deterred investment, renewing the cycle of unemployment and migration to the cities or overseas. At the same time, Lebanon's urban centers produced more highly educated citizens than its labor market could employ. With the highest literacy rate in the Arab world, Lebanon was a leader in its “brain drain.”⁸⁸

Emigration in this era affected the sectarian distribution of power in ways that both built on the legacy of the past and indicated new trends. First, prior emigration contributed, directly or indirectly, to raising some to positions of economic influence. Lebanon's financial elite was predominantly Christian. In 1948, *all* bankers, some 91 percent of insurance agents, 88 percent of engineers, and 67 percent of industrialists were Christian, with comparable ratios in other top professional sectors.⁸⁹ Several studies of large companies and factories in the early 1970s found Christian ownership dwarfing Muslim ownership at ratios of two- or three-to-one.⁹⁰ Several factors gave Christians an edge in business, namely power in state institutions and higher levels of socioeconomic status. Migration also played a role. Remittances, returnee investments, and migrants' charitable contributions helped improve living standards and educational opportunities for some, but not all. Given the weakness of the state and the role of nonstate associations in the provision of social services,⁹¹ such advantage made vital differences in people's life chances. Access to migrant capital was similarly critical in the establishment of businesses that were a path to affluence and elite status.⁹² Labaki identifies thirty-three manufacturing companies that emigrants established in Lebanon between 1943 and 1975, as well as dozens of banks in which emigrants were either founders or key investors.⁹³ The overwhelming majority of these migrants-turned-businessmen were Christians who headquartered their businesses in predominantly Christian areas. A 1962 study of 207 entrepreneurs found that 80 percent were Christian. More than 70 percent had lived abroad for more than one year,⁹⁴ a period that meets the current United Nations (UN) definition of “migrant.”⁹⁵ It is hence at least suggestive of migration experience among business elites.

Second, emigration played some role in access to political posts. From 1943 to 1975, ten returned émigrés held cabinet seats and four were founders or leaders of political

parties. Twenty members of Parliament were return emigrants or sons of emigrants.⁹⁶ A pattern took root by which émigrés from modest backgrounds made great fortunes abroad and then sought to break through Lebanon's traditional hierarchies.⁹⁷ Some bought their way into politics by giving financial support to existing political bosses, often in exchange for a place on their electoral lists.⁹⁸ Some then became politicians in their own right. In this context, Hussein al-Oweini, a migrant who earned millions in Saudi Arabia and became Prime Minister of Lebanon in 1951 and 1964, established an enduring tradition. Emile Bustani, who likewise made millions as an expatriate, was a parliamentarian positioned to become president when he died in 1963.

Moving from elites to the population at large, a third connection between emigration and power emerges. Avenues of social mobility broadened as migrants embarked toward new destinations. Migration to Australia jumped from an average of 800 in 1961–66 to 3,000 in 1966–71.⁹⁹ Migration to the Arab oil-exporting states took off in the 1960s and grew exponentially after the 1973 surge in oil prices.¹⁰⁰ The majority of Lebanese in the Gulf worked in professional or sub-professional occupations.¹⁰¹ That a sizable minority were manual laborers, however, suggests that Lebanese from ranging backgrounds found a livelihood in petroleum economies. Most migrants were Muslim: 64 percent in a survey of a small sample of Arab oil-exporting countries in 1981–1982,¹⁰² and 72 percent according to data specifically on Kuwait from 1953–1975.¹⁰³ This was the first migratory wave in which Sunni Lebanese participated en masse.¹⁰⁴

Though not precise correlations, these twin trends—that most Lebanese migrants to Arab countries were Muslims and most migrants were highly skilled and highly paid—pointed to new developments in the relationship between emigration and power. Rates of schooling among Muslims had increased dramatically under the Mandate. The number of private Christian schools increased from 451 in 1918–20 to 548 1977–78. In the same period, the number of private Muslim schools mushroomed from forty-one to 300, while Muslims outnumbered Christians in nondenominational public schools nearly two-to-one.¹⁰⁵ By 1974, the percentage of Muslims who had university education (9 percent) was nearly equivalent to that among Christians (10 percent).¹⁰⁶

Schooling gave rise to a generation with expectations for white-collar work that, when unfulfilled in Lebanon, encouraged the search beyond its borders. Education was a tested path to social mobility, but education plus emigration opened grander possibilities. The reverberations of this mobility on access to power in Lebanon were mediated by the Arab oil states as destinations, and specifically through what they offered migrants in terms of resources, integration, and proximity to the homeland. The oil economy opened opportunities for some migrants to garner fabulous wealth, and for even the modest to earn much more than their peers in Lebanon. Barred from obtaining citizenship or buying property in the Gulf, and with minimal outlets for spending there, these migrants sent much of their savings home. Moreover, shorter distances, a function of both mileage and hours in travel, helped Lebanese workers in Arab countries to remain connected and return to their country of birth. Given these aspects, emigration carried benefits familiar from earlier eras. Remittances helped migrants' families improve living standards, educate children, and invest in business

ventures. All were ladders to still greater socioeconomic advancement, with some shared benefits for the communities in which migrants were embedded. At the same time, these benefits did not necessarily result in the same demographic loss for migrants' social groups back home. Flying to Riyadh in 1970 was a much less permanent undertaking than boarding a ship to Brazil in 1870.

The fourth and final element of the relationship between emigration and power in this period was greatly increased outmigration from South Lebanon, which had a transformative effect on the Shi'i community. More than any other region, the South suffered successive hardships due to the Arab-Israeli conflict, such as the collapse of economic ties to Palestine in 1948 and cross-border fighting by Palestinian guerrillas and Israeli forces after the late 1960s. Against a backdrop of state neglect and exploitative practices by monopolies, the region also experienced a breakdown in its tobacco-centered agricultural economy. Scores of sharecroppers and small farmers found themselves bankrupt and forced off the land.¹⁰⁷ By 1975, 50 percent of Shi'a in the Bekaa and 65 percent in South Lebanon had abandoned their villages. Some three-quarters settled in Lebanese cities and the remainder went abroad, chiefly to Africa and the Gulf.¹⁰⁸

Most migrants settled in Beirut's southern suburbs; one third of Shi'i Lebanese resided there by the early 1980s.¹⁰⁹ Though the suburbs were considered a "misery belt," urbanization expanded access to new occupations, media, and technology, as well as opportunities for people to discover their shared identity and grievances. Accompanying such socioeconomic change was expansion in education. The number of predominantly Shi'i schools increased from eleven in 1920 to 137 by 1978,¹¹⁰ while the number of students in South and Bekaa alone more than tripled between 1959 and 1973.¹¹¹ Still, these advances lagged behind those of Lebanon's other major Muslim sect. In 1960, Sunnis and Shi'a each comprised 27 percent of all students in Lebanese public elementary schools. Among middle and secondary school students, however, 40 percent were Sunni and only 18 percent Shi'i.¹¹² Secondary education among Sunnis remained more than twice that of Shi'a in 1971.¹¹³

Like all Lebanese, many educated Shi'a emigrated because their training yielded greater returns abroad than at home. Yet to a greater extent for the South than other regions in this era, the relationship between emigration and education revealed a substitution effect as well as a multiplier effect.¹¹⁴ A long history of migration linked South Lebanon to Africa, where developing economies, minimal competition, and scant regulation enabled entrepreneurial migrants to make great profits with little formal education. Observers noted that, given these dimensions of African countries as destinations, émigrés maintained close ties and returned to Lebanon more than migrants to Europe or the Americas.¹¹⁵ Some returned to become a "nouveau riche" in the South, where they bought land and built commercial enterprises. These migrants, together with those who became salaried workers in Lebanese cities, forged a new Shi'i bourgeoisie.¹¹⁶ Émigrés invested capital in banks, industries, real estate, and other business ventures.¹¹⁷ In some towns and villages neglected by the state, returned migrants assumed leadership over socioeconomic development.¹¹⁸

Nonetheless, this local-level influence did not precipitate a breakthrough at the national level.¹¹⁹ In the quest for political status commensurate with their wealth, successful Shi'i émigrés found their aspirations blocked by two obstacles: nationally, by their disadvantaged position in the Lebanese confessional system and internally, by the community's domination by a very few traditionally aristocratic Shi'i families. Thwarted expectations gave rise to a constituency for political opposition. This was traditionally channeled into the Communist Party. Then in the 1960s, a charismatic cleric named Musa al-Sadr offered an alternative platform for expression of grievances as Shi'a.

In migrants and returned migrants, Sadr found both popular and monetary support.¹²⁰ He held repeated meetings with returnees, from small dinners to crowded rallies, during which he solicited backing and financial contributions. He praised migrants in speeches and press statements and spent the first seven months of 1967 visiting Shi'i Lebanese across Africa.¹²¹ Like Shi'i leaders before and after him, Sadr used migrant donations for schools, clinics, mosques, and religious education. This redistribution of resources from affluent expatriates to needy residents helped improve conditions for the community as a whole. It also helped rally support for Sadr's 1974 launch of the Movement of the Deprived. The movement was a revolution in the political organization of Shi'i Lebanese as a sect advancing its interests vis-à-vis other sects. The movement created the militia Amal, from which some members left to create a rival movement, Hezbollah, in 1985.

Access to and struggles over power during the decades following Lebanese independence revealed both the cumulative impact of previous migration and the changing character of new waves. Emigration during the prior era compounded social and economic disparities; subsequent emigration made some inroads toward offsetting them. By the second half of the century, the continued broadening of the "who" of emigration to include new groups and peripheral regions diffused the profits of labor abroad. Yet due to shifts in the "where" of emigration, these benefits did not carry the demographic losses that typified previous waves. Labor migration to the Gulf and Africa enabled much greater connectedness to the homeland. Through remittances, investments, and return, it heightened resources and expectations among disadvantaged groups. This improved the livelihoods of many, yet also stoked conflict. A century of emigration contributed to an imbalance between demography, economic privilege, and institutional power. This added fire to tensions long boiling in Lebanese society.

Migration in War and Reconstruction, 1975–2010

By the 1970s, many of Lebanon's poorer Muslim communities charged that Christians enjoyed political and economic power disproportionate to their share of the population. Leftist movements called for reform or elimination of the confessional system. The resultant mobilization, complicated by the Palestine Liberation Organization's armed base in Lebanon, was the backdrop to the eruption of civil war in 1975. What began as a standoff between leftist challengers and rightist defenders of the status quo

descended into overlapping inter- and intrasectarian wars, as well as battles between regional and international forces played out on Lebanese soil. Fifteen years of devastating violence left some 100,000 people killed, 100,000 permanently injured, a third of the population displaced, \$25 billion in physical assets destroyed, and inflation of 500 percent.

The war had a colossal impact on every aspect of Lebanon, including intersectarian struggles for power. The 1989 Taif Accord that ended the war affirmed Syria as the main arbiter in Lebanese affairs. It also altered the Christian-Muslim ratio of government seats to 50/50. It increased the power of the Sunni prime minister and the Shi'i parliament speaker, and decreased that of the Maronite president. The three leaders were regarded as a governing troika, yet the prime minister occupied the strongest role.¹²² A Sunni-Shi'i rivalry became the main political cleavage, hardening after demonstrations for and against Syria's withdrawal from Lebanon gave rise to the Sunni-dominant March 14th and Shi'i-led March 8th coalition. Rival Maronite parties aligned with each. The 2009 parliamentary elections testified to the sectarian character of the power struggle. March 14th won 88 percent of all seats allotted for Sunni Muslims and March 8th won 88 percent of all seats allotted for Shi'i Muslims. Maronites' seats split 48/62 between the two.¹²³ Each pole of the Lebanese political spectrum supported a different foreign policy. The main Sunni party was oriented toward the United States, Saudi Arabia, and the rebellion beginning in Syria in 2011. Shi'i parties allied with Iran and the beleaguered Syrian regime.

On first glance, the new sectarian-political landscape seemed attributable to groups' different experiences in the civil war, changes to the state established by Taif, or foreign intervention. Some saw it as a reflection of a larger Sunni-Shi'i battle consuming the Middle East.¹²⁴ Emigration appeared to be a factor to the degree that it, along with fertility rates, rendered Shi'a and Sunnis Lebanon's largest sects, and reduced Maronite numbers to a more distant third.¹²⁵ Yet consideration of only the relative size of sectarian groups oversimplifies the multifaceted feedbacks of migration upon domestic politics. A more complete picture requires attention to how migration contributes to both socioeconomic change and structures of influence, as shaped by variation in migrants' circularity, connectedness to the homeland, and repatriation of resources.

As before, the effect of emigration built upon trends from prior eras. Yet it also reflected the impact of the civil war itself. The war unmoored preexisting structures of social, economic, and state powers, and migration was part of the process through which groups seized them anew. Though evidence is insufficient to test these claims definitively, I propose that different migratory trajectories contributed to producing different types of power among sectarian communities in the postwar period. Among Sunnis, migration gave rise to tycoons who came to exercise far-reaching power over economic sectors and governmental decision making. Shi'a also saw some émigrés become very wealthy, but their migration had its greatest political impact via a broader-based social mobility that supported collective organization. In contrast to both, Maronites experienced emigration as a demographic liability with minimal economic gain. I probe the plausibility of this interpretation through several points.

First, civil war migration propelled unparalleled flight from across Lebanese society. One oft-cited estimate is that 990,000 Lebanese left the country from 1975 to 1989, or 40 percent of the total population.¹²⁶ Much of this migration proved permanent. Choghig Kasparian's survey of Lebanese households estimated that nearly three-quarters of migrants departing between 1975 and 1990 went to Western Europe, North America, or Australia, destinations where migrants typically settled for good. Over 70 percent of migrants acquired a second nationality and 64 percent had no intention of returning to Lebanon.¹²⁷ Emigration continued after the civil war, with another 10–14 percent of Lebanese citizens migrating between 1992 and 2007.¹²⁸ Scientific studies by both Kasparian and Lebanese University statistician Anis Abi Farah estimated that Maronites, Sunnis, and Shi'a migrated in roughly equivalent numbers.¹²⁹

Second, a closer look within these trends reveals linkages between the "who" and "where" of migration. Some countries where previous waves of Lebanese migrants had been mostly Christian, such as Australia and the United States, saw inflows of Muslims and Christians in nearly or greater than equal measure.¹³⁰ Other new flows crystallized due to refugee policies, such as the one that brought many Shi'a to obtain asylum in Germany. Nonetheless, enduring associations remained between sect and destinations of greater or lesser permanency. Kasparian's survey found that most Lebanese migrants to the least permanent migratory destinations, namely Arab countries and Africa, were Muslim. Most migrants destined to typically permanent destinations, such as North America and Australia, were Christian.¹³¹ South Lebanon remained the region most likely to send migrants to Africa.¹³² Of Muslim respondents who considered migrating, the plurality sought to go to Arab countries. Of Christian respondents who considered migrating, the plurality sought to go to North America.¹³³ Information International's analysis uncovered comparable patterns. It estimated that the predominantly Shi'i South and Nabatieh districts produced 22 percent of Lebanon's emigrants from 1991–2000, yet 39 percent of those who migrated temporarily for work purposes only. In contrast, predominantly Maronite Mount Lebanon produced 34 percent of all migrants and 27.5 percent of strictly temporary ones.¹³⁴ Qualitative assessments reiterated the impression that migrants to Africa were primarily Shi'i, that Sunnis migrated chiefly to the Gulf, and Christians tended to prefer migration to Western countries.¹³⁵

Third, migration appears to sap the power of Maronite Lebanese vis-à-vis other religious communities. Violence between Christian militias, as well as between them and Syria, spurred flight from East Beirut during the last years of the war. Investigations at the time found that most of these migrants did not intend to return.¹³⁶ The characteristics of their destinations predicted likewise. Christian migrants departed primarily for France, Australia, the United States, and especially Canada.¹³⁷ According to the 1991 Canadian census, 77 percent of Lebanese immigrants identified as Christian, and the overwhelming majority had arrived since 1976.¹³⁸ This and other top destinations for Christian migrants were countries in which cultures of migrant absorption facilitated permanent settlement. Their political economies rendered it unlikely that émigrés would amass the dramatic wealth possible in some other migrant destinations. Tax structures and cost of living made it likely that they would spend much of their earnings in their countries of settlement.

Fourth, migration contributed to a shift in the sectarian character of the economic-political elite. The war's devastation of the economy, as well as the flight of the middle classes and their capital, opened spaces for entrepreneurial émigrés to return and catapult to positions of power. While businessmen-turned-politicians came from all sects, many were Sunnis whose ascendance marked their sect's breakthrough to power in the upper strata of the Lebanese economy.¹³⁹ Rafiq Hariri, prime minister from 1992–98 and 2000–04, stood at their apex. Born to a modest family, Hariri arrived in Saudi Arabia in 1964 and worked as a teacher before becoming a multi-billionaire in construction.¹⁴⁰ He rose to be a larger-than-life figure in Lebanon through philanthropy, a key role in negotiating Taif, and a close relationship to the Saudi royal family. Lebanon had long had a tradition of émigrés consecrating their success through a career in politics, and war circumstances allowed Hariri to follow that path to unprecedented heights. In Paul Salem's words, "Never has one individual wielded such a combination of public and private power in modern Lebanon as has Rafiq Hariri."¹⁴¹ Not only was his personal wealth equal to about one quarter of Lebanon's GDP,¹⁴² but he also spent it "lavishly" to attain sweeping influence over people, institutions, and policy-making.¹⁴³

Hariri's trajectory to power was driven by his particular personality and the unique ways that the war transformed Lebanon's political landscape. Yet it also represented larger trends in the "who" and "where" of emigration at that historical juncture. Primarily, Hariri was able to earn vast riches with dizzying rapidity because he was in Saudi Arabia when the oil boom made it one of the fastest growing economies in the world, and one dependent on migrant labor. Yet Hariri would not have been able to seize the unique opportunities generated by that time and place had he not had certain characteristics as a migrant, namely university education. That he did was reflective of rising rates of education among Sunni Lebanese and the common tendency to seek professional work abroad, as discussed earlier. Though exact statistics are lacking, it is telling that the American University of Beirut recorded that, among its graduates migrating to Muslim countries in the early 1970s, Muslims outnumbered Christians.¹⁴⁴

The Hariri family owned one of the country's largest banks and was primary shareholder in the company awarded control over the reconstruction of downtown Beirut as a center of high-end shopping and leisure. This sweeping role in the postwar economy was likewise outcome, cause, and expression of broader shifts in sect and power. The percentage of professionals in banking who were Muslim jumped from zero in 1950 to 35 percent in 1982–83. The percentage of professionals in industry who were Muslim increased from 33 percent to 44 percent.¹⁴⁵ Aside from Hariri's holdings, Sunnis' obtained majority shares in two of the country's other largest banks and made similar inroads in construction, real estate, and other economic sectors.¹⁴⁶

A Christian financial class, many of whom had benefited from the first waves of migration, thus increasingly shared or ceded control to a Muslim financial class, which gained both capital and lucrative connections during later waves of migration. Some of the latter benefited from the merger and acquisition of the very banks that an earlier generation of financiers had founded with the aid of their own migrant experience or access to migrant investors.¹⁴⁷ Hariri's associates and beneficiaries spanned all sects. Yet his Future Movement became the main political representative of the Sunni

community and his Saudi connections tied him to the region's symbol of Sunni Muslim power. Some members of other sects resented Hariri's disproportionate power,¹⁴⁸ and accused his reconstruction agenda of prioritizing "Sunni Beirut" over other neighborhoods.¹⁴⁹ Hariri's political movement took on greater sectarian dimensions after his assassination until 2005, after which it was led by his son Saad.

Finally, migration during and after the war helped culminate what commentators called the "awakening" or "resurgence" of Shi'a in Lebanon. As Graham Fuller and Rend Francke wrote, "The Lebanese Shi'a ... are the only Arab Shi'a who have pulled themselves up by their bootstraps from an oppressed, despised, isolated, and marginalized community to achieve major political power."¹⁵⁰ Internal and international migration was inextricable from that rise. Migration from South Lebanon to overseas and other parts of Lebanon soared after it fell under Israeli occupation in 1978 and from 1982–2000.¹⁵¹ In 1997, the Lebanese government estimated that 58 percent of all citizens registered as being from South Lebanon—and 88 percent of those from its occupied zones—did not actually reside there.¹⁵²

Some Shi'i emigrants later became business or political elites in Lebanon. Nabih Berri, for example, was born in Sierra Leone and lived in Dearborn, Michigan, before becoming the head of Amal and speaker of the Parliament from 1992 until this writing. However, migration did not launch Shi'a to top echelons of the economy to the same degree, or with the same structural power, as did members of other sects.¹⁵³ Rather, emigration's impact lay in the community's continued transformation from a peripheral peasantry into the ranks of the urban middle class.¹⁵⁴ The character of that mobility was predictable, given lower education rates among Shi'a on the eve of the war. In Ali Faour's 1989 survey of Shi'i villages in south Lebanon, for example, migrants with high school education or lower outnumbered university graduates at a rate of four to one. Eighty-one percent were laborers.¹⁵⁵ When these migrants headed to the same countries as their better-educated compatriots, they entered into different labor sectors. In Faour's study, 16.7 percent of migrants went to the Americas, 20.3 to Europe, 20.42 to Africa, and 40.6 percent of migrants went to Arab countries. Given educational background, those labor migrants to the Gulf typically worked as chauffeurs, plumbers, mechanics, or construction workers.¹⁵⁶ They were less apt to become Hariri-style tycoons

Many migrant laborers would use their earnings to educate their children, but the long-term effects of such investments are yet to be seen. The immediate effect of remittances and migrant capital was in sustaining families during the war and ultimately improving infrastructure and living standards. This greatly altered the map of regional socioeconomic disparities that had been a key grievance for decades. IRFED's path-breaking study of poverty in 1963 had ranked the South as Lebanon's poorest province. A comparable evaluation based on a 1995 survey ranked the South in the upper half of Lebanon's provinces, third after Beirut and Mount Lebanon.¹⁵⁷ In the 1960s, there was arguably little socioeconomic difference between Lebanon's southern and northern peripheries.¹⁵⁸ Today Akkar, Lebanon's northernmost district, is its most deprived region.¹⁵⁹ It also has one of the lowest ratios of migrants to residents in Lebanon.¹⁶⁰ Many Shi'i areas, by contrast, have experienced a renaissance. In the

Beirut southern suburbs, formerly known as a misery belt, monies earned abroad funded a construction boom.¹⁶¹ In the South, landscapes are now dotted by the villas that migrants build as monuments to their success.¹⁶²

From 1997–2004, the North witnessed major deterioration in mean per capita expenditure. The South underwent a significant improvement.¹⁶³ Indeed, the Nabatieh governorate witnessed the country's highest level of growth in per capita private consumption. Though underdevelopment and pockets of deprivation remained, analysts attributed the decline in some aspects of poverty to high rates of international migration and remittances.¹⁶⁴ In the southernmost district, Bint Jbeil, for example, the overwhelming majority of registered residents actually lived in Michigan or Australia.¹⁶⁵ Residents there described the local economy as "living off émigrés."¹⁶⁶ Not only did remittances offer crucial assistance with daily expenditures, but migrants also made considerable investments in local development projects and business initiatives.¹⁶⁷ Migrant earnings rippled down to sustain key business sectors, such as restaurants and hospitality services that catered to émigrés who returned for summer vacation.

This economic mobility was accompanied by political ascendance. The intense rivalry between Hezbollah and Amal made it erroneous to speak of a single Shi'i political movement. Nevertheless, these movements elevated the power of Shi'a as a whole insofar as they offered needed services and employment, mobilized large numbers of supporters in public shows of strength, and became forces in the electoral arena. Their development was a product of many factors, including the formation of militias in a context of state collapse and the galvanizing impact of the Israeli occupation. Foreign backing was also critical, but it came into play only after grassroots empowerment had served as the engine of change.¹⁶⁸ Political representation of Shi'a after 1975 built on pre-1975 foundations of community organizing and self-help to which migrants had made an indelible contribution. Migrants, return migrants, and remittance-receiving residents continued to give to communal organizations in ways that expanded their reach.¹⁶⁹ Beyond this, reports spoke of expatriates who amassed fortunes through diamond trading or other possibly illicit activities, and made sizable contributions to Hezbollah and its projects.¹⁷⁰ Directly and indirectly, migration empowered the social and financial bases of those organizations that gave Shi'a an increasingly forceful voice in Lebanese power struggles. In 2011, the Hezbollah and Amal-led March 8th coalition toppled Prime Minister Saad Hariri and formed its own government.

Conclusion

No observer of Lebanese politics fails to note struggles for power among sectarian communities. Often unnoticed, however, is the role of emigration in shaping them. Emigration can reduce the size of the constituency that sectarian leaders rally to vote, maintain a presence on the land, or claim authority in a political system based on confessional quotas. Yet it does not do so if migrants remain continually connected to the homeland or resettle there. Furthermore, even as migration removes people, it also redoubles opportunities for accessing material resources. For individuals, this has

meant social mobility and prestige. For collectives, this has variously translated into key positions among the country's elite, control of economic sectors, or funding for institutions and social movements. Given the trade-off between demography and wealth, some social groups in the homeland may gain relative advantage due to out-migration while others become disadvantaged. Three factors mediate those outcomes: the identity of those who migrate, their destinations, and the historical timing of the migrations. These factors identify the actors in question and their likelihood of repatriating their persons and capital.

More detailed data is needed to verify the relationship between the "who," "where," and "when" of emigration, as well as their implications for competing social groups in the sending country. Nonetheless, this article has marshaled a wide array of sources on shifts in the distribution of economic benefits and demographic losses over 150 years. This dynamic evolution has helped give rise to the current status of intersectorian power struggles. Facilitated by a particular set of historical circumstances and person-ages, Sunni Lebanese émigrés featured prominently among what one observer called the "rise of a new breed of financiers ... armed with contacts with wealthy Saudi and other Arab personalities."¹⁷¹ Migration offered some of these returned migrants a springboard for far-reaching ownership of economic assets, which translated not only into wealth, but also the social power that comes with command over domestic employment opportunities. No less, it helped them promote a vision of Lebanon as urban and business-oriented.

In contrast to a top-down process spearheaded by émigré tycoons, Shi'i Lebanese appear to be the beneficiaries of migration's contribution to a more bottom-up and dispersed accumulation of resources. Earnings from emigration supported socioeconomic transformation among a once marginalized community as well as a concomitant growth in political organization. In the absence of major sway over sectors of the economy, Shi'i elites have invoked other resources as bargaining leverage in collective struggles, including armed and unarmed mobilization. Broad-based communal empowerment enabled Shi'a to continue to push for a national imagining that integrated piety and resistance, and asserted their community's claim to a central place of the body politic.¹⁷²

For Maronite Lebanese, outmigration over the course of decades came to represent a relative drain on communal power. It likewise reduced their ability to promote a Western and Phoenician sense of Lebanese national identity. This was in part because of Christians' destination to countries where émigrés more typically settled permanently and from where they were unlikely to repatriate massive profits. Today Maronite leaders spearhead such initiatives as granting nationality to diaspora Lebanese and extending overseas voting to expatriates. Facing demographic deficits not offset by economic gains, their challenge is to stem the magnitude of the loss.

Emigration affects access to and struggles over power in myriad ways beyond the intersectorian dimension analyzed here. It also travels through deliberate diaspora interventions in homeland affairs. That topic has received more attention in the literature on transnational migration. However, this article adopted a different focus: oft-overlooked implications for power that result from the cumulative consequences of

large numbers of people leaving a country in pursuit of better lives for themselves and their families. Analysis of their circulations over the *longue durée* illustrates general patterns. It offers a sweeping historical context within which future research can develop and test more specific hypotheses on data that trades breadth for depth.

The impact of emigration upon Lebanon has unfolded in ways unique to its societal fragmentation. Yet its broad contours may be generalizable to other countries of emigration, with outcomes varying in accord with the role of demography and money in struggles for power. As the Lebanese case shows, these outcomes are historically embedded. In their competition for limited resources, people back home respond to and are constrained by formal and informal relationships built in part by prior migratory trajectories. No less, they cope with shifts in the global economy and host countries' restrictions on immigration. The answer to the question of who gains and who loses from emigration, therefore, will continue to evolve.

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