8 Scares and Scars of War

"Violence, Unlike Achilles' lance, does not heal the wounds that it inflicts."
—John Keane, *Reflections on Violence* (1996)

"The animus was always the same: Whether nation, province, or city, whether religion, class or culture—the more one loved one's own, the more one was entitled to hate the other. . . . Through the centuries politicians had exploited this human trait. In the knowledge that hatred can be cultivated with a purpose, they constructed enemies in order to bolster domestic concord."
—Peter Gay, *The Cultivation of Hatred* (1993)

For almost two decades, Lebanon was besieged and beleaguered by every possible form of brutality and collective terror known to human history: from the cruelties of factional and religious bigotry to the massive devastations wrought by private militias and state-sponsored armies. They have all generated an endless carnage of innocent victims and an immeasurable toll in human suffering. Even by the most moderate of estimates, the magnitude of such damage to human life and property is staggering. About 170,000 people have perished; twice as many were wounded or disabled; close to two thirds of the population experienced some form of dislocation or uprootedness from their homes and communities. By the fall of 1982, UN experts estimated that the country had sustained $12 to 15 billion in damages, i.e., $2 billion per year. Today, more than one third of the population is considered to be below the poverty line as a result of war and displacement, (for these and other related estimates, see Hanf 1993: 339–57; Labaki and Abu Rjeily 1993).

For a small, dense, closely-knit society of about 3.5 million, such devastations are, understandably, very menacing. More damaging, perhaps, are some of the sociopsychological and moral concomitants of protracted hostility. The scars and scares of war have left a heavy psychic toll which displays itself in pervasive post-stress symptoms and nagging feelings of despair and

hopelessness. In a culture generally averse to psychoanalytic counseling and therapy, these and other psychic disorders and fears are more debilitating. They are bound to remain masked and unrecognized and, hence, unattended to.

The demoralizing consequences of the war are also visible in symptoms of vulgarization and impoverishment of public life and erosion of civility. The routinization of violence, chaos, and fear only compounded the frayed fabrics of the social order. It drew seemingly nonviolent groups into the vortex of bellicose conflict and sowed a legacy of hate and bitterness. It is in this fundamental sense that Lebanon's pluralism, radicalization of its communities, and consequent collective violence have become pathological and uncivil. Rather than being a source of enrichment, variety, and cultural diversity, the modicum of pluralism the country once enjoyed is now generating large residues of paranoia, hostility, and differential bonding.

It is also in this sense that enmity today, although the outward manifestations of violence have ceased, is deeper, assumes different forms, and is more pervasive than it used to be at the initial stages of hostility. This is why the almost myopic concern with exploring the etiology of violence is not just short-sighted. It has become counter-productive.

Unfortunately, much of literature on civil strife, as I have been repeatedly suggesting, continues to be concerned with its inception or origins. Consistent with the overwhelming bias inherent in most of the leading perspectives on collective violence, explorations of episodes of political unrest in Lebanon, as elsewhere, have also been skewed in that direction. Hence we know too much already about the preconditions, changing political settings (both regional and global), economic disparities, and cultural and psychological circumstances which motivated and predisposed groups to resort to collective protest.

Instructive as such analyses have been, they tell us little about the forces which sustained and escalated violence. Nor do they disclose the changing forms of violence. More striking, perhaps, they do not help in understanding how seemingly ordinary citizens get entrapped in it and how traumatized groups come to cope with chronic hostility and fear. Likewise, this obsession with the origin of violence tells us comparatively little about the impact of the war on collective memory, on changes in group loyalties, collective psychology, perceptions, and changing attitudes toward the "other."

At least in the case of Lebanon this obdurate exercise has become rather futile; at best a laborious elaboration of the obvious. For example, it is not very uncommon that a fragile, pluralistic society caught up in regional and

superpower rivalries should display a high propensity for violence. The lack of political integration in such fragmented political cultures, has been cited over and over again as a major cause, indeed a prerequisite for political unrest. One could, likewise, write volumes about the destabilizing impact of internal socioeconomic disparities, the presence of Syrians, Palestinians, Israelis, or the unresolved regional and global rivalries without adding much to what we know already. It is hoped that the evidence provided thus far, both historical and recent, is sufficient to dispel the need for further substantiation of such uncontested realities.

What is, however, in need of elucidation is the persistence, growing intensity, shifting targets of hostility, and the way violence acquired a momentum and a life of its own unrelated to the initial sources of conflict. Most atrocious in the case of Lebanon was the way violence splintered further as intercommunal rivalries degenerated into fratricidal bloodletting. The ecology of violence, reinforced by the demonization of the "other," provided the sources for heightened vengeance and entrapment into relentless cycles of retributive in-fighting. Hence, much of the conventional characterization of the initial stages of civil unrest (i.e. "Christian versus Muslim," "right versus left") became readily outmoded as internecine violence and factional turf wars became bloodier and more rampant.

First, and perhaps most compelling, there is a need to elucidate how some of the menacing cruelties of the war were normalized and domesticated. I will here argue that by "sanitizing" the war and transforming it into an ordinary routine, terrorized groups were able to survive its ravages. By doing so, however, they also allowed it to become more protracted and diffused.

Second it is equally interesting to show how the war managed to reshuffle the country's social geography and impose its grotesque and ferocious logic on private and public space. Here again, by seeking shelter in communal solidarities, traumatized groups were able to find temporary relief from the atrocities of war. What enabled them, however, to survive its immediate horrors rendered them more vulnerable to other more menacing long-term consequences. By distancing themselves from the demonized "other," they could of course release their guilt-free aggression with impunity, but they also made themselves easier and more accessible targets to focused and directed acts of hostility. Casualties on both sides mounted. More damaging, the prospects for reconciliation and peaceful coexistence became unlikely.

Finally, and more intriguing, various communities displayed strikingly different predispositions and evolved different adaptive strategies to cope

with the cruelties of protracted strife. Hence an anomalous disparity became visible: communities which were victims of a larger magnitude of trauma were not necessarily those which also displayed greater stress and posttraumatic symptoms. An effort will be made to account for this disjunction. How is it, in other words, that some of the more traumatized groups were able to put up with the adversities of war without the accompanying syndromes of distress and demoralization? Such resilience, incidentally, may also give us a clue as to the persistence of violence. This is another seemingly anomalous situation the Lebanese were entrapped in. The more adept they became at adjusting to, or coping with, the cruelties of strife, the more opportunities the war had to reproduce and sustain itself. Once again, the enabling and disabling features became inexorably locked together.

The Domestication of Violence

In some remarkable respects one might well argue that wars in Lebanon, despite some of their appalling manifestations, displayed comparatively little of the bizarre and grotesque cruelties associated with so-called "primitive" and/or "modern" forms of extreme violence, namely; the systematic rape of women by militias, the ritual torture and mutilation of victims, the practice of forcing family members of a family group at knife or gunpoint to kill each other (for further such details, see Wilson 1992). Other than episodic massacres and vengeful acts of collective retribution (Sabra and Chatila, Tal-el-Za'atar, Damour, etc.), there was little to compare to the planned and organized cruelty on a mass scale typical of extermination campaigns and pogroms.

The incivility of collective violence in Lebanon was, nonetheless, visible in some equally grotesque pathologies, particularly those which domesticated killing by rendering it a normal, everyday routine; sanitized *ahdath* (events) bereft of any remorse or moral calculation. A few of these pathologies merit highlighting here.

Collective violence assumed all the aberrant manifestations and cruelties of relentless hostility. Unlike the other comparable encounters with civil strife, which are often swift, decisive, and localized, and where a sizeable part of the population could remain sheltered from its traumatizing impact, the Lebanese experience has been much more protracted and diffuse. The savagery of violence was also compounded by its randomness. In this sense, there is hardly a Lebanese today who was exempt from these atrocities either

directly or vicariously as a mediated experience. Violence and terror touched virtually everyone.

Fear, the compulsion for survival, and efforts to ward off and protect oneself against random violence had a leveling, almost homogenizing, impact throughout the social fabric. Status, class differences, and all other manifestations of privilege, prestige, social distinctions, which once stratified and differentiated groups and hierarchies in society, somehow melted away. At least for the moment, as people fell hostage to the same contingent but enveloping forces of terror and cruelty, they were made oblivious of all distinctions; class or otherwise. Other than those who had access to instruments of violence, no one could claim any special privilege or regard. As Mai Ghoussoub poignantly put it, when people are suddenly thrown together into anguished corridors and damp cellars, their status, as well as their bodies, is squeezed:

> The Civil war that sprang upon the country very soon engulfed the neighbourhood in which Farid's second home was located. The stagnant, cozy routines of its inhabitants were so abruptly disrupted, and their streets turned so easily into an apocalyptic battlefield, that it was as if it had all happened under the spell of some magician's wand. The settled little hierarchies of these petty bourgeois clerks, these shopkeepers and their families, were suddenly huddled into anguished corridors and damp cellars, in which their status was squeezed as well a their bodies. The powerful and the less powerful, the compassionate and the unfeeling, the arrogant and the timid were brought to one same, common level in their struggle for survival. Nothing of what had once been mattered any longer, in the apocalyptic fires that governed their fate at this moment. They all feared the streets, and submitted willingly to the chaos of control by trigger-happy fighters (Ghoussoub 1998: 66).

Equally unsettling, the war had no predictable or coherent logic to it. It was everywhere and nowhere. It was everywhere because it could not be confined to one specific area or a few combatants. It was nowhere because it was unidentified or linked to one concrete cause. Recurring cycles or episodes of violence erupted, faded, and resurfaced for no recognized or coherent reason.

The warring communities had also locked themselves into a dependent relationship with violence and chronic conflict. It was in this sense that violence became both protracted and insoluble. It was a form of self-entrapment

that blocked all avenues of creative peaceful change. It was also sustained by a pervasive feeling of helplessness — a demoralized and obsessive dependency on external patrons and foreign brokers. It was then that violence started to assume a "tunnel vision" effect; i.e., a tendency to focus, almost obsessively, on one's involvement in the conflict to the exclusion of any other relevant course of action. In acute cases, every action, every statement, and every institution acquired value and meaning in relation to the conflict itself. So much so, in fact, that some observers at the time went so far as to suggest that in Lebanon violence and chronic fear became an intrinsic part of society's ethos and mythology. It became an absorbing and full-time concern that overshadowed many other societal, communal, and individual interests (Azar 1984: 4). It may sound like a cliché, but violence became a way of life; the only way the Lebanese could make a statement or assert their beings and damaged identities. Without access to instruments of violence, one ran the risk of being voiceless and powerless. The meek inherited nothing. This is perhaps one of the most anguishing legacies of the arrogance and incivility of violence.

Abhorrent as it was, the fighting went on largely because it was, in a sense, normalized and routinized. In the words of Judith Shklar (1982) it was transformed into an "ordinary vice;" something that, although horrible, was expectable. The grotesque became mundane, a recurrent every-day routine. The dreadful and outrageous were no longer dreaded. Ordinary and otherwise God-fearing citizens could easily find themselves engaged in events or condoning acts which had once provoked their scorn and disgust. In effect, an atrocious raging war became, innocuously, *ahdath*. This "sanitized" label was used casually and with cold indifference; a true wimp of a word to describe such a dreadful and menacing pathology. But then it also permitted its hapless victims to "survive" its ravages.

This is precisely what had transpired in Lebanon: a gradual pernicious process whereby some of the appalling features of protracted violence were normalized and domesticated. Killing became inconsequential. Indeed, groups engaged in such cruelties felt that they had received some kind of cultural sanction or moral legitimization for their grotesque deeds. Those witnessing these horrors were also able, by distancing themselves from their gruesome manifestations, to immunize themselves against the pervasive barbarism. Witnessing and coping with the dreaded daily routines of war became also remorseless and guilt-free.

The manifestations of such normalization are legion. In the early stages of the war, when bearing arms and combat assumed redemptive and purgative features, any identification with the garb, demeanor, or life style of

fighters and militia groups became almost chic — a fashionable mode of empowerment and of enhancing one's machismo. Belligerency, in fact, was so stylized that groups literally disfigured themselves to ape such identities. Bit by bit, even the most grotesque attributes of the war became accepted as normal appendages to rampant chaos and fear. Literary accounts and personal diaries, often in highly evocative tones, recorded such pathologies with abandon. The daily body count was greeted with the same matter-of-factness, almost the equivalent, of a weather forecast. Fallen bodies, kidnapped victims, and other casualties of indiscriminate violence became, as it were, the barometer by which a besieged society measured its temporal daily cycles.

The most dismaying no doubt is when those grotesque features of war begin to envelop the lives of innocent children. All their daily routines and conventional modes of behavior — their schooling, eating and sleeping habits, playgrounds, encounters with others, perceptions, daydreams and nightmares, their heroes and role models — were inexorably wrapped up in the omnipresence of death, terror, and trauma. Even their games, their language became all warlike in tone and substance. Their makeshift toys, much like their fairly tales and legends, mimicked the cruelties of war. They collected cartridges, empty shells, and bullets. They played war by simulating their own gang fights. They acquired sophisticated knowledge of the artifacts of destruction just as earlier generations took delight in identifying wild flowers, birds, and butterflies.

There is hardly an aspect of Lebanese children's lives, and this is certainly more so for adolescents who were involuntarily drawn into the fray of battle, that is exempt from such harrowing encounters. They have all been homogenized by the menacing cruelties of indiscriminate killing and perpetual anxieties over the loss of parents and family members. These and other such threats, deprivations, and indignities continue to consume their psychic energies and traumatize their daily life. Successive generations of adolescents have, in fact, known little else.

Norbert Elias's notion of the "sanitization of violence" could be of relevance here. It will most certainly help us in understanding not only how violence is camouflaged, even stylized so that it no longer seemed offensive, but also how in the process it becomes protracted and insoluble (Elias 1988). During certain interludes, these same horrors were not only bereft of any moral outrage, but also managed to become sources of fascination and venues for public amusement and entertainment. The war, in other words, began to acquire some of the trappings of a spectacle, not unlike the morbid

fascination frenzied spectators encounter in the stylized rituals of a Spanish bullfight! (Marvin 1986: 133–34). In this recent book *On Killing* Dave Grossman argues that a continuous presence of images of violence threatens to blur the line between entertainment and the conditioning of fighters and soldiers. He refers to a "stage of desensitization at which the infliction of pain and suffering has become a source of entertainment. . . . we are learning to kill and we are learning to like it." (Grossman 1998: 311).

Mai Ghoussoub (1998) recounts the transformation of Said, a cheerful, gentle and spirited grocer's son, the neighborhood's most beloved boy, who was metamorphosed overnight into a calloused and heartless killer. Said, the pride of his doting parents, was slated to fulfill his father's ambitions by pursuing his studies at the Ecole Hôteliére. Instead, he was so enamored, almost entranced and bewitched, by the machismo and charisma of the militiamen, that he could not resist the temptations of becoming one himself, to the chagrin of his dismayed parents. This is how Ghoussoub depicts the episode signaling this anguishing transformation:

> . . . despite his mother's warnings and lamentations, he watches the groups of militiamen who have settled in at the entrance of the building facing his. They have all that he does not. And they are free of all that he has. The sad, heavy, constant presence of his parents worrying about him. Asking him to hide and keep a low profile, to smile, like his father, at every potential customer on the street. The militiamen are dressed in a relaxed but manly way. They sit on their chairs with their heads slightly tilted back, their feet stretched way in front; cigarettes hanging constantly from the corners of their mouths, they smoke and laugh and play cards just there on the pavement, next to the door of the building. When a jeep stops with a great sudden screech of its brakes, two lithe and powerful young men jump out of it, adjust the position of their kalashnikovs on their shoulder and give big, generous handshakes to each one of the militiamen that Said sees from his balcony. To Said these men are beautiful. The glamour that emanates from them fills his heart with dreams. He would like to belong to these men, to be as attractive as they are, to feel as young and powerful as they feel, instead of totting in his miserable little apartment (Ghoussoub 1998: 81).

This facile, almost effortless and light-hearted socialization of innocent adolescents into militancy is another disheartening legacy of the arrogance

and incivility of collective violence. Said's case is far from anomalous. Legions of such recruits, often from privileged families, stable and entrenched middle-class groups, became willing volunteers to join the ranks of militias as regular fighters or subsidiary recruits. If one were to believe autobiographical accounts and obituaries of fallen fighters (often doctored to heighten notions of self-sacrifice, daring, and fearlessness) they were all lionized into heroes. On the whole though, particularly during the early rounds of fighting, one saw evidence of over-zealous fighters buoyed by the bravados of their savagery and warmongering. This is again a reminder that killing is not a byproduct of some crazed deranged monster-like creatures driven by the frenzy of atavistic and irresistible compulsion for aggression. Rather, it is more often the outcome of ordinary people being induced by like-minded peers or the aura of bearing arms in defense of threatened values.

This is precisely what Primo Levi had in mind when he cautioned: "Monsters exist, but there are very few of them to present any real danger. Those who are dangerous are the ordinary men" (Levi 1987: 73). More anguishing is to bear witness to how ties of trust, intimacy, benevolence, and caring among neighbors were readily deflected and deformed into enmity. Once embroiled in such structured and heightened enmity one is compelled to take revenge for his group even though he might bear no particular grudge against those he is driven to kill. Here, as well, entrapped combatants flung themselves, often irrationally, into a relentless war of gangfights linked to one concrete cause. Recurring cycles or episodes of violence erupted, faded, and resurfaced for no recognized or coherent reason.

Multiple and Shifting Targets of Hostility.

Unlike other comparable experiences with protracted collective violence, hostilities were not confined to a limited and well-defined number of combatants and adversaries. By the spring of 1984, there were no fewer than 186 warring factions—splinter groups with different backgrounds, ideologies, sponsors, grievances, visions, and justifications as to why they had resorted to armed struggle.

This bewildering plurality of adversaries and shifting targets of hostility has rendered the Lebanese experience all the more gripping and pathological. For example, from 1978 to 1982, the interlude falling between the two Israeli invasions, the country was besieged and beleaguered by every conceivable form of collective violence and terror. The sheer volume and magnitude of such incidents peaked in comparison to all other "rounds" or

phases of the war. Keeping track of who is fighting whom, the swift oscillation in proxies and sponsors, the targets of hostility and the motives propelling and sustaining the violence, is a dizzying and perplexing task.

Virtually no area in the country was spared the ravages of war. All traditional battlegrounds were ablaze. East Beirut was still under siege from relentless Syrian bombardments. Many residents had no choice but to seek shelter, much as they resented it, in West Beirut. Though at the time the neighborhoods of West Beirut were still riven with turf battles between the Mourabitoun and other Sunni Muslim rivals, the area was considerably safer than the heavy and devastating artillery the Syrian army was lobbing on Achrafieh. Both suburbs of Beirut were embroiled in intra-communal turf wars. After Bashir Gemayyel had, in the spring of 1977, gained effective control of the Lebanese Forces (a coalition of all Maronite militias comprising the Phalange, Tanzim, Tigers, and Guardina of the Cedars), he proceeded to consolidate his powers by subduing his potential rivals. Hence there were repeated incursions into the strategic coastal enclaves of Dany Chamoun's Tigers, particularly the military installations at Safra and Amsheit. These were finally overrun (on July 7, 1980), after bloody and fierce assaults that wiped out more than 150 innocent civilians. Christian militias were also engaged in intermittent clashes with Armenian leftists and the Syrian National Party (PPS).

On the southern fringe, confrontations between Amal and the Communist Action Group were already degenerating into open shootouts, a preamble to the more contentious struggles between Amal (Syrian proxy) and Hizbollah (Iran proxy). Further north, Franjieh militias were still trying to thwart the encroachment of Gemayyel's Lebanese Forces into their traditional fiefdom. In June of 1978 Bashir's commandos made that fateful crossover which ended in the tragic massacre at Ihden where more than 40 members of the Franjieh clan were murdered, among them Tony (the heir apparent to the clan's leadership) along with his wife and child.

In Tripoli, Sunni centrists, supported by the Syrians, Sunni radicals, the PLO and Muslim fundamentalists, were engaged in pitched battles. In the central Beqa', Bashir Gemayyel had hoped to link up with Zahlé, the area's largest Christian enclave. Armed and assisted openly by the Israelis, he was overzealous in his foray. The Syrians, refusing to allow such an affront to their hegemony in so strategic a region, besieged the town and after three months drove Bashir out of the Beqa'.

The Palestinians and Shi'ites were also embroiled in their own pernicious strife between and among their various factions. In addition to the ongoing rivalry between pro-Syrian Amal and pro-Iranian Hizbullah, the latter were

split further between those loyal to indigenous leaders like Sheikh Fadlallah and those affiliated to Iranian clerics in the Beqa'. The infighting within the various Palestinian factions was also unabated. Pro-Iraqi and pro-Syrian groups sought to resolve their regional and ideological rivalries in Lebanon. So did Arafat loyalists and those opposed to him.

This became much more pronounced in the wake of mounting public discontent with the PLO's disgraceful conduct during the Israeli invasion of 1982. Syria deployed several of its local proxies to undermine Arafat. It bolstered the "Palestine Salvation Front" with the military units of Abu Musa, the dissident Fatah rebel. Along with Syria's Sa'iqa and the Yarmouk brigade, they battled Arafat's forces from mid-1983 onward. In Tripoli they were joined by the local 'Alawi militias and other Syrian client groups such as the Ba'th and the Syrian Nationalists (SSNP).

Marginal ethnic groups like Armenians and Kurds, as if drawn into the vortex of belligerency by contagion, also found alibis to redress their differences by resorting to arms.

The most beleaguered region was, of course, the South. Added to the inveterate splits between the traditional Zuáma and scions of feudal and neofeudal families, the South was splintered further by the volatile and vacillating hostility between and among the various Shi'ite and Palestinian factions, exacerbated by the presence of the Israeli-backed Saad Haddad's South Lebanese Army (SLA). The major breach between Amal and Hizbullah, fueled by their Syrian/Iranian patronage, was also compounded by the emergent hostility between Palestinians and Shi'ite villagers. Embittered by the havoc and terror Palestinians were spawning in the South, some of the Shi'ites of Jabal Amil were drawn into the SLA.

So multiple, so various and so explosive are the sources of belligerency that South Lebanon is doubtless today the world's most perennial war zone and killing field; a peerless example of "low intensity conflict" that never goes away. Given the mounting casualties, the prefix "low" does not do justice to the magnitude of cruelties the southerners are subjected to. Its hapless victims live in constant fear of being killed or displaced without anticipating or recognizing the identity of their victimizers. Villagers are not only terrorized by the turf wars of warring factions, they are also the surrogate victims of state-sponsored armies. Indeed, villagers in the South could well be bombarded by at least six different sources: Israelis, Syrians, Palestinians, the so-called Republic of Free Lebanon (SAL), UNIFEL and the Lebanese Army, if and when it ventured South.

Is this not the ultimate in incivility, a feature that compounds the futility and impunity of violence? Innocent citizens are victimized without being

cognizant of the source or identity of their victimizers. In this regard it might be argued that Palestinians, Jews, Armenians, Kurds, Corsicans, Ulster Catholics, Basques, Bosnians, Serbs, Croats, and other victims of collective suffering are, perhaps, more privileged. They can, at least, identify and mobilize their outrage against those who might be held accountable for their suffering. The Lebanese are still unable, as a result, to vindicate their collective grievance. They have been homogenized by fear, terror and grief, but remain divided and powerless in identifying and coping with the sources of their anguish. Hence, they are gripped by a crushing sense of impotence and entropy. They are bitter but cannot direct or mobilize their fury and rage toward recognized targets.

The Reterritorialization of Identities

Another striking and unsettling feature of protracted and displaced hostility is the way the Lebanese had been caught up, since the outbreak of fighting in 1975, in an unrelenting process of redefining their territorial identities. Indeed, as the fighting blanketed virtually all regions in the country, few were spared the anguish of uprootedness from their spatial moorings. The magnitude of such displacement is greater than commonly recognized. Recent estimates suggest that more than half, possibly two thirds, of the population has been subjected to some transient or permanent form of uprootedness from their homes and communities. (see Labaki and Abou Rjeily 1993).

Throughout the war, in other words, the majority of the Lebanese were entrapped in a curious predicament: that painful task of negotiating, constructing, and reconfirming a fluid and unsettled pattern of spatial identities. No sooner had they suffered the travails of dislocation by taking refuge in one community, than they were again uprooted and compelled to negotiate yet another spatial identity or face the added humiliation of reentry into their profoundly transformed communities. They became, so to speak, homeless in their own homes, or furtive fugitives and outcasts in their own communities.

The sociopsychological consequences of being dislodged from one's familiar and reliable landmarks, those of home and neighborhood, can be quite shattering. Like other displaced groups, the Lebanese became disoriented and distressed because the terrain had changed and because there was no longer a neighborhood for them to live in and rely upon. "When the landscape goes," says Erikson "it destroys the past for those who are left:

people have no sense of belonging anywhere" (Erikson 1976). They lose the sense of control over their lives, their freedom and independence, their moorings to place and locality and, more damaging, a sense of who they are.

Those bereft of place become homeless in at least three existential senses: they suffer the angst of being dislodged from their most enduring attachments and familiar places; they also suffer banishment and the stigma of being outcasts in their neighborhoods and homes; and finally, much like the truly exiled, they are impelled by an urge to reassemble a damaged identity and a broken history. Imagining the old places, with all their nostalgic longings, serves as their only reprieve from the uncertainties and anxieties of the present.

The effusive war literature, particularly the generation of so-called "decentrist" woman writers and other disinherited liberals, is clearly symptomatic of efforts to grapple with such damaged identities. A growing number of such exiled and uprooted writers felt homeless in their own homes. Much like the earlier generation of exiled Lebanese and Syrian poets (e.g. Gibran and Rihani), who had transformed the anguish of their uprootedness into inventive literary movements (the Pen Bond and the Andalousian Group), they too found shelter in a "poetics of disaster." (See Alcalay 1993: 99). But this brief, blissful interlude turned much too afflictive as the tensions between the vibrant Beirut of old and its descent into anomie became more flagrant. Khalil Hawi's suicide on the eve of the Israeli invasion is seen now as a grim icon, a requiem for that dark abyss in Arab cultural history (see Ajami 1998; Alcalay 1993).

Curiously, the women of the "Beirut Decentrists" found some redemption in the war. The chaos, anarchy, meaninglessness, and the ultimate collapse of society gave women, paradoxically, a liberating place and a new voice (for an elaboration of these see, Cooke 1988; Alcalay 1993; Manganaro 1998). Oddly, as society was unraveling itself and the country was being stripped of its identity, women were discovering venues for validating and asserting their own identities. Incidentally, this transformative, redemptive role did not mean that women were in effect challenging patriarchy or that they were partaking in efforts to restore civility in society. As Miriam Cooke put it:.

> Their concern was not to gain acceptance into a predominantly male preserve but rather to register a voice. These voices were rarely heard in what has been termed the public domain. Their content was deemed irrelevant. How could the expression of private experience

> become acceptable outside its immediate confines? How could the apparently mutually exclusive domains of private and public, of self and other, be reconciled? Boundaries had to be challenged and shown to be fluid, elusive. Such a radical reassessment and construction of social and literary order could not be achieved spontaneously. . . .
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> The Lebanese war provided the context. Violence in this case represented universal loss of power, but it also undermined the private/public dichotomy, revealing the private to be public, and the personal to be universal. Private space became everyone's space and it was appropriated literarily in a collective endeavor to express and thereby understand the reign of unreason (Cooke 1988:87).

But even as "voice" or mere writing, the works of women remained marginal and frivolous. The writers themselves harbor few illusions in this regard other than seeing their personal struggles to forge new identities or reconstruct more coherent selves being closely tied to the enveloping malaise surrounding them. Cooke again provides evidence from the works of Ghada Al-Samman, Etél Adnan, Claire Gebeyli, Hoda el-Námani and Hanan al-Shaykh in support of this:

> By the late 1970s, the Beirut Decentrists were using language to create a new reality. Their writings were becoming transformative, even prescriptive. As self-censorship gave way to uninhibited expressions of self-assertion, the hold of the oppressive male critic was shaken. It was only with the breakdown of Lebanon's identity as an independent patriarchal polity that women began to assert their female identity publicly. . . . As the violence persisted and men fought senseless battles or fled, women came to realize that the society of which they were also members was collapsing; unravelling seams revealed the need for collective responsibility, but also for responsibility for the self. The individual had to become aware to survive. The time that was right for assertion of female identity coincided with the disintegration of the country's identity (Cooke 1988: 11–12).

This poignant predicament, i.e. where the horrors of war are transformed into redemptive features, is most eloquently expressed in Hanan al-Shaykh's novel, *The Story of Zahra*. The torrents of war do not only render all conventions irrelevant and sweep away the hollowness of daily routine and restore normality. They accomplish much more: they became sources of il-

lumination and self-discovery. Indeed, given the catalogue of horrors Zahra was subjected to in her "normal" life (i.e. intimate violence, incest, rape, arranged marriage, divorce), the war seemed more than just a blissful antidote and return to normality. In her own words, it made her "more alive and more tranquil."

> This war has made beauty, money, terror and convention all equally irrelevant. It begins to occur to me that the war, with its miseries and destructiveness, has been necessary for me to start to return to being normal and human.
>
> The war, which makes one expect the worst at any moment, has led me into accepting this new element in my life. Let it happen, let us witness it, let us open ourselves to accept the unknown, no matter what it may bring, disasters or surprises. The war has been essential. It has swept away the hollowness concealed by routines. It has made me ever more alive, ever more tranquil (al-Shaykh 1986: 138).

Equally devastating has been the gradual destruction of Beirut's and, to a large extent, the country's common spaces. The first to go was Beirut's Central Business District, which had served historically as the undisputed focal meeting place. Beirut without its *Burj*, as the city center is popularly labeled, was unimaginable. Virtually all the vital public functions were centralized there: the parliament, municipal headquarters, financial and banking institutions, religious edifices, transportation terminals, traditional souks, shopping malls, and theaters kept the prewar Burj in a constant state of activity. There, people of every walk of life and social standing came together.

With decentralization, other urban districts and regions in the country served as supplementary meeting grounds for common activities. They, too, drew together, albeit on seasonal and interim bases, groups from a wide cross-section of society, thereby nurturing outlets germane for coexistence and plural lifestyles. Altogether, there were very few exclusive spaces beyond the reach of others. The social tissue, like all seemingly localized spaces, was fluid and permeable.

Alas, the war destroyed virtually all such common spaces, just as it dismantled many of the intermediary and peripheral heterogeneous neighborhoods, which had mushroomed with increasing urbanization in cities like Tripoli, Sidon, and Zahleh. The war did not only destroy common spaces. It also encouraged the formation of separate, exclusive, and self-sufficient

spaces. Hence, the Christians of East Beirut had no compelling urge to cross over to West Beirut for its cultural and popular entertainment. Likewise, one can understand the reluctance of Muslims and other residents of West Beirut to visit resorts and similarly alluring spots of the Christian suburbs. With internecine conflict, quarters within urban districts, just like towns and villages, were often splintered into smaller and more compact enclosures. Spaces within which people circulated and interacted shrunk still further. The sociopsychological predispositions underlying this urge to huddle in insulated spaces is not too difficult to trace or account for.

This compulsion to huddle in compact, homogeneous enclosures further "balkanized" Lebanon's social geography. There is a curious and painful irony here. Despite the many differences that divide the Lebanese, they are all in sense homogenized by fear, grief, and trauma. Fear is the tie that binds and holds them together — three primal fears, in fact: the fear of being marginalized, assimilated, or exiled. But it is also those fears which keep the Lebanese apart. This "geography of fear" is not sustained by walls or artificial barriers as one observes in other comparable instances of ghettoization of minorities and ethnic groups. Rather, it is sustained by the psychology of dread, hostile bonding, and ideologies of enmity. Massive population shifts, particularly since they are accompanied by the reintegration of displaced groups into more homogeneous, self-contained, and exclusive spaces, have also reinforced communal solidarity. Consequently, territorial and confessional identities, more so perhaps than at any other time, are beginning to converge. For example, 44 percent of all villages and towns before the outbreaks of hostilities included inhabitants of more than one sect. The sharp sectarian redistribution, as Salim Nasr (1993) has shown, has reshuffled this mixed composition. While the proportion of Christians living in the southern regions of Mount Lebanon (i.e. Shouf, Aley, Upper Metn) was 55 percent in 1975, it shrunk to about 5 percent by the late 1980s. The same is true of West Beirut and its suburbs. Likewise, the proportion of Muslims living in the eastern suburbs of Beirut has also been reduced from 40 percent to about 5 percent over the same period (Nasr 1993).

Within urban areas, such territorial solidarities assume all the trappings and mythology of aggressive and defensive "urban *'asabiyyas*" which exist, Seurat (1985) tells us, only through its opposition to other quarters. In this sense, the stronger the identification with one's quarter, the deeper the enmity and rejection of the other. Seurat's study also suggests that, once such a process is under way, a mythology of the quarter can develop. In it, the quarter is seen not only as the location where a beleaguered community

fights for its survival, but also as a territorial base from which the community may set out to create a utopia, a world where one may live a "pure" and "authentic" life, in conformity with the community's traditions and values. The neighborhood community may even be invested with a redemptive role and mission (such as the defense of Sunni Islam in the case of Bab Tebbane in Tripoli which Seurat was studying). Hence, the dialectics between identity and politics may be better appreciated. Politics implies negotiation, compromise, and living side by side with "the other." Heightened feelings of identity, however, may lead one to a refusal to compromise, if negotiation comes to be perceived as containing the seeds of treachery that may undermine the traditions, values and "honor" of one's community. In such a context, violence and polarization become inevitable: precisely the phenomena that have plagued Lebanon for so long.

The Spaces of War

Another graphic and poignant consequence of protracted and displaced strife is the way the spaces of war, and their concomitant geographies of fear, started to assert their ferocious logic on public and private spaces. Much of Lebanon's geography and landscape took on the grotesque nomenclature of the war. Equally telling is the ingenuity of its besieged hostages in accommodating this menacing turnover in their spatial surroundings.

Public thoroughfares, crossroads, bridges, hilltops, and other strategic intersections which served as links between communities were the first to be converted. They became treacherous barriers denying any crossover. The infamous "Green Line" (which acquired its notorious label when shrubs and bushes sprouted from its tarmac after years of neglect) was none other than the major thruway (the old Damascus Road) which connected Beirut to its hinterland and beyond. Likewise, major squares, traffic terminals, and pedestrian shopping arcades became desolate "no-man's lands," *al Mahawir al-taqlidiyya* (traditional lines of confrontation) or *khutut al tamas* (lines of confrontation).

While prominent public spaces lost their identity, other rather ordinary crossings, junctures, hilltops, even shops, became dreaded landmarks. The war produced its own lexicon and iconography of places. In an evocative, often searing memoir of her encounters with civil strife in Beirut, Jean Said Makdisi (1990) provides an amusing but instructive "Glossary of Terms Used in Times of Crisis." Schoolboys, oblivious to the location of some of their

country's national treasures, became more attuned to and dazzled by *Galerie Sim'an, Sodeco, al-Matahen, Hayy al-Buseinat, al-Laylaki, Barbir, Bourj al-Murr, Fattal, Mar Mikhail, Khaldeh triangle*, etc. By virtue of their contingent location these, and other such inconsequential places and spaces, became fearsome points of reference and lines of demarcation — part of the deadly logistics of contested space.

When the hostility shifted to internecine confrontations, as it repeatedly did, it assumed the manifestations of factional localized "turf wars" between militias vying to eliminate adversaries or extend the bases of operations. Negotiating one's safe havens within this labyrinthine maze of embattled quarters and dense pockets of shifting allegiances became more cumbersome. Here as well, unknown passageways and winding alleys, because they provided relatively safe access to rerouted roads, acquired a new image and notoriety. Overnight, a road became a barricade or a "flying road-block;" a walled garden became a blockaded stronghold; a street corner turned into a check point. Private space was not spared these tempestuous turnovers in land use. Indeed, the distinctions between private and public space were blurred and lost much of their conventional usage. Just as basements, rooftops, and strategic openings in private homes became part of the logistics of combat, roadways were also "domesticated" as family possessions, discarded furniture and bulky items spilled into the public domain to improvise barricades. Balconies, verandahs, walk-ups, doorways, and all the other open airy and buoyant places the Lebanese craved and exploited with such ingenuity became dreaded spaces to be bolted and shielded. Conversely, dingy basements, tightly sealed corridors, attics and other normally neglected spaces became more coveted simply because they were out of the trajectory of snipers and shellfire. They became places of refuge. (For further details, see: Sarkis 1993; Yahya 1993; Khalaf 1995).

The symbolic meanings and uses of a "house," "home," or "dwelling" space, as Maha Yahya (1993) has demonstrated, were also overhauled. The most compelling, of course is the way the family unit and its private space have been broadened to accommodate other functions, as disengaged and unemployed household members converted or relocated their business premises to their homes. The thriving informal war economy reinforced such efforts and rendered them more effective.

As land turns over, so do our perceptions and commitments to it. Such changes are visible not only in the way the Lebanese are confirming their spatial moorings and the language they employ in asserting their retribalized identities but also in the way their images of the "other," those who intrude on their spaces and beyond, have been profoundly transformed.

Such transformations are, doubtless, a reflection of their attachments and devotions to the places they occupy. The war has had in this regard two diametrically opposed reactions. On the one hand, displaced Christians who have been relocated among their co-religionists in integrated communities have become more spatially anchored. On the other hand, uprooted refugees, largely Shi'ites and other disenfranchised groups, have had a markedly tenuous attachment to the spaces they are compelled to occupy. At both ends, the habitat suffers. As we have seen, the out-migration of Christians has been disproportionately higher than other groups. It is estimated that today they make up not more than 35–38 percent of the total Lebanese population. They have not only shrunk demographically, but also spatially. Salim Nasr (1993) suggests that by the mid-1980s more than 80 percent of the Christians were concentrated in a surface area of about 17 percent of the country. Such contraction was bound to dramatically change their perception and uses of space. Feeling more entrapped and hemmed in within compressed areas, they have become predisposed toward more intensive forms of land utilization. Hence, the eastern suburbs and the lush slopes of the northern mountain ridge are now dense with high rises and other strictly city-like constructions.

While the countryside is being urbanized, the cities and sprawling suburbs are being ruralized. Both are perverse. Dislocated groups that converge on squatted settlements in the city center and urban fringe are generally strangers to city life. On the whole, they are dislodged, dispossessed and unanchored groups, traumatized by fear and raging with feelings of bitterness and betrayal. They are, so to speak, *in* but not *of* the city. Hence, they have no attachments to, or appreciation of, the areas they found themselves in, and are not likely to display any interest in safeguarding or enriching its character. To many, in fact, their makeshift settlements are merely places to occupy and amenities to exploit.

Altogether, and perhaps most unsettling, is the way the tempo of war imposed its own perilous time frames, dictating traffic flows, spaces to be used or avoided. Time, space, movement and interaction all became enveloped with contingency and uncertainty. Nothing was taken for granted anymore. People lived, so to speak, situationally. Short-term expediency replaced long-term planning. Everything had to be negotiated on the spur of the moment. The day-to-day routines, which once structured the use of space and time, played havoc with their lives. Deficient communication, irregular and congested traffic rendered all forms of social interaction fortuitous and unpredictable. One was expected to accomplish much of one's daily activities at unexpected hours depending on the merciless whims of

fighters or the capricious cycles of violence. Beirutis became, as a result, astonishingly adept at making instant adaptations to such jarring modulations and precipitous shifts in the use of time and space.

> The street was suddenly deserted. Beirutis have broken all records for getting out of the way on time. It is incredible to see how quickly a street swarming with people can be transformed into ghostly emptiness. Shopkeepers close their doors and pull down their iron shutters, mothers scoop up their children and run, vendors scuttle away with their carts, and after an even more than usually furious beeping of horns, the traffic jam evaporates in no time at all.
>
> As suddenly as the commotion started, it stopped, and as suddenly as Hamra was emptied, it filled up again; within a few minutes life went on as though nothing had happened (Makdisi 1990:86).

A War System

The resilience of the Lebanese and their adaptive strategies to cope with the cruelties of war would not alone have created the circumstances that allowed the war to go on for so long. What abetted and reinforced the war's duration was that it had evolved an elaborate subculture of its own and became something akin to a "war system." Foremost, the void created by the collapse of state authority (particularly between 1975 and 1990), enabled the war to generate and institutionalize its own groups and networks with its particular structures and interrelated web of rules and obligations. Individuals and agencies that provided access to amenities, vital resources, information, smuggled goods, black markets, and war booty, found new shortcuts and other venues for empowerment and enhanced status. Some were propelled into folk heroes. Others, almost overnight, became acclaimed public figures with no legitimate claims for their prominence other than the access they provided for such ephemeral but coveted goods and services. These and the burgeoning informal, parallel, war economy, with its extortionist and protection rackets, its underclass of new warlords and war profiteers and other well-placed individuals, were understandably reluctant to put an end to a situation that had become their lifeline for power and privilege. They all had a vested interest in maintaining the status-quo of belligerency.

The "war-booty" was a bountiful windfall to large segments of society and not restricted to those directly involved in combat. Given its disguised and clandestine character, it is extremely difficult to ascertain its full magnitude.

It was though, by any criteria, immense. Nor was it an ephemeral or transient feature. It played a major role in reshuffling the conventional socioeconomic strata in society. Indeed during the first two years of the war the fighting for control of Beirut's central business district must have precipitated what some claim to be "the greatest redistribution of wealth in modern Lebanon's history" (Hanf 1993: 329).

Like other nefarious exploits, this "war system" was not entirely indigenous. Regional and global sponsors of local militias funneled in inordinate sums of money. Foreign remittances also poured in large reserves to bolster the war efforts of their respective communities. Most dramatic, however, was the new social stratum of war profiteers, contraband traders, and large-scale looters which flaunted its new wealth and privileges with unrestrained exuberance and abandon.

There is also evidence that the looting of souks, vandalizing of private estates and residential quarters, and the extensive bank robberies were not all the work of amateurs. Much of it was accomplished with the technical assistance of professional pillagers, and safecrackers from Europe, possibly supplied by the Mafia (see, for further details, Randal 1984: 98–100; Petran 1987: 231–32; Winslow 1996: 212–19). Zuhair Muhsin, the leader of Sa'iqa (Syrian-sponsored Palestinian militia) was derisively nicknamed the "Persian" for the quantities of valuable Persian carpets his men looted as they vandalized privileged residential quarters in Beirut.

The string of clandestine and makeshift ports stretching from Junieh to Tripoli, in addition to those appropriated from the state, generated untold revenues for the Lebanese Forces. The Gemayyel militias alone, by barring the government from levying custom duties from Pier Five at Beirut's port, managed to siphon off, it is estimated, more than five billion LP during the first seven to eight years of the war (Winslow 1996: 217). Traffic in hashish and other drugs through the Biqa' Valley was also rampant during this period. The Syrian-Franjieh coalition walked away with the lion's share of such nefarious but lucrative ventures. The Syrian Army in Shtura and Akkar was also involved in protection rackets for the trafficking of consumer durables and other products (Harris 1997: 212). Indeed, the scandalous and extensive corruption and involvement of Syrian soldiers and officers in unscrupulous and self-aggrandizing schemes and activities was a source of embarrassment to the Syrian regime. Efforts were made in fact to rotate those on duty, or to restrict their term, to foil or curtail such opportunities. The magnitude of such complicity was still immense: bribery, sale of arms to local Lebanese militias, cultivation, smuggling and drug trafficking, widespread smuggling

of goods from Lebanon to Syria. Rifat Assad alone, the President's notorious brother, was involved it is reported, in deals worth billions of Syrian pounds (see, *Le Monde* 1984; Avi-Ran 1991: 195, 207).

Incidentally, the Israeli Army fared no better in this regard. The Israelis, too, displayed many of the malevolent symptoms of wanton greed, arrogance, and profligacy typical of any conquering army. Ironically, they came in as peacekeepers. Their 1982 invasion, dubbed as "Operation Peace for Galilee," had little to do with peace-keeping or peace-making. They besieged and bombarded the residential quarters of West Beirut and its dense suburbs, destroyed its infrastructure, and generated the heaviest toll of casualties throughout the war. An estimated 17,000 were killed and 30,000 wounded, mostly innocent citizens (See Labaki and Abou Rjeili 1993: 27; Hanf 1993: 341). As if the massive destruction and legacy of hate and bitterness they left behind was not enough. They also hauled away a hefty reward. Apart from the 520 tons of arms and material, ordinary Israeli soldiers were taken it seems by the manifestations of wealth and the life style of the Lebanese bourgeoisie. Quarters under their control were looted. Nothing was spared: private cars, telephones, telex machines, gadgets and appliances, even wooden school benches! (For further substantiation see Randal 1984: 266–67).

The Magnitude of Trauma and Stress

Since Lebanon was, for nearly two decades, besieged by every conceivable form of collective terror, it is pertinent to assess the impact of these beleaguering encounters on those entrapped in them. As we have seen, the magnitude of damage to human life and property and the psychological and moral consequences of relentless violence have been, by any measure, immense — especially since they involved a comparatively small and fractured society with a bewildering plurality and shifting targets of hostility.

The results of an empirical survey, undertaken in 1983 to probe some of the salient sociopsychological effects of the war, provided a few explicit and systematic measures of such unsettling realities. The sample was extracted from a universe of mostly middle- and upper-middle-class professionals, semi-professionals, businessmen, bankers, university and college professors and instructors, government employees, journalists, and the like residing in three different communities in Beirut. Close to 900 heads of households responded to the questionnaire. Matters such as the changing attitudes and perceptions of the respondents, their everyday experiences during the war,

and their encounters with various forms of traumatization, deprivation, and displacement were explored. The survey also enabled us to assess symptoms of stress, particularly some of the psychological and behavioral disorders induced by the traumas of war.

As shown in table 8.1, close to 75 percent of the respondents had experienced some form of deprivation and 66 percent were compelled to take refuge in shelters. By deprivation is meant being denied water, electricity, and other basic amenities. A fairly large portion, about 55 percent, also suffered property damage and more than 40 percent were displaced from their homes or communities. More traumatizing, 36 percent indicated that they had lost a family member or close relative and slightly more (38%), a close friend or acquaintance. Equally anguishing, one-fourth of the sample reported that they had directly witnessed a war-induced death.

The extent of humiliation, of being insulted, intimidated, or harassed by armed men at check points or street crossings was also fairly high. Close to a third of the respondents suffered such indignities. Also a fairly large portion (21%) had their houses broken into or occupied (19%). While only five

TABLE 8.1 Magnitude of Traumatization
% of Total Respondents

	Respondent	*Family/ Relatives*	*Close Friend*	*Witnessed*	*Average*
Deprivation	74%	53%	58%	36%	55%
Refuge in Shelter	66	50	59	34	52
Property damage	54	42	51	27	43
Displacement	41	37	42	22	35
Death	0	36	38	25	33
Humiliation	33	27	29	26	29
Injury	8	26	32	23	22
House broken into	21	24	22	9	19
House/Property Occupied	19	23	23	12	19
Insult/Harassment	19	18	20	20	19
Imposture	17	20	19	11	17
Car stolen	12	26	20	7	16
Kidnapped	5	21	30	10	16
Assault	4	14	21	22	15
Threats	14	16	18	12	15
Disability	3	10	21	16	12
Detention	6	13	19	7	11

percent of the respondents reported being kidnapped, the proportion leapt to 21 percent among other family members and 30 percent among friends. A slightly higher number suffered injury that required hospitalization; 26 percent among family and relatives and 32 percent among friends. Also 10 percent of the respondent's family and relatives suffered a permanent disability as did 21 percent of their friends.

Though not directly related to the conduct of fighting, car thefts, like other symptoms of the breakdown in law and order and public insecurity, became rampant. Twelve percent were victims of such offenses. It was considerably higher for other family members (26%) and friends (20%). About the same number were victims of imposture, detention, and threats.

The psychological concomitants of trauma, particularly as they manifest themselves in emotional and psychosomatic disorders, behavioral and associational problems, were also quite pervasive. No one, as shown in table 8.2, was spared these stressful and crippling trials. This is, after all, another poignant attribute of all uncivil wars; namely the futility of violence and the legacy of senseless destruction, repressed feelings of guilt, shame, trauma and fear they leave in their trail. The scars and scares of war have a way of resurfacing, often with greater intensity and trauma. They rarely go away. The violated are doomed to be haunted by the ghosts of violence. Most stressful, as reported by respondents, were symptoms of restlessness and instability, inability to concentrate, sleep disorders, depression and other behavioral problems associated with over-reacting, such as excessive smoking. About 49 to 54 percent of the respondents suffered these symptoms from time to time.

The moderate symptoms of stress converged on problems like feelings of desperation, obsessive worry, and eating or psychosomatic disorders. The quality of their social relations, particularly their interactions with family, friends, and colleagues at work were also adversely affected. More than 38 percent cited these as sources of unnecessary tension and friction. The family in particular, especially since it is embedded in a kinship culture sustained by a large residue of close and intimate ties and obligations, was a surrogate victim of such displaced tension. Much of the unappeased hostility and daily frustrations induced by protracted violence is apt to be released in such settings on vulnerable and accessible family members.

Tension within the family was compounded by two seemingly divergent sources of strain. Heads of households and other adult members of the family (particularly males) who had to interrupt their employment, were compelled to become house bound. Hence they were "wasting" inordinate chunks of

TABLE 8.2 Induced Stress and Psychological Disorder
(% of total respondents)

	Never	*Occasionally*	*Often*	*Index*
Psychological Disorders				
Restlessness/ Instability	18.6%	52.0%	14.7%	81.4%
Sleep-disorders	20.2	54.0	10.0	74.0
Depression	21.6	47.0	9.0	65.0
Desperation	32.3	37.6	8.6	54.8
Worry, unjustified fears	28.0	39.0	7.6	54.2
Psychosomatic problems	34.7	30.2	7.8	45.8
Loss of will	39.4	30.7	4.6	40.0
Thoughts of death	45.2	23.6	3.4	30.4
Self-blame	53.0	17.3	2.3	22.0
Behavioral Changes				
Over-reacting	22.6	44.0	14.2	72.4
Over-smoking	38.0	24.8	19.0	62.8
Instability to concentrate	26.2	49.0	5.0	59.0
Over-eating	38.5	30.8	7.0	44.8
Over-drinking	49.5	20.6	4.0	28.6
Unlawful predispositions	53.2	17.0	2.5	22.0
Aggressive tendencies	56.3	13.2	2.6	18.4
Associational and Interaction Problems				
With friends	35.7	38.6	2.7	44.0
With family	30.7	35.5	3.2	42.0
With colleagues	34.8	36.5	4.2	35.0
With spouse	33.9	20.0	2.2	24.6
Sexual	54.5	16.7	1.1	19.0

idle and uncommitted time at home. Such involuntary confinement at home, let alone the demoralization that accompanies such symptoms of disengagement and entropy, became an inescapable source of family discord.

Conversely, families suffered from the other extreme: the involuntary absence of men from home. In addition to those involved in the war, many had to seek employment opportunities outside Lebanon and, hence, suffer

TABLE 8.3 Magnitude of Stressful Disorders

Acute Problems	*Moderate Stress*	*Mild Stress*
Restlessness (81%)	Desperation (55%)	Over-drinking (27%)
Sleep disorders (74%)	Excessive worry (52%)	Problems with spouse (24%)
Over-reaction (72%)	Psychosomatic (46%)	Self-blame (22%)
Depression (65%)	Over-eating (45%)	Unlawful (22%)
Over-smoking (63%)	Problems with friends (44%)	Sexual (19%)
Lack of Concentration (59%)	Problems with family (42%)	Aggression (18%)
Problems with colleagues (40%)	Suicidal (5%)	Preoccupation with death (30%)

the travails of diaspora and extended periods of isolation from home. Both intimacy within and distance from the family were excessive and unwanted. The former exacerbated the intensity of family squabbles and rendered the already beleaguered family setting more vulnerable and testy. The latter did much to "feminize" the household. The absence of men and heads of household for extended interludes undermined patriarchal authority and, more damaging, denied children their conventional male role models. Some of the sociopsychological implications of such disjunctive or defective socialization are grievous.

The results of the survey disclose another seemingly anomalous feature. There was no direct relationship between the magnitude of traumatization and symptoms of stress and psychological disorder. In other words groups who had suffered a larger share of trauma were not necessary those who also displayed greater symptoms of stress. Two factors could readily account for this disparity. First, at the time the survey was conducted, shortly after the Israeli invasion of 1982, Christian respondents and residents of the Eastern suburbs of Beirut who had exhibited such tendencies were inclined then to view the conduct of the war in more positive terms. Since they felt that the fortunes of war were still in their favor, the trials they had suffered were partly assuaged or redeemed. Christians were not as yet afflicted with feelings of *ihbat* (a sense of being defeated or demoralized) they would come to be beset with later. Second, Christian groups had also displayed greater readiness for communal solidarity and mobilization in hard times. Voluntary groups, such as church and neighborhood associations, were active in pro-

viding the needed services and support for welfare and relief. Such mobilization might have redressed some of the sources of tension.

Postwar Barbarism

Postwar interludes, particularly those marked by diffuse and protracted civil strife, anarchy, and disorder, normally generate moods of restraint. People are more inclined to curb their conventional impulses and become more self-controlled in the interest of reappraising and redirecting their future options. Rather than freeing them from their prewar excesses, the war in Lebanon paradoxically induced the opposite reactions. It unleashed appetites and inflamed people with insatiable desires for acquisitiveness, lawlessness, and unearned privileges.

Some of these excesses are so egregious that they assume at times all the barbarous symptoms of the not-so-moral substitutes of war. They generate circumstances under which aggressive emotions could liberate themselves from conventional and civilized constraints. Indeed, most of the conventional restraints that normally moderate people's rapacious and impulsive behavior were neutralized. Boisterous and disorderly behavior was routinized. Some, such as ravaging the country's natural habitat, violation of zoning and building ordinances, embezzlement, fraud, corruption, deficient civic and public consciousness — most visible in the preponderance of low crimes and misdemeanors — are all deeply embedded in the cultural ethos of laissez-faire, excessive economic liberalism, and political clientelism.

For example, mercantilism and its concomitant bourgeois values were always given a free rein in Lebanon. The outcome of such excessive commercialization was already painfully obvious in the prewar years. With staggering increases in land values, commercial traffic in real estate (particularly during the 1960s when the magnitude of urbanization and construction industry were at its peak) became one of the most lucrative sources of private wealth. Hence, the ruthless plundering of the country's scenic habitat and the dehumanization of its living space became starkly visible. In the late 1960s, at the height presumably of Beirut's splendor and golden age, the seasoned world traveler John Gunther was so dismayed by what he saw that he prefaced his chapter on the "Pearl of the Middle East," this way:

> Beirut commits treason against itself. This ancient city, the capital of Lebanon, blessed with a sublime physical location and endowed with

> a beauty of surroundings unmatched in the world, is a dog-eared shamble — dirtier, just plain dirtier, than any other city of consequence I have ever seen.
>
> In the best quarter of the town, directly adjacent to a brand-new hotel gleaming with lacy marble, there exists a network of grisly small alleys which, so far as I could tell, are never swept at all. Day after day I would see — and learned to know — the same debris: bent chunks of corrugated iron, broken boulders or cement, rags, rotten vegetables, and paper cartons bursting with decayed merchandise. Much of the detritus seems to be of a kind that goes with a rich community, not a poor one. The cool and sparkling Mediterranean across the boulevard looks enticing for a swim, until you see that the water is full of orange peel, oil slick, blobs of toilet paper, and assorted slimy objects (Gunther 1969: 281).

With the absence of government authority, such excesses became more rampant. What had not been ravaged by war was eaten up by greedy developers and impetuous consumers. Hardly anything was spared. The once pristine coastline was littered with tawdry tourist attractions, kitschy resorts, and private marinas as much as by the proliferation of slums and other unlawful makeshift shoddy tenements. The same ravenous defoliation blighted the already shrinking greenbelts, public parks, and terraced orchards. Even sidewalks and private backyards were stripped and defiled. As a result, Beirut today suffers, perhaps, from one of the lowest proportions of open space per capita in the world. The entire metropolitan area of the city claims no more than 600,000 square meters of open space. A UN report stipulates that for an environment to qualify as a healthy one, each person requires approximately 40 square meters of space. Beirut's is as low as 0.8 per person (for these and other estimates see Safe 2000).

Rampant commercialism, greed, and enfeebled state authority could not, on their own, have produced as much damage. These now are being exacerbated by the pathos of a ravenous postwar mentality. Those who had so long fell victim to the atrocities of human suffering become insensitive to these seemingly benign and inconsequential concerns or transgressions. Obsessed with survival and harassed by all the futilities of an ugly and unfinished war, it is understandable how those moral and aesthetic restraints which normally control public behavior become dispensable virtues. They all seem much too remote when pitted against the postwar profligate mood that is

overwhelming large portions of society. Victims of collective suffering normally have other, more basic, things on their mind. They rage with bitterness and long to make up for lost time and opportunity. The environment becomes an accessible surrogate target on which to vent their wrath. In a culture infused with a residue of unappeased hostility and mercantilism, violating the habitat is also very lucrative. Both greed and hostility find an expedient proxy victim. The abandon with which ordinary citizens litter and defile the environment and the total disregard they evince for safeguarding its ecological well-being is much too alarming. This is further exacerbated by a notoriously high incidence of excessive quarrying, deforestation, traffic congestion, reckless driving, air and noise pollution, and hazardous motorways which violate minimum safety requirements, let alone the conventional etiquettes and proprieties of public driving.

The sharp increase in traffic violations and fatal car accidents in recent years attests to this. Both the incidence of traffic violations and the impounding or seizing of cars for legal custody — because of forged papers or license plates, lack of inspection or proper registration — have been persistently increasing. From 21,692 seized cars and 192,487 violations in 1993, the number has almost doubled by 1999.

Traffic accidents have also witnessed a corresponding increase. They were naturally low during the war years. For example records of the Information Division of the Internal Security registered not more than six injuries and twenty deaths induced by collisions and car accidents in 1987. The figures increased to 21 and 56 in 1988. From 1993 and on, however, and with the cessation of hostilities, the number of such casualties increased sharply and persistently. From 274 deaths and 2,042 injuries in 1993, the incidence increased correspondingly to 331 and 4,210 in 1999.

Perhaps access to new highways and the recent introduction of radar and new technologies for monitoring roadways may, in part, account for this increase. Clearly though not all, particularly since the increase in violations and other manifestation of reckless driving were visible before such facilities became readily available.

This almost innate cultural disposition to violate or depart from normative expectations is apparent in the preponderance of non-traffic related violations. These, too, have been persistently increasing: from about 10,000 in 1993, 14,000 in 1996 and 18,000 in 1999. The Bureau of Internal Security normally categorizes as "ordinary violations" such infractions as the infringement of protective regulations safeguarding forests, public gardens, sand dunes, archaeological and tourist sites, as well as building and zoning ordinances. Also included are the transgressions of the rules governing hunt-

ing, fishing, quarrying, and municipal and public health requirements. These like all other contraventions of regulations on the use of public utilities, particularly water, electricity, and telephones, become readily abused proxy victims of deflected rage and hostility.

Recently the press has begun to devote some attention to such violations, particularly flagrant instances of environmental abuse, corruption, and the misuse of public funds by high government officials. Many of the other "ordinary" violations, however remain undetected, and the fines are too low to dissuade violators, even if they are apprehended.

If smoking in public spaces were ever to be prohibited by decree, the Lebanese would almost certainly brush the injunction aside like all other restrictions on their impulses and extravagant appetites. Lebanon today is a haven for indulgent smokers. Anyone can indulge, virtually anywhere and to their lungs' dismay, unhampered by any prohibition or public disapproval. Indeed, the incidence of smoking is perhaps one of the highest in the world. Studies conducted by WHO and the Ministry of Health reveal that 66 percent of the adult male population are smokers, as are 47 percent of women. By contrast, in most developing countries the percentage of women smokers never exceeds the single digits. For example it is not more than 2.3 percent in Egypt and 7.1 percent in Jordan.

The incidence of smoking is bad enough. More egregious, however, is the bravado with which smokers flaunt their addictive habits. They do so with total disregard for its public health menaces or rights of nonsmokers for fresh air.

For a country beleaguered by formidable expenditure on rehabilitation and reconstruction, the magnitude of what is being wasted on smoking and all its seamy side effects and byproducts is immense. According to the Ministry of Health, a total of $400 million a year is spent on healthcare for those suffering from smoking-related illness. Another $100 million is spent every year on cigarette promotion. The most scintillating ads are for tobacco. Liquor, Lingerie, and cellular telephones are a poor second. Public highways and desolate country roads are decked with imposing billboards beckoning one to Malboro country. Even politicians and public figures (presumably the country's most illustrious role models) cannot part with their cigarettes even when they make TV appearances.

With smoking such a part of everyday life, all attempts to launch a comprehensive country-wide tobacco control strategy or plan of action to curb some of the adverse derivatives of smoking have been abortive so far. Even the laws passed in 1995 banning smoking in hospitals, infirmaries, pharmacies, theatres, public transportation terminals, health clubs, schools, uni-

versities, elevators, etc. are ignored and unenforced. A proposal for a law banning all tobacco advertisements on television, radio, and print media failed to be endorsed by the Council of Ministers. In this and other regards, Lebanon is today where the United States used to be more than fifty years ago. Given the mood of popular intransigence, the public is not likely to entertain any restrictions on their indulgent disposition to pollute their surroundings.

In such a free-for-all context, any concern for the aesthetic, human, or cultural dimensions of living space is bound to be dismissed as superfluous or guileless. As a result, it is of little concern whether our public spaces are ugly, whether they debase their inhabitants, whether they are aesthetically, spiritually, or physically tolerable, or whether they provide people with opportunities for authentic individuality, privacy, and edifying human encounters. What counts is that the unconditional access to land must satisfy two overriding claims: the insatiable appetite for profit among the bourgeoisie and the vengeful feeling of entitlements to unearned privileges among the disenfranchised.

By the time authorities step in to restrain or recover such violations, as was to happen repeatedly in the prewar years, the efforts were always too little, too late. By then, officials could only confirm the infringements and incorporate them into the legitimate zoning ordinances.

Retribalization

As the scares and the scars of war became more savaging and cruel, it is understandable that traumatized groups should seek refuge in their most trusted and deeply embedded primordial ties and loyalties, particularly those which coalesce around the family, sect, and community. Even in times of relative harmony and stability, kinship and communal groupings were always effective as mediating sources of sociopsychological support and political mobilization.

As we have seen, the cruelties of protracted and diffused hostility had drastically rearranged the country's social geography. Massive population shifts, particularly since they involved the reintegration of displaced groups into homogeneous and exclusive communities, rendered territorial identities sharper and more spatially anchored. It is in this sense that "retribalization" became more pervasive. The term, as suggested earlier, is employed here loosely to refer to the reinforcement of kinship, confessional, and communal

loyalties — especially since they also converged on tightly-knit spatial enclosures. Lebanon, in other words, is being retribalized precisely because in each of the three basic groupings (i.e. family, community, and sect) loyalties and obligations and the density of social interaction which binds groups together are increasingly becoming sources of intense solidarity. A word about each is in order.

Familism

The Lebanese family has always been a resilient institution. Despite the inevitable decline in the sense of kinship the family experienced in the prewar years — generated by increasing urbanization, mobility, and secularization — it continued to have a social and psychological reality that pervaded virtually all aspects of society. As repeated studies have demonstrated, there was hardly a dimension of one's life which was untouched by the survival of family loyalty and its associated norms and agencies. To a considerable extent, a person's status, occupation, politics, personal values, living conditions and life style were largely defined by kinship affiliation. So intense and encompassing were these attachments that the average Lebanese continued to seek and find refuge and identity within close family circles. This was most apparent in the emergence and survival of family associations — perhaps unique to Lebanon. Even when other secular and civic voluntary associations were available, the family was always sought as a mediating agency to offer people access to a variety of welfare and socioeconomic services (Khalaf 1971).

The war years have shored up the family's prominence. A significantly larger number of people found themselves, willingly or otherwise, enfolded within the family. By their own testimonies, they were drawn closer to members of their immediate and extended family than they had been before the war. They were also expending more effort, resources, and sentiments on family obligations and interests. As a result, the traditional boundaries of the family expanded even further to assume added economic, social, and recreational functions.

For example the concept of kin, *ahl* or *'ayleh*, became more encompassing and extended beyond the limited confines of a nuclear family. Only 12 percent of the respondents perceived the boundaries of their family to be limited to spouses and children. Almost 40 percent extended their definition to include both parents. Another 22 percent stretched it further to include

paternal and maternal uncles. The remaining 27 percent extended the boundaries even further to encompass all relatives. The family was not only becoming more encompassing. It was also becoming more intimate and affectionate, reinforced by repeated visits and mutual help. Close to 60 percent evaluated their family relations in such highly positive terms. The remaining 38 percent considered them as moderately so. Only 2 percent admitted that their family relations were distant, cold and had no sign of any mutual help or support.

As shown in table 8.4, more than 58 percent of the respondents to the 1983 survey referred to above reported that their ties and relationships with their immediate families had been strengthened by the war. The incidence fell to about 23 percent for relatives and dropped to as low as 18.8 percent for colleagues. The respondents were also asked to indicate, on the conventional 5-point scale, the degree of their involvement in domestic and family affairs. More concretely an effort was made to assess the extent to which such family concerns were becoming more, remaining the same, or becoming less important since the outbreak of civil hostilities. Here as well, and for understandable reasons, more than 60 percent of the respondents indicated that they had become more preoccupied with domestic and family affairs. Thirty-eight percent felt that there was no change in such relations during the war, and only 2 percent reported that domestic and family-centered interests became less important for them.

Given the large-scale devastation of state and other secular agencies and institutions, the family was one of the few remaining social edifices in which people could seek and find refuge in its reassuring domesticity and privacy. It became, to borrow Christopher Lasch's apt title, a "haven in a heartless world" (Lasch 1979). Whether the family will be able to withstand such mounting pressure remains to be seen. What is clear though is that during

TABLE 8.4 Impact of the War on the nature and Identity of Social Relations

	Immediate family	*Relatives*	*Friends*	*Colleagues*
Strengthened	58.2%	22.9%	27.6%	18.8%
About the same	39.4	65.4	57.5	68.6
Weakened	2.4	11.7	14.9	12.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

the war it had to reinvent and extend itself to assume added functions. For example, beyond absorbing a larger share of the leisure, recreational, welfare, and benevolent needs of its members, it also served as an economic and commercial base. Many, particularly lawyers, craftsmen, retailers, and agents, were forced to convert their homes into offices for business operations. Housewives, too, were known to have used their homes to conduct a variety of transactions and to sell clothing, accessories, and other such items.

Communalism

The manifestations of "retribalization" were also resurfacing at the communal level with, perhaps, greater intensity. Since the boundaries and horizons within which groups circulated were becoming more constricted, it is natural that these tightly knit localities should become breeding grounds for heightening communal and territorial identities. Inevitably, such bonding in exclusive spaces was bound to generate deeper commitments toward one's community and corresponding distance from others. In-group/out-group sentiments became sharper. Segmental and parochial loyalties also became more pronounced. So did the sociocultural, psychological, and ideological cleavages. In this sense the community, locality, neighborhood, or quarter was no longer simply a space to occupy or a place to live in and identify with. It became an ideology — an orientation or a frame of reference through which groups interact and perceive others. It is then, as we suggested earlier, that the community is transferred into a form of communalism.

Two unsettling, often pathological, features of such retribalization are worth highlighting again. More and more communities began to assume some of the egregious attributes of "closed" and "total" entities. The two are naturally related. Comparatively mixed, hybrid, and open communities were becoming more homogeneous and closed to outsiders. Such polarization was bound to engender and sustain the growth of almost totally self-sufficient communities and neighborhoods.

Since early in the initial stages of the war the traditional city center and its adjoining residential quarters witnessed some of the fiercest rounds of fighting and destruction, the episodes were accompanied by a quickening succession of massive population shifts and decentralization. In no time business establishments and virtually all the major public and private institutions — including universities, schools, banks, embassies, travel agencies, and the like — took measures to establish headquarters or branch offices in

more than one district. This clearly facilitated the proliferation of self-sufficient urban enclaves. Before the war, people by necessity were compelled to traverse communal boundaries to attend to some of their public services and amenities. Gradually the urge to cross over became superfluous and undesirable. As a result, a rather substantial number of Lebanese were living, working, shopping, and meeting their recreational, cultural, medical, and educational needs within constricted communal circles. More compelling, generations of children and adolescents grew up thinking that their social world could not extend beyond the confines of the ever smaller communities within which they were entrapped.

Some of the sociopsychological and political implications of such reversion to "enclosed" communities are grievous. The psychological barriers and accompanying sociocultural differences are becoming deeper and more ingrown. More and more Lebanese have been forced over the past two decades to restructure and redefine their lives into smaller circles. What is rather unsettling in all this is that they don't seem to particularly resent such restrictions.

A few results of our empirical survey, particularly those which reinforce the proclivity of groups to seek shelter in cloistered spatial enclosures and their corresponding inclination to maintain distance from other communities, are worth noting. Around 70 percent of the respondents indicated that their daily movements are restricted to the area or neighborhood they live in. Surprisingly, a slightly larger number desire to live, work and confine their movements to such restricted areas. Only 22 percent were moving at the time, albeit furtively, between different sectors of the city.

The religious composition of the three broad communities from which the samples were drawn (Ras-Beirut, Basta, and Achrafieh), must have, no doubt, enhanced their receptivity to sustain and encourage feelings of communal solidarity and to entertain unfriendly and hostile feelings toward other groups. The sectarian composition of our respondents corresponds to the religious profile we generally associate with those urban districts. As shown in table 8.5, Ras Beirut is the only fairly mixed district. The majority (40%) are Orthodox, followed by Sunnis and Protestants. The rest are almost equally distributed among Maronites, Catholics, Shi'ites, and Druze, with a few Armenians and other Christian minorities. On the whole, however, Ras Beirut is more than two-thirds Christian and around 27 percent Muslim. On the other hand, Basta is almost exclusively Muslim in composition, just as Achrafieh is also exclusively Christian. The proportion of Maronites, Catholics, and Protestants is as negligible in Basta as is the proportion of

TABLE 8.5 Religious Composition of the Three Communities

	Ras Beirut	*Basta*	*Achrafieh*	*Total*
Maronites	9.1%	2%	40%	17.2%
Catholics	7.3	2	13.5	7.6
Orthodox	40.0	7.8	30.8	26.2
Protestants	15.4	0	1.9	5.8
Armenians	1.8	2	5.7	3.2
Sunnis	17.3	60.8	3.8	27.3
Shi'ites	5.5	15.6	3.8	8.3
Druze	3.6	9.8	0	4.4
Percent	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	110	51	52	213

Sunnis, Shi'ites, and Druze in Achrafieh. The only exception is perhaps the Orthodox. It is the only sect which is represented in the three communities, although to a much lesser degree in Basta.

It is natural that residents of such closely knit and homogenous communities should begin to display particular attitudes toward other sectarian groups. The war, judging by some of our preliminary results, has apparently sharpened such sentiments. The respondents were asked: "How do you evaluate your present feelings and opinions toward the groups listed below? Do you feel closer to them now than before the war, or do you have unchanged feelings, or do you feel more distant?"

The results, as summarized in table 8.6, reveal some obvious and expected tendencies that reflect the roles the various communities played during the war at the time of the survey and the consequent social distance between them.

If we take the sample as a whole, 39 and 38 percent have grown more distant from the Kurds and Druze respectively and harbor hostility toward them. Next come Maronites (29%), Shi'ites (26%) and Sunnites (23%), followed by Syriacs (18%) and Armenians (17%). The rest, namely Catholics, Christian minorites, Orthodox, and Protestants evoke little or no hostility or negative feelings. Conversely, the respondents feel closer to Maronites (22%), Orthodox (19%) and Sunnites and Shi'ites (15%). Groups that elicit least sympathy are Druze (8%), Syriacs (8%), Armenians (5%) and Kurds (1.6%).

TABLE 8.6 Enmity and Social Distance

	Closer	*Unchanged*	*More Distant*
Maronites	22.0%	40.0%	29.0%
Orthodox	19.0	62.0	8.0
Catholics	10.0	71.0	7.0
Protestants	7.0	73.0	8.0
Xian Minorities	8.0	72.0	7.0
Sunnites	15.0	50.0	23.0
Shi'ites	15.0	47.0	26.0
Druze	8.0	44.0	38.0
Kurds	1.6	45.0	39.0
Armenians	5.0	64.0	17.0
Syriacs	8.0	60.0	18.0

Distant From		*Closer To*	
Kurds	39%	Maronites	22%
Druze	38	Orthodox	19
Maronites	29	Shi'ites/Sunnites	15
Shi'ites	26		
Sunnites	23		

It is interesting to note that, with the exception of the Druze, attitudes toward belligerent sects (Maronites, Sunnis, Shi'ites) invite both extremes. Nearly the same proportion who indicate that they have grown closer to a particular sect also display enmity and distance toward them. They are equally admired and admonished. It is also interesting in this regard, to observe that attitudes toward nonbelligerent groups or those who were not directly involved in the fighting, (i.e. Protestants, Christian minorities, Catholics, and Greek Orthodox) remained largely unchanged.

A few other, albeit self-evident, variations are also worth noting. Ras Beiruties on the whole feel far closer toward Maronites (32%) and Orthodox (23%) than they do toward Sunnis (16%) and Shi'ites (15%). The Druze received the lowest score (5%). They have grown distant from the Druze (56%) and then almost equally from Shi'ites (30%), Sunnis (26%), and Maronites (24%).

The Basta residents feel closer toward Shi'ites (27%) and to a slightly lesser degree, Sunnis, Druze and Orthodox (23%). The bulk of their resentment is directed toward the Maronites.

The Achrafieh residents are naturally closest to Maronites (51%), followed by Orthodox (35%) and Catholics (27%). Their resentment is directed toward the Druze (57%) and to a much lesser degree, Shi'ites (30%) and Sunnis (22%).

Communities in Lebanon were becoming more "closed" in still another and, perhaps, more vital and disturbing sense. A few of these communities were beginning to evince features akin to a total, even "totalitarian" character in several significant respects. I borrow the term here employed by Erving Goffman (1961) in his analysis of total institutions such as prisons, hospitals, monasteries, mental asylums, and the like.

1. *Because of the massive population shifts and decentralization, accompanied by the fear and terror of intercommunal hostilities, communities became increasingly self-sufficient.* A full range of human activities has developed within each of those communities.

2. *As a result, even where entry and exit into and from these communities remained largely voluntary, an increasing number of people were reluctant to cross over.* The boundaries, incidentally, are not merely spatial. Sometimes an imaginary "green line," a bridge, a road network, might well serve as the delimiting borders. More important, the barriers became psychological, cultural, and ideological. Hence, there emerges within each of those communities a distinct atmosphere of a cultural, social, and intellectual world closed to "outsiders." It is for this reason that the social distance and the barriers between the various communities grew sharper. The barriers are often dramatized by deliberately exaggerating differences. Such dramatization serves to rationalize and justify the maintenance of distance. It also mitigates part of the associated feelings of guilt for indulging in avoidance.

The same kinds of barriers that have polarized Beirut into "East" and "West" started to appear elsewhere. As we have seen, Residents of "East" Beirut depict the Western suburbs as an insecure, chaotic, disorderly mass of alien, unattached, and unanchored groups aroused by borrowed ideologies and an insatiable appetite for lawlessness and boorish decadence. In turn, residents of Western Beirut depict the Eastern suburbs as a self-enclosed "ghetto" dominated by the overpowering control and hegemony of a one-party system where strangers are suspect and treated with contempt. In short, both communities are cordoned off and viewed with considerable fear and foreboding. Each has vowed to rid or liberate society from the despicable evil inherent in the other!

3. A *total institution, often in subtle and unobtrusive ways, involves an effort to remake or resocialize individuals and groups within it*. This, by necessity, requires that prior values, ideas and patterns of behavior be dislodged and then be replaced by new ones. To varying degrees such manifestations of resocialization became visible at the early stages of the war. The various communities and warring factions, supported by an extremely well developed and sophisticated media — with their own broadcasting stations, newspapers, periodicals, pamphlets, slogans, symbols, and motifs — competed in gaining access to potential recruits, clients, and converts. Each developed its own ethnocentric interpretation of the war, its own version of the social and political history of Lebanon, and proposed diametrically opposed views and programs for the socioeconomic and political reconstruction of the country. The differences do not stop here. They have pervaded virtually every dimension of everyday life: the national figures and popular heroes they identify with, their life style, public and private concerns, and their perceptions of the basic issues in society are being drastically reshaped and redefined.

As a result, there are very few national symbols or fundamental issues with which all the Lebanese can identify. It is facts of this sort that prompt me to argue that Lebanon's pluralism, particularly if those same parochial loyalties and sentiments are maintained, remains more of a divisive force than a viable source of organic solidarity and national unity.

4. *Finally, one can also discern signs of total control*. Individuals and groups, particularly in areas where private militias and political groups enjoy a large measure of hegemony, are subjected to increasing forms of social controls — ranging from direct measures of conscription, taxation, impositions, censure to the more subtle forms of intervention in individual freedom and modes of expression and mobility. Some of these measures became so pervasive at different interludes of the war that at times nothing was held to be morally or legally exempt from the scope and unlimited extension of the group in power.

Confessionalism

Finally, symptoms of retribalization were doubtlessly most visible in the reassertion of religious and confessional consciousness. What makes this particularly interesting is that religious and confessional loyalties manifest a

few paradoxical and seemingly inconsistent features that reveal the sharp distinctions between them. Clearly religiosity and confessionalism are not and need not be conterminous. Indeed results of the 1982–83 empirical survey revealed some sharp distinctions between the two.

Curiously, as respondents indicated that their religiosity was declining (as measured by the degree of changes in the intensity of their spiritual beliefs, religious commitments, and observation of rituals, practices, and duties of their faith), their confessional and sectarian identities however were becoming sharper. When the respondents were asked whether the war has had an impact on the religious practices and activities, the majority (85%) admitted that they had not changed in this regard.

One could infer from such findings that the Lebanese are not taking recourse in religion in an effort to find some spiritual comfort or solace to allay their rampant fear and anxiety. To a large extent this kind of refuge is better sought and served in the family and community. Religion is therefore clearly serving some other secular — indeed socioeconomic and ideological — function.

Some of the results clearly support such an inference. It is, in a way, revealing that when it comes to matters that reflect their religious tolerance and their willingness to associate and live with other sectarian or religious groups — such as the schooling of their children, their attitudes toward interconfessional marriages and their residential preferences — confessional considerations begin to assume prominence.

When asked, for example, whether they would agree to send their children to a school affiliated with a sect other than their own, close to 30 percent of the respondents answered in the negative — i.e. a preference to educate their children in schools with similar sectarian background. Their attitudes toward mixed sectarian or religious marriages — for both males and females — reveal much of the same sentiments. Close to 28 percent disapprove of such religiously mixed marriages for males and 32 percent for females. Similar predispositions were expressed regarding their preferences to live in a locality that has a majority of people from their own sect. Around 21 percent were sympathetic with such a prospect.

Altogether, a surprisingly large proportion of what presumably is a literate, cosmopolitan, and sophisticated sample of professionals, university and college teachers, intellectuals, journalists, and the like displayed strong confessional biases, and a distance from and intolerance toward other groups. This was apparent, in their disapproval of interconfessional marriages, their preference for parochial schooling for their children, and their reluctance to

associate and live with other sectarian and religious groups. More poignant, perhaps, it was also becoming increasingly visible in this rather narcissistic preoccupation with one's community, with its corresponding exclusionary sentiments and phobic proclivities toward others. This heightened confessional consciousness, understandable in times of sectarian hostility and fear, started to assume fanatic and militant expressions of devotion to and glorification of one's group. The relative ease with which the various communities were politically resocialized into militancy was largely an expression of such aroused sectarian consciousness.