Lebanon

Ethnicity in Lebanon

Group selection

The politically relevant ethnic groups mainly reflect the political settlement, the Ta'if Agreement, at the end of the civil war in 1989 and also correspond to Fearon's list. Group sizes are determined on the basis of Fearon's list, the CIA World Factbook ([2950]) and the Fischer Weltalmanach ([2951]): **Shi'a Muslims (Arab)** 32%; **Sunni Muslims (Arab)** 20%; **Maronite Christians** 16%; **Druze** 6%; **Greek Orthodox** 5%; **Greek Catholics** 3%; **Armenian Orthodox** 4%; **Palestinians** 10%; **Armenian Catholics, Protestants, Alawites** 1% each.

[2950] [Central Intelligence Agency]

[2951] [Fischer Weltalmanach]

Power relations

1946-1970

Lebanon gained independence from France in 1943. Since then, the political situation has alternated between periods of stability, turmoil and prosperity. Political representation has always been organized into power sharing between sectarian communities. Struggles over the exact size of the shares allotted to individual communities have been a permanent source of tension, particularly in response to demographic change ([2952]). The demographic changes are taken into account with differing group sizes in the first coding period (1946-1970) from the group sizes in the subsequent coding periods (1971-2017, numbers above). Since the 1950s, the country's major political fault line has been its position vis-a-vis the Arab-Israeli conflict and its wider implications ([2953]). Traditionally, the Maronite Christians and the Sunni Muslims wielded the most influence in politics, mainly due to their large population shares as well as support by the French in the case of the Maronites. Therefore, these groups are coded Senior Partners. Other religious groups are coded Junior Partners or Powerless with regards to their respective representation in political matters in the pre-war period.

[2952] [Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2016]

[2953] [Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2016]

Approximately 100'000 Palestinians fled to Lebanon in 1948 because of the Arab-Israeli war, and have lived there ever since. Domestic legal discrimination against the refugees was instituted in the 1960s and refined after 1990, robbing them of basic civic rights. The main source legitimizing these restrictions is the threat of permanent settlement and naturalization of refugees. The fact that Palestinian refugees in Lebanon are campaigning for civic rights, not naturaliza-

tion, is ignored ([2954], 68).

[2954] [Knudsen, 2009]

1971-1975

In the run-up to the Lebanese civil war, active solidarity with the Arab cause against Israel was advocated by an alliance of Muslim and nationalist/anti-imperialist forces. Christian representatives feared that such a course and the concomitant influence of neighboring countries, as well as the presence of armed groups that were predominantly Muslim, would bolster the Muslim communities at their expense ([2955]). The tensions between the nationalist/leftist forces that shaped the Lebanese National Movement and the Christian Kata'ib Party, which formed the Lebanese Front, were further complicated by the Palestinian resistance ([2956]). As a result to their political and social exclusion as described above, Palestinians are coded Discriminated in this period while the remaining groups' political status does not change.

[2955] [Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2016]

[2956] [Krayem, 1997]

1976-1991

This period is marked by the civil war of 1975-1990, caused by tensions between Christian groups and Muslim militias, exacerbated by pressures of rapid urban development and the presence of a large Palestinian refugee population. The conflict resulted in an estimated 120,000 fatalities ([2957]).

We code these years as "state collapse", because owing to the chaotic situation during the civil war, including a lack of functioning state institutions, it is impossible to determine executive authority.

[2957] [Central Intelligence Agency]

1992-2021

The Ta'if Agreement, signed on 22 October 1989 in Saudi Arabia by the Lebanese parliamentarians put an end to the Lebanese civil war and set the country on the path to peace and reconstruction. The Ta'if Agreement introduced a new system for the inclusion of all religious communities in government and administration, which is based on the fact that most Lebanese communities have been homogenized behind a unified political leadership - with the notable exception of the Christians. In practice, the agreement suggests a sectarian distribution of deputies of the parliament ([2958], 240). The proportions are as follows: Shi'a Muslims (Arab): 27 of 128 seats (21%), Sunni Muslims (Arab): 27 of 128 seats (21%), Maronite Christians: 34 of 128 seats (27%), Druze: 8 of 128 seats (6%), Greek-Orthodox: 14 of 128 seats (11%), Greek-Catholic: 8 of 128 seats: 6%, Armenian Orthodox: 5 of 128 seats (4%), Armenian Catholics, Protestants, and Alawites: 5 of 128 seats (4%) combined. Further, the President is by custom a Maronite, the Prime Minister a Sunni Muslim and the Speaker of the Parliament belongs to the Shi'a Muslim group ([2959]). This results in the following coding:

[2958] [Traboulsi, 2007]

[2959] [Federal Research Division, 1989]

- **Shi'a Muslims (Arab)**, **Sunni Muslims (Arab)**, and **Maronite Christians**: According to the constitution and political tradition, these major players within the political elite wield de facto veto powers ([2960]). Therefore, they are coded Senior Partners.

[2960] [Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2016]

- **Druze**, **Greek-Orthodox**, **Greek Catholics**, and **Armenian Orthodox**: Each of these groups plays a relevant role in Lebanese politics despite the fact that their votes are not sufficient to block policies. They are therefore coded Junior Partners.

- **Armenian Catholics**, **Protestants**, **Alawites**: In a largely symbolic move, they have been mentioned in the Ta'if Agreement and were assigned the remaining 4% of the parliamentary seats. These groups are coded Powerless.

- **Palestinians**: They were not mentioned in the Ta'if Agreement and continuously denied citizen rights until the most recent review and are therefore coded Discriminated ([2961]).

[2961] [US Department of State, 2016]

No mayor changes to the power-sharing system introduced by the Ta'if Agreement occurred since the end of the civil war, despite recurring political turmoil. The popular Cedar Revolution in 2005 marked an attempt to overthrow the Syrian influenced government and finally ended Syrian military presence in the country. In the elections of 2009, the Agreement was respected and every government-recognized religion, (except Coptic Christianity, Ismailism, and Judaism,) was allocated at least one seat in parliament. Three parliamentarians representing minorities, of which two are Alawites, were elected as well. However, their political weight in the parliament is very limited ([2962]) so their coding remains Powerless.

[2962] [US Department of State, 2013]

In the lead up to parliamentary elections in 2013, political parties could not reach a consensus over a new electoral law to reflect demographic changes that took place over the past decades. As a result, the parliament postponed the elections, granting themselves two extensions, first in 2013 and then again in November 2014. The main reason for the dissent was that the quotas for parliamentary seats are based on outdated group size numbers in the country and some groups especially the Maronite Christians fear to lose power if the shares are revised ([2963]). The government was further deadlocked by the parliament's inability to elect a new president in 2014. The position remained vacant until 2016, when Michel Aoun - a Maronite as tradition requires - took office ([2964]).

[2963] [US Department of State, 2016]

[2964] [Presidency of the Republic of Lebanon, 2017]

In 2017, a long overdue electoral law was finally approved and parliamentary elections were held in May 2018. Though the balance of parliamentary power slightly shifted in the favor of the Shi'a-Christian alliance between Hezbollah, AMAL and the Free Patriotic Movement, the overall ethnic power balance remained in place. Moreover, the composition of Prime Minister Saad Hariri's government "reflects the typical power-sharing agreement between the country's dominant groups" ([2965]). In October 2019, President

[2965] [Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2020]

Michel Aoun accepted the Prime Minister's resignation following almost two weeks of protests against corruption and the political elite. He had already resigned in 2017, only to return to office a couple of months later. As of the end of the year 2019, no new government had been formed and the protests were ongoing ([2966]).

[2966] [US Department of State, 2019]

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Political status of ethnic groups in Le

From 1946 until 1970

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Maronite Christians	0.29	SENIOR PARTNER
Sunnis (Arab)	0.22	SENIOR PARTNER
Shi'a Muslims (Arab)	0.2	JUNIOR PARTNER
Palestinians (Arab)	0.1	POWERLESS
Druze	0.07	JUNIOR PARTNER
Greek Orthodox	0.05	JUNIOR PARTNER
Greek Catholics	0.03	JUNIOR PARTNER
Alawites	0.01	POWERLESS
Armenian Catholics	0.01	POWERLESS
Protestants	0.01	POWERLESS
Armenian Orthodox	0.01	JUNIOR PARTNER

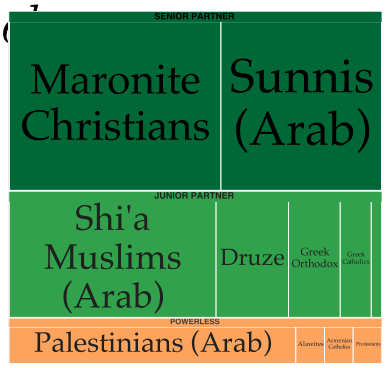

Figure 592: Political status of ethnic groups in Lebanon during 1946-1970.

From 1971 until 1975

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Shi'a Muslims (Arab)	0.32	JUNIOR PARTNER
Sunnis (Arab)	0.2	SENIOR PARTNER
Maronite Christians	0.16	SENIOR PARTNER
Palestinians (Arab)	0.1	DISCRIMINATED
Druze	0.06	JUNIOR PARTNER
Greek Orthodox	0.05	JUNIOR PARTNER
Armenian Orthodox	0.04	JUNIOR PARTNER
Greek Catholics	0.03	JUNIOR PARTNER
Alawites	0.01	POWERLESS
Armenian Catholics	0.01	POWERLESS
Protestants	0.01	POWERLESS

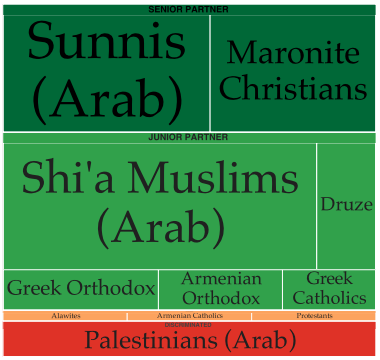

Figure 593: Political status of ethnic groups in Lebanon during 1971-1975.

From 1976 until 1991

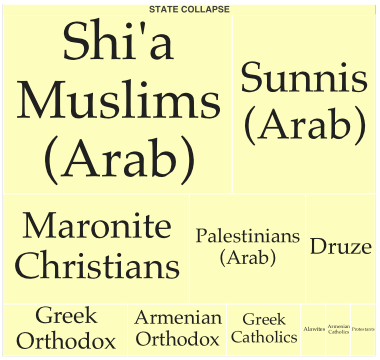

Figure 594: Political status of ethnic groups in Lebanon during 1976-1991.

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Shi'a Muslims (Arab)	0.32	STATE COLLAPSE
Sunnis (Arab)	0.2	STATE COLLAPSE
Maronite Christians	0.16	STATE COLLAPSE
Palestinians (Arab)	0.1	STATE COLLAPSE
Druze	0.06	STATE COLLAPSE
Greek Orthodox	0.05	STATE COLLAPSE
Armenian Orthodox	0.04	STATE COLLAPSE
Greek Catholics	0.03	STATE COLLAPSE
Alawites	0.01	STATE COLLAPSE
Armenian Catholics	0.01	STATE COLLAPSE
Protestants	0.01	STATE COLLAPSE

From 1992 until 2021

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Shi'a Muslims (Arab)	0.32	SENIOR PARTNER
Sunnis (Arab)	0.2	SENIOR PARTNER
Maronite Christians	0.16	SENIOR PARTNER
Palestinians (Arab)	0.1	DISCRIMINATED
Druze	0.06	JUNIOR PARTNER
Greek Orthodox	0.05	JUNIOR PARTNER
Armenian Orthodox	0.04	JUNIOR PARTNER
Greek Catholics	0.03	JUNIOR PARTNER
Alawites	0.01	POWERLESS
Armenian Catholics	0.01	POWERLESS
Protestants	0.01	POWERLESS

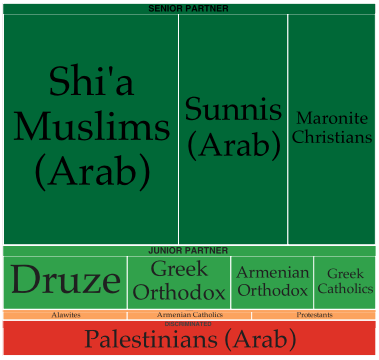

Figure 595: Political status of ethnic groups in Lebanon during 1992-2021.

Geographical coverage of ethnic groups in Lebanon

From 1946 until 1948

Figure 596: Map of ethnic groups in Lebanon during 1946-1948.

	Group name	Area in km^2	Type
	Shi'a Muslims (Arab)	4622	Regional & urban
	Sunnis (Arab)	2407	Regional & urban
	Maronite Christians	2173	Regional & urban
	Greek Orthodox	684	Regional & urban
	Druze	626	Regional & urban
	Alawites	191	Regional & urban
	Greek Catholics	173	Regional & urban
	Armenian Catholics	0	Urban
	Armenian Orthodox	0	Urban
	Palestinians (Arab)	0	Dispersed
	Protestants	0	Urban

Table 217: List of ethnic groups in Lebanon during 1946-1948.

From 1949 until 1974

Figure 597: Map of ethnic groups in Lebanon during 1949-1974.

	Group name	Area in km^2	Type
	Shi'a Muslims (Arab)	4622	Regional & urban
	Sunnis (Arab)	2407	Regional & urban
	Maronite Christians	2173	Regional & urban
	Greek Orthodox	684	Regional & urban
	Druze	626	Regional & urban
	Palestinians (Arab)	263	Regional & urban
	Alawites	191	Regional & urban
	Greek Catholics	173	Regional & urban
	Armenian Catholics	0	Urban
	Armenian Orthodox	0	Urban
	Protestants	0	Urban

Table 218: List of ethnic groups in Lebanon during 1949-1974.

From 1975 until 1990

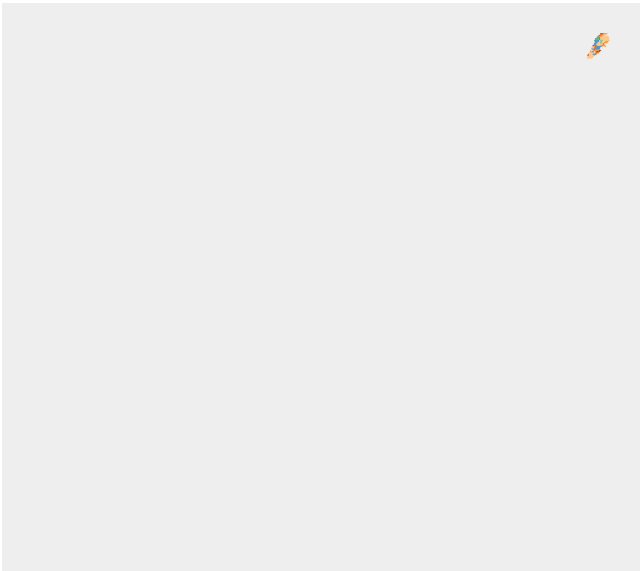

Figure 598: Map of ethnic groups in Lebanon during 1975-1990.

	Group name	Area in km^2	Type
	Shi'a Muslims (Arab)	4622	Regional & urban
	Sunnis (Arab)	2407	Regional & urban
	Maronite Christians	2173	Regional & urban
	Greek Orthodox	684	Regional & urban
	Druze	626	Regional & urban
	Palestinians (Arab)	263	Regional & urban
	Alawites	191	Regional & urban
	Greek Catholics	173	Regional & urban
	Armenian Catholics	0	Urban
	Armenian Orthodox	0	Urban
	Protestants	0	Urban

Table 219: List of ethnic groups in Lebanon during 1975-1990.

From 1991 until 2021

Figure 599: Map of ethnic groups in Lebanon during 1991-2021.

	Group name	Area in km^2	Type
	Shi'a Muslims (Arab)	4784	Regional & urban
	Maronite Christians	3144	Regional & urban
	Sunnis (Arab)	1497	Regional & urban
	Druze	910	Regional & urban
	Greek Orthodox	626	Regional & urban
	Greek Catholics	589	Regional & urban
	Palestinians (Arab)	263	Regional & urban
	Alawites	191	Regional & urban
	Armenian Catholics	0	Urban
	Armenian Orthodox	0	Urban
	Protestants	0	Urban

Table 220: List of ethnic groups in Lebanon during 1991-2021.

Conflicts in Lebanon

Starting on 1948-04-14

Side A	Side B	Group name	Start	Claim	Recruitment	Support
Government of Egypt	Government of Israel		1948-04-14			
Government of Iraq	Government of Israel		1948-04-14			
Government of Jordan	Government of Israel		1948-04-14			
Government of Lebanon	Government of Israel		1948-04-14			
Government of Syria	Government of Israel		1948-04-14			

Starting on 1958-05-14

Side A	Side B	Group name	Start	Claim	Recruitment	Support
Government of Lebanon	Independent Nasserite Movement	Sunnis (Arab)	1958-05-14	Explicit	Yes	Yes
Government of Lebanon	NSF	Druze	1975-09-01	No	Yes	Yes
Government of Lebanon	NSF	Sunnis (Arab)	1975-09-01	No	Yes	Yes
Government of Lebanon	LAA	Sunnis (Arab)	1976-01-19	Explicit	Yes, from EGIP	
Government of Lebanon	Amal	Shi'a Muslims (Arab)	1983-08-31	Explicit	Yes, from EGIP	
Government of Lebanon	Lebanese Forces	Maronite Christians	1985-03-14	Presumed	Yes, from EGIP	
Government of Lebanon	NUF		1985-08-10			
Government of Lebanon	Lebanese Forces - Hobeika faction	Maronite Christians	1986-01-05	Presumed	Yes, from EGIP	
Government of Lebanon	Forces of Michel Aoun	Maronite Christians	1989-03-10	Explicit	Yes	Yes

Starting on 2014-06-24

Side A	Side B	Group name	Start	Claim	Recruitment	Support
Government of Lebanon	IS	Sunnis (Arab)	2014-06-24	Presumed	No	No