

# World politics: a case study of ethnic and religious diversity



The Republic of Lebanon is located on the Western Asia continent. The Southern border of Lebanon is shared with Israel and Syria on the North and East. The Mediterranean Sea makes up the last natural border of Lebanon. Since Lebanon is part of the Middle East the culture is diverse. The three major ethnic groups are Christian (Maronite), Islam (Shi'a), and Islam (Sunni). When the Lebanon is not at war with itself or other countries, the government is ruled by these three elements in a Confessionalism government. The pressure of thousands of Palestinian refugees mixed with these three diverse elements has created a government that has seen much upheaval. The ethnic groups in the region has fought and built the government that is in place today.

The Maronite population in Lebanon has been a strong influence since the fall of the Ottoman Empire. Maronite's in Lebanon speak the national language of Arabic. The Maronite is similar to the Roman Catholic Church, but has different customs. An example would be the Maronite's have their own pope, services, and other customs. Maronite's are concentrated in Beirut and Mount Lebanon. This ethnic group has been in the region since the beginning of Christianity. Although a majority for many years, the group is dwindling due to civil wars and other conflicts that have damaged Beirut's population.

Sunni Muslims make up another part of the major three ethnic groups. Sunnis are the majority of Muslims worldwide. This group is a moderate form of Islam. Sunni Muslims believe in Allah as the one true God. Mohammad's teachings in the Qu'ran are followed. This means Mohammad is the Sunni's messenger and prophet. This religion was based on elements of Judaism and Christianity. Mohammad even recognized Jesus' teachings, but asserted <https://assignbuster.com/world-politics-a-case-study-of-ethnic-and-religious-diversity/>

Jesus was a prophet, not a savior. The Muslims had been in the Lebanon region since the beginning of Islam.

Shi'a Muslims believe everything that Sunni Muslims believe, but in addition religious Imams from the direct descendants of Allah can also make religious rules and interpret Qu'ran ideas. This means that an Imam can declare a war Holy. In a Holy War the men and women killed are destined for martyrdom. This sect, especially the small shi'ite group, can be violent. The shi'ite group is the small population of the Muslim community that uses terrorism against civilians all around the world. Shi'a Muslims have been in Lebanon since before the Ottoman Empire.

In the Confessionalism government a parliamentary democracy is in place. The people vote for parliament in direct elections every four years. The parliament elects a President for a six year term. A president can only hold office one time. The constitution allows that the government can be changed. The three major ethnic groups hold the three high positions in the country. In the Lebanese government under the agreement reached the Lebanon's President is Maronite. The Sunnis always hold the Prime Minister position. The Shi'a always holds the Speaker of the Parliament. In 2008, the Doha Agreement was reached and allows the Lebanese Council of Ministers a veto power (Rubin 2009: 91). This allows all three ethnic groups an equal amount of power in the government.

Lebanon has three major ethnic groups that rule the government. Maronite, Sunni, and Shi'a all hold equal power in the government. This creates a secular government that is unique to Lebanon. Without the three ethnic groups that had been in the area for centuries, Lebanon would not have the government that was arrived at. Although far from stable, the Lebanese  
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government is still a work of democracy in progress. Throughout years of war, ethnic conflict, and other situations in the region, the Lebanese government has been founded on the ruling parties being Maronite, Sunni, and Shi'a.

#### Bibliography

Rubin, B. (2009). Lebanon: Liberation, Conflict, and Crisis (The Middle East in Focus). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.