

Individual and Collective Resistance in Post-Conflict South Lebanon:  
Empirical Insights

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Pluri-ethnic Lebanese recent history has been characterized by high tension between sectarian groups and the state. In a number of cases, minority groups' resistance developed into a manifest attempt to limit the action of the central authority by embracing alternative loyalties, both trans-national and inter-religious (including former enemies).

Makdisi (2000) proved that in multi-confessional Lebanon the old fashioned idea of a *tout court* long-standing violence between competing sects was unsustainable. However, political micro-analysis based on empirical material I collected in South Lebanon during and after the 2006 war shows that where state and ethno-religious groups fail to find a dialogue, tension leads citizens to see the state as alien and other groups as enemies.

With reference to Christian minority groups' responses, this paper looks at the ways Hizbullah post-conflict strategies of reconstruction have been legitimated. Building upon the Weberian assumption of the state's sole power and upon Prato's (2000) analysis of citizens' loyalties to the role of the state as welfare provider, this paper examine the rise of a religion-driven movement in a scenario marked by dramatic economic transformations. The analysis suggests that groups' refusal of the role of the state is most manifest at a local level, where sectarian attitudes (e.g., on land or property issues) take precedence over nationally-based loyalties, and that this refusal is the only perceived means of survival for both the individual and his or her group.