

II Characteristics of Shi'a Publishing Houses in Lebanon

The Genesis and Socio-Economic Background of Publishing by Shi'ites

The roots of press printing in Arabic letters can be traced back to the 16th century. Arab books were at that time printed in Europe, especially in France and by the Vatican. They mainly contained Christian theological works. The theologian 'Abdallāh Zākhir installed the first continuous printing press in Lebanon in the monastery of St. John in *Khunshāra* (*Kisrawān*) in 1733.¹ This was followed by a few other clerical publishing activities in the late eighteenth and the nineteenth century. During this first period, book printing served the function of supporting Christian missionary and educational work in the Levant by spreading theological treatises. During a second phase which started in the second half of the 19th century, cultural, secular, scientific and educational books, magazines and newspapers were edited and printed in Lebanon. Publishing was no longer a privilege of Christian monks but became professionalized and diversified in urban communities.²

The rich historical tradition of Shi'i teaching and writing in *Jabal 'Āmil* (the historical name for South Lebanon) was crushed by the Ottoman administrator *Aḥmad Bāshā al-Jazzār* in the late eighteenth century. He killed and drove out their spiritual leaders and ordered to burn all Shi'a books. This was a heavy setback to the cultural and intellectual life of this community.³ At the end of the nineteenth century, only theologians and a few secularly educated intellectuals of Shi'a origin published books and articles, mainly on abroad media. Apart from a few early exceptions like the religious-cultural magazine *al-Irfān*⁴, which was founded by *Aḥmad 'Ārif al-Zain* in 1909, it was not until the early 1950s that the Shi'a entered the Lebanese publishing market on a large scale.

This late entrance to cultural life had to do with the mainly rural origin of and the widespread illiteracy among the Lebanese Shi'ites until that time. It is generally admitted by observers that their community was one of the most backward and neglected ones. Therefore, during the last four decades of modernization, they experienced the most rapid and dramatic changes of their social structures. Starting with the etatist reformatory policy of president *Fu'ād Shihāb* (1958-1964), which was continued by his successor *George Ḥilū* (1964-1970), the then backward areas in South Lebanon and the *Biqā'* valley got some developmental funding and were connected to the country's infrastructure. New job opportunities in the booming economy of Beirut during the 1960s and the early 1970s drove tens of thousands of rural Shi'i migrants to the rapidly expanding outskirts of Beirut. This urbanization process was also stimulated by the decline of agriculture due to its capitalization and rationalization.

The newly urbanized strata of the Shi'a community have been a source of political mobilization and unrest since the second half of the 1960s. Separated from their parochial village roots, better educated by an expanding system of state and private

schools and universities, surrounded by the highly politicized environment of the student and left-wing movements and of the PLO, they have been open for new ideologies and organizations. They felt discriminated against by the political system of confessional representation, which also penetrated the economic sphere via a clientelist allocation of administrative approval.

Fighting between the Palestinian guerillas and the Israeli army forced people in the southern and eastern parts of the country to flee their homes and gave rise to radicalism on a political level. Since the late 1960s, this fighting has taken place on Lebanese territory, mainly in the Shi'a settlements, as a constant battle on a small-scale level. It escalated in the two big Middle Eastern Wars of 1978 and 1982. From 1982 till 1985, most of South Lebanon was occupied by the *Israeli Defense Forces (IDF)*, which finally retreated to its self-proclaimed "*Security Zone*". This border strip occupies 10% of the Lebanese territory and has been held by the Israeli Army and its allied Lebanese militia, the so-called *South Lebanese Army (SLA)*, since 1978.⁵

The Israeli invasion of 1982 became the date of birth for the Shi'a Islamist *Hizb Allāh (Party of God)*. What began as a loose coalition of some independent Islamist initiatives and personalities with Iranian backing, increasingly developed into a centralized and powerful organization with its own militia, party structure, educational and social services. With its militia, the "*Islamic Resistance*", it was and continues to be the spearhead of the guerilla war against the Israeli occupation of the South.

The second important Shi'a party and militia, the *Amal-Movement (Ḥarakat Amal⁶)*, was founded in 1974. It was the offspring and heir to the social movement *Ḥarakat al-Maḥrūmīn (Movement of the Deprived)* of the charismatic *Imām Mūsā al-Ṣadr*, which had mobilized most of the Lebanese Shi'ites and some intellectuals of other communities during the first half of the 1970s. Because of its more moderate stance towards the Lebanese political order and towards Israel, it lost a lot of its members and adherents to the more radical *Hizb Allāh*. Its leader, *Nabīh Birrī*, has been a minister in different cabinets since 1984, and he became the President of Parliament in 1992. The two rival parties fought a bloody fratricidal war for the dominance of their community from 1985 till 1990. The rivalry and tension between them continues. Nowadays, *Amal* is often portrayed as a part of the establishment, *Hizb Allāh* as the sole "real" opposition to the faults of the system and its policy.

The political and social development of the Shi'a community in Lebanon can be summarized as follows. From the 1950s onwards there was a social mobilization among the Shi'ites. Starting at the end of the 1960s, this community underwent a phase of political mobilization and began to struggle for greater participation in Lebanese society. During the 1970s, left wing parties and the reformist movement of *Imām Mūsā al-Ṣadr* mobilized the Lebanese Shi'a. During the 1980s, they were surpassed in this by the Islamists of *Hizb Allāh*. Since the end of the civil war in 1991, the political and cultural discourse among the Lebanese in general and the Shi'ites in particular has become more pluralist and tolerant. At least temporarily, the Islamists dropped their radical aims, including that of creating an *Islamic Republic in Lebanon*. Islamists of *Hizb Allāh*, nationalists, secularists, liberals, and left-wingers are discussing and even cooperating in some fields nowadays.

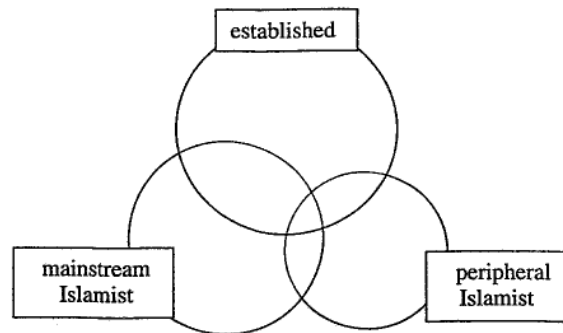
The microcosm of publishing mirrors these different phases of mobilization and politicization among Shi'ites in Lebanon. During the phase of economic expansion (1950-1975), the main market segments of banking, trade, services, industry, real estate and construction were dominated by members of the then established, urban rooted communities such as the Sunni Muslims, the Greek-Orthodox and the Maronite Christians. Because of the clientelist and confessionalist structure of politics and the economy, it was difficult for the new Shi'a bourgeoisie to gain access to these parts of the economy. Therefore, as one publisher put it in an interview, some Shi'a entrepreneurs found their economic alcove in book publishing, which was not as attractive to other sects because of its lower profit rates.⁷ Publishing is not as dependent on an economic network because less investment capital is required and it is not as reliant on suppliers and distributors as are other branches.

During the civil war, this situation changed with the sectarian warfare of 1975/76 and between 1982 and 1985. The religious communities became separated in geography and economy to a large extent. The partial collapse of state authority and administration led to the formation of their own subeconomies, administrations, security systems, educational and welfare organizations. This was the case for the southern suburbs and some parts of West Beirut, in which the Shi'ites now form the majority of inhabitants. The new situation offered opportunities for Shi'ites to establish their own companies such as publishing houses without applying for complicated state licenses and with a guaranteed circle of customers in the areas of a religiously homogeneous populace. Due to the popular Islamist discourse of that time, these were mainly Islamist publishers.⁸

Types of Shi'a Publishers in Lebanon

The historical survey and the socio-economic and political framework described above help one understand the development of the different types of publishers which will be portrayed next. First, I differentiate the wide range of existing companies that deal with publishing into two main groups. The first contains the established publishing houses which were founded during the formative period of Shi'a presence in Beirut (1950-1975). They are mostly secular in their orientation and commercial in the attitude towards their products. The second group consists of Islamist publishing houses which have been founded since the 1970s. They can be subdivided according to their attitude towards the contemporary Islamist movements as mainstream and peripheral.

Each of these three ideal types - the established, the mainstream-Islamist, and the peripheral-Islamist - is distinguished by an accumulative set of characteristics. They vary according to size and kind of administrative organization and functional differentiation, their geographical location in Greater Beirut and the period of their foundation. Their religious and political attitudes, the themes and addressees of their books and the success of their sales differ too. Finally, they can be differentiated according to the size of their program and their export prospects. As most of these factors are matters of degree, the boundaries between the three types are fluid, and there is some intersection between them. I use the following model to illustrate this:



These schematic types are approaches to reality which help to describe the companies. When I assign a publishing house to one of these it means that it fulfills more of the characteristics of this than another type. Sometimes one publisher shifts from one group to another, for example when he changes the emphasis of his program.

Established Shi'a Publishing Houses

The great bulk of Shi'a publishing houses which can be called "established" nowadays were founded between 1950 and the outbreak of the civil war in 1975.⁹ Younger companies belonging to this group were often founded as the offshoot of an older company, e. g. when an owner tried to diversify his market by founding another company, or when the son of a publisher opened his own house. The owners of these publishing houses are part of the new Shi'a bourgeoisie which has been developing in Beirut since the 1950s. A group of these established publishing houses can be found in West Beirut, especially in the areas of *'Ain al-Ṭīna* and around *Rue Verdun*. Others recently settled at the border of the southern suburbs of Beirut (*al-Dāhiyya*), where new companies are booming and rents are still not as high as in West Beirut. Another characteristic of this group is their advanced level of functional diversification. The employees are specialized in the fields of management, editing, design, marketing, secretarial work etc. In big companies, up to 200 people are employed. Usually these publishers have 300-500 titles in their program, and more than 1,000 is no rarity.

In some cases, publishing has become to some extent a family tradition. During the last two decades, the names of half a dozen families have appeared in conjunction with the management of 71 different publishing houses: family members of *al-Zain* manage 23 of them, *al-Khalīl* and *'Āṣī* each manage 15, *Fūladkār/Īrānī*, *al-Ḥusainī* and *Ba'lbakī* each manage 6. It is also striking that many of the established publishers are descendants of one of the rooted Shi'a theological families of *Jabal 'Āmil* in South Lebanon, which shows that there is still a strong intellectual and cultural tradition among these Lebanese. The fact that they engage more in the established than in the Islamist type of publishing indicates that they share the moderate,

apolitical and secularized view of Islam, which was quite common among Shi'ites before the appearance of the Islamist ideology.

The established publishers are more or less secular in their orientation. Secular in this context does not necessarily mean a non-religious attitude but that their predominant access to Islamic literature is cultural or commercial - usually a mixture of both. Islam is seen as a cultural factor, not as a program for societal and political change or even revolution. Some of them edit Islamic source material, often those of the Sunni denomination, because they sell better in Arab countries with Sunni majorities.¹⁰ Some of these publishers print books in which authors elaborate modern interpretations of Islam, thus coming to terms with the needs of modernity - Islam and the natural sciences, Islam and democracy, Islam and the economy - in an analytical, relatively non-dogmatic way.¹¹ Others may even print a few titles of moderate and reformist Islamists in order to widen the debate.¹²

As regards their attitudes towards religious issues, the established publishers may be differentiated into three subgroups:

- *Secular publishers* deal with political or societal subjects (*Dār al-Jadīd*, *Dār al-Kunūz al-'Adabiyya*) or they print technical and scientific books (*Dār Qabīs*, *Academia International*). Religious titles play no or only a minor role. This category of "Shi'a" publishers may represent the largest number of undetected cases of this study as they neither edit Shi'a religious books nor do their owners identify themselves openly as Shi'ites.
- A second group may be called *cultural Islamic*. They focus on the improvement of society by strengthening the Islamic moral of their readers. They have a reformist stance towards the political order without questioning its main principles. Examples of this kind of publishers are *Dār [Maktabat] al-Ḥayāt*, *Dār al-Fikr al-Ḥadīth* and the magazines *al-'Irfān* and *al-Shirā'*.
- Other established publishers, who may confess their religious faith, print Islamic books mainly out of *commercial interest*. They have a share of Islamic source material, both of Sunni and Shi'i origin, which they may sell in the same way as they sell dictionaries, belles lettres, cookbooks or children's books. They may even include some Islamist titles in their catalogues. But they cannot be categorized as Islamists because of their moderate attitude towards Islam and because they also publish secular books which the Islamist publishers would not sell.¹³

There is a gradual transition between the last type of established publishers selling religious books and the Islamist publishing houses. It may become more profitable for a commercial publisher to widen the range of his religious titles or for an Islamist publisher to integrate some scientific works or schoolbooks. In order to assign them to one of the types, I have weighed the different facts and impressions for each case.

Table 1: Shi'a publishing houses according to their year of foundation ¹⁴

Established publishing houses	Islamist publishing houses
1909 al-'Irfān (magazine)	
1930 Dār [Maktabat] al-'Irfān	
1947 Dār al-Andalus	
1950 / 1952 Dār al-Kitāb al-Lubnānī	
1952 al-Sharika al-'Ālamiyya li-l-Kitāb	
1953 Dār [Maktabat] al-Ḥayāt	
1956 / 1977 Dār 'Ālam al-Kutub	1956 Jam'iyyat al-Qur'ān al-Karīm
1957 Mu'assasat 'Awaidāt	
1960 Dār al-'Ālam al-Islāmī	
1960 / 1963 Dār al-Kitāb al-'Arabī	
1962 Dār al-Kutub al-Islāmiyya	
1963 / 1965 Dār Ihya' al-Turāth al-'Arabī	
1964 Dār al-Kitāb li-l-Jamī'	1964 / 1967 Mu'assasat al-A'lamī
1969 Dār al-Ma'rifa	
1971 Dār al-Āfāq al-Jadīda	1969 Dār al-Ta'aruf
1971 Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya	1969 / 1972 Dār al-Zahrā'
1971 Dār al-Kutub al-Thaqāfiyya	
1978 Dār al-Fikr al-Lubnānī	1977 al-Munṭalaq (magazine)
1978 Mu'assasat 'Izz al-Dīn	1979 Dār al-Funūn
1979 al-Mu'assasa al-Jāmi'iyya	1979 al-Dār al-Islāmiyya
	1979 / 1980 Dār al-Tayār al-Jadīd
	1980 Dār al-'Ālamiyya
	1980 / 1984 Dār al-Balāgha
	1980 Dār al-Murtaḍā
	1980 al-Ghadīr (magazine)
	1980 Mu'assasat al-Fikr al-Islāmī
	1980 Mu'assasat al-Wafā'
1983 Dār al-Alif Bā'	1981 Dār al-Aḍwā'
1985 Dār al-Manāhil	1981 Dār al-Mufīd
1985 Dār Qābis	1986 Dār Bilāl
1985 Dār al-Qāmūs al-'Arabī	1987 al-Baṣā'ir (magazine)
1987 Dār al-Fikr al-Ḥadīth	1987 Dār al-Firdaus
	1987 Dār al-Nadā
	1987 Dār al-Qāri'
	1987 Dār al-Rasūl al-Akram
	1987 Dār al-'Ulūm
	1987 Mu'assasat Āl al-Bait
	1987 Mu'assasat al-Imām al-Ḥusain
1988 Dār al-Fikr al-'Arabī	1988 Dār al-Bayān al-'Arabī
	1988 al-Markaz al-Istishārī li-l-Dirāsāt wa-l-Tauthīq
	1988 Mu'assasat al-'Ārif
	1988 Mu'assasat al-Balāgh
	1989 Dār al-Ghurba
	1989? Dār al-Rauḍa
1990 Academia International	1989 Mu'assasat al-Ba'tha
1990 Dār al-Jadīd	1990 Dār al-Hādī

	1990 Dār al-Ṣafwa
	1990 Dār al-Wahda al-Islāmiyya
	1990 Markaz al-Dirāsāt al-Istrāṭijīyya
1991 Dār al-Mu'allif	1991 Dār al-Mahajja al-Baidā'
	1991 Dār al-Malāk
1992 Dār al-Ḥarf al-'Arabī	1992 Dār al-Amīr
	1992 Dār al-Ḥadā'iq
	1992 Dār al-Kalima al-Ṭayyiba
	1992 Dār al-Mu'arriḥ al-'Arabī
	1992 Dār al-Thaqāfa al-Islāmiyya
	1992 Mu'assasat al-Manār
	1993 Dār al-Ḥiwār
	1994 Dār Ajyāl al-Muṣṭafā
	1994 al-Mu'assasa al-Duwaliyya
	1995 Dār al-Ghadīr
	1995 Dār al-'Imād
	1997 Dār al-Ausaṭ
	1997 Mu'assasat al-Imām 'Alī
	1997 Mu'assasat al-Thaqalain al-Thaqāfiyya

Shi'a Islamist Publishing Houses

During my research, I found out 136 publishing houses owned and led by Shi'ites who may be classified as "Islamists". Contemporary Shi'a Islamists have a holistic image of Islam, which in their understanding offers concepts and solutions for nearly all spheres of human life. They criticize the existing orders in the Middle East as being corrupt, anti-religious, westernized and alien to the culture of the region, and they claim that the supposed socio-political "system" (*niẓām*) of Islam should be introduced instead. These ideas found more and more supporters as the Arab nationalist and socialist regimes lost much of their legitimacy during the last three decades. The defeat against Israel in 1967, the lack of substantial improvements in the socio-economic development and the growing differences in affluence strengthened the appeal of the Islamist opposition during the 1970s. For the Shi'a of Lebanon, the charismatic clerical leader *Mūsa al-Ṣadr* mobilized their religious sentiments until his mysterious disappearance during a visit to Libya in 1978. The two massive Israeli military invasions of 1978 and 1982 were impulses that radicalized and militarized many Shi'ites. The success of the "Islamic Revolution" in Iran (1978/79) had a decisive effect and strengthened a specific "Shi'i" self-confidence.¹⁵

In a first wave of foundations, some Shi'a Islamist publishing houses were set up in Lebanon at the end of the 1960s. Four of them - *Mu'assasat al-A'lamī*, *Dār al-Ta'aruf*, *Dār al-Zahrā'*, and *Dār al-Hilāl* - may even be called the "established" publishing houses of the Islamist spectrum. The majority of houses of this type were founded during a second period after 1979. At this time, the influence of the radical Islamism increased. Some of them were quite successful in their work and established a stable base for their companies. Others closed down after a while, reopened under a new name, or were integrated in another publishing house. Apart from some

well-run companies, many of the Islamist publishers seem to work more for idealism than for profit.

The Islamist publishing houses are concentrated in the southern suburbs of Beirut, mainly in *Hārat Hraik*, *Bi'r al-'Abd*, *al-Ghubairi*, and *Bi'r Hasan*. Nearly all of them have their own bookshop, which is located in the same building or even the same floor as their administration and stocks. Typical for them is their low number of employees, which seldom numbers more than five persons. Besides the owner or director, there is normally one representative, often a relative (brother, wife or son), who represents the company for example at book fairs. One or two employees or temporary workers serve in the shop or run errands.

Most of the publications of these houses are written by contemporary Shi'i theologians or laymen and deal with popularized (Shi'a) Islamic descriptions and interpretations of theology, Islamic history and all kinds of social questions. This literature is usually called "*islāmiyāt*" (probably best translated as "Islamist literature") and distinguished from the Islamic *turāth*, the classical religious source books.¹⁶ As the sale of radical Shi'a or political Islamist literature is strictly forbidden in nearly all Arab countries, the list of Islamist publishers normally contains a mix of "harmless" *turāth*, themes of general Islamic life advice, and *islāmiyāt*. Rarely does the program of such a publishing house number more than 200 titles, and the average is between 85 and 90. Besides the narrow market for their books and the competition between them, the low number of titles compared to the established houses can also be explained by their relatively young age.

Due to their theological and political orientation, Shi'a Islamist publishers can be subdivided into those of the "mainstream", which are adherents of the dominant Shi'a Islamist discourse, and those of the "periphery".

Mainstream Islamist Publishers

Most of the 96 mainstream Islamist publishing houses and institutes investigated in this study reside in the central areas of *al-Dāhiyya*, particularly in *Hārat Hraik* and near the mosque of *Bi'r al-'Abd*. In these areas, which are socially and politically dominated by the *Islamic Movement* in general and by *Ḥizb Allāh* in particular, a lot of mosques, theological institutes and colleges, Islamic charitable organizations, kindergartens and schools, religious courts and libraries, local banks and cooperatives of the Islamists have been founded during the last two decades. The publishing houses - which themselves often cooperate in editing a book, helping each other at book fairs, and exchanging books on a reciprocal level - are part of this network of mutual dependencies. Teachers and theologians of the institutes publish their books there, and their disciples buy them in the stores. Islamic schools teach with religious textbooks printed in Lebanon, and they educate the next generation of clients for Islamist literature. The whole area is densely populated and almost of pure Shi'i composition. The social surroundings are shaped by religion. Political debate is dominated by the activities of the *Islamic Resistance* in the south and by the opposition discourse of *Ḥizb Allāh*. Islamist radio and television stations provide their addressees with daily news, while the Islamist magazines and publishing houses supply them with background information and the deeper sources for a spiritual life.

Even internet technology is spreading, and some of the publishing houses and institutes portrayed in this guide have their own e-mail account or even offer a homepage for those interested. Two of the listed periodicals, *al-Qarār*, a publication of the *Supreme Shi'i Islamic Council in Lebanon*, and *al-Bayyanāt*, edited by *Muḥammad Ḥusain Faḍlallāh*, are exclusively circulated via internet. Due to increased exposure and the speed with which information can be sent, these Islamist organizations have been able to target new customers abroad.

Due to their different clients and interests, quite a wide range of diverse publishing houses and publishing institutes has specialized for this milieu. The Islamist mainstream publishing houses in these areas differ in size and in the financial success they have achieved. Central, large and quite successful publishing houses are *al-Dār al-Islāmiyya*, *Dār al-Aḍwā'*, *Mu'assasat al-A'lamī*, *Dār al-Mahajja al-Baiḍā'*, *Dār al-Malāk* or *Dār al-Ḥaqq*. Publishers of a medium size are *Dār al-Amīr*, *Dār al-Mujtabā*, *Dār al-Murtaḍā*, *Dār al-Rasūl al-Akram* and many more. In addition to these, some very small houses like *Dār al-Thaqāfa al-Islāmiyya* eke out their economic existence on a low level and subsidize their company by another job. The owner of the bookshop *Maktabat al-Faqīh* has also edited a few books, as has the editor of the magazine *al-Munṭalaq*, who describes his recently founded publishing house *Dār al-Ḥiwār* as a private "hobby".¹⁷

Some of the publishing houses like *Mu'assasat al-A'lamī*, *Dār al-Zahrā'* or *Dār al-Aḍwā'* are directed by a Shi'a theologian. Others like *Dār al-Malāk* or *Mu'assasat al-Duwaliyya* have specialized in promoting the high-ranking Lebanese theologians *Muḥammad Ḥusain Faḍlallah* and *Muḥammad Mahdī Shams al-Dīn* respectively.

Most of the theological institutes or endowments residing in Beirut are also involved in book publishing. *Mu'assasat Āl al-Bait*, *Mu'assasat al-Imām al-Ḥusain*, *Mu'assasat al-Imām 'Alī*, *Mu'assasat al-'Arīf*, *Mu'assasat al-Ba'tha* are just a few of them. All those mentioned are dependencies of institutes which have their directorate abroad, usually in Iran. Lebanese institutes include *Markaz al-Ghadīr*, which is connected to the *Supreme Shi'i Islamic Council* and its President *Muḥammad Mahdī Shams al-Dīn*. *Al-Markaz al-Islāmī al-Thaqāfi* stands close to *Muḥammad Ḥusain Faḍlallāh*. *Al-Markaz al-Islāmī li-l-Dirāsāt* is led by the theological historian (*Mu'arrikh*) *Ja'far Murtaḍā al-'Āmilī*. Unlike the ordinary publishing houses, these institutes have no shop of their own, and they distribute their publications via other publishers, book shops and professional distributors.

Two institutes in South Beirut have specialized in researching and publishing on political, social and economic issues. *Markaz al-Dirāsāt al-Istrāṭijīyya* understands itself as a part of the wider *Islamic Movement*. It publishes mainly on questions of regional and world politics. *Markaz al-Istishārī li-l-Dirāsāt wa-l-Tauthīq* belongs to *Ḥizb Allāh*. Its technical advisors do research on developmental questions for Lebanon. For example, they supply the media and parliamentarians of the party with background information.¹⁸ Only very recently have they started to make their studies available to a wider public.

Some Islamist publishing houses have specialized in Islamic schoolbooks. Usually they are associated with one of the organizations which sponsor Shi'a Islamist schools in Lebanon. Some educational institutions are run by *Jam'iyyat Mabarrāt*

al-Khairiyya, an endowment which was founded by the late *Grand Āyatullāh Abū-l-Qāsim al-Khūṭ* and is nowadays led by *Muḥammad Ḥusain Faḍlallāh*. *Jam'īyya Ta'līm al-Risālī* and *Mu'assasat Amal al-Tarbawiyya* are the organizations of the *Amal*-Movement responsible for schools. The schools of *Ḥizb Allāh*, called *Madāris al-Mahdī* (*Schools of the [messianic awaited Imām] Mahdī*), are managed by *al-Mu'assasa al-Islāmiyya li-l-Tarbiyya wa-l-Ta'līm* (*Islamic Organization for Education and Teaching*). *Jam'īyyat al-Ta'līm al-Dīnī al-Islāmī* (*Association for Islamic Religious Teaching*) is responsible for *Madāris al-Muṣṭafā* (*Mustafa Schools*) and has its own publishing house, *Dār Ajjāl al-Muṣṭafā*. *Dār al-Imād*, *Maktabat al-Madrasa* and *Dār al-Ḥadā'iq* are just some of the other publishers who supply these educational institutions with textbooks.

Islamist political parties and organizations play an important role in Shi'a publishing. While the *Amal*-Movement owns some publishing houses, *Ḥizb Allāh* seems to control and harness the book market more indirectly. For example, the party's subsidiary organizations like *al-Waḥda al-I'lāmiyya al-Markaziyya* (*Central Propagation Unit*) or *Mu'assasat al-Shahīd* (*Martyr's Organization*) and the already mentioned *Markaz al-Isīshārī li-l-Dirāsāt wa-l-Taṭhīq* commission their printed works from private companies like *Dār al-Nadā*, *Manshūrāt al-Walā'* or *Dār al-Wasīla*. In this way they may subsidize these ideologically friendly companies. But those interviewed at *Ḥizb Allāh* and publishing house interviewees emphasized that they work independently from each other.

Many Shi'i political and religious organizations edit their own magazines. The weekly party organ of *Amal*, formerly distributed under the name "*Amal*", is now called *al-Awāṣif*. *Al-'Ahd* is the weekly of *Ḥizb Allāh*. The weekly *al-Bilād* belongs to *Tajammu' al-'Ulamā' al-Muslimīn* (*Union of the Muslim Theologians*), an organization of Sunni and Shi'i theologians which describes itself as being "on the line of the Imām [*al-Khumainī*]". The triennial *al-Munṭalaq* was founded by *Ittihād al-Lubnānī li-l-Ṭalaba al-Muslimīn* (*Lebanese Union of the Muslim Students*), and the cultural Islamic magazine *al-Raṣad* is edited by the *Iranian Cultural Center* in Beirut.

The mainstream publishers of religious literature print the works of the dominant theologians of Iran, Iraq and Lebanon. But some theological and political similarities notwithstanding, they in no way hold identical views in all fields. There are ideological quarrels and rivalries between them that are also fought out in the book market, for example the question of who should be regarded the highest ranking theologian to be followed by all Shi'ites (*Marja' al-Taqlīd*).¹⁹ Roughly speaking, there are three groups of actors:

- the adherents of the theologians representing the Iranian state clergy: *Rūḥullāh al-Mūsawī al-Khumainī* (d. 1989), *Muḥammad Riḍā Gulpaigānī* (d. 1993), *Muḥammad 'Alī al-'Arākī* (d. 1994) and *'Alī Khāmānā'i*;
- the followers of the Iraqi theologians of the shrine city of *Najaf*, who themselves are divided between the followers of *Muḥammad Bāqir al-Ṣadr*, of *Abū-l-Qāsim al-Khūṭ* and of *'Alī al-Ḥusainī al-Sistānī*;
- finally, the adherents of the (rival) Lebanese theologians *Muḥammad Ḥusain Faḍlallāh* and *Muḥammad Mahdī Shams al-Dīn*.

Some of the Lebanese publishing houses have specialized in promoting the works of one of the mentioned theologians or their followers. But most of them seem to be pragmatic and publish a mixture of all the better selling authors.

It is difficult to determine the Iranian influence on the Shi'a book market in Lebanon. Both the Iranian embassy and the *Iranian Cultural Center* in Beirut published some books and magazines in the past, mostly political and religious ones. But this activity has declined during the last few years. Nowadays, indirect funding of Shi'a publishing houses in Beirut by Iranian organizations takes place by providing them with setting copies of Islamic source material which has been newly composed by religious endowments in Iran. The Lebanese publishers can therefore save on editing and typing costs. Production costs are reduced to the charge for printing and binding. Some of the theological institutes in Beirut mentioned are branches of Iranian institutes. They receive at least a part of their funding from their Iranian mother organizations, which are financed by religious taxes, pious donations or *waqf* (endowments) and which in most cases are not directly linked to the government.

Peripheral Islamist Publishing Houses

A group of 41 Shi'a Islamist publishing houses lies at the "periphery" of their mainstream colleagues in a geographical and in an ideological sense. They are settled in the north-western and south-eastern outskirts of the "*Ḥizb Allāh* area" of *al-Ḍāḥiyya*, mainly in residential areas. Most of the managers and employees of these publishing houses are non-Lebanese, some originate from Iraq, others from the Arab Gulf states.

- a) One larger group of publishers among them follows the teaching of the *Grand Āyatullāh Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī* who is currently residing in *Qum* (Iran). They specialize in printing his works, as well as those of his son *Ḥasan al-Shīrāzī* and his disciples *Muḥammad Taqī al-Mudarrisī* and *Hādī al-Mudarrisī*. All these 'Ulamā' originate from *Karbalā'* in Iraq, and the latter two organized the militant Islamist party *Munazzamat al-'Amal al-Islāmī* (*Organization of Islamic Action*). The publishing houses which promote this group in Lebanon constitute their own network.²⁰ The other publishers speak derisively of them as the "*Shīrāziyūn*" (the adherents of *al-Shīrāzī*). They hardly find any market for their books in Lebanon, and the export to other Arab countries is only possible by smuggling as nearly all of their books are forbidden there. They are all struggling for economic survival, and some of them have already left Lebanon because of the rising costs.
- b) To the south-west of the Beirut sports stadium, about half a dozen publishers can be found who belong to the *Amal*-Movement or who at least stand close to it. In a political sense they are integrated into the Lebanese state system by their party leader *Nabīh Birrī*, who is the current President of Parliament. But they direct their publications primarily at their Lebanese party clientele, and they have hardly any influence on the contemporary cross-border discourse of the Shi'a. Therefore they are counted as "peripheral" in this study.

- c) Some minor Islamist publishing houses, about which I could find no further information, seem to be isolated from the mainstream segment of Islamist publishing and are therefore subsumed under this category.

Other Shi'a Publishers

Some 108 Shi'a publishing houses, whose names I picked up mainly from the members' list of the *Syndicate of the Publishers' Union in Lebanon*, some others from Dalīl al-Maṭābī' (1987) and the address list of the *Arab Cultural Club*, could not be classified under any of the types mentioned. Despite considerable efforts, I could not find any further information on their former or actual activities and the kind of literature they published. Probably most of them are just names on the file and not active anymore. In the following statistical evaluation they will be marked as "sample C".

Borderline Cases

About a dozen publishing houses in Lebanon who have no or only a partial Shi'i management publish and distribute Shi'a religious literature as part of their program. The major Sunni publishing house *Dār al-Fikr* (Beirut) edited some Shi'a Islamist titles in the 1970s when most of the Shi'a Islamist publishers were not yet active. The owner of *Dār al-Jīl* is a Christian, though he has quite a large collection of Islamic works in his catalogue. *Dār al-Taqrīb baina-l-Madhāhib* (House of the Rapprochement between the [Islamic Juridical] Schools) is an offshoot of one of the main (Sunni secular) publishing houses in Lebanon, *Sharikat al-Maṭbū'āt*, and has started publishing a series of moderate Shi'i and Sunni authors. Finally, *Dār al-Falāḥ* has specialized in distributing the works of some Shi'a publishing houses and institutes from Lebanon and other countries. In addition, two non-Lebanese Shi'a publishing houses, *Dār al-Ṣafā* and *Mu'assasat al-Fajr*, are listed in this category. Their main address is in Great Britain, but they have some contact with Lebanese publishing houses and probably an unregistered office in Lebanon. None of these borderline cases have been considered in the following quantitative analysis.

Conclusion

In the following table I sum up the descriptions of the three differentiated types of Shi'a publishing in Lebanon: the established, the mainstream-Islamist and the peripheral-Islamist. It has to be emphasized once again that the divisions between these "pure" forms are fluid, and that the classification of a publishing house under one of these types means that it fits one rather better than another.

Table 2: Typology of Shi'a publishing houses in Lebanon

	<i>Established</i>	<i>Mainstream Islamist</i>	<i>Peripheral Islamist</i>
<i>subtypes</i>	a) secular b) cultural Islamic c) commercial	- close to one <i>Marja'</i> - led by a theologian - Islamic institute - political institute - political organizat. - Isl. schoolbooks	a) followers of Shīrāzī b) close to Amal-Movement c) isolated
<i>time of foundation</i>	mainly 1950s till 1970s	beginning of the 1970s till today	
<i>structure of the publishing house</i>	directory, shop and store house are in separate buildings, high grade of functional diversification	directory and shop in the same building	directory, shop and storage in one building, sometimes in private flats. Several publishers may share a store and a shop
<i>employees</i>	20 - 300	2 - 10	1 - 5
<i>location</i>	West Beirut, some with branch in South Beirut	in main business areas of South Beirut (<i>Hārat Hraik, Bi'r al-'Abd, al-Ghubairī</i>)	in peripheral and residential areas of South Beirut
<i>types of literature</i>	secular books, Islamic source books	religious books	
<i>types of Islamic literature</i>	a+b) reformist, modernist works b+c) primary source material	primary sources, literature of dominant theologians, school books	a) Islamist titles of heterodox theologians; primary source material
<i>authors</i>	of all religions and denominations	mainly Shi'a authors	exclusively Shi'a authors
<i>nationality of the managers</i>	Lebanese	mixed Lebanese, Iraqis and Iranians	a) many non-Lebanese (from Iraq, Iran, the Arab Gulf states) b) Lebanese
<i>motivation for publishing</i>	commercial and / or cultural	religious / commercial, propagation	a) religious, idealistic b) political
<i>economic perspective</i>	stable or improving since the end of the war	alternating up and down or improving	worsening

A Quantitative Evaluation

Lebanon is still suffering the consequences of the civil war. One minor consequence is the shortage of reliable statistics. As already mentioned, there are no reliable and complete official data available on the publishing houses of Lebanon and their activities. The following statistics are therefore to a considerable extent pioneer work.

The Number of Shi'a Publishing Houses in Lebanon

The number of Shi'a publishing houses identified in the registers under investigation differ greatly. *Dalīl al-Maṭābī'* (1987) lists a total of 282 publishing houses resident in Lebanon. But nearly 10% of the companies either appear twice or are printing houses which have been listed by mistake. Therefore, the 50 Shi'i publishing houses named in this register account for 20% of the total. The address list of *al-Nādī al-Thaqāfī al-'Arabī* (the *Arab Cultural Club*) (1997) contains 68 Shi'i publishers out of a total of 148 publishing houses, which amounts to 46%. The most detailed register, the members' list of the *Syndicate of the Publishers' Union in Lebanon* (*Niqāba Ittihād al-Nāshirīn fī Lubnān*) of 1998, contains 619 members' names. But as some of these are also listed twice, the 213 Shi'i members of this professional association constitute approximately 35% of the total.

My own study has identified 312 different publishing houses and publishing institutes with Shi'a owners residing in Lebanon. Shi'a publishers therefore make up 45% of the approximately 700 publishing houses in Lebanon, which comes close to the share of 46% which they have in the list of the *Arab Cultural Club*.²¹

I divided the publishing houses into a first group of 86 exemplary companies (sample A), on which I was able to find detailed information via the questionnaire, interviews with the owners or an employee, and their catalogues. I endeavored to identify at least some exemplary cases for each of the above described types and sub-types. A second group of 118 publishing houses comprises those about which I could find out less (sample B). But their appearance or the description of informants made it possible to classify them roughly. Finally, I added a list of 108 Shi'a publishers whose alignment (established/secular or Islamist) could not be determined (sample C). Most of these were taken from the members' list of the *Syndicate of the Publishers' Union in Lebanon* and from some other sources which could not be counter-checked (see "Other Shi'a Publishers", p. 28).

The figures in brackets show the number of publishers who edit a periodical.

Table 3: Number of Shi'a publishing houses examined

	<i>Exemplary sample A</i>	<i>Additional sample B</i>	<i>Rest (sample C)</i>	<i>total</i>
<i>Established</i>	22 (1)	44 (2)		66 (3)
<i>Mainstream Islamist</i>	50 (7)	47 (16)		97 (23)
<i>Peripheral Islamist</i>	14 (1)	27 (1)		41 (2)
<i>not determined</i>			108	108
<i>total</i>	86 (9)	118 (19)	108	312 (28)

Number of Books Printed by Shi'a Publishers

Lebanon still lacks a national bibliography. Until the beginning of the 1970s general laissez-faire was responsible for this lack of interest. From 1975 onwards it was the war that made registration difficult.²² In a private initiative, *al-Nādī al-Thaqāfī al-'Arabī* has recently started a new effort to register new book titles printed in Lebanon. As some of the publishing houses treated in this study are not registered officially and do not participate in any of the book fairs in Lebanon, their titles will most likely not be documented by this project.

From the statements of publishers in the questionnaires and with the help of their catalogues, I calculated the number of book titles of the Shi'a publishing houses in Lebanon still available on the market as approximately 40,000. In addition, 21 periodicals of Shi'a editors are still on the market, most of them with a "mainstream Islamist" orientation, while 7 periodicals have discontinued their appearance.

How did I reach this figure? In a first step, I added up the titles of the exemplary sample A with the help of their catalogues. The 86 publishers of this group altogether published 14,300 titles. The established publishing houses have an average of 390 titles in their program, the mainstream Islamist an average of 90, the peripheral Islamist an average of 86 titles. In a second step, I projected the titles for all the publishing houses of the three types by multiplying the average of titles by the number of companies assigned to the respective type. In this way I calculated a total of 25,740 titles for the established houses, 8,730 for the mainstream Islamist and 3,530 for the peripheral Islamist publishers. To simplify matters, I estimated a volume of 2,000 titles for the remaining 108 publishing houses of sample C which means an average of 18,5 titles for each. This produced a total of 40,000 titles.

Table 4: Number of publications according to the different types of publishers

	Publishing houses of the exemplary sample A				Extrapolated for all Shi'a publishers	
	number of publishers	percentage of sample A	Titles available		number of publishers	Book titles available
			total	average per publ.		
Established	22	25.6%	8,600	390	66	25,740
Mainstream Islamist	50	58.1%	4,500	90	97	8,730
Peripheral Islamist	14	16.3%	1,200	86	41	3,530
subtotal	86	100.0%	14,300	166	204	38,000
not determined (sample C)				(18,5)	108	(2,000)
total					312	40,000

However, there are some realities that reduce the exactness of this result. A factor which might reduce the actual number of book titles available is that the publishers of the sample A are the more active ones. The average of published books for the other publishers, which was not investigated in the same depth (sample B), could be lower. In addition, in some spot checks I found books that have been published in cooperation by two or more publishing houses so that their titles appear in more than one catalogue. Some titles are sold by several publishers in different editions and therefore are counted several times.²³ Finally, some catalogues unfortunately do not distinguish explicitly between the publisher's own books and those of cooperating houses distributed by him.

There are also factors which could increase the effective number of books. The Islamic standard source books like *Qur'ān, al-Ṣaḥīfa al-Sajjadiyya* by Imām 'Alī or some *Qur'ān* interpretations (*tafsīr*) are sometimes offered by one editor in several editions differing in size, print and paper quality which I counted as only one for this study. The *Qur'ān* editions of all Shi'a publishers taken alone would easily surpass 200. Books which are offered in several languages by the same publisher I also counted once only. There are also some religious multi-volume editions and encyclopaedias of up to 110 books which are treated as only one title.²⁴

These diverse factors seem to cancel each other out, so that the amount of 40,000 titles seems reasonable.

It is also difficult to estimate the average number of new titles published each year. The 47 publishers who provided figures on this question published 720 titles during

1997. To make a projection for the approximately 150 Shi'a publishing houses still strongly active in Lebanon would lead to a number of some 2,000 new titles each year. Another way of estimating this, which leads to the same result, would be to divide the total number of 40,000 titles by the number of twenty years, the period in which most of the titles must have been published.

Finally, I estimate the share of religious books among these titles. Nearly all of the 12,260 books of the Islamist publishers are religious. As at least half of the books of the established publishing houses also deal with Islam, a total of 25,000 Islamic books (Sunni and Shi'i) seems to be reasonable.

Table 5: The range of Shi'a publishing in Lebanon

Total of Shi'a Publishing Houses active during the last two decades	312
Total of titles still available	40,000
Islamic books	25,000
New titles each year	2,000

notes

- 1 For the beginning of letter-press printing in Lebanon see Peter Thielmann: *Kulturelles Erbe und die Anfänge des Buchdrucks im Libanon*; in: *Beiruter Blätter* 1997, Beirut 1998; pp. 132-135.
- 2 One of the first secular publishers of the Middle East and a typical representative of the new cultural awakening was Fāris al-Shidyāq. Lebanese by origin, he worked in Egypt for most of the time; see: Geoffrey Roper: *Fāris al-Shidyāq and the Transition from Scribal to Print Culture in the Middle East*; in: Atiyeh, George N. (ed): *The Book in the Islamic World*, Albany / NY 1995, pp. 209-231. For the history of book printing and publishing in Lebanon see George N. Atiyeh 1995, in: Atiyeh (ed), pp. 236ff; Maud Stéphan-Hachem 1988, pp. 53-64; and Nadā Fayiz al-Sa'īd 1996, pp. 11-18. For the Arab region in general see MATBA'A, in: EI 2nd edition, Vol. VI, pp. 794-807.
- 3 For the early history of the Shi'a in Lebanon see Monika Pohl-Schöberlein: *Die schiitische Gemeinschaft des Südlibanon (Ġabal 'Āmil) innerhalb des libanesischen konfessionellen Systems*; Berlin 1986, pp. 43ff, and the article MUTAWĀLĪ of Werner Ende in: EI 2nd edition, vol. VII, pp. 780f.
- 4 Tarif Khalidi: *Shaykh Ahmad 'Arif al-Zayn and al-'Irfan*; in: Marwan R. Buheiry (ed); *Intellectual life in the Arab East*; Beirut 1981, p. 110-124; Silvia Naef: *Aufklärung in einem*

- schiitischen Umfeld: Die libanesische Zeitschrift Al-Trfān; in: Die Welt des Islams 36/3. Leiden 1996a, p.365-378, Silvia Naef: La presse en tant que moteur du renouveau culturel et littéraire: La revue chiite libanaise Al-Trfān; in: Asiatische Studien / Études Asiatiques L 2 1996; Sonderdruck: Literatur und Wirklichkeit - Littérature et Réalités, Bern, Berlin, Frankfurt a. M. et. al. 1996b, p. 385-397; and Biancamaria Scarcia Amoretti 1995, pp. 116-119, portray the history and the thematic outline of this magazine.
- 5 The *SLA* was founded by *Sa'd Ḥaddād*, a former officer of the Lebanese Army, during the first phase of the civil war in 1975/76. The Israeli military and financial backing goes back to that time. Since 1984 the *SLA* has been led by *Antoine Lahad*, likewise a former commander of the Lebanese army. For more details on the emergence of the militia and the *Security Zone* see Beate Hamizrachi: *The Emergence of the South Lebanon Security Belt*. Major Saad Haddad and the Ties with Israel, 1975-1978; New York, London 1988. Information on their present make-up can be found in Ahmad Beydoun: *The South Lebanon Border Zone: A Local Perspective*; in: *Journal of Palestine Studies* 21/3; Washington DC Spring 1992; p. 35-53 and Augustus Richard Norton: (In)Security Zones in South Lebanon; in: *Journal of Palestine Studies* 23/1, Washington DC Autumn 1993; p. 61-79.
- 6 "*Amal*" means "hope" in Arabic. It is also the acronym for *Afwāj al-Muqāwama al-Lubnāniyya (Battalions of the Lebanese Resistance)*. For its historical development see Fouad Ajami 1986 and Augustus Richard Norton 1987.
- 7 *Samira 'Āṣī*, owner of *Dār al-Andalus* and director of the *Syndicate of the Publishers' Union in Lebanon*, in an interview with the author on 12/30/1997.
- 8 For the socio-political genesis of Shi'a Islamist publishing houses in Beirut and their interconnections with the Shi'a network see chapter III, pp. 43ff.
- 9 For a comparison between the foundation years of the established and the Islamist publishing houses see table 1, pp. 22f.
- 10 e.g. *Dār al-Hilāl*, *Dār Ḥyā' al-Turāth al-'Arabī*, *Dār al-Kitāb al-'Arabī* and *Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya*.
- 11 e. g. *Dār al-Fikr al-Ḥadīth*.
- 12 An example of this kind is *Dār al-Jadīd*, a strictly anti-confessionalist and secular publishing house. Its director, *Rashā al-Amīr*, described this in an interview on the 10th of December 1997 as the motivation for publishing books by the Iranian president, *Muḥammad Khātāmī*, and of *Hādī al-Mudarrisi*.
- 13 Examples of this group are: *al-'Aṣr al-Ḥadīth*, *Dār al-Kitāb al-Lubnānī*, *Dār al-Fikr al-Lubnānī*.
- 14 The data for this table stem from the following sources: questionnaires, interviews with publishers, catalogues of the respective publishing houses, and Maud Stéphan-Hachem 1988, pp. 325f. The years specified differ in some cases as the date of registration and the year in which work began are not identical for all publishers.
- 15 For more information on the Shi'a "Islamic Movements" see chapter III, pp. 41ff.
- 16 The different types of religious Islamic literature and the main themes of the Islamist works are described in detail in chapter III, pp. 45ff.
- 17 *Ḥasan Muḥammad Jābir* in an interview with the author on 09/08/1997.

- 18 For these two institutes see Stephan Rosiny: *Zwei Forschungsinstitute der schiitischen 'Islamischen Bewegung'* in Beirut; in: *Beiruter Blätter* 5 (1997); Beirut 1998; p. 106-110. For *Markaz al-Istishārī li-l-Dirāsāt wa-l-Taṭhīq* see Mona Harb el-Kak 1996: *Politiques urbaines dans la banlieu sud de Beyrouth*.
- 19 For the struggle over *marja'iyya* see chapter III, pp. 40-45.
- 20 This group consists of *Mu'assasat al-Wafā'*, *Dār al-'Ulūm*, *Mu'assasat al-Fikr al-Islāmī*, *Mu'assasat al-Balāgh* and some others.
- 21 Without mentioning her source, Scarcia Amoretti 1995, p. 115, writes that 350 out of 500 publishing houses in Lebanon have been owned by Shi'ites during the last 100 years.
- 22 For the shortcomings of earlier bibliographies see Maud Stéphan-Hachem 1988, pp. 26ff.
- 23 A good example are the *Murāja'āt* by *'Abd al-Ḥusain Sharaf al-Dīn*, which can be found in different editions in the brochures of *Dār al-Ḥaqq*, *Dār az-Zahrā'*, *Dār al-Bayān al-'Arabī*, *Dār al-Rasūl al-Akram*, and *Dār al-Andalus*.
- 24 See for example *Bihār al-anwār* by *Muḥammad Bāqir al-Majlisī*, offered by *Mu'assasat al-Wafā'* and *Dār Ḥyā' al-Turāth al-'Arabī*, which consists of 110 volumes.