



**RE-VISIONING 'LEBANON': POWER-SHARING DURING THE
POSTWAR ERA (1990-2015)**

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Thesis submitted to the Department of Political Science, PhD Programme
in Political Theory, in total fulfillment of the requirements for the
Doctoral degree in Philosophy.

2016

ABSTRACT

One of the major objectives of this study was to show how consociationalism deals with multi-communalism and why it remains the most prevalent form of nation-building in fragmented settings. To enhance communal inclusion, consociationalism propounds the formation of all-encompassing executives and the application of the proportional rule in the allocation of resources, offices and the electoral system. Veto rights prevent decisions that impinge upon issues deemed of Vital National Interest. In addition, functional federalism guarantees the protection of minorities by granting them the exclusive right of managing communal cultural and educational affairs. However, the sacralisation of the consociational devices of power-sharing inhibits their gradual dismantlement as the merits of inclusion and segmental autonomy tend to be highly valued by minority groups. This underscores the contextual character of power-sharing and the study's attempt to explore its peculiarities within an iconic consociational case that of Lebanon.

Thus the second objective of this thesis was to ask why consociationalism has not yet produced a sort of democratic stability grounded on a veneer of syncretistic nationalism in postwar Lebanon (1990-2015). The study therefore, attempted to contribute into the understanding of the subtleties embedded in fragmented settings and demonstrate how institutions become entangled with communal histories and myths. As shown, power-sharing in Lebanon is deeply ingrained in history, mediating and being mediated by different visions of nation-statehood.

The Taif Agreement, which was the main focus of this study, attempted to end a protracted civil war and bolster national integration in Lebanon by ‘ephemerally’ re-introducing confessionalism. Syria formed an integral part of the postwar nation-building process. As argued, the Syrian tutelage was eminently hybrid in nature, straddling a military occupation and a legitimate trusteeship. Following a self-centered approach, Damascus prioritised stability over democracy, adroitly manipulating recurrent patterns of inter-confessional bickering.

The Independence Intifada ended the Syrian tutelage and engendered hopes for a rekindled spirit of consociational partnership. However, as this thesis has tried to argue, Lebanon soon became embroiled in interlocking institutional deadlocks that resided in different visions of nationhood. The eruption of the Syrian uprising accentuated the divergent perceptions nursed by the inter-segmental elites, manifesting that the Lebanese republic has reached a critical stage in the long process of nation-building.

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To my parents

Alexandros and Eleftheria

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This is probably the most important part of the thesis as it condenses the feelings of gratitude and indebtedness to people that stood by me the past three years.

First of all, I would like to thank my supervisors Professor David Held and Dr Valentina Gentile.

Besides my supervisors, I would like to express the deepest appreciation and respect for two brilliant scholars, Dr Adham Saouli and Dr Bashir Saade who both helped me grasp some of the complexities embedded in Lebanese politics.

I would also like to thank Dr Richard Lawrie for the warm welcome and invaluable assistance during my stay at Durham University.

Special thanks go to Dimitrios Stroikos, who has proved to be a relentless source of moral support and encouragement.

Last but not least, I feel grateful to the staff of the PhD office at LUISS University for readily responding to my enquiries.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ANP	Arab Nationalist Party
EU EOM	EU Election Observatin Mission
FPM	Free Patriotic Movement
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
IDF	Israeli Defence Forces
IRL	Islamic Resistance in Lebanon
LAF	Lebanese Armed Forces
LNA	League of National Action
LNM	Lebanese National Movement
PLO	Palestinian Liberation Organisation
PSP	Progressive Socialist Party
SCEC	Supervisory Commission on Electoral Campaign
SNB	Syrian National Block
SSNP	Syrian Socialist Nationalist Party
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNIFIL	United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
VNI	Vital National Interest

INTRODUCTION

This study aims to analyse the model of consociational democracy endorsed in post-war Lebanon (1990-2015). The objectives of this thesis are twofold: firstly, the study attempts to explain how consociationalism grapples with multi-communalism and in relation to this, why it still remains a valid mode of managing ethnic disputes in deeply divided settings. Secondly, the study aspires to explain why the Lebanese model of consociational democracy has not yet engendered the sort of democratic stability propounded by consociationalists squarely grounded on a veneer of syncretistic Lebanese nationalism (Hanf 1993).

By doing thus, the study will try to advance the argument that consociational democracy in Lebanon is genuinely being tested after the Syrian withdrawal in 2005. Whilst political stability was to a large extent palpable in the period 1990-2005, this was achieved at the expense of the consociational formula and its procedural content. By contrast, recurrent patterns of institutional deadlock and controlled instability in the post-Syria era emerged as Lebanese elites were immersing themselves in the realities of power-sharing.

In this vein, this study will attempt to distance itself from previous ventures in conflict regulation by exploring not only the dynamics fostered under power-sharing regimes and the conditions that generate, and facilitate their perpetuation but also the ideational aspects embedded in them. Significantly, consociationalism as the overarching institutional structure is bestowed with meanings that resonate disparately among Lebanon's constituent communities. Within this context, the consociational system turns into a political terrain where divergent visions of the state are unfolded and fiercely contested. This was more

evidently manifested in the mounting antagonism between two competing nation-building projects in the post-Syria era: an economically liberal Lebanon against a society of resistance.

The study will posit two hypotheses: firstly, consociationalism in postwar Lebanon represents an institutional edifice that structures social reality, highly interplaying with communal myths, symbols and identities. As such it is historically embedded within the Lebanese saga of state formation and the vicissitudes that marked its genesis, evolution, breakdown and restoration. Secondly, consociational democracy in Lebanon is highly dependent on external actors as conditions that sustain its perpetuation.

Consociationalism will be used interchangeably with consociational democracy in order to denote the model of shared multi-communal administration of state affairs as endorsed by Arend Lijphart in his early endeavours (1968, 1969, 1977) and his final elaboration (2008) on the concept. Moreover, the thesis will remain in line with Lijphart's conceptual framework by understanding stability in its precariously multidimensional definition of system maintenance, civil order, legitimacy, and effectiveness. Yet, it will not equate power-sharing with consociationalism as Lijphart tended to do in his latest work. Instead, the thesis recognises that other types of institutional design can also claim that title as long as the sharing of power lies at the heart of their theoretical propositions e.g. centripetalism, power dividing (Wolff 2010) that aspire to achieve peaceful and consensual coexistence (Esman 2000, 102).

Communalism will be translated in accordance to the distinctive features of the Lebanese milieu which is crystallised in the vertical

segmentation of the society along ethno-religious lines, here defined as confessional. Given the fact that the Lebanese model of power-sharing pre-determines and categorically identifies the communal segments according to confessional affiliations (*ta'ifiyya*), the study will employ the term “in the subjective and objective sense of collective identification and its institutional expression in global society” (Beydoun 2004, 80). Hence, whilst all communal groups being citizens of Lebanon, e.g. Shias, Sunnis, Maronites etc., they will be explicitly differentiated in order to make sense of their preferences, strategies and myths.

By syncretistic nationalism, the study means the gradual development of an overarching set of ideas widely shared and valued among the citizens of Lebanon that ensues from the merits fixated in the consociational formula such as coexistence, dialogue and symbiosis (Hanf 1993, 70, Fakhoury 2008, 13). This concept of syncretistic nationalism is buttressed with a feeling of territorial attachment to the state of Lebanon (Salibi 1988, 222) but falls short of being identified as a mobilising force akin to the nationalistic ideologies developed in Europe.

Interestingly, Lebanon is cited by Arend Lijphart among the proto-cases of consociational democracy *par excellence* already in the 1969 seminal article on *Consociational Democracy*. Indeed, the case of Lebanon is in theory tremendously fitted for the model of consociational democracy given its small size and population, an alleged long tradition of inter-sectarian bargaining, and an ideal demographic equilibrium where all segments champion the status of minorities. Lebanon is home to 18 recognised Christian (ethnic and non-ethnic) and Muslim communities. Yet, no single group enjoys the status of absolute majority.

In parallel, the Lebanese confessional formula was credited with additional praise as the elites of Lebanon forged a consociational, verbal agreement -the National Pact (*al mithaq al watani*)- to establish an independent, sovereign country amidst widespread aspirations for Arab unity. This unmediated act of conciliation was grounded on a long tradition of representation and power-sharing within the contours of the Règlement Organique and the *millet* system enforced under the imperial cloak of the Sublime Porte.

The prelude to the civil war (1975-1990), highly identified with the skirmishes pitting Maronite and Palestinian militias, symbolise a point of rupture with the democratic institutions in Lebanon. Derived from the accumulated effect of internal and external crises, it ushered in the eventual disintegration of the inter-communal partnership. The collapse of the consociational formula in Lebanon triggered controversies that disputed the merits of the confessional system, whilst highlighting its pitfalls in exacerbating communal strife under conditions of external instability.

The restoration of civic and political life was achieved with the signing of the Document of National Understanding (*wathiqat al wefaq al watani*) or, as it is more broadly known, the Taif Agreement. The Taif accord's targeting was twofold: firstly, it aspired to put an end in fifteen years of inter- and intra-communal violence whilst reviving the state and its institutions. Both objectives were to be achieved through the re-introduction of consociationalism in its confessional variant. Paradoxically, the Taif Agreement envisaged the dismantlement of the 'abhorred' confessionalism in pursuit of a coherent Lebanese identity by reinstating it.

Crucially, consolidation of the state was entrusted to Syria. Damascus was legitimately entitled to assist the Lebanese authorities in reasserting state sovereignty with the exception of the territory occupied by Israel. By virtue of a regional and international consensus Syria acquired a legitimate status in Lebanon. Yet, its presence was silently prolonged nurturing ambivalent feelings towards it across the Lebanese confessional spectrum.

During the first period of the Taif republic (1990-2005), the consociational formula enjoyed a façade of stability couched in the uneven terms of the Syrian-Lebanese relationship and the ideologically charged slogan of the ‘two sisterly nations’. Some critical questions emerge in what regards this period: firstly, how was the Taif Agreement perceived by the Lebanese elites and how did it attempt to address previous sectarian grievances? Secondly, why was consociationalism reinstated if it had already failed? Still, how can we account for the role Syria played during the above mentioned period?

Significantly, the Syrian withdrawal in 2005 marks a critical juncture or a turning point in the political history of Lebanon: it opened the window of opportunity towards a new political phase that through collective action could evolve into a successful nation-building project grounded on consociational power-sharing.

Yet, the Syrian redeployment was received with varying degrees of enthusiasm across the communal spectrum. Continuities and schisms surfaced out of the resulting vacuum, which importantly traced their origins to older ideas of nation- and state-building ‘congealed’ during the years of the Syrian trusteeship.

Significantly, the Syrian withdrawal engendered new structures of opportunity for the different communal segments. The ensuing fluidity facilitated the re-arrangement of political alliances and their subsequent galvanisation into a new equilibrium. The eruption of the Syrian uprising in 2010 jeopardised the viability of the consociational formula as the Lebanese actors projected their particularistic foreign policy agendas to score gains in the domestic arena.

Thus the second period of the Taif era covered in this study, (2005-2015) is fraught with the symptoms of an ailing consociational formula. Recurrent rounds of recriminations on internal and external issues ushered in intractable institutional stalemates. Patterns of *immobilisme* that are endemic to power-sharing regimes increased, whilst being painstakingly resolved through external mediation. *Immobilisme* and polarisation reached its climax in 2008 reflected in the ensuing brief civil conflict pitting mostly Shia militias against Sunni and Druze armed groups.

The Doha Accord, sponsored by Qatar ended the protracted *cul de sac* by offering a package deal that broke an interlocking impasse as enshrined in the formation of a consociational executive and the election of a new president. Yet, the pattern of interlocking stalemates in the structure of governance reemerged as soon as the Syrian revolt unfolded. Lebanese elites have been stubbornly stuck to their particularistic domestic and external agendas that institutional paralysis engulfed most loci of power-sharing.

Yet, the post-Syria phase witnesses some interesting patterns of alignment. Interestingly, a Shia-Maronite pact forged between Hizbullah and the Free Patriotic Movement (FPM) sets in theory, an interesting

example of inter-confessional conciliation that transcends the narrow confines of sectarian thinking. This is juxtaposed to the ever shifting patterns of alliance-making conditioned by the institutional structure.

In light of those processes, the thesis is inclined to ask the following: firstly, if Syria was considered the major stumbling block in the road to democratic stability, why this has not been achieved a decade after its withdrawal. Secondly, how should we understand the resulting re-ordering of preferences, interests and alliances? Are they tantamount to a shift towards a more integrative Lebanese identity based on a reinvigorated consociational formula or they are mere manifestations of strategic calculations? Thirdly, how have external developments, and in particular the Syrian uprising, impacted upon the Lebanese model of governance.

By answering the above mentioned questions, the thesis aspires to prove insightful on numerous grounds. First of all, the Taif Agreement represents a “watershed” (Reinkowski 1997, 500) in the history of Lebanon as it attempted to terminate a war that endowed scholarly and journalistic discourse with the pejorative term of ‘Lebanonisation’ as a synonym of sheer catastrophe and fragmentation. Simultaneously, the Taif Agreement ambitiously envisages the establishment of a deconfessionalised polity whilst defining Lebanon as the final homeland for all its citizens once and for all.

Interestingly, the Constitution possesses a central position within daily public deliberations (Ziadeh 2006). In this vein, it seems imperative to understand how the different segments articulate, and project their strategies within the institutional realm as a means of gauging the prospects of consociationalism in Lebanon. Secondly, as mentioned

already, the Lebanese model belongs to the archetypical cases of power-sharing. Therefore, an assessment of consociationalism's performance in the Lebanese setting can help us understand efforts in conflict regulation and constitutional engineering in milieus other than Lebanon's. The role of external actors, socio-economic disparities, demographic reasons and nation-building agendas are phenomena hardly extraneous to other power-sharing landscapes e.g. Iraq. An exploration of power-sharing in postwar Lebanon becomes significant as its institutional parameters are defended as a source of emulation (Young 2014, Abi-Akl 2015), its failures transposed as didactic course in power-sharing (Dagher 1993, Rosiny 2013, Fakhoury 2014) and its milieu eulogised as an osmotic melting pot of diverse civilisations (Malik 2002).

To address its theoretical and empirical questions, the thesis will champion a multi-disciplinary approach that straddles comparative politics and historical institutionalism. Despite its single- case study character, the thesis remains within the comparativist bounds in terms of examining, questioning and explaining theoretical concepts that are applicable to other countries (Landman 2008, 28). In this vein, consociational democracy, stability, power-sharing, nation-building are all notions that conceptually transcend the borders of Lebanon, thus having strong resonance in other plural landscapes. Moreover, the study does not aim at discrediting the merits of Lijphart's cross-national comparative analysis for the sake of an alleged institutional exceptionalism (Grofman 2000, 48) in Lebanon. Rather, by providing a 'thick' contextual description of the empirical phenomena enveloped within the Lebanese case during the period in question (1990-2015), the

thesis aspires to draw some important inferences on the processes embedded in the consociational structure.

The study draws insights provided by historical institutionalism. Importantly, historical institutionalism sheds light on the middle range in order to “explain how political struggles are mediated by the institutional setting in which they take place” (Thelen and Steinmo 1992, 2). Thus the thesis will focus on the institutional architecture of the power-sharing regime in postwar Lebanon and namely the executive, the legislature and the electoral system. In this vein, the study will take into consideration the formal and informal rules of the game that “structured conduct” (Ibid.) in postwar Lebanon.

Consociationalism performs a double function: firstly, it distributes power among the constituent groups of Lebanese society, translated into offices, resources, and prestige thus shaping and molding political interactions (Ibid. 6). Secondly, it organises the “location of distinctions”, thus helping “define the horizon of actors” in the practical and moral space furnished by consociationalism (Katznelson 2003, 295). Hence, it provides a potential framework for collective action through the ascriptive organisation of state-society relations. Under this light, consociationalism mediates relations between the inter-confessional elites, laying emphasis on their role in achieving accommodation (Lijphart 1977) as the main driver of governance under power-sharing arrangements.

Moreover, the thesis will employ insights provided by literature on critical junctures (Soifer 2012) and periodization (Katznelson 2003). In this vein, it views the termination of the protracted civil war (1989) and the Syrian redeployment (2005) as two important turning points. Both

junctures produced outcomes that pushed Lebanon “onto a new political trajectory that diverge[d] significantly from the old” (Slater and Simmons 2010, 888). In the case of the Taif Agreement, Lebanese elites realised that coexistence is the optimal option to grapple with internal differences. The ensuing accord will shape the political field until the Lebanese elites devise a new formula. Moreover, the end of Syrian tutelage engendered the conditions of possibility towards a democratic legitimate order.

According to Soifer, critical junctures possess a causal logic that rests on the confluence of a number of permissive and productive conditions. Permissive conditions are those factors or conditions that change the underlying context to increase the causal power of agency or contingency and thus the prospects for divergence (2012, 1574). According to Soifer, the mechanisms of reproduction of the previous critical juncture are undermined, and this creates a new context in which divergence from the previous stable pattern can emerge (Ibid.). The duration of a critical juncture is marked “by the emergence and disappearance of a set of permissive conditions (Ibid.).

Permissive conditions engender the possibility space whereby productive conditions operate. In the absence of permissive conditions, productive conditions are insufficient to produce divergence. The loosening of constraints allows productive conditions to shape the outcomes that emerge. As soon as the window of opportunity closes, the productive conditions are “locked in” it (Ibid. 1575).

Thus the study considers the changing regional and international balance of power during the last years of the Cold war as the permissive condition that through a re-arrangement of preferences among actors such as the US and the USSR, Saudi Arabia, Syria and Iran, ushered in the

successful conclusion of the Taif Agreement. Yet, this outcome would have been impossible if the protracted civil war have not reached the point of a mutual hurting stalemate. Thus the Lebanese elites adopted a more conciliatory approach towards a comprehensive settlement.

On a same note, the thesis views the 2005 Syrian withdrawal as a critical juncture that encapsulates the scope conditions engendered by the international system with the productive conditions of domestic agency. In fact, the post-9/11 agenda on the war on terror and democracy promotion in the Middle East furnished the necessary loosening of constraints in Lebanon through the instrumentalisation of UNSC Resolutions.

This encouraged domestic mobilisation which significantly intensified especially among the disillusioned anti-Syria Christian segment. The Hariri assassination coupled with a despotic Syrian interference in the Lebanese affairs triggered the birth of a spirit of national unity that climaxed with the unprecedented popular mobilisations of March 2005. Contrary to the previous juncture, the 2005 Independence Intifada is registered as a missed window opportunity as it was quickly overpowered by the sectarian agendas of the actors involved.

To assess the legacies of those critical junctures, the study will try to link periodization with preferences via the institutional setting (Katznelson 2003, 294) as delimited by the consociational form of power-sharing. Therefore, it will try to underscore the “pattern of mutual constitution” (Ibid. 297) inherent in the Lebanese formula of power-sharing.

Within this context, the study will try to compare the two periods (1990-2005, 2005-2015) using the Syrian factor as the intervening

variable in order to underscore continuities and changes in the patterns of elite interaction. Its self-serving behaviour notwithstanding, Damascus performed the function of the external balancer and arbiter when stalemates impeded decision-making. Inevitably, the removal of the Syrian factor left an important vacuum. The post-tutelage polarisation of the political realm across an interdependence-integration cleavage (Kurtulus 2009) critically manifested the links tying the two countries together.

Moreover, the study will attempt to evaluate the contribution of the background factors in the performance of consociationalism as posited by Arend Lijphart in his article on power-sharing in India. Thus the thesis will try to examine whether the background conditions do indeed enhance the prospect of consociationalism in divided settings.

The study employs a variety of primary and secondary sources. The primary sources include the memoir of the National Movement's leader, Kamal Jumblatt *-I Speak for Lebanon-* that provides an illuminating account on the conditions of prewar Lebanon. Moreover, the study uses a variety of official documents to account in detail for the parameters of the institutional setting in postwar Lebanon. In this vein, the thesis makes extensive references to documents relevant to the period under study and in particular the Taif Agreement, the Doha Accord and the Baabda Declaration. UN resolutions have been broadly employed to trace the postures of the international actors involved on the issues of the Hariri assassination, Hizbullah's disarmament and the Syrian withdrawal.

Furthermore, the study has collected information on the actors' preferences and the processes of daily politics in Lebanon from English and French newspapers –and their respective news sites- printed in the

country (The Daily Star, L'Orient-Le Jour, an-Nahar). These sources have been primarily used to account for the period following the Syrian uprising. The author is well aware that some of the information might be misleading given the degree of political polarisation during the period under study. Another category of primary sources used in this study include reports and bulletins published by prominent international, academic and non-profit organisations that provide invaluable data on the elections, demography and the economy of postwar Lebanon.

Finally, the thesis has benefited from a great variety of secondary sources -journals and books- that focus on power-sharing and the political history of Lebanon.

Literature review on Lebanon

Despite the short timespan as a sovereign state, literature on the Lebanese case is disproportionately vast spilling over to diverse fields related to the study, such as sociology (e.g. Khalaf 1987, 1997, 2003, Beydoun 2003, 2004) history and political science. A rich social fabric, a bloody and protracted civil war (Khalidi 1979, Winslow 1996, Khalaf 1997, O' Ballance 1998) but foremost the, until very recently, much boasted democratic exceptionalism of Lebanon (Brumberg 2002, Fawaz 2009), all contributed into a vivid scholarly interest in the country of the Levant.

At the centre of this longstanding concern on the politics and society of Lebanon lies mainly a recurring problématique on sectarianism, confessional affiliation and their articulations, ramifications and interrelations with the consociational system of power-sharing, the development of a conscious Lebanese identity and state formation.

In this vein, some invaluable studies have been published that focus on the history of sectarianism, and the mythologies connected to Lebanon's communal groups. Dispelling the myths of communal historiography, Kamal Salibi likens the state of Lebanon to "a house of many mansions" (2002, 234) which primarily requires thorough understanding. For a national identity will be credibly forged on the condition of a serious re-reading of history that brushes aside myths on the origins and uniqueness of the sect.

From a different standpoint, Max Weiss employs a genealogical perspective to depict the layers of sectarianism 'stratified' in Lebanon (2009) as imprinted in the work of numerous historians. As a constructed phenomenon, sectarianism is being reproduced through various means such as legal and political (2009, 2010) e.g. judicial system. He concludes that "a greater focus on institutions and practices can help to more adequately trace the convoluted transformations of Lebanese sectarianism over time" (2009, 151).

By highlighting the constructed nature of sectarianism in Lebanon, Weiss echoes Makdisi. The latter attributes the invention of sectarianism to the encounter that took place in the 19th century Ottoman province of Mount Lebanon between local feudal elites, the Ottoman authorities and the imperial powers of the era who sought to patronise the local communal groups (2000) and preponderantly the masses. Largely viewed as a parochial residue within the bounds of a modern construction such as the state, Makdisi argues counterintuitively that sectarianism and nationalism are evenly modern and in no way antithetical (1996, 2000) as Lebanese elites constantly attempt to play its card.

On the contrary, more mainstream historical studies rely on a rich description of the processes, interactions and events that ushered to the birth of the Lebanese state. By providing some extremely elucidating in depth accounts on narratives of statehood, these studies help us understand continuities and changes on the ideational level that are unfolding in present day Lebanon. Thus, Raghid el-Solh (2004) conveys a convincing account on the vicissitudes of Lebanese state formation and the conditions under which independence was achieved. He thus describes eloquently the gradual convergence of the two contrasting visions on the future of Lebanon within the framework of the mandate, which oscillated between the Maronite dream of Christian Lebanon and the Sunni pan-Arabist longing for unity. In a similar vein, Meir Zamir (1997) provides a detailed historical account of Lebanon during the mandate era emphasising the period starting from the promulgation of the first Constitution (1926) to the beginning of the Second World War (1939) and the gradual collapse of the French empire. Finally, Carol Hakim's (2013), *The Origins of the Lebanese National Idea 1840-1920*, explores the validity of the claim of a distinct Maronite Lebanist identity by reconstructing the period of the *mutasarrifiya*, the role of France and that of the Maronite Church in the formulation of this idea.

In addition, a plethora of studies concentrate on the consociational system as 'invented' and instantiated in the verbal agreement of the National Pact. Within this context, power-sharing is often treated as the independent variable that by reproducing and inculcating communal identities impeded democratisation. For instance, Clovis Maksoud stresses the "faulty basis on which the Lebanese body politic rest[ed]" as a form of democracy that channels loyalty to the "religious group" (1966,

240) and its elites. Thus, the consociational system did not represent “the rule of the demos” but a system of benefit allocations (Rondot 1966, 1968, Crow 1966) to the various communities (Kerr 1966, 188).

Elizabeth Picard underlines this undemocratic character of the consociational formula as a form of social contract that aimed at keeping the masses subservient to the segmental elites (1996, 71-72), a view echoed also by Judith Palmer Harik (1995, 136) . Enver Koury, on the other hand, points to the dearth of cultural values epitomised in the absence of a de facto sense of community. Political socialisation being obstructed, the consociational system “aggravated controversies” (1976 8-9) that utterly led to the civil war. Michael Hudson pays particular attention to the consociational devices (grand coalition, segmental autonomy, proportionality) that were embedded in the pre-war formula. According to Hudson, those devices were not very effective in building democracy and stability, whilst they may have “hastened the collapse” (1988, 233). Yet, a counterfactual reading of pre-war Lebanon would have credibly led to the conclusion that in the absence of those embedded guarantees for all minorities and especially the Maronites, the state of Lebanon might have not come about as such.

By contrast, Farid el-Khazen argues that the abolition of the consociational system “would have undermined the very basis of democracy in Lebanon” as long as consociationalism entails a “de facto recognition of diversity and dissent” as “the two pillars of democracy in postcolonial divided societies” (2000, 24), which other studies frame as the “trade-off between openness and competition” on the one hand, and “inclusiveness and protection of minority rights”, on the other (Makdisi, Kiwan and Markanner 2011, 123). Interestingly, Smock and Smock

praise confessionalism by advancing the distinction between confessional politics and sectarianism (1975, 171). Moreover, Binder lays emphasis on the political process, which although akin to a “daily plebiscite”, sits on an “open, pluralistic competitive democracy” (1966, 288).

Another cluster of critiques focuses on the incapacity of the Lebanese system to tackle social, economic and political change (Hudson 1968, 1988, Choueiri 2007, Traboulsi 2007) especially in the pre-war period. Hudson’s *The Precarious Republic* (1969) underlines the impact of social mobilisation on the political system and the latter’s defective capacity to bridge social and economic inequalities in the 60s. Traboulsi dwelling upon a long durée perspective underscores the transition between dominant modes of production that is from feudalism to commerce in the 19th century province of Mount Lebanon. He thus assays the structural effects of Lebanon’s position on the world capitalist system and the ensuing processes of social mobilisation (2007, 159) that sprang out of a lasting legacy of economic discrepancies. Yet, both approaches underplay the link with the exogenous factors e.g. PLO that was entangled with the consociational system, whilst failing to explain why social mobilisation should necessarily lead to collapse.

This external dimension is addressed by Brenda Seaver (2000), who attributes the disintegration of the consociational model to the regional actors and their active involvement in Lebanese affairs. This view is echoed more prominently by Azar, who argues that Lebanon failed to address issues of security and diversity, for it fell “prey to the intrigues and machinations of the stronger, conflictive, or often unstable neighbors” (1984, 41), and the Lebanese economist, Georges Corm (1988, 264).

On the contrary, Zahar stresses the potentially positive contribution of external interference in enhancing the prospects of political stability (2005, 219). Dekmejian notes that apart from a number of other differences that set Lebanon apart from European experiences of power-sharing, it is the “turbulent environment and the Palestinian issue” that matters the most (1977, 261), a view shared also by Rigby (2000). Whilst the Arab-Israeli conflict does indeed have a bearing in the political scene –Lebanon host thousands of Palestinian refugees- the exogenous cleavage has been currently replaced by ideological attitudes on self-determination and external orientation tightly intertwined to the Syrian cause (Kurtulus 2009).

The conclusion of the Taif Agreement reinvigorated interest in the affairs of Lebanon. This comes as no surprise given the ferocity of the civil war and the conditions that gave birth to the new pact. Thus, the Document of National Understanding acquires additional importance given its hybrid nature that straddles a peace agreement and a constitutional document that establishes, assumes and manages “a system of permanent re-negotiation, re-interpretation and accommodation between state, nation and community” (Ziadeh 2006, 173).

From the peace-building perspective, Deirdre Collings alarmingly cautions that Taif “cannot guarantee long-term peace” as its implementation relies on both internal and external factors (1994, 287). Picard and Ramsbotham highlight the importance of freedom of expression, full demobilisation, and the endorsement of reconciliation programmes (2012, 87), whilst Ghosn and Khoury stress the unfinished process of reconciliation (2011). Despite the fact that, reconciliation was never virtually accomplished, peace has been generally preserved –in

terms of inter-confessional relations- with the exceptions of 2008 and the recurrent local rounds of fighting pitting Sunnis against Alawites in Tripoli.

Instead, the aspect of power-sharing does indeed generate skepticism in what concerns the abolition of confessionalism from the public sphere. The Taif Agreement envisages the abrogation of confessionalism by paradoxically re-instituting it (Fakhoury 2014, 241). In this sense, it essentially rejuvenates the 1943 National Pact (Maila 1991, 1994) and doing thus, the flaws that were associated with it. Hudson defined this leap forward as “consociationalism plus” (1999, 108), which hitherto remains a dead letter.

Numerous scholars have criticised this confessional revival by repudiating its nefarious effects in the political system. Ofeish stresses the hypocrisy that permeates the political field in Lebanon as “secular talk” but “sectarian application” (1999). Habib couches the perpetually devastating confessional political culture in terms of “tyranny” (2009, 64). Mona el-Bacha believes that democracy is practiced wrongfully in Lebanon, and this is atavistically reproduced. Hence, the Lebanese elites are called to fulfil their institutional role through the dissemination of democratic values (2009, 83-84).

Moreover, Mattar considers confessionalism as a stumbling block not only for democracy but interestingly, for the building of a strong state (2007, 62). Jabbra and Jabbra characterise consociationalism in Lebanon a “flawed” system as the conditions conducive to its blossoming are not propitious, whilst the defense of minority rights mutates into defense of minority privileges at the detriment of the birth of a national identity (2001, 84-85). Krayem concurs but instead, he inversely argues that the

formation of a cohesive identity is the prerequisite for the full implementation of the agreement (1997).

By contrast, Abul-Husn hails the Taif Agreement as partially “successful” for it restored consociationalism “to the management of its multicomunal structure” (1997, 119), whilst peace and stability “might eventually lead to more favourable conditions for integration and nation-building in Lebanon” (Ibid. 117). Yet, as this thesis pursues, nation-building and stability go in tandem, if not the former influences decisively the latter. Chahal portrays confessional identities in Lebanon as the “secret force” that guarantees the more or less harmonious perpetuation of the system (2002, 127), a view expressed also by Kerr, who sees in a “weak hybrid state” a culture of power-sharing that simultaneously incarnates its strength (2012, 29-30).

Importantly, the Syrian connection encouraged studies that shed light on the preservation of consociations through external actors’ umpire. These approaches are useful because they tend to eschew essentialist arguments about confessionalism that usually fail to explain more empirically centred variables such as stability. Michael Kerr, for instance, revises consociational theory by adding a fourth condition for successful consociations, that of the positive external pressures exerted by state and non-state actors alike (2006, 30). According to Kerr, the Taif Agreement represents a typical case of *coercive consociationalism* that is power-sharing imposed externally. Inevitably then, this dependence on actors residing beyond the political system raises the question on the relevance of the generating and sustaining conditions in consociations.

The ambiguity surrounding the external conditions that are conducive to consociations partially echo debates on the role of Syria in

the Lebanese setting. For instance Marius Deeb accuses Syria of waging a terrorist war on Lebanon (2003), el-Khazen portrays Syrian interference in the democratic process as “authoritarianism by diffusion” (2003) and Salloukh as “proxy authoritarianism” (2010). Rola el-Husseini stresses the strategies of co-optation or marginalisation employed by Syria in order to manipulate and control Lebanese elites (2012). Zahar, on the other hand, underscores that Lebanese leaders often called Syria to solve their internal disputes (2012, 66), whilst Nawaf Salam points to the “invisible hand of Syria” in helping transcend institutional stalemates in the post-war era (2007, 38).

Thus, Knio questions if political stability is sustainable (2008) in Lebanon in the post-2005 era as the Syrian withdrawal re-arranged political alliances. Geukjian advances the same problématique but he points to the lack of external support and to the accentuating effects of consociationalism in triggering polarisation between the two rival camps (2014, 544). Yet, he tends to underestimate the fact that patterns of cross-sectarian alliances could potentially act as a glimmer of hope towards a more integrating political system. Bouyoub, for instance, asks if the Hizballah-Free Patriotic Movement entente equates to a paradigm shift in state formation by stressing that polarisation in Lebanon should not be interpreted through sectarian lenses but political (2013, 188). Fakhoury (2009) and Salamey (2009) both advocate a more integrative institutional design that would gradually lead to a coherent polity. But discussions on a new electoral law reveal centrifugal tendencies that guarantee pure confessional representation e.g. Orthodox law that will expunge the traditional pre-electoral cross-confessional alliances.

Still, whilst both studies highlight the transitional phase Lebanon is passing through since 2005, they tend to underestimate the fact that consociationalism is being truly tested since that critical juncture. For it is also the contention of this study that consociational democracy is a transient model ideally leading to the formation of a coherent polity.

In Lebanon, the dynamics of this transition unfold in a rather bifurcated way, “wherein the political elites and the Lebanese are re-contextualising democracy and nationalism as well as their national interests...” (Kota 2009, 127). To understand and explain this re-contextualisation, it is crucial to focus on the subtle nuances that stem from the consociational system and the dimensions the latter acquires across the confessional spectrum. As Hanna Ziadeh indicates, “the Constitution has its own independent presence as an actor in the Lebanese quest for national consensus” (2006, 19). And the crux of this quest lies at the crossroad of the actors’ point of convergence that is the political system, which explains also the ‘ephemerally permanent’ perpetuation of consociationalism.

The study will proceed as follows: chapter 1 offers an historical overview of the genesis and evolution of consociational democracy as formulated by Arend Lijphart during a timespan approaching five decades of scholarly work. Thus it presents the main criticisms and debates associated with the model, which significantly contributed to its development and expansion as the main power-sharing model. Chapter 2 delves into the genealogy of power-sharing in Lebanon in order to explicate the genesis and the institutionalisation of confessionalism during the formative years of the Ottoman Empire, and its consolidation during the French mandate and the period leading to Lebanese

independence. Chapter 3 covers the period of the First Republic. Thus it investigates the causes of the civil war and the shifts in perceptions and preferences engendered by it. It then tries to explain why the Taif Agreement succeeded in endorsing a compromise settlement after fifteen years of bloodletting. Chapter 4 offers a reading of the Taif Agreement and how it sought to grapple with multi-communalism in postwar Lebanon. It then attempts to explain how the new institutional setting shaped preferences. Moreover, it sheds light on the complexities of power-sharing in a post-conflict society and the influence that Syria exerted into the political system. Finally, chapter 5 grapples with the vicissitudes of power-sharing in the post-Syria period. It thus tries to analyse the new dynamics and explain why consociationalism fell short of producing stability.

CHAPTER 1

ORIGINS, CRITICISMS AND THE CONSOCIATIONAL RESPONSE

Tracing the origins and development of a contested model

Almost half a century after its first formulation by Arend Lijphart (1968), the consociational model of democracy remains deeply contested and fiercely criticised. Undoubtedly, this span of time has been crucial for the development of a fruitful scholarly debate that revealed its merits and shortcomings, stressed its pitfalls and rectified part of its weaknesses.

This debate is not limited within the field of Comparative Politics but extends to other disciplines such as Political Theory, International Relations and Conflict Resolution. Essentially, this echoes the model's protean nature. Ongoing publications on consociationalism, critical or not, epitomise strikingly this continued interest (e.g Lijphart 2008, Taylor 2009, O'Leary and McEvoy 2013 McCulloch 2014).

Since its first formulation, the model has been characterised by methodological contradictions, conceptual confusion and oscillating scholarly aspirations, which obscured its empirical and normative content. These contradictions impacted upon the model's explanatory and heuristic capacities, the conditions that ushered in its emergence and perpetuation, its democratic credentials, and utterly its potential contribution into the field of conflict resolution and peace-building.

The origins of the model

Demystifying the architecture and the inner workings of consociational democracy admittedly begins with a systematic exploration of the ideas propounded by its most consistent defender, Arend Lijphart. Lijphart elaborated considerably on the strengths and weaknesses of the model, albeit not being its sole pioneer; a new generation of consociationalists has emerged, that represent the so called “new wave of consociations” (Taylor 2009, 7) within the genealogy of consociationalism.

Lijphart attributes the terminological origins of the word “consociational” to David Apter and his study on Uganda (Lijphart 1968, 20 and 2008, 3). Indeed, the latter study appears in a footnote in Lijphart’s seminal article, *Consociational Democracy* (Lijphart 1969, 211) next to a reference on Johannes Althusius’s writings on *consociatio* –which quintessentially connotes a society of societies- (Princeton Encyclopedia of Self-Determination). In addition, earlier variations of consociational democracy were to be found –Lijphart claims- in the works of Gerhard Lehbruch (1967), the Austro-Marxists, -such as Otto Bauer and Karl Renner- (Lijphart 1977, 43) but most preponderantly in the *Politics of West Africa* (1965) authored by Sir Arthur Lewis. To quote Lijphart, “political scientists like Gerhard Lehbruch” and himself “discovered consociationalism a few years later”, but “Lewis *invented* it by trying to think what would be the logical solution to the problems in West Africa” (Lijphart 2008, 278).

The purported long historicity of consociationalism and its alleged widespread application served a double purpose: firstly, it acted as a solid basis of support for the model’s normative potential, thus discrediting any allegations of Eurocentricity. Secondly, it enhanced the credentials of

consociational democracy; the latter does not merely serve as a tool for the conciliation of divergent visions of the state but it utterly implies a certain kind of logic (Lijphart 2008), or a consociational *esprit de corps*.

The first tentative effort to portray the contours of the consociational type of democracy took place in an article published in the journal of *Comparative Political Studies* (1968). In this article Lijphart strove to devise a new typology of democratic regimes distancing himself from Gabriel Almond's prevalent typological scheme.

According to Almond, political systems are distinguished according to the criteria of *political culture* and *role structure* (Lijphart 1968, 4). Those criteria define roughly two political systems: the majoritarian Westminster model (Anglo-American type) and the multiparty proportional system endorsed in many European (Continental European type) countries. Whilst the Anglo-American type is characterised by a "homogenous political culture" and a "highly differentiated role structure", those categorised under the rubric of the Continental type are permeated by a sharply fragmented political culture and a plethora of secluded role structures or subsystems (Ibid).

For Almond, fragmentation inexorably engenders segmentation and inevitably instability. He includes in this category the Third and Fourth French Republic, the Weimar Republic in interwar Germany but also postwar Italy (Ibid. 5). By contrast to the latter, the UK and the US exemplify two politically stable systems understood in terms of viability, which, according to Lijphart, expresses the dominant preoccupation of the comparativists of the era (Ibid. 8). In the words of Almond, the Continental type is prone to cause inertia (*immobilisme*) and fatally a 'Caesaristic breakthrough' gearing probably towards dictatorship.

Instead of the cumbersome nature of the Continental type, the Anglo-American demonstrates a *versatile* capacity of absorbing external and internal loads on the political system (Ibid. 10) buttressed by a thriving separation-of-powers role culture (that includes not only the three branches of power but forms of civic association within the broader public sphere).

Lijphart exposes his theoretical objections on precisely this distinction which he considers misguided. Henceforth, he will try to elaborate his typology by illustrating that some deviant cases disprove Almond's scheme. He questions the validity of Almond's typology by exploring the political culture and social structure of smaller European democracies such as The Netherlands, Austria, Switzerland, Belgium and the Scandinavian countries. Whilst political culture is homogenous (Ibid. 16) in Scandinavia, this property does not equally apply on the other cases. In fact Austria, The Netherlands, Switzerland and Belgium are essentially segmented societies with mutually reinforcing cleavages demarcating the populace along class, religious and ideological lines. Remarkably though, this group of countries fares satisfactorily in terms of systemic stability despite the conspicuous absence of overlapping membership in formal and informal civic associations (Ibid. 17).

The lack of cross-cutting cleavages notwithstanding, the deliberate efforts put forward by the various sub-cultural elites compensate for their absence. This forms the main argument and the cardinal necessary variable for the consociational model to work. Given the dangers lurking in the absence of cooperation and overlapping membership, elites are prone to cooperate for the sake of the public good (Ibid.18). Elites choose therefore in specific critical junctures between constructive or destructive

behaviour (Butchensøn 1987, 94). This is the self-denying hypothesis which explains, according to Lijphart why consociations are launched. Thus, “democracies with subcultural cleavages and with tendencies towards immobilism and instability which are deliberately turned into more stable systems by the leaders of the major subcultures may be called *consociational democracies*” (1968. 20).

One year later, Lijphart published one of his most influential articles entitled *Consociational Democracy* (1969). In this article, he reiterates the aforementioned definition of consociationalism. Consociational democracies are those regimes that whilst highly fragmented in terms of cleavages, exhibit remarkable resilience. Paradoxically, the elites choose to altruistically cooperate to “counteract the immobilizing and unstabilizing effects of cultural fragmentation” (Lijphart 1969, 212).

Yet, political stability ceases to be synonymous to viability. Quoting Claude Ake, Lijphart defines political stability in terms of degree, which is “quite out of proportion to its [society’s] social homogeneity” (Ibid.). Whilst viability implies longevity and it could be somehow measured by the temporal resilience of the cabinet, degrees of political stability connote obscurity leaving enough room for speculation. This is a problem that Lijphart acknowledges in his 1977 book *Democracy in Plural Societies*. As he remarks, political stability is a “difficult” and “ambiguous” term. Therefore, he seeks to employ it in a multidimensional fashion that denotes “system maintenance, civil order, legitimacy, and effectiveness”. Political stability entails foremost low levels of actual and potential civil violence under the veneer of democracy (Lijphart 1977, 4).

According to Lijphart, there are four types of democratic regimes: the *centrifugal*, *consociational*, *centripetal*, and *depoliticised* democracy. Political culture (homogenous/fragmented) and elite behaviour (coalescent/competitive) are the two defining criteria. The centrifugal type is the most problematic given the level of social fragmentation and the competitive behaviour of the elites which parallels that of the Continental systems in Almond's typology. On the other hand, centripetalism features strong majoritarian elements: despite the competitive behaviour of the elites, homogeneity on the societal level and overlapping membership prevents any destabilising effects (Lijphart 1968 37-39).

In *The Politics of Accommodation: Pluralism and Democracy in the Netherlands* Lijphart provides an in depth account of a deviant case which "approximates" (1975, 194) the model. But this time the model is named after "accommodation" and not consociation (Ibid). Significantly, the Dutch case amends the third pluralist proposition, that is the "idea of crosscutting affiliations" (ibid 7), thus representing a critical juncture in the lineage of the pluralist theory of democracy as developed by Aristotle, Alexis de Tocqueville, Rousseau and Madison -the first proposition refers to the implicit assumption that viable democracies face grave obstacles in "plural societies", and the second, to the controversial implications that the existence of many secondary groups may entail- (Ibid. 3-5).

In *Democracy in Plural Societies* (1977) Lijphart furnishes the most elaborate definition of consociational democracy by encapsulating two dimensions: a societal (segmented cleavages) and a behavioural (political cooperation of the segmented elites). According to Lijphart's approach, "segmented pluralism" attempts to reconcile "religious and ideological"

diversity leaving aside linguistic, class and ethnic differences (1971, 141). In this limited application of the model, elites within those segmented settings appear to have a rather nebulous role (Lijphart 1977, 5).

By contrast, Lehbruch lays emphasis on the bargaining side of the consociational spectrum and the altruistic tendency of the elites (their agency) to cooperate instead of adopting competitive strategies commonly bolstered in the majoritarian systems (1975, 378). Hence, Lijphart sketches his consociational model on an inclusionary fashion that embraces Lorwin's segmented pluralism and Lehbruch's *Konkordanzdemokratie*.

Yet, the genesis and development of consociational democracy spurs a number of logical tensions between a theory of democracy that amends previous propositions, and a Weberian ideal type that entails certain qualities. On the one hand, consociational democracy presumably explains stability and democracy under adverse conditions but on the other incorporates both, given its alleged capabilities. This is the tautological problem of consociationalism, which Brian Barry has eloquently stressed (1975b, 480) and which conflates problem and solution, cause and effect in a single definition. Those ambivalences are inevitably perpetuated, embedded as they are in the defining elements of consociationalism which form its backbone.

Thus, if segmented pluralism and cooperative attitude on the elite level are the two features of an ideal type, a *grand coalition*, the *mutual veto*, *proportionality* and *segmental autonomy* are the 'devices' (Lijphart 1968, 21) or what Lijphart interchangeably terms as 'elements' and 'characteristics' of consociationalism (1977, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2008). In

this early definition, a plural or divided society is essentially the model's fifth element.

Yet, Lijphart will later drop plural society from the definition. In fact, he reconsiders the validity of the initial fourfold typology, which "exaggerated the danger of democratic instability in the French Fourth Republic and Italy (the major examples of centrifugal type) as well as in the depoliticized type of democracy" (2000, 426).

In the final formulation of consociationalism, the grand coalition prevails as the "prototypical consociational device" (Lijphart 1977, 31) through its manifold manifestations: it varies from formal schemes such as coalition cabinets (executive branch) to informal e.g. advisory councils (horizontal power-sharing or shared rule). Its essence lies in the legitimate representation of all major segments in the grand coalition and thus of all interests within its bounds.

Whilst the grand coalition scheme can be crystallised in both formal and informal forms of representation, Lijphart posits in his 1968 article as a condition conducive to consociational democracy a *popularly legitimated* government by grand coalition (Lijphart 1968, 28). This probably implies that Lijphart had foremost in mind popular legitimation, enshrined in the formation of a collective cabinet.

Yet, O' Leary contests the idea of an all-inclusive consociation (*complete* consociation). Specifically, he identifies, besides the complete, all-encompassing executive of Lijphart, two other types of executive power-sharing: firstly, a concurrent executive, where each major segment is represented enjoying majority support from the communal pillar (50% plus). Secondly, a weak consociation, where each significant segment sends its democratically elected delegates in the executive but at least one

of the communal leaders in it enjoys plurality support by its segmental followers in contradistinction to the majority support enjoyed by the other incumbents (2003, 12-13).

In addition to the grand coalition, the mutual veto functions as a safety valve that allays the fears of minorities on issues deemed of vital importance. Its empirical manifestations are mirrored in forms of concurrent majorities in the legislature and/or the executive. Furthermore, the third element or device, proportionality, implies two aspects: firstly, the proportional allocation of civil service appointments or financial resources to the sub-cultural segments of the given society, and secondly, the adoption of the proportionality rule (PR) in elections. Finally, segmental autonomy can be both functional and territorial. In the first case, constituent communities are entitled to manage autonomously their educational and cultural affairs. By contrast, territorial autonomy refers to forms of self-rule based on carefully demarcated borders and competences (vertical power-sharing) such as federations, confederation or federacies (e.g. O’Leary 2008, Wolff 2008, 2009, 2010, O’Leary and McEvoy 2013).

The importance of each of the four devices included in Lijphart’s theoretical scaffolding, the effects of their combined utilisation in different constellations or its universal endorsement remains uncertain. In the *Typologies of Democratic Systems*, Lijphart indicates that “the essential characteristic of consociational democracy is not so much any particular institutional arrangement as overarching cooperation at the elite level with the deliberate aim of counteracting disintegrative tendencies in the system” (1968, 21). Consequently then, the grand coalition is translated into the institutional embodiment of the altruistic attitude

exhibited by the sub-cultural elites, whilst its inclusion into the toolkit of devices becomes at least dubious.

Perhaps aware of those inconsistencies, Lijphart introduces a distinction between primary and secondary characteristics: “grand coalition and autonomy are the most crucial, whereas the other two are occupying a somewhat lower position of importance” (Lijphart 2004, 2008). This distinction notwithstanding, the indispensability of those characteristics remains ambiguous in the absence of the master variable of elite cooperation which theoretically explains stability in fragmented societies. The model’s normative and geographic expansion will further exacerbate those inconsistencies: yet, the four devices remain at the core of the theoretical scaffolding for a number of younger adherents of consociationalism (e.g. McGarry and O’Leary 2004, 2006, 2007, McCulloch 2014), whilst others speak about the diffusion of some “ahistorical principles” (Bogaards 2000, 409) or ultimately about a degenerated research programme (Lustick 1997).

Criticisms of the consociational model

Consociational democracy has been brought under the spotlight of critical scrutiny on different grounds. Consociationalism, as underscored in the previous section, has suffered since its inception from conceptual and methodological shortcomings. Admittedly, this does not imply the model’s abrupt rejection or repudiation. Lijphart has progressively tried to rectify parts of those shortcomings by integrating into the model bits and pieces of the criticisms mounted against the theory.

Critiques of the consociational model can be organised into three clusters. Firstly, a cluster of criticism pertains to the factors and

conditions that buttress the model and that presumably enhance its predictive capacity. Secondly, a number of scholars denied the democratic character of consociations in terms of accountability, legitimacy, electoral contestation and political equality. Finally, a third debate, which is inextricably interwoven with the aforementioned ones, concerns the prescriptive capacity and adequacy of consociational democracy in plural (deeply divided societies) in contradistinction to majoritarian/centripetalists/ integrative-leaning models.

Prerequisites, factors and conditions (1968-1977)

Methodology is one of the main stumbling blocks in the theory of consociational democracy. Drawing inductively from specific case studies such as The Netherlands, Austria, Switzerland, Belgium, Lebanon and Malaysia, Arend Lijphart tried to extract some 'factors', 'conditions', and prerequisites that explain and predict the establishment of consociational democracy. Their subsequent universalisation raised eyebrows among the scholarly community regarding their status, validity, predictive capacity and significantly, their utility as deterministic panaceas. This confusion was further aggravated semantically by the interchangeable use of terms. Following an inductive approach, Lijphart offers a list of 'prerequisites' in the *Typologies of Democratic Systems* that explains why consociational democracies emerge and how they become sustained (1968, 22) if and only if rival sub-cultural elites internalise the norms engendered by the model. Lijphart identifies four attitudinal pre-requisites/attributes that he preserves in subsequent publications as largely compatible with the voluntaristic character of the model (1969, 1975, 1977): *ability* (probably refers to consciousness/ altruistic ethos) *to recognize the dangers inherent*

in a fragmented system, commitment to system maintenance, ability to transcend subcultural cleavages at the elite level, ability to forge appropriate solutions for the demands of the sub-culture (Ibid. 22-24).

To compensate for the predictive paucity of the prerequisites, which rely exclusively on the elitist volition, Lijphart enumerates six conditions (actually more) at the mass level that are “conducive to consociational democracy” (Ibid. 25): *distinct lines of cleavage between subcultures, a multiple balance of power among the subcultures, popular attitudes favorable to government by grand coalition, external threats, moderate nationalism, a relatively low total load of the system*. Whilst those are the conditions enumerated, Lijphart adds an additional condition in the last paragraph under the rubric of size. He indicates that what all cases share in common is a small surface. Crucially then, size emerges as a factor that has an effect on the last three (external threats, moderate nationalism, low load on the system).

In *Consociational Democracy* (1969), Lijphart increases the number of the favourable factors (not termed conditions in this article) that generate and bolster elite cooperation (*length of time a consociational democracy has been in operation, external threats, multiple balance of power among subcultures, relatively low total load on the decision-making apparatus, distinct lines of cleavage, internal political cohesion of the subcultures, adequate articulation of the interests of the subcultures, widespread approval of the government by elite cartel*) (1969, 216-22).

In the *Politics of Accommodation*, he discovers seven unwritten, implicit “rules of the game” that define the role culture in The Netherlands (1975, 122-123) that underpin perpetuation of stability in the

political system. Yet, Lijphart does not substantiate their relation firstly, to the favourable factors and secondly, to the consociational devices used in The Netherlands, although he tends to include elements from both lists in the “rules of the game” (e.g. proportionality, deference of the mass to the subcultural leaders).

In what concerns the Dutch case, Hans Daalder contends Lijphart’s reading of events. Specifically, Daalder posits that the accommodative style that led to Dutch conciliation (1917) must be in fact traced to the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth century. Hence, the ensuing institutionalisation of consociationalism in The Netherlands was not the effect of deep cleavages (as Lijphart argues) but the reason why those cleavages were eventually ossified. Therefore, a culture of conciliation deeply rooted in history must be considered as a factor conducive to inter-elite cooperation (Daalder 1974, 616) especially under conditions of modernisation and mass mobilisation. Daalder’s scepticism reflects the problem of circularity inherent in the theory of consociational democracy.

Lijphart elaborated in a more sophisticated fashion the factors that facilitate accommodation in *Democracy in Plural Societies* (1977). He embarks upon this effort by recognising that a prudent leadership plays a cardinal role in plural societies, not in appeasing the masses but the followers instead, who are defined as a distinct group of sub-elite political activists (1977, 53). In addition, he introduces a distinction between favourable and unfavourable factors. Yet this distinction loses much of its heuristic and predictive value, as the favourable factors are hardly considered “indispensable” or “sufficient” (Ibid. 54).

Among the factors identified, a multiple balance of power is the first. According to Lijphart, this factor ideally entails either a balance -or

an approximate equilibrium- or the presence of three segments. Hence, all segments shall have the status of minorities when considered in relation to each other. When examined separately, segmentation should be internally translated into three or four fragments. Lijphart believes that negotiations are easier among fewer segments –ideally four- as this power constellation does not translate into zero-sum games of adversarial politics (Ibid. 56).

Yet, realities in fragmented societies are usually intrinsically complex. For instance, Lebanon is officially divided into two segments (Christians and Muslims). This initial distinction notwithstanding, Christians are further subdivided in confessions such as Maronites, Greek Orthodox, Greek Catholics and ethnic groups such as Armenians (both Orthodox and Catholic). On the other hand, the Muslim community is chiefly divided between Sunnis and Shia in addition to the smaller Druze and Alawite sects. As De Juan notes “most ethnic groups are not internally homogeneous. Rather, they comprise various subgroups with different religions, languages, or customs. Such subgroup differences are often hidden by salient intergroup conflicts, yet they may also resurface when intergroup conflict has been settled” (2013, 79).

A multiparty system is the second favourable factor by serving a duality of functions: ethnic parties represent segmental interests, whilst the communal electorate chooses their preferred delegates in the grand coalition (1977, 61-62). Multipartism with relatively few parties is according to Lijphart the ideal state of affairs (Ibid.) in accordance with the ideal number of segments mentioned above. Nevertheless, pure PR creates an opportunity structure that facilitates the establishment of new parties and thus new balances in the party system (McCulloch 2014, 134).

Therefore Lijphart adds the proviso that moderate multipartism conveys its favourable effects in plural societies where all parties enjoy a minoritarian status and are of almost equal size (1977, 64).

Size is a recurrent theme in Lijphart's work. In *Democracy in Plural Societies*, Lijphart strives to explicate analytically the effects of size on consociational democracy. Implicitly though, he shifts his focus to Europe by arguing that "a striking characteristic of European consociational democracies is that they are small countries"(Ibid. 65). This statement contradicts parts of his previous work, where Lijphart included Lebanon among the iconic cases of consociational success. Probably, the collapse of the Lebanese state in 1975 acted as a major blow to the theory thus raising questions on the vicissitudes of state formation in the developing world.

As regards size, Lijphart identifies four effects, -direct and indirect- (1977 65-70). The *direct internal* effect of smallness refers on the one hand, to the increased likelihood of elite familiarity which enhances accommodation. Despite its plausibility, closeness might instead exacerbate misperceptions and misunderstandings. Indeed, elite familiarity did not prevent collapse in Cyprus (1960-63). On the other hand, smallness limits decisively the reservoir of political talent which is crucial for the smooth functioning of a voluntarist model (Ibid. 66).

Furthermore, the *direct external* effect assumes that an external threat will galvanise a trans-communal front for the sake of the state's survival. Lijphart emphasizes the need of shared threat perception as, echoing Lehbruch, internal replication of an external conflict hovers as the sword of Damocles over the society (Ibid. 67). Yet, perceptions of foes/friends differ markedly as the case of interwar Austria showcases.

However, the *indirect* effects function in the benefit of the decision-making process, as smallness reduces the load exerted on the system. Theoretically, small size implies fewer preoccupations in the management of the internal and external affairs. In what regards the *indirect internal* aspect, “smaller countries are easier to govern than large ones because they tend to be less complex: the number and variety of groups and individuals whose interests and attitudes have to be taken into consideration are fewer”. But a small population does not automatically imply fewer demands for policymaking. Belgium, Cyprus (1960-1963) and Bosnia and Herzegovina were and still are extremely complex settings as evidenced in the establishment of multiple layers of power and the recurring crises of governance.

Finally, Lijphart depicts a causal sequence in explaining the *indirect external* effect of smallness. A state’s limited power on the international scene leads to neutrality in foreign policy and consequently to minimal dilemmas. Nevertheless, neutrality does not deterministically imply a state’s survival in cases where regional actors value strategic calculations more than respect for sovereignty e.g. Lebanon, Bosnia and Herzegovina. Moreover, neutrality is an inherently political stance that may subsequently arise as the source of inter-communal frictions over the right course of (in)-action the state should follow.

The next set of favourable factors relates to the cleavage structure (number, type and fragmentation) (Ibid 71-72). Within this context, Lijphart argues that “when there are two or more cleavages, one must examine how they relate to each other and, in particular, whether they tend to crosscut or to coincide” (Ibid. 75). In the case of cross-cutting

cleavages, the mode of their intersection affects the number of segments and ultimately the balance of power between them.

In addition, the cleavage structure impacts upon the inter-segmental “intensity of feelings”. This is a paradoxical inclusion, for consociational democracy excels by ‘producing’ political stability amidst mutually reinforcing cleavages. Lijphart deems therefore the contribution of the cleavage structure as desirable but “subsidiary” (Ibid 81). Thus, cleavages of *equal* intensity can have a positive effect when they lead to an all-minority state of fragmentation, and a negative, in cases of fractionalization (Ibid.). Still, *unequal* cleavages engender fewer and less homogenous segments that under conditions of crisscrossing will yield moderate effects (Ibid).

Furthermore, *overarching loyalties* enhance accommodation by moderating the conflictual potential of cleavages. Lijphart stresses the significance of some kind of nationalist spirit. Within the context of fragmentation, nationalism should be perhaps understood as a thin narrative that elicits a modicum of trans-segmental feelings of togetherness.

Given the absence of such a unifying national narrative, Lijphart suggests *segmental isolation* and *federalism*. Lijphart argues that conditions in plural societies do not favour inter-communal exchanges on the mass level. Hence, communal seclusion appears preferable (Ibid 88) to forestall tensions in the ethnic mosaic, thus enhancing the prospects of inter-elite cooperation on the apex of the social pyramid.

In contrast to segmental isolation which forms part of the consociational device of segmental autonomy, federalism is not. Federalism emerges as a favourable factor in the case of compact

minorities that are geographically concentrated in homogeneous clusters (Ibid.). Homogeneity is a permissive condition for a spatially-based organisation and management of communal affairs. Yet, Nordlinger contends that federalism invites secessionist trends when the federal region borders states inhabited by groups linked to it with relations of kinship (1972, 110).

Last but not least, Lijphart seems to heed Daalder's criticism on the origins of Dutch consociation. In contrast to his previous ventures, Lijphart not only includes a prior tradition of accommodation as a factor conducive to consociation but he also attributes it a higher value in comparison to the above mentioned ones (1977, 103). Yet, its addition into the list of the favourable factors makes only a marginal contribution to the problem of circularity: it is unclear whether a tradition of accommodation enhances the prospects of consociational democracy or rather it is consociationalism that entrenches this tradition.

Factors and conditions (1985-2008)

Lijphart's thoughts on the architecture of consociationalism have been profoundly shaped by his book on *Democracy in Plural Societies*. The aspiration to explore the potentialities of consociationalism in new cases comes perhaps as no surprise. Yet, this shift to prescription carries with it part of the weaknesses left unaddressed during the formative years of the consociational model. This is more patently crystallised in some of the amendments put forward in the list of the favourable factors, which are modified to fit in the new cases.

In this vein, *Power-sharing in South Africa* (1985) features conspicuously as an analytic endeavour to study the consociational

prospects of this society. In this monograph, Lijphart alters the favourable conditions by reducing its number from nine to eight (1985, 119-128) trying to adjust the theory to the exigencies of the South African society.

Firstly, Lijphart re-introduces the presence of *external threats* (1968 list) as a favourable and autonomous factor. Secondly, size and its outward manifestation, -smallness-, are replaced by a small population. It should be noted that Lijphart has already insinuated the importance of a small population in *Democracy in Plural Societies*, when explicating the direct internal effects of size (familiarity, personal relations/ poor reservoir of political talent). Thirdly, socioeconomic equality is conducive to a stable consociational regime. The inclusion of socioeconomic equality could possibly echo the lingering disparities between Europe and the developing world. Interestingly, a discussion on the role of socioeconomic conditions has appeared already in a chapter on Consociational Democracy in the Third World (1977, 174) -not endowed with the status of 'factor' though-.

Finally, Lijphart bestows the scientific veneer of positivism on the theory by quantifying the favourable and unfavourable conditions along a five-point scale. The results of this quantification were undoubtedly controversial: the measurement was based on flimsy assumptions and wishful thinking as evidenced in the prediction that the black community will remain fragmented along tribal lines, thus producing the necessary multiple balance of power (McGarry and Noel 1989, 7).

Lijphart ends the long peregrination on prerequisites, factors and conditions in an article on power-sharing in India (1996). As he confesses in the Introduction of *Thinking about Democracy* (2008), among the nine conditions found in the South African and Indian cases, those that matter

the most are the absence of a solid ethnic and religious majority, and the absence of large socioeconomic disparities among the groups of a divided society (2008, 5). As can be plausibly inferred from this article, the following “background factors” represent the final ‘inventory’: *absence of solid majorities, absence or presence of large socioeconomic difference among the communal groups, moderate number of segments, a multiple balance of power, a small population, external dangers, overarching loyalties, functional or territorial isolation, traditions of compromise* (Ibid. , 51-52).

Building on Lijphart’s prior work, Brendan O’Leary tries to investigate the prospects of a successful consolidation of consociationalism in Northern Ireland (1989, 2004) by shifting the level of analysis to the external setting. This is an important modification in the theory of consociational democracy as Lijphart’s work is primarily focused on endogenous factors.

By exploring the status of the background conditions, O’Leary concludes that Northern Ireland scores negatively on almost all, with the factors of size and segmental isolation being the exceptions (2004, 113). Engineering some of the favourable conditions tends to be an implausible a solution too, unless the elites are willing to fulfill the self-denying prophecy. He infers that given the conspicuous absence of inter-elite motivation, structured elite predominance, and intra-segmental stability, the prospects of a voluntary consociation are reduced to naught.

Therefore, external actors should be invited to engage proactively in enforcing a consociational settlement. O’Leary underlines that a number of external actors -such as the UK and Ireland- should channel their efforts on two fronts: the external and the internal. On the external front,

coercive consociationalism should entail an impartial support of consociation, whilst on the internal, the promotion of social and economic reforms that would redress past injustices (Ibid. 122-123).

In the Foreword of *Imposing Power-sharing* (2005), O'Leary underscores the function of international norms as a factor conducive to consociations as reflected in the compromise of state sovereignty under the guise of international protectorates. He avoids nonetheless any reference to Lijphart's list of conditions with the sole exception of size: yet, he tends to reject any direct or indirect effects derived from it. Nevertheless, a latent correlation between the establishment of consociational protectorates, small size and international norms (2005 xxxiii) might perhaps be established. Bosnia-Herzegovina and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) exemplify cases, where the USA and the European Union have exerted considerable coercion coupled with inducements to bolster consociational settlements (Ibid.).

Whilst both approaches attempt to explain why consociations emerge and come into fruition, none of them elaborates how and why they are sustained. Lijphart has largely ignored this discussion by granting to the prerequisites both genetic and sustaining qualities (1968, 22). Conditions were simply relegated to the status of facilitating or favourable factors (2008, 5), whose utility looks in the bottom line, ambivalent.

Adriano Pappalardo criticises Lijphart for precisely neglecting the role of conditions in ushering to consociational democracy (1981, 365). For Pappalardo, inter-subcultural stability and elite predominance over a politically deferential and organisationally encapsulated following are the

only indiscriminately necessary and sufficient conditions for consociational democracy to succeed.

In response to Pappalardo's critique, it is overwhelming voluntarism that pervades Lijphart's model translated into reliance on preponderantly attitudinal variables. Arguably, Lijphart was preoccupied with the model's prescriptive expansion which may explain why factors and conditions were useful at the end of the day as mere indicators of success.

An account on genetic and sustaining conditions is provided by Gerhard Lehbruch who lays emphasis on the international environment and its impact on the perceptions of the elites (1975, 380). For Lehbruch, genetic conditions involve the presence of some national symbols, a bitter, violent past, a tradition of accommodation, intense informal communication on the elite level, the absence of majorities (internal) and the presence of external threats (external). Consociationalism emerges when the internal favourable factors coexist with an imminent threat. Still, Lehbruch identifies neutrality as the unique sustaining factor, which is strongly related to smallness and threat perceptions. However, Bogaards rejects Lehbruch's conditions as the birth of Dutch consociationalism did not witness any kind of external threats. Hence, the conditions that Lehbruch posits should be viewed as requisites rather than as conditions (2000, 494).

The discrepancy between genetic and sustaining conditions looms large in O'Leary's theorisation of consociational engineering. Whilst crafting favourable conditions could be a solution, this artificial reality could wither away as soon as external actors withdraw or lose their interest in the process. Northern Ireland exemplifies a successful example

of consociation (McCulloch 2014) without being a state though. Being part of the United Kingdom, Westminster has still a legitimate say in the internal proceedings in Belfast.

Crucially, external engineering might be perceived by the society in question as another form of Western imperialism or standard of civilisation (Zaum 2007) within the confines of an unjust international society. Therefore, it is imperative to shed light on processes of constitutional engineering in order to trace the footprints, legacies and residues of exogenous interventions in the post-trusteeship era. By delving into cases such as Northern Ireland, Iraq or Lebanon, consociationalists can extract some informed hypotheses on the conditions of successful and failed settlements.

Consociational democracy or consociational 'democracy'?

A second set of critiques revolves around the concept of democracy and its different facets within the consociational conceptual universe. Those discrepancies refer firstly, to the definition of democracy within the consociational literature, and secondly, to the tensions ravaging the model that view consociational democracy as an independent variable and a self-standing descriptive label at the same time.

Democracy can be credibly defined as “a means of government in which... the people rule. It entails a political community in which there is a form of political equality among the people” (Held 2006, 13). On the other hand, consociational democracy straddles a variable that explains “political stability”, “democratic stability”, “peace and democracy”, (dependent variables that Lijphart has used interchangeably) over disparate communities coexisting within a society, and a descriptive

category or an ideal model whose defining features entail a grand coalition, mutual veto, proportionality and segmental autonomy.

In *Democracy in Plural Societies*, Lijphart eschews to denote democracy describing it merely as a concept that “defies definition” (1977, 4). He seems content to state that democracy will be henceforth understood in Dahl’s terms of ‘polyarchy’ (Ibid.). According to Robert Dahl, polyarchy essentially implies two dimensions: public contestation and inclusiveness (1971, 4). In an ideal democratic process, democracy should satisfy the following criteria: equality in voting, effective participation, enlightened understanding, final control over the agenda, inclusion (1982, 5).

It is in this realm, that consociational democracy has been severely criticised. According to Hans Daalder, for instance, the rigidly hierarchical structures and the secretive brinkmanship that consociational democracy entails, promote “procedures of purposive depoliticization”, encourage “bargaining behind closed doors”, whilst undermining direct accountability (1974, 607-608).

Indeed, the hierarchical structure of consociationalism has a difficulty in grappling with notions such as contestation, alternation in the executive, responsiveness and accountability. Firstly, contestation in the political field emerges as an inherently antithetical concept to the prerequisites of consociationalism. The materialisation of the messianic message of consociational democracy resides in the goodwill, the altruistic spirit and collegial ethos of the relevant elites. Inevitably, conciliation, decision-making by amicable agreement and consensus preclude any room for disagreement as this would in the long run lead to collapse.

As delineated by Arend Lijphart (1968, 1969, 1977), consociationalism relies upon i) the elites' ability to accommodate the divergent interests and demands of the subcultures, ii) the ability to transcend cleavages and to join in a common effort with the elites of the rival subcultures, iii) commitment to the maintenance of the system and improvement of its cohesion and stability and, iv) a shared understanding on the perils of political fragmentation (1969, 216).

Therefore, structured elite predominance becomes imperative in order to appease oppositional reactions and enhance cohesion within the subcultural segment. Eric Nordlinger posits four conditions that facilitate the establishment of a secure and firm prevalence of the elites: apolitical quiescence and acquiescence to authority, patron-client relationships and mass parties (1972, 86) which are complemented by the practice of purposive depoliticisation. Deference is a trait propounded by Pappalardo's account as well (1981, 365). In the *Politics of Accommodation*, Lijphart concurs with Nordlinger as he inductively identifies "depoliticization", and "secrecy" as part and parcel of the rules of the game (1975 129-134); "deference" is posited as an extra factor that is conducive to conciliation (Ibid. 144- 162) on the inter-elite level.

Depoliticisation in The Netherlands was achieved through the allocation of economic benefits, discussions on economic matters largely incomprehensible to the public and constitutional principles (Ibid. 129). Secrecy involved decision-making behind closed doors and limited dissemination of information (Ibid. 131) given the idiosyncrasy of the societal structure. Moreover, deference was defined as an "individual's acceptance of his position both in social hierarchy and on the scale of political authority, accompanied by a low level of participation and

interest in politics” (Ibid. 144-145). Under the conditions of reduced information, apathy, dearth of robust opposition, and responsiveness, contestation loses much of its dynamic. Lee Dutter asks whether The Netherlands can really be called a democracy whilst Daalder describes the system as an “oligarchy” (cited in Lustick 1997, 104).

Contestation is further undermined by semantic shortcomings. In his early endeavours on consociational democracy, Lijphart framed the cabinet under the rubric of an “elite cartel” (1968, 1969). The connotations were remarkably deleterious as it ultimately implied an established cohort that rules in defiance of the electorate. Interestingly though, Lijphart repeals the latter concept by replacing it in *Democracy in Plural Societies* with that of the grand coalition. The grand coalition represents the main collegial body of decision-making, where adversarial politics are to be attenuated.

But the concept of the grand coalition elicits certain dilemmas regarding the permissible degree of contestation. As noted above, the cabinet in the consociational model can be expressed in different schemes. Lijphart recognises as forms of grand coalitions among others, diachronic alliances (1977, 30) between two or more parties that tend to rule for an extensive time span, and rotating presidencies e.g. Colombia (Ibid. 33). Inexorably then, the merits of suffrage are reduced to participation in a symbolic procedure, that promotes clubism, whilst abandoning viable opposition politics (Brass cited in O’Leary 2005, 6). Van Schendelen castigates the conspicuous absence of opposition politics in consociationalism by arguing that in polyarchy, competition is the *sine qua non* in sharp contradistinction to consociationalism’s *collaboration* (own emphasis) (1984, 32).

Opposition politics are not ruled out totally, according to Lijphart. For, as long as a parliament functions, a locus of criticism will be always available. Alternatively, demands for accountability could be raised in front of individual members of the grand coalition (Ibid. 48). Yet, Lijphart does not explain how criticisms mounted in the parliament can have an impact on the collegial executive without jeopardizing conciliation within the coalition. Importantly, the grand coalition comprises in principle all parties in the legislature. Moreover, holding accountable individual members of the cabinet depoliticises the conduct of politics not in the direction of moderation but in favour of personal rivalries and ‘vendettas’.

Andeweg adopts a more realist stance by arguing that the lack of opposition in consociationalism notwithstanding, elections are held in a competitive fashion (2000, 530) or at least, in a more competitive in comparison to other arenas in the public sphere. O’Leary concurs that a “consociation does not eliminate democratic opposition within communities, but it does enable such divisions and oppositions as exist to flourish in conditions of generalized security” (2005, 11). .

Contestation and opposition politics are feasible then under the form of concurrent and weak consociations (Ibid. 12-14). O’Leary presents three types of consociationalism, where opposition is possible. Firstly, a dominant segment rules on a consensual basis over its followers, whilst exerting supreme control over a minority. Israel epitomises an example of consociation coupled with control over the Arab segment of the Israeli society. Yet, it is doubtful that Israel can really express the consociational ethos as the systematic exclusion of Israeli Arabs violates both the model’s letter and the spirit as incarnated in inclusion. A second

case is that of deliberate self-exclusion e.g. Northern Ireland (1976-1998), and a third, the introduction of thresholds in what regards participation into the executive e.g. South Africa, Northern Ireland. Yet, thresholds have often been manipulated by incumbents to constrain fair representation of minorities. e.g. Turkey (10% threshold). Therefore, introduction of thresholds is viewed with suspicion as impairing on the inclusionary aspect of consociationalism.

It is precisely the inclusive character of consociationalism that Lijphart acclaims when arguing that it is “the best kind of democracy that can realistically be expected...” He explains that given the intractability of segmental cleavages, exclusion of “the minority segment or segments permanently from participation in the government” would be undemocratic (1977, 48). Hence, Lijphart attributes excessive significance to the inclusionary dimension of polyarchy.

Indeed, Andweg concurs that consociationalism can on this ground “outperform adversarial democracies, since its very aim is to prevent the permanent exclusion from power of any social segment” (2000, 530). Yet, Lijphart appeared to initially have reservations on the model’s democratic quality (Bogaards 2000, 402). Responding to Bogaards criticism, Lijphart admits that he no longer believes that there is anything inherently undemocratic in the four consociational elements but he was merely influenced by the majoritarian bias of the time (Lijphart 2000, 426).

The majoritarian bias is eminently tackled with inclusion and participation of all segments in the democratic process. Lijphart bases his conviction on the qualitative advantages of consociationalism in the *Politics in West Africa*, written by the economist Sir Arthur Lewis (1965).

According to this book, the former British colonies of West Africa proved to be misguided by uncritically adopting the Westminster tradition of the former rulers. The reason lies in the one-party rule and the exclusion of major segments of the populace (Lijphart 1977 143-147). In Lewis's thinking, majority rule should not be equated with bare majority rule. Instead, democracy finds its fullest expression in wider majorities, where citizens have the right to participate, directly or indirectly in the decision-making process (Lijphart 2008, 126).

In the field of consociational democracy therefore, proportionality guarantees political equality through fair representation of all segments. In the words of Arend Lijphart, election by PR is the main self-determination method (Ibid. 6). In *Power-Sharing in South Africa*, Lijphart suggests that the most basic democratic principle is that of one man and one vote (1985, 81). He recognises though that equality through proportionality sometimes takes different forms as reflected in overrepresentation of minority segments and parity (1977, 41).

Yet, it is not very clear why one-party rule should necessarily usher in a tyranny of the majority. Majoritarianism does not necessarily imply one-party rule as the example of the Conservatives-Liberal Democrats coalition in Britain explicitly demonstrates, -although not a plural or deeply divided society-. Power-sharing within a grand coalition is perhaps possible even under majoritarian electoral laws e.g. Lebanon. Besides, overrepresentation and parity could rightfully be blamed to violate political equality on the grounds of minority protection (Cyprus, Burundi) or favouritism (Lebanon) by external actors. The examples of Cyprus and Lebanon indicate that overrepresentation within a consociation can have the adverse effects by endorsing demands of fairness.

However, contestation and inclusion epitomise the Janus-faced physiognomy of an ideal regime. Lijphart claims that it is either consociationalism or no democracy at all (1977, 238). The dilemmatic character of this proposition notwithstanding, it would be preferable to argue that as ideal type, democracy leaves ample space for creativity. In this sense, “If democracy is perceived as a device to keep political elites responsive and accountable to the masses, competition (and not just in the electoral arena) is essential, but if democracy is perceived as the avoidance of tyranny, inclusiveness is valid (Andeweg 2000, 531). Inevitably then, emphasis between the two dimensions of polyarchy depends on the preferences, mindset, and influence of constitutional engineers and political elites in a given formative critical juncture.

Segmental autonomy and self-determination

A sub-critique related to the democratic credentials of consociational democracy emanates from political theorists of the liberal and Marxist strand, who argue that, instead of freedom and self-determination, consociationalism reifies segmental identities (Kieve 1981, Brass 1991, Taylor 2001, 2009). This is most conspicuously reflected in the consociational device of segmental autonomy and the mutual veto. Whilst the grand coalition incarnates shared-rule, segmental autonomy champions self-rule on matters deemed vital for the ethnic segments (1977, 41-43). According to Lijphart, segmental autonomy “increases the plural nature of an already plural society” (Ibid. 42). This is culminated in the establishment of a plethora of voluntary communal associations and groups based on ascriptive pre-determination. Lorwin concedes that

segmental pluralism is founded on those forms of association and its recognition (1971, 141).

In Lijphart's formulation, segmental autonomy echoes resoundingly Dahl's conception of polyarchy. Yet, Robert Dahl warns that one of the defects of pluralist democracy is mirrored in the deformation of civic consciousness for aspects of the self tend to identify with the interest of the group instead of the public's (1982, 43-44). This is highly expected to take place in a conflictual setting, where mistrust and perceptions of otherness rule supreme, and where organisations are structured on the basis of communal affiliations.

Brass demurs at segmental autonomy, for communal stratification mistakenly perceives identities as objective factors, thus violating the rights of groups and the rights of individuals (cited in O'Leary 2003, 5-6). On a same note, David Held notes that the idea of democracy derives its power and significance from the idea of self-determination that is the freedom of citizens to choose their own association. Those choices should constitute the ultimate legitimation of the form and the direction of their polity (1995, 145). Rupert Taylor disapproves of the 1998 Belfast Agreement that grappled with the Northern Irish question on the grounds that it violated the individual right of self-determination. Instead, he propounds an approach that transcends ethnic boundaries and promotes social transformation through the engagement of movements (2001, 46-47).

An interesting critique on the falsification of identities within the consociational realm comes from Marxist scholars. Kieve in particular, notes that political elites in The Netherlands perpetuated their rule and the

existing rules of production through the manipulation of religious identities that cut across the class-based social movements (1981, 332). Indeed, Lijphart initially perceived identities as primordial and thus not potentially malleable (1977, 17). Thus, segmental autonomy arises as a necessary modality to allay mutual fears and suspicions. Nevertheless, as he confesses in *The Rights of Minority Cultures*, the case of South Africa exerted a decisive influence upon his thoughts on the capacity of political engineering in plural societies. Lijphart admits that in South Africa racial and ethnic identification artificially overlapped (1995, 280-281), creating bogus categories. He thus concludes that self-determination should be the default rule rather than pre-determination (Ibid. 282). This reconsideration notwithstanding, self-determination in South Africa was to be undermined by the proportional allocation of public offices based on ascriptive criteria in conjunction to the results of the general elections. Lijphart reiterates this preference for self-determination in *Thinking About Democracy* (2008), where he categorically states its superiority against pre-determination (2008, 4) and corporate forms of power-sharing.

Preference for self-determination is echoed by scholars such as John McGarry and David O'Leary (e.g. 2004, 2007, 2009). They both propound a less rigid form of consociationalism that gives some breathing space to the individual in order to freely identify herself. Within the context of liberal consociationalism, self-determination is eminently manifested in voting on common electoral registers (O'Leary 2003), preferential balloting (McGarry and O'Leary 2001, 2004), and explicit protection of human rights and civil liberties.

Towards a consociational universe?

The third cluster of critiques pertains to the model's expansion and evolution and shift from an empirical to a prescriptive type of regulating conflict within fragmented societies. As Andeweg underlines "consociationalism has expanded from an amendment to democratic theory intended to help explain the existence of democratic stability in a few small European countries, to a normative theory of consociational engineering in practically all deeply divided societies"(2000, 517).

In this vein, numerous scholars have stressed the model's frail foundations as reflected in its iconic case-studies. This evokes naturally questions regarding the applicability of consociationalism to other cases, bringing it into a 'collision course' with 'competing' models of power-sharing e.g. integration/centripetalism.

At the epicentre of this controversy lies the notion of the *plural* society as one of the two indispensable components (the other being the grand coalition) upon which the accommodative edifice is grounded. On the notion of the plural society, Lijphart employs a definition conceptualised by Harry Eckstein as division along a number of "segmental cleavages" (1977, 3). Segmental cleavages may be of a religious, ideological, linguistic, regional, cultural, racial or ethnic nature, whilst civil associations are organised along those segmental lines (Ibid. 4).

Daalder notes that consociationalists "assume without detailed political analysis that social divisions are automatically translated into political conflicts" (1974, 614), which implies preoccupation with a conflict's intensity and thus the model's indispensability. Within this framework, Brian Barry cautions against the blind implementation of

consociationalism by comparing Northern Ireland to The Netherlands as a classical example of accommodation. Specifically, he indicates that comparing Northern Ireland to The Netherlands is not worthwhile given the different nature of the cleavage structure. Thus, segmentation is based on religion in the Dutch case, whilst the Northern Irish question evokes ethnic differences (1975a, 408) which render intra-segmental stability and accommodation implausible. Moreover, Barry rejects the classification of Switzerland as consociational due to the broad use of referenda in the decision-making process that inherently questions the adversarial nature of the Swiss society and the level of intersubcultural hostility (1975b, 488).

Barry's argument unequivocally challenges the consociational model per se; Lijphart argues that if any of the six archetypical examples of consociational democracy (Switzerland, The Netherlands, Belgium, Austria, Lebanon, Malaysia) are found not to be really plural societies, consociationalism can be potentially declared null and void (1985, 104-105). Therefore, he suggests that firstly, plurality is a matter of degree, "ranging from 0 percent pluralism in a completely homogenous society to 100 percent pluralism in the most extreme case of a plural society" (1981, 355). Secondly, degrees of pluralism are to be distinguished based on four criteria:

1. In a completely plural society, it must be possible to identify exactly the segments into which the society is divided.
2. It must also be possible to state exactly what the size of each segment is, that is, how many belong to each of the segments.

3. In a completely plural society, there must be perfect correspondence between segmental boundaries and the boundaries between the political, social, and economic organizations.
4. Political parties are one type of organization covered by the third criterion. The final test of a completely plural society is that, since party and segmental loyalties should coincide, there should be little or no change in the voting support of the different parties from election to election: in a perfectly plural society, an election is a segmental census.

According to Lijphart, these criteria express only but an ideal type. No society fulfils all the above criteria and the degree of their deviation is indicative of their plurality (Ibid. 356). In practice though, operationalisation and measurement of pluralism in accordance to the aforementioned list looks troublesome. In fact, communal groups may be permeated by other religious, regional or linguistic sub-divisions. Lijphart, for instance, refers among others, to the vicissitudes of the secular segment in The Netherlands and its internal fragmentation into a Socialist and a Liberal strand (Ibid.). In addition, exact knowledge of a segment's size is improbable. The plethora of identities an individual possesses notwithstanding, censuses are sometimes controversial if not threatening to stability in post-conflict settings. In Lebanon, a census was not held since 1932 because of considerations over the demographic balance of power (Faour 2007). Hence, the safest way of diagnosing a society's degree of plurality over time becomes the electoral process, which, as a consequence of ethnic voting, reflects to a large extent the electorate's preferences. Nevertheless, abstention from the electoral process can blur the real degree of pluralism.

Jürg Steiner (1987), on other hand, shifts the unit of analysis from the societal level -at least for Switzerland- to the decision-making process in order to measure the degree of segmentation. According to Steiner, decision-making is the ideal locus to measure plurality as different cleavages play out differentially on specific issue-matters. Therefore, he identifies three behavioural patterns within the executive: unanimity, decisions by interpretation, and no decision at all (1987, 366). Yet, if information about the decision-making- both as process and output- might abound for Switzerland, this may not be the case for a number of developing countries. Still, Lijphart correctly points out that the aggregation of decision-making modes in different issue areas with decisions made by individual decision-makers would be difficult to translate into broader patterns that characterize entire political systems (1981, 359).

In *Power-sharing in South Africa* (1985) Lijphart proposes an alternative classification which seems as the Gordian knot between precise measurement and total absence of classification. According to it, the universe of plural societies could be divided into three categories that of low, medium and high pluralism (1985, 130). It must be noted that the latter classification appears in his monograph on South Africa, which represents the first detailed effort on prescriptively universalising the model (Taylor 2009, 4). Yet, Lijphart falls short to explain how this classification emerges. Lijphart merely admits the insurmountable difficulties entailed in the task whilst reiterating the relevance of the four criteria (2002, 17). Therefore, scholars of comparative politics should skirt the problem of classification by intuitively following their personal judgment or what he has previously called “impressionistic judgment”

(1981, 357). The intuitive impulse is presumably enhanced by the visible antithesis between plural and homogenous societies.

The problems of measurement notwithstanding, recent works on power-sharing by consociationalists and non-consociationalists alike (e.g. Horowitz, 2000, Reilly 2001, Lijphart 2002 McGarry and McEvoy 2013, McCulloch 2014) tend to opt for the eminently qualitatively-oriented concept of *severely* or *deeply divided societies*. As deeply divided societies are understood those milieus where ethnic-group identities have a high degree of salience, exceeding that accorded to alternative identities (class, religion, region), whilst levels of antipathy between ethnic groups are high (Horowitz 2002, 18). This preference reflects also Lijphart's theoretical shift from explanation to prescription but also the parallel geographical expansion of consociationalism from Europe to non-European societies (McGarry and Noel 1989, 4-5).

Thus, Horowitz admits in *The Architecture of Democracy* (2002) that an encounter with consociational democracy and Arend Lijphart seems inevitable especially when grappling with conflict management and constitutional engineering in African and Asian societies (2002, 19). Horowitz represents perhaps the most consistent critic of the prescriptive validity of consociationalism, championing a majoritarian/centripetalist incentives-based approach for post-conflict societies (1991, 2000a, 2000b, 2008).

The main centripetalist objections focus on the following points: firstly, the consociational approach is motivationally inadequate as it does not explain why statesmanship and good will should work under the painful strains of post-conflict recovery between inter-segmental elites of different size. Secondly, there are no guarantees that in the medium term,

segmental elites will exhibit altruism by sacrificing the interests of their communal clientele. Thirdly, outflanking is a very credible scenario as extremists will seek to undermine compromising segmental elites. Fourthly, cultural autonomy and hence equality, are the products of conflict regulation and not eminently inherent in the prescriptions of consociationalism. Finally, PR ushers in post-electoral coalitions on the allocation of offices but not to pre-electoral ones which could be formed on the basis of mutually compromising ideological and political agendas (Horowitz 2000, 568-576, 2002, 20-22).

Instead, centripetalists propose a different institutional arrangement that induces elites to cooperate by introducing built-in mechanisms within the cabinet. The aim is not consensus which is regarded as an extremely ambitious target, but accommodation. As Reilly notes, centripetalism seeks to encourage three distinct phenomena in divided societies i) *electoral incentives* that enhance inter-group coalitions ii) *arenas of bargaining*, that aim at vote-pooling and the reciprocal setting of agendas, iii) *centrist political parties or coalitions* (2001, 11).

More concretely, centripetalism advocates preferential electoral laws of the majoritarian type such as the Alternative Vote (AV), which tend to reinforce vote-pooling among a society's segments through the ordinal ranking of candidates until the absolute majority of preferences is reached (Ibid. 16). Yet, for vote-pooling to materialise, territorial engineering is required that cuts the state across into ethnically heterogeneous federal units. The inter-segmental moderation is further articulated into the election of a president through a system of geographically based electoral thresholds e.g. presidential elections in Nigeria require that the winning candidate garners plurality of support on

the country level coupled with geographically distributed thresholds of 25% in 12 out of 19 federal states (McCulloch 2014, 95).

Centripetal claims are indeed plausible and do deserve thorough examination by constitutional engineers. Nevertheless, centripetalism faces a number of impediments too. First of all, the incentives-based approach lacks a reasonable pool of cases (Nigeria, Sri Lanka, Fiji Papua-New Guinea). Hence, generalisations based on the centripetalist strand of conflict management seem premature. The danger of generalisation and universal applicability is a feature that centripetalists share in common with consociationalism.

Secondly, centripetalism suffers from some flawed assumptions. Specifically, centripetalists deem possible that a moderate centre will exist within a divided society, which under the influence of the AV, will attract similarly minded political forces. Ben Reilly argues that under the AV and its reliance on the electorate as the engine of moderation in divided societies, centripetalism may be particularly suitable for societies in which a moderate voice exists (2001, 178). To support his argument, Reilly cites the Good Friday agreement as an example of successful centripetal venture. Yet, it is extremely doubtful that moderation can prevail among the electorate especially in periods that follow deep animosity and ruthless violence. Therefore, timing is of crucial importance (Horowitz 2000b) as conditions might not be ripe for the endorsement of cooperative strategies.

Moreover, moderation is always vulnerable to potential spoilers or outflanking from actors that are simply disinterested in participating in democratic procedures. Rabushka and Shepsle have criticised consociationalism on the same grounds, as outbidding tends to dissolve

the elite cartel (Esman 2000, 101). Thus, the provision of incentives does not suffice to counter centrifugal tendencies. In Sri Lanka, the Tamils were doubly mistreated: firstly, by the unfair institutional framework that favoured the majority (the Sinhalese), and secondly, by the Tamil Tigers who intimidated any accommodation-seeking parties.

On a similar note, the assumption that the electorate will be seeking moderation under preferential voting should be heeded with a grain of salt as it depends more on processes of social mobilisation and structured elite predominance. Finally, the Good Friday Agreement contains consociational rather than majoritarian/centripetalist features (Horowitz 2001, 89) as reflected in rights of cultural autonomy, concurrent majorities, a grand coalition and proportional voting.

In addition, the centripetalist strategy of heterogeneous federal units elicits questions on districting. Centripetalists in fact, do not explain how political elites can mutually engage in the drawing of internal borders. To engage in gerrymandering in post-conflict settings requires either a pre-existing level of accommodation between the contending elites or the mediating/arbitrating role of external actors. Centripetalists posit Nigeria as a shining example of federalism, reflected in the demarcation of ethnically mixed entities (Horowitz 2000a, 2000b, Reilly 2001). In fact, it was the military that decisively intervened towards this direction (McCulloch 2014).

More recent studies on conflict management try to prudently overcome the intellectual clash of models (Sisk 2013, McCulloch 2014) by laying emphasis on the subtleties that pertain to contextual factors. Conflict management is an inherently policy-oriented field, which calls for intellectual clarity and scientific knowledge. Besides, hybridity,

eclecticism and partial adoption characterises the empirical world of conflict regulation as divergent preferences, trade-offs and negotiations preclude the sheer adoption of ready-made solutions.

Timothy Sisk observes that “today the issue of short- versus long-term approaches to institutional design in protracted social conflicts ... is a critical question for international mediators and as well as protagonists in conflict” (2013, 15). By temporally distinguishing between different phases along the post-conflict time scale, Sisk notes that, whereas consociationalism is the preferred conflict resolution approach in the short-term, centripetal devices shall be progressively introduced as more prone to long-term stability (Ibid 15-16). On the other hand, Allison McCulloch points to the “where-and when” of conflict management. She reaches the conclusion that the ability of power-sharing institutional designs to facilitate political stability depends on the nature of divisions in terms of intensity and demography. (2014, 143-144).

A ‘consociational’ universe might be a misnomer. Yet, the prescriptive toolkit of consociationalism remains relevant albeit in its diverse manifestations. Therefore, in-depth analysis of particular case studies might prove of increasing importance to produce knowledge on an array of questions: firstly, why consociational settlements emerge and if possible, how they are sustained, which consociational devices are chosen, and how does the institutional framework constrain actors’ preferences. Sadly, intellectual controversies focus extensively on the potentialities of respective power-sharing models ignoring the subtleties embedded within divided settings. Delving into history might prove fruitful to understand the peculiarities, and capture the complexities endemic to divided polities.

CHAPTER 2

A GENEALOGY OF POWER-SHARING: FROM THE QAYMAQAMIYYA TO THE FIRST REPUBLIC

The genealogical portrayal of power-sharing in Lebanon helps contextualize the conditions that led to the invention and subsequent reproduction of an array of institutions that sacralised corporate forms of administration.

Interestingly, the internalisation of the new rules of the game subverted old structures of power, thus hailing the advent of an era of competing national-sectarianisms and sectarian-nationalisms (Weiss 2010, 19) firstly, in the Ottoman province of Mount Lebanon and later, within the confines of modern Lebanon.

In what regards Mount Lebanon, this geographical entity did not represent the territorial configuration of modern Lebanon. Divided between the vilayets of Sidon and Tripoli, Mount Lebanon, “enjoyed a limited de facto autonomy” (Hakim 2013, 14). As Traboulsi argues “Lebanon as a polity begins with the Emirate of Mount Lebanon constituted in the late 16th century” whose residual vestiges will be present in the genesis of modern Lebanon (2007, 3). Those features include a sizeable Christian numerical majority, an early conversion to production for the market (silk) and to international trade, a long cultural exposure to Europe and a tradition of intervention by European powers in its international affairs (Ibid.)

The emirate of Mount Lebanon enveloped essentially the stories of two communities: the Druze and the Maronites. It was actually the complex web of relations of friendship and enmity between the members of those

two communal groups that would decisively determine the course of events and that would ultimately spill over to engulf the surrounding areas in the Lebanese fold. Ultimately, the introduced institutional framework in the Mountain would interpose between a hitherto partially cross-cutting set of allegiances and loyalties (class, regional, religious).

This set of institutions endorsed by the Ottoman authorities in close coordination with the Great Powers aimed at preserving order and civility in the Mountain in an era of revolutionary zeal. Strongly intertwined with the Enlightenment ideas of equality and justice, and against the backdrop of Ottoman aspirations for reorganisation of the Syrian provinces and the creation of an overarching sense of Ottoman citizenship through administrative centralisation, the new arrangements would be eventually enacted via the politicisation of religious ties. Thus, the re-configuration of the political and social realms across religious lines would herald the birth of a confessional system whose legacy lingers on in contemporary Lebanese politics.

As a matter of fact, the introduction of confessionalism did not imply power-sharing in its modern manifestation; power remained in varying degrees the prerogative of overseeing authorities (Ottomans, European Concert), at least until the establishment of a sovereign Lebanese state. However, the confessional segregation of the population would elicit an indelible footprint as long as vested interests of the communal elites increased the stakes for its perpetuation.

Firstly, its constant reproduction would be guaranteed through ascriptive modes of confessional pre-determination, thus shrinking the space for the expression of alternative forms of identification. The introduction of proto-consociational devices such as segmental autonomy

and proportionality consolidated confessional identities as a means to manage diversity and coexistence.

Secondly, the embryonic form of power-sharing within the framework of the Ottoman province of Mount Lebanon furnished the conditions of possibility for civility and institutionalised symbiosis within the confines of the Lebanese Republic. As Akarli mentions, power-sharing requires political traditions and norms that will govern the “constant renegotiation and reconciliation of competing material and moral interests” (1993, 4). Akarli’s claim echoes Daalder’s conviction that a tradition of power-sharing might be conducive to consociationalism’s successful realisation. Hence, the institutionalisation of communitarianism could have ideally served as “a means of social and political organisation and integration” and not as a particularistic basis of political identity and loyalty (Ibid. 191).

The Qaymaqamiyya (1842)

The qaymaqamiyya regime was the product of an era of tectonic changes: patterns of authority and hierarchy gradually crumbled as a number of domestic and exogenous actors vied for legitimacy, legitimation and recognition.

By mid-19th century, the Eastern Question (Spagnolo 1988, 103) surfaced as a critical issue between the Great Powers and the Sublime Porte. On the one hand, the ailing Ottoman Empire needed European assistance to manage communal aspirations of autonomy, but on the other, it tried to defend its sovereignty against interference in its internal affairs.

This was most evidently showcased in Egypt, where Mohammad Ali initiated a process of modernisation with French assistance that utterly challenged Ottoman suzerainty and sovereignty over vast territories of the Empire such as modern-day Syria. The attempted shift in the balance of power impinged crucially on the interests of Britain and Austria, which at the time were keen on preserving a modicum of Ottoman sovereignty in the area of the Middle East.

The risks posed by Mohammed Ali's Egypt underscored the need for daring reforms in the realm of administration and the army amidst an era of pronounced changes in technology, economy and ideas. The Ottoman authorities would soon realise that apart from giving a new lease of life to the Empire, reforms would allay growing agitation among the minorities and especially the Christians who were considered second-class citizens.

In the economic realm, this opening was sealed with a number of trade treaties that abolished monopolies. These treaties were first signed with Britain and later France (Akarli 1993, 24), as a token of genuine willingness to adhere to the rules governing the society of states at the time. Trade treaties and commerce liberalisation were coupled with liberalising efforts aiming at the integration of the minorities within a framework of a just polity. The Gülhane Edict (1839) is thus registered - at least in principle- among the first initiatives to modernise the Empire by envisioning an Ottoman citizenship on the grounds of greater equality, social justice and fairness. In this vein, it sought to address persistent grievances expressed by dismayed segments of the population that suffered from heavy liabilities –in particular the Christians- such as

disproportional taxation, forced labour and compulsory conscription to the Ottoman army.

Mount Lebanon was at the epicentre of these developments. Under Ibrahim Pasha, Egypt expanded its control over what is now Lebanon and Syria imposing an iron grip rule that would disenchant the population of the Mountain. In an attempt to consolidate his rule, Ibrahim Pasha kept in place the local Emir Bashir II Chehab, who was subsequently entrusted with the competences held under Ottoman rule: preservation of order, extraction of resources, and conscription of soldiers for the Egyptian army.

The princely Chehab family enjoyed an exceptionally prominent status among the notable families of the Mountain: they served as government officials (*multazim*) appointed directly by the Sultan. In the capacity of the multazims, the Chehabis were charged with the duty of forwarding taxes to the Ottoman Treasury through the governor of Sidon, whilst paying a yearly tribute (*miri*). Within this context, they enjoyed special feudal (*iltizam*) autonomy unheard of among the multazims of other Ottoman provinces (Khalaf 2002, 66). Significantly, only three families were eligible for the position of the multazim (Chehab, Abil-lama, and Arslan) (Ibid, 68).

Under Egyptian suzerainty, Bashir enjoyed more freedom to consolidate the new status quo by coopting members of the feudal notability whilst alienating others. To entrench his grip, Bashir marginalised some of the local Maronite and Druze notables, who were consequently deprived from their access to forms of economic and social capital.

These families (*muqata'ji* class) held an exceptional position in the society of Mount Lebanon that was founded on a centuries old feudal system (*'iqta*). Eight houses were eligible to the rank of the sheikh and were thus allotted a feud or *muqata'a*: the Jumblatt, Imad, Abu Nakad, Talhuq, Abd al-Malik among the Druze, and the Khazin, Hubaysh and Dahdah houses among the Maronites (Ibid. 68).

Their power was founded on vertical relations of kinship such as tribe, lineage and the distribution of patronage. For the Druze notability in particular, the feudal system that governed social relations in Mount Lebanon carried an additional significance. The Druze mythical narrative viewed the community and its sheikhs as the real lords of the Mountain as both Mamluk and Ottoman governors of Damascus forged ties and sought cooperation with members of the Druze notability given their reputation as valiant warriors (Ibid. 11). Ideas of class and communal supremacy were morphed based on this narrative in the area of the Mountain—part of it known as Jabal Duruz or the Mountain of the Druze-. This feeling of superiority did not preclude occasional cooperation between the Druze and Maronite elites to safeguard the status quo.

Moreover, structural changes in the economy of the Mountain impacted catalytically upon the social structure. As the area was integrating into the western capitalist system, sericulture emerged as the ideal source for capital accumulation. Steadily, as growing western demand for silk displaced traditional crops, its trade ushered in the timid formation of a middle class of merchant families. This shift was coupled with stringent inheritance laws that divided the land to unsustainable, limited estates (Hakim 2013, 24).

Crucially, the diminishing returns from the cultivation of land, and the policies of Bashir impaired the welfare of the vulnerable lower strata (commoners) of the Mountain's society. In the mountain's social structure, the commoners and the peasants, -known broadly as *ahali* (or '*ammiyyah*)-, were associated with relations of vassalage to their muqat'ajis whom they were forced to respect and serve on a permanent basis. The adverse effects caused by the lower rates of profit were inexorably trickling down to the peasantry which was forced to intensify its labour in pursuit of greater yields.

This was coupled with Bashir's onerous policy of taxation that targeted all classes indiscriminately. For instance, by 1840, taxes were being collected several times annually, the payment of head taxes was asked in advance whilst having been increased previously e.g. *jizya* (Khalaf 2002, 80). The cumulative effect of the social and economic crisis led to a series of peasant uprisings from 1820 to 1860 (Hakim 2013, 24), that were suppressed by the Emir. Due to the burdensome taxation, an ephemeral Druze-Maronite classed-based understanding was achieved against Bashir's despotic rule. Yet, this understanding did not translate into a full-fledged class-based alliance.

Instead, this understanding was prevented by policies of divide-and-rule employed by Ibrahim Pasha and Bashir. Firstly, Ibrahim, with the help of Bashir, employed Maronite conscripts to suppress a Druze insurgency in 1834 in return for a preferential treatment towards the Maronites which was manifested in the promise for a legal possession of arms and lower taxation (Khalaf 2002, 81). Secondly, Bashir strengthened his ties with the Maronite Church, which conferred upon him a degree of

moral legitimacy (Akarli 1993, 22) effectively sidelining members of the Druze notability.

The Maronite Church, on the other hand, supported the emir's rule that allowed it to expand its organisation, land and utter influence (Akarli 1993, 21-22). Crucially, the ruling branch of the Chehab family converted to the Maronite rite abandoning Sunni Islam (Salibi 1988, 15). Whilst the emir himself practiced Islam in public and Christianity in private (Akarli 1993, 21), the Maronite Patriarch would expose Chehabi's alleged Maronitism as an unshakeable justification for a political programme of autonomy and independence that moved beyond Maronite regional, and class differences. Bashir's Imarah (emirate) retains a conspicuous position in Maronite mythology as it provides a prototype for a separate Lebanon (Kanaan 2005, 57) that would be eventually realised in the 20s.

Under Bashir's rule, the Church increased its moral credentials among the lowest classes. Numerous disgruntled Maronite peasants (Akarli 1993, 22) rallied behind it to protect themselves from the rapacious whims of the frustratingly dispossessed muqat'ajis. Thus the clergy undertook the dual role of sustaining social solidarity and providing daily leadership (Kanaan 2005, 61-62). Progressively, the Church will espouse the role of the ethnic entrepreneur by firstly, reaching out to external sponsors such as France, and the Sublime Porte and secondly, through the provision of meaning to a fledgling Maronite identity couched in an ethnic mythology (Ibid).

This ethnic venture eminently unfolded after the 1840 revolt. Endorsing a law of general disarmament, Egyptian authorities attempted to foist a new state of affairs on the Druze and Maronite communities that

deprived them from a sacrosanct -and in the case of the Maronites-, promised right. Thus disarmament served as the pretext of an uprising that dwelt on grievances over taxation and forced labour (Hakim 2013, 25-26) that disproportionately burdened the commoners.

Having been defeated by the Egyptian forces, rebels were exhorted to revolt anew in view of a coordinated Ottoman, British and Austrian intervention. The eventual Egyptian defeat signalled the end of Bashir's rule and the reinstatement of Ottoman suzerainty over Mount Lebanon. Yet, attempts to dismantle the system Bashir Chehab has established after years in power (1788-1840) would stir tensions and frictions between the different groups of the Emirate. As Akarli indicates, "changing perceptions of proprietorship were an important dimension" in the disputes pitting former muqat'ajis and new tenants (1993, 27). Amidst an intense power vacuum, land disputes acquired sectarian nuances as Druze landlords imposed harsh working conditions on their Maronite vassals, whilst Maronite tenants defied even rightful Druze claims on plots of land. In 1841, frictions between the communities escalated to open conflict (Ibid. 28) during which the Ottoman authorities refrained from immediately intervening (Kanaan 2005, 70).

In parallel, conflicts of interest among the European powers and the Ottoman Empire led to a bidding race of promises that aimed at bringing the locals to their respective protective fold. British and Ottoman agents for instance, asserted respect for the "ancient rights and privileges" of the Mountain's inhabitants, whilst the French consul in Beirut conjured up an ambitious plan for the establishment of a Catholic principality in the Orient in line with France's mission civilisatrice (Hakim 2013, 27-29).

Simultaneously, Russia portrayed itself as the protector of the Greek Orthodox community and Austria of the Greek Catholics.

The Maronite Church was the first actor to enter the fray by formulating concrete and explicit demands. According to Carol Hakim, petitions addressed to the Sublime Porte epitomise the birth of the Lebanist ideal as enshrined in the establishment of a self-ruled entity in the Mountain under nominal Ottoman suzerainty. These petitions signified a breaking point with the past.

Significantly, this concept of Lebanism reverberated eminently on the discursive level; it echoed an idealised Maronite past which tacitly implied a number of immutable rights and privileges which had to be recognised by dint of tradition (Ibid.30), and which aimed to differentiate the community racially and culturally from the rest of communities, whilst justifying the establishment of its primacy in the region (Kanaan 2005, 51). The invention of tradition by both Maronite and Druze would ultimately herald an “incipient culture of sectarianism in its moment of production” (Makdissi 2000, 62), where “religion was detached from its social environment and treated as a cohesive, exclusivist, and organic force” (Ibid. 65). As Esman argues, “once mobilization occurs, ethnic identities tend to become dominant, eclipsing and superseding all others” (2000, 97).

The instrumentalisation of religion became official with plans for partition of Mount Lebanon in line with the confessional geography of the Mountain. This solution was endorsed by the Austrian Chancellor, Klemens von Metternich, who expressed the common resolve of the Great Powers to the Ottoman authorities. Having rejected the restitution of Bashir to the position of the emir –and thus a special status of

autonomy-, eager to reinstate order in the area of Mount Lebanon, and reorganise the administrative system in Syria, the Ottoman authorities conceded to confessional partition (Hakim 2013, 46) as the Gordian knot that satisfied all powers involved. Mount Lebanon would be henceforth divided into two cantons, one Maronite and one Druze or a dual *qaymaqamiyya* (1842). The Northern District, which was predominantly inhabited by Maronites, would be ruled by a Maronite governor, whilst the Southern District, which included the Druze heartland by a Druze.

Yet, this plan was not meant to ensure stability and order for long. Given its majoritarian character, it excluded minorities living in those areas. Firstly, Christian communities such as the Greek Orthodox and Greek Catholic were neglected, whilst a Maronite majority was ruled by a Druze minority in the southern district. Yet, the Druze were not eager to surrender their perceived historical rights in the area.

Three years later, the Ottoman foreign minister, Shekib Efendi would revise the aforementioned scheme by introducing a new set of regulations. The new regulations consecrated confessional representation as a constitutional principle in the political realm, whilst setting the ground for the reforms endorsed by the *mutasarrifiyya* regime (Akarli 1993, 29).

According to Shekib's *Règlement Organique*, the *qaymaqams* or governors of each district would be assisted in their work by a twelve-member administrative council which included a judge and an advisor for each of the sects, which were henceforth recognised as such (Maronite, Druze, Sunni Greek Orthodox and Greek Catholic). As Hakim indicates "the principle of allocating political and administrative charges on a communal basis, which henceforth became an enduring feature of the

Lebanese political system, was adopted...as a trade-off between the Ottoman attempt to centralize and rationalize local administration and the concern of the European powers...to grant equal powers to the various religious communities (Hakim 2013, 52).

The muqat'ajis would preserve their competences in maintaining law and order despite the fact of overlapping jurisdictions with the members of the administrative councils. Wherever the notables and the population were of different "race" and "sect", a wakil, or representative of the same "race" of the population would be appointed to oversee the administration of the notables (Makdissi 2000, 84). The R glement reinforced partially the social and political status of the feudal families, since the qaymaqams would be appointed after consultation with the a'yans (notables) and the clergy (Khalaf 1987, 60-61).

In fact, this modified institutional arrangement dwelt upon the logic of satisfying the array of preferences harboured by the actors involved through the multiplication of the layers of authority. In a sense, it trumpeted an early embodiment of conflict resolution schemes that would be found later in the post-colonial world by creating vested interests in an opportunity structure.

Hence, within the institutional context of the qaymaqamiyya, the invented modernity of confessionalism and its categorical ethos was to be counterbalanced by the traditional authority of the muqat'ajis and the invented tradition of primordialised identities. This Janus-faced state of affairs will be replicated in the years to come. Yet, the complex web of authorities endorsed by the Shekib Effendi's R glement would generate a dense network of antagonistic claims as different vested interests vied for niches of supremacy. Inevitably, it would prove an ephemeral a solution

as it failed to contain growing animosities -especially in the mixed districts-.

The mutasarrifiyya (1861)

The mutasarrifiyya arrangement represents a renewed effort by the Sublime Porte and the Great Powers to restore inter-communal peace, order and civility in the area of Mount Lebanon. Institutionally, it trod on the path of the qaymaqamiyya by broadening the application of confessionalism. Thus it aimed at ending once and for all a long period of upheavals.

The pretext should be sought in the peasant revolt of 1858 in the Maronite district of Kisrawan which culminated in an inter-sectarian conflagration in the Mountain. The social background of the contestation notwithstanding, the peasant uprisings of 1858-1860 muted into the worst communal atrocities that the Mountain has ever experienced. Carol Hakim argues that “the underlying fears, expectations, tensions and contradictions that had been building throughout this troubled period were brought to such an extreme limit, and expressed in such an appalling way during the events of 1860, that they left all involved in a state of shock and dismay”. The emotional legacy of the massacres and the coercive measures followed by the Ottomans facilitated the reassertion of Ottoman control on the area (2013, 65).

In the mixed districts, the contestation acquired sectarian nuances: cross-cutting social and communal cleavages fell short to moderate the effects of existential fears. The culture of sectarianism, incubated during the events that ushered in the qaymaqamiyya, became consolidated on the

morrow of the 1860 massacres as the sectarian consciousness violently intruded modern life (Makdissi 2000, 164).

Trying to alleviate those fears, the mutasarrifiyya regime nurtured ideas of nationhood (Hakim 2013, 66). On the one hand, the consolidation of the sectarian culture would entrench myths of communal homogeneity epitomised in ideas “that there is such a thing as a Maronite or a Druze nation that can or should be represented” (Ibid.). On the other, it created a fertile ground for the formulation of nationalist schemes such as Syrianism that moved beyond the narrow limits of the community. Crucially, the mutasarrifiyya regime attempted to walk a fine line that straddled assimilation and self-determination: the first called for centralisation of power in the Syrian provinces – an Ottoman aspiration-, whilst the second pleaded for greater autonomy—a view propounded chiefly by the feudal elites and the Maronite Church-.

For the feudal elites in particular, the changing socio-economic landscape proved extremely detrimental (Khalaf 2002, 90-91). These changing conditions prompted what Makdissi calls the politics of restoration (Makdissi 2000) of those privileges considered traditional. In the Christian district of Kisrawan, the politics of restoration pitted the members of the prominent Khazin family against the qaymaqam, the peasants and the clergy (Ibid. 90). In the central and southern districts of Mount Lebanon –especially in the areas of the former Druze qaymaqamiyya- the politics of restoration had a pronounced sectarian character: Druze feudal elites met Christian resistance in attempting to claim back usurped property rights.

In Kisrawan, the agrarian mobilisation was couched carefully in conciliatory terms in its inception to eschew open confrontation with the

notables and the local structures of authority. The main grievances expressed involved the lowering of the burdens endured by their class. Progressively though, the local mobilisation acquired more confrontational features that were reinforced as long as the feudal families refused to concede to the commoners' demands (Ibid. 92).

Instead of partial relief from tax and other burdens, the peasants were now openly asking for a radical transformation of the system and recognition of their independent subjecthood. This radically novel assertiveness envisioned equality between peasants and sheikhs, an end to the exactions of gifts, dues, and the imposition of forced labour, the abolition of contrived taxes on land sold by the sheikhs to the peasants and finally the abolition of the right to authorise marriages and administer floggings in jail sentences (Ibid. 93).

The uprising developed in an extremely violent fashion as the peasants invaded, looted and plundered a number of estates that belonged to their former masters. Members of the feudal families were murdered, whilst a great number of them were evicted from the north e.g. the Khazins and the Hubaysh.

In fact, four merchant towns overturned muq'ataji control and ran their affairs through elected councils (Traboulsi 2007, 28). As the commoners in the north were entrenching their grip, they were prone to invite Maronite peasants of the southern districts of the Shouf and Metn to revolt against their Druze lords with a promise for military assistance (Hakim 2013, 67).

Indeed, the Druze Abu Nakad family was expelled from two towns, whilst an elected council replaced its authority (Traboulsi 2007, 28). Inevitably, the uprising in the Druze areas acquired strong communal

connotations as the Druze muqata'jis were unwilling to surrender what was considered their own territory.

The sectarian nuance became more profound as the Maronites threatened the Druze of the southern districts and the Druze preemptively attacked Christians. Ossification of the Druze communal pillar was thus facilitated against a disquietingly assertive Maronite sect (Ibid.). The conflict soon spilled over the bounds of civility.

The sectarian bloodletting lasted four weeks. During that period, 12000 Christians lost their lives, 4000 perished in destitution, 100000 became homeless (Khalaf 2002, 97), whilst 200 villages were devastated including the two thriving Christian towns of Zahle and Dayr al-Qamar (Hakim 2013, 68). These massacres would leave an indelible mark in the Maronite mythology as it “provided Maronite martyrs, who could become a focus for shared grief and pride” highlighted in the need of an “autonomous entity” (Kanaan 2005, 75).

The sectarian chord was stricken so powerfully that its echo reverberated in Damascus where an anti-reformationist spirit and a perception of favouritism towards the thriving Christian community engendered suspicion and envy. As soon as the conflict in Mount Lebanon dissipated, a Muslim mob, “driven by a number of the city’s notables and enjoying the complicity of the city’s Ottoman authorities attacked the Christian quarter of Bab Touma massacring 1000 people. Violence was halted with the intervention of the Algerian emir ‘Abd al-Qadir, whose armed men assisted Christians in fleeing in safety towards Beirut (Traboulsi 2007, 35-36).

The aftermath of the events in Mount Lebanon and Damascus found the Ottoman authorities in complete disarray and the European powers

prone to intervene against an alleged Christian persecution in the hands of an 'incompetent' central administration. The European response was twofold: firstly, a French 'peace-keeping' force was dispatched to Syria in order to "help Ottoman authorities restore order and security" (Ibid. 71). Secondly, a European commission was formed with a mandate to identify the causes and the persons responsible for the aforementioned events, to determine the extent of the losses of the Christian population and to devise the means to indemnify the victims. Still, the Commission's mandate entailed the reorganisation of the Mountain in a fashion that would prevent future tensions (Ibid. 73). The last point implied that the Commission should reconcile the interests of the Porte, the Great Powers and their protégés in Mount Lebanon. Significantly, events in Damascus blurred perceptions on the underlying causes of the riots in Mount Lebanon (Ibid. 71).

Hakim attributes European machinations in the aftermath of the 1860 events to the burgeoning Eastern Question. "The essence of the problem" laid in the fact that the fate of the Syrian provinces was tied to that of the Ottoman Empire (Ibid. 72). Given events in the Balkan Peninsula, a swift disintegration of the Empire was deemed not forthcoming. Therefore, any plan of reorganisation of the Syrian provinces should preserve Ottoman territorial integrity.

Lord Dufferin, who represented the interests of Great Britain in the Commission, argued in favour of a single semi-independent from Ottoman rule Syrian province entrusted to a governor-general chosen by the Porte in cooperation with the Great Powers. For Lord Dufferin, the Ottoman administration proved itself deficient to rule a multi-communal province, whilst politicisation of religious beliefs was to be avoided. For

the British diplomat two were the main causes of the 1860 riots: the role of the Maronite Church in fomenting tensions to endorse its nationalist vision, and the Ottoman divide-and-rule policy which aimed at discrediting any claims for autonomy. Dufferin believed firmly that integrating the Mountain to the province of Damascus would be the ideal solution. Yet, given the French commissioner's reactions, he opted for a plan, where Mount Lebanon would be reunified under a Christian non-native governor whose competences would not differ from that of the other pashas (Ibid. 75-77).

The French commissioner, Béclard, found himself between a hard and a rock place. For French commitments to the Maronite community were still valid and involved the establishment of a Christian principality under the restitution of the Chehab family. On the other hand, Béclard had to balance the French commitment to the Maronites with the pragmatist imperative of preserving a modicum of Ottoman suzerainty. Besides, Béclard was convinced that the issue good governance in the Mountain passed foremost entailed a reorganisation of the Syrian provinces. Béclard held the belief that the root of all causes in Mount Lebanon resided in the "feudal and the theocratic" systems whose abolition would be beneficial for the welfare of all communities in a province that should somehow remain attached to the Syrian hinterland (Ibid 78).

Yet, the official French stance was obscured by the independent course of action followed by the commander-in-chief of the French Expeditionary Force, General Beaufort d'Hautpoul. The latter was inclined to proactively shape French foreign policy in the area rallying support for the idea of a Christian principality under Ottoman suzerainty.

In this vein, he devised a map of a future Lebanese principality whose viability entailed the annexation of the coastal cities of Tripoli, Sidon, Tyre, the Bekaa valley and the Bilad Bishara. (Ibid 83-86). Interestingly, the geographical borders of this Grand Liban coincided with the entity envisioned by the Maronite Patriarch (Ibid. 89) and the territory that would later become modern Lebanon.

The intervention of the French Foreign Minister tilted the balance towards accommodation. Mount Lebanon would preserve its privileged status of semi-autonomy but with a non-native Christian governor at its head (Ibid 94). This solution satisfied both British and Ottoman interests but left Maronite and Druze in a state of frustration.

The R^èglement Organique of 1861 was guaranteed by France, Great Britain, Austria, Russia, Prussia and Sardinia (later Italy) (Salibi 1988, 69). The mutasarrifiyya merged the two qaymaqamiyyas into one geographical entity with some areas of the Bekaa plain -that formerly belonged to the vilayet of Damascus- attached to it. Nevertheless, the port cities of the Mediterranean coast remained part of the vilayet of Damascus (Traboulsi 2007, 43).

The governor-general would be a non-native Ottoman Christian appointed by the Porte in agreement with the guarantor powers (Hakim 2013, 97) and entrusted with wide executive powers. An elected twelve-member Administrative Council (two delegates for each community) was reinstated granted with consultative powers on all issues but two: security, -the intervention of Ottoman troops- and taxation were issues that the members of the council were granted veto powers. Moreover, the AC members would be elected indirectly through a 'college' of village sheikhs. The council was evenly divided between Christians and

Muslims, a formula that was later modified to increase Christian representation to seven (Traboulsi 2007, 44).

The territory of the reorganised Mount Lebanon was divided into seven districts each headed by a *qaymaqam* appointed by the governor from the dominant sect. The districts (*qadas*) were subsequently divided into subdistricts (*nahiyes*) with a *mudir* on the top appointed again by the *mutasarrif*. Justice on the first instance level was to be dispensed by the village sheikhs, whilst judges in the two higher courts were nominated by the governor. Finally, a local gendarmerie was to keep order in the area, whilst revenues accrued by taxation were to be used for local purposes. Any budget deficits would be covered by the central administration (Hakim 2013, 97-98).

The *mutasarrifiyya* regime proved a resilient and effective institutional framework. From the standpoint of conflict management, it managed to restore relations of civility whilst inculcating a sense of belonging based on a series of prerogatives such as lower rates of taxation, exemption from conscription and a relatively efficient administration (Ibid. 138). Engin Akarli characterises the 1860-1920 period as the Long Peace (1993) since the merits of the new system became internalised by all sides.

Essentially, the *mutasarrifiyya* follows the line drawn by the Shekib Effendi *Règlement*. The abolition of territorial autonomy notwithstanding, it sacralised confessional segmentation. The vertical organisation of society on the basis of a number of communal/confessional pillars would be henceforth the rule as enshrined in the proportional allocation of seats in the Administrative Council and the 'public sector'. For instance, the Maronite segment, representing

about 57 percent of the Mountain's population, would be allotted an extra seat in the AC to mirror demographic realities on the ground (Akarli 1993, 84). Besides, proportionality would be preserved to safeguard confessional inclusion that conferred legitimacy upon the new rules. This burgeoning legitimacy was conspicuously epitomised in the altered elitist preferences especially within Maronite circles. Thus, the Maronite Church suspended its goal for independence since the new regime was not categorically hostile to its economic and social interests. The new regime was equally appealing to the notable families that were eager to preserve the old patrimonial mode of social organisation (Hakim 2013, 139-140).

The consultative functions of the Council notwithstanding, the inhabitants of Mount Lebanon would have an early opportunity to experiment with quasi-democratic procedures as they delegated powers to the elected village sheikhs. Akarli argues that the politics of position-hunting fostered under the *mutasarrifiyya* was instrumental to the formation of a common and democratically oriented political consciousness (Ibid. 160) as each position was apportioned by common consent (Ibid.). Veto powers under the guise of consensual appointment would resurface in the state of Lebanon to allay inter-communal fears of power usurpation. Apart from the institutionalisation of confessionalism, the *mutasarrifiyya* would exhibit the embeddedness of linkage politics between the local elites and their external sponsors.

Hakim notes that an important paradox was embedded in the *mutasarrifiyya*: the granted political autonomy, and the relative prosperity that followed its consolidation, rendered the Mountain receptive to ideas and influences that facilitated integration into the Empire. A distinct

Lebanese political sphere was thus shaped that favoured the crystallisation of a wider feeling of identity which for the first time acquired a legal definition associated with a ‘modern’ system of administration (Kanaan 2005, 77). This accommodation with the established political order came gradually “to encompass a more general sense of belonging, and allegiance, to the Empire as a whole” (Ibid. 143).

Yet, the *mutasarrifiyya* carried also the seeds of its dissolution: firstly, employment opportunities in the ‘public sector’ would engender the rise of a new stratum of public functionaries, lawyers and officials who championed secular ideas and who despised the confessional conservatism of the *mutasarrifiyya*. Secondly, economic growth engendered the conditions for a significant demographic increase thus shrinking the availability of arable land. Relative prosperity in a sense forced thousands of the Mountain’s inhabitants to emigrate to the Americas, Europe and Africa (Ibid. 157-171).

Immersed with liberal and nationalist ideas expounded in intellectually vibrant cities such as Paris, Cairo and New York, the members of this diaspora would develop ideas about the nation that would influence the course of events after the end of the First World War.

The Constitution (1926)

The Constitution of 1926 was born out of the throes of the French mandate (1920-1943) in Lebanon and Syria, and the ideologically, politically and economically prevalent position of the Maronite community in the period following the demise of the Ottoman Empire. Its symbolic significance is cardinal as it heralded the establishment of an independent state against the backdrop of dissenting Muslim and -a

number of- Christian voices that rejected separation from Syria and the Arab hinterland.

The mandate system mirrored essentially the *esprit du temps* in the international society. Thus the trusteeship regimes buttressed the management of international relations by the Great Powers. In the Levant, the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, and the ensuing risk of disorder served as the suitable pretext for its endorsement.

Within this context, the French trusteeship attempted to differentiate itself from the Ottoman rule given its messianic message of democracy, justice, and equality for all communities in Lebanon. Hence, the constitution marked the apex of the French mission civilisatrice.

In contrast to the Règlements Organiques of the qaymaqamiyya and the mutasarrifiyya era, the constitution was not devised to manage a civil conflict; it promised the advent of a new era of self-determination and democratic redemption under the protective wings of the French Third Republic. Yet, the contours and the content of it reflected patterns prevalent in the règlements of the past molded together with ideational and political elements germane to the juncture, yet rearticulated under different conditions of possibility.

These conditions surfaced in the Levant as a result of developments closely intertwined with the First World War. Firstly, the decision of the Ottoman Empire to side with the Central Powers ultimately signified the end of its existence as such. Secondly, the proclamation of the Wilsonian principles on self-determination nurtured universal aspirations for autonomy and independence which, in the Levant, acquired communal nuances.

Thus the implications of Ottoman alignment with Germany ramified in the diplomatic and military fields as the members of the Entente Cordiale coveted the Arab provinces of the Empire. For Great Britain, the defence of the strategic corridors that led to India was a priority coupled with a strong interest over the oil fields of Mesopotamia and the Gulf (Traboulsi 2007, 76). Still, the British imperial prestige was at stake as long as London offered pledges of statehood to both Jews and Arabs.

On the other hand, French interests revolved around three main concerns: firstly, there was a cultural preoccupation in protecting the Christian minorities of the Orient, especially the Maronites (Solh 2004, 2). Significantly, a cultural connection was galvanised with the cultural and educational activities of the Jesuits, who worked laboriously to preserve and disseminate Catholicism in an era of heightened Protestant – and thus American-British – penetration in Mount Lebanon. This cultural link would acquire a more scientific veneer through French-backed expeditions of archaeologists, historians and anthropologists who tried to raise ‘national’ awareness by reconstituting an imagined Maronite past. Ernest Renan, for instance, in his *Mission de Phénicie*, attempts to reconcile Phoenician civilisation with the idea of a Maronite nation (Chalabi 2006, 92) which according to this narrative, traces its roots in antiquity. The Jesuit priest, Henri Lammens, on the other hand, propounds in his *Quarante ans d’autonomie au Liban* the formation of a Greater Lebanon within its “natural and geographical frontiers” that annexes the surrounding areas (Hakim 2013, 74-75) to ensure its economic viability. The demise of the Turkish Empire would revive his ideas, serving as justification of Lebanese particularism (Firro 2004, 3).

Secondly, balance of power considerations in the Eastern Mediterranean and North Africa played out importantly in French calculations. Thus the French strongly believed that, occupying a landmark city such as Damascus would utterly enhance their prestige in the Islamic world. Thirdly, economic interests had also a bearing as evidenced in the proliferation of private initiatives such as the Congrès français de la Syrie and the Union économique de la Syrie (Solh 2004, 2-4) that dreamt of *la Syrie française* often with state support (Firro 2004, 3).

Crucially, imperial interests often overlapped, nurturing mutual suspicion but also cautious restraint that essentially reflected the position of Britain and France within the international hierarchy of power at the time. This cautious restraint was crystallised in the exchange of letters between Sir Edward Grey, director of the Foreign Office and the French ambassador in London, Paul Cambon which culminated in the conclusion of the Sykes-Picot agreement (1916). According to the latter, two spheres of influence were to be established in the Middle East indicated on the map as the Blue (French) and the Red (British) zones respectively. France was to be assigned modern day Syria and Lebanon, parts of Palestine, Cilicia, and crucially the oil-rich area of Mosul. Britain, on the contrary, was to declare its sovereignty over parts of Palestine (modern day Israel and Jordan), and Iraq (Chalabi 2006).

Inevitably, imperial visions of the post-Ottoman Middle East antagonised, overlapped and flirted with indigenous conceptions of it. On the morrow of Ottoman disintegration, three visions of nation- statehood would permeate the body politic in Syria and Mount Lebanon: firstly, an independent Arab Greater Syria governed by Faysal, son of the Sharif of

Mecca, Husayn. Secondly, an independent Greater Syria, under French or Western aegis and politically dissociated from the rest of the Arab world and thirdly, a Greater Lebanon, sponsored by France and separate from the rest of Syria (Hakim 2013, 215).

In 1915, the British authorities in Egypt approached Sharif Husayn, encouraging him to revolt against the Young Turks. The British-Hashemite rapprochement was enhanced by the Husain-MacMahon correspondence, which opaquely referred to a Syrian Arab state under the rule of Faysal. For, tracing their lineage to Prophet Mohammad, the Hashemite dynasty dreamt of reviving the Umayyad caliphate of the seventh century by uniting the Arab nation under the banner of Greater Syria (Zamir 1997, 1). This was countervailed by the Balfour Declaration (1917) that pledged British support for a Jewish state, which necessarily implied the dismemberment of Palestine.

In October 1918 the Arab army together with Australian contingents entered Damascus, and two days later, Beirut (Zamir 1991, 404-406). The march of the Faysalite army was perceived as the first step towards the realisation of Arab unity and a *fait accompli* against the Franco-British machinations described in the Sykes-Picot agreement -and the complementary September 1918 provisional agreement that recognised the French interests in the Blue Zone- (Ibid. 405). The subsequent expulsion of Faysal's representatives from the captured cities of the Levantine coast (Tyre, Sidon, Beirut, and Tripoli) and the removal of the Arab flag by the French in Beirut was viewed as a blatant indication that Paris was determined to implement the Sykes-Picot agreement to the detriment of Arab aspirations.

The Faysal-French controversy climaxed as the Arab nationalists raised claims over the Bekaa valley that –it is interposed between the two mountain ranges of Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon- consisted of four districts that were hitherto divided between the vilayets of Damascus and Beirut. According to the British partition scheme, the four *qadas* came initially under French jurisdiction but after Faysal’s reactions, they were handed to the Arabs (Ibid. 407). The four districts would remain a bone of contention in the Arab-French relations as its population was largely Muslim, pro-Faysalite, and it was part of the Blue zone (Ibid.).

The pending issues were to be discussed in the Peace Conference in Versailles (1919), and settled definitely by the ‘peripheral’ treaties that followed it. Progressively, it became clear that Paris was willing to sacrifice the Greater Lebanon scheme and thus Christian support, if Faysal accepted a French mandate over a federal Syria (Ibid. 410). This gradual overhaul in French policy preceded a pronounced ambivalence regarding the Syrian imbroglio that essentially blurred three options: establishment of a unitary Syria under Faysal in which Lebanon would be loosely linked to the interior in return for French mandate over Syria, division of Syria into two different zones with Faysal in nominal control of the interior and French grip on Greater Lebanon or a multifaceted war of attrition against Faysal’s rule until his final overthrow was achieved (Hakim 2013, 237).

The US-sponsored King-Crane Commission (1919) was thought to provide auxiliary services to the conference by gauging local dynamics vis-à-vis the upcoming territorial settlement. Convinced that the majority of the population in the coastal areas would opt for integration into the Arab kingdom, Faysal turned down Clemenceau’s offer for a united Syria

under the auspices of a French mandate. Meanwhile, a war of propaganda and of mutual accusations ossified the positions of the two sides, as French and Arab agents were exerting polarising pressure on the local population (Zamir 1991, 410-412). In its report to the Peace Conference in 1919, the commission recommended a united state for the whole of natural Syria governed by Prince Faysal under one mandatory power, whilst urging for modifications in the Zionist project of unlimited emigration into Palestine (Traboulsi 2007, 78). Yet, its inferences were ignored as a British-French rapprochement led to coordinated military action (Zamir 1991, 413) that were in line with their territorial ambitions in the coastal areas, the Bekaa and Palestine (Ibid. 414).

Alarmed by those developments, Maronite religious and political elites were mobilising to rally support for the scheme of the Grand Liban. Arab plans for a Lebanese province as part of a Greater Syria dismayed the Maronites deeply, stirring fears of marginalisation in a Muslim majority entity. This fear was accentuated by the bitter memories of the War. Mount Lebanon has indeed paid a heavy price: Ottoman occupation, abolition of the Mountain's privileged status, political repression and persecution, arrests and executions, banishment of local leaders but foremost a tremendously devastating famine that exterminated large segments of the local population (Hakim 2013, 231). Phares indicates that it was the memory of starvation that would determine the eventual demand for Greater Lebanon (1995, 71).

The Peace Conference was thus a window of opportunity for the Maronite elites to express their aspirations, investing in the traditionally strong channels between them and France. Initially, Maronite claims were quite nebulous, revolving around some sort of autonomy with a parallel

extension of the Mountain's borders. It was under the leadership of the patriarch, Elias Hoyek, the reconstituted Ottoman-era Administrative Council, and the interaction with the émigré communities that Maronite claims would be gradually fleshed out in concrete terms (Ibid. 232).

As Kais Firro argues, the idea of a Greater Lebanon was first captured within the members of expatriate groups such as Hizb al-Ittihad al-Lubnani (Party of the Lebanese Unity) in Egypt, and Jam'iyat al-Nahda al-Lubnaniyya (Society of Lebanese Renaissance) in New York around 1919. These groups argued in favour of an independent entity whose borders would be that of the mutasarrifiyya's (Firro 2004, 16-17). Daud 'Ammun, member of the Lebanese delegation in the Peace Conference first spelt out Maronite claims for an extended Greater Lebanon. He was followed by patriarch Hoyek who, in his intervention, called for a "restoration of Lebanon to its 'natural and historic frontiers' in accordance with the map drawn up by the commander of the French expedition to Syria in the years 1860-1861" (Ibid.).

These imagined 'natural' frontiers included the contested territories of the coast and the Bekaa valley, whose population opposed the Greater Lebanon scheme. Significantly, Maronite claims were received with some sympathy framed in appealing terms such as "self-determination", traditional Maronite "struggle for liberty" and Lebanese contribution to "world civilisation" (Hakim 2013, 220- 221).

The first Lebanese delegation was succeeded by a second, headed by Patriarch Hoyek. Its confessional composition was indicative of communal intentions in the Mountain. In fact, the second Lebanese delegation -exclusively Christian- championed the cause of the Mountain's independence. This option was not shared by the Druze and

other Muslim notables of Mount Lebanon, who preferred to be part of Syria. Beyond the Mountain's confines, the Grand Liban scheme enjoyed support from the Christian communities inhabiting the neighbouring areas whilst the Sunni majority cities of the coast fervently opposed it (Ibid. 245-246).

French foreign policy was oscillating between compromise with Faysal and a tougher stance in support of its local Maronite allies. In fact, French ambivalence reflected that of 1860, when discrepancies between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and military officials in the Levant hindered the formulation of a clear course of action. Clemenceau in particular, nurtured the hope that an understanding with Faysal would be possible as part of a broader settlement with the Muslim community. Nevertheless, attacks by armed bands of Bedouins and Shia against Christian villages and French troops stationed in Syria, rendered this ambivalence unsustainable.

A provisional agreement was thus concluded by early 1920. According to its terms, "France recognised Syria's rights for independence and territorial integrity in return for Faysal's recognition of France's interests in Syria and Lebanon. Lebanon was to be an independent state separate from Syria and its boundaries were to be determined by the Peace Conference" on the basis of the rights, interests and the will of the people (Ibid. 417). The latter implied essentially a tendentious French stance towards the Grand Liban project.

The latter acquired additional impetus as a centre-right government was formed in France that was more willing to heed the suggestions of the French High Commissioner in Beirut. The latter's approach entailed a tougher stance against Faysal translated into plans for Syrian

fragmentation into ethnic statelets that would function as Trojan horses against Arab nationalism. This policy was inspired by a perception of a 'Levantine civilisation' that interpreted social realities in the Orient through the prism of confessionalism (Mizrahi 2002, 42). This vision was wholeheartedly espoused by Robert de Caix, secretary general of the French High Commission, who advocated the partition of Syria into decentralised 'coherent entities' e.g. Mount Lebanon, Alawi, Druze state etc. with France playing the role of the arbitrator (Ibid.).

In March 1920, the Syrian Congress proclaimed independence in Syria and Iraq (Hakim 2013, 254) and elected Faysal as king of Syria within its 'natural' borders', including Lebanon and Palestine. The proclamation of Syrian independence was coupled with a resolution that accepted Lebanese autonomy within its prewar boundaries –the Ottoman province of Mount Lebanon-, provided it rejected foreign rule (Zamir 1991, 419).

Nevertheless, the official recognition of the French mandate in the San Remo conference (April 1920) would give France the much needed legitimation to confront the Greater Syria challenge. After persecuting Christian members of the Administrative Council, who preferred a compromise settlement with Faysal (Hakim 2013, 255), the French defeated the Faysalite army in Maysaloun (July 1920) (Zamir 420-422). Some days later, the French army will march to Damascus, putting an abrupt end to Faysal's ambitions. The battle of Maysaloun would be engraved in the Syrian collective memory as a symbol of heroic defence for the cause of national independence against French imperialism (Zamir 1997, 2).

On September 1, the French High Commissioner, General Gouraud proclaimed Lebanese independence by annexing to the new entity the four districts of the Bekaa valley and the city of Tripoli. According to Hakim, “the final decision to create an independent Greater Lebanon was taken by France as part of its policy to carve up Syria into separate states” in order to weaken opposition to its mandate in the hinterland. Whilst strategic interests influenced the establishment of Greater Lebanon, the final outcome was guided “by the claims and narratives developed and circulated by the Lebanese activists within and without the Mountain”. For they persuaded the French that “the natural and historical frontiers” of Lebanon should be fixed according to the map devised sixty years ago by General Beaufort (Hakim 2013, 260) as part of the 1860 French ‘peacekeeping’ mission in Mount Lebanon.

Yet, on the eve of Lebanese independence no Maronite current defended simultaneously the establishment of Greater Lebanon and the imposition of a French mandate. The confluence of the two trends will emerge progressively as a result of the French *fait accompli* (Traboulsi 2007, 84). Henceforth, an intra-Maronite debate would spring from the new realities that would divide the community along the following axis: attachment/partition to/from Syria and coexistence/independence with/from the Muslim majority of the annexed areas (Grand Liban/ Petit Liban) (Ibid. 85).

This debate would be intensified with the partition of Syria into six statelets (Greater Lebanon, the Alawite region, Jabal Druze, Alexandretta, Aleppo and Damascus). The inclusion of Tripoli and the four districts of the Bekaa into Lebanon would leave deep scars in the Syro-French and Syro-Lebanese relations (Zamir 1997, 5) as it satisfied the ambitions of

those Maronites that wanted an expanded and economically viable state. Significantly, the memory of this partition reverberated decades later in the Baathist discourse to justify the Syrian role in Lebanon during the early phases of the Lebanese civil war (Pipes 1990, 120).

Moreover, the incorporation of Beirut in the scheme of the Grand Liban had implication on the social level. As Albert Hourani noted, the ‘ideologies of the mountain’ that for him were identified with the ideologies of the Maronite community (1981, 173) fused with the urban and bourgeois cosmopolitanism of Beirut. This osmotic relationship was epitomised in the alliance between the feuding classes of the Mountain and the prosperous financial/mercantile strata (Traboulsi 2007, 85, Zamir 1997, 30) of Beirut that would imbue Lebanon with their particular worldview over the state and its mission.

In 1921, French authorities initiated a process of institution-building within the framework of the mandate. Framed as a project of “civic education and political emancipation” (Ibid. 88), it entailed the establishment of an administrative, legislative and executive apparatus. In this vein, a French governor was appointed, assisted by an executive of seven director-generals of whom only two were Muslims (Ibid.).

In fact, the bulk of political, legislative and military powers were concentrated in the hands of the High Commissioner, whose position was buttressed by a general secretariat that monitored and coordinated the activities of a number of security services (Mizrahi 2002, 45). Still, the High Commissioner, appointed an Administrative Commission (AC) with consultative powers reminiscent of the Administrative Council of the *mutasarrifiyya* period (Traboulsi 2007, 88).

Consisted of 15 –and later 17- members, the Commission included six Maronites, three Greek Orthodox, a Greek Catholic, a Druze, four Sunni and two Shia (Muslims boycotted its workings), that hailed from the landowning and merchant families. The AC was later transformed into an elected Representative Council (RC) in order to enhance its legitimacy as a constituent assembly under the auspices of the mandate. Yet, this legitimacy was discredited due to the pronounced Maronite clout -derived from the 1921 census- and constant French interference in its workings (Ziadeh 2006, 90).

Maronite predispositions were conspicuously defined by a sense of pride and victory in the battle against the Ottomans and the Muslims. They were determined to integrate the annexed territories and to assimilate the Muslim segment under a modified version of Lebanese nationalism that transcended Maronite particularism and embraced the idea of the nation-state. The nascent nation-state should safeguard the alleged historical Christian rights within the framework of a unitary and integrative polity. (Phares 1995, 81-83).

Nevertheless, communal diversity in the Grand Liban was an obstacle to Maronite aspirations. Michel Chiha, a Lebanese-Iraqi banker, intellectual and journalist, attempted to develop an ideological framework that accommodated Maronite aspirations with the demographic realities of the new entity. Representing the non-Maronite Christian world of Beirut, Chiha rose as an influential figure in the drafting procedure of the Lebanese constitution. Chiha nursed a vision for Lebanon grounded on a Mediterranean-based “geographical determinism” (Traboulsi cited in Zamir 1997, 38) that fixated the country’s political, economic and ideological orientation on the Western system of values.

For Chiha, the constitution should ensure proportional representation of Lebanon's ethnic communities, coupled with equality before the law as the right basis for power-sharing. In his optimistic vision, a corporate federation of communities could be morphed into an overarching loyalty to a nation-state (Firro 2004, 19-20). Therefore, a parliamentary assembly should facilitate the construction of an eclectic nationalism (Ibid. 22) through common participation in the burgeoning institutions of the state. Chiha's 'pragmatist' version of Lebanese nationalism grappled with governance by furnishing an ideological justification for Greater Lebanon (Ibid. 23). Yet, the Mediterraneanist strand of Christian nationalism he championed concealed delicately a Maronite conception of statehood (Zamir 1997, 38). "When Chiha refers to equal sectarian representation, he means Christian hegemony; when he speaks of a 'Mediterranean identity' he is rejecting Arab nationalism; and when advocating a capitalist *laissez-faire* economy, he envisages the transformation of Syria, Iraq Transjordan and the Arabian Peninsula, in addition to the peripheral regions annexed to Lebanon, into an economic hinterland for Beirut and Mount Lebanon" (Ibid. 39).

Chiha's ideas would be partially realised as French calculations in Syria facilitated the promulgation of a Lebanese constitution. The nationalist Syrian-Druze revolt of 1925 challenged the French position in Syria anew. Its subsequent suppression raised strong international condemnation by the League of Nations (Zamir 1993, 11), thus tainting the benign façade of the French mandate.

The Briand administration was determined to chart a new long-term policy that would restore stability and provide a face-save solution for the French (Ibid.). The appointment of High Commissioner, Henri De

Jouvenel, -the first civilian to occupy this post-, encouraged this shift in French policy. De Jouvenel was a strong advocate of the mandate's mission, destined to serve as a transitory phase towards statehood and independence. (Ibid. 11-13). In this vein, the elected members of the RCs in Syria and Lebanon would legislate on a number of Organic laws that would lead to independence in line with the paradigm set by Great Britain in Iraq under the conclusion of a thirty-year treaty.

In Lebanon, the 1926 constitution reflected the first symbolic step towards independent statehood. French influence was ubiquitous in it as it was modelled after the 1875 constitution of the Third Republic. Yet, its strong Jacobin spirit was diluted by widespread confessional undertones. As Traboulsi argues, it was a "hybrid constitution" straddling civic and individual rights, political and judicial equality with defense of communal rights (Traboulsi 2007, 90).

In fact, it reflected the tensions and contradictions inherent in the nascent Lebanese state and the agonising effort of the Christian elites to preserve supremacy under a framework that tried to carve out an innocuous role for the Muslim segment. Importantly, the citizen and its relations with the state were brought under spotlight as the latter guaranteed the freedom of religious practices for all citizens irrespective of religious affiliation (Ziadeh 2006, 94).

Yet, this central role of the state was undermined by the conferral of segmental autonomy to the religious communities on matters of personal status. The paradoxical function of this corporate federation was prominently mirrored in the case of the Shia community. Largely neglected during the years of the Ottoman Empire - considered as heretics-, recognition of Shia autonomy was the vehicle to 'ethnicisation'

(Firro 2006b, 741-749) in a unitary polity. In the same vein, the constitution safeguarded autonomy in the realm of private religious education under the proviso that it did not contravene the public one (Traboulsi 2007, 90).

In addition, Article 95 ordained the dispensation of public offices on an equitably sectarian basis for the sake of justice and amity (Zamir 1997, 30) albeit in a temporary, turned-permanent, fashion. The ascriptive allocation of offices would prove as one of the most enduring features of Lebanese power-sharing. By legitimising the sectarian distribution of positions in the public sector, the engineers of the constitution were incorporating a mechanism of ephemeral perpetuation of the sectarian mindset.

French influence on the building of institutions was explicitly manifested in the executive and the legislature. A strong presidential system was established in order to guarantee political stability and compliance with the mandate's objectives. The legislature was initially divided into two bodies, a senate and a chamber of deputies. The competences of the president were "unchecked" by any other institution, "except the French High Commissioner". He could "dismiss the cabinet, dissolve the parliament, rule by decree and could only be held accountable on the grounds of high treason (Ziadeh 2006, 94). Given the balance of power at the time, the presidency was reserved for the Christians, and shortly after a probation period for the Maronites. The first president was a Greek Orthodox (the only non-Maronite to serve in the post) and the prime minister a Maronite. Subsequent revisions of the constitution (1927, 1929) extended the president's prerogatives in ruling by decree under emergency conditions, prolonged his tenure to six years,

and gave him the right to form extra-parliamentary governments and dissolve the parliament (Ibid. 95).

Nevertheless, the first version of the constitution entrusted the bulk of the executive powers to the prime minister (Zamir 1997, 54). The empowerment of the presidential post was detrimental to the premier who was thus dependent on presidential backing. In fact this re-arrangement of powers echoed French concerns over a stable cabinet that could effectively fulfil its mission. Hence, a strong presidency could more efficiently perform this task given that the president could manipulate the parliament by appointing one-third of its members –a prerogative reserved before for the premier-, dissolve the legislature, and promulgate legislation with governmental approval (Ibid.).

Moreover, there was widespread scepticism regarding the composition of the council of ministers. This scepticism reflected ambivalence between a small competent executive and a broader inclusive cabinet. Inclusiveness was finally preferred as reflected in seven-member cabinets that comprised the six major communities (two Maronites and one Sunni, Shia, Greek Orthodox, Greek Catholic and Druze minister). Crucially, confessional representation encouraged clientelism that in turn resulted in an overstuffed public administration (Ibid. 49).

The legislature was another point of contention during the first years of Lebanese parliamentary life. As Zamir highlights, the Lebanese Republic had inherited all the weaknesses of the Third French Republic (Ibid. 46). Power struggles and personal rivalries between deputies and senators dominated political life during those formative years (Ibid.). In fact, the political system suffered from imbalances between a strong

bicameral legislative branch and a weak executive. Moreover, the appointment of deputies, and the election of senators increased competition for authority and prestige between the two chambers.

Initially, both houses were invested with significant powers e.g. election of the president, a vote of no-confidence, and the approval of the annual budget (Ibid. 29). The senate comprised initially 16 members – seven appointed by the president and nine elected for a period of six years. The chamber, on the other hand, numbered 30 deputies elected for four-year terms (Ibid. 29) on a sectarian basis.

Alarmed by the high level of political instability and the cumbersome costs entailed by the different layers of power, the French authorities expressed their willingness to curb the powers of the legislature. Such a revision was in line with French interests in Syria as it was thought that it would preempt similar requests from being raised by the nationalists there (Ibid. 22). Thus the 1927 revision led to the merging of the two chambers. However, confronted with the vested interests of both senators and deputies, the French hesitated to reduce their number. According to the amended Article 24 of the constitution, the parliament would henceforth include both elected and appointed members out of whom thirty would be elected and fifteen appointed. This amendment notwithstanding, the parliament continued to exert significant influence as manifested in the election of the president (Ibid. 54).

Moreover, the electoral law revived to a certain extent patterns established in the nineteenth century Mount Lebanon. Firstly, proportional representation in the parliament was translated into the distribution of seats according to demographic and regional considerations. Secondly, elections were held into two rounds and in six

districts. During the first round, an electoral college was voted in each of the districts. In the second round, the college elected its deputies among a list of candidates that received the majority of ballots in the first round (Ibid. 63). This indirect form of representation was reminiscent of the two-round *mutasarrifiyya* system, when village sheikhs were elected on the local level before casting a ballot for the members of the AC.

Crucially, the list system implied the creation of trans-sectarian alliances that competed to attract votes from a respectively trans-sectarian pool (Ibid. 64). This choice was explained by Christian confidence on their numerical superiority and French political engineering. The latter drew a number of administrative and electoral districts in order to manipulate the leading notables through a complex system of divide-and-rule (Ziadeh 2006, 96).

Despite its flaws, the constitution symbolised a partial commitment to Western democracy. Thus it was a product of its historical juncture that fused colonial interests with locally grown nationalisms and concerns. This explains the different meanings the constitution acquired across the communal spectrum. For the Maronites, the constitution was the symbolic confirmation of Lebanese independence and Lebanese exceptionalism whilst for the Sunni elites it demonstrated Christian-French connivance (Zamir 1997, 29) against Arab unity.

The quintessence of the constitution was indeed reflected in the preservation of Christian hegemony amidst an effervescent Arab Muslim majority. The modernity of this *problématique* is remarkable as similar concerns reverberate nowadays in divided settings e.g. Sri Lanka, Cyprus, where majorities in a state harbour fears towards majorities residing

beyond the state (Sinhalese-Tamil in Sri Lanka and India, Greeks and Turks in Cyprus and Turkey).

Therefore, a closer look on the constitution reveals vestiges of the Maronite aspirations first articulated under the Ottoman Empire. Thus, “the scientification” or constitutionalisation of the Lebanese territorial formation echoed not only the recent Maronite struggles of 1918-1926 but also that of the nineteenth century (Ibid. 97). Still, the usurpation of most executive powers by the president, a post reserved to the Christian community, “secured a century-old demand for an independent state under a local Christian hākim” (Ibid. 108). As Zamir argues, the empowerment of the presidential office that followed the constitutional reforms of 1927 and 1929 galvanised Maronite determination to relentlessly fight for it (Ibid. 55).

The residues of the past were further crystallised in the institutionisation of political sectarianism in the executive, the legislature and the public administration. Under the *mutassarifiyya*, the confessionalisation of the autonomous province of Mount Lebanon has preserved peace under the auspices of the Sublime Porte and the Great Powers. Within the context of an independent Lebanon, political sectarianism could prove a disintegrating force contrary to Chiha’s ideological convictions.

This was most evidently exemplified by the rebranding of the old *muqat’aji* class as national ‘modern’ elite, whilst its members were still attuned to the practices of the past. These ‘traditional’ practices were safeguarded by Article 95 mentioned above, that legalised the nineteenth century demands for *muhāsasa* (the communal allocation of shares in the

administration) and wazīfa (communally motivated employment) (Ziadeh, 2006, 98).

Importantly, the 1926 constitution functioned as the institutional bridge that connected the Ottoman world of proto-nationalisms with the era of sovereign statehood. Despite its shortcomings, it emerged as the overarching framework for the confluence of divergent national/sectarian agendas that would eventually usher in the National Pact and Lebanese independence.

The National Pact (1943)

The National Pact (al-mithaq al-watani) is a milestone in the Lebanese history of power-sharing. For its formulation ensued from the bifurcated intra- and inter-communal ideological and political battles of the interwar years, that pitted Lebanese nationalists against pro-Syria unionists. In this vein, it epitomises the least common denominator of possible conciliation and consensus between two competing nation-building programmes, Lebanese Christian nationalism and Arab unification.

Permeated by an ambivalently forward-looking perspective, the National Pact dictated the ontological features of the Lebanese First Republic and its revised distributional parameters. Its verbal character notwithstanding, the National Pact aspired to acquire legitimacy by providing built-in incentives to the disgruntled segments of the sovereign state. In this vein, it acted in a complementary fashion to the amended 1926 constitution, generating a conflictual compromise between constitution and custom (Traboulsi 2007, 111).

This compromise was essentially “Lebanon’s communal approach to Realpolitik” (el-Khazen 1991, 5) that marked the apogée of Maronite and Sunni political rapprochement (Ibid). This rapprochement was grounded on an inter-communal partnership, entrenched in the ‘ephemeral perpetuation’ of the confessional traits of the Lebanese society as the ideal means towards nation-building and democracy.

The conclusion of the National pact was propelled by external developments, and namely the implications derived from the Second World War and the declining French position. Significantly, French defeat weakened precipitously the capacities of Paris in the Middle East. Divisions between the Vichy regime and the Free French were replicated in the colonies and the mandated areas of the French empire. The Free French were crucially dependent on British support. This became evident in Lebanon where lacking the necessary resources and manpower, the Free French could not sustain their position for long.

Moreover, the rise of nationalism in interwar Europe influenced the emergence and proliferation of nationalist groups in the Middle East. Despite their variation, the nationalist movements of the era provided the mobilising force against colonial tutelage. The British-Iraqi (1930) and British-Egyptian (1936) treaties of independence generated widespread aspirations for true independence and sovereign statehood.

In Lebanon, the 1926 constitution created a burgeoning political consciousness that would precipitate opposition to the mandate (Hourani 1981, 139-140). Thus the French inadvertently undermined their position in Lebanon. Therefore, if the 1926 constitution symbolised the sacralisation of Lebanese territoriality, the National Pact and epitomised

Lebanese inter-communitarian determination on a distinct, sovereign existence.

This inter-communitarian determination was exhibited some years before the eruption of the Second World War in 1936, when prominent figures of the Maronite and the Sunni communities championed a Franco-Lebanese treaty as part and parcel of a fully independent and democratic polity. Despite the different starting points -as they harboured conflicting nation-building agendas-, the force of historical events engendered the necessary preconditions on a future rapprochement. This was reinforced by a mutually tactical eagerness to convince the other side about the soundness of each project: Lebanese nationalists wished to co-opt Sunni elites in a sovereign Lebanon and conversely, pro-Syria unionists exalted the secular virtues of pan-Arabism.

In addition, French mishandling in the economic and political affairs of the mandate created a fertile ground for conciliation. This was most conspicuously exemplified in November 1934, when the mandate authorities granted to a French company the monopoly in the cultivation and commerce of tobacco, and in the manufacture of cigarettes. This French favouritism met with strong disapproval from various sides of the communal spectrum as manifested in a general Maronite-Shia strike led by the Maronite patriarch Arida (Traboulsi 2007, 96-97).

On a similar note, the Maronite patriarch submitted a communiqué to the French High Commissioner where he expressed frustration over the state of affairs in Lebanon. Specifically, the patriarch asked for the preservation of the Lebanese entity, its full independence within the framework of friendly relations with Syria, the adoption of a new constitution, the signing of a treaty of independence similar to the one the

French were preparing for Syria, and finally the adhesion of Lebanon to the League of Nations (el-Khazen 1991, 10).

Previously, the French authorities had suspended the constitution (1932) imposing emergency rule. This decision echoed the dire economic situation in Lebanon and the need for a president (March 1932) who would pliantly enforce the required reforms. The imminent election of a Sunni in the presidency, as a result of intra-Maronite squabbling, served as the necessary pretext.

The French wished to preserve the post for the Christians amidst a worryingly changing demographic balance (Christians 52,5% and Muslims 46,2%) as evidenced by the 1932 census (the last in Lebanese history) (Mizrahi 2002, 62-63). Kiwan adds that the French veto to the candidacy of the Tripolitan Mohammad al-Jisr reflected also imperial machinations over the final territorial configuration between Lebanon and Syria -the city of Tripoli and the four districts being at the epicentre- (1988, 135). Ironically, Jisr's candidacy met stiff opposition from parts of the Sunni community. The reason lied in Sunni refusal to confer legitimation upon an entity that undermined the unionist cause (el-Khazen 1991, 11-12). These intra-Sunni divisions mirrored a deep crisis of identity (Atiya cited in el-Khazen, 32). Under the Ottoman Empire, the Sunnis enjoyed a privileged status. This has changed markedly under the mandate. The Sunni elites increasingly sensed that developments were leaving them behind. The articulation of preferences over schemes that fluctuated from support to pan-Arab unity, Syrian unity, or even support for the Lebanese entity mirrored precisely this sense of communal disorientation.

The Sunni chagrin would grow as the Syrian National Bloc (SNB, al-Kutla al-wataniyya), the main nationalist party in Syria, mended fences with patriarch Arida and other Maronite segments. In parallel, the Syrian political elites were finalising the details of the independence treaty with France. In March 1936, a French communiqué promised the SNB a treaty similar to the British-Iraqi, restoration of constitutional life in Syria, and amnesty for prisoners. A statement made by four Sunni deputies in support of a Franco-Lebanese treaty exacerbated fears of an adverse outcome. In parallel, rumours were circulating that the SNB was negotiating reunification with the autonomous areas of the Jabal Druze and the Alawite district that excluded the disputed territories in Lebanon (Ibid. 22).

This turning point in French policy (Solh 2004, 21) precipitated unionist mobilisation in Lebanon against a *fait accompli* that would utterly signal the cause's death knell. Raghid el-Solh observes that during the so called Conference of the Coast (1936) two main approaches seemed prevalent. Firstly, a number of Sunni notables from Beirut and Tripoli –e.g. Salim ‘Ali Salam and ‘Abd al-Hamid Karami- propounded unification with Syria that would include the disputed territories of Tripoli and the four districts. This traditionalist approach was justified on the grounds of a nationalist and not religious Arabism. Importantly, the inhabitants of the former Ottoman province of Mount Lebanon would be free to decide on their preferred scheme (Ibid. 23-24).

The radical approach on the other hand, was advocated by an array of nationalist and communist groupings that under the deteriorating economic conditions in Lebanon (devaluation of the franc, rising unemployment, dwindling remittances) and the compromising stance of

the SNB managed to acquire a number of followers (Ibid. 25-26). The League of National Action (LNA, *Usbat al-‘Amal al-Qawmi*) and the Arab Nationalist Party (ANP, *al-Hizb al-Qawmi al-‘Arabi*) represented the strand of pan-Arab unity. The LNA, for instance, rejected local chauvinism, whilst championing inclusion of Lebanon into an enlarged Arab state. Therefore, it progressively challenged the nationalist credentials of the SNB, by speaking in favour of a Syrian-Lebanese federation (Ibid. 27).

The ANP, on the other hand, opted for a gradualist stance. This was attributed to Kazem el-Solh, prominent member of the Arab nationalist current in Lebanon. According to Kazem, the crucial parameter was the relations between “an Arab Maronite minority and their Arab brethren” (Ibid. 29). Hence, unity or separation from Syria was essentially a ‘national’ (*qawmiyya*) question that entailed “either creating a country in union with Syria and alienating half of the population, or leaving Mount Lebanon outside a united Greater Syria thereby inducing the Christians to seek protection and surrender to colonial domination” (el-Khazen 1991, 14). Within this context, Arab unity would gradually spring from each single country (*qutr*) (Ibid. 15).

On the contrary, the Syrian Socialist Nationalist Party (SSNP) formulated its own genre of Syrian nationalism that foresaw establishment of a state within the borders of ‘natural Syria’ (*al-Suriya al-tabi’ iyya*). This natural Syria would ultimately incarnate the aspirations of the Syrian nation that was distinct from the surrounding Arab peoples. This state would include initially Syria, Palestine, Jordan, Lebanon and later Iraq, Kuwait and Cyprus (Mermier 2012, 192). Finally, the

Communist Party of Syria and Lebanon posited Arab unity through a programme of social change (Solh 2004, 32-33).

Despite Sunni demands for an immediate return of the disputed territories to Syria (Ibid. 33) Kazem el-Solh's formula against Maronite alienation was steadily gaining ground. As aforementioned, Maronites were increasingly feeling frustration with the French authorities. Patriarch Arida's opening to the SNB confirmed Kazem's line in favour of a Christian-Muslim alliance (Ibid. 34).

The advent into power of the Popular Front in April 1936 accelerated the pace of negotiations with Syria. The new French government welcomed parallel negotiations with Lebanon in response to increasing Maronite petitions for Lebanese independence. This was in fact a tactical manoeuvre aimed at unifying the Maronite milieu which was sharply divided between ardent Lebanese nationalists and more pragmatist voices (Mizrahi 2002, 70-71) that did not categorically oppose French tutelage and conciliation with the Sunni elites.

The signing of the Franco-Syrian treaty in November 1936 affirmed beyond any doubt the French disposition to preserve the territorial integrity of mandate Lebanon. The unionists in Lebanon were thus left on their own devices to boost the idea of some sort of unity with Syria. Riad al-Solh, prominent leader of the unionist strand –cousin of Kazem-, proposed a confederal scheme as a compromise solution between demands for Lebanese independence and Syrian unity. In parallel, he requested that the unionists be included in the negotiations of the Franco-Lebanese treaty (Solh 2004, 45-46).

Crucially, the agreement was concluded without unionist participation because of French suspicion towards the unionist elites

(Ibid. 46). According to the treaty, Lebanon would be recognised as an independent state that would join the League of Nations within three years. Still, the treaty envisioned internal reforms and a fair confessional representation in the administration as well as recognition of Arabic as the official language of the state (Ibid. 47).

The marginalisation of the Sunni elites disillusioned the Arab nationalist current. In fact, there was wide consensus (Ibid. 49) in France that Lebanon constituted a case apart from Syria. The peculiarity of the Lebanese case stemmed from an imperial French commitment to the Christians of the Orient. In this vein, the territorial integrity of Lebanon was paramount. Therefore, French troops were allowed to station indefinitely in Lebanon, whilst military presence in the areas of Jabal Druze and the Alawite statelet prevented the airing of any revisionist tendencies regarding Tripoli and the four qadas. (Ibid. 49).

These facts constrained the unionists. Progressively, the dominant current among them would redefine its strategy to embrace the idea of a sovereign state. Instead of focusing on the four districts and unity with Syria, Lebanese statehood would represent the first stage of a gradualist strategy towards Arab unity (Ibid. 49-50).

This gradualist strategy was appealing to segments of the Maronite milieu, that believed in the potentialities of “a mariage de raison based on pragmatism, interest, and especially, belief in the secular dimension of Arabism” (el-Khazen 1991, 17). Bechara el-Khoury epitomised this Maronite conviction in a Christian-Muslim partnership. Importantly, Khoury was the brother-in-law of Michel Chiha, whose intellectual influence permeated the constitution (Ibid. 30-31). Being close to him,

Khoury benefited from Chiha's ideas and financial magnanimity (Ziadeh 2006, 104).

Khoury was a Francophile and proponent of Lebanon's territorial integrity as the vast majority of the mandate era Maronite political class. Yet, he emphasized the need for robust constitutional institutions (Kiwan 1988, 142). In pursuit of this aim, he adopted a multilateral approach establishing channels of communication with Syria -in tandem with patriarch Arida-, Italy (Ibid, 142) and Great Britain. This pragmatist stance allowed him to address his message to a broader audience than his rival in the leadership of the Maronite community, Michel Eddé (el-Khazen 1991, 30).

Eddé represented the Maronite current that believed in a 'smaller' Lebanon, where the Christians would enjoy a clear-cut majority (Ibid, 29) under French protection. In the capacity of the President of mandate Lebanon, Eddé was accused, perhaps unjustifiably, for anti-Muslim bias trying to enforce a plan of fiscal rationalization that disproportionately targeted the scaling down of schools in Muslim areas (Zamir 1997, 82-83).

By 1937, Khoury increased his contacts with Syrian and Egyptian leaders (el-Khazen 1991, 34) openly advocating a pro-Arab foreign policy. In the same vein, editorials authored by prominent Christians such as Michel Chiha and Charles Helou increased calls for coexistence and partnership with the Muslims (Kiwan 1988, 143). This *air du temps* culminated in the committee (el-Khazen 1991, 36) of the National Pact (1938), that was joined by prominent Maronite, Sunni, and Shia figures such as Youssel el-Sawda, Omar Fakhoury and Zouheir Osseiran (Kiwan

1988, 143). This Maronite-Sunni rapprochement was facilitated by events taking place in Europe.

Divisions between the pro-Nazi Vichy regime and the Free French of General de Gaulle, during the Second World War, debilitated the French position in the colonies. The ailing capacities of France gave Britain an almost free hand to determine the course of events in Lebanon and Syria especially after the Free French reluctance to grant Lebanese independence. Yet, Churchill did not intend to humiliate the French but rather, appease the Arab nationalists through the delivery of a degree of sovereign statehood. In fact, he recognised the position of France in Syria as one of 'special privilege' (Solh 2004, 154). The Foreign Office had repeatedly stated support for a balanced approach according to which, the French mandate will be replaced with a treaty system that would bind independent Lebanon and Syria to Paris (Ibid.).

Nevertheless, the British policy in the Levant was derailed as Major-General Edward Louis Spears -Minister of the United Kingdom to Lebanon and Syria and Head of the Anglo-French liaison in the Levant-, adopted a fiercely anti-French stance (el-Khazen 1991, 20-21). As el-Khazen notes, "[Spears] was instrumental in hastening the process of change in favour of local nationalists and against the French, all the more so because [he] went beyond the confines of official British policy" (Ibid. 22).

In December 1941, patriarch Arida summoned "a national gathering" where he 'blessed' Lebanese independence (Ibid. 37) within the context of a multi-sectarian state. In June 1942, a meeting sponsored by Great Britain brought together the presidential aspirant Khoury, the Syrian President, Jamil Mardam, and the Egyptian Prime Minister

Mustafa Nahhas Pasha. During the meeting, the Arab leaders assented to the formation of an independent Lebanon under its current borders (Ibid. 18). In parallel, the leaders of Syria and Egypt consented in the election of Khoury in the presidency and the appointment of Riad el-Solh to the post of the Prime Minister (Ibid.)

The details of the National Pact were agreed during the summer 1943 between Khoury and Solh with external mediation (Ibid. 36). In November 1943, Lebanon acquired its political independence (Ibid. 38) and some years later its sovereignty as the remaining French troops redeployed (Ibid.).

One month earlier, Riad el-Solh enunciated in a ministerial speech (Ibid.) the main tenets of the National Pact. The arrangement was essentially shrouded in ambiguity. This was more conspicuously reflected in the parts of the verbal agreement that referred to the identity of the state that attempted to bridge the bifurcated struggles of the previous decades between Lebanese nationalism and pan-Arab unionism.

This dialectical battle of nation-building projects acquired a discursive anthropomorphic depiction that defined Lebanon as a country with an 'Arab face' (wajih 'arabi). Thus Lebanese identity resided in an ambivalent dualism that straddled a Christian western-oriented 'body' and a Muslim Arab face. The National Pact, therefore, sought to reconcile the two contrasting projects by camouflaging Maronite predilection for the Western civilisation amidst an assertive Arab society of states.

This 'Arab face' portrayal was complemented by Khoury's 'no East, no West' formula. For the eclectic physiognomy of Lebanon would be only preserved through the pursuit neutrality in the regional and international affairs. This implied that the Maronites should abandon their

traditional affiliation with France and the Muslims their dense contacts with the Arab world. Georges Naccache, editor of the francophone newspaper L'Orient, has famously described this formula as the 'two negations' –no West, no arabisation-, whose aggregate result rendered the birth of a nation highly improbable (L'Orient 1949).

In fact, the National Pact attempted to “transplant the mutasarrifiya Maronite-Druze partnership onto the Maronite-Sunni partnership of the 20th century Republic, thus maintaining the 19th century Maronite 'national' leadership and communal primacy” (Ziadeh 2006, 115). Therefore, the core traits of the previous power-sharing arrangements were preserved carrying all the merits and flaws embedded in it. In this vein, the allocation of offices according to ascriptive criteria was preserved albeit in a modified fashion: the presidency would continue to be the bastion of the Maronite community and symbol of its preeminence in the new state. Yet, the premiership of the Council of Ministers would be henceforth a Sunni preserve, thus confirming a practice that was first launched in 1937. Finally, the post of the Parliament's Speaker would be allotted (since 1947) to the largely marginalised Shia community.

The sacralisation of confessionalism would apply universally (the administrative, judicial and political realms). Consequently, the National Pact maintained the consociational devices of proportionality, and segmental autonomy, raising confessionalism to the building block upon which a democratic, nation-state should be edified. Therefore, it reaffirmed the validity of the 'ephemeral' Article 95 that expressed quintessentially the Lebanese oxymoron: integration should be achieved through the pillarisation of society along religious lines that translated into the proportional allocation of offices.

In the Parliament confessional representation “was established at a multiple of eleven (6 Christians and 5 Muslims)” which was a result of mediating efforts by General Spears and the Egyptian Prime Minister, Mustapha Nahhas (el-Khazen 1991, 37-38). Seats in the legislature were increased to 55 with 30 reserved for the various Christian denominations (Maronites, Greek Orthodox, Greek Catholics, Armenian Orthodox, Armenian Catholics) and 25 for the Muslims (Sunnis, Shias, Druzes) (Ibid. 38). This ratio was further applied in the state administration and in the so called class A offices e.g. Commander-in-Chief of the army, President of the Court of Cassation (Ziadeh 2006, 118).

Walid Phares rejects the claim that the National Pact epitomised a consociational agreement, crystallised in the dual ‘surrender’ of Christian nationalism and Muslim pan-Arabism (1995, 88). He justifies this critique on the historicity of the two nation-building programmes that rendered expectations of a hybrid identity fallacious (Ibid.). Farid el-Khazen argues that the architects of the National Pact, Bechara el-Khoury and Riad el-Solh, were not genuinely committed to transcending confessional differences. It merely represented the ‘best offer’ the two statesmen could get given the internal and regional circumstances (el-Khazen 1991, 38). Besides, the Shia elites were not included the process that led to the conclusion of an agreement that resembled merely a Maronite-Sunni understanding.

These shortcomings notwithstanding, the National Pact could provide the framework for the birth of a consociational confessional ethos. This ethical attitude resided in the sharing of power within a sovereign state that rejected forced assimilation (Ziadeh 2006, 2004). Significantly, inter-communal acknowledgement that power-sharing was

the only viable option towards peace sustained a significant degree of political freedom (Ibid.). This freedom rendered Lebanon a deviant case in the Middle East even if, as Clovis Maksoud argued, this was “a democracy by default” that he interpreted as “the free existence of anything more than one [communal groups]” (1966, 240).

However, being a product of its historical juncture, the National Pact was vulnerable to shifts in the pervading ideational and political climate. Its fragile foundations became evident as soon as the balance of power changed giving rise to a radical genre of Arabism associated with Nasser that “was identified with the bloc of Non-Aligned countries and Third World revolutionary movements” (el-Khazen 1991, 47-49). The embeddedness of Lebanon into the Arab system of states underscored that the National Pact could function only under conditions of external stability. For international sponsorship (Ziadeh 2006, 180) was cardinal not only in the conclusion of the agreement but also in the preservation of Lebanon’s independence.

Yet, if the National Pact failed to shape a coherent Lebanese identity, this was not only the fault of external intervention: rather, Maronites and Muslims were equally to be blamed. In fact, the Maronites embraced only hesitantly the Arab aspects of Lebanon. On the other hand, the Sunnis did not exert any effort to convince the other side that Arabism was not about a form of “domination at the disposal of Arab rulers who, in most instances, [were] rejected by their own people” (el-Khazen 1991, 62).

CHAPTER 3

THE RISE AND FALL OF THE FIRST REPUBLIC

The National Pact epitomises the birth of the Lebanese republic as a sovereign state grounded on the basis of an inter-communal partnership. In this vein, the prewar model of power-sharing in Lebanon incorporated all four consociational devices (Fakhoury 2007, 78) propounded by Lijphart as a means to preserve the country's confessional diversity.

Firstly, the Presidents of the First Republic ruled over grand coalitions that tended to include prominent sectarian leaders according to confessional, clannish, regional and political considerations (Dekmejian 1977, 253). During the period 1943-1958, the President wielded extensive executive authority within the framework of a quasi-presidential system (Rondot 1966, 135). This quasi-presidentialism was progressively moderated in favour of the Sunni Premier who emerged as "a recognized national leader, almost equal in importance" with the Maronite President (Harik 1985, 426).

Secondly, the Maronite-Sunni duumvirate enjoyed an unwritten mutual veto, given that either one of the two could effectively block an unacceptable decision (Ibid.). Specifically, both presidencies enjoyed a concurrent majority that forced them to deliberate jointly in pursuit of consensus (Fakhoury 2007, 78).

Thirdly, segmental autonomy guaranteed the unhindered management of communal affairs. This pertained to the personal status laws that regulated relations within each communal group and the administration of educational and religious institutions. In this vein, the

community mediated relations with the state, whilst the latter acquired a limited role in regulating its ties with the communal groups.

Fourthly, the rule of proportionality permeated most aspects of the consociational edifice. In the executive, ministerial posts were equally divided between the confessional groups (Dekmejian 1977, 254). The distribution of parliamentary seats was, on the other hand, was established on the basis of a 6:5 ratio in favour of the Christians according to the results of the 1932 census.

Moreover, the electoral system enshrined proportionality in the sectarian allocation of seats within each district in line with its demographic realities (Rondot 1966, 128). Proportionality was enforced also in the public sector, where “the communities would be equitably represented in government employment...”, but on a provisional basis (Ibid.129). It should be mentioned that Christians were overrepresented in the public sector during the first years of the First Republic. This reflected the political clout wielded by the Maronite elites but also the community’s advancement in the realm of education. However, this trend mutated into inter-confessional equity during the last years of the First Republic, despite the fact that the Christians remained overrepresented in the officer corps of the Lebanese army (Harik 1985, 426).

Hence, the First Republic has from a descriptive point of view, fulfilled the consociational requirements propounded by Lijphart. It is therefore useful to examine why the consociational scaffolding collapsed by looking at the background factors that buttressed its perpetuation throughout its prewar lifespan.

On the causes of the civil war

According to Lijphart, “consociational democracy tries to explain the probability that power-sharing will be instituted and maintained in divided societies in terms of nine background factors that may favor or hinder it” (2008, 51-52). In the Indian case, most of the factors were favourable and hence it was not surprising that consociational democracy performed relatively well. These factors include the absence of solid majorities, the absence or presence of large socioeconomic differences among the communal groups, a moderate number of segments, a multiple balance of power, a small population, external dangers, overarching loyalties, functional or territorial isolation, and traditions of compromise (Ibid.).

Among those factors/conditions, Lijphart deems “as the most serious obstacle in power-sharing” (Ibid. 51), the presence of solid majorities. The absence or presence of large socioeconomic disparities looms large as the second most important contributing factor to consociational consolidation. In this vein, it is important to investigate the state of these background factors in post-independence Lebanon.

-absence of solid majorities: Lebanon comprised seventeen communities, none of which constituted the absolute majority. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the French census of 1932 showed that the “Maronites comprised 28.8 percent of the population, [the] Sunnis 22.4 per cent and [the] Shiites 19.6 per cent” (Faour 2007, 909). On the morrow of the Lebanese independence, official estimates indicated a slight increase in the percentage of Maronites (from 28.8 per cent to 30.4 per cent) and some decrease in the percentages of Sunnis (from 22.4 per cent to 21.3 per cent) and Shiites (from 19.6 percent to 19.3 per cent)” (Ibid.). During the years of the First Republic, significant demographic

changes occurred due to the higher fertility rate in the Muslim segment (Shia 3.8 percent, Sunnis 2.8 percent, Catholics 2.0 percent). In addition, migration impacted also upon the differential growth of Lebanon's communities. In this vein, it is assumed that the real differences might have been larger given the Maronites were more likely to migrate because of their "better socio-economic circumstances on average" (Ibid. 910-911). The differential demographic growth notwithstanding, these changes did not produce overwhelming majorities. However, they did actually result in a perceived unfair Christian overrepresentation in the state and its institutions. For Lijphart, the "inflexible institutionalization" of Lebanese consociationalism according to the 1932 census was the key reason for the demise of the First Republic (1977, 149).

-large socioeconomic differences: The First Lebanese Republic was indeed permeated by socioeconomic gaps that became pronounced during the 60s. Significantly, Lebanon's *laissez faire* culture limited state intervention, leaving the provision of welfare to the community and its inter-segmental elites. In the economic realm, this liberal approach on the role of the state ushered in the entrenchment of a commercial/financial oligarchy that controlled most sectors of the economy and most importantly the industrial and agricultural sectors (Trabulsi 2007, 157). Crucially, on the eve of the civil war, the majority of the Lebanese held no more than 12-15 percent of national income (Ibid. 161).

These socioeconomic discrepancies have most fatally impacted the long marginalised Shia community. Farsoun explains that this longstanding marginalisation was conducive to a cleavage overlap between confession and class nurturing perceptions of a Shia sect-class (1988, 119). In this vein, Arend Lijphart has warned that when the

socioeconomic cleavage tend to coincide with the religious one, one of the groups is bound to feel resentment over its inferior status and its unjustly meager share of material rewards (1977, 75).

The case of the Shia community in post-independence Lebanon captures this adverse state of affairs. By any reasonable measure “the Shi’is fared poorly whether their status might be measured relative to other Lebanese sects or in absolute terms. They earned less, had a lower standard of literacy, lived in the poorest regions, toiled more often than not as unskilled wage earners or farmer, and paid most dearly in blood for the enduring violence that has plagued Lebanon for more than a decade” (Norton 1986, 158). In addition, the community was underrepresented in bureaucratic appointments and the officer corps, as well as in business and commerce (Ibid.). These sectarian disparities were reproduced in the realm of education: public schools served principally the Muslim population of Lebanon, -and notably the Shia (Farsoun 1988, 108)- as Christians tended to prefer private institutions at a higher rate.

Importantly, economic growth during the 60s triggered a process of modernisation that rendered Lebanon a precarious republic (Hudson 1968). This modernisation process was most explicitly crystallised in the empowerment, demographic growth, urbanisation and increasing social mobilisation of the Shia. By the 70s, the Shia have massively relocated to Beirut, essentially transforming themselves from an eminently rural community into urban dwellers (Traboulsi 2007, 161-162). These newcomers have settled in the outskirts of the capital, giving rise to what deplorably became known as Beirut’s ‘poverty belt’ that, apart from its new residents, included a number of Palestinian refugee camps (Ibid. 162).

Efforts to redress these disparities were launched by the early 60s under the auspices of President Fouad Chehab (1958-1964). In pursuit of a more equal society, Chehab introduced a 'fifty-fifty' distribution of posts in the public sector, encouraged public works and endorsed a policy of planned development in the poor areas of South Lebanon (Salibi 1966, 218-221). Nevertheless, regional income disparities persisted as the annual per capita revenue in Beirut was estimated at \$803, whilst it reached only \$151 in the area of South Lebanon (Traboulsi 2007, 161).

Hanf argues that in terms of class stratification Christians and Muslims exhibited almost the same patterns (1993, 105). Civil servants and employees in the public sector were more or less evenly divided, whilst among industrial workers 45 percent were Christians and 55 percent Muslims of whom two-thirds were Shia (Ibid.). On a similar note, Harik indicated that, according to the level of inequality, prewar Lebanon suffered from moderate inequality (1985, 416-417) that did not necessarily imply a sectarian or class struggle.

These data notwithstanding, a pervasive feeling of deprivation was strongly felt among the Shia. This sentiment of Shia deprivation was largely articulated by the Shia scholar Imam Musa al-Sadr, who, in his various petitions to the state called for social justice and fairness in the realms of development and the management of the affairs of the state (Halawi 1992). Significantly, social mobilisation under the leadership of Sayyid al-Sadr reverberated this feeling of Shia alienation, catalytically influencing the community's self-perception within the state of Lebanon.

-moderate number of segments: Lebanon was divided into two major segments: Christians and Muslims. Each segment was subsequently subdivided in 17 denominations e.g. Greek Orthodox, Druze, Shia. This

excessive fragmentation has undeniably impaired processes of cabinet formation and distribution of portfolios.

On the other hand, the *multiple balance of power* epitomised in the minority status of all communities mitigated fears of assimilation and control. In addition, the *population* of Lebanon remained relatively small. Numbering around 3 million inhabitants, Lebanon figured among the smallest countries within the Arab League and Lijphart's list of iconic consociational cases (The Netherlands, Belgium, Malaysia, Austria and Switzerland). However, Lebanon's small population had a rather opaque effect. As mentioned above, the process of cabinet formation was complex, encompassing an intricate web of sectarian, regional and political interests. Moreover, the socialisation of the elites was equally ambiguous as reflected in intra- and inter-sectarian antagonisms.

-functional isolation: Functional isolation was a key trait of the post-independence power-sharing formula. As mentioned, the National Pact guaranteed autonomy in the management of cultural and educational affairs. Still, the Lebanese communities were free to adjudicate on matters of personal status with the sole exception of the Shia community. The establishment of the Supreme Shia Islamic Council in 1967 would henceforth permit the Shia community to independently manage its religious affairs, endowments and institutions (Halawi 1992, 139).

-tradition of compromise: The Lebanese elites have been immersed in traditions of compromise since the years of the *mutasarrifiyya*. The mandate era political institutions have contributed in launching a learning process of bargaining and deliberation among the members of the political class. The National Pact was partially the end result of this process. However, the legacy of this tradition reached its limits as the

Lebanese polity became progressively engulfed by the effects of the Arab-Israeli conflict that exacerbated relations within and across the communal pillars.

-external dangers: Lijphart praises the role of external threats in forging internal unity (2008, 52). In the case of India, the anticolonial struggle against the British provided the indispensable mobilisational force in pursuit of independence. In a similar vein, the anti-French struggle in Lebanon allowed Maronite and Sunni elites to coalesce around the cause of Lebanese sovereignty.

Yet, as Tamirace Fakhoury observes “some favorable conditions in Lebanon were not constant” (2007, 84). For instance, France was broadly perceived as the external threat that ushered in the consociational settlement of the National Pact (McGarry 2008, 693). However, this did not imply that this shared perception of threat would be reproduced in the long-term. Significantly, the National Pact was the outcome of particular historic conditions that pertained to the Second World War, the declining position of France and the burgeoning wave of decolonisation. Farid el-Khazen remarks that the National Pact was based on two faulty assumptions: “an internal one based on the belief that elite-consensus reflected grassroots support; and an external one derived from the assumption that the balance-of-power in the region would remain unchanged in the sense that it will always reflect the first generation of conservative pro-Western Arab nationalists” (1991, 39). This implied that the legitimacy of the state rested on weak foundations that could be undermined as soon as regional developments challenged its main tenets. Hence, the ‘no East, no West’ formula-warning uttered by the architects of the National Pact implicitly acknowledged this lack of legitimacy.

-overarching allegiances: Lijphart stresses the role of overarching loyalties in moderating the effects of particularistic loyalties (2008, 52). In the case of India, a fledgling nationalism attenuated the impact of sub-statal particularities thus forging an overarching devotion to the Indian state. In post-independence Lebanon instead, nationalism was not a potent ideological force. Importantly, the National Pact opted for a fusion of sectarian nationalisms as crystallised in the struggle between Maronite Lebanonism and Muslim Arabism. The Arab face formula epitomised this attempted fusion of competing visions structured around a confessional system.

In contrast to this attempted fusion, the post-independence consociational formula sacralised the devices of segmental autonomy and confessional representation as the appropriate means to nation-building. Michael Weiss indicates that “the differential distribution of power and influence in political institutions along sectarian lines (political sectarianism)” coupled with the theory and practice of personal status law were instrumental in delineating sectarian norms, boundaries, and modes of identification (sectarian affect)” (2010, 98). Thus, the community emerged as the interposing layer in relations between state and society. Clannish, tribal and regional ties (communal *asabiya*) formed the basis of a system of structured elite predominance grounded on clientelist networks of patronage. As Ghassane Salamé notes “th[e] process of nation-building could not automatically follow the establishment of the modern state”. A “period of adaptation to the political framework and the reorientation of political socialisation to a state-dominated political culture was needed” (1986,1). It should be noted though, that the

confessional edifice did manage to provide political stability for an extensive period of time.

Hence, prewar Lebanon fared descriptively well in the background factors related to the population, the solid majorities, and the multiple balance of power. However, socioeconomic disparities had a deleterious effect as long as they overlapped with the confessional cleavage, creating perceptions of sectarian deprivation. Moreover, the identity-related factors (external threats, overarching loyalties) were conducive to impairing the consociational formula as external turmoil exacerbated and reproduced communal differences.

This was manifested in the 1958 crisis, when a dispute over Lebanon's external alignment escalated into a brief civil war. Specifically, the meteoric rise of Nasser after the Suez crisis engendered a mounting regional polarisation pitting the pro-Western conservative Arab kingdoms against the forces of pan-Arabism. In Lebanon, this regional polarisation exacerbated sectarian rivalries as President Chamoun decided to align Lebanon with the USA. For Chamoun, Nasser presented a graver threat than the US-sponsored Baghdad pact (Baroudi 2006, 11). On the contrary, the majority of Muslim leaders and the Maronite patriarch demanded that the President changed his course, aligning Lebanon with Nasser and the nascent United Arab Republic (Ibid. 12). This foreign policy dissonance was accentuated by Chamoun's effort to prolong his mandate by amending the constitution without prior consultation with the political elites of Lebanon.

The ensuing brief civil war demonstrated how the politicisation of confessional identities under conditions of external instability could translate into violence. Whilst the Maronite patriarch's opposition to the

Baghdad pact attenuated the sectarian connotations of the clashes, its essence underlined strong Muslim objections on the domestic order. Nasserism was thus instrumentalised and re-interpreted as an 'oppositional doctrine' against a 'Christian Lebanon' and a yearning for a 'Sunni Arab order' (Kanaan 2005, 201). Thus Nasserism served as an ideological platform that offered access for the Lebanese Sunni to a 'wider Sunni community' (Ibid.). On the other hand, the Maronite masses perceived the rise of Nasserism as a threat to Lebanese sovereignty (Ibid. 244). The Sunni mythology embedded in this rekindling of Arabism negated the essence of Lebanese nationalism associated with political Maronitism and the community's special status in the country (Ibid.). The crisis ended with US-Egyptian mediation that engineered the election of Fouad Chehab to the presidency of Lebanon in line with a foreign policy of neutrality.

The 1958 crisis allows us to extract some inferences regarding the consociational formula during the period 1943-1958. Firstly, dissonance in the perception of external threats impacted upon the relations among the subcultures. In fact, it revealed that decision by consensus was not the case in prewar Lebanon. As Zamir admits, despite his reformist agenda, Chamoun tried to increase presidential powers "as well as Maronite influence over the state institutions, claiming that this was necessary to counter the growing threat of the pan-Arabist Nasserism" (1999 114-115). His subsequent interference in the 1957 parliamentary elections and the aborted effort to extend his mandate increased inter-confessional suspicions. Secondly, stability in Lebanon was extremely dependent on a low load on the decision-making apparatus. As Lijphart admits in his 1968 article, stability in Lebanon was becoming precarious as the

decision-making apparatus became inflated with controversial matters (218-219). Thirdly, internal political cohesion among the subcultures was not to be taken for granted. In the case of the Maronites, the temporal and religious division between the Maronite patriarch and the President was coupled with intra-Maronite regional and clannish rivalries as manifested in the Mizyarra massacre (Baroudi 2006, 16). Moreover, structured elite predominance proved spurious as the Lebanese Sunni elites struggled to antagonise Nasser's overwhelming popularity as "hero" and "zaim" (sectarian boss) (Kanaan 2005, 201). This probably implied that the Sunni elites were falling short of effectively articulating the community's interests at the time.

The Chehab administration attempted to correct some of the flaws related to confessionalism by redressing injustices in the system. In this vein, he "attempted to reform the political and economic systems shaped by the previous two presidents by bypassing the politicians, the government, and Parliament, and relying instead on the army, the intelligence services, and the technocrats" (Zamir 1999, 115-116). The US-Egyptian understanding on the need of Lebanese neutrality allowed Chehab to focus on the domestic arena. He thus attempted to partially eliminate social, economic and regional distortions derived from the effects of uneven development. As mentioned above, Chehab encouraged a series of public investments in the poor Shia areas of the South, established a fifty-fifty allocation of offices in the public sector (Salibi 1966, 218-221) and extended the powers of the Sunni Prime Minister (Zamir 1999 116). Yet, his heavy reliance on the security apparatus that aimed at preventing dissenting voices and at countering the mounting Palestinian militancy provoked counter-reactions by rightist and leftist

forces alike. Therefore, Fouad Chehab, whilst being a pragmatist, in a sense snubbed democratic procedures as reflected in patterns of bargaining and immobility (Barak 2003, 310) embedded in Lebanon's confessional politics.

Chehab's successors in the presidency (Helou and Franjeh) were not able to grapple with the mounting socioeconomic and political problems. The changing political and ideological context that followed the Arab defeat in the 1967 demonstrated the vulnerabilities of a state generally described as weak (Barak 2003). This weakness was conspicuously reflected in the signing of the Cairo Accord (1969) and the Melkart Agreement (1973). These treaties entitled the Palestinian guerillas residing in Lebanon to "take part in the Palestinian revolution through armed struggle" as a new front against the state of Israel. The rationale behind the two treaties echoed an alleged commonality of interest between Lebanon, the Palestinian revolution and all Arabs. The two treaties essentially confirmed the extraterritoriality of the refugee camps and the neutralisation of the areas of South Lebanon (Picard 1992, 86). In fact, a new kind of radical Arabism (el-Khazen 1991) was surfacing whose content was identified with the Palestinian struggle, effectively replacing Nasser's pan-Arab discourse of the 50s and 60s. Crucially, the two agreements facilitated the progressive militarisation of the political and social fields through the instrumentalisation of the Palestinian resistance

The internalisation of the external environment and the instrumentalisation of the Palestinian factor led to a replication of the patterns observed in the 1958 crisis. Firstly, the Lebanese decision-making apparatus became loaded with an item that caused ontological

controversies. Thus, demands for radical reform in the political and economic realm propounded by the Lebanese National Movement –a coalition of Marxist and leftist organisations-, and support for the Palestinian resistance touched upon the neutrality principle of the National Pact. Secondly, the legalisation of the Palestinian resistance mirrored another case of divergent threat perceptions. For the Maronites, the Palestinian armed struggle could progressively shift the political balance of power in the country. Besides, the presence of large numbers of Palestinian refugees had already stirred Christian sensitivities. Thirdly, structured elite predominance melted away in view of the Palestinian cause. For instance, the Sunni conservative elite had difficulties in containing its ‘street’. El-Khazen notes that the Sunni predicament in the post-independence Lebanon was epitomised in the dearth of Lebanese Sunni leaders of Solh’s caliber that could effectively antagonise their Arab counterparts in the mobilisation of the Arab ‘street’ (1991, 50). Thus, on the eve of the civil war, the Sunni elites were oscillating between losing their vested interests in the system (Eisenlohr 2008, 21-22) and losing their followers. Moreover, the Shia mobilisation led to the progressive abandonment of the community’s zuama. The Shia masses felt largely excluded from an ‘elite cartel’ that monopolised “the positions and resources allotted” in the state (Barak 2003, 312). Therefore, many Shia joined the ranks of Leftist parties and organisations with the Lebanese Communist Party being the main conduit of Shia discontent (Ibid. xiii).

The internalisation of the regional state of affairs was reflected in the discourse of the Druze leader Kamal Jumblatt, -leader of the PSP and the National Movement-. In this vein, Jumblatt appropriated the Arabism

of the 70s by re-articulating it into the context of Lebanon. As he wrote in his memoirs, the isolationists – identified mainly with the Maronite elite – “seek to isolate Lebanon, to cut it off morally, politically, socially, and perhaps even nationally from the Arab world”. In his view, “only a Christian, or rather Maronite, Lebanese nationality exists... This Maronite nationalism..., was one day bound to come into conflict with an Arab nationalism legitimized by the history of the country, a nationalism which is a blend of Lebanese patriotism and Arabism” (1982 , 40). Interestingly, this discourse echoes the Druze historical narrative that viewed the Maronites as the old foes in the struggle for domination in the Ottoman province of Mount Lebanon (Chalabi 2006, 166). Within the context of the 70s, this discourse was re-articulated to express a teleological way of thinking that viewed the conflict against political Maronitism as inevitable.

The Palestinian factor was important in militarising and hence catalysing the conflict (el-Khazen 2000, 108). The PLO, unlike Nasser in the post-1958 period, was eager to pursue its goals with determination. The 1967 Arab defeat and the 1973 October War disillusioned the Palestinian movement that was henceforth eager to pursue its struggle with its own forces. In this vein, the Cairo Agreement, sponsored by Egypt as a token of Arab solidarity, legitimized the PLO’s armed struggle, fatally opening Lebanon to the destabilising effects of the inter-Arab and Arab-Israeli politics (Ibid.). Yet, this is not to deny the structural flaws of the consociational system. On the contrary, it was this longstanding accumulation of domestic problems that in the presence of an external catalyst led to the protracted civil war.

Civil war, preferences and the state

The civil war presented a window of opportunity for the warring factions to achieve their goals (Rowayeb 2014, 417). In this vein, the social and political struggles of the previous era degenerated into violence as the preferred means to preserve or alter the status quo. Yet, these goals were not static: instead they changed in accordance to the developments in the military field.

In the Maronite milieu, the civil war ushered in a reconfiguration in the constellation of power. This re-configuration reflected an agonising process of soul searching over the community's place in the state. As Phares indicates "an ideological civil war" took place within the Christian segment (1995, 124). The resulting divisions mirrored the political splits of the 30s between the proponents of an economically viable and pluralist Greater Lebanon and supporters of an ethnically homogenous Christian statelet. In fact, the Maronites opted for a self-defeating strategy. In 1976, President Franjeh invited Syrian troops to prevent Maronite annihilation from the forces of the National Movement. This decision had far-reaching consequences for it concomitantly "changed the nature of war, led to Israeli and US involvement in Lebanon, and caused a deep rift within the Maronite community" (Zamir 1999, 119-120).

A moderate strand within the Maronite segment propounded reconciliation with the National Movement, and reconstruction with international support. This strategy of internationalisation was thought to crucially limit the Syrian influence in Lebanon (Ibid. 120) and eventually usher in a reformed power-sharing scheme. The most prominent advocate of this moderate strand was President Sarkis (1976-1982), who in a sense incarnated the Chehabist legacy of multi-communal pragmatism.

Suleiman Franjeh represented the Maronite strand that was in close cooperation with Syria. The Syrian intervention has crucially saved him the position of the President whilst the Maronites escaped from a humiliating defeat at the hands of the Palestinians and their Lebanese allies (Ibid.).

Moreover, a radical current of Christian nationalism championed a more militant strategy. This rightist strand developed an ideology of Maronitism “which gradually produced an ethnic claim” (Phares 1995, 124) that transcended the moderately conservative ideas of the older generation of Maronite leaders such as Camille Chamoun and Pierre Gemayel. Adopting an activist approach, this faction progressively distanced itself from the old sectarian leaders that formed the core of the National Lebanese Front, the umbrella organisation of the main Maronite political parties –headed by the old generation of Maronite politicians-.

The Lebanese Forces which were incubated within the framework of the Phalanges Libanaises (Kataeb), -the political party that voiced the concerns and aspirations of the Maronite ‘street’ (Snider 1984)- articulated this Maronite determination for a radical solution to the Lebanese question.

The so called ‘Historical Document’ issued by the Lebanese Front called for a federal solution as the most appropriate formula for a *national* community such as the Christians (Phares 1995, 130). This text reflected the growing hegemony of the militias, and more specifically, of the Lebanese Forces over the older generation of the sectarian leaders that formed the nucleus of the Lebanese Front.

Bashir Gemayel, leader of the Lebanese Forces, -and son of Pierre Gemayel, founder of the Phalanges- incarnated this Maronite

determination. “Bashir surrounded himself with a new generation of paramilitary peers, technocrats, and middle-class adventurers, who had risen with him in the Lebanese Forces. This represented a rupture with the classical Christian -especially Maronite-pattern of dynastical elite recruitment” (Bahout 2016). In Gemayel’s view Lebanon needed a strong Maronite president to restore order in the country. His election to the presidency on August 23rd 1982 would elicit inter-confessional controversies. Crucially, the election of Bashir Gemayel exemplified the ‘perennial’ problématique surrounding the role of the president in Lebanon, who straddles a consensus figure and a confessional representative (Hanf 1993, 268). This ambivalence, if not outright opposition, towards Gemayel was accentuated from his collaboration and tactical alliance with Israel (Nisan 2002, 215, Schulze 1998) that aimed at prevailing over the National Movement, the PLO and Syria.

The assassination of Bashir Gemayel weeks later after his controversial election caused disillusionment to the Lebanese Front. Gradually, the rightist strand of the Maronite elite started to enunciate political programmes that espoused different forms of territorial autonomy such as decentralization (Phalanges and the Chamounists), federation (Lebanese Forces), and confederation and in some cases, partition (Ibid. 132). In fact, most of the proposed schemes indicated an implicit acknowledgement of defeat and retreat to the safety of the Christian heartland.

General Michel Aoun, by contrast, expressed a distinct form of trans-communal Maronite nationalism that primarily targeted the Syrian presence in the country (Sirriyeh 1998, 62). Michel Aoun served as acting Head of a military government (1988-1990) appointed by the outgoing

President Gemayel (1982-1988) that ruled over the Christian part of Beirut and some areas of the Christian heartland in the area of Mount Lebanon. According to Sarkis Naoum, Aoun nursed “a national project” or a vision of a liberated Lebanon with the army forming the backbone of the nation’s unity (cited in el-Husseini 2012, 132-133). This vision was epitomised in the ‘war of liberation’ against the Syrian army and the subsequent intra-Maronite civil war against the cantons controlled by the Lebanese Forces.

The Shia entered the fray of the civil war, intending to amend system perceived as unfair. Like the Maronites, the Lebanese Shia did not represent a unified block. In fact, Shia joined the ranks of various parties - some even joined Christian parties- (Shanahan 2005, 89-93) during the first years of the civil war. The civil war had a grave impact upon the political and military development of the community. As aforementioned, the bulk of the Shia sought political representation via the secular parties of the Left. For instance, Shia membership in the Lebanese Communist Party superseded that of any other community (Eisenlohr 2008, xiii).

The establishment of the Movement of the Deprived (*harakat al-mahrumin*) as “a mass protest movement” (Shanahan 2005, 107) in 1974, and its military wing, Amal (Brigades of Lebanese Resistance) by Sayyid Musa al-Sadr (Eisenlohr 2008, 24), channeled membership towards a purely Shia organisation. Importantly, three events accelerated Shia membership in the ranks of Amal: firstly, the Israeli invasion of 1978 during which, the Shia of South Lebanon incurred grave losses. Secondly, the disappearance of Imam Musa al-Sadr during an official visit to Libya triggered the Shia religious imagery that drew parallels with the

occultation of the Twelfth Imam. Thirdly, the Iranian revolution in 1979 provided a successful example of a Shia opposition movement fighting against an unjust government (Shanahan 2005, 108).

However, opposition to the ancien régime did not imply full agreement with the National Movement. In fact, this was limited to the abrogation of political confessionalism. Yet, in contrast to the absolute secularisation thesis propounded by the National Movement, Sayyid al-Sadr defended the role of religion in the public sphere. Within this context, Sadr envisioned that coexistence would be better achieved through public piety (Eisenlohr 2008. 27) in a society of true believers.

According to this line of reasoning, it was not the consociational system -and its Lebanese variant confessionalism- that would facilitate understanding and symbiosis. Instead, coexistence would be enhanced by the amalgam of a number of pious communities that would utterly form the foundations of an ethical nation devoid of ascriptive criteria of belonging. Yet, and this reveals the ambiguities embedded in the Sayyid's discourse, social justice would be dispensed firstly, through the equal redistribution of seats between Christians and Muslims in the parliament and secondly, through administrative reform that would enhance access to public goods and services (Ibid. 31). Hence, confessionalism would be moderated but not fully rejected.

Sheikh Muhammad Mahdi Shamseddine, who was Sadr's successor in the Higher Shia Islamic Council and intellectually close to Amal, believed that the abolition of political sectarianism shall be a long-term objective (Ibid. 35-36). Whilst not rejecting the establishment of an Islamic State out of hand, he recognised that the confessional realities of Lebanon rendered this probability remote. Within this context, he

developed a system of pluralist ('adadiyya) democracy based on the principle of consultation and advocated return to the true souls of Christianity and Islam (Mallat 1988, 19).

Under the temporal leadership of Nabih Berri, the movement continued to champion the abolition of political sectarianism, albeit not couched in the intellectual sophistication of Sadr. Moreover, Amal championed the restoration of security in South Lebanon, as its Shia population suffered heavily from the Palestinian guerilla war and the Israeli occupation. This partially explains Amal's pro-Syrian posture as security provider for the embattled areas of South Lebanon. The pro-Syrian posture of the party was eminently unfolded in the fierce clashes against the Palestinians in West Beirut, and later in the battle against Hizbullah. The latter reflected an intra-Shia struggle for hegemony but also a latent Iranian-Syrian competition by proxy (Saouli 2014, 112).

Amal rejected any federalist or confederalist schemes, speaking in favour of a unitary state (Norton 1984, 191). In a bid to portray Amal as a responsible stakeholder, Nabih Berri participated in various Maronite projects such as the 1982 Salvation Committee (Eisenlohr 2008, 107) and the Syrian-sponsored Tripartite Accord concluded between Berri, the Druze leader, Walid Jumblatt, and the Maronite Elie Hobeika – elected commander of the Lebanese Forces - that sought to reform the system and legitimise the Syrian presence in Lebanon.

Hizbullah represented the second pole within the Shia community. Its evolution was tightly interwoven with developments during the civil war and the conflict's repercussions on the Shia community in South Lebanon and the Bekaa valley. Thus members of the movement participated in the Islamic Resistance in Lebanon (IRL) that was founded

in 1982 (Daher 2011, 102) as a reaction to the Israeli invasion of South Lebanon. Hizbullah was formally established in 1984 to convey institutional and mobilisational support to the IRL beyond the bounds of the military arena (Ibid.).

Similar to Amal, Hizbullah sprang out of the Shia 'cultural environment' (Saouli 2014, 93) sharing and internalising the woes of this particular community. In contrast to Amal, Hizbullah would employ a universal, transnational discourse that laid emphasis on the *umma*, as opposed to Amal's Lebanese/ Arab nuances (Saouli 2011, 931). The period 1984-1989 were crucial for the development of the organisation as it tried to consolidate its position within the Shia community and wage its resistance war against Israel and its Maronite allies. From an ideological point of view, Hizbullah drew inspiration from the Islamic model of *wilaya al-faqih* (rule of the Jurist-Theologian) propounded by the Khomeinist strand of political Shiism and the ideas of Ayatollah Muhammad Hussein Fadlallah on the struggle for liberation, inter-communal relations and the role of Islam (Saouli 2014).

Within this context, the 1985 Open Letter -Hizbullah's manifesto- sets the tone, and spells the contours of Hizbullah's worldview for, among others, the ideal political system. The Open Letter called openly for the establishment of an Islamic State or an Islamic Republic. This reflected Fadlallah's universalist thought that viewed Islam as state (*dawla* in Arabic) and *daw'a* (mission) -the first step towards the establishment of the entity of Islam- (Ibid. 109-110). In the Open Letter, the confessional system is equated to political Maronitism and thus to the 'oppressors'. Therefore, it should be replaced with an Islamic order that would ultimately herald the advent of an era of justice (Alagha 2011, 17).

In this order, Christians would enjoy social and religious freedoms but no political freedoms (Ibid.).

The Open Letter continues by indicating that the Islamic order would not be imposed by force as there is no compulsion in religion and in convictions on political systems (Ibid. 44). The Islamic model of governance would be chosen “on the basis of direct and free exercise by the populace...” (Ibid. 45). As Saad-Ghorayeb explains, “the Islamic principle of non-compulsion and the party’s conceptualisation of justice” necessitates taking into consideration the constraint posed by Lebanon’s multi-confessional fabric (2002, 49). This reflects Fadlallah’s intellectual influence on the movement’s political world vision as crystallised in the conditioned transformation of Lebanon into an Islamic State (Saouli 2014, 111). The intra-Shia war against Amal (1987-1988) and the ratification of the Taif Agreement revealed the limits of this enterprise.

The Taif ‘moment’

The civil war has been entering its fourteenth year in 1989. A conflict that started as a battle between the forces of stasis and change had in due time degenerated in all-out war. By 1989, the country was divided across a patchwork of mini-states. The demarcation line in down town Beirut epitomised the sectarian and intra-sectarian cleavages ravaging Lebanon. A Christian military government ruled the eastern part of the capital along a Muslim administration reigning over West Beirut.

In fact, both administrations had nominal control over their constituencies. In East Beirut, an intra-Maronite clash echoed the different perceptions upheld by the Lebanese Forces and the acting Prime Minister, Michel Aoun. In the western part, intra-Shia clashes were

entangled with regional rivalries between Syria and Iran. Beyond Beirut, the patterns mirrored the multi-faceted character of the conflict: Christians against Muslims, Christians against Christians, Muslims against Muslims, rightists against leftists, Syrians against Palestinians, Syrians against Israelis, and Palestinians against Israelis.

Previous efforts to reach a compromise settlement in 1976, 1983, 1985 failed, because one or the other side rejected the proposed deal as inappropriate, deemed the mediator (namely Syria) partial or firmly believed that victory was possible. In light of the previous unsuccessful attempts, it is useful to ask why the warring parties decided to reach a settlement by autumn 1989.

The juncture

Cappoccia and Kelemen (2007) define as a critical juncture the short period of time “during which there is a substantially heightened probability that agents’ choices will affect the outcome of interest” (2007, 348). Yet, as Soifer observes, this conceptualisation falls short to explain why some moments are permeated by loose structural constraints, high chances of contingency and pronounced fluidity (2012, 1574). In this vein, Soifer proposes a different definition that places the emphasis on the criticality of the moment. According to him, critical junctures comprise a set of permissive and productive conditions that explain why some junctures does produce divergence.

“Permissive conditions can be defined as those factors or conditions that *change the underlying context to increase the causal power of agency or contingency and thus the prospects for divergence*. The mechanisms of reproduction of the previous critical juncture are undermined, and this

creates a new context in which divergence from the previous stable pattern can emerge” (Ibid. 1574). Significantly, permissive conditions mark the duration of the juncture, setting the temporal limits of a respective window of opportunity (Ibid.).

In the presence of the permissive conditions, productive conditions determine the outcome that emerges from the critical juncture. Nevertheless, productive conditions do not define the limits of the critical juncture. They operate within the possibility space bounded by the permissive conditions. Productive conditions are insufficient to produce divergence in the absence of the permissive conditions that loosen the constraints of structure and make divergence possible (Ibid. 1575).

Within this context, the Taif Agreement can be viewed as the product of a particular temporality. The confluence of a set of permissive and productive conditions related to the domestic arena and the developments on the regional and the international level created a framework conducive to the resulting peace settlement.

Permissive conditions

The Arab League initiative that ushered in the signing of the Taif Accord was tightly interwoven with developments in the regional balance of power. Shifts in regional and international alliances created the scope conditions for a substantial change in the Lebanese civil war. These were facilitated by the linkage policies Lebanese actors upheld with regional powers such as Syria, Iran, Saudi Arabia and the US (Kerr 2005).

Firstly, the Iran-Iraq has ended without a clear victor. The two countries have fought a relentless war without any tangible results though. In Iran, the end of the war was followed by a transitional period

as new figures joined the hierarchy of power. This change was crystallised in an effort to mend fences on the regional level. In June 1989, Grand Ayatollah Khomeini died. The victory of the former Iranian president Hashemi Rafsanjani against the hardliners brought the moderate faction into power which sought to ameliorate relations with Washington and turn Hizbullah to “a party like the rest” (Daher 2014, 117).

Secondly, Syria was interested in thwarting Iraqi influence in Lebanon as part of the broader contest for inter-Arab primacy. Despite the fact that the Syrian-Iranian axis was as robust as ever, Damascus tried to make overtures to the US as evidenced by its stance on the release of foreign hostages kept by Hizbullah (Goodarzi 2006, 276). The cooling of relations with the USSR produced a gradual reformulation of Syrian foreign policy which was translated into greater reliance on Iran and its Lebanese and Palestinian proxies (Ibid. 210). The collapse of the USSR, moreover, produced a thaw with the western camp (Kerr 2005, 153).

Thirdly, Saddam Hussein was eager to project Iraqi power in the Middle Eastern regional system and the inter-Arab affairs. Despite his fruitless war against Iran, Saddam nurtured hegemonic ambitions that primarily targeted the Syrian-Iranian axis. Iraqi involvement in the Lebanese war through the provision of arms to General Aoun in the latter’s fight against Syria in Beirut only confirmed this ambition (Ibid. 2006, 287). On January 1989, the Council of Ministers of the Arab League appointed a commission on the Lebanese crisis, whose “moving force” was Iraq (Hanf 1993, 572). The rationale behind this move dwelt in Saddam’s calculations that by regionalising the Lebanese imbroglio, he could credibly undermine Syrian influence in Lebanon.

Fourthly, US interests dictated that the Lebanese file closed as it was “spreading tension throughout the region” (Kerr 2005, 169). Thus the US administration was keen on reaching out to Syria given its importance on the regional level (Ibid.). This became evident one year later when Syria joined the US-led expedition against the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in exchange of a preponderant Syrian role in postwar Lebanon.

Finally, Saudi Arabia wanted to curb Syrian hegemony in Lebanon, by positioning itself as the second power in the local hierarchy, effectively boosting its credentials as mediator and champion of the Sunni cause in Lebanon which “had been hijacked by Syria during the war” (Ibid.).

Productive conditions

As Timothy Sisk explains, “fears of the costs of failure to conciliate” often encourages key protagonists in ethnic conflicts to enter into negotiations and abide by settlements that place power-sharing at its epicentre (2013, 12). This underlying fear lies beneath power-sharing agreements as the preferred option to subjugation or involuntary expulsion (Ibid.). In fact, the Lebanese civil war in its various phases, has witnessed involuntary expulsions (Maronites from the Shouf, Shia from the South), massacres (e.g. Sabra and Shatila) and subjugation (e.g. Lebanese Forces against rival Maronite militias).

It could be therefore inferred that the civil war has reached a mutual hurting stalemate (Kerr 2005, 153). As Theodor Hanf eloquently explains “by mid-1990, Lebanon had disintegrated into a number of small territories controlled by different politico-military forces, some in condominium with Syria or Israel, and all with daggers drawn with every

neighbouring territory” (1993, 604). Apart from the two rival governments in Beirut, the intra-Shia fighting between Amal and Hizbullah has cost the lives of at least three thousand Lebanese Shias (Eisenlohr 2008, 115). Aoun’s war of liberation against Syria and the intra-Maronite antagonism that followed over the acceptance of the Taif Agreement escalated to an all-out war. By mid-August 1989 –after four months of hostilities between the remnants of the Lebanese army loyal to Aoun and the Syrian army- 1000 people perished, whilst many more incurred injuries (Hanf 1993, 581). The heavy toll provoked mixed reactions within the Maronite community: the Maronite patriarch condemned Aoun’s intransigence advocating a swift settlement, whilst pro-Aoun protestors supported the continuation of the war (Ibid. 605). By January 1990, a new round of hostilities erupted pitting the General’s army against the Lebanese Forces, which in the meantime decided to support the Taif Agreement. It is estimated that each of Aoun’s wars accounted for 1000 dead and 3500 wounded. During 1989-1990, 25000 houses and flats were destroyed and 150000 Lebanese emigrated (Ibid.).

Against the backdrop of bloodletting in Beirut, the sixty-two surviving MPs of the last elected Parliament (1972) were invited to the Saudi resort of Taif upon the request of the Tripartite Committee of the Arab League –it included King Fahd of Saudi Arabia, King Hassan of Morocco and President Chadli Ben Jadid of Algeria-. The conference aimed at bringing together the legitimate political representatives of the Lebanese people in order to end the war and ‘restart’ the state. For the deputies, the accord represented an opportunity to end the dominance of the militias (Kerr 2005, 155) that mushroomed during the civil war. Michael Kerr argues that the Taif Agreement represented an exemplary

case of coercive consociationalism, presented as a *fait accompli* (Ibid. 155-156) to the various actors. Indeed, the Tripartite Committee refrained from asking Syria to withdraw its troops from Lebanon.

Nevertheless, the Taif Agreement did offer a breakthrough from the vicious stalemate of the civil war. In October 1989, fifty-six deputies voted in favour of the accord, thus officially terminating the First Lebanese Republic. On 4 November 1989, René Moawad was elected new President of Lebanon. His assassination seventeen days later, would lead to the election of Elias Hrawi.

CHAPTER 4
CONSOCIATIONALISM REDUX AND THE POSTWAR ORDER
(1990-2005)

The Taif Agreement: Consociationalism redux

Historical institutionalism emphasizes the role of decisions met in the past as drivers of future decisions (e.g. Peters 1999, 63). Specifically, path dependence underlines that “institutions forged in particular historical conjunctures may exhibit considerable ‘staying power’ even in the face of developments that alter the set of conditions that brought them about” (Thelen 2003, 220). Moreover, consociationalism is often chosen by default as a form of power-sharing that “prioritize[s] inclusion, consensus decision-making, and the institutionalization of norms of peaceful coexistence in the state” (Sisk 2013, 10).

Within this framework, it is not surprising that the Document of National Reconciliation did not sharply deviate from the previous power-sharing model (Fakhoury 2007, 164). In fact, the Taif Agreement revived elements of power-sharing that were prevalent during the previous eras.

Essentially, the engineers of the agreement charted a settlement based on blueprints discussed during the course of the civil war. For instance, the Constitutional Document which attempted to reform the National Pact during the first phase of the Lebanese civil war (1975-76) envisaged the following changes:

- i. Equal distribution of seats in the parliament between Christians and Muslims.
- ii. Election of the Prime Minister by the legislature.

- iii. Confessional apportionment of offices only in the highest echelons of the civil service.
- iv. Broadening of the definition of citizenship to strengthen Muslim representation.
- v. Ascriptive distribution of seats in the three highest offices of the state –presidency, premiership, speakership of the parliament-
- vi. Arabisation of state identity.
- vii. Highest positions in the state (presidency), the army (commander-in-chief) and the civil service would remain a Maronite preserve (Goria 1985, 218-219).

The 1985 Militia Agreement concluded between Syria, Elie Hobeika –warlord, member of the Lebanese Forces-, Nabih Berri and Walid Jumblatt –son of Kamal Jumblatt and heir of the PSP’s leadership-walked to a great extent on the same trajectory.

- i. Lebanon would remain a unitary state, effectively rejecting Maronite aspirations for decentralisation and territorial autonomy.
- i. A senate would be established next to the parliament with the power to decide on constitutional amendments and confessional personal status regulations.
- ii. Part of the executive powers of the President would be transferred to the Prime Minister and the council of ministers. The Prime Minister would chair the meetings of the cabinet, invested with substantial executive powers. The President would retain the right of a suspensive veto.
- iii. The parliament would be evenly divided between Christians and Muslims for a transitional period of four years –its termination would be decided by a qualified majority vote-. Equal distribution

of seats would also apply for the three main confessional groups (Maronites, Sunnis, Shia) for the same period. Deputies would be appointed and not elected to vacant and new seats.

- iv. Confessional distribution of seats would be preserved in the highest echelons of the civil service based on parity and without preferential treatment for specific communities. (Hanf 1993, 307-308)

The Taif Agreement succeeded where the other proposals failed: it offered an opportunity to restore the state through the sharing of power. In contrast to the National Pact though, it envisaged an open-ended “process” (Krayem 1997) or a period of reformation towards an ideal, secular polity, paradoxically anchored to the confessional structuration of the social and political realms.

-Identity: The first part of the Document of National Understanding includes a number of General Principles and Reforms that cover the domestic sphere. Importantly, the text starts with a categorical definition of Lebanon’s identity. Lebanon is “a sovereign, free and independent nation” (*watan*), “a final homeland” (point A), “Arab in belonging and identity” (point B).

Thus, the Lebanese entity is re-territorialised within the confines of the state founded during the mandate era. Hence, the Taif Agreement attempts to settle forever the past struggles over Lebanon’s shape pitting Lebanese nationalists against pan-Arab unionists. Nonetheless, Lebanon is as a *quid pro quo*, henceforth defined as an exclusively Arab country, a statement that repeals the National Pact’s “Arab face” formula and implicitly Maronite flirtation with western civilisation and particularism.

Still, “Lebanon’s soil is united” and there “shall be no fragmentation, no partition...” (Point H). Joseph Maïla underlines that the unity and no partition clauses anticipate schemes of territorial division and cultural pluralism (*al-ta’adudiyya al-thaqafiyya*), largely associated with Maronite preferences aired during the civil war (1992, 6-7). Finally “no authority violating the common co-existence charter shall be legitimate” (point I). Hence, Lebanon constitutes essentially a society of communities that are tied together by common volition to live together (*al aysh al-mushtarak*) (Ibid. 17-18) as a value universally shared.

-The Parliament: The second section of the General Principles outlines political reforms in the legislature and the executive branches of power. The Document stipulates that the “Chamber of Deputies is the legislative authority which exercises full control over government policy and activities”. Lebanon is therefore transformed into a parliamentary democracy –from a quasi-Presidential system- where accountability is established between the two branches of power. The Speaker of Parliament will be elected for four years instead of one in the prewar era (point 1). A no-confidence vote against the Speaker will require qualified majority of two-thirds (point 2): this renders his impeachment improbable given the confessional structuration of the parliament. Hence, the Shia speaker witnessed an increase in his powers as she/he could henceforth play a preponderant role in the formation of the government, the voting of laws, the election of the President and the control of governmental activities (Ibid. 19-20).

Still, the larger and denominationally mixed mohafazat (point 4) replace the small qadas as electoral districts in order to boost inter-sectarian alliances and enhance representation in the parliament.

Parliamentary representation will be henceforth based on parity between Christians and Muslims (point 5a) –amending the National Pact’s six to five ratio- grounded on proportional intra-segmental (point 5b), and regional representation (point 5c). The number of seats increased to 108 from 99 (point 6) -and later to 128-.

Michael Kerr remarks that the Shia gained only three out of the nine additional seats allocated to Muslims (27-27 out of 64 Muslim seats), bringing them into line with the demographically smaller Sunni community (2005, 161). Saudi influence was decisive on this score; the Shia were partially compensated for their numerical superiority with the enhancement of the Speakership’s competences (Ibid.). Contrary to the Militia Agreement that entailed equal distribution of seats between the three main communal groups, Maronites preserved their predominance (34 out of 64 Christian seats) within the Chamber of Deputies.

Finally, the Taif Accord envisaged the re-establishment of a senate, as a second (Upper) Chamber (point 7). Tightly intertwined with the deconfessionalisation process set out in the accord, confessional representation would be transferred to the senate. Thus the parliament would be disentangled from ascriptive criteria of representation. The chairmanship of the senate would be assigned to the Druze, whose demographic leverage was minimal although their political and historical weight proved disproportional to their numbers. However, the establishment of the senate has not yet seen the light as political sectarianism remains the rule of the day.

-The President: The excessive powers of the President were fiercely contested in the prewar era. The President could dissolve the cabinet, veto its decisions, and nominate a new Prime Minister at will. Political

Maronitism was largely identified with the special prerogatives of the President which conferred a source of power and prestige upon the community. It, therefore, epitomised the specificity of Lebanon as the sole country in the Middle East headed by a Christian.

Under Taif, the powers wielded by the President become mostly ceremonial. According to the text, the President of the republic is the “head of state” and “a symbol of the country’s unity”. Yet, as Joseph Maila indicates, this phrasing is nothing more than empty words. For the President is stripped from his executive powers: whilst presiding the meetings of the Council of Ministers, he cannot vote (point 1). He is the Supreme Chief of the armed forces but only nominally as effective power is transferred to the Council of Ministers (Maila 1992, 28-29).

Still, the President can no longer veto legislative proposals. The Document of National Understanding transforms this right into a request for reconsideration within fifteen days since the deposition of a law, depending on the decision of the Council of Ministers (point 3). Moreover, the President no longer appoints the Prime Minister. In fact, the Prime Minister-designate is named in consultation with the Speaker of parliament “on the basis of binding parliamentary consultation” (point 6). Essentially, the President is forced to accept the decision of the Chamber of Deputies, and hence, the decisive influence exerted by the Speaker (Ibid. 32). Point 8 stipulates that “on agreement with the Prime Minister” he issues the decree on the formation of the cabinet, whilst he can no more dissolve the government or dismiss a minister. Significantly, the diminished powers of the President followed the dwindling demographic, ideological and political influence of the defeated Maronite community.

Does the President represent the Maronite community or he rather incarnates the unity of the Lebanese nation?

On this note, the Lebanese consociationalist Antoine Messara sets as precondition for the reconstruction of a moderate political centre the election of a consensual President that “would not live up to the sectarian idea of a ‘strong’ President” that represents communal interests (1988, 28). However, this idea is not broadly shared by the Maronites, viewed as a unilateral concession to the other major communities.

-Prime Minister: The Prime Minister is the “head of the government. He represents it and speaks in its name”. As President of the Council of Ministers, he is responsible for implementing the general policy drafted by the cabinet. He “holds parliamentary consultations to form the cabinet and co-sign with the President the decree forming it”. Michael Kerr argues that in the event of disagreement between the President and the premier on the formation of the government, the former retains a “veto by default” (2005, 163). In the capacity of the head of government, the premier chairs the cabinet meetings (point 2), signs all legislative decrees (point 4) and drafts the agenda (point 6).

It could be plausibly argued that the Sunni Prime Minister ‘randomly’ profited by the reordering of competences and responsibilities within the executive. This was part of a broader effort to ‘diffuse power in the cabinet, an inclusive body *par excellence*, thus attributing a power-sharing role to all communities (Ibid. 164).

-Council of Ministers: The Council of Ministers is vested with the bulk of power in the executive branch. According to the agreement, it “sets the general policy of the State in all domains”, it “draws up draft bills and decrees (Point 1), “watches over the implementation of laws and

regulations”, and “supervises the activities of all the state agencies without exception”, including their civilian, military, and security branches (point 2). In addition to that, “it is the authority which controls the army” (point 3), “appoints, dismisses, and accepts the resignation of state employees” (point 4). It has the right “to dissolve the Chamber of Deputies at the request of the President of the republic if the chamber refuses to meet throughout an ordinary or a special session lasting no less than one month” (point 5). Point 6 of the agreement stresses the decision-making procedure within the Council. A legal quorum requires the presence of the two-thirds of the cabinet members. All decisions shall be met with consent. If this is not possible, then a decision is adopted by majority voting. Importantly, major issues require two-thirds majority in the cabinet.

The text indicates that major issues –or literally questions of destiny (Maila 1992, 48) shall be considered the state of emergency and its abolition, war and peace, general mobilization, international agreements and treaties, the state's general budget, comprehensive and long-term development plans, the appointment of top-level civil servants or their equivalent, reexamination of the administrative division, dissolving the Chamber of Deputies, the election law, the citizenship law, the personal status laws, and the dismissal of cabinet ministers. According to point 6, the President heads the workings of the Council only when present.

Hence, the Council of Ministers emerges as the cradle of consociationalism in the Second Republic. Firstly, it guarantees inclusion, representation and participation in a “just and equitable manner” (Lebanese Constitution Art. 95 point a) for all confessional and ethnic segments in the formation of the cabinet. Executive power is thus

dispersed and crucially ‘diluted’ among the numerous members of the cabinet. Secondly, it emerges as a locus of veiled veto powers on issues deemed of “vital national interest” (McEvoy 2013, 254) through the formation of inter-confessional alliances. Thirdly, ministerial portfolios are allocated according to the rule of proportionality in respect of inter- and intra-segmental political demographic and regional considerations.

Hence, a collegial ethos and collective action emerge as ideal *condiciones sine quibus non* in the postwar cabinets. Therefore, the premier taps into the elevated status of the cabinet to justify her/his prominent position in the postwar landscape.

-Deconfessionalisation: The Taif Accord sets out a process of deconfessionalisation as a “fundamental national objective” that amended the infamous Article 95 of the 1926 constitution. Hence, it incorporates a constant demand raised by all strands of the National Movement such as the Left (e.g. the PSP, the Lebanese Communist Party and the Syrian Socialist Nationalist Party) and the Muslims (e.g. Amal, Hizbullah).

Yet, deconfessionalisation did not extend in the confessional management of communal affairs e.g. personal status laws. This inevitably questioned the integrative dynamics of the postwar power-sharing formula which vascillated between confessional belonging in the individual’s daily affairs and political secularism in the exercise of her/his political rights and duties.

This process shall be kicked off “in accordance with a phased plan”. This plan shall be devised by the Chamber of Deputies that will decide on the formation of a national council under the auspices of the President and with the participation of the Prime Minister, the Speaker of Parliament and “political, intellectual, and social notables”. The council is assigned

with the task to propose the adequate measures to the Chamber of Deputies and the Council of Ministers on the necessary steps towards the abolition of sectarianism.

At the epicentre of this endeavour lies the distribution of posts in the public sector which impaired heavily inter-confessional relations during the First Republic. The Taif Agreement amends, therefore, Article 95 which represented the quintessential locus of sectarian disputes by reviving its ephemeral perpetuation. Within this context, “the principle of confessional representation in public service jobs, in the judiciary, in the military and security institutions, and in public and mixed agencies shall be cancelled in accordance with the requirements of national reconciliation” (Lebanese Constitution Article 95 point b). Sectarian representation shall be replaced by meritocracy as soon as the deconfessionalisation process is triggered. However, “Grade One posts and their equivalents shall be excepted from this rule, and the posts shall be distributed equally between Christians and Muslims without reserving any particular job for any sectarian group but rather applying the principles of expertise and competence” (Ibid.). In the same vein, the text requires that religious affiliation be removed from identity cards.

We can therefore deduce that, according to the engineers of the agreement, political confessionalism was largely responsible for the civil war. The construction of an overarching Lebanese citizenship passed therefore through the abolition of confessional ascription in the political realm. Yet, the Taif agreement did not cut the Gordian knot embedded in forms of corporate representation that is, how to supersede minority fears of marginalisation in a country where the communal group functions as the intermediate layer between the individual and the state.

-Administrative Decentralism: The text calls for an expansion of the powers of governors and the district administrative officers (point 2). Expansion of administrative decentralisation should “ensure local participation” (point 4) in order to devise plans of “comprehensive and unified development” on the level of the provinces (point 5). Yet, this devolution of sorts is offset by the stipulations of point 1, which states that Lebanon is “a single and united state with a strong central authority” and point 3 which call for an administrative division that preserves “common coexistence and unity of the soil, people and institutions”. Therefore, Maila prefers to characterise the decentralisation plan as mere administrative ‘deconcentration’ (1992, 63).

-Parliamentary Election Law: The agreement calls for a new electoral law defining the governorate as the basic electoral district. The new role shall “guarantee common coexistence” and shall “ensure the sound and efficient political representation of all the people's factions and generations”. The absence of details notwithstanding, we can assume that proportional representation shall be preferred over various forms of majoritarianism.

Sections B and D grapple with the issues of Lebanese sovereignty and Syrian-Lebanese Relations. Those parts of the agreement were non-negotiable and submitted for prior Syrian approval (Kerr 2005, 167, Maila 1992, 73). According to the text, all parties agree on a “strong” and capable” Lebanon. The government of national accord shall “draft a detailed one-year plan” to restore state sovereignty “with its own forces”.

The text sets a timetable for the demobilisation of all militias Lebanese and non-Lebanese alike within a period of six months “beginning with the approval of the national accord charter”. Syria as a

fraternal state will “thankfully assist the forces of the legitimate Lebanese government to spread the authority of the State of Lebanon within a set period of no more than 2 years” after all political reforms have been approved constitutionally.

Hence, Syria acquired a legitimate mandate in Lebanon. It should be noted that the Syrian army was first deployed in accordance to an Arab League resolution during the second phase of the Lebanese civil war (1976-1982) in the capacity of the peacekeeping force. Crucially, this resolution has expired seven years before the signing of the agreement (1982).

Upon termination of the two-year transitional period, Syrian forces would redeploy in the Bekaa valley on the basis of an agreement reached between the two governments and a joint military committee. The two sides would then conclude an agreement “to determine the strength and duration of the presence of Syrian forces” in the areas specified, but also “to define these forces' relationship with the Lebanese state authorities where the forces exist”. The Tripartite Committee pledges to assist the two sides in developing the agreement.

Moreover, the section on the restoration of Lebanese sovereignty provided for the liberation of Lebanon from Israeli occupation according to UNSC Resolution 425 and “the other UN Security Council resolutions calling for fully eliminating the Israeli occupation”. Still, the text mentions the 1949 truce agreement and underlines that all steps necessary should be taken in order to liberate the occupied territories. The UN peacekeeping force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) shall be part of the process of Israeli withdrawal.

The Taif Agreement concludes with a paragraph that focuses on the special bonds tying Lebanon to Syria. The last paragraph reiterates that Lebanon has an “Arab identity” and is associated with all Arab countries “by fraternal relations”. Yet, Syrian-Lebanese relations are inherently distinct, grounded on “blood relationships, history, and joint fraternal interests”. These are the foundations of cooperation and coordination between the two states “in all areas, and in a manner that accomplishes the two fraternal countries’ interests...” The accord stresses that none of the two countries shall present a threat to the other. In fact, this last paragraph encapsulates Lebanon’s postwar doctrine: Lebanon and Syria form ‘one people in two states’.

The Taif Agreement condenses eminently the merits and flaws, the static and dynamic traits associated with consociationalism. It offered a comprehensive framework to end warfare and ‘restart’ the state and its institutions. Thus, it amends the Constitution by incorporating Muslim rights for the first time in its text (Kerr 2005, 162). It entrenches power-sharing along the lines of consociational democracy. Proportional representation is preserved in the cabinet, the parliament, and tacitly in the electoral law. Decision-making in the Council of Ministers can be impeded through alliance-making that takes the shape of a blocking minority, whilst consensus is the default mode of decision-making. Segmental autonomy or functional federalism remains the rule of the day and a grand coalition guarantees the just and equitable participation of all political and confessional groups.

Hence, the Taif Agreement redistributes power into the system following developments on the societal (demographic changes) and the military fields. The Maronite President, therefore, surrendered

prerogatives and rights to the Sunni Prime Minister, the collegial Council of Ministers and the Shia speaker of Parliament. According to Joseph Maila, this establishes a reversed 'unequal diarchy' of poles of influence between the President and the Premier (1992, 54). However, it partially corrects past imbalances as reflected in the parity principle between Christians and Muslims in the Parliament and the enhanced role of the Shia speaker.

Crucially, the accord addresses explicitly the issue of identity. Lebanon shall remain a unitary state: schemes of pan-Arab integration or devolved autonomy are precluded. In a sense, the Arabization of Lebanon's state identity replaces Chiha's Mediterraneanism and the ambivalent Arab face formula. Significantly, the text confirms the defeat of the Maronite nation-building project, heralding the integration of Lebanon into its regional Arab order. Inevitably, this preordains Lebanon's foreign policy realm on issues of Arab interest e.g. Arab-Israeli conflict.

However, the formation of a Lebanese identity turns into an endless forward-looking goal. Reinserting confessionalism through its phased abolition, the agreement merely amends the 1943 National Pact: deconfessionalisation would usher in the formation of a coherent, Jacobin state. Yet, the ephemeral perpetuation of political confessionalism renders this process essentially messianic. In the absence of a meaningful Lebanese identity, partnership in the management of the state is required to ensure coexistence.

The Taif Agreement granted Syria a multi-faceted role in the postwar period. The Syrian mission included the restoration of Lebanese sovereignty, demobilisation and disarmament of Lebanese militias,

rehabilitation of political stability and return to democracy. The Treaty of Brotherhood, Cooperation and Coordination signed in 1991 sealed this special relationship, tying Lebanon to Syria in a formal structure that extended to an array of realms such as politics, economy, military and internal security (Nasrallah 1993, 98). Intriguingly, Syria was in a sense, ‘avenging’ history, by gaining foothold in Lebanon under the guise of an internationally mandated trusteeship.

The actors’ preferences in the aftermath of Taif

Maurus Reinkowski argues that competing nationalisms and ideologies have reached a “burn-out stalemate” in the postwar era. (1997, 495). In fact, the reformed order forced the different actors in the Lebanese political system to readjust their strategies and structure their preferences according to the new rules of the game.

Firstly, Lebanon was henceforth identified as an Arab country. The values of coexistence and partnership were reconfirmed as the pillars of the revived consociational framework and power “drew its legitimacy from its ability to maintain the *vouloir vivre en commun* as the *raison d’être* of the state (Dagher 2000, 175).

Secondly, the Syrian factor was structurally embedded in the nation-building process (Zahar 2005, 154). Crucially, external actors tend to promote nation-building on the basis of coercive and incentives-based approaches (Ibid. 155). Central to both approaches is the imperative of legitimation that eminently resides in the internalisation of the nation-building process by the society itself (Ibid. 156). Yet, the results of this process are shrouded in ambiguity that tends to negatively influence relations between the segments of a fragmented society (Ibid.). As Lake

and Fariss underscore, “there is a trade-off between states that are legitimate in the eyes of their people and states that are ‘loyal’ to the trustee” (2014, 2). This rift leads to a divergence of preferences between the citizens and the trustee (Ibid.). In post-conflict plural societies, divergences inevitably acquire an ethnic resonance as they are filtered through the communal lenses.

Within this context, the Maronite segment found itself trapped in a political and ideological stalemate that varied between exit, voice and loyalty (Hirschman 1970). In fact, the demise of political Maronitism (*al-siyasiyya al maruniyya*), that was the set of ideas buttressing Maronite political preeminence in Lebanon, created deep scepticism over the community’s postwar status. Simon Haddad notes that the Maronites entered a damaging phase in the post-Taif era as prewar patterns such as intra-Maronite antagonisms for communal hegemony persisted, reflecting divisions of visions on the future of Lebanon (2002, 323). Prevalent among the community’s preoccupation was the role of Syria, largely viewed as a partial actor.

The Maronite elites were therefore obliged to conform to the exigencies of the postwar order by forming new alliances or alternatively endure alienation. A number of Maronite politicians and former warlords –turned politicians- opted for cooperation and participation into the new order. Maronite participation in the consociational system was most profoundly manifested in the presidential elections.

During the period 1990-2005, two Maronites served in the post: Elias Hrawi and Emile Lahoud. René Mouawad, first President of the Second Lebanese Republic was assassinated seventeen days after his election in 1989, as mentioned above. President Hrawi was considered

subservient to Syrian interests and unable to promote Maronite interests (Sirriyeh 1998, 64). Therefore, the Phalanges, a party that was traditionally close to the presidency, forfeited its support for the symbol of Maronite preeminence in Lebanon (Rabil 2001, 33-34). Apart from the Maronite figures who served as Presidents, the Franjeh family of North Lebanon preserved its traditional pro-Syrian affiliations in the postwar order.

Still, dilemmas of participation fomented intra-party divisions. For instance, the Phalanges (Kataeb) split into a pro- and anti-Syria faction. The cooptation of the Kataeb's leader, Georges Saadeh in the postwar cabinets ossified these divisions (el-Husseini 2012, 47). Initially, the party conformed to the decision of the Christian authorities (political and religious) to boycott the postwar general elections. However, it progressively changed stance especially after the Gemayel family reentered the realm of Maronite politics, deciding to run in the elections and challenge the leadership of the party founded by Pierre Gemayel.

This pro-anti- integration dilemma was replicated within the Lebanese Forces, a party that was intrinsically associated with the so called Christian resistance. The Lebanese Forces had systematically boycotted parliamentary elections in Lebanon (1992, 1996). In 1994, the party's leader and former warlord Samir Geagea was incarcerated over alleged crimes committed against rival leaders during the civil war. The Lebanese Forces were subsequently outlawed. Soon, a pro-Syrian faction emerged that challenged Geagea's anti-Syrian stance, as a means to avoid further marginalisation (Ibid. 56-59) in the postwar order.

Boycott of the general elections became the primary means to voice opposition against the new order. Yet, the primary channel of Maronite

criticism was the church. Under conditions of political marginalisation and alienation, the Maronite patriarch re-appropriated the task of ethnic entrepreneurship, reestablishing the popular legitimacy of Christian nationalism (Haddad 2002, 326).

In this respect, the Maronite patriarch Nasrallah Sfeir shouldered the temporal task of exposing Maronite frustration in Lebanon and abroad (McCallum 2012, 360-361). The patriarch was often expressing Maronite indignation over the state of affairs in postwar Lebanon. The patriarch's criticism revolved around the poor implementation of the Taif Agreement, the sectarian attitudes of the elites and their collusion with Syria, Maronite marginalisation in the political process and the administration, and the naturalization of Palestinian refugees as a means to change the demographic balance in the country (Baroudi and Tabar 2009, 204-210).

The condemnation of the post-Taif order became more explicit after 2000, as reflected in calls for enhanced political participation and representation of the Maronites in the cabinet, a fair and balanced electoral law, redeployment of the Syrian army, disarmament of Hizullah, and restoration of the President's prerogatives as part of a process of constitutional rebalancing (Ibid., Dagher 2000, 139-140). Moreover, patriarch Sfeir oversaw the organisation of an umbrella Maronite platform -the Qornet Shehwan grouping- that aimed at bolstering political action against Syria (McCallum 2012, 362).

Furthermore, a number of prominent Maronite leaders exited the postwar landscape. After his defeat in the war of liberation, and the intra-Maronite bloodshed, Michel Aoun fled in exile to Paris (Sirriyeh 1998, 63). Raymond Eddé has left Lebanon in 1976 in protest to the Syrian

intervention and Maronite complicity in inviting it (Rabil 2001, 32). Amin Gemayel, Lebanon's former President, has also chosen exile shortly after the end of his presidential term (1988). After the death of Hafiz al-Assad, Amin Gemayel returned to Lebanon, in order to claim back the reins of his father's party (el-Husseini 2012, 46).

In addition, Danny Chamoun, son of Lebanon's former President Camille Chamoun, was assassinated in 1994 allegedly by the head of the Lebanese Forces, Samir Geagea (Sirriyeh 1998, 63-64). His father and former President, Camille, has died some years before the Taif Agreement (1987). As aforementioned, Samir Geagea, was convicted to life imprisonment on various counts. Apart from the assassination of Danny Chamoun, Geagea was accused of assassinating former Premier Karami. However, he was not declared guilty for the original crime that sparked the judicial investigation -related to a bombing attack against a church- (el-Husseini 2012, 55). He remained in solitary confinement for eleven years. Geagea's indictment was condemned by the patriarch as the leader of the Lebanese Forces was one among the few former warlords that did not benefit from an amnesty law (Dagher 2000, 140).

The Sunni community was to large extent content with the Taif Agreement. A constant grievance of the Sunni political class has been fulfilled as epitomised in the elevated status of the Prime Minister (Hamdan 2013, 43). Lebanon was henceforth considered an integral part of the Arab world and the Syrian presence could guarantee the unitary character of the state. From an institutional point of view, the Prime Minister was centrally positioned within the new setting, engaging with both the President and the Speaker of Parliament as part and parcel of the reinvigorated partnership and the 'diffused' power-sharing constellation.

Traditionally, the Sunni political class was divided among families of notables that vied for influence within the framework of the community's charitable institutions such as the Makassed society in Beirut (Johnson 1986, 47). Contrary to the agrarian origins of the Maronites, the Sunnis were prevalent in the coastal cities of Lebanon such as Tripoli, Beirut, and Sidon. During the civil war, the Sunni community failed to mobilise its own militias with the exception of the Mourabitoun that became inactive by mid 80s (el-Husseini 2012, 26). Significantly, defence of the Sunni cause in Lebanon was left to the Palestinians, since the community felt pronounced attachment to the Palestinian struggle (Ibid. 27). In addition, the Baathist regime viewed Sunni mobilisation with suspicion, as a potential source of destabilisation to its minority Alawite foundations (Ibid.).

In the post-Taif era, the Sunni notability found itself disoriented. Although well versed in the prewar political culture, the emergence of the militia order dictated a new way of exercising power (Gervais 2012, 109). This was coupled by changes in the economy. The protracted civil war has cost Lebanon its role as financial intermediary between the Arab East and the Western markets. This development hurt decisively the commercial financial bourgeoisie which to a certain extent belonged to the Sunni notability (Baumann 2012, 85).

These socioeconomic disruptions within the Sunni elites opened the space of communal politics for Rafiq Hariri. Hariri made a fortune as construction contractor in Saudi Arabia. His engagement with the affairs of Lebanon during the civil war started as envoy of the Saudi king (Ibid. 82). His progressive expansion into education, healthcare and philanthropy were coupled with his international connections. This

combination of political, economic and symbolic capital allowed Hariri to reach an unprecedented status among his co-religionists (Ibid.) at the direct expense of the old Sunni families of Beirut e.g. Salam. Progressively the Sunni milieu became almost exclusively identified with the personality of Rafiq Hariri. His meteoric rise changed perceptions and attitudes among the Sunnis that were reflected in the aspiration for a strong and unified Sunni presence in the Lebanese setting (Gervais 2012, 123).

Hariri was elected Prime Minister of Lebanon three times (1992, 1996, 2000) and formed four cabinets. His policies had a lasting impact on Lebanon, whilst his legacy is still a cause of contention. Harirism emerged as a distinct ideological current that blended economic liberalism with a moderate approach to Sunni Islam. In addition, Hariri attempted to inspire a national vision to the Lebanese polity, emphasizing coexistence and individual success (Ibid. 110). This vision entailed friendly relations with Saudi Arabia and the West (mainly France and the US) given his business and friendly contacts with prominent actors in those countries.

Hariri sought to reinstate Lebanon as the Middle Eastern centre for finance, services, and tourism (Fakhoury 2007, 207) through structural reforms and privatisations in coordination with organisations such as the IMF and the World Bank. Hariri's vision of national unity started with the revitalisation of Beirut's old cosmopolitan spirit through a gigantic and controversial project of reconstruction (Makdisi 1996, 23) that trumpeted the beginning of an era of economic prosperity and Christian-Muslim coexistence (Eisenlohr 2008, 22). His ambitious economic policy rested on three mechanisms of rent creation: over-borrowing from the country's

commercial bank, the “services ministries”, and reconstruction through a private real-estate company –Solidere- (Baumann 2012, 99-100).

Hariri despised, at least rhetorically, political confessionalism viewing it as the root cause of Lebanon’s malaise. Nevertheless, setbacks in the economy and electoral calculations led to a shift in his approach, espousing a confessional discourse. This became evident in the 2000 legislative elections. Having consolidated his position among the Sunni political class and the community’s charitable and religious institutions, he mobilised his followers by employing a sectarian nationalism that prioritised Sunni interests and prestige against the assertive Maronite President and the established Shia political parties (Gervais 2012, 123).

Hariri entertained ambivalent relationships with Syria that varied from collaboration, toleration and enmity. Syria benefited economically, politically and ideologically from Hariri as long as his policies preserved the post-Taif order. In exchange, Hariri was granted the necessary breathing space to pursue his policies, and consolidate his prevailing position within the Sunni segment.

The *modus vivendi* between Hariri and Syria started to crumble as different conceptions of sovereignty and economic priorities between President Lahoud and the Sunni Premier surfaced. The first revolved around the disarmament of Hizbullah and the termination of the Resistance in the aftermath of the Israeli withdrawal in 2000. President Lahoud defended continuation of the resistance until the last remnants of occupied Lebanese territory have been liberated. On the other hand, Hariri believed that the time was ripe to restore Lebanese sovereignty through full Syrian and Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon. By 2004, their cohabitation in the two presidencies was reaching a tipping point

(Fakhoury 2007, 225). Opposition to the unconstitutional renewal of President Lahoud's mandate, and support for the UNSC Resolution 1559 -that was sponsored by France and the US and called for full withdrawal of all foreign troops from Lebanon- led to an open rift and perhaps to his assassination in 2005 (Daher 2015, 210).

Apart from Hariri's Future Movement (al-Mustaqbal), Sunni preferences were channelled –albeit to a lesser extent- to Islamist parties such as the Jamaa Islamiyya (Islamic Association) and the Ahabash Group. Despite their Islamist orientation, both parties reconciled themselves with the consociational framework and Syrian tutelage, exhibiting a sense of pragmatism. For the Islamic Association in particular, integration in the workings of a non-ideal political system such as represented by the post-Taif order is couched in an Islamist discourse that considers parliamentary participation as a method of accountability (*Husbat*). In this sense, integration into the system incarnates the duty of achieving the principles of Islamic law, obstructing anti-Islamic legislation, continuing da'wa (the call to Islam), and promoting peoples' interests, eliminating vices, and endorsing balanced economic development (Rabil 2011, 70).

In its various political programmes, the Islamic Association has defended coexistence based on a proportional electoral law, a clear separation of powers between the presidency, the cabinet and the parliament and abolition of political confessionalism as an “undemocratic configuration” (Ibid. 74). Significantly, the organisation acknowledges that political pluralism and elections are endorsed by Islam –although democracy deviates from Islam- and are compatible with the nature of the Lebanese society (Ibid.). This does not imply though abandonment of the

Islamic law (sharia) that through dialogue and persuasion, shall order social life (Ibid. 75-76).

The Islamic Association managed to elect three MPs in the 1992 elections. This result has not been repeated as Hariri increasingly monopolised Sunni representation (el-Husseini 2012, 80). Despite its rejection of political confessionalism, the Association has tactically opted for a rapprochement with Hariri as the latter vocally championed Sunni rights in Lebanon (Gervais 2012, 122). The exhibited pragmatism of Jamaa Islamiyya was also manifested towards Syria. The party maintained a working relationship with Damascus that was cloaked in the common opposition against the United States and Israel (Ibid. 131).

The Taif Agreement partially compensated the Lebanese Shia for the years of marginalisation and underrepresentation in a binary manner: firstly, it elevated the Speaker's powers to a level that rendered him/her a veto player, and secondly, it increased the number of Shia seats in the Parliament. Moreover, the abolition of political sectarianism reflected a shared Shia demand. Hamdan argues that the Taif Agreement did not fully satisfy the Shia segment (2013, 44) for, within the bounds of the corporate distribution of offices, the Shia are not entitled to any of the top positions in the executive (Ibid. 45).

Despite its partial satisfaction with the Taif Agreement, the leadership of Amal fully integrated into the postwar order. The party has tried systematically to portray itself as responsible stakeholder since the 80s. Alignment with Syria admittedly played a role into that and remained a key feature of the postwar period. The party abided by the new rules of the game, epitomised in the monopolisation of the Speakership by its leader, Nabih Berri (Speaker of Parliament since 1992). In addition, Amal

benefited from the administration of the Council of the South, -a government institution established in 1970 to provide financial assistance to the mainly Shia residents of South Lebanon and West Bekaa-, which served extensively as an invaluable source for the distribution of patronage to its constituency (Shanahan 2005, 119).

This strong institutionalisation within the bounds of the Second Lebanese Republic conformed to the views propounded by Sayyid al-Sadr and Ayatollah Shamseddine that, as aforementioned have intellectually influenced the party's platform. The latter has warned against close association with Iran (Eisenlohr 2008, 35) to prevent Shia alienation. For Amal, the Shia represent the Lebanese citizens who suffered the most from Israeli intrusions, therefore deserving a more privileged position in the state (Ibid. 36). This Shia advancement requires a gradual systemic change through, on the one hand, a proportional electoral law that mirrors the Shia's demographic status and, on the other, abolition of political confessionalism (Shanahan 2005, 121).

The new order posed severe moral and political dilemmas to Hizbullah. According to its manifesto, the prewar confessional system embodied a tyrannical system that oppressed the weak. Thus the party uttered outright rejection of the confessional system and expressed support for an Islamic state that would quintessentially herald an era of justice. The rejuvenation of political confessionalism rendered this prospect nebulous. Moreover, the process of demobilisation and disarmament directly impinged on the party's *raison d' être* enshrined in the liberation struggle against Israel. The designation of the party as a liberation movement exempted it from forced demobilisation giving it a

free mantle to continue its struggle –as long as it did not risk Syria’s regional standing-.

The party grappled with the issues pertaining to the new order and Hizbullah’s position in it during its second conclave (1991). In this vein, its Shura Council deliberated over i) the legitimacy of a political system that does not comply with Hizbullah’s ideals, ii) the legitimacy of participation in connection to the party’s Islamic vision, iii) the costs and benefits derived from participation, iv) the hierarchy of priorities and in particular the position of the resistance in it on the event of integration into the new order (Rabil 2011, 64). These internal deliberations led to the historic decision to open up (*infitah*) the party to the rituals and practices of parliamentary democracy (Alagha 2011, 22).

Amal Saad-Ghorayeb suggests that, in order to discern the reasons which ushered in Hizbullah’s endorsement of participatory politics, we need to also examine the conditions that the party posits for the establishment of an Islamic State. (2002, 49). Within this context, the first condition pertains to the Islamic principle of non-compulsion in religion, which prohibits the coercive imposition of Islam upon others (Ibid.). Thus the plural character of the Lebanese society renders such a possibility relatively remote (Ibid.). In addition, the fact that the Islamic State is a means to achieve justice –and not an end- the precondition of its establishment is justice, which is conceptualised as the general population’s endorsement of the Islamic republic (Ibid.). Given these moral and religious constraints, Hizbullah is forced to interact with Lebanon’s socio-cultural reality and devise a political strategy within the framework of multi-sectarian Lebanon (Ibid.).

Moreover, the absence of a state whatsoever can lead to anarchy (*fawda*), which is a non-desirable state of affairs in Hizbullah's worldview (Ibid. 49-50). Participation into parliamentary politics emerged therefore, as the second best option in pursuit of "the greatest extent of justice" (Ibid. 50). Nevertheless, accommodation with the confessional system did not imply that the party abandoned its pursuit of the Islamic state. Rather, the party remained intellectually committed to the concept of the Islamic state, effectively preventing political assimilation by it (Ibid. 50).

Furthermore, integration into the confessional system emerged as an opportunity to legitimise the resistance in the eyes of the Lebanese, who viewed the party as an Iranian pawn (Ibid. 53). Besides, Hizbullah was willing to heed the demands and needs of its social base that were translated into popular participation in the institutions of representative democracy (Ibid.).

Hence, integration into the political system did not undermine but instead, advanced the cause of the Resistance (Ibid.). Coupled with a process of extensive institution-building, participation into the workings of parliamentary democracy facilitated the diffusion of the values of the Resistance society (*al mujtama al-muqawama*) into the Lebanese fabric until the latter becomes assimilated by the former (Rabil 2011, 69).

Apart from its moral and religious constraints, Hizbullah coped with the institutional and para-institutional impediments engendered by the Taif Agreement. Firstly, the party was obliged to share Shia seats in Parliament, competing against Amal. Secondly, it had to come into terms with other parties through bargaining deals (Ghorayeb 2002, 57) in order to enter into winning alliances given an electoral law that encouraged the

formation of trans-sectarian lists and cross-confessional voting. Within the Parliament in particular, this process of alliance-making was translated into agreements of mutual interest in various fields with parties that belonged to the opposition (Azani 2009, 157). Moreover, integration into the post-Taif order necessarily implied compliance and accommodation with the preferences of Damascus. This was most conspicuously reflected in the 1998 municipal elections, when Ghazi Kanaan, Syria's head of intelligence service in Lebanon, 'advised' the party to form common lists with its intra-Shia competitor, Amal (Daher 2014, 423).

However, the Lebanonisation of Hizbullah was limited to the legislature. The party refused to join the executive during the period 1990-2005, despite its popularity among the Lebanese Shia. This negative stance echoed differences of perception with Hariri over the resistance and the latter's liberal policies in the economy. (Ibid. 154-155).

Moreover, reluctance to join the government had moral underpinnings that related to the movement's aversion to corruption, strongly associated with the management of the country's affairs. The party changed its posture to conditioned opposition and partial cooperation as soon as the pro-resistance Emile Lahoud became President in 1998 (Ibid. 156).

In what regards its political agenda, Hizbullah asked for a proportional electoral law and abolition of political confessionalism (Ghorayeb 2002, 56) as the two vital steps towards true representation. Nevertheless, the party seemed more preoccupied with the IRL's liberation struggle against Israel which forms part of its immutable/fundamental principles (*al-thawabit*) (Rabil 2012, 52).

Importantly, the liberation struggle against Israel played out strongly in the movement's nation-building agenda. Lebanonisation in Hizbullah's discourse does not connote the socialisation of a perceived 'foreign' group, but instead, it exemplifies a genuine manifestation of Lebanese patriotism (Ibid. 56).

In Hizbullah's national vision, the Lebanese can share "common feelings and values", and "are able to form a single, cohesive community in the face of aggression" (Ibid.). To promote the Lebanese authenticity of its version of nationalism, Hizbullah was eager to establish channels and forge relations with other parties (Ibid.). Within this context, Hassan Nasrallah tried to allay Christian fears by propounding the position of the Maronite patriarch on the matter which considered political confessionalism primarily as a flawed mentality (Rabil 2011, 77) and then as a nefarious political practice.

Taif in practice

The political praxis of the period 1990-2005 deviated significantly from the text's letter. In fact, the skewed implementation of the power-sharing arrangements reflected continuity from the years of the First Republic, where the contours of governance were susceptible to the pretenses of the inter-segmental elites. Under Taif, these skewed practices mirrored conflicting interpretations of the agreement, sectarian attitudes and personal agendas. These practices were aggravated by Syria which adroitly manipulated sectarian controversies to promote its interests in Lebanon.

The Cabinets

The first postwar cabinets (1990-1992)

Joseph Maila argued that the Taif Agreement generated an ‘unequal diarchy’ between the two levels of executive authority, the President and the cabinet. In reality, a rivalrous constellation of executive authorities emerged that included the three presidencies, or what was called the troika. For the Speaker could henceforth influence decision-making through the newly acquired blocking powers. Hence, the executive turned into a wide arena where powers were extra-institutionally pooled among the Head of State, the Head of cabinet and the Head of Parliament. (Najem 2011, 60).

This contest for power within the executive became evident in the process of cabinet formation. Premier Salim al-Hoss believed that the first postwar cabinet should include a few technocrats only that would lead the country in the transition phase. On the other hand, President Hrawi insisted that the President’s prewar prerogatives (Hanf 1993, 614) should be maintained by having a say in the formation of the cabinet. This institutional controversy led to al-Hoss’s early resignation and its replacement by Omar Karami.

Karami formed the first postwar cabinet in December 1990. The cabinet numbered thirty ministers (the largest in the history of Lebanon) (Ibid). The aim was to include all segments of the communal mosaic in order to facilitate transition to the new era. It included the leaders of the main wartime militias and political parties, a number of traditional leaders, friends of Syria and friends of the President (Salem 1994) – Aounists, Hizbullah and the Communist party were excluded-. Samir Geagea, the leader of the Lebanese Forces, was appointed state minister without portfolio. Yet, he did not accept the office on the grounds that it

was controlled by “Syrian-backed leftists” (el-Husseini 2012, 54). The cabinet won a vote of confidence but this was limited to thirty-four out of the forty MPs present (Hanf 1993, 615) .

The cabinet had to grapple with a loaded agenda that was tightly associated with the Taif Agreement. Specifically, Karami’s cabinet had to: i) to appoint new deputies in the Chamber in order to render the number of MPs equal ii) to ratify the special relations with Syria iii) to dissolve the militias and iv) to begin extending the authority of the state around the country (Salem 1994).

The Karami administration managed to accomplish in a relatively satisfactory fashion most of the aforementioned tasks. However, it failed to address the problems that affected the daily lives of the Lebanese citizens in the economy and the public administration (Ibid.). Important decisions such as the appointment of civil servants stagnated as President Hrawi, Premier Karami and Speaker Husseini vied to defend the constitutional rights of their respective communities (Fakhoury 2007, 332). Moreover, Karami’s administration increased the number of deputies from 108 to 128 by appointing forty deputies to “to fill vacant seats and correct the disequilibrium in sectarian parliamentary representation” (el-Khazen 1994). Importantly, the Taif Agreement did not contain any such provision. According to el-Khazen, the real undeclared objective behind this decision was the engineering of a pro-Syrian parliament (2003, 66). Significantly, the Karami cabinet formalised relations with Syria, signing the Treaty of Brotherhood, Cooperation and Coordination that tied Lebanon to Damascus (Salem 1994).

Karami resigned in 1992 amidst mounting nationwide labour strikes due to falling wages (Ibid.). He was succeeded by Rachid al-Solh whose national unity cabinet lasted only five months (May-October 1992). The new cabinet comprised twenty four members and was boycotted by the anti-Syrian segments of the Maronite community, namely the Lebanese Forces and the Kataeb (Salem 1994). Solh had set an ambitious agenda that included a cap in public spending, increase in public revenues, administrative reform, return of displaced persons, liberation of the South, and a new naturalisation law (Ibid.) In fact though, the main task of Solh's cabinet was the preparation of the first postwar elections.

The troika system 1992-1998

The trilateral competition for power peaked during the period 1992-1998 with the election of two ambitious figures such as Rafiq Hariri, and Nabih Berri in the positions of the Premier and the Speaker of Parliament respectively. Rafiq Hariri symbolised the ascent of the new economic elite in Lebanon. His appointment echoed Syrian willingness to enhance the regime's outward legitimacy and ameliorate its relations with the USA and Saudi Arabia (Salem 1994). Berri, on the other hand, was a former warlord turned-politician who was avid to increase the influence of political Shiism within the domestic field. Elected as Speaker of Parliament, Berri could henceforth enjoy the prerogatives emanating from the position, which under the guise of "participation in the national destiny" accorded him quasi-executive powers (Bahout cited in Najem 2000, 214).

Hariri's first cabinet comprised thirty ministers that apart from the traditional elites, included technocrats and business leaders (Salem

1994.). Downplaying political issues, the Hariri cabinet prioritised the task of reconstruction and rehabilitation of infrastructure (Ibid.). The main reconstruction projects were subsumed under the Horizon 2000 Plan that went through different forms during the period 1992-1995 (Dibeh 2007, 3). “Public investments, totalling US\$17.7 billion, were to be allocated to physical infrastructure, social infrastructure and public services. As of December 1997, foreign financing of the 1992 reconstruction programme totalled US\$4.0 billion, with US\$3.5 billion in loans and US\$0.5 billion in grants with the loans component consisting of soft loans and commercial loans with export guarantees (Ibid.).

The epicentre of reconstruction was the city centre of Beirut (Baumann 2012, 99). Under this reconstruction plan, “most of the historic fabric of the city centre was torn down in order to exploit the space to the maximum commercial benefit” (Ibid.). Importantly, owners of the properties were compensated with shares in the private company that was assigned the project (Solidere), effectively passing property rights from the old Beirut bourgeoisie to the new contracting bourgeoisie (Ibid 100).

The involvement of the Prime Minister and businessmen in the government stirred questions over conflicts of interest (Salem 1994) cronyism and corruption. This lack of distinction between public and private interest was reflected in the distribution of licenses in the media. In 1996, for instance, the Hariri administration passed a law that aimed at regulating the audiovisual landscape by limiting the number of TV and radio stations. Among the four licences awarded, two ended up to Rafiq Hariri and Nabih Berri, whilst the remaining two were granted to the brother of an incumbent minister and serving deputies (Najem 2000, 216-217). This interconnection between public and private interests had

repercussions in the patterns of inter-confessional deliberation during the troika period.

The appointment of friends in high-level government positions was conducive to endless political bickering and sectarian horse-trading (Ibid.). Rafiq Hariri has repeatedly threatened to resign as opposition to his policies within the cabinet impeded the implementation of his agenda. In fact, members of the Council of Ministers accused him of monopolising power (Ibid.). The crisis was defused with the mediation of the Syrian vice-President and the Syrian head of intelligence in Lebanon (Ibid.).

In 1994, Hariri boycotted the cabinet meetings as Hrawi demanded his own share in the appointment of Christian ministers. In a similar vein, Berri obstructed the formation of a new cabinet insisting on the allocation of the strategic finance ministry to the Shia sect (Ibid.). Importantly, all ministerial decrees require the signature of the Minister of Finance, which essentially imply a veiled veto right. Hariri's attempt to form a cabinet that did include pro-Berri ministers was blocked by Syria (Ibid. 219). This was achieved in May 1995 though, after a compromise deal struck by Syria involving Hariri and Berri (Ibid.). Thus a new 30-member cabinet was formed that excluded some pro-Syrian figures, whilst bringing into it some of Hariri's closest associates in the Council for the Reconstruction and Development and one of his companies (Ibid. 219-220). To facilitate its formation, the cabinet followed the practice of the allocation of state ministries without portfolio.

The inter-sectarian antagonisms resurfaced under the pretext of Hrawi's end of term (1995). Hariri was willing to amend the constitution in order to prolong Hrawi's tenure for three years. This initiative met with

Berri's resistance, which according to Fakhoury, did not reflect concerns of constitutional legitimacy but rather, a show of institutional force (2007, 333). The prolonged deadlock was resolved by Assad, who eventually backed Hariri's proposal (Ibid.).

In 1996, Hariri formed his third cabinet. The cabinet followed the previous pattern, including thirty ministers –two without portfolio-, among whom ten were considered close to Hariri himself (UPI 1996), along with an important segment which was affiliated to Damascus. Its formation took fourteen days and it was achieved after intensive consultations with Hrawi and Syrian officials, including Syrian President Hafez al-Assad given differences with Berri over the allocation of portfolios (Ibid.).

The Hariri-Berri rivalry was complemented with Hrawi's disdain of the troika scheme. The latter insisted on the need "for the stabilization of a presidential system" (Ofeish 1999, 109) that would utterly return Lebanon to the National Pact era. Within this context of institutional and sectarian competition, the three leaders reached out to Syrian officials in Lebanon and Damascus to ensure their backing in the domestic arena (Najem 2000, 221). Whilst inter-elite coalescence is normatively indispensable in consociationalism, the sectarian manipulation of the state and its institutions undermined the spirit of the new power-sharing arrangement.

The torpedoing of legislation on civil marriage is indicative of the patterns of inter-segmental competition during the troika years (1992-1998). Significantly, the introduction of civil marriage was viewed as an important step towards deconfessionalisation. The initiative was launched upon Hrawi's proposal. Specifically, Hrawi managed to pass a draft law

in the cabinet in coordination with a number of ministers of secularist conviction, some of whom were in working terms with the Speaker of Parliament. The draft law was opposed by Premier Hariri, who considered it as a direct impingement upon his institutional powers, and political standing (Ibid. 111).

Alongside frictions over competences, the bill sparked protests among the Sunni clergy. These were in turn followed by the Shia, Druze and Maronite religious authorities, which voiced their strong rejection of the plan. The crisis was defused with Syrian mediation, whilst Hariri refused to sign the bill. In the same vein, a proposal submitted by President Hrawi to establish a national committee on the abolition of political confessionalism in accordance to Article 95 of the Constitution was suspended by the Speaker of Parliament (Ibid.).

The troika system has “effectively broken down between the autumn of 1996 and the first half of 1997” (Najem 2000, 221). Berri was particularly critical of Hariri and Hrawi accusing them of pursuing policies that aimed at reducing his powers. In turn, all three leaders blamed each other “over a host of issues”, including corruption (Ibid.).

The rise of the presidency (1998-2005)

The election of Emile Lahoud in the presidency marked a new phase of competition in the executive. “The Lebanese troika had ceased to function, and it was in Syria’s interest to introduce a new figure who could break the deadlock between Hariri and Birri and help to shift the focus of the political discourse to something different, and less problematic to Syria” (Ibid. 231).

Emile Lahoud served as former Commander-in-Chief of the Lebanese Army. Acting in this capacity, Lahoud forced Aoun's surrender during the 'war of liberation' against Syria in 1990 and paved the way towards the new order. Lahoud represented the ideal candidate to appease the Maronite community – and its demand for a 'strong' President- (Gambill, Abdelnour, and Endrawos 2001). Indeed, his election was initially well-received in the Maronite milieu as committed to institution- and nation-building (Dagher 2000, 159). Thus, Lahoud was broadly perceived as incorruptible for not being part of Lebanon's elitist establishment, whilst credited for rebuilding the Lebanese army along non-confessional lines (Najem 2000, 231).

Thus the Lebanese Parliament summarily amended Article 49 of the Constitution that prohibited a high-ranking military officer to occupy a post in the executive before two years after retirement have passed. Lahoud was voted by all 118 (out of 128) deputies present to become the second President in Lebanon's history with a career in the military (Fouad Chehab was the first).

Tamirace Fakhoury argues that the consociational characteristics of the Second Lebanese Republic were eroded further under his term. In fact, consociationalism degenerated into a sort of consociational authoritarianism (2007, 336). Consociational devices such as the grand coalition and the mutual veto became obsolete (Ibid.) as the powers of the President were informally enhanced in line with the increased role of the security apparatus.

Lahoud had challenged all over from the beginning Hariri's power in the executive. Differences on the composition of the new government led Hariri to submit his resignation (Najem 2000, 234). As Najem

mentions, Hariri's second term (1996-1998) was fraught with scandals and political conflict. His resignation therefore served probably both Hariri's ambitions for a future return in office, and Syria's interests in Lebanon (Ibid. 235) that dictated some form of renewal amidst the mounting socioeconomic problems. Moreover, Hariri has managed by 1998 to acquire the status of the "de facto head of state", establishing a solid basis of Sunni support, enunciating a national vision and crucially enjoying international backing. Hariri's status stood therefore, in stark contrast to the rest of the feudal class in Lebanon (ICG 2010, 4)

In December 1998, Salim al-Hoss was appointed Prime Minister. Al-Hoss formed a technocratic government, composed of sixteen ministers. According to him, four ministers comprised his personal choice and two were appointed by Syria (el-Husseini 2012, 109) in a scheme that combined technocrats, entrepreneurs and traditional heirs of political families.

Al-Hoss's government lasted two years. His appointment mirrored a shift in the balance of power towards the President (Najem 2000, 233) as the Sunni Premier lacked the authority and popular base of Rafiq Hariri. Significantly, President Lahoud had his own agenda. This involved 'a war on corruption' that targeted notably ministers of the Hariri administration (Gambill, Abdelnour, and Endrawos, 2001). The task was assigned to the Prime Minister. However, investigations were quickly discarded as fears surfaced that the anti-corruption drive might touch Hariri's Syrian allies (Ibid.).

Moreover, the new administration attempted to reform the public administration. Yet, this process degenerated into targeted cleansing of pro-Hariri elements in the public sector (Najem 2000, 234). Failures in

the anti-corruption drive and the civil service reform were coupled with persistent problems in the postwar economy, and Israeli bombing of public infrastructure in retaliation to Hizbullah's operations in South Lebanon (Ibid.235). Inevitably, al-Hoss submitted his resignation, as pro-Syrian figures such as Berri and Lahoud managed to escape accountability (Ibid. 234).

He was succeeded by Hariri, after the latter's sweeping victory in the 2000 legislative elections. The third Hariri cabinet consisted again of thirty ministers (KUNA 2000) and its formation followed the Israeli withdrawal in 2000. Hariri praised "the victory of the resistance" in the cabinet's policy statement as a national achievement against "the aggression and Israeli occupation" (Middle East Intelligence Bulletin 2000). In this vein, the Hariri cabinet saluted "the resistance, steadfastness, and tolerance of the Lebanese people, especially our kin in the South and the Western Bekaa for the sufferings and sacrifices they have endured for two consecutive decades" (Ibid.). Still, it praised Lebanese-Syrian steadfastness and struggle as a reflection of "a unity in positions, destiny, and partnership in confronting Israel's assaults on Lebanon and their repercussions" (Ibid.). In line with his previous terms, Hariri prioritised financial and monetary stability, reconstruction and economic revival, privatisations, support for the private sector as a means to fight unemployment and reform in the administration (Ibid.).

Yet, cohabitation with Lahoud was uneasy given the latter's overt support for the continuation of Hizbullah's struggle against Israel and systematic opposition to Hariri's economic policies. "Lahoud's and Hariri's bickering was mainly a race to redefine the concept of authority and political prerogatives in executive power-sharing" (Fakhoury 2007,

337). Under Syrian pressure, the two Presidents were advised to find a *modus vivendi*. “In this strange case of forced coalition, power-sharing did stem from the elites’ genuine coalescence but from an external agent” (Ibid. 337).

This forced consociation evolved into a distribution of labour under which the President oversaw domestic and foreign politics and the Premier the economic portfolio (Ibid. 338). In view of this distribution of labour, the President did not hesitate to clamp down on dissenting voices e.g. anti-Syrian Maronite nationalists, without the prior approval of the Premier (Gambill, Abdelnour, and Endrawos 2001). Presidential support for Hizbullah’s resistance in the South exacerbated tensions between the two as Israeli retaliations hindered the prospects of reconstruction.

During the first years of the new millennium, the reconstruction drive acquired a new impetus through the organisation of donor conferences that promised conditional aid to Lebanon in exchange of liberalising reforms. Specifically, “at Paris I in February 2001, among other commitments, Lebanon pledged to stimulate the economy and modernize its tax system. In exchange, France provided Lebanon with 500 million euros to finance development projects” (Schenker 2007). This was followed-up by the Paris II conference (November 2002) where the Lebanese government vowed to privatize key industries, pay down debt, cut recurrent expenditures, and increase tax revenues. Lebanon would receive in exchange \$4.4 billion in grants and loans (Ibid.).

The troublesome partnership between Lahoud and Hariri heightened after 2002 as the latter tried to implement the package of structural reforms that touched upon the security portfolio. These reforms entailed the privatisation of the cellular network, and spending cuts in the security

sector. Moreover, a Hariri-sponsored plan to build new public schools was blocked by Lahoud on the grounds that it benefited the capital instead of the regions (Fakhoury 2007, 338-339).

Squabbling between Lahoud and Hariri exacerbated antagonisms between Hariri and Berri. The latter was consistently trying to carve out his own niche of influence by “manipulating the legislative agenda” on matters of economic reform and privatisations (Ibid. 339). This sequence of inter-institutional antagonisms eloquently exemplified the significance of relative power in the absence of an overarching consociational ethos. Whilst opposition to liberal reforms had some deeply political undertones, these were overshadowed by the personal strategies and sectarian attitudes of the elites. Appointments in the public administration in particular conspicuously manifested the underlying sectarian logic (Ibid).

The last Hariri administration (May 2003-October 2004) followed the over-sized scheme of the previous cabinets comprising thirty members. Most of them were connected to senior political figures such as Walid Jumblatt and President Lahoud, whilst others owed their allegiance to Syria (el-Husseini 2012, 110). Its denominationally representative character notwithstanding, its composition followed the rule of post-Taif cabinet formation, exemplified by the absence of major Maronite figures. Hizbullah continued to refuse participation in the executive, despite its growing popularity after the 2000-01 Israeli withdrawal.

Fakhoury calls the 2003 cabinet as “one of the power-sharing failures in post-war Lebanon” that ushered in Hariri’s resignation and Lahoud’s domination over the Council of Ministers (2007, 341). “The near equalization of the presidency and the premiership under the Ta’if order provoked unhealthy struggles of predominance and paved the way

for an era of dual executive balance tending to political immobility” (Ibid.).

Crucially, political immobility ossified in the post-9/11 era. The war on terror and the ‘rogue state’ discourse undermined Syria’s status in Lebanon. According to the Taif Agreement, Syria had to redeploy its troops two years after the ratification of the agreement and the implementation of all necessary reforms. Manipulating inter-confessional rivalries, and US reticence to challenge Syria amidst the ongoing Arab-Israeli peace process, Damascus proved capable to preserve its predominance in Lebanon.

US foreign policy towards Syria shifted under the G.W. Bush administration. The Syria Accountability and Lebanese Sovereignty Restoration Act, passed by the US Congress in 2003 demanded Syrian withdrawal from Lebanon and condemned “Syrian support for terrorism”. In addition, the UNSC 1559, backed by France and the US, further condemned Syrian interference in Lebanese politics.

The mounting international hostility towards Syria nurtured a progressive binary polarisation of the political field between pro- and anti-Syrian blocks that exacerbated tensions in the executive. The unconstitutional renewal of Lahoud’s term in September 2004 epitomised the extent of Syrian involvement in Lebanon and Damascus’s preoccupation in retaining its position in the country.

In autumn 2004, Omar Karami formed a new cabinet (October 2004-May 2005), following Hariri’s resignation. Formed in consultation with President Lahoud and Speaker Berri, it included thirty members aiming at driving the country to the 2005 legislative elections. The cabinet was eminently close to Syria, reflecting Damascus’s anxiety over

increased external pressures and domestic agitation. Thus the so called 'sovereign' portfolios (Interior, Defence and Foreign Affairs) were ceded to openly pro-Syrian figures (al Jazeera 2004). The assassination of Rafiq Hariri and the subsequent wave of popular mobilisation would lead to the cabinet's resignation -and re-appointment for a brief period in spring 2005-.

The executive emerged during the period 1990-2005 as the key battling ground between the three Presidents. Essentially, their interaction mirrored a zero-sum game of inter-institutional competition in the management of the state. This implied a deformed interpretation of the agreement that did not comply with its spirit and letter. Inevitably, the executive had mutated into a trilateral scheme that undermined the work of the Council of Ministers. To a certain extent, the trespassing of jurisdictional lines was owed to the ambiguity of the agreement itself. Yet, the textual ambivalence does not detract responsibility from the elites that participated in the grand coalitions of the period under study.

Admittedly, the first postwar cabinets had to grapple with an enormous amount of issues that pertained to reconstruction, and institutional restoration. Therefore, most of the cabinets followed a broadened format that comprised thirty ministers -some of whom without portfolio- to facilitate transition, and compromise divergences of interest. In this vein, they were carefully crafted to represent sectarian, regional and political interests. Significantly, the distribution of seats in the Council of Ministers informally included quotas allotted to Syria, the President and the Speaker of Parliament, who thus placed their protégés.

Nevertheless, the outwardly representative character of the postwar cabinets was in fact fallacious as Hizbullah and the most prominent

Maronite politicians refused joining them. Hence, significant segments of the Shia and notably the Maronite sects were not included in them.

Syria had an extra-institutional role in the executive. On the one hand, it functioned as the final arbiter in cases of inter-institutional stalemates. The trilateral constellation of the presidencies, vested with formal and informal veto powers, frequently produced deadlocks that were resolved with Syrian mediation. This allowed Syria to employ an imperial policy of divide-and-rule as the members of the Lebanese troika reached out to Damascus. Syrian arbitration deepened the pervasive democratic deficit in the executive, by, ironically, emboldening the deresponsibilisation of the incumbent elites (Zahar 2005b, 162) which eminently highlighted the low level of institutionalisation during the first phase of postwar Lebanon.

On the other hand, Syria worked to preserve its vested interests in Lebanon. These extended in various areas ranging from the Arab-Israeli peace process, the protection of Syrian migrants (sending \$1-3 billion in remittances) working in Lebanon and the preservation of illegal sources of personal enrichment (Ibid. 158). In this vein, pro-Syrian figures were rewarded with ministerial portfolios, despite the fact that they very often lacked a broad base of support (Zahar 2005a, 239).

The Legislature

The Taif Agreement had elevated the status of the Chamber of Deputies by transforming the quasi-presidential system into parliamentary democracy. This shift was additionally emphasized by the increased powers henceforth wielded by the Shia speaker.

Nevertheless, the postwar legislatures suffered from a significant lack of popular legitimacy. In this vein, the representative function of the Parliament was 'diluted' as soon as a modicum of stability was restored. The appointment of forty new MPs that were close to Syria and the increase in the number of seats to 128 further impaired its legitimacy. As it will be shown below moreover, the electoral laws voted during this period, aggravated the Parliament's standing as the cradle of popular sovereignty.

In this vein, the Parliament institutionalised the postwar political order (el-Khazen 2003, 61). Thus, almost 24 percent of the MPs elected after the first postwar elections represented parties that were involved in the war (Ibid.) and to a certain extent owed their election to the Syrian trustee (Ibid. 70).

The legitimacy deficit of the Parliament was further aggravated by its instrumentalisation in the inter-institutional battle between the three presidencies. The veto rights indirectly granted to the Speaker impaired its performance. Under the troika system, the instrumentalisation of the legislature has been intensified, blurring the lines between the role and mission of the executive and legislative branches of power.

Moreover, the Parliament's lawmaking reputation was compromised by the voting of some controversial constitutional amendments. As aforementioned, the Parliament extended Hrawi's term in the presidency. In the same vein, it amended the constitution to render Emile Lahoud eligible for the presidency, and drafted, under Syrian pressure, an extra-constitutional decree that extended his tenure for three years (Salamey and Payne 2008, 457). Essentially, the Parliament has been largely dissociated from the process of presidential election as the

candidates were handpicked in extra-institutional settings (el-Khazen 2003, 71).

Finally, the Parliament failed to evolve into an arena of a principled opposition. Rather, opposition to governmental policies was transposed within the grand coalitions of the post-Taif era. It should be noted though, that the fear factor of the Syrian security apparatus constrained the development of accountability and substantial opposition politics. Thus “when opposition leaders raise[d] fundamental issues, they either ma[d]e no real impact on the political process, or they opt[ed] for boycott and exit from the political process” (el-Khazen 1994). The first time “a taboo issue” was raised in the Parliament was in 2000 and referred to the process of Syrian withdrawal and the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries (el-Khazen 2003, 69).

Elections

Theories of democratization stress the significance of postwar elections as means towards stability and nation-building (Reilly 2008, 157-158) In this vein, postwar elections contribute to the termination of civil wars, the transformation of militias to political parties, the restoration of normality in the political realm, the election of a representative assembly, and the conferral of legitimacy upon the political system (Ibid. 158). For instance, Terrence Lyons observes that post-conflict elections form an integral part of a peace process. Post-settlement elections attempt “to instill democracy by enshrining new political institutions and rules of competition” (2002, 215).

Within this framework, the first postwar legislative elections in Lebanon were instrumental in marking transition to the postwar era. “The

1992 election was distinctive because it was the first to be held since the outbreak of war in the mid-1970s. It was also distinctive because it was the first to be held in accordance with the Document of National Understanding...” and were therefore likened to adopting a new constitution (el-Khazen 1994).

According to the Taif Agreement, the Lebanese elites should adopt an electoral law that uses the governorate (*mohafaza*) as the electoral unit, guarantees “common coexistence” and ensures “the sound and efficient political representation” of all factions and generations. The call on sound and efficient political representation on the level of the governorate probably implied the adoption of proportionality (Salam 2004, 6).

However, Lebanon’s electoral system has traditionally deviated from the rule of proportionality, applying a hybrid law that straddled majoritarian and proportional principles. In fact, the combination between the two electoral systems propelled cross-confessional bargaining, trans-sectarian alliances and vote trading as propounded by centripetalist theories of conflict management.

In this vein, the first-past-the-post (FPTP) is used to determine the winning lists in multi-member electoral districts. Under this majoritarian formula, the phenomenon of the wasted vote becomes endemic, so that the majority of the Lebanese voters in the 1972, 1992, 1996 elections were not represented by a single deputy (Ibid. 3).

To mitigate those effects, the seats within the governorates are proportionally distributed on the basis of sectarian and demographic considerations. Moreover, the lists are open and each voter is free to cast a list as it is (*straight bloc vote*), add (*mixed block lists*) candidates from a competing list or remove (*partial block vote*) (Salamey 2014, 111) them

under the condition that her/his choice does not alter the pre-determined confessional balance.

In line with these parameters, the 1992 electoral law did not deviate from the overarching electoral rationale. Nevertheless, practices of gerrymandering and malapportionment were endorsed to reproduce a pro-Syrian legislature. Crucially, Law 154 that preceded the elections increased the number of deputies from 108 to 128. The Christians were granted ten additional seats. Yet, the distribution of those seats did not reflect the demographic changes that took place during the civil war. In fact, Maronite seats were allocated to areas, where the sect's candidates would be largely dependent on Muslim voters, whilst the ratio of Maronite voters per deputy in those districts was far behind their national average (Salloukh and al-Habbal, 2015, 90).

Moreover, the electoral law distorted the letter of the Taif Agreement: it divided the country into three large electoral districts (Beirut, North and South Lebanon) and nine middle-sized districts (Mount Lebanon and Bekaa) (Ibid. 92) to ensure the election of pro-Syrian elites. Thus, Nabih Berri “demanded and received” the merging of the South into one constituency (el-Khazen 2003, 67). Beirut was also turned to one constituency to the benefit of the Sunni elites and in particular Rafiq Hariri (Ibid.). On the other hand, Mount Lebanon, which had a vast Christian majority, was divided into six districts that favoured the compact Druze community of the area and its leader, Walid Jumblatt (Hanf 1993, 628). Similar calculations led to the fragmentation of the Bekaa into three constituencies that corresponded to the strongholds of President Hrawi, Speaker Husseini, and Interior Minister Khatib (Ibid.).

Hanf underlines that malapportionment rendered impossible the election of a one-third blocking minority of Christian MPs mainly elected by Christian votes (Ibid.). In the large districts of Beirut, the North and South Lebanon, Muslim voters could effectively determine the election of Christian candidates.

Importantly, the 1992 elections echoed dilemmas endemic in post-conflict settings that straddled short- and long-term priorities, questions of representation versus stability and domestic versus international legitimacy (Reilly 2008, 157). Farid el-Khazen distinguished three approaches regarding the 1992 elections. A number of politicians buttressed the idea of holding the elections on schedule. Others opposed the timing of the elections and its holding per se, whilst some oscillated between acceptance and rejection (al Mashriq 1994).

Government officials were broadly in favour of holding the elections on time. President Hrawi, for instance, viewed the elections as a chance to consolidate his position both domestically and towards Damascus (Ibid.). Speaker Husseini, competing in the same district with Hrawi, muted his initial reluctance, eventually speaking in favour of the scheduled elections. In the same vein, Premier Solh and influential ministers in the cabinet that were close to Damascus, pressed effectively for holding the elections on time (Ibid.).

On the other hand, Hizbullah opted for participation in the elections but rejected the Taif Agreement (Ibid.). Sunni politicians such as Salim al-Hoss and Tamam Salam were ambivalent in their support to the electoral process. The latter's father in particular, the former Premier Saeb Salam, opposed holding the elections amidst a climate of sectarian polarisation (Ibid.).

The picture was more complex among the Maronites. The aounist forces have rejected outright both the Taif Agreement and the elections. On the other hand, the Kataeb, the Lebanese Forces and the Maronite patriarch had supported the Taif Agreement but disagreed on the timing and the modalities of the elections. “The partial implementation of the Ta’if Agreement and its repeated violations alienated those Christian leaders who had given it the required political cover despite popular opposition” (Ibid.). President Hrawi did not have the necessary Maronite credentials to compensate for these flaws. Thus the boycott of the electoral process came as the least evil between the choice of participating in the elections -and thus losing large parts of the Christian popular base-, or staying aloof and missing a substantial share of political power in the new order (Ibid.). Besides, the lack of basic services and the devaluation of the Lebanese lira rendered the election of new representatives a second-order priority (Ibid.).

By contrast, Syria, seized the window of opportunity to push for the scheduled holding of the elections. This served its own interests that straddled Lebanese and international concerns. On the one hand, a class of pro-Syrian politicians was emerging in the domestic level that was much indebted to Damascus. On the other hand, Syria viewed the juncture as opportune to endorse its legitimacy and credentials as a trustee given US indifference to press for a more democratic process (Ibid.).

The 1992 elections witnessed the lowest level of voter turnout since independence as 30.34 percent of the electorate decided to cast her/his ballot. Crucially, 42 percent of the new MPs were elected unopposed or with nominal opposition (Ibid.). These winners represented 69 percent of the Christian deputies and 16 percent of the Muslim. The results of the

1992 elections ushered in an unprecedented transformation in parliamentary representation.

Elite circulation has reached 80 percent in respect to the results of the last general elections (1972). A great number of established feudal leaders (zuama) gradually became irrelevant as an emerging caste of warlords took over the provision of welfare to the community during the years of the civil war (Ibid.). The effects of this social transformation were more profound among the Shia whose political representation turned into a duopoly between Amal and Hizbullah, effectively sidelining the prewar feudal class of zuama (Ibid.)

The electoral process was realised in three rounds (three consecutive Sundays). The completion of the first round was followed by charges of ballot-rigging (Inter-Parliamentary Union 1992), whilst other infringements were reported such as disappearance and concealment of voter lists, tabulations unsigned by government officials and tampering (el-Khazen 2003, 68).

The electoral law was amended for the 1996 elections to gerrymander electoral districts in line with the interests of the main political leaders and Syria. Therefore, the three electoral districts in Bekaa were morphed into a single constituency, shifting the balance of power in favour of the Shia voters. Essentially, this re-arrangement favoured Amal and Hizbullah that captured the district's seats without much effort (Salloukh and al-Habbal 2015, 92). Instead, the Christian-majority area of Mount Lebanon remained fragmented into small districts to match the preferences of the Druze leader Walid Jumblatt. (Ibid.). Crucially, Jumblatt, serving as Minister of the Displaced could exert strong leverage on the displaced Christians of the constituency in exchange of faster

rehabilitation to their former residences (Malik 1996). Still, South Lebanon and Beirut remained a single constituency to favour Berri and Hariri respectively (el-Khazen 2003, 67).

Nonetheless, the 1996 electoral law was challenged by ten MPs on the grounds of violating the principle of the equality of vote. In fact, a candidate could be easily elected with a mere few hundred votes on the district level. On the level of the governorate instead, election required some thousands ballots cast in favour of a candidate. The case being lodged at the Constitutional Council notwithstanding, the government - with parliamentary consent- 'rectified' the law by adding the phrase "for one time only" (Harik 1998, 147). Despite this setback, the Constitutional Court managed to unseat four MPs, a Minister included, an event that was characterised as "unprecedented" in the democratic trajectory of post-Taif Lebanon and the judiciary's role in it (Ibid.148). The ruling of the Constitutional Court aside, monitoring and private groups documented widespread fraud (Ibid.). Crucially, newly naturalized Lebanese were invited to vote for the government's candidates (Malik 1996).

The effects of the electoral law were manifested in the seemingly paradoxical alliances formed during the process. Amal and Hizbullah ran under Syrian pressure (el-Khazen 2003, 68) on the same ticket in the Shia areas of South Lebanon and the Bekaa, but they entered rival lists in the Maronite-Druze districts of Mount Lebanon and Beirut –Amal formed a joint list with Hariri's party in Beirut- (Salloukh and al-Habbal, 2015, 92). Malik argues that the US and Lebanese governments agreed in barring the return of Hizbullah and other Islamist parties in the constituencies of Beirut, the North and Mount Lebanon "in return for U.S. endorsement of the integrity of the electoral process" (The Washington Institute 1996).

Voter turnout increased to 44.11 percent (Inter-Parliamentary Union 1996). Some Christian politicians decided to run in the elections despite the Christian boycott (el-Khazen 2003, 65). This reflected Christian fragmentation that rendered the formation of a coherent opposition front hardly possible (Malik 1996).

The results did not mark a shift in relation to the 1992 elections. The Islamist parties, such as Hizbullah, the Jamaa Islamiyya and al-Ahbash suffered losses indeed. These parties apart, most of the deputies elected “counted as loyalists who were committed to regime notables” (Harik 1998, 148). Hence, Premier Hariri and Speaker Berri were comfortably reelected with the “mainstays retaining their portfolios” in the Council of Ministers (Ibid.).

The 2000 legislative elections followed a number of events that could be characterised as turning points in the history of the region (EUEOM Final Report 2005, 18). In May 2000, after 22 years of occupation, the Israeli army withdrew from Lebanon (Ibid.). Some weeks later, Syrian President, Hafez al-Assad passed away (Ibid.). Both events impacted upon the elections in Lebanon: firstly, the opposition became more vocal in its demand for Syrian withdrawal especially after the Israeli redeployment. Secondly, the ascent of Bashar al-Assad in the presidency of the Syrian Arab Republic led to a re-arrangement of alliances and preferences in Lebanon ((Rowayeb 2011, 55). In this vein, Bashar replaced the old guard of Syrian Baathists such as Abdul Halim Khaddam and Hikmat Shahabi, who have both been in good terms with Jumblatt (Ibid.) and Hariri with his own associates. Therefore, Hariri and Jumblatt have gradually seen their influence going diminishing, since Lahoud emerged as Syria’s most favoured protégé in Lebanon.

The 2000 legislative elections were therefore characterised by a strong political battle between supporters of Lahoud and his opponents (Hariri, Jumblatt, and the non-boycotting Christian opposition) (EUEOM Final Report 2005, 18). Some were channelling their opposition specifically against Lahoud and others –mainly the Christians- against the Syrian presence in Lebanon (Ibid.).

Significantly, Bashar proved adamant in the preservation of the status quo in Lebanon and the perpetuation of the Syrian tutelage. This was reflected in the new electoral law that was crafted for the 2000 elections. The law repeated patterns prevalent in the previous elections. Thus, the law was prepared hastily just a few months before the election day, leaving little time to candidates “to prepare their campaign and the electorate to adapt to the new districts introduced by the law’ (Ibid. 15).

Gerrymandering was thus again manipulated to engineer the reproduction of a pro-Syrian legislature. The new electoral law divided Beirut, Hariri’s stronghold, into three districts in order to fragment the Sunni vote among rival Sunni politicians such as Tamam Salam and outgoing Premier al-Hoss (Gambill and Abou Aoun 2000). In Mount Lebanon, electoral districts were decreased from six to four to enhance the prospects of the pro-Syrian Minister of Interior Michel Murr, and undercut the influence of Walid Jumblatt (Salloukh and al-Habbal, 2015, 94). The North and the South governorates were both split into two districts in order to boost the chances of success for Franjeh and Berri respectively (Ibid.). Finally, the Bekaa was redrawn into three districts, yet this did not make an impact on Hizbullah’s performance, which was again asked not to run against Amal (el-Khazen 2003, 68).

Apart from districting, electoral engineering took place in the formation of lists. This happened in Mount Lebanon, where Syria tried unsuccessfully to impose Elie Hobeika on a common list with Jumblatt's Druze rival, Talal Arslan, Amal and Hizbullah. Hizbullah's reaction led to a compromise solution, where voters could write Hobeika's name in an empty slot on the slate (Gambill and Abou Aoun 2000). In the South, Hariri allied with Amal and Hizbullah in a list that swept all twenty three seats (Salloukh and al-Habbal, 2015, 94).

The electoral campaign was characterised "as the most corrupt since the termination of the civil war" (Inter-Parliamentary Union 2000). The list of irregularities included the use of media for slandering opponents and the lavish spending on the electoral campaign. Before, the Parliament has rejected a proposed law on capping campaign spending (Ibid.). The elections were a triumph for Rafiq Hariri (won all seats in Beirut), who has spent \$50 million in the campaign (Ibid.). The voter turnout varied from 33 percent to 66 percent depending on the area, as the main Christian parties quite unsuccessfully tried to continue their boycott (Ibid.).

Hence, electoral laws were largely employed as means to engineer and reproduce the re-election of the incumbent elites. In this vein, considerations about democracy were traded-off in exchange of political stability within the bounds set by the Syrian trustee. Widespread practices of malapportionment and gerrymandering effectively distorted accountability, representativeness and competition (Salloukh and al-Habbal, 2015, 88). For the Christian opposition in particular, the first postwar elections were a bitter process that contributed to their further marginalisation from the political landscape. Gerrymandering and

malapportionment primarily targeted their constituencies thus attenuating to a great extent the merits of overrepresentation in the legislature.

Background factors (1990-2005)

The protracted civil war had inevitably caused changes in the social fabric of Lebanon. According to Imad Salamey, 130,000 civilians lost their lives, whilst “one million people (about one-quarter of the population) were wounded, and half of those were left with lifetime disabilities (2014, 41). Moreover, about 900,000, -roughly 20% of the population- people were displaced from their homes. Simultaneously, thousands have migrated abroad, representing more than a fourth of the labour force among whom many highly skilled and educated individuals (Picard 1992, 142).

The humanitarian dimension aside, the indiscriminate fighting caused an estimated damage of \$30 billion (Gemayel 1992, 4). Tom Najem indicates that “the gross domestic product fell to less than one-third in early 1980s level, the exchange rate dropped from 3.4 Lebanese pounds to the US dollar in 1980 to 450 Lebanese pounds to the US dollar in 1989 and unemployment increased from 12 percent in 1980 to 35 percent in 1989”. (2000, 17). Still, the capital stock was decimated as the value of the physical assets destroyed reached \$25 billion (cited in Dibeh 2005, 1). Infrastructure such as hospitals, roads, water mains, electricity and telephone networks were lying in tatters. The World Bank and the Lebanese Council for Development and Reconstruction estimated the cost of reconstruction at more than \$10 billion (Picard 1992, 142).

Thus Lebanon has undergone some important changes during the fifteen years of the civil war. In prewar Lebanon, the accumulating effects

of socioeconomic disparities, divergent perceptions of external threats and the lack of a shared overarching allegiance to the state created a precarious context that ushered in the state's demise through the militarisation of inter-confessional politics and the politicisation of identities.

The Taif Agreement attempted to prevent the disastrous recurrence of these phenomena, grappling with issues of identity, re-distribution of power and balanced economic development. During the period 1990-2005, the background factors could have a little impact, given the role of Syria in the political system. However, their exploration is useful to stress the trends and changes prevalent in postwar Lebanon.

-absence of solid majorities: Lebanon remained a country where no community enjoyed a solid majority. According to Dagher, right before the eruption of the intra-Maronite fighting in 1989-1990, Christians were estimated at 42.9 percent (26.4 percent Maronites, 7.9 percent Greek Orthodox, and 6.8 percent Greek Catholics) (2000, 70). The Muslims were, on the other hand, estimated at 56.9 percent (28.9 percent Shia, 24 percent Sunnis, and 4 percent Druze). The Christians reportedly paid a heavy price due to the intra-Maronite struggle between General Aoun and Geagea's Lebanese Forces, as their number shrunk to 36.5 percent (Ibid.). The CIA estimated the Christian population of Lebanon at around 30 percent as of July 1996 (Ibid.).

Faour contends that it is impossible to extract an accurate estimation of the Lebanese population in the absence of census and available data (2007, 919). A general estimation based on fertility rates and published data on parliamentary elections and the religious affiliation of eligible voters gives the following picture: Maronites are unlikely to

represent less than 20 percent of the population. Shia and Sunnis are estimated at around 31 percent each. These three largest sects together comprise 68 percent of the population. (Ibid.). The absence of solid majorities notwithstanding, the 1994 naturalisation of Arab immigrants (Kurds, Palestinians, Syrians, Iraqis and others), 85 percent of whom were Muslims, stirred Christian sensitivities (Dagher 2000, 74) pertaining to the demographic equilibrium and in relation to this, to the politics of citizenship in Lebanon (Maktabi 1999).

-socioeconomic disparities: Socioeconomic disparities in the postwar period persisted if not grown across regions, classes and districts (UNDP 2009, 124). Yet, it would be risky to paint these differences in sectarian terms in the absence of reliable data. Crucially, devastation inflicted Lebanon from the North to the South. Beirut, in particular, paid a heavy price as the contending Christian and Muslim militias waged ferocious battles until 1990.

According to the UNDP report (2009), the Horizon 2000 plan, which spearheaded the process of rebuilding Lebanon, was expected to trigger a trickle-down effect (2009, 45). Yet, most of the targets were out of reach (Ibid.). Other plans of reconstruction equally focused on the physical infrastructure without incorporating the rectification of macroeconomic imbalances, public administration reform and sectoral development (Ibid.). Whilst economic and social indicators were improved, a broader developmental vision was lacking (Ibid.). By 2006 public debt (178 percent GDP in 2006) skyrocketed as a result of an expansionary public expenditure policy coupled with a rigid monetary stabilization policy (Ibid. 46). Political instability and conflict with Israel made matters worse. Crucially, \$4.4 dollars have been unevenly disbursed

on infrastructure related to social outcomes (Ibid. 128). Beirut, for instance, which received 16 percent of public investment spending, represented only 8 percent of households with low satisfaction of basic needs in 1995 (Ibid.).

According to the Human Development Index (HDI), Lebanon made progress during the postwar phase in terms of economic growth, investments in education and growth in the GDP (Ibid. 50). The results show that the Christian-majority area of Mount Lebanon and the multi-communal city of Beirut fared better than North Lebanon (Sunni majority area), the Bekaa (it is inhabited by Sunni, Shia and Christian communities) and the South (Shia majority area) in all indexes (GDP, education, life expectancy).

Moreover, Lebanon has progressed in the postwar era in the fight against illiteracy, almost reaching its Millennium Development Goal (Ibid. 52). The Shia-majority areas of Nabatieh and Bekaa suffered from higher levels of illiteracy than Beirut and Mount Lebanon. Yet, the problem becomes more profound when viewed from a gender perspective as women formed a larger part of the illiterate population (Ibid. 52). Moreover, analysis of poverty levels in Lebanon revealed that North Lebanon suffered the most, followed by the South. Yet, disparities between regions were coupled with intra-regional differences that pointed to an important class dimension (Ibid. 147). Therefore, it would be an exaggeration to argue that a repetition of the class-sect cleavage reemerged in the postwar era.

Besides, the political economy of reconstruction ushered in a resuscitation of structured elite predominance through the exploitation of the state resources that somehow attenuated the adverse effects of the

financial, monetary and fiscal problems of the period 1990-2005. “Political elites in Lebanon are returning to the prewar pattern” of establishing ‘shadow’ states manifested in the sectarian provision of social welfare to increase leverage on the national level and “quell challenges at the local level (Kingston and Zahar 2004, 94). In this vein, most communities embarked upon a process of institution-building that provided welfare e.g. hospitals, schools.

Furthermore, corruption became embedded as a motley crew of “businessmen, warlords, militia leaders and wartime Syrian allies perceived themselves as the victors of the war and claimed the fruits of their struggle through rent seeking” (Adwan 2004, 2). Thus public goods provision became a tool of nepotism based on reciprocal consent and political toleration (UNDP 2009, 132) as *quid pro quo* towards symbiosis.

Moreover, the civil war has produced a sectarian make-up within the bourgeoisie that reflected the gradual socioeconomic convergence between Lebanon’s sectarian groups. Thus, whereas the Christians dominated the economy by 75:25 in the 60s, this ratio was reduced to 65:35 on the eve of war, and reached parity in the immediate postwar period (Traboulsi 2014, 45).

-moderate number of segments: Confessional fragmentation remained a key feature in the postwar period. Significantly, the 17 recognised communities were increased by one in the postwar period, as the small Alawite community was granted the status of the confessional group, translated into one parliamentary seat in North Lebanon. Nevertheless, Lebanon continued to enjoy a *multiple balance of power*, and a *small population*.

-external dangers: Divergences on the perception of external threats persisted. The Taif Agreement identified Israel as the nation's number one enemy, justified by the occupation of South Lebanon. The nominal consensus on the Israeli threat notwithstanding, this was not conducive to a cohesive Lebanese nationalism. The Christian segment, in particular, primarily focused on the threat posed by the perpetuation of Syrian domination in Lebanon. In this vein, members of the Maronite elite have been repeatedly accused as "isolationists" and "traitors" by various Muslim religious and political authorities (Rabil 2001) on the grounds of not being enthusiastic with the common Lebanese-Syrian struggle against Israel. On the other end of the spectrum, Hizbullah hoisted its struggle against Israel as the paramount example of patriotic commitment to the state and its identity. The Syrian tutelage posed constraint though, impeding the articulation of different perceptions of threats as the Lebanese elites were obliged to comply with the Syrian foreign policy priorities.

-overarching allegiances: Samir Khalaf underlines that the postwar Lebanese society experienced a retribalization that gave shape to "homogenous enclosures" (2003, 154). The recent memories of the war nurtured a trans-sectarian commonality of feelings that were anchored in the fears of confessional marginalisation, assimilation and exile (Ibid. 135). Hence, the community re-elevated to the status of the intermediary between the state and society, providing welfare, consolation and meaning. Crucially, the common memory of the war could have possibly served as the necessary sticking glue for the formation of a sense of a trans-confessional Lebanese identity grounded on the traumatic experiences of the war.

However, the Lebanese elites seemed “unconcerned with the task of transcending communal cleavages or with the need to forge a strong public national identity, let alone a national sense of sharing historic destiny” (Rabil 2001, 39). Thus, almost all actors in Lebanon pursued foreign policies that reflected the multi-faceted character of relations tying the elites in Lebanon to external actors. Nevertheless, these relations were to a great extent passed through the Syrian filter.

In this vein, Saudi Arabia has acquired a preponderant influence in Lebanon as the country that primarily sponsored the Taif Agreement. The preeminent status of Rafiq Hariri in the postwar order was in part reflection of this advanced Saudi role in Lebanon. The very fact of his premiership mirrored an understanding between Syria and Saudi Arabia which recognised Syrian interests in Lebanon, while giving Saudi Arabia a role through Hariri (ICG 2010, 4) as the most self-consciously “Sunni” power in the region (Baumann 2012, 89).

As has been already mentioned, Hariri has entered the arena of Sunni politics in Lebanon with Saudi assistance, as the Arab kingdom progressively skirted support for its previous favourite in the country Saeb Salam (Ibid. 92). During the years of the civil war, Hariri evolved as the envoy of Saudi Arabia in Lebanon mediating between various agreements (Ibid.93-94) that helped him position himself in the communal labyrinth of Lebanese politics. In the economic realm, the civil war presented investment opportunities both for Saudi Arabia and Hariri himself in the financial and construction sectors (Ibid. 94). The required investment capital to pursue those investments has been essentially derived from lucrative contracts for the Saudi king (Ibid. 95). Gradually, Rafiq Hariri managed to convert the financial capital acquired from his

business ties with Saudi Arabia to symbolic capital by expanding his philanthropic activities derived from his status as the Saudi king's contractor in Lebanon but also due to the direct payments made by the kingdom to his Hariri's educational and charitable institutions (Ibid. 98).

In the postwar phase, the Hariri-Saudi connection retained its economic-sectarian traits that as long as they did not threaten Syrian interests in Lebanon went unhindered. In this vein, the mounting public debt accumulated by the economic policy pursued under Hariri's premiership ushered in a growing dependence on Saudi Arabia that functioned as an "implicit" guarantor against default (Ibid. 99). Moreover, Saudi Arabia continued to fund the main Sunni institution in Lebanon, the Makassed (Ibid. 100-102). This economic aid deliberately stopped in 1996 in order to reportedly boost Hariri's credentials in its intra-Sunni political rivalry with Tamam Salam (Ibid. 102).

In the Shia milieu, the period 1990-2005 has been quite revealing of the multi-faceted character of the ties binding Hizbullah to Iran. This complexity is essentially anchored in the distinction between the religious and political realms in Iran. For Hizbullah, there is no contradiction between "being subject to the *Wali al-Faqih* and being committed to Lebanese identity and citizenship" (Daher 2007, 3). Whilst the authority of the wali is respected on matters of war and peace, the party enjoys relative autonomy in applying on the field the general principles defined by the Guide of the Revolution (Ibid.).

However, the party has asked for guidance by Ayatollah Khamenei to participate in the 1992 legislative elections after its Shura Council voted in favour of integration into the post-Taif order (Ibid. 4). In a similar vein, Hasan Nasrallah's re-election to the position of the

Secretary-General for a third mandate required prior authorisation by the wali since Hizbullah's statute allows only one tenure to the post (Ibid.).

Nevertheless, allegiance to the wali al-faqih benefits the party on the diplomatic level, as Khamenei represents Iran's highest authority. In this vein, Hizbullah recognised Khamenei as religious reference (marja') which importantly secured important funds for the party derived from its share of the Islamic taxes (khums) collected by the wali (Ibid. 3-4). The financial dimension of the marja'iyya extended in the provision of funds to assist the party's institution-building in Lebanon that in turn promote the marja's stature within the world Shia community. Significantly, this transnational two-way relationship bolsters Hizbullah's nationalist goals "in claiming rights vis-à-vis the Lebanese state" and in re-visioning the nation in line with its own interests (Eisenlohr 2008, 186).

Hizbullah's relations with the Iranian governments were more subtle during the period 1990-2005. Despite the fact that the two sides shared the common submission to the authority of the wali (Daher 2007, 4) and a commonality of interests in relation Israel, short-term priorities of the Iranian governments prompted slight divergences.

For instance, President Rafsadjani, prioritised normalisation of relations with the West against the exportation of the Islamist revolution. In this vein, he drastically cut down Iranian financial aid to Hizbullah, whilst urging for the party's integration into the Lebanese setting (Daher 2007, 5). This decision led to the eclipse of Hizbullah's radical faction and the ascent of the more pragmatic but conservative group led by Abbas Musawi and Hassan Nasrallah (Ibid.). Moreover, Khatami's term signalled a phase of pronounced Iranian-Western rapprochement that in

the Lebanese setting was translated into opening channels of communication with Hariri and other political factions (Ibid. 5-6).

Moreover, Amal and Hizbullah were “not created to be instruments of Iranian control so much as to strengthen the independent power of the Shi‘ite community...” (Fuller 2007, 143). Besides, the Hizbullah-Iranian relationship was to a certain extent mediated by the Syrian factor that defined the space of permissive action.

Finally, the Maronites had a hard time in advancing their causes among the community’s traditional patrons –namely France and the US-. Both states were preoccupied with stability in the area and prioritised the endorsement of the Syrian-Israeli, Palestinian-Israeli tracks of the Arab-Israeli peace process. As it will be explained in the next chapter, this stance progressively started to change during the post 9/11 era.

The Maronite Church however, attempted to make symbolic inroads by exploiting the Vatican’s political clout. In 1995, Pope John Paul II convened a three-week Synod for Lebanon. The Synod’s Final Message made references to the Syrian redeployment, cultural pluralism – a concept associated with the Christian aspirations of self-determination-, and to consensual democracy (Dagher 2000, 119). This was followed by the Pope’s Apostolic Exhortation issued upon his visit to Lebanon in 1997. In it, the Pope made nuanced calls for equality, respect of human rights, independence and sovereignty (Ibid. 193). However, the Apostolic Exhortation stressed that the Maronites should integrate themselves into the Arab culture, effectively challenging the Maronite conceptualisation of ‘pluralism’ (Ibid. 194).

-functional isolation: Functional isolation was preserved in the Taif Agreement. The sacralisation of confessionalism in the public sphere

entrenched cultural autonomy furthering the retribalization and pillarisation of the Lebanese society. In addition to segmental autonomy, a sort of informal territorial isolation emerged as massive population displacement during the civil war created a new map of homogeneous, self-contained and exclusive spaces (Khalaf 2003, 135).

-tradition of accommodation: The culture of accommodation deeply rooted in the Lebanese saga of power-sharing, seemed weak to contain inter-segmental rivalries. Christian marginalisation in particular, had a negative impact in the pursuit of consensus and the crystallisation of a culture of coexistence.

Overall, Lebanon rated favourably in the structural factors related to size and population but also segmental autonomy. On the other hand, the identity-related factors (overarching allegiances, external threat) coupled with extreme segmental fragmentation impinged upon

The Syrian factor

Damascus formed an integral part of the postwar order. Its responsibilities were delineated and legitimated by the Taif Agreement. Based on regional consent and US support, Syria emerged as a stakeholder embedded in the process of nation- and state-building. This salient role was justified by the historical bonds that tied the two countries together. The overarching doctrine of 'one people in two countries' (sha'b wahid fi baladayn) (Perthes 1996, 31) that permeated the post-Taif process, set the ideological and political bounds of acceptable domestic and international behaviour from the part of the Lebanese elites.

Interestingly, the Syrian mandate echoes some of the dilemmas embedded in the new wave of trusteeships prevalent in the post-Cold war

order e.g. Bosnia, Kosovo. Within the framework of complex consociations endorsed in countries such as Bosnia-Herzegovina, FYROM and Northern Ireland, O' Leary underscores the role of external actors in generating and sustaining the conflict-regulation arrangements (2005, 35). According to O'Leary, complex consociations grapple with political settlements that address national self-determination disputes (Ibid.34). Crucially, complex consociations are complemented by non-consociational conflict-regulation strategies e.g. territorial autonomy, arbitration or integration (Ibid.34).

The Lebanese case differs however, from the model of complex consociation. Demands for territorial self-determination such as secession, partition or confederation, which are endemic in national self-determination disputes, were limited to parties of the Maronite right (e.g. Phares 2001). Moreover, the Taif Agreement envisaged a unitary Lebanese state, whilst, as mentioned above, administrative devolution has a rather opaque meaning.

Nevertheless, international involvement was decisive in generating the settlement. The Tripartite Committee of the Arab League mediated the end of hostilities and international actors, such as the US provided the necessary backing for its enforcement. Within this context, Syria was entrusted with the role of the trustee, thus obtaining external legitimacy. Internally, this legitimacy was embodied in the support Syria enjoyed from various factions of the Lebanese mosaic. Therefore, Marie-Joëlle Zahar argues, that it would be wrong to qualify Syria as an occupying force (2005, 157).

Within this context, Syria emerged as the arbiter and ultimate decision-maker in cases of inter-sectarian bickering. As the external

guarantor, the Syrian trustee nurtured conditions of growing de-responsabilisation of the Lebanese elites that, in the words of Ghassan Salamé, underlined “the need for greater Syrian involvement” (Ibid. 162-163).

Thus, political elites in Lebanon felt to a certain extent comfortable to pursue their narrow interests at the expense of consociational power-sharing. Rabil argues that Syria had put Lebanon in “a double bind”: Lebanon could not forge a national identity under Syrian tutelage, but without it, the country faced the specter of recurring into civil war (2001, 41). In this vein, the Baathist elite in Beirut and Damascus provided its distorted interpretation of the Taif Agreement that tied Lebanese interests to that of Syria. In contrast to the prominent cases of neo-trusteeship in the post-Cold war order, the task of maintaining commitment to the peace settlement was assigned to an authoritarian state *par excellence*.

Essentially, political stability was prioritised over democracy in the process of postwar nation-building. This trade-off was reflected in the extensive Syrian engineering of the electoral laws, the composition of the cabinets, and the definition of Lebanese identity. Joanne McEvoy contends that external actors maintain power-sharing when they offer rewards that meet the domestic actors’ minimum constitutional preferences (2014, 62). The flawed implementation of the Taif Agreement distorted those preferences at least for the disempowered Maronite segment. Moreover, the election of Emile Lahoud, and his subsequent rise as Syria’s protégé impaired the constitutional preferences of the Sunnis as reflected in the powers of the Prime Minister.

Rewards were therefore distributed as a means to coopt rival leaders in the governance of the state. These included special provisions

in the drawing of the electoral laws, appointment in the postwar cabinets, and in the case of Hizbullah, exemption from disarmament. Simultaneously, the power-sharing formula was equally sustained through the use of coercion. Opponents were often harassed, arrested, and imprisoned thus facilitating the preservation of a pro-Syrian order.

Hence, Syria had essentially hybrid functions that straddled an occupying force and an internationally mandated trustee. This hybridity quintessentially reflected the contradictions of state formation in Lebanon but also the dilemmas of the post-Cold war order in the area of the Middle East.

CHAPTER 5
CONTESTED CONSOCIATIONALISM: LEBANON IN THE
POST-SYRIA ERA (2005-2015)

The Independence Intifada

The Independence Intifada or the ‘Cedar Revolution’ of 2005 has been a watershed moment in the history of Lebanese nation-building. Twenty-nine years of Syrian military presence in Lebanon ended after a wave of popular mobilisations ushered the Baathist regime in the decision to redeploy its troops. Importantly, the élan elicited by these popular protests and the accumulated indignation against the Syrian order bore the traits of a critical juncture (Clark and Zahar 2014) that could potentially pave the way towards national unity and democracy. Yet, the point of divergence marked by the Syrian withdrawal, and the space of possibility opened by it evolved into a missed opportunity (Ibid.). The power vacuum created by the end of the Syrian tutelage was progressively filled by an intense antagonism over the state and its orientation.

Crucially, the 2005 events are nested within a broader set of conditions that enhanced the prospects of structural change within Lebanon. As shown in chapter 3, the peace settlement in Taif became possible under a combination of favourable conditions in the regional environment and within Lebanon itself. Regional developments created the scope conditions towards a successful comprehensive settlement. The mutual hurting stalemate in the battlefield, on the other hand, armed Lebanese actors with determination to reach an agreement that ran to a large extent against their preferences. Likewise, the Independence Intifada was the product of a set of permissive factors in the international

arena that facilitated the relaxation of structural constraints within Lebanon.

Permissive conditions

Significantly, the 9/11 tragedy fuelled a set of perceptions and triggered a chain of events that profoundly shaped developments in the Middle East. The dual campaigns on the ‘war on terror’ and on the promotion of democracy spearheaded this change of course in the realm of the post- 9/11 US foreign policy.

Within the context of the post-9/11 US foreign policy, the Middle East would transform into an area of peace and democracy with Iraq as its main driver (Ottaway, Brown et al. 2008, 1). This revolutionary zeal was echoed in the words of G.W. Bush who argued that “the establishment of a free Iraq at the heart of the Middle East will be a watershed event in the global democratic revolution” (Ibid.).

Crucially, Syria held an eminent position on the list of rogue states. It was accused of sponsoring terrorism and violating civil liberties. Thus, “Syria f[ell] into that particular troublesome category, identified by the Bush administration, of states with terrorist links simultaneously maintaining or pursuing weapons-of-mass destruction capabilities” that consistently impeded political and economic liberalisation (Leverett 2005, 16).

Within this context, the legitimacy of the Syrian tutelage in Lebanon was put into question. The perpetuation of this state of affairs in Lebanon was deemed even more unacceptable as the Assad regime was not unwilling to cooperate on the Syrian track of the Arab-Israeli peace process (Ibid.).

US invasion in Iraq added new sources of friction in the US-Syrian relations. The US administration accused Syria of facilitating the “movement of so-called ‘freedom fighters’ across the border” (Ibid. 17). The US government was therefore, determined to exert pressure on Syria in what regards its position in Lebanon in order to obtain the much coveted Baathist cooperation on Iraq and the Arab-Israeli peace process.

The enactment of the Syria Accountability and Lebanese Sovereignty Act (Ibid. 17) signed by President G. W. Bush in December 2003 reflected this shift in US foreign policy towards a tougher stance against Damascus. According to the text, the Congress called Syria to withdraw its military, paramilitary and security forces from Lebanon and set a firm timetable for such withdrawal (Syrian Accountability and Lebanese Sovereignty Restoration Act Sec.3 par.3).

Importantly, the Lebanese diaspora engaged in some extensive lobbying to ensure that the bill would be voted by the US Congress. Groups such as the U.S. Committee for a Free Lebanon advocated the voting of the bill portraying Lebanon as an "outpost of western values" (Shlaes 2002). The committee, whose composition was mostly Christian, coordinated action with other immigrant associations to create the Syrian Accountability Act as a step towards “democratization” and abandonment of US “realpolitik in the Middle East” (Ibid.).

In parallel to the enactment of the Syria Act, the US administration made overtures to France in pursuit of a concerted action against Syria. Crucially, French hostility towards the US invasion in Iraq has produced a transatlantic rift in the relations between the two countries. This discord was anchored in a difference of perceptions between the multipolar world order (NYT 2004) propounded by Jacques Chirac and a pronounced US

unilateralism echoed by the Manichean connotations of the ‘coalition of willing’.

Lebanon offered a convenient point of convergence to bridge US-French differences. Besides, France traditionally portrayed itself as a responsible stakeholder in Lebanon. This US-French rapprochement was reflected in the shared perceptions that Syria destabilised Lebanon by i) protecting Hizbullah ii) facilitating the flow of weapons and radical elements to the Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon iii) undermining the authority of Premier Rafiq Hariri and iv) meddling in the constitutional process, pushing for the unconstitutional renewal of Lahoud’s term (Baroudi and Salamey 2011, 404).

The UNSC Resolution 1559, sponsored by the two countries, condenses this thaw. According to the Resolution, the Security Council reaffirms “its call for the strict respect of the sovereignty, territorial integrity, unity, and political independence of Lebanon under the sole and exclusive authority of the Government of Lebanon throughout Lebanon”, it calls upon “all remaining foreign forces to withdraw from Lebanon”, and it declares “its support for a free and fair electoral process in Lebanon’s upcoming presidential election conducted according to Lebanese constitutional rules devised without foreign interference or influence” (UNSC Res. 1559). Fakhoury notes that the resolution had deeper implications than preventing Syrian meddling in the Lebanese presidential elections. In fact, it resonated intentions for regime change in the Middle East through softer means and thus to a rearrangement of the Lebanese-Syrian relations (2007, 269).

The assassination of Rafiq Hariri on 14 February 2005 -attributed to Damascus and its allies in Lebanon- led to an escalated US-French

collaboration against Syria. France recalled its ambassador from Damascus, whilst President Chirac reaffirmed the united US-French stance on Lebanon (Baroudi and Salamey 2011, 407). This common approach entailed three goals: i) the conduct of an international investigation on the murder of Rafiq Hariri ii) withdrawal of the Syrian military and security apparatus before the June 2005 legislative elections and iii) timely holding of elections (Ibid.).

In February 2005, a fact-finding Commission arrived in Lebanon to investigate the circumstances that led to Hariri's assassination. In April 2005, the Security Council voted in favour of Resolution 1595, which, building upon the findings of the Commission, stated that "converging evidence point[ed] at both Lebanese and Syrian involvement in the terrorist act" (UNSC Resolution 1595).

Productive conditions

The normative shift in the international order, incarnated by the plan for a new Middle East created a climate permissive to anti-Syrian political and social mobilisation in Lebanon. Previous or parallel mobilisations in Ukraine, Georgia and Kyrgyzstan attested to the pervasive *esprit du temps* that echoed demands for 'democracy', 'sovereignty' and 'independence'. Within this permissive context, anti-Syrian mobilisation would bring Lebanon under the spotlight of the struggle for democracy and the war on terror.

Significantly, Syria has underestimated its growing unpopularity in Lebanon and its heightened regional and international isolation (Baroudi and Salamey 2001, 405), a miscalculation that opened a window of opportunity for structural change. In response to the UNSC Resolution

1559, the Lebanese Parliament voted under Syrian pressure, for an exceptional three-year renewal of Lahoud's term.

Some days earlier Premier Hariri was summoned to Damascus. After a meeting with Bashar al-Assad, Hariri decided to vote in favour of the proposed extension of term (Safa 2006, 29). Hariri resigned some weeks later, in October 2004. He was succeeded by Omar Karami, who, after forming a pro-Syrian cabinet, called for a demonstration of the 'one-million' in protest to UNSC Resolution 1559 (Shebaya 2007, 260) as a show of Lebanese support to Syria. The attempted assassination of Druze MP Marwan Hamade on 1st October 2004, allegedly by the Syrian regime, demonstrated that Lebanon was undergoing a period of high effervescence.

The internationalisation of the Lebanese cause through the UNSC Resolution 1559 encouraged the anti-Syrian, -namely the Maronite opposition-, to intensify its mobilisation (Fakhoury 2007, 272). One day before the vote of UNSC Resolution 1559, the Maronite Bishop's Council issued its fifth statement, where it accused Syria of transforming Lebanon into its province (Ibid. 274).

In addition, Walid Jumblatt stepped up its change of heart towards Damascus by joining the Bristol Gathering (at-Tajamou al-Bristol) that brought together various Maronite anti-Syrian forces such as the Qornet Shehwan Gathering, the Lebanese Forces, Aounists, the National Liberal party but also trans-sectarian political formations e.g. the Democratic Left Party (Ibid. 275). In fact, Jumblatt's move confirmed his 2000 volte face towards the Christian opposition. Yet, his opposition to Syria "intensified after the United Nations' Security Council voted for Resolution 1559 in 2004" (Rowayeb 2011, 58). Ironically, Jumblatt's anti-Syrian stance

escalated as soon G.W. Bush decided to limit Syria's influence in Lebanon (Ibid.). Apart from mending fences with the Maronite opposition, Jumblatt forged an alliance with Rafiq Hariri, whom he considered an important asset in the struggle against Syria (Ibid) given the latter's gleaming prestige.

Despite differences on the modalities of redeployment of Syrian troops, the members of the Bristol Gathering managed to agree on a common declaration. The declaration called for a restructuring of Syrian-Lebanese relations, the application of the Taif agreement, the holding of free elections, the formation of a new cabinet, the release of Samir Geagea and the return of Michel Aoun from exile (Fakhoury 2007, 277). Its publication triggered enthusiasm from moderate Sunni actors, who rarely criticised Syria (Fakhoury 2008, 7). In February 2005, the Bristol Gathering called for total Syrian withdrawal (Ibid.). It was after this meeting that it became known that Hariri was on the opposition's side (Ibid.). His assassination on 14 February 2005 that cost the life of 21 people triggered a string of reactions from both elites and the grassroots. "Whether or not this assassination was engineered by the Syrians, it served as the catalyst for a massive anti-Syrian movement in Lebanon" (Kattouf and Phares 2005).

Importantly, the tacit alliance between Maronite, Druze, and Sunni leaders came amply into the fore (Baroudi and Salamey 2011, 406). In parallel, popular agitation climaxed into mass demonstrations and rallies, that according to Safa, were the most intense in the history of Lebanon (2006, 31). Apart from demands on Syrian withdrawal, members of the opposition would henceforth call for a just and thorough investigation of Hariri's murder. "A collective mobilization of the population, student

unions, youth movements, opposition parties, civil society groups led gradually to gigantic mass demonstrations” from 21 February to 14 March 2005 (Fakhoury 2007, 282), that would be identified as the Independence Intifada (*al intifadat al-istiqlal*) or the Beirut Spring.

By late February 2005, Karami’s government resigned. It was the first time in the history of Lebanon that a government resigned in the legislature (Ibid. 283). On 5 March 2005, Syrian troops were ordered to redeploy in a staged fashion that was completed in April 2005 after 29 years of stationing in Lebanon (Baroudi and Salamey 2011, 407).

Yet, the mobilisation of the anti-Syrian forces was countervailed by an enormous demonstration on 8 March 2005 of about one million people in support of Syria. This was organised by Hizbullah and Amal with minor participation by ideologically secular parties such as the Syrian Socialist Nationalist Party and the Baath. The *shukr wa-wafa’ li souriya* (thanks and loyalty to Syria) (Shebaya 2007, 261) bloc expressed essentially this segment of the Lebanese population, mainly Shia, that felt grateful towards Syria and its alleged sacrifices in the liberation of Lebanon from Israeli occupation (Ibid.) In relation to Hariri’s murder, Hassan Nasrallah reminded his followers that it was premature to accuse Syria of masterminding his assassination (Knio 2008, 447), exposing his reticence towards the need of an international investigation team.

In response to the pro-Syrian rally, anti-Syrian forces mobilised anew on 14 March, gathering a crowd of about 1.2 million people in down town Beirut. Protesters called again for a swift Syrian redeployment, the uncovering of truth behind Hariri’s assassination, resignation of the security establishment, and timely holding of legislative elections without Syrian interference (Safa 2006, 33). “Rarely has a

popular mobilization received so much attention from the global media, and possibly never before has a movement for political change been so conscious of the image it was projecting to the world” (Salti 2005).

By spring 2005, the Second Lebanese Republic was shaken by tremendous mobilisations and counter-mobilisations, dividing the country seemingly between two poles. Significantly, both camps brandished Lebanese flags to demonstrate their patriotic and nationalist credentials. Nevertheless, this public display of patriotism was essentially invested with different meanings. Whilst both sides agreed on the need of Syrian withdrawal, the justification for this was grounded on disparate interpretations. For Hizbullah and the Syrian regime, the redeployment was legally based on the provisions of the Taif agreement. Instead, the Christian opposition considered the Syrian withdrawal as the outcome of an obligation towards the international community springing out of the UNSC Resolution 1559 (Kurtulus 2009, 202).

Towards a new landscape

The Syrian withdrawal is undoubtedly a juncture of tremendous importance. On the one hand, Lebanon has regained its sovereignty and independence after a rare display of popular mobilisation that stayed within the bounds of civility. On the other hand, the Syrian redeployment has created a structural vacuum within the political system. Syria has functioned as an arbiter of last resort, the external guarantor of the Taif Agreement and ultimately the balancer between competing sectarian interests.

The evaporation of the Syrian factor generated a fluid state of affairs or a power vacuum. In the absence of the external balancer,

Lebanese actors ventured to shape the course of events according to their respective vision of the state that to an extent drew its meaning from opposition/attachment to Syria or what Kurtulus coined as the *integration-independence cleavage* (2009).

Crucially, the events that ushered in the Independence Intifada highlighted an emerging bipolarity in the configuration of alliances that partially reflected a bipolarity of visions. However, this seeming bipolarity did not rise automatically. As Halim Shebaya explains, on the morrow of the Syrian redeployment, three lines of interpretation emerged (2007, 261) that were tightly interwoven with the Syrian factor in postwar Lebanon.

First, the 8 March camp expressed gratitude to Syria for its steadfastness in the liberation of the Lebanese territories occupied by Israel. In this vein, the 8 March alliance opposed the UNSC Resolution 1559 as a violation of Lebanese sovereignty and in relation to it, condemned initiatives that aimed at disarming the Islamic Resistance. On the issue of the Hariri assassination, the 8 March forces provided rhetorical support for its investigation (Ibid.) as this involved external – and namely western intervention- in the affairs of Lebanon.

The second interpretation was enunciated by the 14 March alliance. Echoing this interpretation, Fouad Siniora, Prime Minister of Lebanon (2005-2008) and close aide to Rafiq and Saad Hariri, thanked Syria for preventing the partition of Lebanon (*taqsim*), but blamed it for becoming a burden in the social, economic, and political life of Lebanon (Ibid. 262). According to this line of reasoning, the Syrian role was deemed positive until the election of Lahoud as President of the Republic in 1998. Therefore, the latter's resignation would "cure the country's disease"

(Ibid.) According to this interpretation, the Future Movement (Hariri's party) was acquitted of any fault committed, being in the opposition at that time (Ibid.). This interpretation was shared by Walid Jumblatt, who opposed the unconstitutional extension of Lahoud's term, and who have seen one of his aides, Marwan Hamade being targeted (Ibid.). Thus the Syrian withdrawal and dispensation of justice for Hariri's murder provided the main drivers of coalescence in the 14 March ranks. This explains Christian alignment with a number of political groups in the 14 March alliance that have tightly cooperated with Syria during the first postwar years (Ibid. 263).

The third approach was represented by Michel Aoun. For Aoun, the entire post-Taif period was an era of occupation and outright usurpation of Lebanese sovereignty, independence and freedom (Ibid.). Therefore, Emile Lahoud and the security apparatus were not the sole culprits: responsibility for the post-Taif order resided also in the political class that to varying degrees collaborated with Syria. Hence, Lahoud's resignation would resolve nothing, unless transition involved total renewal (Ibid. 263-264) beginning with a new electoral law for the upcoming 2005 elections. In the absence of a commonly agreed electoral law, the Syrian-sponsored 2000 one was retained. Significantly, this led to a paradoxical constellation of alliances: 8 March –Amal and Hizbullah- and 14 March parties –the Future Movement and Jumblatt's Progressive Socialist Party- formed a quadripartite agreement (*al-tahaluf al-ruba'i*) (Shebaya 2007, 265) that ensured victory for their lists in the May-June 2005 electoral battle. On the other hand, exclusion of Aoun's Free Patriotic Movement (FPM) ushered in an opening to pro-Syrian figures (Fakhoury 2007, 296) which would normally seem unthinkable.

On the morrow of the elections, this quadripartite coalition dissolved. In fact, the members of the electoral alliance returned to their default pro- anti-Syria positions (Kota 2009, 107). In the Parliament, this re-arrangement took the shape of three blocks: 14 March Alliance (majority), 8 March Alliance (opposition), and the Change and Reform bloc (opposition). In the executive, Premier Siniora formed a cabinet that included members of both camps (Hizbullah and Amal included) to achieve consensus over Lebanon's inchoate transition. However, the FPM did not join the cabinet -allegedly over a discrepancy with Saad Hariri on the allocation of the Justice portfolio- (Fakhoury 2007, 303), thus playing the role of the opposition par excellence.

In February 2006, Hizbullah and the FPM signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). The MoU grappled with issues of governance, the state, political reform and relations with Syria. Essentially, the MoU provided for a comprehensive understanding, thus establishing a formal alliance between two seemingly disparate parties. Hence, by February 2006, the political field in Lebanon has been acquiring the traits of an incomplete bipolarisation.

Explaining the new setting

As aforementioned, most of the actors involved in the 2005 mobilisations have espoused, invoked and utilized some version of 'Lebanonism' or Lebanese nationalism (Kota 2009, 119) to justify their postures. This seeming consensus generated hopes of a "new Lebanese national ethos" (Fakhoury 2008, 6) that would eventually animate a functioning system of accommodation. Instead, the removal of the Syrian sword of Damocles engendered a space of contestation over the new *khatt*

al-watani or the nationalist principles of the post-tutelage Lebanon (Shebaya 2007, 276).

Deep discrepancies over the interpretation of the Taif agreement, the disarmament of Hizbullah, the international investigation on Hariri's assassination and the drawing of a new electoral law clouded the formation of the first post-Syria cabinet. Amal Hamdan argues that the underlying cause of these divergences pertained to communal grievances of unequal power-sharing derived from the corporate consociational formula (2012, 40). Within this context, she argues that "genuine participation of significant ethno-confessional groups within the executive power" was capable of remedying immobility and institutional deadlock (Ibid. 41). Yet, these grievances could be credibly viewed as the epiphenomenon of different visions of Lebanon. Nadim Shehadi wraps up eloquently the post-Syria landscape as the 'Riviera vs Citadel' battle (Open Democracy 2007).

On the one hand, the 'Riviera' paradigm is deeply anchored in Hariri's vision of Lebanon that championed a "liberal approach to development and urban capitalism" (Geukjian 2014, 529). Within this context, Lebanon was strategically positioned to emerge as the region's commercial and services hub on the basis of "a cosmopolitan open society" in alliance with the West and in respect of international legality (Shehadi 2007). Therefore, the Future Movement under the leadership of Rafiq Hariri's son, Saad, tended to defend the role of the private sector as the main locomotive of the Lebanese economy buttressed by sizeable financial assistance from Western institutions and Saudi Arabia (ICG 2010, 10).

Intriguingly, the Future Movement rebranded itself to accommodate the Christian segment of the 14 March alliance. In this vein, it adopted the eminently Christian slogan of ‘Lebanon first’, something that “would have been unthinkable” in the past (Knudsen and Kerr 2012, 11), having been inextricably associated with the Phalangist nationalist discourse of the civil war era.

The slogan ‘Lebanon first’ is thought to encapsulate the ideals that inspired the Independence Intifada. In this vein, Lebanese sovereignty and national independence necessitates the monopoly of the means of coercion by the state, and respect for international legality, identified with the implementation of the UNSC Resolutions that grapple with the Special Tribunal for Lebanon (STL) and Hizbullah’s arsenal.

To this end, the Future Movement tried to achieve a double balancing act in the domestic arena: firstly, preserve its “unnatural alliances” with the Maronite Lebanese Forces and the Kataeb (ICG 2010, 8), and secondly, entrench its preeminence within the Sunni community, which, since Hariri’s death, felt increasingly persecuted by the Lebanese Shia (Abdel-Latif 2008, 1-2).

Moreover, emphasis on international legality implied external repositioning. Saad Hariri considered the US as an indispensable partner in the struggle against the ‘axis of resistance’ -Hizbullah, Syria and Iran-. Despite its unpopular invasion in Iraq and constant support of Israel, the US campaign against terror offered an opportunity to score points in the domestic field against Hizbullah (ICG 2010, 8-9). Priority was therefore placed on the internationalisation of the internal disputes. For the Future Movement, this was “an existential conflict between two incompatible visions for the country” (Ibid.) that reached new heights as perceptions of

a 'Shia crescent' on the regional level, were reproduced in the domestic setting.

The 'Citadel' paradigm, on the other hand, was exemplified by the vision of the battling society or the 'society of resistance'. In this vein, the equation 'army, people and resistance' straddled a defensive strategy and a nationalist doctrine. Within this context, the weapons of the Resistance are deemed sacrosanct as long as the Lebanese army lacks the adequate means to defend Lebanon and liberate the last inches of land occupied by Israel in the South (parts of the Ghajar village, Shebaa Farms, the Kfarshouba hills). As mentioned in the previous chapter, Hizbullah's institution-building serve precisely the ideal of the 'society of resistance', by constructing a social sphere that inculcates its norms and values (Daher 2015, 78).

The words of Hizbullah's MP Nawwaf Mussawi powerfully capture the party's vision in the post-Syria phase and its strong opposition to the 'Riviera' paradigm: "If it wasn't for the resistance, its society and its people, then belonging to Lebanon would not have the same value that it does today. At one time, belonging to Lebanon meant belonging to a touristic state that offers services, but we have changed this understanding...Whoever is looking for sources to determine who belongs to the nation and who doesn't should use the resistance as a reference" (The Daily Star 2015).

Within this context, the resistance is used at the discursive level to prove Hizbullah's 'Lebanity' and justify the preservation of its arsenal. In the absence of the Syrian trustee, the party felt increasingly exposed to accusations of violating Lebanese sovereignty. The July 2006 war against Israel and the 2008 assault against the Future Movement and its militias

heightened fears of a constantly rising Hizbullah that seeks to violently impose its vision on others.

The internationalisation strategy opted by the Future Movement brought Hizbullah under increasing international scrutiny. The decision of the Lebanese government to cooperate with the STL in order to investigate Hariri's murder outside Lebanon enraged the party's leadership that viewed it as a violation of Lebanese sovereignty and a Western plot to annihilate the Resistance.

Under these conditions, a new course of action was drawn. In 1992, Hizbullah's Shura Council decided to participate in the parliamentary elections. As explained in the previous chapter, this decision was hailed as historical compromise or the outset of a process of Lebanonisation/institutionalisation. In fact, it was a strategic readjustment within the structure of constraints imposed by the Syrian regime and the consociational system. It did not entail abandonment of the Resistance. Likewise, the decision to participate in the post-Syria cabinets reflected accurately this reasoning. Significantly, this change of heart towards participation in the government was accompanied by a strong insistence on a blocking-third veto along with Amal (Daher 2014, 472) to obstruct decisions deemed harmful by the party.

In parallel, Hizbullah intensified its process of socialisation. The alliance with the largest Christian party (FPM) "provided a crucial dimension to Hizbullah's armed resistance amid intense internal and international pressure", for it equipped the movement with a Lebanese social safety net (Saouli 2011, 935). The MoU signed by the two parties contained points of convergence between two 'unnatural allies' that through mutual concessions wished to set an example of inter-

confessional relations in a reformed post-Taif order. Thus the MoU is likened to the National Pact (Bouyoub 2013, 186) to the extent that offered “an evolutionary type of change” in line with the rules of consensual democracy (Ibid. 187).

In 2009, Hizbullah issued an updated version of its Manifesto. The new Manifesto has imprinted the shifts in Hizbullah’s perceptions over the world order and the Lebanese domestic arena since the publication of the 1985 ‘Letter to the Oppressed’. Hizbullah’s worldview did not shift dramatically in the meantime: it remained anchored in the binary distinction between “oppressors and oppressed” (Alagha 2011, 168). Yet, in contrast to the bipolar perception of international relations embedded in the 1985 Open letter, the 2009 manifesto speaks about “a multipolarity which characteristics are not clear yet” (The New Hezbollah Manifesto 2009). US hegemony and Israel continue to incarnate the absolute evil. Within the context of the post 9/11 US foreign policy, terrorism has turned into “an American pretext of hegemony” that is instrumentalised to discredit the Resistance (Ibid.).

In the internal front, Hizbullah stresses its commitment to the state of Lebanon as “the homeland of our father and ancestors”, the “homeland of our children, grandchildren, and the future generations” (Ibid.). In this vein, the party reiterates its opposition against “any kind of partition or federalism, whether apparent or disguised” and expresses support for “a strong, capable and just state”. This requires a political system “which truly represents the will of the people and their aspirations for justice and freedom, security and stability, well-being and dignity”. Therefore, political sectarianism should be abolished to establish “a true democracy where an elected majority can rule and an elected minority can oppose,

opening the door for a proper exchange of power between the loyalty and the opposition or the various political coalitions”. According to Hizbullah’s MP Ali Fayyad, the party is seeking to establish a “nonsectarian, democratic state” based on the principle of equality among all the Lebanese (The Daily Star 2015). Meanwhile, “consensual democracy” will continue to represent “a proper political formula to assure true partnership”, contributing “in opening the doors for everyone to join the phase of building the reassuring state” (The New Hezbollah Manifesto 2009).

Beyond the Sunni-Shia divide, the Maronites were perhaps the most eager to achieve change in the domestic order. Interestingly, half of the demonstrators in the anti-Syrian mobilisation were Christian (Kurtulus 2009, 201) thus revealing a rare unity of cause. The sentiment of jubilation was reinforced by the return of the sect’s prominent leaders. General Michel Aoun returned from exile in May 2005, whilst Samir Geagea was released some months later, regaining the leadership of the Lebanese Forces. Besides, Lebanon’s former president (1982-1988), Amin Gemayel has returned from France some years earlier, reclaiming the leadership of his father’s party, the Kataeb.

Yet, this unity of cause proved ephemeral. As aforementioned, Michel Aoun soon broke ranks with the 14 March camp over differences on the electoral law, the formation of electoral lists (Shebaya 2007, 278) and the allocation of ministerial portfolios. More importantly, the Maronite political elite were still haunted by the memories of the vicious intra-sectarian struggles for hegemony -notably between Aoun and Geagea-.

This intra-Maronite division played out in the selection of camps: the Lebanese Forces and the Kataeb remained part of the 14 March camp, whilst the FPM formed its own block. Its subsequent alliance with Hizbullah brought Aoun's party closer to the 8 March camp, without fully integrating into it though.

Are Knudsen and Michael Kerr argue that the Maronites "split strategically between those who are more afraid of the Sunnis and those who are more afraid of the Shia" (2012, 30). Demographic considerations do indeed explain this Maronite fear.

Nevertheless, intra-Maronite power struggles, grounded on regional, personal and ideological rivalries, have contributed to this renewed fragmentation. Thus the Lebanese Forces came to be identified with the values championed by the 14 March camp such as sovereignty, national unity, respect for the Taif agreement and the status quo (Naharnet 2016). A radical nationalist militia during the civil war, the Lebanese Forces rebranded themselves as a Christian conservative party. For Samir Geagea, the Lebanese Forces are the voice of the Maronite patriarch who personifies the community's highest moral and spiritual authority (Aubin-Boltanski 2012, 70-73).

On the other hand, Michel Aoun represented a less radical form of Maronite nationalism. The slogan "leader, army and the people" condensed the pre-Taif Aounist vision that contradictorily transcended the narrow limits of the Maronite community (Abirached 2012, 43-44) in defence of the nation's sovereignty against Syrian occupation. For Aoun, the Syrian redeployment implied the liberation (*tahrir*) of Lebanon and the eventual fruition of the Christian resistance. Henceforth, Lebanon and Syria could normalise relations through the formal establishment of

diplomatic relations –Syria did not have an embassy in Beirut-.This position justified Aoun’s impressive volte face in the 2005 legislative elections that culminated in the alignment with prominent pro-Syrian figures.

In the Aounist discourse, return to constitutional legality forms part and parcel of a necessary reform process that would eventually eliminate the nefarious residues of the years of the Syrian tutelage. This essentially implied the re-empowerment of the president according to the 1943 National Pact. Thus the Maronites deserved to be represented by a strong leader in the executive as long as the two largest sects elect their own (Noujeim 2015) in the other two top positions in the political system (cabinet and parliament). Central to the Aounist vision was the agreement on a fair electoral law as a means to political renewal. These reforms would progressively correct the injustices committed against the Maronites and help them reclaim their usurped historic rights (Haddad 2015) in the state and its institutions.

The MoU with Hizbullah epitomises Aoun’s vision of Lebanon. Importantly, the MoU has been described as an “alliance of hypocrisy” (Khashan 2012) that aimed at “the neutralization of Sunni political power” (Ibid.). Political expediency notwithstanding, the MoU represents –at least discursively- a tentative effort to merge two sectarian nationalisms. The quintessence of the agreement lies in the trade-off between Hizbullah’s disarmament and the formulation of a strategy of national defence. Thus the Islamic Resistance will be disarmed as soon as Lebanon restores its full sovereignty over the territories occupied by Israel (the controversial Shebaa farms) and the army acquires the necessary deterrent capacity. This is in theory an important point of

convergence. Both sides share an appreciation on the role of the army as the backbone of a national identity based on a strong, non-confessional state.

In parallel, the MoU reflects a principled understanding, according to which the Christians comprehend “the importance of the Israeli-Arab/Palestinian conflict to the Muslim population”, whilst Hizbullah acknowledges the importance “of Lebanon’s sovereignty and border demarcation with Syria” (Shebaya 2007, 276).

Moreover, the understanding echoed the suspicion that both sides nurtured against external interference. Aoun has repeatedly stated his preference for ‘Lebanese solutions’ to domestic problems, which included also the disarmament of Hizbullah (Noujeim 2015). Furthermore, both parties share a belief in a fair and equitable electoral law (proportionality) grounded on a deconfessionalised political field. For Hizbullah, this is translated into a formula of one citizen, one vote. Crucially, this convergence on the need of a reformed polity among two parties that among others shared their common rejection of the Taif Agreement have rekindled fears of revisionism towards a new power-sharing formula that divides offices into three thirds. (Young 2015). Fears of revisionism are, moreover, nurtured by Nasrallah’s proposal for the formation of a constituent assembly elected by the people on a non-confessional basis, in view of a new social contract or a non-sectarian system (Naharnet 2012). The intricacies of the consociational system notwithstanding, -especially after Hizbullah’s pre-emptive intervention in Syria- the MoU proffers an unprecedented platform of inter-confessional cooperation that attempts to shape the terms of a reformed polity. Historically, it resonates the pattern of sectarian dualities that pervaded state formation in Lebanon e.g.

Maronite-Druze in the Ottoman era, Maronite-Sunni in the years of independence. Politically, it exemplifies an alliance of minorities which, after the Syrian uprising feel uncertain about their position in Lebanon.

Consociational ‘revival’ (2005-2015): the quest for accommodation

The events that surrounded the 2005 juncture engendered expectations of consociational revival. The almost unanimous disapproval of Lahoud’s extension of term (Kurtulus 2009, 199), the nationalist display during the spring 2005 popular mobilisations, the Sunni-Shia-Druze alliance in the 2005 legislative elections, and the formation of a national unity cabinet emancipated from Syrian hegemony (Fakhoury 2007, 368) were indicators of an emerging reactivation of the institutional devices of consociational democracy such as coalition-building and the mutual veto (Ibid.).

Significantly, the confessional elites in Lebanon had an opportunity to drive the country towards a new era and fully implement the provisions of the Taif Agreement.

The Cabinets

Siniora cabinet (2005-2008)

The 2005 legislative elections were a triumph for the Four Party coalition consisted of the Future Movement, Hizbullah, Amal and the Progressive Socialist Party (PSP). As aforementioned, the coalition disintegrated in the post-electoral period. Representing the majority of the Sunni segment, the Future Movement embarked upon the formation of a government under Fouad Siniora, close aide of Rafiq and Saad Hariri.

The formation of the first transitional government proved puzzling in regards to the consociational devices embedded in it (Ibid. 370). Firstly, the 14 March camp considered the prospect of eschewing the formation of a national unity cabinet. Such a decision impinged upon Lebanon's power-sharing formula as one sect (the Shia) would be totally absent from the decision-making process, whilst marking an abrupt transition towards a more majoritarian form of power-sharing.

These thoughts were eventually discarded in favour of a more inclusionary cabinet that for the first time included ministers of Hizbullah. Its inclusivity notwithstanding, the Christian representation was limited to the smaller Christian parties such as the Kataeb, the Lebanese Forces, the Qornet Shehwan Gathering and independent figures (Greek Orthodox and Greek Catholic). The cabinet comprised twenty four ministers out of which five came from the Shia parties (Alagha 2011, 130).

Secondly, the Siniora cabinet had to manage a loaded agenda that included items coined in power-sharing settings as "vital national interests" (VNIs) (McEvoy 2013, 254). For the Shia segment, in particular, participation in the cabinet implied the conferral of guarantees on the consensual mode of decision-making translated into a blocking-third veto power. Lijphart argues that a minority veto can give "each segment a guarantee of political protection" (1977, 36-37). In this vein, the 8 March camp considered the veto as a form of protection against the disarmament of Hizbullah and the international investigation of the Hariri case.

Demands for the conferral of veto powers increased as international pressures on Lebanon heightened, following the vote of two resolutions in

regards to the Hariri assassination (UNSC Resolution 1636, 1644) and repeated international calls for the implementation of UNSC Resolution 1559.

The resolutions asked for a freeze of all financial assets, funds and economic resources belonging to individuals suspected by the UN International Independent Investigation Commission (IIIC) and the Lebanese government “of involvement in the planning, sponsoring, or organizing” the terrorist act (UNSC Resolution 1636), asked from the UN Secretary-General to “identify the nature and scope of international assistance” needed to meet the Lebanese government’s request for the establishment of an international tribunal and authorised the IIIC to “extend its technical assistance as appropriate to the Lebanese authorities with regard to their investigations on the terrorist attacks perpetrated in Lebanon since 1 October 2004” (UNSC 1644). In December 2005, the Security Council voted Resolution 1664, sponsored by France and the US, which requested the Secretary-General “to negotiate an agreement with the Government of Lebanon aimed at establishing a tribunal of an international character based on the highest international standards of criminal justice” (UNSC 1664). In compliance to UNSC 1559, the Siniora administration took action to deploy Lebanese troops across the border with Israel and disarm the members of the Resistance (Knio 2008, 447).

The strategy of internationalisation of the domestic files –namely Hizbullah’s disarmament and the international investigation of the Hariri case- strained elite coalescence within the cabinet. To obstruct decision-making in the cabinet, the Shia ministers boycotted its workings for two months. Crucially, the Shia ministers accused Premier Siniora and the 14 March majority of complicity with the West in order to impose foreign

tutelage on Lebanon (Fakhoury 2007, 378). UNSC Resolutions 1680 (it called Syria to delineate its borders with Lebanon), 1664 and 1686 (referred to the workings of the International Commission investigating Hariri's assassination) reinforced perceptions of Western complicity (Baroudi and Salamey 2011, 411).

On the other hand, members of the majority questioned the loyalty of Hizbullah to the Lebanese state, castigating it for establishing a state within a state and derogatorily equating it to a 'militia' (Ibid. 379). To defuse tensions, Premier Siniora stated in the Parliament that Hizbullah's military wing would never be called anything but a 'Resistance' (Ibid. 380).

These differences notwithstanding, a National Dialogue Process (Shields 2008, 477), was launched in March 2006 that provided an important locus of deliberation on VNI issues. The fact that fourteen communal representatives were included (Fakhoury 2007, 370) -out of the eighteen recognised confessional groups- bestowed it with an aura of trans-sectarian legitimacy.

The process grappled with five issues: i) normalisation of relations with Syria ii) collection of weapons of armed militants outside the Palestinian camps iii) the status of President Lahoud iv) disarmament of Hizbullah and v) reform of the electoral system (Shields 2008, 478). Among the issues discussed, insistence on Lahoud's resignation, and the disarmament of Hizbullah were fiercely debated (Ibid.). For the 14 March officials, Lebanese independence would not be fully recovered unless the President stepped down (Fakhoury 2007, 382). Yet, the July 2006 war between Israel and Hizbullah halted the process, reigniting fears about the Resistance's allegiances and respect of Lebanese sovereignty.

The war lasted more than a month. The abduction of two IDF soldiers by Hizbullah caused a tremendously devastating Israeli retaliation. Public infrastructure in Lebanon, such as bridges and power plants were turned to rubble. 1500 Lebanese civilians lost their lives along with 160 Israelis (Ibid. 385). Nasrallah described the war as “the most fierce battle in Lebanese history”, and hailed it as a “strategic, historical and divine victory for Lebanon and the *umma*” (cited in Alagha 2011, 127).

By late July 2006, the Siniora cabinet presented a Seven Points truce plan to the international community in order to put an end to hostilities. The plan included an immediate and comprehensive cease-fire along with a declaration of agreement on the following issues:

1. An undertaking to release the Lebanese and Israeli prisoners and detainees through the ICRC.
2. The withdrawal of the Israeli army behind the Blue Line, and the return of the displaced to their villages.
3. A commitment from the Security Council to place the Shabaa Farms area and the Kfarshouba Hills under UN jurisdiction until border delineation and Lebanese sovereignty over them are fully settled. While in UN custody, the area will be accessible to Lebanese property owners there. Further, Israel surrenders all remaining landmine maps in South Lebanon to the UN.
4. The Lebanese government extends its authority over its territory through its own legitimate armed forces, such that there will be no weapons or authority other than that of the Lebanese state as stipulated in the Taef national reconciliation document.

5. The UN international force, operating in South Lebanon, is supplemented and enhanced in numbers, equipment, mandate and scope of operation, as needed, in order to undertake urgent humanitarian and relief work and guarantee stability and security in the south so that those who fled their homes can return.
6. The UN, in cooperation with the relevant parties, undertakes the necessary measures to once again put into effect the Armistice Agreement signed by Lebanon and Israel in 1949, and to insure adherence to the provisions of that agreement, as well as to explore possible amendments to or development of said provisions, as necessary.
7. The international community commits to support Lebanon on all levels, and to assist it in facing the tremendous burden resulting from the human, social, and economic tragedy which has afflicted the country, especially in the areas of relief, reconstruction and rebuilding of the national economy. (Rebuild Lebanon 2006)

The UNSC 1701 incorporated parts of Siniora's Seven Points plan. According to the text, the Government of Lebanon and UNIFIL should "deploy their forces together throughout the South". In addition, the resolution "emphasizes the importance of the extension of the control of the Government of Lebanon over all Lebanese territory in accordance with the provisions of resolution 1559 (2004) and resolution 1680 (2006), and of the relevant provisions of the Taif Accords, for it to exercise its full sovereignty, so that there will be no weapons without the consent of the Government of Lebanon and no authority other than that of the Government of Lebanon" (UNSC 1701). In this vein, the UNSC 1701 calls for the deployment of 15000 UNIFIL troops that will "take all

necessary action... to ensure that its area of operations is not utilized for hostile activities of any kind” (Makdisi 2011, 14-15).

Hizbullah’s leadership was forced to accept the ceasefire and hence the resolution in order to halt the destruction of public and private properties and crucially the displacement of the civilian population of South Lebanon (Ibid. 414). For the 14 March camp instead, the UNSC Resolution 1701 was an opportunity “to restore Lebanon’s sovereignty, leverage international support against Hizbullah domestically and extricate Lebanon, once and for all, from both the Arab–Israeli conflict and Iranian/ Syrian sphere of influence” (Makdisi 2011, 16).

The aftermath of the July War had severe repercussions for the functioning of the executive. Hizbullah raised the ante by asking anew for the blocking third veto power in the Council of Ministers. Still, it demanded the formation of a national unity government and the holding of early legislative elections grounded on a more representative law that would be agreed by all Lebanese parties preferably based on proportionality and small electoral districts (Alagha 2011, 129-130).

In pursuit of those goals, Hizbullah insisted on bringing into the cabinet the FPM as their combined legislative power (44 percent) could proportionally translate into a blocking-third alliance in the executive. In the event of non-compliance, Hizbullah was determined to escalate its reactions, taking to the streets until the government yielded in its demands (Ibid.131).

However, the majority’s response was that granting a veto to the opposition required prior acceptance of the international tribunal by Hizbullah (Knio 2008, 448). Importantly, the 14 March majority in the cabinet voted for the establishment of the STL on the basis of a two-thirds

quorum (Ibid.) that essentially overlooked inter-sectarian consensus. This sparked reactions by President Lahoud and Speaker Berri who declared the government 'unconstitutional'. The President in particular, refused to sign any laws or decrees (Ibid. 449). The assassination of the Kataeb minister Pierre Gemayel –which was added in a string of assassinations of anti-Syrian figures- reduced the 14 March majority in the cabinet to one above the required two-thirds quorum (Ibid.). Some days before, Gemayel has stated that the government “will not allow those who determine war and peace to have the final say in state building” (Alagha 2011, 131).

Significantly, these differences of interpretation of the Taif Agreement in the post-tutelage era reveal the level of institutional debilitation and inter-confessional animosity. In this vein, the institutional setting became the battling ground where the actors involved, far from exhibiting Lijphart's self-denying hypothesis, engaged in a zero-sum struggle that oscillated between majoritarian and consensual decision-making.

In November 2006, the Shia ministers resigned again. To escalate reactions, the 8 March camp joined by Aoun's FPM staged protests and sit-ins outside the Premier's office in the centre of Beirut, followed by a general strike that lasted fifty three days. On the symbolic level, the opposition's mobilisation in front of the Sérail was deemed provocative by the Sunnis that traditionally associated this part of Beirut as their own “sphere of influence” (ICG 2010, 12). Soon, counter-demonstrations evolved into inter-confessional scuffles.

This led to an increasing securitisation of the political controversies. In response to the pressing popular pressure, the leaders of the Future Movement planned to establish their own centralised militia (Ibid. 13).

The plan was aborted, given Hizbullah's military superiority (Ibid.). Instead, Mustaqbal's leadership decided to create a private security to protect its leaders, whilst recruiting young Sunnis to defend their neighbourhoods against potential Shia intrusions (Ibid.).

In fact, Lebanon teetered on the brink of an open inter-sectarian conflict: seven people died, more than 500 were injured –among them thirteen soldiers- and 216 were arrested (Alagha 2011, 133). Nasrallah reacted to these confrontations by tainting Siniora's cabinet as “the government of the armed militias” (Ibid. 134).

Yet, the Siniora government weathered the storm, receiving significant western backing. In parallel to the opposition's mobilisation in Beirut, Jacques Chirac opened the Paris III Donor Conference (Baroudi and Salamey 2011, 415) to increase the financial aid channeled to Lebanon. Simultaneously, the conference's organisers exhorted the pro-Western Arab regimes and the Arab League to increase involvement in the management of the political crisis in Lebanon (Ibid.).

Importantly, Hassan Nasrallah tried to prevent the looming war, issuing a *fatwa* that urged his supporters to vacate the street in order to “ensure and uphold peace and stability...this *fatwa* is in the interest (*maslaha*) of our country, its civil peace and peaceful coexistence...we insist on using civil, democratic, and political means in expressing our political differences, and any recourse to arms, from whichever party, is considered treason” (cited in Alagha 2011, 134). On the same note, Nasrallah declared that “even if 1000 Hizbullahis die, we will not be led to *fitna* or take recourse to our weapons in the domestic infighting” (Ibid.).

This led to a partial thaw between the two sides. To end the months-long deadlock, Siniora proposed increased ministerial participation for the 8 March in the cabinet (13 out of 30 ministers) in exchange for a common programme grounded on the Seven Points, and the decisions reached in the National Dialogue Process and UNSC Resolution 1701 (Ibid. 136). Whilst Amal welcomed the proposal, Hizbullah refused to participate in a cabinet headed by Siniora, revoking the party's previous acceptance of the Seven Points (Ibid.136).

Thus, in accordance to its previous decisions, the Siniora government proceeded by asking the UN for the establishment of the STL outside Lebanon with a majority of international judges and an international prosecutor (Knio 2008, 449). By the end of May, UNSC 1757, -sponsored by France and the US under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, called for the establishment of the STL "on a date to be determined" and based on the progress made by the IIC (Ibid.). This undoubtedly constituted a decisive victory for the 14 March camp in the domestic arena. A French initiative launched in summer 2007 failed to reach a breakthrough in the longstanding political paralysis (Baroudi and Salamey 2011, 416).

Political tensions notwithstanding, Lebanon had to cope with the threats posed by jihadi groups active in the Palestinian camps. Fatah al-Islam, a jihadi terrorist organisation comprising Afghan-Arabs, Lebanese nationals, Palestinians and returnees from Iraq (ICG 2010, 27) fiercely clashed with the Lebanese army in the Nahr al-Bared camp, reminding the Lebanese of the 2000 battle against the Dinniyeh Group in North Lebanon. The Lebanese army managed to eventually defeat Fatah al-Islam, albeit suffering heavy casualties. 450 people died (civilians,

soldiers and Islamist militants), whilst 6000 families fled the camp that was utterly destroyed by the protracted battles (Ibid.).

Meanwhile, the upcoming presidential elections shifted the debate from the international tribunal, accentuating the divergent interpretations on the modalities of power-sharing in the post-tutelage era. These interpretations were increasingly filtered through sectarian lenses in pursuance of each side's political objectives.

Firstly, the FPM supported the election a 'strong' –in the Maronite discourse- president against the choice of a 'weak' non-representative compromise figure. Secondly, the 14 March alliance argued that in the absence of a two-thirds majority in the first round, the president can be elected in the second with simple majority. On the contrary, the 8 March camp insisted on the requirement of a two-thirds majority in both rounds, which essentially implied a veiled veto for the opposition. Thirdly, the 14 March camp claimed that in the event of a non-timely presidential election, the president's powers are transferred to the Council of Ministers whereas the 8 March camp declared the government unconstitutional (Knio 2008, 449).

To prevent another institutional stalemate, international actors ratcheted up their involvement, not on the basis of “democratic and constitutional ideals” but on concerns to prevent civil strife (PolicyWatch 1310 2007). According to Rabil, the French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner asked the Maronite patriarch Nasrallah Sfeir to form a list of preferred candidates that he subsequently handed to Saad Hariri and Nabih Berri for further deliberation (Ibid.). In addition, French President Sarkozy attempted to press Syria, by expressing his deep frustration against Assad's obstructionism on the Lebanese presidential file (Baroudi

and Salamey 2011, 417). This was echoed by G.W. Bush who indicated his strong disapproval of President Assad (Ibid.) and subsequently, of the detrimental Syrian meddling in Lebanese affairs.

The deteriorating political and security situation offered the pretext to break the longstanding stalemate in May 2008 (Ibid.). In a bid to curb Hizbullah's military machinery, the Siniora cabinet decided to dismantle the movement's communication network, describing it as an "onslaught against the state's sovereignty and its financial resources" (Alagha 2011, 141). In parallel, the cabinet dismissed Beirut's airport security chief "for failing to prevent Hizbullah's alleged video surveillance of a runaway" (Geukjian 2014, 534) and vowed to prosecute all those responsible for its deployment, which implicitly insinuated an arrest warrant against Nasrallah (Alagha 2011, 141).

This was an eminently controversial decision. Hizbullah has by long considered the "government illegitimate" and any seizure of its weapons "not an internal war, [but] a war on the front" (Saouli 2011, 938). As a consequence, the party's militia and allied groups from Amal and the SSNP deployed swiftly across Beirut and Mount Lebanon, comfortably defeating Mustaqbal's and PSP's militias. Soon, the leaders of the 14 March camp found themselves besieged in their own homes, whilst the Lebanese army hesitated to intervene running the risk of sectarian disintegration.

The Sunnis found themselves in a state of collective shock (Daher 2014, 444). Hizbullah has vowed in the past to not turn its weapons inward. In May 2008, the Party of God pushed for "a coup d'état" (Ibid.) in order to affect change by force, gaining the much awaited veto power after eighteen months of political stalemate (Alagha 2011, 140).

The crisis deescalated with Qatari mediation. Members of the two camps met in Doha in order to negotiate the prospect of a package deal to the eighteen-month deadlock. Crucially, “the negotiators of the Doha Agreement were members of the Lebanese Dialogue Conference” (Salamey 2014, 73). On May 21st 2008, the two sides concluded into a compromise formula under the auspices of the Emir of Qatar and the Arab League (BBC 2008) that attempted to temporarily reinvigorate the executive moving within the bounds of Lebanese power-sharing.

The Doha cabinets (2008-2011)

O’ Leary remarks that the international community is prone to promote accommodation but only “after rebellion has threatened order” (cited in McEvoy 2014, 48). Order during the first years of the post-tutelage phase was limited in the preservation of a modicum of stability translated into a state of no-war that in May 2008 reached its limits.

Within this context, the Doha Agreement exemplifies the role that external actors play in sustaining power-sharing arrangements. Therefore, the settlement grappled directly with the interconnected institutional stalemates in the cabinet, the presidency and the electoral law. According to the agreement:

- i. The Speaker of Parliament would call the Lebanese Parliament within 24 hours to elect General Michel Sleiman as consensus president of the Lebanese Republic.
- ii. A Government of National Unity will be 30 ministers to be allocated as follows: 16 to the majority, 11 to the opposition, and three to the President.

- iii. Lebanon would hold the 2009 legislative elections in accordance to the 1960 electoral law that defines the districts (qada) as electoral constituency.
- iv. The signatories pledged to refrain from the use of weapons or violence to achieve political gains.
- v. National Dialogue would be resumed under the auspices of the President (S/298/392).

Significantly, the agreement introduced the following changes. Firstly, a consensus president would be elected, thus brushing aside the majority's aspirations for a partisan candidate, coming from its camp. In parallel, it ignored Maronite demands' for a representative president. Secondly, it granted a formal veto to the 8 March alliance and the FPM under the guise of the one-third-plus-one representation in the cabinet. This has been a constant point of friction during the period 2005-2008. Thirdly, the president would be allocated his own share in the appointment of ministerial portfolios -three ministers- in order to swing and balance (Salamey 2014, 76) between the two camps, effectively forming a centrist bloc within the cabinet. Hence, the agreement moved the power-sharing pendulum in the executive to a consociational direction par excellence in order to promote consensus and collegiality in the decision-making process. Forthly, it re-introduced the 1960 electoral law, eliminating the 2000 Syrian-backed electoral law. Last but not least, Hizbullah was urged to comply with the agreement and discuss the prospect of integrating its arsenal into the Lebanese army in accordance to the proceedings of the National Dialogue Process.

Imad Salamey argues that "majoritarian politics, which is essential for democratic practice, was rendered irrelevant" (Ibid. 74). Indeed, grand

coalitions usually eschew the government-opposition pattern prevalent in majoritarian systems. Nevertheless, the post-tutelage experiment with majoritarian decision-making without the participation of one major segment proved conducive to conflict. As Lijphart argues, “the political stakes are often high in plural societies...” Thus “a grand coalition is therefore more appropriate than the government-versus-opposition pattern” (1977, 27).

In July 2008, Fouad Siniora formed an interim government that led Lebanon to the 2009 legislative elections. Crucially, Lebanese-Syrian relations witnessed “a strategic shift as the two countries reestablished diplomatic relations” (Geukjian 2014, 536). It was thus expected that Syria would help address some of the issues of Lebanese concern such as respect for its sovereignty, control of the Syrian-backed Palestinian militias, delineation of its borders with Lebanon and cooperation on the Lebanese prisoners held in Syrian prisons (Ibid. 536-537). Significantly, Nicolas Sarkozy offered an incentive towards a more constructive Syrian attitude as he invited Bashar al-Assad in the inauguration ceremony of the French-backed Union for the Mediterranean in Paris, putting an end to years of international isolation.

The 2009 elections did not alter the domestic balance of power dramatically. In fact, it confirmed the almost quasi-bipolar fragmentation between the 14 March and 8 March alliances (14 March won 71 seats and 8 March 57). Both camps employed a polarising discourse to mobilise supporters. The 14 March alliance campaigned under slogans such as ‘Lebanon First’ and ‘We love life’, implicitly targeting Hizbullah as warmonger and pawn into the hands of Syria and Iran (Saouli 2011, 936). On the other hand, the opposition called for “a fair, capable and strong

state” under the slogan ‘We love life, with dignity’. This, according to Saouli, referred to the independence struggle against Israel (Ibid.) and Hizbullah’s patriotic contribution to the nation.

The new cabinet was formed after five months of acrimonious disputes over the proposed line-up. These revolved around the allocation of the so-called ‘security ministries’ (Defence, Telecommunications and Interior), that Hariri refused to cede to the 8 March camp (Alagha 2011, 150) and which would effectively help Hizbullah to capitalise on the gains of the Doha Agreement. The dispute on the security ministries notwithstanding, the process of cabinet formation was obstructed by the intra-Maronite competition between the FPM and the Lebanese Forces. The Lebanese Forces opposed the allocation of the Education, Labour and Public Works ministries to its Maronite competitor as this would give an advantage to Aoun’s party in “universities, schools, trade unions and social security services” (Naharnet 2009).

Saad Hariri eventually formed a cabinet that partially echoed the changes engendered by the Doha Accord. Specifically, it comprised 30 ministers, half of whom belonged to the 14 March majority, five were appointed by the President and ten came from the 8 March and the FPM camp (BBC 2009). Hariri thus opted for a more inclusive scheme that embraced the majority and the opposition. However, the opposition did not wield a formal veto: instead, it could block decisions on vital matters in alliance with the President’s centrist block.

The cabinet’s policy statement followed the consensual pattern set in the postwar period that emphasized the role of the resistance and respect for Lebanese sovereignty (Alagha 2011, 153). In this vein, the statement echoed Hizbullah’s identity affirming “the right of Lebanon, its

government, its people, its army, and its resistance, to employ all legitimate means in order to liberate all Lebanese territory” (Ibid. 153-154). On the other hand, it highlighted Lebanon’s commitment to UNSC Resolution 1701, whilst stressing the need to formulate a national defence strategy that effectively incorporates Hizbullah’s military wing (Ibid.).

Significantly, a Syrian-Saudi rapprochement facilitated the formation of the cabinet (Khashan 2011). This culminated in a joint visit by Assad and Saudi king Abdullah in Beirut (July 2010) that emphasized Arab unity and collective action in Lebanon in line with the spirit of the Doha Accord (Geukjian 2014, 540). In the same vein, Saad Hariri, visited Damascus in a historic volte face, during which he expressed willingness for the normalisation of relations between the two states (ICG 2010, 13). Soon after this visit, Hariri stated that he regretted charging Syria with responsibility for his father’s assassination, having been misled by false witnesses (Knudsen 2012, 229). Importantly, Riyadh has exhorted Hariri to head to Damascus in exchange for Syrian cooperation in taming Hizbullah and Iranian influence in Lebanon (Geukjian 2014, 540).

On 29 April 2009, the Special Tribunal for Lebanon (STL) ordered the release of four pro-Syria generals (the former General Security chief Major General Jamil Sayyed, Major General Ali Hajj, the ex-Internal Security Forces director general; Brigadier General Raymond Azar, the former military intelligence chief; and the then Presidential Guards commander Brig. Gen. Mustafa Hamdan) who have been held in Lebanon in relation to the assassination of former Lebanese Prime Minister, Rafiq Hariri (The Hague Justice Portal 2009).

Their release sparked renewed controversies over the use of false witnesses in the procedure that ultimately paralysed the government

(Geukjian 2014, 540). During spring 2010, eighteen Hizbullah members were summoned for questioning (Ibid.) This stirred Nasrallah's reaction, who nonetheless agreed to cooperate "as long as it remained impartial" (Ibid.). In July 2010, Nasrallah announced that the STL intended to indict 'rogue' Hizbullah members (Ibid.) In an attempt to depict its politicised character, Nasrallah accused repeatedly the tribunal's prosecutor Daniel Bellemare of serving Israeli interests (Daher 2014, 374-375). According to Nasrallah, Lebanese intelligence services have arrested a numbers of spies in the service of Israel, whilst the Tribunal's prosecutor held frequent contacts with high-ranking Israeli officers (Ibid.). For Hizbullah, the tribunal aimed at enforcing UNSC Resolution 1559 –and thus the Resistance's disarmament- as the "fifth" act of an Israeli-Western plot – the first being UNSC 1559, the second was the efforts to disarm the movement in the period following Hariri's murder, the third the 2006 war and the fourth the dismantlement of Hizbullah's communication network "with US consent"- (Daher 2014, 376).

On the contrary, Mustaqbal was adamant on its support for the tribunal. The party and the 14 March alliance in general have suffered a string of tactical defeats in the military and the political field. The thaw of relations with Syria caused frustration over "a newfound centrist position" that undermined the party's foundations in the Sunni milieu (ICG 2010, 16). Therefore, Hariri could not make any concessions on an item such the STL that loomed large in the party's identity in the post-Syria phase. Besides, the US administration rejected the prospect of dropping the case, despite Saudi, Syrian, Qatari and Turkish mediation to reach accommodation on the issue to prevent a new paralysis in Lebanon (Knudsen 2012, 231).

For Hizbullah, on the other hand, the indictment of four of its members by the STL was a red line. In January 2011, the party decided to overthrow the government in order to obstruct an adverse outcome in relation to the case. Making use of the blocking-third power, the ten ministers belonging to the 8 March and the FPM camp together with one minister appointed by President Sleiman resigned. In addition, Walid Jumblatt abandoned the 14 March alliance, sensing that the domestic and international balance of power has shifted against the majority since May 2008. Hence, the opposition held henceforth the majority of seats in the Parliament (Daher 2014, 376) and thus the right to nominate a new prime minister.

In the shadow of the Syrian revolt (2011-2015)

The new balance of power in the Parliament was reflected in the selection of a Prime Minister that did not organically belong to the 14 March. Indeed, by 68 votes in favour and 60 against, the Lebanese Parliament voted for Najib Miqati. Miqati, a Sunni billionaire, had in the past cooperated with the 14 March camp, forming joint lists with the alliance in the 2009 legislative and the 2010 municipal elections (Dewailly 2012, 188-181) in his hometown, Tripoli.

In 2005, Miqati served as interim Premier in the government that led to the first post-tutelage elections and previously, as minister in the government of Salim al-Hoss (1998-2000). Significantly, Miqati emulated Hariri's model of politicking, trying to carefully expand his power base within the Sunni milieu of Tripoli through the conversion of his immense economic capital to symbolic power in the realms of philanthropy, education and culture (Ibid. 179-180).

Miqati's mission was daunting all over from the beginning given the lingering disputes in the executive and the widespread feeling of Sunni defeatism. For a Sunni who lacked a broad popular base, the task was even more challenging as he was largely perceived by the 14 March forces and the USA as subservient to Hizbullah (BBC 2011).

Significantly, Miqati's elections coincided with the wave of Arab revolts that rekindled fears of state disintegration in Lebanon. In January 2011, Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali was ousted from Tunisia, whilst insurgencies gradually engulfed Yemen, Libya Egypt, Bahrein and preponderantly Syria (Dalacoura 2012, 65-66). Gerhard Lehbruch remarks that "when internal conflicts between the subcultures correspond with cultural conflict between neighboring political units, this results in the internal replication of international conflicts, especially in case of religious and ethnic conflicts (1975, 382). Thus Lebanon credibly ran the risk of turning into a side battleground of the Syrian war, where its fault lines would be fatally reproduced given the strong historic, religious, ethnic and tribal ties linking the people of the two states.

Miqati managed to form a cabinet after five months of deliberations. Importantly, this did not include members of the 14 March opposition, thus evoking questions about its resilience. However, Miqati attempted to balance the absence of representative Sunni ministers in his cabinet, by allotting "for the first time in decades" the majority of ministerial posts to members of his community (Salem 2011).

The cabinet comprised 30 members, whilst giving a blocking-third veto to the centrist bloc represented by the ministers appointed by the Prime Minister, the President and Walid Jumblatt (Ibid.). Hizbullah kept a low profile (held two ministries), leaving the task of policy-making to its

allies. In this vein, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was assigned to Amal, whilst the FPM and Franjeh's party (Marada) took over among others, the strategic Telecommunications, Justice and Defence portfolios (Daher 2014, 379). In his policy statement, Miqati pledged to meet up to the aspirations of all Lebanese, as reflecting "the victory of consensus over difference" (BBC 2011).

The main challenge inevitably pertained to the preservation of a modicum of stability amidst the unravelling of neighbouring Syria. In pursuit of political stability, Miqati endorsed a policy of neutrality – dissociation policy- that tried to shield Lebanon from the repercussions of the Syrian quagmire.

Importantly, the dissociation policy was rooted in the Baabda Declaration, a text produced within the framework of the National Dialogue held under the auspices of President Sleiman since 2009. The text among others called for the full implementation of the Taif Accord and read that Lebanon "should seek to avoid the negative repercussions of regional tensions and crises in order to preserve its own paramount interest, national unity and civil peace..." but also refrain from being used as a base, corridor or starting point to smuggle weapons and combatants..." (Baabda Declaration A/66/849–S/2012/477).

However, neutrality in times of ethnic polarisation can be easily interpreted as an indication of ethnic and political bias towards one or the other side. Within this context, Miqati attempted walked a fine line between the two camps. Thus, he refused to associate Lebanon with the UNSC declaration against the use of force in Syria, and deport the Syrian ambassador from Beirut after the Houla massacre (Daher 2014, 380-381). Moreover, Miqati abstained from the Friends of Syria summit in Tunisia

(Ibid. 381) and allegedly cooperated with the Syrian authorities to deport dissidents that found refuge in Lebanon (ICG 2012, 1). In response to rebel intrusions in Lebanon, the Prime Minister warned that the dissociation policy is “null and void” in the face of aggression (The Daily Star 2012).

Yet, Miqati refused to attend a pro-regime summit in Iran. In parallel, he fulfilled Lebanon’s pledges to the STL (Salem 2011), ignoring the cabinet’s negative vote on the issue. Contravening “the government funding procedures” (Aziz 2013), Miqati bolstered his Sunni credentials, effectively defying Hizbullah’s negative stance. It is likely, that Syria consented to this decision in order to avoid the cabinet’s fall (Knudsen 2012, 232).

These balancing acts notwithstanding, the Miqati administration succumbed to the “political schizophrenia” that permeates fragmented states such as Lebanon and Iraq (Saouli 2014, 105) and relates to the pursuit of particularistic foreign policies by non-state actors. Crucially, the Syrian uprising presented threats and opportunities for the various actors in Lebanon (Ibid. 127) that were inextricably interwoven with calculations of political expediency.

In the Sunni milieu, the Future Movement tended to embrace the Arab uprisings. Saad Hariri declared that “the Lebanese have to choose between blindly following regimes and supporting peoples demanding freedom”. (Naharnet Newsdesk 2012). To endorse this posture, Mustaqbal published a policy paper portraying the 2005 Beirut Spring as the precursor of the 2011 Arab revolts (Vloeberghs 2012). However, the party remained mute on the popular protests in Bahrain (Shia majority country) and the concomitant Saudi intervention there.

Instead, the Syrian revolt represented a “gift from heaven” (ICG 2012. 20) to change the domestic balance of power in favour of the Sunni community. To this end, Saad Hariri escalated his rhetoric accusing the government of being appointed by Assad (Ibid.21). In a pattern familiar of the post-Syria period, Mustaqbal mobilised its followers, appealing to the sectarian chord. The demonstrations culminated into riots. The party proved unable to control the mob that attacked the Premier’s headquarters. Following the riots, Miqati offered his resignation to the President -for the second time-. The new crisis was prevented with Western intervention (Aziz 2013).

Moreover, cadres of the Future Movement furnished apart from moral, material support to the Sunni rebels in Syria (Ibid.). This was in line with the prevailing feeling in the Sunni street, especially in the North. The assassination of Wissam Hassan in October 2012 –head of the Internal Security Forces Information Branch and former head of Rafiq Hariri’s security- (Ibid.) fuelled Sunni resentment against Hizbullah and Syria. Crucially, Hassan was involved in the investigation of the Hariri murder and constituted an important pillar in the 14 March-affiliated segment of the security and intelligence apparatus. Months before his assassination, he has uncovered a plot concocted by the Syrian intelligence services and a pro-Syrian Lebanese politician (Michel Samaha case) to incite sectarian conflict in Lebanon (Ibid. 21-22). According to Rabil, Hassan’s murder confirmed the death of Hariri’s plan to uphold his leadership in North Lebanon, which was evolving to a hub of anti-Assad activities (2014, 218-219).

His death armed with rage the radical voices within the Sunni community, and preponderantly the activist Salafist strand in Tripoli, that

called for war against Hizbullah, and for jihad in Syria (Ibid.). Besides, the security situation has been deteriorating markedly in the city, as a new round of hostilities pitted the Sunni neighbourhood of Bab al-Tebbaneh against the Alawite neighbourhood of Jabal Mohsen that replicated in a smaller scale the sectarian dimension of the Syrian civil war. In Sidon, Ahmad al-Assir, a Salafi sheikh verbally attacked Mustaqbal's leadership, deriding it for exhibiting weakness towards Hizbullah and its arsenal. Clashes with the latter in Sidon led to three deaths (ICG 2012, 26).

On the other hand, Hizbullah has initially nursed a non-sectarian view of the Arab uprising. The party supported protests in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Yemen, and Bahrain. For Nasrallah, the Arab revolts were made by the people against pro-US regimes (al Manar 2011). According to Nasrallah, these regimes "should have initiated dialogue and reforms away from hypocrisy, but instead they resorted to accusations, humiliation, and murder. A major victory was achieved in Egypt and Tunis, and this prompted the Libyan regime to ignite a cruel internal war, and put the regimes of Yemen and Bahrain on verge of civil war" (Ibid.).

Yet, on Syria, Hizbullah adopted a stance that mirrored its priorities and strategic relations with the Assad regime. Thus the Syrian uprising represented "an Israeli-Western-Arab conspiracy and Sunni putsch onto turmoil". By 2012, the party's officials started to feel that the Resistance project was coming under increasing threat as the conflict engulfed Aleppo, Homs and the border area with Lebanon. In May 2012, eleven Shia pilgrims have been abducted in Syria. In response to the kidnapping, a prominent Shia clan abducted Syrian immigrants and a Turk residing in Lebanon—the pilgrims were released with Hariri's and Turkish mediation- (BBC 2012). By the latter half of 2012, members of the Islamic

Resistance engaged in battles against “Sunni jihadi groups linked to the opposition” (Daher 2014) along a string of Shia villages –inhabited by Lebanese citizens but under Syrian sovereignty- in the non-demarcated frontier zone between northeast Lebanon and Syria. (Daher 2014).

Miqati resigned in March 2013. His resignation reflected the mounting entanglement of narrow, domestic considerations with external priorities that fatally played out within the institutional realm. The cabinet’s refusal to extend the term of the Internal Security Forces’ Head, Major General Ashraf Rifi served as the necessary pretext for Miqati’s resignation. Rifi, who by the time has reached the age of retirement (Aziz 2013) was considered close to the 14 March camp and eminently hostile to Hizbullah. For the FPM in particular, any renewal of term was deemed unconstitutional. On the contrary, Miqati believed that extending the term of the ISF’s head would prevent Lebanon from a critical vacuum in the security apparatus given the absence of consensus on a new appointment. In parallel, the Prime Minister proposed the formation of a supervisory committee that would oversee the upcoming legislative elections scheduled to take place in the summer 2013 (Haddad 2013). The Hizbullah-Amal duo and the FPM rejected the proposal since the electoral law was largely perceived to give the 14 March camp and Walid Jumblatt an overwhelming majority in the Parliament (Ibid.).

It should be noted though that Miqati’s proposals might conceal political expediency in view of the upcoming elections. In fact, Miqati attempted to expand his influence among the Sunni community of Tripoli (Aziz 2013) by submitting proposals that Hizbullah would definitely reject. In the past, Miqati attempted to raise his Sunni credentials by ordering the release of the Islamist Shami Mawlawi, who was arrested for

providing material assistance to Syrian rebels in North Lebanon (Rabil 2014 219).

Miqati's resignation coincided with the climax of Hizbullah's intervention in Syria. The battle of Qusayr, lying across the borders with north-east Lebanon marked the first joint Syrian army-Hizbullah operation that aimed at securing the Damascus-Homs-Aleppo axis and Lebanon's northern flank from rebel attacks (Daher 2014). Crucially, Hizbullah's pre-emptive intervention mirrored the evolving sectarianisation of the Syrian conflict as part and parcel of the "grand Saudi-Iranian competition for regional dominance" that in the past played out in Lebanon, the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, Yemen and Bahrain (Salloukh 2014).

In this context, the overlap of Lebanon's independence-integration cleavage with the regional –largely- Sunni-Shia rivalry exacerbated the 'sectarianisation' of the political field, producing paralysis in the institutions of the Lebanese state. Thus, in May 2013, the Parliament voted for the extension of its mandate for an additional period of 17 months. In June 2013, the militia of the Salafi cleric al-Assir attacked army posts in Sidon, that left 16 dead and a hundred wounded among the ranks of the military (Daher 2015, 213).

Miqati was succeeded by Tammam Salam. The latter needed ten months (February 2014) to form a new cabinet that reconciled sectarian, regional and political interests. Salam, who hails from one of the most notable Sunni families of Beirut (Johnson 1985, 67) served in the past as Minister of Culture under the Siniora administration. The new cabinet comprised 24 ministers. Following the pattern established by the Doha Accord, Salam formed a centrist block of eight ministers appointed by

him and the President. The remaining 16 portfolios were equally divided between the 14 March- 8 March camps and the FPM.

The cabinet had initially a caretaker character that aimed at leading the country to the presidential election scheduled for May 2014. Therefore, Salam preferred to portray his administration as a government of “national interest” formed in the “spirit of inclusivity” (Reuters 2014). The national interest entailed also revival of the national dialogue, the management of the deteriorating security situation and the mounting refugee problem (Ibid.) in line with Lebanon’s dissociation policy.

Therefore, Premier Salam introduced the following decision-making mechanisms in order to allay inter-confessional fears: firstly, each minister was endowed with a blocking veto (thus 24 vetoes). This represented a radical shift to consensual decision-making *par excellence*. To emphasize the resulting stalemate, the Speaker of Parliament stated that Lebanon “now has 24 presidents, 24 prime ministers and 24 ministers (al-Monitor 2014).

Secondly, the principle of rotation in the distribution of ministerial portfolios was reasserted to prevent the monopolisation of the much coveted ministries by certain communities (Reuters 2014). The Ministry of Defence was exempted from the rule on the grounds that its incumbent –member of the Greek Orthodox community- served simultaneously as Deputy Prime Minister (Now. 2014) -a post allotted to the aforementioned confession according to the Taif Agreement- and thus he could not be removed.

The expiry of President Sleiman’s term in May 2014 accentuated the differences between the two camps. Crucially, the presidential

election was tightly interwoven with developments in Syria, the legislative elections and the formulation of an electoral law.

In April 2014, the Lebanese parliamentarians convened to elect a new president. According to the constitution a two-thirds majority is required in the first round and a simple majority in the second. In the absence of a two-thirds quorum the election is postponed. This veiled form of veto has been consistently employed by the pro-Syria camp to obstruct the election of an anti-Syria president.

The Future Movement initially flirted with the idea of extending the term in office of President Sleiman (Haddad 2016). Saad Hariri later discarded this option by endorsing the candidacy of its ally in the 14 March camp, leader of the Lebanese Forces, Samir Geagea until he shifted his position anew, proposing as presidential nominee the pro-Syrian Maronite MP Sleiman Franjeh. This probably reflected a tactical move by Hariri in order to drive a wedge in the 8 March camp. On the other hand, Hizbullah remained adamant in its MoU with the FPM, favouring Michel Aoun as a “strong president who cannot be bought or sold” (Naharnet 2015). Whilst not opposing Franjeh’s candidacy – Hizbullah and Amal ally- the party viewed Aoun as their first choice for the post.

Secondly, the meaning of a consensus candidate played out strongly in the inter-confessional debate. For Premier Salam, a consensus candidate implied a “neutral and centrist personality” that would essentially incarnate the ‘no victor, no vanquished’ principle of the Lebanese model of power-sharing (Naharnet 2015). However, this definition evoked negative connotations among the Maronite political class. Consensual presidents were reminiscent of the ‘weak’ figures of

the post-Taif era that lacked Maronite legitimation, having been largely elected with external interference.

Instead, the Aounist discourse holds as consensus candidate the ‘strong’ president who enjoys popular (Naharnet 2015) but foremost Maronite support. Therefore, Aoun rejected Geagea’s offer to elect a president in a second round with simply majority, as this would essentially imply political fragmentation. By contrast, Aoun proposed the direct election of the president in two stages first, by a vote within the Christian electorate, and then in a run-off, by all Lebanese citizens (Ya Libnan 2014). Alternatively, Aoun proposed the holding of a referendum as a means to assess the popularity of each candidate (The Daily Star 2015). In this vein, Aoun stated that he cannot trust “a majority that does not honor its promises and does not respect proper Christian representation...The same standards must apply to the president, parliament speaker and prime minister or else the process would be aimed at imposing hegemony over others”. (Naharnet 2014). Hence, the election of a consensual president passed through the restoration of equal power-sharing reflected in the re-empowerment of the president’s Christian legitimation.

The protracted vacancy in the presidential office created a trickledown effect in the executive that revolved around the cabinet’s powers. To alleviate fears of adverse decisions on VNIs, Premier Salam introduced a confidence-building mechanism according to which the cabinet agenda would be prepared 72 hours ahead of meeting so that “any controversial article would be canceled” whilst the writing of decrees “should be done in harmony” (Naharnet 2014).

To enhance its deliberative aspect, Salam sought to modify the decision-making mechanism from unanimity to consensus (Naharnet 2015), as the cabinet had succumbed to in a two-week state of paralysis. According to Salam “there is a difference between the consensus that we should seek for and the unanimity that could lead to paralysis.” (Ibid.).

Hence, the bestowal of veto powers to every single minister, instead of reinforcing individual responsibility, impaired the government’s efficiency. Thus under conditions of extreme polarisation, governance by grand coalition turns into a low-intensity exercise that aims at merely preventing systemic collapse. However, this constant flirtation with immobilisme and inertia showcases the pragmatics of power-sharing in Lebanon: inter-segmental elites avoid “acting upon polarizing issues on principle, opting instead for pragmatic loopholes” (Khashan 2012), which nevertheless ushers in deviations from the constitution and the Taif Accord.

The pursuit of pragmatic loopholes is equally exemplified by the critical issue of appointments in the leadership of the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF). In the post-Taif era, the Council of Ministers has a decisive say on national and security matters, with the Minister of Defence being the highest authority of all institutions under the auspices of the Ministry (Nerguizian 2015, 115).

In this vein, the decision to extend the term of the LAF’s Commander-in-Chief triggered a new dispute in the executive as the FPM outright rejected all sorts of extensions. Within this context, extension of term in the security sector constituted another violation of the constitution that obstructed promotions and ultimately usurped the role of the cabinet (Naharnet 2015). Aoun allegedly pushed for the promotion of his son-in-

law and head of the Army Commando Unit to the highest post in LAF's hierarchy (The Daily Star 2015). In response to the decision made by the Minister of Defence, the FPM suspended its participation in the executive (The Daily Star 2015).

In August 2015, trans-sectarian rallies erupted in Beirut, triggered by an unprecedented trash crisis. The government's double failure, to agree on a new contract for garbage collection, and to designate a new garbage dump zone (Saouli 2015) demonstrated the vicissitudes of governance under a punctuated mode of power-sharing where sectarian interests rule supreme.

By the end of 2015, the executive was ensnared in a concentric web of institutional stalemates. The presidency has been vacant for 17 months, and the cabinet was "under-performing" as the Prime Minister refrained to convene it on various occasions to prevent ministerial resignations and hence collapse (Naharnet 2015).

The Legislature

The Syrian withdrawal has generated hopes of institutional reinvigoration in the Chamber of Deputies as part of the drive towards a new phase in Lebanon's consociational democracy. These hopes were buttressed by the introduction of some new dynamics into the legislative process: the Speaker of Parliament has sponsored a process of national dialogue over key political issues such as the status of former President Lahoud and the disarmament of Hizbullah (Salamey and Payne 2008, 468). Still, the anti-Syrian majority managed to pass several decrees, outflanking the President's veto (Ibid.), whilst the Karami cabinet

resigned having been held accountable from the opposition over the handling of Hariri's assassination (Salamey 2014, 135).

These novel developments created expectations that the Chamber of Deputies would stand up to the legislative and representative challenges of the post-Syria era. This aspiration has been sustained by the fact that the 2005 and 2009 elections were held free from coercion. In addition, the re-integration of the most prominent Maronite politicians in the post-tutelage political arena enhanced the Parliament's representative credentials and thus its legitimacy.

Indeed, the Parliament encapsulated the quasi-bipolarity of the political field as epitomised in the independence-integration cleavage. Thus, the Chamber of Deputies ceased to be a rubberstamp institution of an engineered political class, but instead turned to a locus where the government-opposition axis was reproduced.

Hence, the post-2005 parliamentary politics loom large as testing ground of oppositional politics in a consociational democracy. Van Schendelen criticised the Dutch model of accommodation for being far off from polyarchy given the fact that collaboration emerges as the prevailing mode of conducting politics (1984, 32). The post-tutelage landscape in Lebanon revealed that collaboration is not the rule of the day in deeply divided societies. Instead, its absence is conducive to heated opposition politics that result in immobility and paralysis.

Crucially, political opposition acquired pronounced characteristics in post-tutelage Lebanon, given the divergent agendas harboured by the 14 March-8 March camps. Within this context, patterns of parliamentary instrumentalisation recurred to serve the sectarian logic underpinning the consociational foundations of Lebanese democracy. The inter-

confessional alliances notwithstanding, this instrumentalisation reflected the confluence of sectarian interests in pursuit of concrete agendas.

Thus the Speaker of Parliament refused to convene a session to ratify the agreement, establishing the STL. This negation did not solely reflect political disagreement with Siniora's decision: it also functioned as a reminder of the political influence and the broad powers that the Shia Speaker possesses within the institutional constellation of post-Taif Lebanon that include the prerogative of calling the Parliament into session (Salamey and Payne 2008, 467) when deemed right.

The instrumentalisation of Parliament was profoundly manifested in the blatant manipulation of the quorum requirement. This has been consistently used in the procedures revolving around presidential elections in post-Syria Lebanon. This occurred in 2007 when, at the height of the 14 March-8 March camps discrepancy, the Parliament failed to elect a president after nineteen attempts (Inter-Parliamentary Union 2016). The Gordian knot of this deadlock was cut with the Doha Accord package deal that ordained General Michel Sleiman as Lebanon's new President. This pattern has been replicating since April 2014, when the Lebanese parliamentarians made their first attempt to elect Sleiman's successor. In that very first effort the 14 March candidate, Samir Geagea, received 48 votes, whilst the 8 March camp and the FPM refused to nominate a candidate, submitting 52 blank ballots (Aziz 2015). The excessive manipulation of the quorum card has resulted in 45 unsuccessful attempts until General Michel Aoun was elected in October 2016.

Moreover, the representative function of the Parliament has been gravely affected by the consecutive extensions of its term that impinged

upon its fledgling legitimacy. Crucially, this reflected concerns over the security situation in Lebanon amidst the ongoing war in Syria, but also the conspicuous incapacity of the political class to agree on a common electoral law after years of inter-confessional bargaining. Within this context, elections have been postponed to June 2017 (The Daily Star 2014) –the last were held in 2009-.

For Michel Aoun, the consecutive prolongation of the Parliament’s mandate constituted a blow “to the principle of the rotation of power” (al-Akhbar 2014). On the other hand, members of civil society organisations criticised the decision as an infringement of democratic rights within a political order that “continues to benefit only a few in the country” (Ibid.). Moreover, the Parliament has fallen short of fully responding to its legislative duties. As Salamey and Payne indicate, “because of Lebanon’s plural confessional politics, the executive engages in informal consultations and consensus building with parliamentary blocs ahead of introducing draft laws. As a result of the dominance of sectarian considerations, most policy issues are settled outside parliament” (2008, 467). In this vein, the Chamber of Deputies has succumbed to immobility nurtured by the interlinked stalemates on the presidential election, the electoral law and the legislative elections. In fact, political paralysis has been metastasized from the executive to the legislature to the extent of meeting in extraordinary sessions to pass urgent draft laws deemed essential for the state’s finances (Voice of America 2015).

Elections

Agreement on a new electoral law has been depicted as “launching-point for political reform” (UNDP 2009, 113). As shown in the previous

chapter, the post-Taif electoral laws deviated from the stipulations of the Taif Agreement in order to engineer the reproduction of pro-Syrian political elites. In this vein, the process of electoral reform in the post-tutelage era formed an integral part in the political agenda as it is inextricably interwoven with respective visions of the nation and the role of the community in it. Within this context, elections acquired pronounced significance as a means to mobilise followers, gauge confessional influence and bolster alliance-making in Lebanon's political labyrinth.

The 2005 general elections marked "a glaring departure" from the past three post-Taif electoral battles (Haddad 2005, 305). For the first time, effective measures were taken to ensure that the elections were free and fair (Ibid.). The caretaker government of Najib Miqati invited international monitoring organisations "to legitimize and validate election results" (Ibid. 306). Moreover, the authorities did not interfere in favour of the one or the other side (Ibid.). Notwithstanding the absence of coercive engineering, inter-segmental dissonance on a new electoral law lowered expectations of wholesale democratic renewal, as the elections were inevitably held under the flawed Syrian-sponsored 2000 electoral law.

Interestingly, the 2005 elections witnessed the formation of a number of 'unnatural alliances' (Salloukh and al-Habbal 2015, 114) -or winning lists- that brought together pro- and anti-Syrian candidates. The ephemeral Four Party alliance between Mustaqbal, the PSP, Hizbullah and Amal epitomised the paradox of alliance-making in Lebanon, as these parties found themselves on opposing sides during the Independence Intifada.

According to Kota, the dissolution of these ad hoc alliances in the post-electoral period reflected essentially political differences. (2009, 107). Yet, this line of reasoning ignores the fact that the post-electoral divisions coincided with the Sunni-Shia cleavage. Thus the bipolar 14 March-8 March constellation mirrored to a great extent the Sunni-Shia fault line. It was the Maronite fragmentation that most prominently gave a political nuance to these divisions and this only partially, as the FPM – Hizbullah entente was concluded some months after the election.

Thus the 2005 elections “were instrumental in hardening sectarian modes of subjectification and mobilization” (Salloukh and al-Habbal 2015, 97). Hariri consolidated his unrivalled position in the Sunni bastions of Beirut, Sidon, West Bekaa and the North. Shia voters on the other hand, confirmed the duopoly of communal representation in the areas where they form the predominant majorities (namely the South and Baalbek) (Ibid.). On the Maronite side of the spectrum, Michel Aoun “swept across the Christian heartland” of Mount Lebanon (Ibid.). Finally, Walid Jumblatt benefited from his alliance with the major Sunni and Shia formations, winning all seats in the Druze districts and some in Beirut (Ibid.).

On the morrow of the elections –that were held on four consecutive Sundays- the 14 March alliance captured 72 seats, the 8 March camp 35, and the FPM 21. The turnout reached 46,47 percent -increased by 6 percent since the 2000 elections-, ranging from 28 percent in Beirut to 50 percent in Mount Lebanon and the Bekaa valley (Inter-Parliamentary Union 2016).

In comparison to the previous period, the 2005 elections ushered in significant elite circulation in Parliament as 47,6 percent of the MPs were

elected for the first time (EUEOM Final Report 2005, 34). Still, the main Christian parties, the FPM and the Lebanese Forces, re-entered the political field, thus enhancing Christian representation in the legislature. The 2009 legislative elections were held in the shadow of the May 2008 hostilities and the two-year long political paralysis between the anti- and pro-Syria camps that brought the country into a standstill. As aforementioned, the Doha Accord ended this prolonged impasse by endorsing a package deal that in what concerns the electoral procedure, envisaged the re-introduction of the 1960 electoral law.

According to this law elections are held on the basis of the *qada* or the small district (Kota 2009, 112). Lebanon was divided into 26 districts, whilst some of the electoral constituencies were explicitly mentioned in the text of the agreement. Thus the Qatari mediators created an electoral district in Beirut to favour Hariri's list (Salloukh and al-Habbal 2015, 97). The electoral battle revolved around three core issues: international alignments, Hizbullah's weapons, and the cabinet's decision-making mechanism (consensus vs majority) (Corstange 2010, 286-287). The bipolar polarisation of the political field was thus mirrored in the alliances formed. Daniel Corstange underlines that given the neck-to-neck Sunni-Shia battle, the Christian vote became decisive (Ibid. 287). This ushered in a heightened sectarian discourse and demonisation of the other "with frequent accusations of treason, invocations of collusion with Israel and the United States, and selling out to the Iranians" (Ibid.). The Maronite patriarch tried to influence the community's vote by painting Aoun's Shia allies as "agents of Persian Iran" that threatened the existence of Lebanon itself (Salloukh and al-Habbal 2015, 98).

Moreover, vote-trafficking and ‘electoral money’ (Corstagne 2010, 287) were broadly used to lure voters with the money allegedly coming from Iran and Saudi Arabia -US\$1 billion were reportedly spent- (Salloukh and al-Habbal 2015, 98). Importantly, a large number of expatriate voters were transported to Lebanon –the majority of whom by the 14 March alliance (80000) against 30000 voters transported by 8 March- (Ibid. 100)-.

The 2009 elections were hailed as an important step “towards the consolidation of democracy in Lebanon” (EUEOM Final Report 2009, 4). For the first time in Lebanon’s political history elections took place in a single day (Ekmekji 2012, 11), which was considered among the necessary reforms towards a modern and rational electoral system. In addition, a degree of impartiality was preserved, crystallised in the monitoring provided by a non-partisan Minister of Interior (Corstagne 2010, 287) Under his auspices, a Supervisory Commission (SCEC) was established as “a credible and neutral body” (National Democratic Institute 2009, 2) to monitor the electoral process.

The turnout reached 53,98 percent (Inter-Parliamentary Union 2016), ranging from 27 percent in Beirut II to 68 percent in the Christian district of Kesrouan (Corstagne 2010, 287). Yet, the turnout is probably underreported as expatriates are still registered in voter rolls (Ibid.). The results did not produce a shift in the balance of power. The 14 March coalition won 50,4 percent of the total votes and the 8 March alliance. 49,6 percent (Ibid.). This was translated into 71 seats for the 14 March camp and 57 seats for the 8 March coalition (the Aounist bloc included) (Ibid.).

The effects of inter-segmental polarisation were reflected in the voting patterns within the Sunni-Shia segments: 24 out of the 27 Sunni seats were won by the Future Movement, and equally, 24 out of the 27 Shia seats were shared by the Shia Hizbullah-Amal duo. On the other hand, the Christian vote remained fragmented with 37 seats going to the 14 March Christian parties and independent figures, and 27 to the opposition (FPM and Marada parties) (Ibid. 288).

The 2013 general elections were postponed to 2017 due to the precarious security situation and the recurrent institutional deadlock. However, discussions on electoral reform have been ongoing, occupying a central position within the broader context of political reform in Lebanon.

As stressed in the previous chapter, the Taif Agreement foresees political deconfessionalisation as enshrined, among other clauses, in the establishment of a non-confessional Parliament and the re-institution of a Senate based on confessional representation. In what regards the electoral law, the Taif Agreement stipulates that it shall “ensure the sound and efficient political representation” of all communities and generations on the basis of the ethnically mixed governorates.

The distorted and partial implementation of the Taif Agreement during the period of Syrian tutelage has in the meantime enhanced the articulation of divergent preferences that are essentially connected to sectarian strategies of power maximisation. This has been most eminently manifested among the main Christian parties that aspired to end practices of gerrymandering and malapportionment in the direction of limiting dependence on Muslim votes.

On the other hand, the Shia parties are adamant in their rejection of the confessional system as a means to correct the community's underrepresentation. Within this context, Hizbullah and Amal have repeatedly stressed the need for a proportional law that reflects accurately their demographic weight. On the other hand, Saad Hariri rejects pure proportionality as this would utterly usher in the fragmentation of the Sunni vote and will ultimately increase Shia influence in the political system.

However, the period 2005-2015 have seen some attempts to reach consensus on the basis of cooperation with experts from the civil society experts and the political class. The most notable example is the National Commission on Electoral Law founded in 2005 as a “symbolic break” with the years of Syrian tutelage (Salloukh and al-Habbal 2015, 103). The Commission more commonly known as the Boutros Commission (headed by Fouad Boutros, former Foreign Minister) included 12 members from various confessional and professional backgrounds (judicial, academic, legal) (Ekmeji 2012, 9). Its head submitted the commission's proposals in May 2006, having received during its proceedings 122 different schemes of partial or full amendment (Salloukh and al-Habbal 2015, 103). According to the draft law, Lebanon should adopt a mixed electoral system whereby 60 percent of the seats (77 out of 128) are elected on the level of the small district (qada) on the basis of the current FPTP system, whilst the remaining 40 percent is elected on the level of the muhafaza—as enshrined in the Taif Agreement—on the basis of proportionality (Ibid.). According to Salloukh and al-Habbal, those arrangements reflected a compromise formula between the FPTP preferences of the political

establishment and proportionality championed by members of the civil society (Ibid.).

Hence the Boutros Commission hesitated to submit a radical revision of the confessional system in accordance to the electoral reforms provided by the Taif Accord. Rather, it attempted to reconcile the divergent perspectives harboured by the different political actors, leaving the establishment of a Senate and the abrogation of the quota system for the future.

Nevertheless, the Commission did make some steps towards a fair and modern electoral system. Thus it suggested:

- i. Reduction of the voting age from 21 to 18 (a constant demand of Hizbullah).
- ii. Creation of an independent commission to monitor the elections.
- iii. Introduction of a 30 percent quota for women in electoral lists.
- iv. Right of suffrage for expatriates.
- v. Ban incumbent ministers from running into legislative elections. (Ekmeji 2012, 9).
- vi. Use of pre-printed ballots (Salloukh and al-Habbal 2015, 103).

It should be noted that the expatriate vote is a constant Christian demand that resides in the conviction that the vast majority of the Lebanese diaspora has Christian background. On the other hand, reduction of the voting age is a standard demand raised by Hizbullah and pertains to the party's conviction of numerical superiority in the 18-21 age groups.

Significantly, the Commission submitted proposals on media monitoring and introduced standard rules governing the campaigns' expenditures (Ekmeji 2012, 10) to ensure transparency. However, the prolonged sectarian standoff (2006-2008) overshadowed the Commission's proposals. However, an independent electoral commission was formed, elections were held in a single day, and detailed regulations regarding advertising, media campaign and use of public space were developed (Ibid. 105).

A new attempt to introduce a commonly accepted electoral law was submitted by Marwan Charbel, former Minister of Interior in the cabinet of Najib Miqati. This proposal did also contain elements of hybridity, but it was more deeply entrenched in proportionality. Specifically,

- i. Each voter casts her ballot for one list and she is entitled to cast two preferential votes for two candidates of the same list. The first vote would determine the candidates who would be on the list, and the second vote who among them would take office on the basis of proportional allocation of seats in the district.
- ii. Lebanon would be divided in 10-14 medium-sized districts, thus merging the small qada and the larger muhafaza (governorate/province) of the Taif Accord.
- iii. It retains some of the contributions made by the Boutros Commission, such as the affirmative 30 percent quota for women, the pre-printed ballot and the expatriate vote. An electoral commission would be established but under the auspices of the Ministry of Interior (Draft Parliamentary Elections Law for the Elections of 2013, Ekmekji 2012, 13).

The draft law included some of the traits of the Single Transferable Vote (STL) voting system, namely proportionality and preferential voting. Nevertheless, it did not abolish the confessional allocation of seats, thus again raising questions about the equality of vote in Lebanon. Moreover, the preferential aspect of the law, whilst allowing voters to choose a candidate according to her personal virtues, it did not discourage the development of patron-client relations. By contrast, its proportional aspect of the law attenuated the wasted vote effects of the FPTP, thus enhancing representativeness in the Parliament. Finally, the middle-sized districts went against Christian aspirations for homogeneous constituencies.

Therefore, the main Christian parties lent support to the Orthodox Gathering Law devised by the Greek Orthodox former deputy Prime Minister Elie Ferzli (Ekmeji 2012, 14). According this plan, Lebanon will be turned into a single constituency, where each community votes exclusively for its representatives on the basis of proportional distribution of votes and seats. Hence, the electoral system will be molded into perfectly parallel pillars where campaigns are waged within the confessional group.

Lijphart's suggested, that minorities would hardly accept being represented by leaders of other communities (2002, 48-49). In the Christian milieu, this perception has been inculcated by the extensive reliance of Christian candidates on Muslim votes. In fact, the Orthodox Gathering Law corrects what Lijphart sees as anomaly in the Lebanese formula that is its majoritarian, centripetalist aspect by establishing "a straightforward PR" (Ibid. 52). Nevertheless, the law does not repeal ethnic pre-determination, which Lijphart condemns for the exclusion of

minority groups that do identify themselves with the overarching ascriptive criteria.

Crucially, the Orthodox Gathering Law contradicts the Taif Agreement and the drive towards national integration. Whilst the FPTP rule enhanced cross-confessional alliances, the Orthodox Gathering Law militates for the intra-segmental electoral competition. Intra-segmental competition has been a constant feature of the electoral system in Lebanon. However, the Orthodox Law tends to privilege confessional seclusion as cross-confessional alliances will be irrelevant.

Moreover, it creates new injustices by giving much more weight to Christian votes (Qifa Nakbi blog 2013). It thus encapsulates an ethical dilemma deeply embedded in consociational forms of power-sharing that straddles endorsement of the equality of vote and protection of minorities through overrepresentation as guarantee against hegemonic control and assimilation.

The Future Movement reacted negatively to the proposed draft law (al-Akhbar 2013). Limiting voting within one's sect would curb Sunni influence over the Christian and Alawite candidates of the North, where the community forms the majority of the population. Moreover, proportional representation foments fears of intra-segmental fragmentation that would essentially undermine Mustaqbal's quasi-monopoly of Sunni representation (Ibid.) as the party is progressively being outflanked by extremists.

Within the framework of a new parliamentary sub-committee Amal submitted a proposal according to which half (64) of the MPs would be elected on the basis of PR and the other half according to FPTP. The 14 March camp, on the other hand, proposed a draft law that decreases the

number of lawmakers elected under FPTP (60) and increases the number of those elected under PR (68). However, districting remained a major stumbling block to an eventual agreement (The Daily Star 2014).

A new parliamentary committee was formed in November 2015 that aimed at following the same compromise path mixing proportional representation with FPTP (Naharnet 2015). Hizbullah took a position in favour of proportionality in a national constituency “or in a few expanded electorates” (Naharnet 2016) as the most suitable formula for pluralist societies like Lebanon. According to the party representative in the parliamentary committee, proportionality guarantees elite renewal and ends the monopolisation of representation (OLJ 2016). For Hassan Nasrallah, “any party that rejects proportional representation would be dictatorial because it would be rejecting partners in its regions and confessional representation” (Naharnet 2015). On the other hand, Mustaqbal’s representative in the committee rejected proportionality as long as “illegitimate arms are spread throughout the country” (Naharnet 2016) -in reference to Hizbullah’s arsenal-. For the Future Movement, “the political forces of each country define the democratic criteria according to the prevailing conditions within it” on the basis of political consensus (Naharnet 2015).

Significantly, the prolonged political bickering in the realm of the electoral law coupled with the plethora of the draft plans submitted, reveal the transitional phase that Lebanon goes through. Within this context, the proposed draft laws reflect the fragmented visions of the future. Hizbullah endorses PR and the introduction of referenda in the political process (Naharnet 2015) as the means to advance the status of political Shiism and confirm its growing influence within the confines of

the confessional system. By contrast, the Future Movement strives to retain its hegemonic position within the Sunni milieu as reflected in the preservation of the status quo. The Christians oscillated between the FPM's support for an electoral law that endorses communal seclusion and the Lebanese Forces' endorsement of a hybrid system.

Background factors (2005-2015)

Despite the deep fragmentation witnessed during the period under study, Lebanon managed to retain a modicum of political stability. In this vein, the examination of the background factors provides some key insights into the trends prevalent during the period 2005-2015.

-solid majorities: According to the latest data based on the voter registration list, the Muslim community of Lebanon is edging closer to forming the overwhelming majority of the country's population. Thus 37 percent of Lebanese voters are Christian, among whom 21 percent are Maronites (Economist 2016). The influx of over one million Syrian refugees has accentuated Christian fears of a repetition of the Palestinian scenario that would overwhelmingly tilt the balance in favour of the Muslim segment.

However, the intra-confessional composition of the Muslim segment, -translated into 29 percent Shia and 28 percent Sunni voters (Ibid.)- implied the existence of a *multiple balance of power* that attenuated the effects of Muslim preponderance. Yet, the extreme number of segments rendered the formation of cabinets a Herculean task given the plethora of sectarian, political and regional interests at stake. In view of this fragmentation, it is doubtful that the *small size* of the

Lebanese population exerted a positive influence on inter-elite coalescence.

-socioeconomic differences: Socioeconomic disparities persisted if not increased during the period 2005-2015. Again though, the communal dimension of those disparities can be only deduced given the regional focus of the available data. In addition, regional disparities shall by no means, be automatically interpreted as points of inter-sectarian dispute.

According to a United Nations Development Programme report on Lebanon, the country “continues to face serious challenges in translating relative financial wealth as a high Middle Income Country, into broad-based, socio-economic progress for its people, with significant regional disparities and pockets of extreme poverty remaining” (UNDP 2016).

In this vein, the governorates of North and South Lebanon continue to suffer the most from extreme and overall poverty. Specifically, North Lebanon manifested a very high prevalence of extreme poverty (18 percent) and overall poverty (53 percent). North Lebanon represents 20.7 percent of Lebanon’s population, 46 percent of the extremely poor population and 38 per cent of the entire poor population (UNDP 2008, 19-20). Intra-regional differences in the North probably point to differences in communal prosperity. Thus, the Sunni majority areas of Tripoli, Akkar, Minieh/Dinnieh have a relatively high poverty rate in comparison to the more well-off Christian majority areas of Koura, Zghorta, Batroun and Bshare (Ibid.20). In the Bekaa valley and the South, -both Muslim majority areas-, the higher-than-average prevalence of extreme poverty is 10 percent and 12 percent respectively. Besides, the Bekaa exhibits an average prevalence of overall poverty of 29 percent, whilst the South a higher- than-average prevalence of overall poverty of

42 percent. Crucially, the category of non-salaried employees has the highest exposure to poverty, with one out of six workers in this category being poor (Ibid. 22). On this note, the Bekaa and the North run the greatest risk since the poverty rate among the non-salaried employees is as high as 31 and 21 percent respectively (Ibid.).

Whilst these figures did not imply a direct economic-sectarian backlash, they did provide a fertile ground for growing animosity and radicalisation. Indeed, the Sunni *ihbat* (disenchantment) of the post-2005 period ushered in a retreat to a new ‘patriotisme de communauté’ which correlated the sect’s declining position to the meteoric rise of Shia power (Daher 2015, 218-219). In the same vein, the war in Syria and Hizbullah’s intervention on the side of the regime has rekindled fears of an Islamist revival in the North. The victory of the former Justice Minister –member of the Future Movement-, Ashraf Rifi in the 2016 municipal elections in Tripoli against an alliance of the Sunni heavyweights Hariri and Miqati (Reuters 2016), might augur intra-segmental destabilization and thus further tensions with the Shia. On a similar note, economic deprivation partly explains Hizbullah’s success in recruiting fighters for the Syrian front (Ghaddar 2016) in a country where the unemployment rate in 2015 stands at 24 percent, and the rate of youth unemployment at 35 percent respectively (al Jazeera 2015).

On the other hand, these seeming regional-confessional disparities conceal deep class discrepancies: “48 per cent of personal wealth in Lebanon belongs to just 0.3 per cent of the adult population - a mere 8900 individuals - while the rest of the citizenry divide up less than 52 per cent between them. Just two families - Mikati and Hariri - own 15 per cent of it” (Traboulsi 2014, 32).

This over-concentration of wealth stresses the flaws embedded in the political system. As Traboulsi notes, “the prominent role of the sectarian system in the social structure is manifested in the competition over rent in and through the state and the struggle over the distribution of state services, public works and contracts, and battles to optimize the various regional allocations taken from the state budget” (Ibid. 20). Ultimately, this “competition that also includes the apportioning of state contracts and the division of various forms of rents between the sectarian blocs and alliances” ushers in mismanagement and the lack of basic services (Ibid. 20-21).

Moreover, the July 2006 war and the Syrian crisis had tremendous repercussions on the Lebanese economy. Firstly, the July 2006 war compromised the expected growth rate by 5 percent. The direct and indirect cost of the war has been officially estimated at \$5 billion, or 22 percent of GDP (Ibid.), whilst the public debt rose to the even less tenable level of 180 percent of GDP (Ibid.).

Secondly, the Syrian imbroglio added strains on the economic and social fabric: as of 2014, the Syrian refugees represented more than one quarter of the population of Lebanon, added to the 300000 Palestinian refugees that already resided in the country, and to the 42000 Palestinian refugees displaced from their Syrian homes (ESCWA 2016, 88). Significantly, the vast majority of the refugees are settled in the poorest areas of Lebanon –notably in the North, the Bekaa valley and the South-. Furthermore, the GDP has been cut by 2.9 percent annually (2012-2014). The total losses for the Lebanese economy have been estimated at \$13.1 billion, \$5.6 billion in 2015 alone (Ibid. 87). The unemployment rate has been doubled (20 percent) as the combined effect of refugee influx and

stalled creation of jobs pushed women, the young and the unskilled, out of work (Ibid. 88). This state of affairs inevitably creates an explosive mixture as the population of vulnerable Lebanese now matches that of the Syrian refugees (1.5 million) (Ibid. 88).

These discrepancies notwithstanding, an economically-driven sectarian conflict has not been apparent in the period under study. Instead, the trans-communal protests of August 2015 have demonstrated universal dismay against the political system *per se*. However, socioeconomic hardships could in the mid-term be conducive to intra-segmental fragmentation and radicalisation incubated under the condition of regional turmoil that tends to acquire sectarian nuances.

-external dangers: The divergent perceptions of external dangers came fully into surface during the period under study (2005-2015). The re-arrangement of the political landscape and its concomitant structuration around the independence-integration cleavage mirrored regional rivalries (Saouli 2014, 123) and equally perceptions of ‘friends’ and ‘foes’. The unravelling of Syria, moreover, amplified these perceptions as exemplified by the proliferation of armed non-state actors.

On the state level, Israel continued to represent the preeminent threat to Lebanon’s interests as enshrined in the policy statements issued by all cabinets in the post-2005 period. Thus, the liberation of the land still occupied by Israel remains a constant point of reference. The Baabda Declaration, sponsored by President Sleiman, refers explicitly to Israel: “All political forces and intellectuals and opinion leaders should be encouraged to avoid inflammatory political and media discourse and anything that could spark conflict, disturbances, and sectarian confessional strife. That approach would consolidate national unity and

promote internal cohesion in confronting external threats, particularly that posed by the Israeli enemy” (Baabda Declaration 2009).

Beyond the seeming consensus over Israel, Lebanon’s confessional elites harboured opposing views over what constitutes a threat. The independence-integration cleavage that shaped political life in the post-tutelage era reflected precisely the diverse feelings entertained over Syria. For the Sunnis, in particular, the assassination of Rafiq Hariri –and the subsequent assassinations of 14 March members- caused total disillusionment with the regime in Damascus. This Sunni disillusionment prompted a shift in the community’s alignment towards the ‘moderate axis’ that included Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Jordan and the Palestinian Authority (ICG 2010, 9).

Thus, the Sunnis in Lebanon continued to nurse negative perceptions of Iran, exacerbated further by Hizbullah’s growing role during the post-2005 period. Moreover, Lebanese Sunni hostility to Iran was in line with the pervasive ‘Shia crescent’ discourse espoused by Arab Sunni leaders such as the Jordanian king Abdullah (Ibid. 11). For instance, Siniora accused Hizbullah of dragging Lebanon into war against Israel to serve Iranian geopolitical interests (Barakat 2015, 144). On the morrow of his toppling from the premiership in January 2011, Hariri blamed Iran for “flagrant intervention” in the Lebanese and Arab affairs (al Ahram 2011).

On the other hand, Hizbullah felt threatened by the internationalisation strategy propounded by the 14 March alliance. In its 2009 Manifesto, the party explicitly identifies as threats the United States of America and Israel, epitomising the colonial powers that seek to subjugate, “divide and detach nations of the region into entities in

constant conflict under different titles”. Within this context, Hizbullah warns of “the malignant colonial discord (*fitna*)” that might spread “sedition”, stir “Sunni-Shia sectarian feelings” and impede pan-Arab and pan-Islamic unity. Therefore, Hizbullah was/is not in principle against Saudi Arabia and the Sunni monarchies of the Gulf. However, relations with Saudi Arabia were much perceived through the lenses of the internationalisation strategy pursued by the Future Movement and the latter’s close association with Saudi Arabia as the party’s external protector. In addition, US-Saudi ties under the Bush administration and the Saudi-Iranian antipathy weighed heavily on the party’s perceptions of the Saudi monarchy.

Perceptions of Syria evenly divided the Christian segment. This marked an important shift as the Maronites were to a great extent united in their opposition to Syria. Whilst the FPM sought to restore ties with Syria on the basis of formal diplomatic relations, other parties such as the Lebanese Forces and the Kataeb continued to perceive Syria as constant threat. The targeted assassinations –by unknown assailants- of a number of prominent anti-Syria Christian figures nurtured these perceptions e.g. Samir Kassir (journalist), George Hawi (politician, former secretary general of the Lebanese Communist Party), Gibran Ghassan Tuani (politician and editor), Pierre Gemayel Jr. Moreover, the close ties between Hizbullah and Iran played out in the discourse of the Maronite patriarch and his perception of external dangers. In a bid to influence the Maronite vote in favour of the 14 March forces on the eve of the 2009 elections, the patriarch claimed that “the Lebanese entity and our Arab identity of Lebanon are under threat” by the agents of Persian Iran in Lebanon (Salloukh and Habbal 2015, 98).

The disintegration of the Syrian state and the heightened Saudi-Iranian competition exacerbated the lingering tensions between Lebanon's segmental groups. As aforementioned, the Future Movement did not conceal its opposition to the Baathist regime. In this vein, Hariri accused Assad of the massive killings of the Syrian people and the opening of the borders that spread "the forces of extremism and perversity" and led to "displacement 10 million Syrian citizens" (Ya Libnan 2015). On the same note, he called for a military solution in Syria, by calling for a shift in the Saudi-led 'Decisive Storm' operation from Yemen to Syria (The Daily Star 2015). In parallel, Hariri blamed Iran for "leading the widest operation to destroy Arab societies, from Lebanon to Syria, Iraq, Yemen, and every country infiltrated by the Revolutionary Guard" (The Daily Star 2016).

For Hizbullah, the Syrian revolt presented many challenges. Firstly, a change in the balance of power in Syria risked undermining the project of the Resistance since Damascus has been a conduit of Iranian arms for Hizbullah (Daher 2014). Secondly, various groups in the Syrian opposition have verbally threatened Hizbullah for its support of the regime (Ibid.). Thirdly, Lebanese Shia are anxious of a jihadist threat that might engulf Lebanon and the Shia minority in particular (Daher 2015, 222-223). Therefore, Hassan Nasrallah has repeatedly stated that "if takfiris achieve victory in Syria, we would all be eliminated in Lebanon, not just the resistance" (al-Akhbar 2014). In view of this danger, the IRL was eager to wage a pre-emptive war against takfiris in Syria, Iraq "and everywhere [needed] to face off this threat because this is the right way to defend Lebanon" (al-Masdar 2015).

For the Christian political parties, the Syrian uprising stirred fears related to the status of the Christians in the region and the demographic repercussions of the influx of Syrian refugees in the country. However, each side opted to emphasize different aspects of the matter in accordance to its respective alliances in the domestic arena. Thus Samir Geagea described the Syrian revolt as a “revolution” arguing that “if fundamentalist regimes took over power, we will oppose them as we have opposed some current regimes” (The Daily Star 2011). On the contrary, Michel Aoun stressed the emergence of jihadist groups such as ISIS that call Christians “apostates” (al-Monitor 2015), whilst, as aforementioned, portraying the eventual collapse of the regime “as the fall of democracy” of which Christians “will be the first victims” (ICG 2012, 12). Within this context, Aoun underscored that the commonality of visions with Hizbullah, as the two parties have reached “the stage where they complement each other” due to the fight against the takfiri threat and the Israeli danger” (Naharnet 2014).

In a similar vein, the Maronite patriarch emphasized the fear of Christian persecution for “the Islamist tide that arose in the so-called Arab Spring countries has frightened many Christians, who are a minority in every Middle Eastern country and who are concerned for their survival should the multi-religious nature of the region change” (al-Arabiya 2012). On the level of the state, the Syrian uprising produced a double consensus in relation to the jihadist threat and the growing number of Syrian refugees. The brief capture of the northeastern border town of Aarsal by a coordinated Nusra-ISIS attack that cost the lives of 19 Lebanese troops and 42 civilians and the abduction of 27 members of the army and the security forces, has ushered in a seeming “united response to the threat”

(Syria Deeply 2014). Furthermore, the mounting influx of Syrian refugees has resulted in a governmental decision to shut down the border with Syria amidst revenge attacks against refugees on the morrow of the Arsal attack (Syria Deeply 2014).

This minimal consensus notwithstanding, the elites in Lebanon followed personal strategies to address them. Firstly, Premier Tammam Salam “preliminary” aligned Lebanon with an Islamic alliance against terrorism sponsored by Saudi Arabia (Naharnet 2015). This decision incited reactions regarding the premier’s powers and the alliance’s affiliation. For Salam, this decision was justified on the grounds of the cabinet’s prolonged stalemate, and by no means implied overruling the cabinet (Ibid.). Secondly, the Foreign Minister Gebran Bassil –son-in-law of Michel Aoun and head of the FPM- took the initiative to unilaterally pursue the resolution of the refugee file. In this vein, he planned to resettle refugees in ‘safe areas’ within Syrian territory. This initiative met with resistance: on the one hand, it was thought to impinge upon the Premier’s powers, and on the other, it contravened the Lebanese policy of dissociation, by establishing official contacts with the authorities of the regime (OLJ 2014).

-overarching allegiances: The unfolding of the competing visions of nationhood during the 2005-2015 period has increasingly highlighted that “in times of crisis Lebanon’s communities will look for external sponsorship to reinforce their domestic positions (Kerr 2007, 250). In this vein, the Syrian crisis and the sectarian filtering of threats has only magnified these allegiances thus manifesting a profound rift on how Lebanese elites frame and understand the national interest and the identity of the state.

For instance, the former member of the Future Movement -and resigned Justice Minister-, Ashraf Rifi said: “Together we will defend Lebanon and its Arab identity and we will not accept that it be turned into a subordinate of Vilayat-e Faqih or that the representative of (Iran’s supreme guide) be able to control the State, decide the identity of its president, or form its government...This is the Lebanese republic and we won’t accept that it be turned into the republic of the supreme guide” (Naharnet 2016).

Moreover, the suspension of the Saudi pledge to disburse a \$4 billion grant for the purchase of French weapons for the LAF and the Internal Security Forces (ISF) evolved into a point of discord over Lebanon’s Arab identity. The Saudi retraction was allegedly connected to the decision of the Lebanese Foreign Minister, Gebran Bassil, to deny support for an Arab League resolution which condemned Iran’s “provocative acts” and that linked Hizbullah to acts of terror in Bahrain and elsewhere (Halawi 2016).

Following the deterioration of relation between the two states, Saad Hariri tried to demonstrate Lebanon’s commitment to the Saudi version of Arabism: “We will stand at the face of any scheme aimed at undermining Lebanon’s ties with its Arab brothers...We reject any Iranian hegemony over Lebanon’s domestic and foreign policies. The Lebanese rejected the hegemony of the Syrian regime over Lebanon although it carried the slogan of Arabism...Any party or organization in Lebanon will not be able to force the Lebanese to accept the approach of surrendering Lebanon to the Iranian policies. The Lebanese who are keen on their Arab identity will not betray their brothers, especially the kingdom of Saudi Arabia...” (Naharnet 2016). On the same note, Premier Salam invited

Saudi Arabia to review its decision and hence “contribute to the consolidation of the Lebanese identity and its Arab character” (Naharnet 2016).

The project of the Resistance, on the other hand, entailed strong relations with Syria and Iran. For Hizbullah, the Syrian redeployment implied that Damascus ceased to function as “guardian” of the Resistance but emerged rather as a “regional partner” (Daher 2007, 6). In what regards Iran, the election of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad signalled the restoration of ideological affinities between Hizbullah’s leadership, the Guide and the Iranian President (Ibid. 6-7). The July 2006 war evidenced this “ideological convergence and the mutualisation of their interests (Ibid.). Thus, in defiance of UNSC 1701, Ayatollah Khamenei rushed to warn the UNIFIL forces against “interfer[ing] in Hezbollah’s affairs” and declared that “any attempt to attack that pious group, whether from Zionists or miserable agents of the Great Satan, will be fought back by the Islamic world” (cited in Daher 2007, 7). Moreover, Iran has probably funded Hizbullah’s reconstruction efforts, although “the Party has never denied the fact that the Iranian authorities – the religious associations linked to the Guide of the Revolution’s office in particular – have always financed some of its social institutions...like *Jihad al-Binaa*” (Hizbullah’s ‘reconstruction service’)(Ibid. 10).

The Syrian crisis exhibited the density of ties connecting Hizbullah to Iran. Their common military engagement in Syria apart (e.g. Fulton, Holliday and Wyr 2013, Joshi 2016), Hizbullah has verbally attacked Saudi Arabia on various occasions. Thus, after a double attack against the Iranian embassy in Beirut in 2013 -whose responsibility was claimed by the al-Qaeda-linked Abdullah Azzam Brigades-, Nasrallah argued that the

perpetrators acted “under the administration of Saudi intelligence” (Now. 2013). Whilst hailing the interim nuclear agreement between Iran and the P5+1 states, the secretary general of Hizbullah said that “Saudi Arabia treated Iran as its enemy. The Saudis have proxy wars with Iran inside Iran, in Iraq, Syria, Lebanon and Pakistan” (Ibid.). Reflecting this line of reasoning, Nasrallah argued that the problem with ISIS, al-Qaida, and al-Nusra is their ideology that ‘is the same Wahhabi ideology that is present in Saudi Arabia’ (Naharnet 2016). The Saudi intervention in Yemen reconfirmed the commonality of visions between Hizbullah and Iran.

Thus the removal of the Syrian factor facilitated the development of particularistic allegiances that in the domestic field exacerbated inter-segmental divisions on the elite and the mass levels.

-tradition of compromise: As aforementioned, the pragmatics of power-sharing in Lebanon entails a high degree of pragmatism in the conduct of politics (Khashan 2012) that tends to prevent systemic collapse.

This does not imply that a culture or a tradition of compromise is atavistically reproduced in Lebanon. Rather than that, it could be plausibly argued that the elites in Lebanon have been internalising the dangers springing from disorder and implosion. In this vein, they are inclined to exhibit the required flexibility in order to achieve compromise in the negative sense of preventing the worst outcome. Thus, this exhibited inclination to eschew the worst evil might ultimately incarnate the Lebanese tradition of accommodation.

Significantly, processes of national dialogue encompassing, on the one hand, the political class in its entirety, and, on the other, Mustaqbal and Hizbullah, have managed to defuse tensions, providing channels of extra-institutional deliberation.

The investigation of the background factors during the period 2005-2015 has demonstrated the negative prospects of consociational consolidation in post-Syria Lebanon. The divergent perceptions of external dangers coupled with the tendency to follow foreign policies according to particularistic affiliations have impacted heavily on elite coalescence within the executive. Despite the fact that Lebanon continued to score positively on factors such as the solid majorities and the multiple balance of power, the identity-related factors moderated their alleged positive effects.

However, an overall examination of the background factors during the period 1990-2015 demonstrates that Lijphart's classification cannot be universally applied. In the case of postwar Lebanon, it became evident that the absence of a coherent, national identity mattered most than the absence of solid majorities or the presence of large socioeconomic differences between the segmental groups. This does not imply that they are devoid of significance. On the contrary, the examination of the background factors points to their 'aleatory' importance that varies across time and context. In this vein, the examination of the background factors during the period 1990-2015 confirms Lijphart's 'verdict' according to which "an attempt at consociationalism can fail even if all the background conditions are positive" and it is possible to succeed even "if all of these conditions are negative" (2008, 5).

Finally, the investigation of the background factors in postwar Lebanon stresses the significance of the external actors in facilitating and sustaining consociationalism. As analysed above, Syria played this role during the period 1990-2005. In the post-tutelage period, this role has

been undertaken by numerous actors such as Qatar. Within this context, the EU has been particularly active, assisting the country in the realms of institution-building, political, economic and educational reform (Fakhoury 2014, 314), and crucially the refugee crisis (EU Support to Lebanon 2016).

CONCLUSION

Power-sharing has been the prevalent mode to structure political and social life in settings fragmented across ethnic, religious and linguistic lines. Its emphasis on communal inclusion has provided a realist framework to manage diversity. Despite the fact that the institutionalisation of diversity impairs efficiency and the development of a coherent national identity, it sometimes emerges as the sole means to preserve stability. In this vein, Arend Lijphart has underlined the significance of shared and self-rule as epitomised in the consociational devices of rule by grand coalition and segmental autonomy.

However, consociationalism does impinge upon some basic democratic principles. As shown, the prioritisation of inclusion violates the principle of equality as enshrined in the affirmative quotas granted to minorities. Moreover, the formation of all-inclusive cabinets limits accountability and erodes the credibility of institutions such as the Parliament. In parallel, the structuration of society across ascriptive criteria of belonging narrows down the space for the articulation of interests that transcend the ethnic mold.

The Lebanese model of power-sharing does to a certain extent incorporate all those dilemmas. As this thesis tried to show, power-sharing has been consistently endorsed in Lebanon to build the nation and manage the affairs of the state. This constant–albeit punctuated– return of power-sharing is what makes Lebanon an instructive case on multi-communal partnership. The Sisyphean process of engagement with consociationalism as the means to devise the terms and conditions of the –perceived– fair cooperation and imagining of the state (Adeno 2009, 62) epitomises the vicissitudes of sharing power in fragmented states.

As assumed, power-sharing is deeply entrenched in the history of state formation in Lebanon and thus in the historical consciousness of the communal groups. The institutional setting has been inextricably intertwined with burgeoning visions of nation- statehood. In this vein, the study aimed at investigating how processes of political engineering and institutional design become entangled with communal myths, historical perceptions, identities and crucially preferences. In contrast to its façade of institutional stasis, consociationalism incubates change. Interposing between the visions nursed by the different actors, the overarching institutional framework has influenced inter- and intra-segmental relations and in turn, it has been influenced by them.

The sacralisation of confessionalism (ta'ifiyya), proportionality and functional autonomy under the Ottoman-era province of Mount Lebanon has crucially set the stage for the modalities of accommodation within the state of Lebanon. Devised as a form to manage an inter-communal conflict between Lebanon's two historic communities –the Maronites and the Druze-, power-sharing has evolved into an historic necessity in an enlarged, French-sponsored, multi-confessional Greater Lebanon. Its Jacobin spirit notwithstanding, the 1926 Constitution bore the brunt of Chiha's convivialist, *laissez faire* ethos, as a fig leaf for Maronite preponderance grounded on the ephemeral perpetuation of confessionalism in the state, and functional federalism on the level of the society. The National Pact sealed the institutionalisation of those key consociational devices as the two pillars of Lebanon's formula of symbiosis. Coupled with the 'no East, no West' formula, the architects of the National Pact sought to disguise the tensions between Lebanese

nationalism and pan-Arab unionism amidst a regional state system that had not yet consolidated.

The formula lasted for about three decades. The hegemony of political Maronitism was soon compromised towards a more equal partnership with the Sunni political class. Crucially, Fouad Chehab attempted to move forward with nation-building by pursuing the fusion of the Lebanese in a single society based on a shared belief in belonging to one people and one nation (Solh 2004, 317). Economic and political reforms were introduced to boost this nationalist project, decrease inequalities and embrace the marginalised strata of the society. However, these reforms proved incapable of healing the accumulated flaws of a political system suffering from recurrent crises of political paralysis, and an economic system structured around an economic oligarchy. The emergence of a more radical version of Arabism, closely associated with the Palestinian struggle, gradually ushered in an alliance with the anti-status quo forces in Lebanon. The progressive militarisation of the political field led to a protracted civil war that unravelled the state into a plethora of sectarian cantons.

Meanwhile, new actors have entered the field: a number of warlords have largely replaced the old political classes. The Shia community, lagging behind in terms of institutional organisation during the prewar years, had in due time entered the fray of communal mobilisation as Amal and Hizbullah projected their visions of Lebanon. In parallel, Syria effectively outmanœuvred all domestic and regional actors to slowly impose its firm grip over the country. Having been invited in 1976 to save the Phalanges Libanaises from defeat, Syria entrenched its position as the ultimate decision-maker, and interpreter of Lebanon's identity.

The Taif Agreement aimed at endorsing a comprehensive peace settlement. As argued, the accord was the result of a critical juncture, whose set of permissive and productive conditions facilitated its realisation. Apart from a peace settlement, the Taif Agreement launched a new process of nation-building towards an integrative polity, paradoxically grounded on the ephemeral perpetuation of political confessionalism. Essentially, the Taif Agreement has engendered a new framework for the redefinition of relations between the community and the nation: “the ta’ifa [shall] relinquish its claim to exclusive representation and admit to a supra-communal national identity” (Ziadeh 2006, 173), or to a sort of syncretistic nationalism (Hanf 1993). This syncretistic nationalism shall be eminently developed within the confines of a henceforth Arab Lebanon as the final homeland for all its citizens.

However, the Taif Agreement did not constitute a breaking point with the past. Being subject to path-dependence, the Taif Accord revived the merits and flaws of the previous order as crystallised in the re-adoption of consociationalism. In pursuit of collective responsibility, the accord diffused power among the three presidencies in the executive and the legislature. The consociational devices of segmental autonomy, proportionality and government by grand coalition were preserved, whilst veto rights were veiled in the executive and the legislature. Nevertheless, transition to the new order was not smooth: patterns of political bickering in the process of cabinet formation, immobilism and lack of consensus reflected the pursuit of narrow sectarian interests and the divergent interpretations of the agreement.

Crucially, the architects of the agreement entrusted Syria with the role of the external regulator. Following a self-centered approach, Syria

manipulated the divisions within the elite cartel, employing an imperial strategy of divide-and-rule that secured its position within the country. In pursuit of its interests, Syria paid a lip service to the Taif Agreement, focusing, instead, on the engineering and re-production of pliant elites.

As had been explained, the Independence Intifada signalled a point of divergence with the period of tutelage. The scope conditions engendered by the shift in US foreign policy in the post-9/11 era emboldened the disenchanting segments of the Lebanese population. The assassination of Rafiq Hariri catalytically propelled a chain of popular protests that ushered in the Syrian redeployment after 30 years of military presence in Lebanon.

The Independence Intifada generated expectations of a rejuvenated spirit of national unity that would utterly culminate in a functioning consociational formula. Nevertheless, the post-tutelage political field quickly turned into a terrain of inter-confessional brinkmanship that mirrored its quasi-bipolar fragmentation. The permeating independence-integration cleavage, tightly intertwined with perceptions of Syria progressively came to reflect two broad projects of nation-building: a re-invented 'merchant republic' against a steadfast 'resistant state'.

These two visions echoed diverse strategies in the application of consociationalism in Lebanon. On the one hand, the 14 March forces worked to shift the Lebanese model of power-sharing towards a majoritarian direction. On the other hand, the 8 March camp and the FPM favoured return to consensual forms of decision-making as enshrined in the persistent demand on a blocking-third veto on matters considered as of Vital 'National' Interest. Within the context of this dissonance of visions, the 14 March camp sought to ascribe an international dimension

to various items on the political agenda, as exemplified in the establishment of the Special Tribunal for Lebanon. By contrast, the 8 March alliance insisted on ‘lebanonising’ all matters deemed controversial. The May 2008 hostilities pitting the militias of the 8 March camp against the militias of the 14 March alliance reminded of Lebanon’s fragile institutional consolidation. The Doha Accord offered a temporary breakthrough by endorsing a package-deal that grappled with the institutional stalemates in the presidency, the cabinet and the electoral law.

This ephemeral thaw notwithstanding, the unfolding of the Syrian civil war revealed the degree of division within Lebanon. Mirroring the domestic actors’ external allegiances, the Syrian tragedy underlined firstly, the multi-faceted links binding the two states together, and secondly, the overlapping association of institutional stalemates with regional developments. Despite the adverse external conditions, the consociational formula proved resilient enough to avoid implosion. This essentially reflected the pragmatics of power-sharing in Lebanon, epitomised in the exercise of brinkmanship to achieve consensus.

On 31st October 2016, General Michel Aoun was elected President of the Lebanese Republic after two and a half years of tactical obstructionism. His election became possible due to a historic intra-Maronite reconciliation -between him and the head of the Lebanese Forces, Samir Geagea (OLJ 2015) - and Hizbullah’s consistent backing of his candidacy. Significantly, the breakthrough in the presidency was achieved against the backdrop of heightened Saudi-Iranian competition in Syria, Yemen and Iraq.

On the morrow of his election, Michel Aoun reiterated his vision to “build a strong state that is strong through its national unity”. For Michel Aoun, this represents the beginning of “the second journey” –the first was liberation from Syria-(Naharnet 2016).

No matter how feasible this project might be Lebanon is indeed found in the middle of a journey. Crucially, this journey towards the building of a nation might prove chimeric. Perhaps, the osmosis of a society for long organised across confessional lines is a fallacious venture. Probably, the mere fact of the conscious recognition of this diversity of emotional structures, divided between community, nation and state might at the end of the day incarnate the quintessence of Lebanon’s national identity (Reinkowski 1997, 513).

As demonstrated, the period under study condenses a mixture of contradictory dynamics, indicative of a polity embroiled in a process of soul-searching. Timothy Sisk observes that “longer term state-building in postconflict situations suggests that over time an initial focus on security guarantees and inclusion-at-all-costs politics needs to be renegotiated in a way such that ethnicity is no longer the basis of the representation and power (and public-goods delivery) to a political system in which politics is fought more among lines of leadership personality, national programs for development, and accountability and good governance” (2014, 13-14). The Taif Agreement can indeed serve as the political compass towards this direction.

However, it might be still premature to make the leap into centripetalism after a quarter century of ‘transitory power-sharing’ (Rosiny 2015). Its flaws notwithstanding, the confessional form of consociationalism endorsed in Lebanon has safeguarded a system of

guarantees within a society of minorities as enshrined in segmental autonomy, communal inclusion, and participation in the executive. To dismantle this system would require prior inter-confessional concessions on the role, the mission and the orientation of the burgeoning nation-state. Within this context, the study aimed at explaining the subtleties embedded in efforts to change the consociational modalities of governance to majoritarian forms of power-sharing. Attempts to rule Lebanon on the basis of a majority-opposition axis during the period 2005-2015 ushered in the formation of grand coalitions. On the one hand, these aborted efforts echo dilemmas of contested legitimacy in post-conflict societies when one of the major segments does not participate in the process of decision-making. On the other hand, the pursuit of consensus in the grand coalition impedes efficiency. Thus power-sharing turns into a low-intensity model of governance whose essential function is to prevent relapse into the status quo ante.

In relation to these dilemmas, the comparative exploration of the period 1990-2015 demonstrated that external actors can variably influence power-sharing in Lebanon. As shown, the Taif Agreement that terminated the civil war was to a great extent a product of external mediation. During the period 1990-2005, the power-sharing arrangements have been sustained at the expense of democracy within the framework of the *pax Syriana* (el-Husseini 2012).

In the aftermath of the Syrian withdrawal, the ensued power vacuum was filled by various state actors that rushed to assist the strategies of their preferred groups in Lebanon. Thus the period 2005-2008 witnessed intense polarisation and overlapping institutional stalemates that to a certain extent were induced by foreign actors that

indirectly participated in the intra-Lebanese antagonisms. The brief inter-confessional hostilities of May 2008 ended after Qatari mediation effectively cut the Gordian knot of the interlocking impasses. The Doha Accord had, therefore, induced consensus to reboot the power-sharing pendulum towards consociationalism.

As demonstrated, the eruption of the Arab revolts and the unravelling of Syria impaired the consociational formula in Lebanon. The lingering institutional stalemates have been further ossified as the political actors in Lebanon interpreted regional developments according to their respective perceptions and agendas. This dissonance of perceptions culminated in the meagre results of Lebanon's policy of dissociation. The mounting political and security challenges notwithstanding, an implicit domestic and regional consensus has managed to keep Lebanon afloat.

In the long-term, however, fulfillment of Lijphart's self-denying hypothesis will continue to represent the overriding challenge towards a revamped Third Republic.

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