



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.