

LEBANON:
POLITICAL DILEMMA FROM 19TH CENTURY TO PRESENT

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ABSTRACT

LEBANON: POLITICAL DILEMMA FROM 19TH CENTURY TO PRESENT

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This thesis analyzes the process of civil wars and political crisis in Lebanon in a historical context, covering the period starting from the civil war of 1860 until the Doha Agreement in 2008. This thesis defines confessional system as a type of democracy implemented in multi-religious societies, which did not change along two centuries in Lebanon. This study aims to establish a different approach on questions such as how far confessionalism can contribute to internal strives and political crisis in Lebanon. The thesis claims that the confessional system that was posed as a solution after civil war periods is the main resource of intercommunal conflicts and this system is open to the manipulation of the foreign actors for their own interests. This thesis also claims that if the national citizenship is applied instead of confessional system, and if Lebanese people unify in terms of national identity, civil wars, political crisis, and foreign intervention could be prevented.

Keywords: Lebanon, confessionalism, power-sharing, and foreign intervention.

ÖZ

LÜBNAN: 19. YÜZYILDAN GÜNÜMÜZE UZANAN SİYASİ ÇIKMAZ

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Bu çalışma, Lübnan'daki iç savaş ve siyasi kriz süreçlerini tarihsel bir çerçeve içinde 1860 iç savaşından 2008 Doha Antlaşması'na kadar olan dönemi kapsayacak şekilde incelemiştir. Bu tez *confessionalism* kavramını, Lübnan'da iki yüzyıl boyunca değişmeyen ve çok dinli toplumlarda uygulanan bir demokrasi çeşidi olarak tanımlamıştır. Bu çalışma, *confessionalism* sisteminin Lübnan'daki iç mücadelelere ve politik krizlere ne kadar katkıda bulunduğunu farklı bir yaklaşımla açıklamayı hedeflemiştir. Tez iç savaş dönemlerinin ardından bir çözüm olarak sunulan *confessional* sistemin, Lübnan'daki toplumlararası mücadelenin temel kaynağını oluşturduğunu ve bu sistemin kendi çıkarlarına ulaşmak isteyen yabancı aktörlerin manipülasyonuna açık olduğunu savunmaktadır. Ayrıca bu tez *confessional* sistem yerine ulusal vatandaşlık sistemi uygulanması ve Lübnan halkının ulusal kimlik çerçevesinde bütünleşmesi durumunda, iç savaşların, siyasi krizlerin ve dış güç müdahalesinin engellenebileceğini iddia etmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Lübnan, *confessionalism*, iktidar paylaşımı ve dış müdahale.

To My Sky

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1. INTRODUCTION

Lebanon is unique among its neighbors in the Middle East for employing a confessional system of government. The Lebanese confessional system allocates political power to different communities based on their proportion to the Lebanese population. This system has existed in Lebanon since the Ottoman times and continued through the French mandate period. Lebanon is made up of 17 different religious, legally organized and ethnic communities. The confessional form of government has sought to bring stability to a fragmented political landscape that is rife with sectarian tension. The Lebanese system is based on the idea that the only way to ensure that peace and stability in a deeply divided society and still ensure that everyone has a voice is through a power sharing model.

The model used in this case is Arend Lijphart's consociationalism theory. According to Lijphart's theory, the establishment of democratic government in divided societies requires two elements: power sharing and group autonomy. Power sharing is the participation of representatives of all significant communal groups in political decision making, particularly at executive level. Group autonomy means that these groups have the authority to run their own affairs, especially in the areas of education and culture. These are the primary features of a kind of democratic system that is referred as power-sharing democracy or "consociational" democracy.¹

In this model, various groups have to rule together by consensus without the exclusion of any other group. Lijphart argues that consensus democracy is the only viable option for a culturally diverse country, and imposes that a majoritarian democracy could be dangerous. For consociationalism, Lijphart stresses on elite cooperation which means that peace should be achieved by having the elites of the various factions cooperate in the political system. This cooperation is accomplished

¹ Arend Lijphart, "Constitutional Design for Divided Societies", *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 15, No. 2, 2004, p. 97.

by incorporating mechanism such as a veto system, in which all factions would have the right to use in order to guarantee that the law, which was not supported by all factions, would not be passed. In theory, this mechanism should eliminate the influence of the extremists without cooperating.²

Lijphart also suggests separation of ethnic/religious groups, which will lead to viable peace. What he suggests is a federal solution, where each group gets their own territory and a certain degree of autonomy, although still held together by a central state.³ In Lebanon's case, Lijphart would probably argue that letting the groups remain separated would be the best way to prevent any further conflict in the future.

Consociationalism is a confessionalistic approach, which means that candidates must declare his or her allegiance before the election. In Lebanon's case, it is religious allegiance. The number of seats for each faction in Parliament has been predetermined according to the faction's size for this reason. This system is devised to guarantee that seats are distributed amongst factions according to their proportional size. That all factions get their 'fair share' of the seats is an important principle of consociationalism.⁴ After the long civil war period between 1975 and 1990, the Taif Agreement settled the rules of consociational democracy in Lebanon. The number of seats has been equally split between Christians and Muslims, so that each gets half of the seats.

Lijphart criticizes his own theory on two bases: consociational democracy is not fully democratic, and consociational democracy is not sufficient to realize efficient and stable government.⁵ Also Berghe regarded consociational democracy as a conservative democracy model that benefits mostly the ruling elites.⁶

² Arend Lijphart, "Democracy in Plural Societies", New York: Vail Ballou Press, 1977, pp.41-53.

³ Ibid, p. 88.

⁴ Arend Lijphart, "Constitutional Design for Divided Societies", p. 100.

⁵ Ibid, p. 47.

⁶ P.L. van den Berghe, "Multicultural Democracy: Can It Work", *Nations&Nationalism*, October 2002 Supplement, Vol. 8, Issue 4, pp. 437.

Horowitz has been critical of Lijphart's theory for several reasons. Firstly, he argues that the heterogeneous countries in Europe can not be compared with deeply divided African and Asian countries. It is difficult to adapt a Western type of consociational democracy because of the intense hostility to other groups' members. Secondly, he underlines that grand coalition should be centerpiece of accommodative agreements; however it would perpetuate conflict and deepen intragroup difference and competition. Lastly, more than creating compromise or moderating attitudes, the proportional representation strengthens differences.⁷

Hudson argues that consociational democracy might exacerbate the inter-communal conflict rather than ameliorate it. According to him, instead of eliminating the confessionalist differences, political arrangements prepared the Lebanon's collapse. He underlines that the socioeconomic problems are ignored to avoid civil strife. In that respect, demands of the citizens change and reform result in protests and in some cases violence.⁸

Huntington charges that consociational democracy is not democratic. He emphasizes that consociational theory attaches great importance to elites and elite decision-making, and this does not comply with normative democratic theory. Instead, the consociational democracy has been referred to consociational oligarchy or elite conspiracy.⁹

Confessionalism, on the one hand, has been advocated as the most participatory and democratic forms of governance in a divided society like Lebanon. On the other hand, however, this system of governance has been criticized to incorporate the elements such as a limited conception of the role of the state; the allocation of legislative functions to the non-state institutions; and the dominance of politics by a

⁷ Donald L. Horowitz, "Ethnic Groups in Conflict", Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1985, p. 572.

⁸ Michael C. Hudson, "The Lebanese Crisis: The Limits of Consociational Democracy", *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol. 5, No. 3/4, Spring - Summer, 1976, p. 111.

⁹ Samuel P. Huntington, "Reform and Stability in a Modernizing, Multi-Ethnic Society," *Politikon: South African Journal of Political Studies*, Vol. 8, 1981, p. 14.

certain community. Under these circumstances the political wilderness can be seen as the reality of Lebanon which figures out in civil wars and political conflicts.

In this thesis, I will try to analyze whether confessionalism can be held at all responsible for the civil wars that rage in 1860, 1958, 1975, and for the presidential crisis in 2007. I will also discuss whether being a citizen of Lebanon instead of being a member of ethnicity can solve the problems of communitarian politics in Lebanon. In my thesis, I will focus on two main arguments and I will analyze the cases in the light of these arguments. My first argument is that after every civil strife, confessionalism has been presented as the most proper solution to the sectarian divisions; in fact, the confessional system was the main source of crisis in Lebanon. Second one, parallel to that, is that confessional system facilitated the intervention of foreign actors in Lebanese politics and thus further complicated its political struggles.

The Lebanese case has implications for other countries in the region. After the US invasion of Iraq, the Lebanonization of Iraq began to be discussed. Harris emphasizes “Lebanonization” concept and discusses its different uses. In French, it is defined as “process of fragmentation of a state, as a result of confrontation between diverse communities”. The term here tends to replace “balkanisation”. This term became popular at the end of 1980s, when Lebanon was experiencing civil war violence and political disintegration. The West’s perspective regarding the nationalist, ethnic, and sectarian outbreaks in the country was shaped by interpretation of the long-running crisis. When the combination of internal struggles and external pressures made Lebanon a war arena, the country possessed all the necessary features to create a generic terminology.¹⁰

In Iraqi case, it is questioned that whether identity-based politics create democratic system or polarize the groups in multiethnic/religious states. In the early stages of the US-led occupation of Iraq, the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) applied a Lebanese-style method of ensuring direct representation in positions of political

¹⁰ William W. Harris, “The New Face of Lebanon: History’s Revenge”, Princeton, N.J.: Markus Wiener Publishers, 2006, pp. 1-2.

power for Iraq's ethnic and religious groups. In the interim government headed by Iyad Allawi, ministers were selected according to the same strict religious-ethnic calculus.¹¹

The idea of guaranteeing such direct representation for ethnic and religious groups might be applicable. In practice, however, this type of system tends to freeze existing power distributions in place, to decrease the weight of majority opinion and to hinder the development of an overarching national identity. Although Ta'if changed the equation slightly, Lebanese Christians are still guaranteed more political positions than any other group even though they are no longer a majority. By contrast, Lebanese Shiites, who probably constitute a larger percentage of the population than all the Christians, are allocated only 22 percent of the seats in parliament. A new census could produce a more proportional allocation of positions, but political systems which tie power directly to the size of a group's population turn censuses into sources of potentially violent competition.¹² This was the reality of consociational democracy and this reality showed itself in Lebanon. If that system turned into a federal one, the Lijphart's theory could then be confirmed. On the contrary, the system itself became the source of violent civil turmoil. In that context, in this thesis I tried to underline that how consociational democracy can be a source of conflict instead of a solution and to put forth the weaknesses of this system which would not be suitable for other multiethnic and multireligious states like Iraq.

Historical continuity is essential in understanding the confessional system and analyzing the effects of foreign powers in Lebanon. Therefore, a study on a political system requires an analysis of Ottoman background and the colonial legacy of Lebanon. The changing nature of colonialism brought about new actors in world politics and this outcome affected the politics of Lebanon. As a multiethnic and a multi-religious state, Lebanon could not transform itself into a national-state. Ethnic and religious identities were determinant factors which gave rise to civil wars and political stalemates.

¹¹ Vickie Langohr, "Experiments in Multi-Ethnic and Multi-Religious Democracy", *Middle East Report*, No. 237, Winter 2005, p. 5.

¹² *Ibid*, p. 6.

Ottoman background and the French colonialism in the country embodied today's Lebanon and its dilemmas. The traditional *millet* system was transformed into a modern state as a result of foreign support and its reflection on the political and social background. The *millet* system dominated the administrative structure of multi-ethnic and multi-religious Ottoman Empire from 15th to 20th century. It was a socio-cultural framework based firstly on religion rather than on ethnicity. This generally reflected linguistic difference, and later laid the ground for the late 19th and 20th century nationalism movements in the Balkans and the Middle East.¹³

The *millet* system was used also in Mount Lebanon under Ottoman Empire. For each religious community, Maronite, Greek Catholic, Greek Orthodox, Armenian Catholic, Jewish and likewise, there was a council of clergy who worked together in guiding civil matters as education, marriage and divorce.

The contest between Europeans, who sought to save Christian subjects, and Ottomans, who were urgently reforming the empire, singled out religion in Mount Lebanon. The empire announced reforms for moving towards political and civic equality between the Muslim and non-Muslim populations. The problem that confronted Ottoman authorities, European officials, and local elites was how to transform religious communities into political communities while preserving social order.

Ottoman reformist decrees of 1839 and 1856 aimed at changing the political nature of Muslim and non-Muslim subjects and maintaining some measure of order and control. Those regulations, also, guaranteed equal political representation and taxation of various religious communities. When the Great Powers began to use those reforms to their advantage and laid a claim on non-Muslims, those reforms became a dangerous tool used all over the Ottoman land. Its reflection on Mount Lebanon was the French protection of Maronites and the British protection of Druze. This protectionism started a long term rivalry in that multi-religious society and

¹³ Kemal H. Karpat, "Studies on Ottoman Social and Political History: Selected Articles and Essays", Leiden: Brill, 2002, p. 612.

transformed the political sphere in terms of ethno-religious identities. After the civil wars in 1842 and 1860, confessional solutions were applied in order to stop inter-communal strifes. However, those solutions strengthened the foreign hand in internal politics of Lebanon and demonstrated the first signs of foreign intervention which has been faced throughout the country's history.

The second important period in the Lebanese history was the French mandate period. This period demonstrated the French "civilizing mission" in Lebanon and the nature of the colonial state-making process. The 1926 Constitution and 1932 census were important parameters of Lebanon's political life, showing its confessional characteristic.

After the dismemberment of Ottoman Empire, the victorious Supreme Allied Council entrusted France with a mandate over present-day Syria and Lebanon on 28 April 1920, and on 1 September 1920, the French High Commissioner proclaimed the creation of Greater Lebanon. Establishing Lebanese Representative Council in March 1922, the French indicated their belief that only sectarian representation could prevent the sectarian strife and bring about inter-group cooperation. On the contrary, the council's design, based on confessional representation in proportion to the size of each community, reinforced sectarianism and increased the power of sectarian leaders.¹⁴

France ended the six-year transition period by establishing Lebanon's constitutional power-sharing regime. The 1926 Constitution transformed Greater Lebanon into the Republic of Lebanon and placed confessional politics throughout all levels of governance. In terms of sectarian balance, Article 95 guaranteed that "the sects shall be equitably represented in public employment and in the composition of the Ministry", though Article 12 stated that "every Lebanese shall have the right to hold public office, no preference being "made except on the basis of merit and competence", while Article 27 stated that "a member of the parliament shall

¹⁴ A.H.Hourani, "Syria and Lebanon: A Political Essay", London: Oxford University Press, 1946, p. 181.

represent the whole nation.”¹⁵ The balance of power which emerged after 1926 among the president, the government and the parliament was a clear illustration of Maronite success in exploiting sectarianism to dominate new political institutions.

The 1932 census strengthened Maronites’ position in Lebanese politics. The distribution of political and administrative functions was formalized as a consequence of the 1932 census taken by the French to determine actual proportionality of groups in Lebanon. According to the census, it was determined that the Maronites were the largest ethnic group, the Sunnis were the second largest one and the Shiites, the third. The principal division was made between Christians and Muslims, and that distribution was determined to be 6 to 5 ratio of Christians to Muslims. All political and administrative seats in the state were determined by this 6 to 5 ratio.¹⁶

The problem with the census originated from its uniqueness. The census has not been repeated for seventy seven years. It is obvious that at that time the number of Muslims exceeded the number of Christians. The Christians became more and more intransigent about making a census because they were alarmed by the thought of becoming a minority and losing their privileges. The Muslims, who considered that Christians would never respond favorably to their demands for justice, were marginalized. Polarization reached its highest level and resulted in civil war in 1975.

Lebanon’s history following the independence period was marked by political instability and turmoil. After independence, divisions between religious sects became deeper. In order to decline these divisions, the unwritten National Pact of 1943 was devised. However, it could not obstruct the 1958 Civil War and the transformation of social and power relations in Lebanese society became more radical.

The National Pact of 1943, which aimed at constituting internal peace following the independence, became the sign of confessional system in Lebanese politics. As an

¹⁵ “The Lebanese Constitution”, *Arab Law Quarterly*, Vol.12, No. 2, 1997, pp. 224-261.

¹⁶ John P. Entelis, “Ethnic and Religious Diversity in Lebanon”, *Society*, March/April 1985, pp. 48-49.

unwritten agreement between two leading religious groups' leaders, the Pact institutionalized the distribution of power among Christians, Sunnis, and Shiites. Also, it underlined the country's Arab identity without disclaiming its cultural and spiritual ties with the West. Indeed, the authors of the National Pact hoped that consociationalism was a temporary solution and looked forward to a permanent arrangement based on a more united Lebanese identity.

There has been a great deal of open and frank discussion about the Pact since 1958, with all groups in Lebanon, at one time or another, accusing others of departing from it. Those elements that supported government in 1958 felt that the groups in revolt were violating the Pact while the rebels insisted that they were only objecting to the government's departure from it.¹⁷ When President Camille Chamoun sought to be elected for a second-term, the Pact's inability to influence political structure came up.

The external world was another reason for debating the Pact. The policy of positive neutrality that was constituted by the National Pact and extreme hostility toward certain Western powers followed by the U.A.R. which was united around Nasser's Arab nationalism was at variance with Lebanon's policy, particularly in the immediate post-Suez period, when Lebanon adhered to the Eisenhower Doctrine. This naturally antagonized those Lebanese sympathetic to the policy and objectives of the U.A.R. particularly among the Sunni Muslims.

There was also increasing dissatisfaction with the "immobilism" of Lebanese governments and increased demands from the government to take more effective leadership in economic and social problems. This attitude was widespread and shared by members of all religious communities. As a result, Chamoun's desire to reign for a second term, the ineffective neutral foreign policy which compressed Lebanon between the West and Arab nationalism, and dissatisfaction of Lebanese people with the governments' indifferent attitude toward internal problems caused the War of

¹⁷ Ralph E. Crow, "Religious Sectarianism in the Lebanese Political System", *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 24, No. 3, August 1962, pp. 515-516.

1958 to be inevitable. This was the first serious threat to confessional system institutionalized by National Pact in all aspects of Lebanese political life.

The dissatisfaction with consociational democracy and foreign intervention led another civil war in 1975. This war which had continued for fifteen years became the arena of many actors including various Lebanese militias, Palestinian groups, and the Syrian and Israeli governments, all of which were in de facto control over certain territories in the country. There were many external and internal reasons for the outbreak of the Civil War. One of the internal reasons was Lebanese leaders' commitment to advance their own interests rather than build a common Lebanese polity. Secondly, the balance of power was challenged by the Maronites although they were not populous enough to form a majority. For them, it was needless to compromise or cooperate with Muslim demands for consociational adjustments. Thirdly, demands for greater social justice were inevitable but the government chose to ignore them. The combined pressures of confessional and regional imbalances, unemployment and inflation constituted a massive problem on the Lebanese system of governance. Lastly, large segments of population no longer supported consociational democracy as a system of governance because this system did not respond to the social needs of the population. Instead of this system, Syrian nationalism, Arab nationalism, secularism and socialism, or Maronite nationalism were chosen as alternatives by different Lebanese sects. This led to the intervention of various outside forces who desired to use Lebanon's problems for their own purposes.¹⁸

The Arab-Israeli dispute and the armed Palestinian presence was the major external load on the Lebanese system, greatly polarizing Lebanese domestic politics. In addition to drawing the Lebanese completely into the Arab-Israeli conflict, the Palestinians got support from Muslims, reinforcing Maronite fears that the Palestinian presence would upset the political balance. With the Lebanese government politically powerless to use coercive measures about Palestinian refugees and armed militia, the Maronites reacted aggressively by arming

¹⁸ Joseph G. Jabbara & Nancy W. Jabbara, "Consociational Democracy in Lebanon: A Flawed System of Governance", In *Governance and Developing Countries*, ed: Jamil E. Jireisat, Leiden: Brill, 2002, pp. 77-80.

themselves, and in 1975, began a military conflict with the Palestinians that ignited the war.¹⁹

The Israeli attacks from southern border of Lebanon did not only create border disputes, but also mobilized Shiite resistance which resulted in foundation of Hezbollah, the Shiite militia. This organization would become the main political actor in the post-civil war period. As another foreign power, Syrian military and intelligence presence in Lebanon transformed into Syrian suzerainty and this country affected all aspects of Lebanese political life after the civil war. As other postwar regulations, the Taif Agreement, which ended the 15-year-old Civil War, could not solve the inner problems of Lebanon and of confessional democracy. Taif was not applied as a consociational remedy to unite Lebanese society but rather used as a tool to divide and rule Lebanon while providing Syria with political cover. It was applied in accordance with a uniquely Syrian agenda and thus, consolidated Lebanese sectarian divisions and institutional weakness.

Between 1990 and 2007, the settlement, which the Taif built up, was tried to be applied all around the country. While Lebanon faced with both internal and external threats, the Syrian military presence, Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon, the assassination of the Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri, and the presidential crisis of 2007 gave way to further tensions.

Syria cemented its authority on Lebanon through its selective disarmament of militias, its manipulation of electoral laws, and its veto over political developments in Lebanon. This undermined the power-sharing principle. Instead of a pact between Lebanese communities, Taif had become a tool to pursue Syrian interests in Lebanon.

The Syrian intervention in Lebanon became more controversial and it was disputed locally and internationally. Within Lebanon, four major events gave rise to stronger anti-Syrian sentiment: the Israeli unilateral withdrawal in 2000 from south Lebanon;

¹⁹ Walid Khalidi, "Conflict and Violence in Lebanon: Confrontation in the Middle East", Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983, p. 101.

the adoption of UNSC Resolution 1559; the three-year term extension for Lebanese President Lahoud; and the assassination of ex-Prime Minister Rafik Hariri. Hariri's assassination started patriotic Lebanese demonstrations under the March 14th Movement which demanded the immediate withdrawal of Syrian forces from Lebanon. On 26 April 2005, Syrian military troops fully withdrew from Lebanon under the pressure of international community, in accordance with UNSC Resolution 1559.

Popular demonstrations followed the assassination of Hariri, the largest anti-Syrian gathering took place on 14 March 2005 and became a symbol of the emergence of a majority coalition. In May 2005, shortly after the Syrian pullout, the anti-Syrian 14 March coalition swept the majority of seats in the first free and emotionally charged parliamentary elections of post-Syria Lebanon. Another important consequence of the assassination was the explosion of emotion and will-power among most Lebanese. The demonstrations brought out a third of the entire population of the country. The population regenerated as a potent force in political life and this was a warning to political class for taking into account their demands.²⁰

The War in July 2006 interrupted the National Dialogue Process that begun after Rafiq Hariri's assassination and Syrian withdrawal. Although it withdrew in 2000, Israel had security concerns in southern Lebanon. The leading factor of that war was Israel's goal to destruct Hezbollah. By limiting the social life of Lebanese people and making Hezbollah responsible for casualties, Israel tried to end the support for Shiite organization. Adversely, the support for Hezbollah did not shrink at all and the organization became more popular.

In 2007, Lebanon faced a new crisis. The presidential election created a political dilemma for the country because of the uncompromising attitude of the parts in the Parliament. Lebanon made a turn from a new civil war, when the parties compromised on Michel Suleiman, the former chief of general staff. The Lebanese

²⁰ Paul Salem, "Lebanon At the Crossroads: Rebuilding an Arab Democracy", Saban Center Middle East Memo, May 2005, <http://internationalrelations.house.gov/archives/109/sal072805A.pdf>, [last accessed on 29 May 2009].

confessional politics proved that the presidential elections will not be the last stalemate as long as ethnic groups seek to dominate on one another.

In this thesis, I will cover the significant events of 1860, 1958, 1975 Civil War and 2007 Presidential Crisis, and formulate my arguments on the basis of four assumptions. First, historical background of Lebanon is at the basis of understanding the confessional system which is unique for this country. Second, the colonial period drew up the institutions of this system and nation-building process but independence did not create a unity among different groups in Lebanon. The colonial legacy made contributions to nation-building process on one hand, on the other, it prevented the society from solving the inner problems on its own. Third, as civil wars and postwar regulations proved foreign powers that intervened in conflicts deepened the sectarian diversity. Fourth, the confessional system did not work well because, rather than cooperating with them, all religious sects claimed equal rights. In that context, I argue that there is one solution to that sectarian conflict: being Lebanese on the basis of non-sectarian nationalism. Instead of being a Maronite, Druze or Shiite Muslim, building up a Lebanese national identity can only bring a “long term peace” to Lebanon.

In the following chapter, I will present the Ottoman period of Lebanon. In this part of my thesis, I will focus on the civil clashes in the country. Initially, the Ottoman reforms in 19th century and its reflections on the country’s politics will be examined.

Chapter three covers the period starting from the beginning of the mandate in 1920 to the independence in 1943. The level of success of French mandate to create a modern state is the primary concern of this section. Here, there will be special emphasis on the first constitution of Lebanon and 1932 census.

Chapter four provides an analytical overview of the events from the independence to the Civil War in 1975. The National Pact of 1943, the outbreak of the insurrection in 1958 will be discussed. This chapter claims that the new state focused on reconstruction of the boundaries between various groups but could not be successful.

Chapter five will cover the civil war period between 1975 and 1990. The effects of domestic, regional and international actors in Lebanon are the primary concerns of the chapter to understand the rivalry between sects.

Chapter six will focus on the era after Taif Agreement and the beginning of postwar reconstruction. The chapter also analyzes the period between 1990 and 2008, and covers the Syrian presence from 1990 to 2005, the assassination of Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri in 2005, the War in July 2006 with Israel, and presidential crisis in 2007. Lebanon's presidential crisis was a sectarian struggle for power between Sunni and Shiite Muslims, and that struggle intersected with a regional battle for influence between Iran and Syria on the one side, and so-called moderate Arab states, the United States, and Europe on the other. The chapter claims that foreign intervention and internal turmoil can bring new civil wars to Lebanon unless a different political system is applied.

Finally, in conclusion, the nature of Lebanese identity and the uniqueness of the Lebanese political structure are revised. The thesis argues that contrary to confessional system, Lebanon can constitute a system which is based on national identity as opposed to ethno-religious identity. Consociational governments are governed by a power-sharing formula devised by elites who speak for and represent their communities and are able to reach compromises amongst themselves. Thus, a consociational state seeks to unite its citizens as members of the state without asking them to renounce their ethnic, or in the case of Lebanon, sectarian loyalties. Instead of promoting a monolithic national identity, the consociational state rests upon distinct ethno sectarian 'pillars', a confederation of protected identity groups. One important source of weakness in the consociational system is that its success depends on cooperation among all communities.

This problem can be overcome if the national citizenship is applied instead of confessional system. The representation of sects will not be the problem; representation of the Lebanese nation will be the result of national citizenship. It could be achieved through participation to national, social and economic developments. The state should provide everyone in every region with the same

opportunities and conditions for economic and social development. In that way, political and social cohesiveness could be created with the feeling of national identity.

What is more, unlike any other country in the world, Lebanon was an act of power struggle and balance between foreign actors. As a solution, there would not be power gap which requires foreign power intervention if Lebanese people could unify in terms of national identity.

2. RISE OF TENSION IN LEBANON UNDER OTTOMAN RULE

In the mid-nineteenth century, key developments, which would have repercussions for the future of Lebanon occurred. One of them was the increasing interest and involvement of foreign powers in the country. But this intervention had some distinct features that originated from Ottoman Tanzimat period and Lebanese social system.

The set of regulations and governmental practices shaping the relation of the Ottoman Empire's ruling the Muslim class with its non-Muslim subjects is commonly referred to as the *millet* system. The millets were quasi-autonomous units which performed administrative functions in legislative, judicial, fiscal, religious and charitable affairs. After the establishment of *millet* rule in 1516, the Ottoman Sultan Selim granted authority to the Druze lord Fakhr al-Din I al-Mani. For 180 years, the Manis ruled over a large part of Lebanon and they exacted taxes, acted independently in all internal affairs, and transmitted their offices to their descendants. Fakhr al-Din II clearly established a precedent for Lebanese self-determination through his policies of acquiring new territory, seeking independence from the Ottoman Empire, and strengthening religious tolerance by allowing all confessions freedom of religion. When Shihabis replaced the Manis, the Druze Shihabi Emirate became officially Christian. Shihabis maintained a friendly policy toward Europeans. In this period, Maronites became closer to France. Shihabi rule ended in the emirate of Bashir al-Shihabi II and the end of his rule signified the transformation of Lebanese politics from tribal to religious one.²¹

In the nineteenth century, the Ottoman Empire was in a period of transformation which affected its international, political, and social relations. Restoration policies, named as Tanzimat, aimed at consolidating equality and liberty among the subjects. In that context, the religious equality of all the subjects was decreed and in Lebanon it was not an easy task to perform. Druze and Maronite tribes were not able to live under equal conditions due to Lebanon's demographic ambiguity.

²¹ Hafeez Malik, "Overview: Lebanon as an Experiment in Multicultural Interdependence", In *Lebanon's Second Republic: Prospects for the Twenty-first Century*, ed. Kail C.Ellis, Florida: University Press of Florida, 2002, pp. 16-17.

It was impossible to apply “equality” to the religious communities which were under the control of local elites. The transformation period of the Ottoman Empire became an opportunity for those local elites to strengthen their own legitimacy. Achieving this task was possible in two ways: realigning with foreign powers and reaffirming their loyalty to the Empire. Also, foreign powers needed those local elites to intervene in to the Ottoman internal affairs. To that end, France was working close with the Maronite Church; while Britain committed to Druzes for security and liberty they needed against Maronites.²²

On one hand, Ottoman Tanzimat reforms affirmed the equality of all Ottoman subjects and on the other hand, they gave chance to non-Muslim subjects to reorganize their communities. The Maronite church became very powerful by benefiting from reforms and strengthened its position in Lebanon. It embodied sectarian patriotism and asked for European interference and protection. As both French and British powers intervened in the policies of Ottoman reform, its position became more important as the largest landowner in the Mountain. It was unable to challenge with the Ottoman policies on its own and it was against the Mountain’s other community, Druzes. Under those circumstances, the only suitable ally was France, who offered protection to Christian communities in Lebanon.²³

The Druze community chose Britain as its protector. Britain promised Druzes their free enjoyment of their own institutions for the people and properties, in return Druze notables made promises to deliver their country to the protection of Britain.²⁴ In fact, Britain was wedged between the support of the Druzes in response to French hegemony over Maronites and the concern for the rights of Christians. But there was no chance for Britain to gain patronage of the Maronites because of the strong ties of the French civilizing mission with Maronite notables.

²² Ussama Makdisi, “The Culture of Sectarianism: Community, History, and Violence in Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Lebanon”, California: University of California Press, 2000, p.61.

²³ Youssef M. Choueiri, “Ottoman Lebanon and Lebanese Patriotism”, In *Lebanon: A History of Conflict and Consensus*, ed: Nadim Shehadi and Dana Haffar Mills, London: I. B. Tauris, 1992, pp. 69-72

²⁴ Ussama Makdisi, “The Culture of Sectarianism”, p.61.

At this stage, the Ottomans played a different role to restore the governance and security in Lebanon. The Ottoman *millet* system may have granted autonomy to religious groups in religious and certain judicial affairs, but only in the context of Ottoman rule. Moreover, the *millet* system was not interested in a liberal, open form of rule within autonomous *millets*. In accordance with the European intervention to the sectarian divergence, Ottoman Empire recognized the importance of the centralization. Lebanese sects became an obstacle for modernizing Ottoman identity but the Empire did not have confidence as it had overwhelming problems of its own. Under these circumstances, it was Great Powers, not the Ottoman Empire, who supplied goods and materials for the restoration and represented the Ottoman modernization on its own territory.²⁵

2.1 The Clashes of 1841

The Tanzimat reforms, initiated by the Ottoman Sultan in 1839, were designed to procure British and Austrian military assistance against his Egyptian rivals. Ottoman rulers took decisive actions against the political threat of Ibrahim Pasha, who was the son of Ottoman viceroy of Egypt Mehmet Ali under the late Ottoman rule, occupying areas of Greater Syria (Palestine, Lebanon and Syria) between 1832 and 1840.

These reforms contributed to the fundamental paradigm shift of political interaction in Greater Syria. The imperial decree promised administrative reforms that abolished tax farming, standardized conscription, and eliminated corruption to “all Ottoman subjects, regardless of their religion.”²⁶ The British, then, led a campaign with Austrian, Ottoman, and Syrian support that ended Egyptian rule in 1840.

The victorious Ottoman and British governments also approached the aftermath of Egyptian occupation with various perspectives. The former sought to restore the High Porte’s sovereignty in Greater Syria in a “secular project of imperial renewal.” The British who “read Mount Lebanon in religious tribal terms” viewed it “as a sectarian project of local restoration.”²⁷

²⁵ Ibid, p. 59.

²⁶ William L. Cleveland, “A History of the Modern Middle East”, Colorado: Westview Press, 2000, p.83.

In an effort to restore the old *muqata'ji* system, which was a form of tax farming where a district or individual agreed to pay the state a fixed sum in return for fiscal autonomy and limited state intervention, the Ottomans assigned Bashir II's cousin, Bashir Qasim, as Emir of Mount Lebanon. The departure of Bashir II from Lebanon signified the end of an era. He misjudged the true balance of power and allied with Ibrahim Pasha, and as a result, he was formally stripped of his authority by the Sublime Porte and was exiled. The appointment of his successor, Bashir Qasim, marked the beginning of the transformation of Lebanon's history. A council of 12 members drawn from the notables of six main sects was to be established for the purpose of overseeing the assessment and collection of the imperial revenues.²⁸

However, the constitution of the council could not go beyond a positive gesture. The Druze tax-farmers, who had fled their districts or were exiled as a result of their opposition to the policies of Bashir II, continued their agitation for the restoration of their traditional privileges, lands and authority over their largely Maronite tenants. Meanwhile, the Maronite church launched a campaign to reinstate the former amir as the chief tax-farmer for the entire Mountain. The role of its patriarch in strengthening the unity of Maronite community had a great importance as the old order began to crumble. Both communities contributed to the complexity of the situation by articulating their grievances and demands against the Ottoman reforms. Moreover, these developments led to a strife in the main mixed areas of central Lebanon. With the demographic rise of the Maronites, these grievances turned into an alarming tone of urgency.²⁹

One of the significant events in Lebanese history that refers to sectarian diversity occurred in 1841. The Druze notables rebelled against the Bashir, the Amir of Mount Lebanon, and Christian society of Dayr al-Qamar. This struggle was about the land and the control of taxation. The Druze notables, who returned from exile, wanted their former properties that had been promised to them by the Ottoman and British

²⁷ Ussama Makdisi, "The Culture of Sectarianism", p.60.

²⁸ Youssef M. Choueiri, "Ottoman Lebanon and Lebanese Patriotism", p. 65.

²⁹ Ibid, pp. 65-66.

administrators. Maronite notables of Dayr al-Qamar rejected the hegemony of Druze notables and the sectarian clashes began. Besides the taxation and land claims, Druzes also insisted on imposing their rights on Christian subjects. They tried to change the old regime which had bounded them to Maronite Church. The Church held the British and the Ottomans responsible for bringing the Druze back and turned to France for help. The Druze appealed to the British for protection of their rights against the Maronites.³⁰

On the one hand, it was obvious that all diplomatic representatives of the sectarian parts, particularly British and French, agreed not to let the Ottoman government solve the problem on its own. Hence, their existence emphasized the sectarian dimension and contributed to solidify the sectarian lines. On the other hand, religious identities were of great importance for political representation in a multi-religious society. This factor caused the expansion of the crisis to other regions of Lebanon.

Behind these sectarian clashes, it is possible to find out the lack of contact between local elites. Maronite Church did not try to meet with the Druze elites, however Druze sheikhs urged the Christian elites to make solidarity and provide a stable social order.³¹ But in contrast to the old regime, new restoration politics underlined the open-ended struggle for the definition of community and control of the land in Lebanon.

Following the violence of 1841, a joint European-Ottoman initiative was set in order to settle the situation. In 1842, the French, British, Russian, Austrian, and Prussian ambassadors met with the Ottoman Foreign Minister and decided on a partition of Mount Lebanon along religious lines. They divided the Mountain into two districts, one in the north under a Maronite district governor and the other in the south under a Druze district governor. They also agreed on the Beirut-Zahla road to be the boundary between two districts. But that partition did not solve the problems because

³⁰ Engin Akarlı, "The Long Peace: Ottoman Lebanon", 1861-1920, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993, p. 28.

³¹ Ussama Makdisi, "The Culture of Sectarianism", p. 66.

in Druze district, Christians formed the majority of the population and consequently, Maronite Church claimed to rule over all of Mount Lebanon.³²

Partition was not a local decision; it was imposed by foreign powers. The coexistence became a problem in a society which was divided along religious lines. The partition assumed that there were two factions as Druzes and Maronites and also legitimated sectarianism by defining Mount Lebanon in religious means.

The problems within the partition were on the agenda of Ottomans and Şekib Efendi, the new foreign minister, was ordered to solve those problems. His regulation, known as Réglement of Şekib Efendi, was based on the rivalry between two factions. According to him, Christians of the mixed district would never accept Druze hegemony and in fact, there was no solution except transferring a short population to that district. He also formed for each district an administrative council which included a judge and an adviser for each sect. Each council consisted of six judges and six advisors. The judges were responsible for settling the disputes brought before them by the governor and the advisors were responsible for assisting the governors about taxation.³³

The Réglement of Şekib Efendi brought both contributions and contradictions to the politics of Lebanon. Firstly, it pointed out the institutionalization of confessionalism by forming the Lebanese administrative councils. This foundation was used in the *mutasarrifiyya* regime and also affected today's constitution of Lebanon.³⁴ Secondly it provided the political leadership with the procedures of a bureaucratic government. Thirdly, it brought confessional representation as a constitutional principle into Lebanese public life.

The Réglement posed many contradictions, too. Şekib Efendi described the notables as compatriots in a common land but his regulations reinforced the idea of

³² Leila Tarazi Fawaz, "Civil Conflict in Lebanon and Damascus in 1860", Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994, pp. 27-28.

³³ Engin Akarlı, "The Long Peace: Ottoman Lebanon", p. 29.

³⁴ Joseph Abou Nobra, "L'Evolution du Système Politique Libanais Dans Le Contexte Des Conflits Régionaux et Locaux (1840-1864)", In *Lebanon: A History of Conflict and Consensus*, ed: Nadim Shehadi and Dana Haffar Mills, London: I. B. Tauris, 1992, pp. 43-44.

sectarianism by creating parallel governments. He gave a chance to notables to represent themselves but he insisted that the governors should come from local elites and work for preserving the social order. In that context, district governors could not exert much authority over the local elites and over the Maronite church.

The Réglement of Şekib Efendi was a response to problems of Ottoman centralization and growing sectarian tensions in Lebanon. Ottoman Empire found confessionalism as the solution for religious clashes. When council was formed under the Réglement, it went beyond sectarian mentality and there, the government did not pose a mediator between two groups; but it granted the clemency on the basis of absolute power.³⁵

Power sharing regime survived with the support of external protectors. But feudal families throughout Lebanon saw the Réglement as a direct threat to their status and traditional privileges and did their best to resist its application.³⁶ Under those new circumstances, the outbreak of sectarian hostilities was inevitable.

2.2 The Civil War of 1860

The system that Réglement formed failed to keep order when the peasants of Kasrawan, overburdened by heavy taxes, rebelled against the feudal practices that prevailed in Mount Lebanon. In 1858 Tanyus Shahin, a Maronite peasant leader, demanded that the feudal class abolish its privileges. When this demand was refused, the poor peasants revolted against the shaykhs of Mount Lebanon, pillaging the shaykhs' land and burning their homes.³⁷

In the spring of 1860, the sectarian confrontations began between Maronites and Druzes. Maronites, who lived in the north, could not help their coreligionists in the south, but Druzes managed to break all resistance that they faced. When the Druzes

³⁵ Maurus Reinkowski, "Beyond the Mountain Refuge: Searching for a Wider Perspective On Ottoman Policy In Mount Lebanon", In *From The Syrian Land To The States Of Syria And Lebanon*, ed: Thomas Philipp, Würzburg: Ergon, 2004, pp.232-233.

³⁶ Samir Khalaf, "Civil and Uncivil Violence in Lebanon", New York: Columbia University Press, 2002, pp.276-277.

³⁷ Leila Tarazi Fawaz, "Civil Conflict in Lebanon and Damascus", pp.44-50.

ended the conflict, there were about 15000 Christians dead and tens of thousands of them were homeless.

The civil war that broke in Lebanon was a bad experience for the Ottoman government because its centralization policy failed again. Under these circumstances, the government sent Fuad Pasha, the Ottoman Foreign Minister, to Beirut with special powers. He gave the acute punishment to the Ottoman officials and officers for having failed to prevent attacks. Also, Druze leaders were imprisoned or fled the Mountain to avoid punishment. France sent a large military force consisting of six thousand soldiers, to protect the Maronites and Christians. The Maronite Church was the only significant institution and the true victor of the confrontations was the Church.³⁸

The events in Mount Lebanon gave Great Powers a chance to intervene and particularly France played an important role in saving the Maronites. The French military presence complicated the search for a new solution for Mount Lebanon's administrative problems. It also brought suspicions of other powers and compromised Ottoman sovereignty.

In October 1860, the representatives of Great Britain, France, Austria, Russia and Prussia establish a committee and met with Fuad Pasha in Lebanon to discuss the situation in Lebanon. They were concerned with their own interests and they could only agree that Lebanon must be taken as a unit and its problems could be solved if it was recognized under that unity. They recommend a new administrative and judicial system for Lebanon that would prevent the recurrence of such events.³⁹

By May 1861, the committee had finally agreed on a draft statute for Lebanon. The *Réglement Organique*, which was signed on 9 June 1881, organized Lebanon as a special Ottoman governorate. It was called as *mutasarrifiyya* and the head of the *mutasarrifiyya* would be a Christian and he would be directly responsible to the Sublime Porte. The *Réglement* also formed an administrative council in which the six major communities had two seats and that council was responsible for helping the

³⁸ Engin Akarlı, "The Long Peace: Ottoman Lebanon", pp. 30-31.

³⁹ Ussama Makdisi, "The Culture of Sectarianism", pp. 85-86.

governor. After the agreement with the notables, all members of the council were chosen by the leaders of the communities and appointed by the government. Mount Lebanon was divided into six districts and ruled by a local major chosen by the member of the dominant religious community.

In 1864, the disagreement between Maronites and Ottoman governor brought a revision in *Réglement*. The administrative council was then established by four Maronites, three Druzes, two Greek Orthodox, one Greek Catholic, one Sunni Muslim, and one Shi'a Muslim. France insisted on equal representation to give the Maronites a guaranteed opportunity by increasing their seats in the council.⁴⁰

The *Réglement Organique* brought the system of representation on a proportional and confessional basis. It met European wishes and perceptions; recalled the old Ottoman traditions of autonomous rule; and replaced the policy of ethnic division with a more efficient system of control and rule.⁴¹ Here, it can be said that the Ottoman millet system was expanded and the founding of confessional institutions impressed Europeans. The pressure of the European powers led Ottoman Empire to covet ethnic groups in the form of *millet* and the conception of ethnic groups turned into confessional ones.

In fact, the *Réglement* reinforced the provisions of Şekib Efendi's *Réglement* and it reflected the distribution of seats within the administrative council. None of the sects were placed in a position of dominance over another. In that form, it favored sectarian representation instead of an equal one. As a consequence, the *Réglement* confirmed the sectarian foundation of society. Ottoman reformism encouraged the development of basic institutions for organized political partition. It was also helpful to develop and consolidate Lebanese political identity.⁴²

With the 1864 revision, confessionalism became firmly rooted into Lebanon's political life. The communal peace came to Lebanon after a long time and until 1920

⁴⁰ Marie-Joelle Zahar, "Power Sharing Regime in Lebanon: Foreign Protectors, Domestic Peace, and Democratic Failure", In *Sustainable Peace: Power and Democracy After Civil Wars*, ed. Philip G. Roeder and Donald S. Rothchild, New York: Columbia University Press, 2005, pp. 222-223.

⁴¹ Maurus Reinkowski, "Beyond the Mountain Refuge", pp.235-236

⁴² Samir Khalaf, "Civil and Uncivil Violence in Lebanon", pp. 277-282.

there had not been violence between religious sects of Mount Lebanon. This period passed with local tensions between local notables who looked for increased autonomy and the Sublime Porte who attempted to control over the Ottoman land. The Maronite community in the north continued to call for the communal consciousness which was awakened earlier in that century.

2.3 Behind the Maronite Druze Rivalries

The outbreak of the 1841 Conflict and the Civil War of 1860 were the outcomes of power struggle between the Maronites and Druzes. It was not only between different sects but it was also a struggle among European powers and the Ottoman Empire. On the one hand, there was a reformist government who sought to see its subjects equal before the law and who utilized the *millet* system to continue that equality. These events were sectarian tensions arising from the nineteenth century Ottoman reforms known as Tanzimat. It conferred equality to all Ottoman subjects irrespective of their religion. On the other hand, the expansion of European hegemony over the East Mediterranean and the sectarian nature of the violence in each case made it inevitable to consider events in terms of religious tensions.

For the expansionist European powers of the second half of the nineteenth century, religion was the best excuse for intervention in strategic Ottoman domains. For local minority communities, sectarian conflict signified to attract European assistance. Centuries of communal cooperation in Ottoman autonomy was overlooked and claims of sectarian conflict privileged both sides.

The 1860 events in Lebanon created an intense international discussion and at that time, the massacre of Christians prompted intervention by the European powers and the Ottoman government alike. The Europeans did not limit their intervention to the dispatch of a security force as France did after 1860 events, but played an active role in drafting constitutional arrangements for Mount Lebanon's government. In fact, the result of those events was sectarianism and it was a reflection of nineteenth century European colonialism imposed on local societies towards specific political ends. Local minority groups, like Druze and Maronites were the beneficiaries of European

Powers' protection. They were natural collaborators in colonial project of casting communal relations in sectarian terms.

Sectarianism proved a political legacy as an organizing principle of government as well as a future source of civil strife. First sign of that political legacy was Şekib Efendi's Réglement. Following the War of 1842, as a result of tensions and the violence had taken place within the region, the solution was a new political system that created two districts and appointed Maronite and Druze governors. This regulation limited the independence of local leaders and new feudal rights. It also destroyed hegemony of local elites as it let the representation of local notables in local councils.

Under these circumstances, the transformation of socioeconomic structure in Lebanon was negatively influenced. It created big diversification between Maronites and Druze notables. On one hand, Druzes paid attention to the ownership of the land and on the other hand, the Maronites attempted to have properties in Druze land. That situation caused the armament of Druze notables.

France used this period to constitute its own authority in the region by evaluating the interests of Maronite community. Britain sought to support Druze interests as a response to French intervention.

The Civil War of 1860 brought a new order to Lebanon. Ottoman government, who tried to block European intervention, sent Fuad Pasha to the region and aimed at alleviating the European public opinion. Collaborating with foreign powers, a new rule was formed in Lebanon.

The critical point of change in the region was the social impact of both Ottoman and French administrative and legislative reforms. The French and Ottomans both played critical roles in the allocation of Maronite identity; they became the dominant social group, and regarded themselves as deserving political rights which reflected this dominance in opposition to other religious groups. The French intervention in Lebanon issue in 1850s and 1860s created religious and ethnic lines among groups such as the Maronites and Druze, who saw them as politically supported in forming a religiously defined identity.

The Maronites had the conscious of a religious distinction separating them from Druzes, Muslims and especially from other Christian communities. According to them, they were the “protected community” of the French imperial power and they perceived necessity of separation in the political and social sphere under Ottoman rule.

Despite this separation, conditions on the ground were different and also pluralistic when one considered the situation in the nineteenth century. After the 1840 confrontations, Ottoman rulers tried to separate the Druze and Maronites into administrative regions. But there was largely Christian population under the Druze unit and most of them were Maronites. But for practical reasons, people tended to find common ground with others in their particular social and economic history.

Behind the sectarian conflict, there was European intervention which chose to privilege Maronites in trade and in cultural and educational cooperation. Under these circumstances, Ottoman Muslims were angry with their Christian counterparts who were the beneficiaries of European powers. This sentiment demonstrated that the Ottoman Muslims felt deceived by the Christian notables to the Ottoman land. They did not see Christians in the Ottoman Empire as heirs of any such European identity. However, the Maronites perceived themselves as Europeans as long as they took the French education. It was too strong for non-Catholic and Druze communities of Lebanon to accept attacking their Maronite rivals in 1840s and 1860s.

Consequently, the first signs of sectarian diversity in Lebanon were the outcome of foreign intervention and Ottoman decentralization. However, Druze and Maronite communities were as responsible as their protectors to spark civil tensions. Instead of collaborating with each other, they chose to seek foreign support to impose their own authority on the other sect. This tendency repeated itself in Lebanese history and the religious clashes became the inevitable result in every case.

3. UNDER THE FRENCH MANDATE: THE STRENGTHENING OF CONFSSIONALISM

The end of the nineteenth century was also the end of the integrity of Ottoman Empire. The disintegration of Ottoman Empire was presented as a solution to the Eastern Question which signified the question of how the Great Powers would share Ottoman territories. As the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire was believed to be inevitable, the European powers became parts of power struggle to safeguard their military, strategic and commercial interests in the Ottoman domains.

During the years leading up to the First World War, the Ottoman Empire, a long standing trade partner of the British, was beginning to pull itself away and move towards beginning a relationship with Germany. It was an alarming situation for Britain and France. Particularly, the British Empire had become dependant on the strategic advantage of being able to move quickly between the Western and Eastern hemispheres since the opening of the Suez Canal in 1867. In order to save her ventures, Britain needed to gather support from outside of Ottoman Empire.

Beginning in July 1915, Sheriff Hussein of Mecca made contact with Britain's High Commissioner in Egypt. Between the High Commissioner of Egypt and Sheriff of Mecca, there was a special agreement. In return for the promise of an Arab revolt, Britain would recognize and support the independence of Arabs in all the reigns, and give assistance to form suitable governments on these various territories.⁴³ In addition to the independent Arab state, Britain agreed to provide Hussein with funds and weapons for his revolt against the Ottoman Empire.

The most complex question was the partition of Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire. France could not protect its Middle Eastern interests and regarded Britain's growing military involvement in the region as an alarming issue. To resolve that problem, representatives of two countries drew up a secret treaty in May 1916 in

⁴³ "The Hussein-McMahon Letters (October 24, 1915)", <http://www.lib.byu.edu/~rdh/wwi/1916/mcmahon.html>, [last accessed on 8 June 2009].

which they shared most of the Arab lands. This treaty contravened parts of the promise that Britain had given to Sheriff Hussein. Known as the Sykes-Picot agreement, the Treaty gave direct control of a large zone along the Syrian coast, historical Arab territories to France and the special status of Lebanon was recognized by both of the Great Powers. The British position in Iraq was guaranteed and Britain gained direct control over Iraq. Under the treaty, Palestine was to be placed under international administration. This agreement abandoned the McMahon-Hussein Agreement which gave all the regions lying within the frontiers proposed by the Sheriff of Mecca.⁴⁴

At the end of the war, Lebanese political entity found itself in the midst of power struggle between the French and the Anglo-Arab government in Damascus. Immediately after the victory, the British permitted Amir Faisal, the son of Hussein, to become military governor of Damascus. When French general Henri Gouraud troops replaced the British forces in 1919, they had no authority for overwhelming Faisal's national government. The nationalists declared independence and proclaimed Faisal as the King of Syria. With the help of San Remo Conference's decision to give Syria and Lebanon to French mandate, General Gouraud's forces drove Faisal from Damascus and, French rule was constituted entirely in Syria and Lebanon.⁴⁵

Eventually, the Maronites shaped the scope of new Lebanese political entity. They chose the French mandate and demanded Greater Lebanon which involved the territories of Mount Lebanon and the portions of Muslim dominated regions. This demand was also presented in Paris Peace Conference of 1919. In a report, Maronites underlined that Lebanese as a national community was defined as a self-sovereign political community. In that context, Maronite Patriarch was demanding the same structure that existed during the *mutasarrifiyya* regime where the foreign intervention was defined and limited in order to prevent direct control of the Lebanese political structure.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ William L. Cleveland, "A History of the Modern Middle East", pp.155-160.

⁴⁵ Ibid, p. 162-163.

Terms of an Ottoman partition were finally agreed upon at the San Remo Conference in April 1920. The decisions reached at the San Remo Conference gave Arab provinces to Britain and France. The former provinces were divided into entities called “mandates”. On September 1, 1920, the First French High Commissioner, General Henri Gourad proclaimed the creation of Greater Lebanon (Grand Liban), which would include the territory of Mount Lebanon, the towns of Beirut, Tripoli, Sur (Tyre), and Saida (Sidon), the regions of Ba’albak and the Biqa, and the districts of Rashayya and Hasbayya. The expansion of the territory also changed demographic scene of the country. From 80 percent of the population of the Mount Lebanon province, the Maronites fell to bare 51 percent majority in the new polity.⁴⁷ Also the Druze lost their position as the dominant Muslim sect and the Sunnis took their place.

Only Maronites and Greek Catholics supported the creation of Greater Lebanon, other sects were uncertain about their position in the new system. A big majority of the Muslims saw themselves as a part of Syria and opposed to both the French mandate and the enforced unification with the Mountain. The only group who achieved its goal was the Maronites who were under the protection of France. Their power would enlarge as long as they favored their protector and used their knowledge of confessional politics.

The establishment of Greater Lebanon had some special features for France. Firstly, a foreign power formed a state fully divided and a single nation could not survive in that respect. Secondly, there was a strong religious factor which tied Maronites to French. French saw their Catholic right as an opportunity to protect Maronites from the threat of Islam and establish a society which was dominantly Christian. Thirdly, controlling Syria without direct access to the sea was meaningless for France. France was determined to match British power in the eastern Mediterranean and it was possible with Lebanon dominated by loyal Christians who provided a base for French military and naval forces.

⁴⁶ Meier Zamir, “The Formation of Modern Lebanon”, London: Cornell University Press, 1988, pp. 281-282.

⁴⁷ Marie-Joelle Zahar, “Power Sharing Regime in Lebanon”, s.224.

The social structure of the new state posed an important question: Would it become a nation or not? All the people of Lebanon were Arabs and spoke Arabic despite its complex sectarian feature. Also in the Mountain, there was the experience of a multi-sectarian regulation with the collaboration between Maronites and Druzes. The earlier experience in a small territory could be extended to the new Greater Lebanon. Yet the Mountain was different from the rest of Lebanon. The political experience of the Mountain with its elective Council was unique among other regions. Also, the social structure of the Mountain was composed by independent farmers, a few land-owning notables and the Maronite church as the largest land-owner. By contrast, in most Sunni and Shia areas, there were many land-owning notables and tenant farmers. The new areas were close to Syria and most of the religious sects were concentrated in particular areas to hold their distinct position. In that respect, there was no common identity and no instinct to become a nation in the new state.⁴⁸

Between 1920 and 1926, the political situation in Greater Lebanon was unstable. In 1921, French mandate power conducted a census to quantify the sectarian and tribal differences between the communities. Christians accepted this census, and combined with the privileged position of the Church, the new state structure was determined as sectarian in nature.⁴⁹

Until 1922, four French governors administered Lebanon and a 17-member consultative council assisted the governors. Council members continued the tradition of the Administrative council as defending their local interests. In March 1922, the French High Commissioner sought to establish a more effective representative foundation and established the institution of a Lebanese Representative Council. The council would consist of 30 deputies elected by general male suffrage for a period of four years. It was based on confessional representation of each community as determined by the census of 1921.⁵⁰ It was believed that sectarian representation could prevent a sectarian strife and bring collaboration among different sects. The

⁴⁸ D.K. Fieldhouse, "Western Imperialism in the Middle East: 1914-1958", New York: Oxford University Press, 2006, pp.312-313.

⁴⁹ Elizabeth Thompson, "Colonial Citizens: Republican Rights, Paternal Privilege, and Gender in French Syria and Lebanon", New York: Columbia University Press, 2000, p.44.

⁵⁰ Meier Zamir, "The Formation of Modern Lebanon", pp. 142.

Representative Council was an advisory body and the right of the final say in all matters belonged to High Commissioner and the governor. They could reject any decision of the Council, and they had the authority to dissolve the Council.

In addition to these features, the majority of the Council was comprised of Maronite Christians. The election of the members based on proportional size of each community constituting the Lebanese society but the boycott of Muslim communities of the 1921 census caused the recognition of Christians as the dominating minority. Maronites sought to secure Lebanon's position in terms of political autonomy and the census acted as a marker of political dominance of one group on other.⁵¹

3.1. The Constitution of 1926 and the Legitimacy of Confessionalism

The French mandate ended the six-year transition period by establishing Lebanon's second power regime. In 1926, the French colonial rule demanded the Representative Council to prepare a draft constitution. Early in 1926, the Representative Council prepared 210 questionnaires and sent them to notables, civil leaders, and religious patriarchs. According to the results of the poll in May 1926, Lebanon was proclaimed as a constitutional republic. The new constitution built up Lebanon as "an independent and indivisible state" whose official languages were Arabic and French. The new political system emerged around a senate, a chamber of deputies and a president.⁵² Both houses had widespread powers as the election of the president, voting confidence in the government, and approval of the yearly budget on paper. The two houses elected the president who was charged for a three-year term with the possibility of renewal.

There is a specific controversy in the constitution which gave equal civil rights to all Lebanese on one hand and which guaranteed sectarian representation on the other. This controversy was underlined in Article 7 and Article 95. In Article 7, "all the Lebanese were accepted equal under the law" and it is guaranteed that "they enjoy equal civil and political rights and are equally subjected to the public charges and duties, without distinction." This article reminded the Ottoman constitution which

⁵¹ D.K. Fieldhouse, "Western Imperialism in the Middle East", p. 314.

⁵² "The Lebanese Constitution", *Arab Law Quarterly*, Vol.12, No. 2, 1997, pp. 224-261.

declared equality among all members of the Ottoman Empire.⁵³ Article 95, however, contradicts Article 7. The article read as follows: “As a provisional measure and according to Article 1 of the Charter of the Mandate and for the sake of justice and amity, the sects shall be equitably represented in the public employment and in the composition of the Ministry, provided such measures will not harm the general welfare of the state.’ As Article 7 demonstrated the legal boundaries for a nation-state referring to the rights and responsibilities of individuals, Article 95 underlined the reality of the confessional nature of Lebanese society. The provisional feature of this article was intended to develop the sense of individual citizenship. Introducing individual citizenship has been the most difficult aim under the circumstances of Lebanese politics, because it has reinforced the access to state power through confessional representation rather than individual access to its representation.

In addition, Article 12 stated that “every Lebanese shall have the right to hold public office, no preference being made except on the basis of merit and competence.” But the Maronites who claimed a right to maintain their hold on the Presidency and the Sunnis who claimed the Premiership poses another controversy for the sake of “justice and amity”. The regulation was whether access to any governmental post was connected to the rights and responsibilities of individual citizens whatever their confessional position (Articles 7 and 12) was or whether the government should adapt an exact confessional proportional representation connected with the certain census figures.(Article 95) While the Sunni and the Maronite communities sought maintaining the status quo which strengthened their hold on power, Shiites, Druze and Greek Orthodox were prepared to discuss these options.⁵⁴

Another important feature of Article 95 was that it stated the confessional share of power’s being a transitional measure. Confessionalism was not an established system in Lebanon. This was clear in Article 22 of the Constitution which called for the creation of a second chamber, senate, consisting of all religious groups. However,

⁵³ David D. Grafton, “The Christians of Lebanon: Political Rights in Islamic Law”, London: Tauris Academic Studies, 2003, pp. 100-101.

⁵⁴ Meier Zamir, “Lebanon’s Quest: The Road to Statehood 1926-1939”, London: I.B.Tauris, 1997, p. 30.

this senate was going to be created first when the Chamber of Deputies was created on a non-confessional basis.

The confessional feature of Lebanese system was also underlined in Article 24. Article 24 referred to the electoral laws and it was in 1926 electoral laws that the proportional, confessional, and geographical share of seats in parliament was first introduced.

While the Lebanese were granted basic rights and freedoms like individual liberty, education, freedom of speech and equality before law, these rights were all limited with the Mandatory law in each Article. Additionally, French was transferring sovereignty to people while appointing the High Commissioner to control every measure taken by the parliament and the authority to suspend the constitution itself.

The new parliamentary system or adoption of the confessional representation in the Constitution of 1926 did not serve to the interest of Lebanese communities. When the constitution was made, it attempted to make a set of rules that could satisfy all communities of the country. Power-sharing strengthened a small group of Christian families in Beirut and the Mountain, Shiite and Sunni landowners and Sunni notables in the coastal towns. The reality was that the Muslim and Christian communities each struggled for their nation. While Muslims wanted to be a part of Arab nation, the Christians wanted Lebanon to have a pure Christian identity. Under these circumstances, the determinant factor was the French mandate that supported the Christian movements.⁵⁵

The constitutional system sought to be defending a free society of namely equal citizens, but it constituted the clientelist system which depends on the sectarian communities. Notables and their families had no power under communal representation but the elites continued to fill the parliament. The system's inability to address the social and economic inequalities was dangerous and maybe the main reason for the beginning of the civil war.

⁵⁵ Hana Ziadeh, "Sectarianism and Intercommunal Nation Building in Lebanon", London: Hurst, 2006, p.95.

The identity of the country which it would take towards the outside world was the main problem for different sectarian groups. Being Christian, Muslim or Arab also had the influence on the distribution of seats and posts in the parliament and other institutions. The Maronites were satisfied when influence was given, but the Shiites seemed to be removed to the periphery with little influence. Being a part of a consensus democracy was not ordinary for many groups and they did not know how to handle it.

The constitution created two legacies in Lebanon politics for the future. First, it altered the balance of power among the president, government and the parliament which shifted towards president with French support. Parliament became a forum for discussion rather than a legislative authority. The government became unstable and the prime minister was bound to the president. The Maronite presidents enjoyed significant power which would have risks for the delicate inter-communal balance which Lebanon's stability depended on. The second legacy was the transformation of political feudalism in the political system. The political elites, who sought access to state institution and disguised that ambition under serving community interests, can be held responsible for the growing tension of sectarian politics that would bring the collapse of the confessional system.⁵⁶

The constitution was modified in October 1927 and 52 out of 102 original articles were amended. Article 24 of the revised constitution provided that parliament compromise both elected and appointed deputies, and that the number of appointed deputies is equal to half the number of those elected, that is 30 elected and 15 appointed. The new parliament lost its cohesion, power and prestige while rivalry between elected and appointed deputies remained source of political instability. The privilege for electing the new president enabled them to retain considerable influence over presidency and this became clear after the 1929 parliamentary elections.

The amended constitution was a symbol of Lebanon's independence and sovereignty. However, it had a dangerous precedent: whenever an immediate political need occurred, it would be modified. In that sense, instead of forming a shape for Lebanese politics, the constitution demonstrated negative characteristics of the

⁵⁶ Marie-Joelle Zahar, "Power Sharing Regime in Lebanon", pp. 225-226.

politics. The responsibility of the new system belonged to French mandate which aimed at adjusting Lebanon to a modern system. French mandate overlooked Lebanese politicians who lacked the experience of carrying out a Western parliamentary system successfully. Some modifications were necessary to create an affective Lebanese administration but they also serve for continuity of the French control over Lebanese politics.⁵⁷

Consequently, the constitution established a consensus system within the sectarian and polarized society. On one hand, it was the reflection of Lebanon's sovereignty and independence and on the other, it was an indication of Maronite and French mandate domination. While it seemed as a solution to sectarian diversity and challenges, it guaranteed interests and dominance of some groups within the state and brought the feudal concept into modern politics. As a result, it posed a big dilemma for the future of Lebanon's politics: a Western based political system as a sign of equality and universal suffrage regardless of religion or sect; and sectarianism which became the reality in Lebanon's political and social culture.

3.2. The 1932 Census and Beyond

Under the French mandate Lebanon witnessed its unique population census in 1932. It was found that among the six major religious groups or sects in Lebanon, the Christian Maronites were the largest, followed by the Sunni Muslims, and then the Shiite Muslims. According to that census, Maronites comprised 28.8 percent of the population, Sunnis 22.4 percent and Shiites 19.6 percent. Census results formed the statistical basis for the confessional system that distributed public positions among the major religious groups in respect of their populations. As the largest sect, Maronites gained the most powerful position of President of the Republic. Sunnis were allocated the premiership as the second most important political position and Shiites were offered the position of Speaker of Parliament. In the parliament, seats of representatives were allocated to Christians and Muslims in the ratio of 6 Christians

⁵⁷ D.K.Fieldhouse, "Western Imperialism in the Middle East", p. 318-319.

to every 5 Muslims. Government positions were also distributed according to the 6:5 ratio.⁵⁸

The 1932 census was a useful indicator in showing the numerical balance between the Muslims and Christians. The political leaders of the religious communities accomplished Article 95 of the constitution according to the results of 1932 census. For four decades, this ratio constituted the political formula for the distribution of political and administrative positions among the religious sects. Article 95 and the 1932 census introduced a proportional basis into Lebanese politics and this basis that was meant to be the core for cooperation among Lebanese elites became a severe source of stress for the political system.⁵⁹

Furthermore, the 1932 census was also important for transforming the political conditions shaped by the 1921 census, which was opposed by the Muslims and led Christians to get the control of nation-building process. The 1932 census also played a fundamental role in the state-building process in two ways: it was the basis for the personal registration of the population in Lebanon as well as Lebanese emigrants, and it formed one of the milestones of Lebanese citizenship legislation. In fact the Muslims insisted on excluding the number of immigrants from the census results and the political authority of the Christians was put in danger. The immigrants that were not included in the census results became a problem throughout 1930s because without the immigrants the Maronites suddenly became a minority within a sectarian state as Maronite Church scared.⁶⁰

The creation of Greater Lebanon in 1920 satisfied the national aspirations of the Maronite community. However, the extended borders resulted in the inclusion of a large Muslim population. Whereas the Maronites had been the majority in Mount Lebanon, in Greater Lebanon they became a minority. At the time Muslims sought to

⁵⁸ Muhammad A. Faour, "Religion, Demography, and Politics in Lebanon", *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol.43, No.6, November 2007, p.909.

⁵⁹ Joseph G. Jabbara & Nancy W. Jabbara, "Consociational Democracy in Lebanon: A Flawed System of Governance", p. 72.

⁶⁰ Rania Maktabi, "The Lebanese Census of 1932 Revisited: Who Are the Lebanese?", *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 26, No. 2, 1999, p.221.

reunite with Syria which they regarded as their Arab homeland. This goal posed a fundamental threat for the Maronites who focused on a predominantly Christian state with strong tie to the West. The carrying out of the 1932 census and the application of citizenship policies were the important steps to preserve and strengthen Christian hegemony over the state. As a result of 1932 census, undesirable residents were excluded from registration and they were categorized as foreigners. The desirable emigrants were given the opportunity for registration and they were enabled to gain Lebanese citizenship. The inclusion of emigrants served for the strength of Christian communities, while 85% of them were Christian, Muslim emigrants constituted only 15% of the total emigrant population. For the most politically active group, the Maronites, the census was a basic document in forming a politically favorable citizenship.

The connection between the distribution of political power according to the findings of the census, and the resulting politicization of its results placed the Lebanese census in a special position. In a divided society like Lebanon, the representation of the religious sects according to their proportion in the population politicized the census. The greater the numerical size of a confessional group, the more powerful its political influence, and by that it was possible to implement its own political aspirations regarding the identity of the state against the other sectarian and ethnic groups. Political power distribution to demographic realities would be the main reason for the civil wars in the future.

3.3. The Road to Independence

In addition to the domestic politics, the late 1930s and the early 1940s were remarkable with changes in international arena. The rising threat of Germany forced the British and French mandatory powers to propose treaties of alliance to their mandates. British signed Anglo-Iraqi Treaty with the Iraqi administration in 1930. The Treaty ended the British Mandate and led to the admission of Iraq to the League of Nations in 1932. This development affected Syrians and Lebanese who perceived that the French did not act within the parameters of the terms of the mandate. Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations defined the mandate system as one of

the tutelage and advice by the mandatory power to the mandated territory to prepare it for self-rule.⁶¹ French mandate was perceived as a form of colonial rule going beyond its assigned task to advise and assist and one that had failed to manage preparing the territories for indigenous rule as stipulated in the mandate charter.

The Anglo-Iraqi Treaty was an example for Syria and Lebanon but there were not any initiatives in a similar direction until 1936. The treaties that gave guarantee for independence to Syria and Lebanon were signed in September and November of 1936 between France and two countries. These treaties were significant since they guaranteed the independence of two countries' near future. Both Syrian and Lebanese parliaments ratified the treaties but the French parliament waited for the ratification. The collapse of the Popular Front government that supported the treaties, its replacement by a right-wing government, and the threatening of war led to the abandonment of the treaties by France. The increasing threat of war reinforced the French presence in the Eastern Mediterranean, and in July 1939 the High Commissioner abolished the constitutional rule by declaring state of emergency.⁶²

The events of the Second World War and wartime Anglo-French rivalry accelerated the independence of Lebanon. Politically, the Lebanese of different religious sects were in the same opinion over the issue of ending French mandate rule. They were also encouraged by the British who sought to weaken France's role in the Levant. After the fall of France in June 1940, Lebanon remained under the Vichy government, which insisted on its full neutrality. The supporters of Vichy regime and the Free French movement led by General Charles de Gaulle had a decisive impact on the future of the mandated territories. As a pro-Axis sympathizer, the new High Commissioner announced that the French forces in the mandatory territories would abide by the French armistice. This announcement with the access of Syrian air bases given to German aircraft during the Rashid Ali Revolt in June 1941 led the British to invade Syria and Lebanon in June 1941. The strategic importance of the Levant with respect to the British interests was connected with the German threat. If the Germans

⁶¹ "Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations", (June 28, 1919) <http://www.mideastweb.org/leaguemand.htm>, [last accessed in 9 January 2008].

⁶² Charles Winslow, "Lebanon: War and Politics in a Fragmented Society", New York:Routledge, 1996, pp. 70-71.

were to gain control of Levant states, Britain would have lost the Suez Canal and Egypt. French participated in the campaign with de Gaulle's Free French troops. The invasion of Syria and Lebanon began on 8 June 1941 and it took five weeks to defeat the Vichy forces. An armistice agreement was signed in Acre on 14 July 1941. The British gained the dominant position in the previous French mandates with respect to the Free French.⁶³

To ensure local support and enhance their position with the Lebanese, British pressured the French to end the mandate regime in Syria and Lebanon and to proclaim the independence and freedom of the two republics in June 1941. However, Free French decided to continue French domination in the Levant and de Gaulle's demands for the administration of mandate territories caused a new crisis between the two wartime allies. A new crisis emerged due to the conflict in Britain's independence promises to Syria and Lebanon and the requirements of the Anglo-French alliance. The British accused French of being against Arabs, and giving Maronites unproportional privileges at the expense of Muslims. The French claimed the British were giving promises to the Arab governments to reduce the French influence in the region. To ensure the French that they had no secret agendas for the Levant, Britain signed a treaty with France. In this treaty, it was stated that the British did not have any intention for violating the French position. Also, Free France and Great Britain promised to each other independence to Syria and Lebanon.⁶⁴

The elections of 1943 became a power struggle between the Lebanese nationalists, France and Britain. Since as the earlier elections president were to be elected by the Chamber of deputies, and British and French put pressure on the Lebanese deputies to strengthen their position in Levant. None of the French candidate was elected.

The crisis began in November 1943 when the Lebanese parliament amended the constitution as removing all references to the mandate, asserting the independence of Lebanon, and ending the use of French as an official language. High Commissioner

⁶³ Caroline Attie, "Struggle in the Levant: Lebanon in the 1950s", London: I.B.Tauris &Co Ltd, 2004, pp. 18-19.

⁶⁴ A.B.Gaunson, "The Anglo-French Clash in Lebanon and Syria, 1940-1945", London: Macmillan Pres, 1987, pp. 5-6.

reacted violently and he arrested the President, suspended the constitution, and appointed the French supporter Emile Eddé as the President. This caused riots and strikes throughout Lebanon, High Commissioner was withdrawn, all of his decisions were cancelled, and the government was restored along with the parliament and the constitution.⁶⁵ Despite the external power struggle, the 1943 elections were significant for the establishment of a sovereign Lebanese state. Because of its most important outcome, the National Pact, these elections also affected the political system of Lebanon.

3.4. French Mandate and Its Reflections on Lebanon

France's record as a mandatory power in Lebanon has many features. One of them is the civilizing mission of France. France's traditional and religious ties with the Christian Maronites facilitated to realize this mission. French mandate spent two decades for defending integrity of the Lebanon, and protecting it from both internal and external dangers. The High Commission helped to form Lebanese constitution and build its political and administrative system and modern infrastructure. The French contributed to Lebanon in the areas of administration, public works, education and the provision of equal rights to all individuals. The French achievements provided some essential conditions for the transition of Lebanon from a medieval to a modern society.⁶⁶

Another contribution of the French mandate was the 1926 Constitution. The promulgation of the constitution introduced a system of republican democracy and established an electoral system which gave an opportunity for representation of all sectarian groups. This was the most important contribution of the mandate period to the political life of Lebanon.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ D.K.Fieldhouse, "Western Imperialism in the Middle East", pp. 326-327.

⁶⁶ Meir Zamir, "Lebanon's Quest: The Road to Statehood", p. 241.

⁶⁷ Albert Hourani, "Lebanon From Feudalism To Modern State", *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 2, Issue 3, April 1966, pp. 256-258.

French, also, held the hands of inexperienced politicians and governments, providing the official backing they needed and taking over when indigenous ministries failed. They prevented the Maronites from completely dominating the state institutions and tried to integrate the various groups through the balanced confessional system. The attempt to prepare subject people for a self-governing unit was a rare practice made by colonial powers.⁶⁸

While France helped consolidating Lebanon, its policies had some negative effects which were reflected Lebanon's political system and its relations with Syria after independence. Firstly, France's minority policy and refusal of returning the annexed provinces resulted in the hostility of Syrian nationalists to the existence of Lebanon. This led to encouragement of Muslim politicians who demanded that Lebanon become part of an Arab Middle East rather than a Western type state. Secondly, while the constitution provided for Western institutions, Lebanese political culture was determined by traditional forces. Lebanon emerged as a mix of experience with practicing a parliamentary democracy and penetration of the state by primordial forces as community, feudalism and kinship. Under the French mandate Lebanon was the most Westernized country of the Middle East, and paradoxically, it continued to have Ottoman features in terms of society and politics. Thirdly, political feudalism provided by French mandate gave the large powers to the president who was always a Maronite and gave the Maronite elite access to state institutions and wealth. These political elite saw the political confessionalism as the basis of its claim to office. French mandate led to creation of a society which used the state apparatus to reach their own interests.⁶⁹ Therefore, the attempt to transform Lebanon into a nation state failed.

French gave the Maronites every opportunity to exert their power. As a result, the Greater Lebanon became a nation-state only for the Maronites and for the rest of the population it was an imposed state dominated by the Maronites. The French colonial rule went beyond to advise and assist and failed to fulfill the requirement of preparing the territories for independence. In that sense, Maronites who favored the

⁶⁸ D.K.Fieldhouse, "Western Imperialism in the Middle East", p. 329.

⁶⁹ Meir Zamir, "Lebanon's Quest: The Road to Statehood", pp.245-247.

French presence and worked closely with the mandate regime pursued their own interest. Consequently, more than a nation state, Lebanon remained as a collection of *millets* lacking any general sense of community under French mandate.

4. COHESION AND DISSOLUTION: NATIONAL PACT AND 1958 WAR

The 1943 elections were significant in terms of internal disputes. On the eve of independence, three major positions were significant among Lebanese communities. While Christians sought to retain French protection, Muslims sought Lebanon's integration with Syria. Lebanese nationalists accepted Lebanon's independence within the 1920 frontiers, provided following a policy of real independence and cooperated closely with the Arab world.⁷⁰

The future character of Lebanon and the basic structures about power-sharing were the main issues of the newly independent state. The National Pact was the primary outcome of the 1943 elections. The Pact was pivotal to understanding the post independence history of Lebanon and the events of 1950s that culminated in the crisis of 1958. The pact was the result of the relationship between internal Lebanese sects, and external Arab and Western powers. This external-internal relationship was a dominant feature of Lebanon's history and a potential source of instability.⁷¹

The National Pact of 1943 was a verbal agreement between representatives of the largest Christian and Muslim communities, built the reconciliation based on the Lebanese national position. The National Pact (*al Mithaq al Watani*) came into being in the summer of 1943 as the result of numerous meetings between Bishara al-Khuri, Lebanon's first president, and the first prime minister, Riyad al-Sulh. While it provided a framework to compromise the interests of the Maronites and Sunnis, it also confronted the French with a united Lebanese position for an end to mandate. This unwritten agreement would complete the formal Lebanese constitution.⁷² It set three basic principles:⁷³

⁷⁰ A.H.Hourani, "Lebanon From Feudalism To Modern State", p. 298.

⁷¹ Caroline Attie, "Struggle in the Levant", p. 8.

⁷² Marie-Joelle Zahar, "Power Sharing Regime in Lebanon", p. 227.

⁷³ Joseph G. Jabbara&Nancy W. Jabbara, "Consociational Democracy in Lebanon", p. 74.

1. Segmental proportionally: This means the representation of the communities in government according to their proportion in demography. The leading positions in political system were to be distributed in line with that proportionality. President of the Republic will be a Maronite Christian; the prime minister will be a Sunni Muslim, the President of the Chamber of Deputies will be Shiite Muslim.

2. Segmental autonomy: The Pact guaranteed that there will not be state intervention in the communities' rights to conduct religious, educational, and cultural affairs. Lebanon will be an independent and sovereign state. The Christians will not try to seek Western protection, nor will they bring Lebanon under foreign influence or control. Also, the Muslims will not make an effort to unite with Syria or other Arab countries.

3. Foreign policy: The National Pact provided that Lebanon would not cut off its ties with the West in favor of Christian population. In order to please Lebanon's Muslim population, the Pact underlined that Lebanon was a country with an Arab face and language. Furthermore, as a member of the Arab family, Lebanon was to cooperate with other Arab countries, without taking side near one against another. In return, Arab states were to recognize Lebanon as an independent sovereign state with its present boundaries.

These principles were set forth in the public for the first time in address to the Chamber, on 8 October 1943, by Riyad al-Sulh, when he presented the first cabinet of independent Lebanon. But while emphasizing the principles and their underlying ideology, Sulh chose to skip over the practical details. Khuri, also took the similar position and he described the Pact "as an agreement between the two elements of which the Lebanese homeland is made up, for the fusion of their aspirations in one single principle: complete Lebanese independence without recourse to protection by the west and without joining a union or confederation with the east".⁷⁴

⁷⁴ Eyal Zisser, "Lebanon: The Challenge of Independence", London, New York: I.B.Tauris&Co Ltd., 2000, p. 59

The Pact changed the conceptual foundation which had underlined the idea of “Greater Lebanon”. It broke the hegemony of the Maronites on the country and brought the new concept stated as “Lebanon of all the communities”. The new concept had its roots in the past and this was an important fact that added to its legitimacy in the eyes of the Lebanese. On one hand, the pact set up the rules which were to govern the game of politics in the country on practical level. On the other hand, it brought Lebanon political stability and provided a functioning political and administrative system for many years.

Looking at its political significance, it could be considered that it combined the two principle power elements of the country: the Maronites and the Sunnis. It ended the ideological controversy between them about the nature of the state, and solve the issue of how they could coexist and cooperate through disturbing power according to proportionality. In that respect, Maronites gave up claiming hegemony and their close links with the West, especially with France. This signified renouncement French guarantee for the existence of the state and accepting the necessity of Lebanon’s integration to the Arab world. For their part, the Sunnis gave up the idea of Lebanon’s partial inclusion in Syria and recognized the predominant position of the Maronites. Under this aspect, the pact formulated the modalities of communal coexistence different from the formulation imposed by the French and the Maronites at the time of Greater Lebanon.⁷⁵

The importance of the pact was based on its combination of modern and old elements for bridging the sectarian gaps. It combined political traditions which had its origins in Mount Lebanon and in the Ottoman Empire as a whole with features of the modern, independent state. An elected parliament had existed since the late 1920s and had become the main element of Lebanese political system. The National Pact ensured a common framework of authority and also preserved the division between the communities.

The Maronites had understood the limitations of French-Maronite formula in the 1920s and 1930s. The decline of French hegemony, the rise of British influence in

⁷⁵ Eyal Zisser, “Lebanon: The Challenge of Independence”, p. 60.

the Levant, the emergence of a united Arab policy, the foundation of an independent Syria were the main regional factors that the Maronites realized. The new political arena had led them to see the need for placing Lebanon in new structures. In line with these views, the Sunnis moved towards an acceptance of the predominant power status of the Maronites in terms of their demography and their links with the West. They might also have understood that any attempt to restrict the position of the Maronites too narrowly might drive them back to the French side. Both communities learned to take more serious look at each other and at Lebanon as a whole and this look constituted the National Pact.⁷⁶

In terms of social and economic means, the Pact provided a consensus between the Christian elite and the Sunni urban notables who sought to preserve their social and economic positions. For the same reasons, the elites of other communities followed the same way for consolidating their place in economic and political affairs. Both the 1926 constitution and the Pact were based on the idea that protection of elites' standing was necessary for Lebanon to become an independent state as well as a "state of all communities".

There were two different ambitions and hopes for the Pact's two authors including political benefits. For Khuri, the direct advantage was the support of Muslims in the Chamber for presidential election. In return of his contribution to devising the Pact, Sulh became the Prime Minister. Also, the National Pact noted a shift from old alliances. Khuri abandoned the old Maronite tie with France and the French obligation of protecting the Christians of Lebanon. Sulh for his part was blamed for renouncing his commitment to the cause of Arab union and abandoning Muslims to the mercy of the Maronites. The Pact proved that the only guarantee for Lebanon's independence was not Western links. A new balance which included all political elements in the country and inter-Arab influences needed to be found. In that sense Lebanon's foreign policy returned to earlier concepts by adapting the realities of the 1940s.⁷⁷

⁷⁶ Ibid, pp. 61-62.

⁷⁷ Ibid, p. 63.

There were also negative aspects of the Pact which later contributed to the outbreak of the civil war. Although the basic terms of it were recognized by all parties, there was a disagreement on two points. Firstly, the Pact's implications were never fully spelled out to all parties. Secondly, concerning the continued suitability of the Pact, some believed that it was not suitable for the erratic conditions. According to the Maronite Christians, although there was an attribution to the non-Christians who were allowed a proportionate share in politics, Lebanon was a Christian state with its Maronite president. At the expense of renouncing the protection of a European power, they saw this regulation as a guarantee which would preserve the Christian character of the state and protect the Maronites to become a powerless minority in the future.

On the other hand, Sunnis saw the proportional sharing of the offices of government as only a principle but considered that it is not being adhered to fairly. They emphasized that the ratio of the communities changed and that they deserved a larger proportion than was originally allotted to them. The second charge, which was made while still accepting the system, was that the government did not use its resources for the equal benefit of all communities and that the Muslims had been neglected.

By considering two main parts, the National Pact proved that despite the difficulties which the sectarian system entails, there was no other immediate solution without the dominance of one community at the expense of the others. Most Lebanese political leaders believed that there was something to be gained for all communities through the maintenance of an independent Lebanon, and this meant a multi-communal society which would have to take into account the communal differences and maintain some form of sectarian features in the political system.⁷⁸

The intra-communal feature of the state's politics was evident -and even crucial- during the quest for the National Pact. The pact reflected, and emerged out of, internal power struggles within the Maronite and Sunni communities, the two most powerful ethnic groups in the state. The broad multi-communal and multi-regional coalitions were the necessities to bid for political power in Lebanon, and these could

⁷⁸ Ralph E. Crow, "Religious Sectarianism in the Lebanese Political System", pp. 517-520.

be assembled only by an agreement among several powerful intra-communal actors to work hand in hand.⁷⁹ Indeed, the authors of the National Pact hoped that consociationalism was a temporary solution and looked forward to a permanent arrangement based on a more united Lebanese identity. But the balance of power was achieved by only the president and the prime minister. However the pact did not bound to two men who held the top positions in 1943 but was a long term settlement.

The communal tradition which determined the appointment of officials and the allocation of public recourses was the reality of the Lebanese state. These officers were not committed to state but to their community or their family. In that respect, it was difficult to set up state policies concerned with the welfare of citizens regardless of their community.

The most important weakness of the pact was the lack of a system to transform it according to changing conditions. The proportional share in the state structures reflected on the balance of power but the demographic balance did not remain static. Both of the parties ignored this aspect in order to view the Pact as the only solution. The Sunnis agreed to the presidency of Maronites so that they would guarantee their future in independent Lebanon and end their isolation from the Arab world. For Maronites, the pact was the final settlement of the issue of communal relations and it provided them a permanent achievement.

4.1. The Road to Civil War: 1943-1958

Following the National Pact, the main goal of the new state was preserving the national unity by keeping all the sects and communities together. Under the circumstances of regional politics, al-Khuri's term became a power-balancing era during which Lebanon sought to integrate with the international and regional arena.

For wiping away the effects of colonial rule, al-Khuri gave importance to Lebanese integration to the Arab World. This integration was important for both economic and

⁷⁹ Oren Barak, "Intra-Communal and Inter-Communal Dimensions of Conflict and Peace in Lebanon", *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 34, No. 4, November 2002, pp. 620-621.

political reasons. On one hand, there were hostile voices which supported either French or Syria, and, on the other hand recognition of the independent state in the international arena was not realized. The outcome was the Alexandria Protocol of 1944 with six other major Arab states which established a joint Arab organization. The important result of it was the recognition of Lebanon as an independent and sovereign state.⁸⁰

After the independence, the inner politics of Lebanon was unstable. Between 1943 and 1947 Lebanon had seven cabinets and four prime ministers. From the first, each cabinet and prime minister did their best for their political survival. But there were three main threats they had to cope with: the permanent intervention of the president in cabinet issues; the rivalries among the Sunni leaders who sought to gain the premiership; the pressure of notables from all communities for a share of the benefits which were provided by ministers.

Under these unstable conditions Sunni notables called for reforms. They called for the appointment and promotion of government positions on a merit basis; reforming the judicial system to remove it from political field; and changing the electoral law to make the Chamber of Deputies more effective. While the reforms resembled many others which were going to be proposed over the next years, only a few were adopted. Rather than reforms, the main issue of the president al-Khuri was to prepare for national elections in 1947. The main motive of the elections was that enough government supporters returned to Chamber to amend constitution and allow the President to be chosen for a second term. Government interference managed to bring al-Khuri for another second term. In his first six-year term, Khuri made most of Sunni notables dependent on him to be elected for a second term. In his second term, political and financial corruption led to decline of his power. Rather than signifying the democracy and the equality of all citizens, the elections became the playground of feudal notables who controlled every measure of the political participation.⁸¹

⁸⁰ Raghid El-Solh, "Lebanon and Arabism: National Identity and State Formation", London, New York: I.B.Tauris, 2004, pp. 251-253.

⁸¹ Charles Winslow, "Lebanon: War and Politics in a Fragmented Society", pp. 87-93.

Despite all the attempts to assure the balance of power between Maronites and Sunnis, al-Khuri and al-Sulh could not achieve to keep all communities together, but they created collaboration between confessional elites.⁸² The National Pact was a modern contract between leaders than communities as long as the two leaders maintained their own rule. When in 1951 Riyad al-Sulh was assassinated, the pact and the ideology it represented immediately dissolved. In that respect, the National Pact could not form a nation, but revived a new Christian nationalism model that rejected the Muslim and Arab character of Lebanon.

Camille Chamoun was the new symbol of Christian awakening after the assassination of al-Sulh and al-Khuri's loss of power. He became president in 1952 with the support of British and the majority of Muslim deputies and served as second president of independent Lebanon until 1958. In spite of being a member of cabinet in al-Khuri's Constitutional Bloc, he cut his ties with him following the 1947 elections for modification of the constitution to reelect al-Khuri for a second term.

Chamoun had neither sizable support of his own nor any means of building it without returning to the patronage politics. Those who put him on power had only agreed on the necessity for a change but they had no idea of what that change would be. In his term, the balance between religious communities was maintained and undercurrents of hostility were discernible. The Muslims criticized the regime in which Christians occupied the highest offices in the state and disproportionate number of civil service positions.⁸³

After 1955, opposition to the regime intensified again and became increasingly polarized on a sectarian basis. Muslims could hardly get the status and wealth through pursuits outside the political sector. The real power given to the Muslims was the office of premiership, and under the power resided by the president, this office had no means. Sunni complaints about the lack of power in their part of the

⁸² Caroline Attie, "Struggle in the Levant", p.27.

⁸³ Ibid, p. 48.

confessional system broadened into a more diffuse sort of opposition and into a willingness to defy the system itself.⁸⁴

Between 1955 and 1958, he stood for a pro-Western alignment, thus becoming the main target for those who sympathized with closer Arab unity. But by choosing to violate the conventional six year term, he caused the uprising of Muslims who held that whatever else may happen, the present President should not be re-elected. The result was the 1958 civil strife and the American intervention in Lebanese domestic politics.⁸⁵

The hostilities towards Chamoun rule were stimulated when the Baghdad Pact was signed in February 1955. The Baghdad Pact brought Syrian suspicion about Lebanese participation in the Pact and affected Syrian efforts to bring down President Chamoun. Lebanon did not join the Baghdad Pact and saved her neutral position but it was not favorable for Nasser who sought reawakening of pan-Arabism.

4.2. The Civil War of 1958

The Cold war rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union put pressure on Lebanon and the other Arab states to make a choice between the Western alliance and the communist bloc. One of the regional changes in that process was the nationalization of the Suez Canal by Nasser in 1956. British, French and Israeli jointly-led military intervention against Egypt placed the United States and the Soviet Union on the same side. The United States and the Soviet Union replaced Britain and France in the Middle East and Nasser's Egypt became the dominant player in the Arab world.

According to Nasser, the Lebanese government did not cut its ties with Britain and France during the 1956 Suez War and gave harm to the solidarity with Egypt. For

⁸⁴ Charles Winslow, "Lebanon: War and Politics in a Fragmented Society", p. 102.

⁸⁵ Wm. Roger Louis, "Britain and the Crisis of 1958", In *A Revolutionary Year: The Middle East in 1958*, ed. Wm. Roger Louis and Roger Owen, London: I. B. Tauris & Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2002, pp. 34-35.

Chamoun, there was no choice but to maintain relations with British and French to enable Lebanon to be an Arab voice that the Europeans would listen. He realized that Lebanon would either be occupied by Nasser or by the communist in Syria. Lebanon had to find a way to play a role in America's global program and in return get protection for the country.⁸⁶

Between the years 1955 and 1958, President Chamoun made several foreign policy choices that changed Lebanon's neutral position. He supported the conclusion of the Baghdad Pact in 1955; did not approve nationalization of Suez Canal by Gamel Abdul Nasser; resisted Arab pressures to cut diplomatic ties with Britain and France during the 1956 Suez Canal Crisis; adhered to Eisonhower Doctrine in 1957. He also manipulated the 1957 parliamentary elections to amend the Constitution and to run for a second presidential term. Chamoun ordered the army to intervene against his opponents but the army decided to remain neutral in this conflict. These were the main parameters led to the Civil Strife of 1958.

The year of 1958 was significant for American policy in Middle East. Suez crisis forced US to take a larger role in the region. US attempted to stop Nasser's inclination towards communism and to block further inroads of Soviet Union by launching Eisenhower Doctrine. According to President Eisenhower and his officials, the Suez crisis and its aftermath had jeopardized the economic and diplomatic well-being of its Western allies. Furthermore, continuous access to Middle Eastern petroleum reserves for Western Europe could be provided by rectifying the situation and US took this responsibility by promulgating the Eisenhower Doctrine.⁸⁷ The doctrine guaranteed the independence of the nations in the region and promised the integrity against armed aggression from any communist or communist dominated country. In that respect, the doctrine aimed at preventing the expansion of Soviet influence in the region, securing allies without creating a pact, and providing economic and military assistance to friendly Middle Eastern States.⁸⁸

⁸⁶Charles Winslow, "Lebanon: War and Politics in a Fragmented Society", p. 105

⁸⁷ Diana B.Kunz, "United States As A Middle Eastern Power", In *A Revolutionary Year: The Middle East in 1958*, ed.Wm.Roger Louis and Roger Owen, London: I. B. Tauris&Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2002, p.77.

Adhering to the 1957 Eisenhower Doctrine infringed the National Pact and threatened the rules of domestic politics in Lebanon. According to Chamoun's opponents, adoption of the doctrine was a political act against pan-Arabism. For the Chamoun's allies, the doctrine was a guarantee for Lebanon's independence and sovereignty against any attack from neighboring states. The government initiative was a turning point from National Pact which required Lebanon's neutrality in inter-Arab relations. Also, this altered the traditional Lebanese policy based on a common front with the Arab world. In other words, the government isolated Egypt from Arab world and became the part of the Western camp in the Cold war. In addition to this, the Iraqi revolution pose a threat for Lebanon and Chamoun requested United States and Britain to intervene and to protect Lebanon from communism spreading all over the Arab world. This last step proved that Lebanon's foreign policy of neutrality did not survive any more.

Syria's decision to unite with Egypt in the new United Arab Republic (UAR) started another episode of regional transformation. The establishment of the UAR created the shock among Arab states and in the Middle East region. In Lebanon, Chamoun and his supporters considered the popular images of Nasser and the UAR as threats to the political system. While preferring to maintain closer relations with the West, Chamoun blamed the UAR for Lebanon's impending political crisis and argued that the UAR interfered in Lebanese internal affairs with the aim of affecting a radical change in his basic political policy. To sum up, the Cold War penetration and the rise of Nasserism forced Lebanon to abandon neutral foreign policy and seek a new role for itself in regional politics and security. In a delicately balanced religious and political mosaic, the rise of Arab nationalism with its pan-Islamic overtones now infused fear in the Christian community. The division in the regional environment posed unresolved dilemmas for its domestic politics.

In addition to these foreign policy changes, 1957 parliamentary elections sharply divided Lebanese society. In view of the changed circumstances, the elections were both connected with the international and local level. At the external level, the

⁸⁸ Ibid, pp. 80-84.

conflict reflected Chamoun's support of a pro-Western policy against the wishes of his opponents who wanted to bring Lebanon into the orbit of UAR. At the internal level, Chamoun was anxious to consolidate support in the Chamber of Deputies for re-election.

In order to run for a second period, the Chamoun sought to amend the constitution and amendment of the constitution meant jeopardizing the National Pact. This brought about the destruction of the political system and abolition of the confessional integrity and politics. In the period 1957-1958, there were three main factors that affected the Lebanese domestic politics. Firstly, the manipulation of the legislative elections raised the intercommunal vulnerability as communal groups feared exclusion. Secondly, the level of intercommunal trust began to diminish as Chamoun and his supporters called for the transformation of the rules of state governance. Thirdly, under Chamoun's presidency, Maronites were dominant in all institutional levels and Chamoun was decisive to use that control to seek another presidential term.⁸⁹

The amendment of the constitution and enabling President Chamoun to run for re-election were the main issues that formed two different camps. Muslims saw such a measure as a threat to the balance of intercommunal power and satisfaction that was created and perpetuated by the National Pact. In contrast, the Maronites believed that President Chamoun was the best safeguard for Lebanon's sovereignty against any foreign attempt.

The Lebanese Constitution prohibited the re-election of the president while being in office. Amending the constitution through a two-thirds vote in the Chamber of Deputies was the only way for Chamoun who sought to run a second presidential term. When Chamoun supporters won 1957 elections, they began setting the climate for such a chance by advocating for his re-election.⁹⁰

⁸⁹ Badredine Arfi, "International Change and Stability of Multi-ethnic States", Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005, pp.152-153.

⁹⁰ Caroline Attie, "Struggle in the Levant", p.141-144.

The situation deteriorated when the opposition considered Chamoun's aim to run a second term in presidency. The assassination of Nasir al-Matni, a Maronite Christian, publisher and owner of the Beirut Arabic Daily Telegraph, was the spark that transformed the debate from a discourse level to violent clashes and armed conflicts on the streets. Most opposition groups, including the Third Force, National Movement and the Popular Front, called for a general three day strike from 10- 13 May throughout the country to force Chamoun's resignation. The president responded instead that UAR was behind the events at home and accused the opposition leaders of acting as its agents. The opposition increased its level of challenge to the government even further by taking its cause to the streets and calling for general strikes.⁹¹

Contrary to Chamoun's claims, Nasser indicated an interest in cooperating with the United States in Beirut. As evidence of his intentions, he offered to talk with the Lebanese opposition to obtain its agreement on a formula that included the four proposals. First one was the amnesty for opposition. This was the most important proposal because greatest preoccupation of opposition leaders was that they would be court-martialed and, as long as there was prospect from which Chamoun would take his revenge. Second, General Fuad Chehab would become Prime Minister since he was respected and enjoyed confidence of both Christians and Muslims. Third, Chamoun would disclaim his intention to seek to change the constitution but to serve out term. Nasser argued that he understood the opposition insisting on his Chamoun's resigning now, but this would obviously present complications and he saw no reason for insisting on this provided there was fully guaranteed amnesty. Four, as soon as possible new elections would be held.⁹²

In the midst of all these events the fall of Iraqi monarchy on 14 July 1958 created a sense of panic within Chamoun regime and the Christian population. Chamoun requested immediate assistance from the United States, Britain, and France insisting that the independence of Lebanon was in jeopardy. The United States responded by

⁹¹ Ibid, pp. 153-155.

⁹² Irene L. Gendzier, "Notes from the Minefield, United States Intervention in Lebanon and the Middle East 1945-1958", New York: Columbia University Press, 1997, p.259.

landing some fourteen thousand US marines in Beirut on 15 July 1958 in reference to Eisenhower Doctrine. The United States intervened in Lebanon's internal political affairs to support pro-Western government that was endangered by a crisis largely of its own creation. Also, the Iraqi revolution provided an unexpected legitimization of US intervention in Lebanon.⁹³ However, the Chamoun regime was aware that there was no serious threat of *a coup d'état* or an invasion from Syria except the internal Arab nationalist opposition. In addition, the opposition understood that the United States did not intend to impose a puppet government on them. From now on, both sides were ready to talk to each other about the most important issue to be resolved: who will be the next president?

Chamoun and his supporters favored the election of a pro-government deputy from Parliament; the opposition was against the nomination of any deputy and favored among others either former president Bishara al-Khuri or General Chehab. Chehab accepted the candidacy, and the opposition endorsed him on July 30, 1958. Although he could not assume power until September 23, his election brought a slow but clearly recognizable sense of widespread relief. He immediately proclaimed the formation of a new cabinet under Rashid Karami. After re-establishing domestic peace, the government proceeded to resume the country's traditional policy of neutrality among its Arab neighbors and reassured both the Muslim and Christian communities about the future of Lebanon and the 1943 National Pact. The government also announced that the Eisenhower Doctrine was no longer applicable to Lebanon and requested that the United States withdraw its troops from the Lebanese territory. Furthermore, for normalizing domestic politics, the Chamber of Deputies increased the number of deputies from 66 to 99 and introduced secret ballot procedure of voting in the Chamber on April 20, 1960. In sum, the end of the crisis had two important consequences for state governance. First, the Lebanese groups returned to the internal peace period as well as the form of the 1943 National Pact. Second, Lebanon returned to a neutralist foreign policy.⁹⁴

⁹³ Irene L. Gendzier, "Oil, Politics, and US Intervention", In *A Revolutionary Year: The Middle East in 1958*, ed: Wm. Roger Louis and Roger Owen, London: I. B. Tauris & Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2002, pp.126-127.

⁹⁴ Badredine Arfi, "International Change and Stability of Multi-ethnic States", pp.170-171.

The 1958 civil war demonstrated the limits of the National Pact which established the balance of power between the religious communities. Firstly, it was fabricated by two leaders of time who wanted to leave communal hostilities behind. Bound to the 1926 constitution and 1932 census, the pact could not survive with the transformation of domestic politics. Also, the power sharing model was not applicable any more for Muslims who were confident that a new census could prove their numerical superiority.

The international changes and the cold war penetration proved that foreign policy of neutralization could not respond the realities of the regional context. Lebanon was stuck between the pan-Arabism and Western choice. In that respect, the country had to make a choice between Eisenhower Doctrine and Nasserism. But that choice resulted in division in domestic politics and the religious communities struggling for their own fate. In the end, the position of the president posed the real danger when he sought to reign for a second term. These entire external and internal struggles posed that the National Pact was not enough to unite all the communities under the same national interest and presidential elections would be the main jeopardy that displaced the pact with general dissatisfaction of sectarian units. As a conclusion, confessional system could not work as long as it was bounded to leaders, to settlements which remained out of time to international changes which made deep impacts for the political choices.

5. CONFLICT AND RESOLUTION: THE 1975 WAR AND THE TAIF AGREEMENT

As a Maronite Army Commander, General Fuad Chehab was the pioneer of the soldier presidents who would be selected at the end of the long-term presidential crises. His refusal to use the army in a repressive role brought him the popular support from Muslim masses. In his term between 1958 and 1964, he chose the policy of détente in foreign affairs and domestically he followed the etatism to bypass the bulk of Christian and Muslim leaders. His main objective was to establish the concept of Lebanese nationalism, as opposed to Pan-Arabism. Chehab administration was a time of unprecedented economic growth and development in Lebanon and these were the best years of the Republic. Chehab succeeded in having his nominee, Charles Helou, elected as the next president.

During the Chehab's presidency, Lebanese politics differed from the earlier period. His reformist policies which addressed the Muslim grievances and gave the priority to socio-economic issues, helped to defuse the tension over the issue of power-sharing. The power sharing was not an issue of political debate during the Helou's presidency. Lebanon's politics were signified by fierce rivalry between government and opposition. The Chehabist establishment was faced by a strong opposition which was composed by leaders from all sects. The decisive sign between government and opposition was the 1968 parliamentary election in which the opposition arised.

During, Helou's presidency, a series of momentous regional developments affected the Lebanese politics. These developments began with Israel's diversion of the River Jordan in 1964 and continue with 1967 Arab-Israeli War in which Lebanon did not participate. But the war had serious reflections on all aspects of Lebanese life. The most significant impact was the increased role of Palestinian guerrilla groups in the struggle against Israel and the groups' use of Lebanon as a base of operations.

5.1. The Reasons of the 1975 Civil War

Lebanon's political culture was shaped by the interplay of historical and social processes and the civil war of 1975 was a stage in a continuous conflict process. There were three main concepts that affected these conflict processes. The first was the collapse of the domestic sociopolitical and economic structures. The second was the collapse of the functioning government because of the regional politics and outside influences. The third was the intervention of foreign power which escalated the tension of the war.

Most people considered Lebanon of the late 1970s and the 1980s as synonymous with anarchy, ranging from incidents of random violence, car bombings and kidnappings to major military conflicts such as the 1982 Israeli invasion. Conflicts over political transformation in Lebanon and the territorial ambitions of rival militias were followed by major regional wars which had little to do with internal Lebanese politics but which were fought on Lebanese territory.

5.1.1 Domestic Reasons

The domestic situation in the country had structural features that escalated the violence and started the civil strife. Muslims of Lebanon saw themselves in an inferior position deprived of status, power and the rewards system in a Christian-dominated state and this led to marginalization of the community. However, Christians saw the Muslims outside of the core value system that established the independent state. According to the Maronites, equal Muslim access to the power was a threat for both their communal status and to the independence of Lebanon. With the economic asymmetry, educational imbalance and political disparity, these sectarian views heavily influenced the civil war.

Many historians cite the effects of modernization as a key factor that started the Civil War of 1975. The fast-growing Lebanese economy of the 1950s and 1960s was a service economy, that is, externally oriented. Krayem points out that uneven development is inherent in a service-based economy and that it often leads to

increased social mobilization. Uneven growth and development deepened sectarian divisions geographically, economically, socially, and culturally. This, in turn, altered key relationships on which successful consociationalism depended.⁹⁵

The economic system created the considerable disparity of wealth and inequality in Lebanese society. According to a national income study in 1975, Christian Lebanese was in a better position than Muslim Lebanese. This study showed that 61 percent of Christians earned an annual income of less than L6.000, 82 percent of the Shiite, 79 percent of Sunnis and 69 percent of the Druzes earned less than that. The sectarian disparity also showed itself in the economic structure in which Muslims were small businessmen and peasants; Christians had a relatively larger middle class being involved in public sector activities, companies and banking.⁹⁶

The structure of the educational system, also, showed the country's social and ideological division. Many schools were established by religious foundations, and foreign missionaries. The foreign universities and schools fostered conflicts by dividing the political and cultural socialization between native and foreign influences. The illiteracy rate difference between two communities was another indicator that showed the inequality. 31 percent of the Shiite men and 70 percent of Shiite women were illiterate, compared to 13 percent of Christian men and 20 percent of Christian women. Among the Muslim population, especially Shiite Muslims, this inequality in education led to perceptions of injustice, deprivation and denial. This reflected to an understandable demand for more public schools and educational facilities for the Muslim children.⁹⁷

The political structure failed to transform the disparity in the Lebanese system into a dynamic force for the change. When the domestic and regional situation became deteriorated, the system failed to activate the National Pact. This gave rise to

⁹⁵ Hassan Krayem, "The Lebanese Civil War and the Taif Agreement", In *Conflict Resolution in the Arab World: Selected Essays*, ed. P. Salem, Beirut, American University of Beirut, 1997, p. 414.

⁹⁶ Latif Abul-Husn, "The Lebanese Conflict: Looking Inward", London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1998, p. 54.

⁹⁷ Ibid, pp. 55-56.

radicalization of the anti-status-quo forces and created militant organizations and groups such as the Amal, and the Lebanese Forces. Yet, the social structure provoked the civil strife and the denied expectations became the primary motivation in the conflict. The frustration of Shiite sect grounded on these motives. Economic disparities, loss of substantive rewards, and the system's failure to address their grievances pushed them into the conflict.⁹⁸

In reality, differences within the communal groups were not promoting to perceive violence and war as the only alternative to solve the injustice problem. Change through non violent actions was possible in Lebanon. There was a possibility for altering the political balance in favor of all communities: the parliamentary and presidential elections in 1976. It was assumed that the elections would promote change as it did in the last two parliamentary elections in 1968 and 1972, and in the presidential election in 1970.

Power-sharing model was disputed before the civil war period, mainly by the Sunni Muslims. Prior to the 1960s grievances were expressed by the Sunni political establishment dealt with the weakness of the prime minister vis-à-vis the president. At the beginning, injustice about power-sharing did not lead to a political crisis or government paralysis. The restructuring of executive power was demanded by Sunni establishment and it was political rather than sectarian. The debate was remained in the level of political elite and did not spread among masses. The political scene in the mid-1960s differed radically a few years later when the issue of power-sharing within the executive surfaced again.⁹⁹

The issue of power-sharing in non-crisis situations related mainly to the sectarian distribution of civil service posts and in the armed forces. While representation in the parliament favored the Christians (54 to 45), in the cabinet, it was equal. The distribution in government bureaucracy was in favor of the Christians, particularly the Maronites, due to social factors of Lebanese society. While the Druze community

⁹⁸ David McDowall, "Lebanon: A Conflict of Minorities", London: Minority Rights Group Publications, 1983, pp.12-13.

⁹⁹ Michael Hudson, "Precarious Republic: Political Modernization in Lebanon", Boulder: Westview Press, 1985, p. 262.

was well-presented in relation to its small size, representation of Sunnis was less equitable, and the least represented community was the Shiites.¹⁰⁰ The problem was not that of number of posts and parity, but the allocation of key posts to particular communities.

Before the war, the army was involved in politics in Lebanon and the target was the opposition, which included leaders from all communities. Actually, Maronite leaders criticized the army's intervention in politics in the 1960s. Presidential attempts to use the army were confronted by effective opposition. Although the president was in a position to order the army commander to intervene, politically he could not do so in the lack of internal consensus, specifically Muslim support.

Under these circumstances, attempts to reduce Maronite privileges in the first half of the 1970s were powerful at a time when Sunni veto right within the execution reached its highest level of effectiveness since 1943. In this respect the president had two alternatives. First was to move to a particular action while paying no attention to the position of prime minister or to public opinion opposed to such action. It was the way which was pursued by Chamoun in the 1958 crisis. Second was the policy of inaction which meant management of the crisis through using available political and military means for purposes of damage control. For this way, Sunni veto against the presidential decision was inevitable. Following the outbreak of war, the power-sharing discussions was replaced by the mounting cycle of violence. For Christian leaders, the National Pact was taken away from its initial content and was not operational. For Muslim leaders, they played on each other regarding the transforming of the political system. The common goal shared by all sects among Muslims was the ending of Maronite rule, but they diverged on all other issues. But ending the Maronite rule was not the solution for ending the war.¹⁰¹

¹⁰⁰ Theodor Hanf, "Coexistence in Wartime Lebanon: Death of a State and Birth of a Nation", London: I.B.Tauris&Co Ltd., 1993, pp. 93-96.

¹⁰¹ Farid El Khazen, "The Breakdown of the State in Lebanon: 1967-1976", London: I.B.Tauris, 2000, pp. 247-248.

5.1.2 The Effect of Regional Struggle in Civil War

Lebanon became host to thousands of Palestinians as a result of the Arab Israeli war of 1948 which was the first struggle between Arab states and Israel. The existence of the Palestinians in the country became the most urgent issue in any regional peace settlement. Unlike its neighbors, Lebanon had different concerns with the Palestinians. Firstly, its economic capacity to absorb the Palestinian refugees was very limited. Secondly, the majority of Palestinians were Muslims who could not be absorbed without disturbing communal balance that had been worked out in the National Pact of 1943. Pan-Arabist ideology caused them to side with the opposition during the Lebanese civil war of 1958 but their impact was minimal since they were not organized. The foundation of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and its military wing (PLA) by the Arab League started a new phase for Lebanon's involvement in the Palestine question. After the Arab's military defeat in the War of June 1967, the Palestinians established guerilla bases and began recruiting in the refugee camps through the Lebanon's laissez-faire political system.

In early years of 1970s, the main issue emphasized by both Maronites and Muslims was the support for PLO. For the Maronite leaders, the preservation of the status-quo was the last line of communal and political defense. It was an option they controlled and they were opposed to tampering with the fragile confessional system. Maronite resistance to change the political power structure was proportional with Muslim resistance to change their support for the PLO. Internal opposition politics based on Palestinian politics hardened the positions of all parties.

The Muslims of Lebanon insisted on Lebanon's active participation in the Arab-Israeli conflict because of two main motivations. The first was to establish closer relationships with Arab world that might affect Muslims' status and their overall demands for a more equitable power-sharing arrangement. The second was to prevent sociopolitical structure, with its Maronite dominance, from strengthening since this would transfer Muslims to the lower ranks of the political system. The Christian groups were anxious of an organized Palestinian military presence in

Lebanon. It was compounded by the inability of the government to contain the rise of Palestinian power and to preclude its cooperation with anti-status-quo forces.

The Palestinian resistance created the deep social and political fissures between Muslim and Christian groups and the refugee camps turned into commando operations' bases which threatened most Christian Lebanese and conservative Muslims. When the Lebanese government failed to restrict their activities, they took the advantage of social and sectarian divisions among sects to establish a firm basis of support in the country. The first reflection of this support was the Israeli raid on Beirut International Airport on 28 December 1968. Israel claimed that this raid was a response to a Palestinian attack of one of its airplanes over Italy in July 1968. In fact, it was the first sign of Israeli retaliation policy towards Lebanon. This event was also a beginning of a series of conflicts between the Lebanese, who was anxious to end Israeli attacks, and Palestinian resistance.¹⁰²

Lebanon had to put the condition under which the Palestinians could operate in Lebanon. The government realized that support for the Palestinians by the radical parties and Lebanese Muslims caused the criticism of the Lebanese political system and the privileged status of Christian community. The tension escalated between Maronite and Muslim politicians who viewed the Palestinian resistance as an essential part of the Arab cause. This tension transformed into the armed confrontations between the army and the Palestinians. The Lebanese government had to resolve Palestinian questions in three ways. One was to find a way to disclaim responsibility for the Palestinians' actions in order to terminate Israeli retaliation. Second was to maintain Lebanese sovereignty in order to satisfy its internal critics. Third was to be seen as a supporter of the Palestinian movement towards the opposition parties and its Muslim constituencies.

As the government failed to find immediate solutions, the conflict in Lebanon culminated with a series of clashes between the Lebanese army and various guerilla groups. The Lebanese government and PLO held talks in attempts to build an

¹⁰² Kail C.Ellis, "The Regional Struggle for Lebanon", In Lebanon's Second Republic: Prospects for the Twenty-first Century, ed. Kail C.Ellis, Florida: University Press of Florida, 2002, pp. 27-28.

understanding and prevent further clashes between the commandos and the army. President Nasser of Egypt also supported the right of the Lebanese government to exercise reasonable constraints on Palestinian guerrilla activity.

On November 1969 Nasser successfully mediated the Cairo Agreement between the PLO and the Lebanese army. The agreement gave Palestinians the right of administrative control over their refugee camps in Lebanon. The essence of the agreement was the legitimization and control of the command presence and of operations against Israel. Palestinian armed presence restricted to contain localities while operations against Israel were to be secretly coordinated with the Lebanese army.¹⁰³ The Palestinians gained the right to use the camps as bases, install weapons, and recruit resident Palestinians for the resistance. In return they promised to control the lawless opponents of their ranks, to cooperate with the Lebanese government to ensure noninterference in Lebanese politics. They also recognized that Lebanese civil and military authorities would continue to exercise their full rights and responsibilities in all Lebanese regions in all circumstances.¹⁰⁴

The agreement did not respond to the basic issues related to Lebanese sovereignty. According to Christian politicians, the sovereignty was being endangered by the actions of Palestinians. Furthermore, it strengthened the trend towards the organization of militias by Maronites. The Phalanges already had a militia but this trend also spread to former president Camille Chamoun, Suleiman Franjeh (the Maronite leader in northern Lebanon), and others. The Maronite militias strengthened suspicions of the Lebanese Muslims and radicals as well as those of the PLO.¹⁰⁵

Israel responded the Cairo Agreement by increasing its raids against southern Lebanon. The result was the creation of a Lebanese Shiite refugee problem in addition to the Palestinian refugee problem. The Shiites migrated north to settle in the shantytowns of Beirut and they were largely tenant farmers and agricultural

¹⁰³ Walid Khalidi, "Conflict and Violence in Lebanon: Confrontation in the Middle East", pp. 41-42.

¹⁰⁴ Charles Winslow, "Lebanon: War and Politics in a Fragmented Society", pp. 161-162.

¹⁰⁵ Kail C.Ellis, "The Regional Struggle for Lebanon", p. 30.

laborers. Their regions were deprived of development projects and they had been considered as the most disadvantaged confessional group in the country. They were dismissed politically and their political power was split into the hands of the Sunni Muslims. However, they were transformed into a highly politicized community as a result of Israeli military activity in their region. Urbanization of the Shiites provided the political mobilization of the community and their disappointed expectations were transformed into demands in the political arena. Many Shiites joined the Palestinian groups and when the Amal movement gained power and started to dominate Shiite politics in Lebanon the Shiites turned towards the movement. The politicized Shiites were capable of translating their deprivation into political action through the Amal political organization.¹⁰⁶

At the presidential election of 1970, Suleiman Franjeh was elected as president and he called on the Sunni leader Saeb Salam to form the cabinet. Salam formed a new youth cabinet to carry out a revolution at the top that would avoid a revolution from below. But over the following few months, regime's spirited reformers found it necessary to resign from their post as the old political leaders and new radical forces interfered with their efforts. As the youth cabinet dissolved, Franjeh became more isolated. Also, radical nationalism from nearby states contributed to Lebanon's domestic discord. After the Cairo Agreement the Palestinians chose to go underground, but all commando groups did not obey the PLO Chairman Arafat's directives.¹⁰⁷

The situation worsened when the Palestinian leadership moved to Lebanon after 1970 Jordanian civil war. Lebanon was caught between the Palestinian resistance and Israeli raids. The Lebanese army was criticized by the opposition parties for their inability to protect the country from Israeli retaliations. If the Lebanese government was unable to control those residing in the country, Israel would demonstrate its strength. Thus, in April 1973, Israeli conducted their second major raid into Beirut, assassinating three top leaders of the Palestinian guerillas. The army explained that it had not been informed of the raid and the army's response was towards Palestinians,

¹⁰⁶ Latif Abul-Husn, "The Lebanese Conflict", pp. 61-62.

¹⁰⁷ Charles Winslow, "Lebanon: War and Politics in a Fragmented Society", pp. 171-172.

not Israel. The increasing tension between the Lebanese army and the PLO began in May 1973 in the most serious conflict between them since 1969. The Lebanese Air Force was used for the first time against Palestinian locations inside refugee camps. But the new Prime Minister Amin Hafiz, make a new agreement with the PLO which reconfirmed and restricted the provisions of the 1969 Cairo Agreement.¹⁰⁸ These events showed that Israeli attempts to force the Lebanese government to suppress the commandos went beyond the Lebanese government's abilities and the breakdown of the civil strife was not far away.

5.2 Lebanese Civil War and Foreign Intervention

In this atmosphere, assassination of Maaruf Saad, a former member of Parliament and local Sunni leader in Sidon was the first spark that started the longest civil war of the Lebanese history. He was shot when he was leading a demonstration for supporting the strike by local fishermen opposing army units. The fishermen protested formation of an offshore fishing monopoly sponsored by former president Camille Chamoun. His death caused a violent populist uprising in Sidon. Palestinian commandos joined radical Lebanese militias to prevent Lebanese Army to control the city. The polarization of the country overwhelmed the army which had saved it in the earlier crisis of 1958. Both public opinion and the traditional elite separated over the role of the military establishment. Traditionally, Muslims had been suspicious of the army and opposed its use for internal security. This contradiction undermined the state's ability to restore public order and the position of the opposition who demanded redistribution of political power strengthened.¹⁰⁹

The second incident sparked massive clashes between the Phalangist militia and the Palestinians. On 13 April 1975, unknown attackers fired at a Sunday church meeting attended by Pierre Gemayel, leader of the Maronite Phalanges, killing his bodyguard and two others. Maronite militiamen responded to this attack by attacking a bus and

¹⁰⁸ Walid Khalidi, "Conflict and Violence in Lebanon", p. 43.

¹⁰⁹ Hani A. Faris, "The Failure of Peacemaking in Lebanon, 1975-1989", In *Peace for Lebanon: From War to Reconstruction*, ed: Deirdre Collings, Boulder : Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1994, pp. 19-20.

massacring 28 passengers mostly Palestinians on board. By May 1975, the fighting spread to the refugee camps and involved Palestinians and Phalangists.¹¹⁰

While the civil strife continued in the streets, the political instability in the Lebanese government surfaced again. In May 23, Franjeh took an unprecedented decision by appointing a military cabinet. Muslim Brigadier Nur al-Din al-Rifai was appointed as prime minister and all other cabinet members were military officers except one.¹¹¹ Franjeh's motive for that decision was part of a plan to consolidate Maronite dominance of the government. Another purpose was attempting to force the army to intervene in the struggle. According to him, a strong inter confessional military government with unquestionable authority over the army could prevent widespread conflict, although democracy would be damaged. However, the military government survived shortly and Rashid Karami became prime minister once again. The resignation of the military government showed the power vacuum in Lebanese politics and it was used as the catalyst to conflict.

In 1975 important changes were realized in the Middle East. After the 1973 Arab-Israeli war, Anwar al-Sadat left the Soviet line and allied with the conservative Arab states led by Saudi Arabia. He also sought strong relationships with the USA. Each of the actors had its own reasons to worry about the growing popularity of the Palestinian movement, its sponsorship by Syria, and its tendency to undermine established regimes. The Palestinians acted with a great deal of independence, because no one was able to control all the factions of their movement. The United States wanted them repressed while the Egyptians wanted them to do nothing to provoke the Israelis; and the Gulf States wanted them to be militarily defeated. For other Arab states, Palestinian problem could be resolved with the efforts of Lebanese Christians. Under these circumstances, army could not remain neutral and the Christians had no choice except employing their own militias.¹¹²

¹¹⁰ Charles Winslow, "Lebanon: War and Politics in a Fragmented Society", p. 182.

¹¹¹ Walid Khalidi, "Conflict and Violence in Lebanon", pp. 47-48.

¹¹² Charles Winslow, "Lebanon: War and Politics in a Fragmented Society", p. 183

At the beginning, Syria watched the situation in Lebanon intently because intervention in civil war needed the international acceptance by Israel, USA, and the other Arab countries. Syria's decision to intervene in the civil war had several reasons. Firstly, Lebanon's territory had great importance for Syria's line of defense. If there was an Israeli attack coming through Lebanon's territory, Syria could station its troops in Lebanon and force the Israelis to allocate to the Lebanese border. Secondly, as a state seeking to establish hegemony over Lebanon and PLO, the civil war was an unobtainable opportunity. Acquirements of the anti-status-quo coalition which was composed by leftist, Muslim and Palestinian elements could increase Syria's effect over the Lebanon and PLO.¹¹³

The Maronites who faced with defeat returned to its past habits and searched for a foreign protector. The president Franjeh, with his special relationships with Syria, provided the propulsion through which the Maronites found Syria as the savior. Syria finally intervened against Palestinians and their allies on 1 June 1976 and ended the first phase of the Lebanese civil war. But Hafiz Assad faced with difficulties to explain how an Arab nationalist party could fight on the side of status-quo pro-Western militias against the Lebanese Muslims and Palestinians. The Syrian presence in Lebanon also challenged the sovereignty of the country. Although there was a battle between Christian and Muslims over political and economic power, they were totally devoted to independent Lebanon.¹¹⁴

Syria's efforts were approved officially by an Arab Summit held in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, in October 1976. One of the resolutions of this summit was the foundation of the Arab Deterrent Force (ADF) to bring security to Lebanon. Under the control of Lebanon's president, the ADF was composed primarily by Syria troops and military action was controlled by Syria. Consequently, an Arab consensus came to recognize Syria's position in Lebanon with the creation of that military force.¹¹⁵

¹¹³ Itamar Rabinovich, "The Limits of Military Power: Syria's Role", In *Lebanon in Crisis* ed. P. Edward Haley & Lewis W. Sinder, New York: Syracuse University Press, pp. 55-57.

¹¹⁴ Sandra Mackey, "Lebanon: Death of a Nation", New York: Congdon & Weed, 1989, pp. 166-168.

¹¹⁵ Kail C. Ellis, "The Regional Struggle for Lebanon", p. 32.

Although the civil war was over in October 1976, the conflict continued by changing both form and direction. Syrian presence in Lebanon played an important role in those changes. The first was the Syrian reevaluation of its ties with the status-quo powers. In 1978 Syria broke its ties with the coalition and began to support the Palestinians and reformist camps. This shift could be explained by the fact that the coalition had allied itself to Israel at the expense of the Syrian connection. From that time status-quo forces maintained their policy to the eviction of the Palestinians from Lebanon and challenging the Syrian army in the area they controlled. In this way, Syria was transformed into an active participant position from a mediator.¹¹⁶

Israel was concerned with the developments in Lebanon and saw the war as an opportunity to weaken the Palestinian resistance. For that end, Israel provided military and political support for the Lebanese Forces and armed the militia of Saad Haddad which was formed to protect Christian villages from Palestinian guerillas. Israel also formed military groups from Maronite militias, trained and used them in the battle against Palestinians. Israel also focused on to control Syrian presence in Lebanon. It prevented Syria from exerting its mediatory position by explaining it “Red Line” at a midway between Sidon and Tyre on the coast to the Syrian border. This area was controlled by the Palestinian-leftist coalition and this was appropriate for Israel who preferred their presence instead of Syrian troops on its northern borders.¹¹⁷

The 1978 Israeli invasion of South Lebanon in response to a Palestinian commando attack on a bus in Tel Aviv was another turning point in the conflict. The immediate effect of this invasion was the sharpening of Lebanese communal polarization. The Maronite and Muslim positions became distant over the Palestinian and Syrian presence in the country. The Maronites sought to liberate country from both the Syrians and the Palestinians. Muslims dropped its opposition to Syrian presence in Lebanon and made closer ties with that country’s position. Moreover, Franjeh, who was succeeded by Elias Sarkis in May 1976 election, left from the Lebanese Front and joined the Reformists. A new alliance was formed in line with the political

¹¹⁶ Latif Abu-l Husn, “The Lebanese Conflict”, p. 67.

¹¹⁷ Kail C. Ellis, “The Regional Struggle for Lebanon”, p. 33.

interests rather than sectarian issues. This strengthened the newly formed Syrian-PLO strategic alliance which was opposed to President Sadat's peace plan with Israel.¹¹⁸

Israel's second invasion of Lebanon opened another phase in the war. The polarization of the domestic conflict reached its peak. On 6 June 1982, Israeli forces invaded Lebanon from the south and southeast and moved towards the capital. Contrary to the Israeli invasion in March 1978, the large-scale military operation in summer 1982 had far-reaching results. First, it resulted in the ousting of the PLO forces from Beirut in September 1982, and from Tripoli by Syrian troops in December 1983. Second, it led to the first direct military confrontation between the Syrian and Israeli armies since the 1973 Arab-Israeli war, ending with the loss of much of Syria's air force in the span of a few days. Third, it radically broke down the military and political balance in post-1976 Lebanon. This in turn facilitated the election of Syria's principal enemy in Lebanon to the presidency, Bashir Gemayel, and subsequently to the election of his brother Amin, following Bashir's assassination a few days after his election. Fourth, it led, for the first time since war began in 1975, to a direct involvement of the major powers in the conflict. The United States was obliged to carry out a new policy to deal with this unprecedented turn of events in Lebanon. Similarly, the Soviet Union stepped up its support to Syria to counter American influence. Finally, multinational forces were dispatched to Beirut to help the Lebanese government restore order and to bring peace to the country. A few years earlier, in March 1978, a United Nations force (UNIFIL) was stationed in south Lebanon in the buffer zone between Israel and the PLO in accordance with United Nations Resolution 425.¹¹⁹

Israel's 1982 invasion completed the withdrawal of the PLO from Beirut, but also created a new resistance movement against itself. Shiite population in southern Lebanon motivated by religious enthusiasm and the desire to liberate from their

¹¹⁸ Latif Abul-Husn, "The Lebanese Conflict", pp. 67-68.

¹¹⁹ Farid El Khazen, "Ending Conflict in Wartime Lebanon: Reform, Sovereignty and Power, 1976-1988", *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol.40, No.1, January 2004, p. 68.

homeland from occupation, resisted to Israel. The result was the emergence of Hezbollah which had a vast support from Iran and Syria. For Syria, commitment to Iran was necessary for challenging with Israel. Also, Syria strengthened its position in the Beqaa, supported Lebanese opposition group with providing arms, and tried to weaken the Lebanese Forces and Lebanese army who supported Amin Gemayel. Syria's overall strategy was to leave Lebanon weak and to prevent it from getting foreign support from USA or Israel. For that end, by 1987, Syria had gained control over the Palestinian camps, reunited the Amal and Hezbollah Shiite factions, and became the dominant power in the Lebanese territory with its 35,000 troops.¹²⁰

The end of President Amin Gemayel's term brought another challenge for Syria. In the last hours of his presidency, he appointed General Michael Aoun as interim prime minister and created a constitutional crisis by appointing a Maronite to this post. The existing government of Sunni Prime Minister Salim al-Hoss had not been dismissed. Reformist groups declared this step as illegal and they refused to recognize the government of Maronite Michael Aoun or to submit to its authority. For the next two years, there were two governments but no president. While Salim al-Hoss had a broad support from Syria and Arab countries the rival military government could not expand its power beyond the Maronites who live in east Beirut and the Kisrewan region. The existence of two rival governments resulted in escalating tension and violence. Aoun had to struggle with both Maronite militias and reformist camp militias supported by Syrian troops in west Beirut. He shifted his attention from Lebanese forces to the Syrians. He demanded their total destruction and complete withdrawal from the country. He failed to reach his goals because the political situation changed when the Taif Agreement was concluded in 1989.

5.3 Conflict Resolution Efforts During the Civil War

During the civil war there were several mediation efforts. The status quo powers sought support from the West, while the reformist camp demanded mediation from line with the League of Arab States. In fact, there was no solution except for the Lebanese rival parties could settle. The most significant attempts for conflict

¹²⁰ Elizabeth Picard, "Lebanon: A Shattered Country", New York and London: Holmes and Meier, 1996, p. 134.

resolution were: The Constitutional Document of February 1976, 14 Points National Entente Program of March 1980, the National Dialogue Conference in Geneva and Lausanne of October 1983 and April 1984, the Tripartite Agreement of December 1985, and the Taif Agreement of October 1989.

5.3.1 Constitutional Document

Initiated by Syria with American support, the Constitutional Document did not include any program for radical reform. Rather, it was a deal whereby the Christians would accept closer relations with Syria in exchange for the promise of a reduced Palestinian influence in Lebanon. Aiming at more equality between the Christian and Muslims, the number of parliamentary seats was to be expanded from ninety nine to one hundred and ten, with the newly created seats divided between Christians and Muslims. Proportionality in government jobs was to be abolished except at the highest level, and the prime minister was to be elected by a simple majority of parliamentarians, not appointed, a charge that would strengthened his position vis-à-vis the president. The three executive powers were confirmed and the Arab identity of Lebanon was acknowledged.¹²¹

The rival factions responded to the document with little support because it was not more than the confirmation of National Pact. The Document did not propose any reforms for radical groups. Syria was not in a position to control the PLO in Lebanon and could not affect all the parties to accept this. It did not show any credible mechanism for enforcing its provisions and instead view the authority of president, the institutions of the state and the support of traditional elite sufficient. The document was not approved by Lebanon National Movement as well as by more radical reformers like Kamal Jumblat, who still believed that a military settlement was possible.¹²²

¹²¹ Michael Kerr, "Imposing Power-Sharing: Conflict and Coexistence in Northern Ireland and Lebanon", Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2005, p. 147.

¹²² Hani A. Faris, "The Failure of Peacemaking in Lebanon", p.23

5.3.2 National Entente Program

Until March 1980 there was no proposal to end the war. In that month, the President Elias Sarkis became the president, and he announced his 14 Points National Entente Program for the resolution of conflict. Between the 1976 and 1980 the face of the conflict had changed its direction because of the active involvement of foreign forces. The settlement of the Palestinian refugees and the country's sovereignty were significant issues for the status-quo coalition and these issues were addressed in National Entente program as well as issues of national identity and political reform.

The National Entente Program confirmed the sovereignty and unity of Lebanon and rejected the permanent settlement of the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. The program also affirmed Lebanon's Arab identity and acknowledged the special relationship between Lebanon and Syria. Although both parties accepted the program, the Maronites continued to have some reservations and the program failed to start the negotiation process.¹²³

5.3.3 National Dialogue Conference

With the help of several members of the League of Arab States, a National Dialogue Conference was organized to find a solution to the conflict. Representatives of both camps participated in the two-staged conference, first in Geneva in October 1983 and the second Lausanne in April 1984. The president of Amin Gemayel, who succeeded Elias Sarkis in September 1982, chaired the conference. He pointed out the main problems which were to save Lebanon and its people unified, its sovereignty recovered, and to keep the ties between Lebanon and the Arab world.

The signing of the Lebanese-Israeli May 17th agreement stalemated the Geneva Conference. The agreement provided for a staged withdrawal of Israeli forces, on the condition of the establishment of a Lebanese Army "security zone" in South Lebanon along the border area. The agreement had the support of the USA but it met strong opposition from Lebanese Muslims and in the Arab world. The conclusion of

¹²³ Latif Abu-l Husn, "Lebanese Conflict", pp. 104-105.

separate peace with Israel was unacceptable in the Arab world. Syria's opposition to the agreement was vocal, and by refusing to move its troops from Lebanese soil, Damascus effectively sabotaged its implementation, since Israeli withdrawal was contingent on Syria doing the same. As a result, the Muslim participants insisted on the abolition of agreement and on forcing Israel's withdrawal before attending to Lebanon's internal issues. The only outcome of the conference was the definition of Lebanon's identity as an independent and sovereign Arab state.¹²⁴

During the Lausanne conference, members of the Lebanese Front proposed the foundation of a federal system including confessionally homogenous units. Muslim participants represented a settlement plan that suggested elimination of political sectarianism, administrative decentralization, limiting the powers of president and expanding the powers of the council of ministers.¹²⁵ The Lausanne phase of the conference led to a trend of mutual understanding between two warring factions and gave an opportunity to articulate their positions. Although the conference ended without adapting an agreement, common ground between the various actors had expanded.

5.3.4 Tripartite Agreement

Although it was not ultimately the agreement that ended the conflict, the Tripartite Agreement of 1985, was indicative of Syria's influence among the Lebanese militias. It showed the importance of Syrian cooperation and the inclusion of militia leaders in Ta'if. This agreement was made between the leaders of the three strongest Lebanese militias, Elie Hobeika of Lebanese Forces, Walid Jumblat of the PSP, and Nabih Berri of Amal and completely excluded the Sunnis, who had no Lebanese militia to speak of and considered themselves represented by the PLO. The agreement was different from former peace plans, especially in its call for the abolition of the sectarian system and for the definition of a special relationship with Syria. Following a transitional period the sectarian system of representation would be abolished in the legislative, executive, and judiciary branches. Even the three highest offices would

¹²⁴ Hani A. Faris, "The Failure of Peacemaking in Lebanon", p.23.

¹²⁵ Ibid, p. 25.

no longer be distributed on a sectarian basis. This agreement offered more serious steps towards de-confessionalization, and emphasized the special relationship with Syria, a feature that would re-surface at Ta'if.¹²⁶

It is not surprising that the agreement could not be applied, as it completely excluded the Lebanese government and a significant portion of its population. However, it did pave the way for the Ta'if accords in so far as it established some points of agreement under the close direction of Syria. By this time it had become clear that no settlement would be possible without Syrian support, and that Syria would not support any agreement that emphasized Lebanese sovereignty.

5.4 The Taif Agreement and Its Evaluation

The Document of National Understanding concluded in al-Taif, Saudi Arabia on 22 October 1989 signified an important turning point in the history of Lebanon. The Taif Agreement ended Lebanon's fifteen year war by establishing the internal conditions for peace and it also included important regional and international players as Syria, Israel and United Nations. The agreement contained key principles that formed the foundations on which the Lebanese state was built. Its underlying principle was a re-affirmation of the consociational system that was first established in the 1943 National Pact.¹²⁷

The first section, "General Principles", confirms the sovereignty and independence of Lebanon, the sovereignty of the Lebanese people, and state's commitment to economic and social justice and reform. One of the greatest outcomes of Taif is that it does not provide a practical process leading to the restoration of Lebanese sovereignty. Another important theme in Taif is the explicit recognition of confessionalism as the regulating principle of political organization. The Agreement claims that any arrangement that opposed to the coexistence or desire to live together is illegal. Taif, therefore, determines the nature of Lebanese society as a society of

¹²⁶ Hassan Krayem, "The Lebanese Civil War and the Taif Agreement", pp. 417.

¹²⁷ Theodor Hanf, "Coexistence in Wartime Lebanon", p. 584.

communities united by their desire to live together¹²⁸ The question of Lebanon's identity was answered definitively in the first section of the agreement which defines Lebanon as having an "Arab face" and as being the final homeland of its citizens. Furthermore, provisions for a more inclusive political economy were made as Taif asserted that the basic social security needs of all Lebanese should be taken into account in the face of a sometimes harsh capitalist system. The fact that Taif refers to 'personal initiative' and 'private property' highlights the new importance attributed to stable economic growth.

The second section, "Political Reforms", outlines the powers and duties of the various government institutions, notably the president, the prime minister, the cabinet, the speaker of parliament, and parliament as well as the electoral institutions. The agreement called for equality of seats for the Christian and Muslim communities in the parliament, transfer of executive powers to the council of ministers, increase the number of deputies from 99 to 108. It is also in this section that the "abolition of political sectarianism" is described as a "fundamental national objective". The principle of a state based on the sectarian communities as appeared in 1926 Lebanese Constitution, Article 95 and in National Pact. Taif Accord proposes certain steps for abolishing Lebanon's sectarianism. For example, the accord's text eliminates sectarian criteria for appointment of public servants and also all mention of religion on identity cards.¹²⁹

The third section, on other reforms, covers a variety of domestic concerns including administrative decentralism, courts and education. This section also addresses the spread of Lebanese sovereignty over all Lebanese territories. It is in this section that the armed forces and the Israeli and Syrian occupations are addressed. This section also calls for the disbanding of all militias, Lebanese and foreign.

The accord puts forth two key measures with respect to relations with Syria. Firstly, it is stated that two years after the adoption of constitutional reforms the Syrians

¹²⁸ Joseph Maila, "The Document of National Understanding: A Commentary", Oxford: Center for Lebanese Studies, 1992, p. 17.

¹²⁹ "The Taif Agreement", (October 22, 1989), <http://www.mideastinfo.com/documents/taif.htm> [last accessed on 8 January 2009]

should redeploy to the Beqaa Valley. International guarantees to supervise this redeployment and the eventually restoration of Lebanese sovereignty were not written in the agreement and subsequently abandoned. The procedure for the withdrawal of Syrian troops was not specified. Secondly, the accord sets forth the establishment of privileged relations with Syria and Lebanon and Syria are expected to broaden the area of cooperation including the security measures.¹³⁰

Lastly, with respect to relations with Israel, the accord demands the Israeli withdrawal and calls for the enforcement of UN Security Council resolutions concerning the Israeli presence in Lebanon, especially resolution 425. Furthermore, Taif commits the Lebanese and their sponsors to “Taking all the steps necessary to liberate all Lebanese territories from the Israeli occupation...and making efforts to reinforce the presence of the UN forces in South Lebanon to insure the Israeli withdrawal and to provide the opportunity for the return of security and stability to the border area.”¹³¹

The Taif Agreement was a conflict resolution that sought to find solution to Lebanon’s internal and external problems. Internal question of reform and the status of foreign forces in Lebanon are dealt with under the same resolution package. This proved that the conflict was not based internal factors but also it was affected by the foreign powers. By establishing an Arab mechanism, the Tripartite Arab High Commission, the accord provided Arab guarantee, to the factions hostile to Syria, which their country would not be left alone to negotiate one by one with Damascus.

By confirming that Lebanon is a country of different sects that demand to live together, the agreement aimed at encouraging cooperation and intercommunal understanding on the institutional level. It also paved the way for abolishing sectarianism that would continue to be a dream in the 21st century. If confessionalism

¹³⁰ Joseph Maila, “The Taif Accord: An Evaluation”, In *Peace for Lebanon: From War to Reconstruction*, ed. Deirdre Collings, Boulder : Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1994, p. 36.

¹³¹ “The Taif Agreement”, (October 22, 1989), <http://www.mideastinfo.com/documents/taif.htm> [last accessed on 8 January 2009]

was abolished, political system would engage to form a secular state. But instead the post-Taif political system remained as the pre-Taif system with an escalated tension among sectarian communities.

With respect to the presence and status of two foreign forces, the accord posed a big contradiction. While the document called out UN to pressure the Israeli withdrawal, there was no mention anywhere in the text of a Syrian withdrawal. Instead of that, Lebanon was expected to form close ties with Syria. The Syrian interpretation of Ta'if undermined the premise of the entire document, as power-sharing between representatives of different Lebanese communities was replaced by a system of power-sharing among Lebanese representatives of Syrian interests.

Two developments, one local and one regional, had decisive roles in weakening resistance to this emerging status quo and made it possible for Syria to impose its interpretation of Ta'if on Lebanon. First, internal division among the Lebanese Maronites rendered their position in opposition of a Syrian implementation of the Accord useless. The Christians would pay for this opposition in their significantly diminished role in government under Syrian hegemony. Second, the outbreak of the Gulf war in 1991 gave Syrian enhanced importance as a key strategic ally of the west against Iraq, putting it in a position to assert itself in Lebanon. Further legalization of Syrian infringements on Lebanese sovereignty was quick to follow. The "Treaty of Brotherhood, Cooperation and Coordination" between Lebanon and Syria, signed on 22 May 1991, deepened and strengthened Syrian influence in the country. The treaty of Brotherhood, Cooperation and Coordination formalized Syria's role in post-Taif. It stipulated that the two states agreed to work for the highest possible level of coordination in all matters of political, economic, security and cultural policy and established a joint institutional framework to achieve that end.

5.5 The Consequences of the Civil War Period

The Lebanese civil war continued to destruct Lebanon for fifteen years, causing intra-sectarian conflicts and confronting communal groups one against another. The Taif Agreement that ended the violence, in fact, was a return to consociational

democracy model, distributed public offices among Lebanon's communal groups according to their size in the population. This proved that the fifteen years of civil war could not change the political nature of consociationalism, which brought Lebanese together and also led to destruction of them.

As manufactured by external powers, Taif Agreement deepened the confessional tradition in Lebanese politics. The confessional system of governance might have been necessary in the state formation process. The civil war showed that this formula deepened confessional divisions and provided the intervention of foreign forces as Syria, Israel, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and the US. The consociational democracy, therefore, converted minority rights into minority privileges, and hardened the lines of cleavage among the communities.

During the 1975-1990 war, the lack of internal consensus on Lebanon's mission in the Arab world, such as the degree of involvement in the Palestinian crisis, left the country indecision between regional and internal tendencies. The Arab-Israeli conflict was not Lebanon's war, but it could become an element of it. Moreover, this external conflict could deepen the divisions between Christians and Muslims. Also, it could culminate in foundation of militias like Hezbollah, which will make impacts on country's politics.

The civil war and its resolution also brought Syrian tutelage in all aspects of Lebanese life. Syria became a part of the Lebanese civil war for two reasons: saving defense line with Israel and exerting hegemony over Lebanon and PLO. Syria did not remain in order to reach these goals; it also opened a phase of direct control over Lebanon's all political life. The withdrawal of its forces was not stressed on in the Taif Agreement; however there were UN Resolutions about the Israeli withdrawal. Instead, special relations of Syria and Lebanon were emphasized in the agreement and these special ties led the Syrian hegemony. Placing its own candidates in the government posts, manipulating electoral processes, and supporting Hezbollah in terms of military assistance, Syria used the fragile political environment of Lebanon for its own interest. This process would continue until the Lebanese population's awakening with the assassination of Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri.

Israel viewed Lebanon as a battle ground in its war with Palestinians. During the civil war, Israel did not hesitate to invade Lebanon by using Palestinians as an excuse. In fact, Israel created its own enemy in the Lebanese territory by unreasonable raids. The foundation aim of Hezbollah was the destruction of Israel and the conflict of these two actors did not stop even Israel withdrew from Lebanon unilaterally in 2000.

To sum up, both the civil war and the conflict resolution reinforced the political and military intervention of foreign actors in Lebanon. Although it has been tried for many times, the consociational system again was seen as the panacea for internal struggle. On the contrary, confessionalism showed its inexpediency in post-Taif Lebanon, with power-sharing disputes, wars, assassinations and political crisis.

6. POST-TAIF SYSTEM AND POLITICAL STALEMATE

6.1. Power-sharing in Post-Taif System

As a result of Taif Accords, the confessional system was rebalanced by giving greater powers to the cabinet at the expense of the Maronite Christian presidency. Most notably, the power to appoint the prime minister was transferred from the presidency to the legislature, and the ministries and seats in the national assembly were divided equally between Christians and Muslims. The accords also called for the disbandment of all militias within six months of the formation of a new government.

The Taif Agreement got over many of the imbalances that were inherent in the constitution. Further, the agreement ended the Maronite political dominance by reducing the power of the Maronite president as well as increased the number of deputies in the parliament and introduced an equal parity in parliamentary representation between Christian and Muslims (50:50). While the position of prime minister was strengthened, the role of the speaker of the parliament was consolidated through extending his term from two to four years.¹³²

Opposition to these changes came from the Maronite Christian former commander in chief of the Lebanese army, Michel Aoun, who had retained the loyalty of sections of the military and who had been fighting Syrian forces since early 1989.¹³³ Aoun rejected the accord, ordered the parliament dissolved, and refused to relinquish his political and military positions. The armed resistance to the agreement ended on 13 October 1990, when Syrian forces intervened at the request of President Hrawi. Although Aoun had delayed the implementation of the agreement, he had not been able to stop it. He was eventually forced into exile in France as part of a deal between the US and Syria, which emphasized on Washington's agreement to back

¹³² David McDowall,, "Lebanon: A Conflict of Minorities", pp.11.

¹³³ Kail C. Ellis, "The Regional Struggle for Lebanon", p. 37-38

Syria's involvement in Lebanon in return for support from Damascus for the multi-national coalition against the Iraqi regime of Saddam Hussein.¹³⁴

After the Taif Agreement, internal relations changed dramatically with respect to Maronite position. The Maronites were significantly disaffected by Taif's diminution of their former hegemony and they were even more disturbed by Syria's post-Taif position in the country. This position led them to bear the burden of their collaboration with Israelis; and give the popular attitude toward the Israelis.¹³⁵

The Shiites found themselves united against Israel but were ambivalent about post-Taif Lebanon. In particular, the Shiites, seen as the clear winners, gained a share of power that was more proportionate to their demographic strength for the first time. Although the Shiite speaker of the parliament now enjoys a longer term with more influence and Shiite officers are prominent, the more militant Shiites still wonder if the civil war led to an improvement in their weak position. In general, the Muslim community as a whole benefited from Taif at the expense of the Christians; especially the Sunnis vis-a-vis the Maronites. Although the agreement ended sectarian violence in Lebanon, it failed to ensure the country's independence and also disrupted the internal equilibrium among communities.¹³⁶

The Sunni Muslims were satisfied with Taif and the position of their community. They have emerged as the principal sectarian winner in the agreement: their Leader, the Prime Minister, has the leading position in the troika with the President and the Speaker of Parliament. The Druze cannot be happy with the new arrangements. They are not represented in the higher positions politically and they do not have positions in military.¹³⁷

¹³⁴ Piere M. Atlas&Roy Licklider, "Conflict Among Former Allies: Sudan, Zimbabwe, Chad, and Lebanon", *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 36, No. 1, 1999, pp. 47-48.

¹³⁵ Simon Haddad, "The Relevance of Political Trust in Postwar Lebanon", *Citizenship Studies*, Vol. 6, No. 2, 2002, p. 203.

¹³⁶ Michael Hudson, "Trying Again: Power-Sharing in Post-Civil War Lebanon", *International Negotiation*, Vol.2, No.1, 1997, p.118.

¹³⁷ Michael Hudson, "Lebanon after Ta'if: Another Reform Opportunity Lost?", *Arab Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 21, 1999, p. 27.

Although a certain sectarian balance has been restored, the coalition governments, which Syria's influence overshadowed, have generated other problems. First, executive and legislative power in post-Taif Lebanon is based on the troika. But the distrust among these leaders, and their commitment to clientelistic concerns over public policy led to ineffective governmental performance. Second, by manipulating the media and marginalizing the opposition through elections, the government generated dissatisfaction in public. Third, there has not been any development of the institutions of civil society since the end of civil war. There has been no party system and no individual parties with national constituency. Fifth, there has been a growing problem related to economic inequality. Problems of poverty, homelessness, and unemployment have challenged governments. There is a risk of economic crisis which would lead to sectarian political conflicts.¹³⁸

Post-war elections are usually regarded as a turning point in restarting democratic process after civil war and in multi-religious states elections tend to strengthen consociational system. In order to break the old clientelist political system and forge multi-confessional alliances, Taif Agreement stipulated that voting should be based on large administrative units.¹³⁹ In spite of that regulation, the post-war parliamentary elections have all violated the Taif Agreement. Firstly, in each election, a new electoral law was used. Secondly, the new large governorates, which should constitute the constituencies or the one large national constituency as proposed in the Ta'if Accord, have not yet been implemented and the voting is still done along the small district lines. This can make voting according to religious affiliation easier, as the election campaigns focuses on the local issues instead of the national ones. This can also make it more difficult to gain central state authority. Thirdly, the confessional system was not abolished as suggested in the agreement.

As a result, failing to reform the political system proved that there were no changes in the composition of parliaments in the post-war period and most prime ministers inherited their seats along family lines. The political system did not change because

¹³⁸ Michael C. Hudson, "Trying Again: Power-Sharing in Post-Civil War Lebanon", pp.119-120.

¹³⁹ "The Taif Agreement", (October 22, 1989), <http://www.mideastinfo.com/documents/taif.htm> [last accessed on 8 January 2009]

of Syrian tutelage over the post-war elections. Syria manipulated the electoral law to ensure the election of candidates favored by itself. For each electoral district, the different sects were allotted candidates in proportion to their share of the electorate. Voters were therefore voting for a multi-confessional list of candidates that was assembled after Syrian consultation.¹⁴⁰

In addition to this manipulation, vote rigging, voter intimidation, and buying of votes led to low participation in post-Taif elections. Particularly, in the 1992 elections Christian leaders and parties boycotted the elections because of the presence of Syrian troops. The elections of August to September 1996 took on particular significance. Voting participation rose to forty-four percent, still well below the 1972 level, the last election before the war. The 1996 election brought in the Rafiq al-Hariri, further entrenching the Syrian-dominated system, and continued marginalization of Maronites and traditional elites. In preparation for the 2005 parliamentary elections, there was a need for a new electoral law but international pressure to conduct the elections on time and the disagreements between the major actors made this impossible. As a result, the voter turnout was very low, in reality a new version of the Christian boycott of 1992 elections. Especially in the South, the joint Amal and Hezbollah list gained most of the votes of the opposition.¹⁴¹

In Lebanon, the political system was based on political leaders rather than political parties. Political parties in Lebanon had no ideology, and they made little effort at transcending sectarian support. Most parties are organizational bodies of powerful politicians and they are simply lists of candidates endorsed by a prominent national or local figure. Loose coalitions are formed for electoral purposes by negotiations among clan leaders.

During the civil war most of the parties were militarized and turned into militias. During the post-war period, the political success of the parties depended on their relations with Syria. In that period, while the Christian parties weakened, the main

¹⁴⁰ Are Knudsen, "Precarious Peacebuilding: Post-war Lebanon, 1990-2005", Working Papers from: Chr. Michelsen Institute, Bergen, 2005, pp. 7-8.

¹⁴¹ Ibid, p.9.

sectarian Muslim parties gained power under Syrian tutelage and they were represented in all post-war parliaments. Particularly, Hezbollah's transition from militant movement to political part realized in the 1990s.¹⁴² Hezbollah contested parliamentary and municipal elections successfully, but disarmament of the organization following UN Security Council Resolution of 1559 continued to be a problem.

In conclusion, the Taif Agreement did not lead to fundamental political reform and confessional political system remained unchanged. Due to the importance coalitions in the form of electoral lists, political parties have served for personal ambition and sectarian interests. The Lebanese post-war elections were neither free nor transparent but characterized with extensive pre-election manipulation, vote rigging and Syrian interference. In post-war period, Lebanese politics have revolved around politicians rather than parties and tend to favor sectarian groups rather than to reach national goals.

6.2 Syrian Influence over Lebanon in Post-Taif Period

Syria has always focused on “distinct relations” to legitimize its interference in Lebanon's domestic and foreign politics. The Syrian role in the Taif Agreement strengthened its tutelage on post-war period. According to that Agreement, the Syrian forces were to be redeployed to the Bekaa Valley within two years after the agreement was implemented. Contrary to that emphasis in the agreement, there were 14000 Syrian troops in Lebanon at the time of Hariri's assassination.¹⁴³

Lebanon's domestic and foreign policies have also made in Syria as a result of two countries' common destiny. Treaty of Brotherhood, Cooperation and Coordination and the Defense and Security Pact, which were signed in the early 1990s,

¹⁴² Daniela Pioppi, Nathalie Tocci, and Karam Karam, “Domestic Politics and Conflict in the Cases of Israel, Palestine and Lebanon”, <http://www.euromesco.net/images/domestic%20politics.pdf>, [last accessed on 30 May 2009], p. 23.

¹⁴³ Are Knudsen, ”Precarious Peacebuilding”, p. 11.

institutionalized the relationship between two countries.¹⁴⁴ Given the power disparity between two states, these treaties entailed the institutionalization of Syrian hegemony over Lebanon, especially in the foreign policy and security fields, and ensured Syria's domination over Lebanon's military establishment and intelligence apparatus.

Syria had many reasons to intervene in Lebanese politics as reviving the former "Greater Syria", national concerns meant to preserve Syrian unity, to narrow regime interests pursued with little concern for the damage to Lebanese civilian institutions. A fourth reason was the importance of Lebanon to Syria's ailing economy: Lebanon provided Syria with a window into the free-market worldview. Moreover, bilateral agreements regulating the trade between two countries favored Syrian exports when this harmed Lebanon's domestic economy and its citizens.¹⁴⁵

The planned redeployment of Syrian forces away from Beirut to the east of the country was much delayed; prompting renewed Israeli warnings that the country had effectively become a Syrian protectorate. While strengthening the confessional system in Lebanon, Taif Agreement institutionalized Syria's hegemony over Lebanon progressively. Most agree that Syria has played a major role in Lebanese politics in the post-war period, but it has mainly been done through the Syrian intelligence units. It is however interesting that the political parties in Lebanon in the post-war period have prospered according to whether they were pro-Syrian or not. The Syrian intelligence has been suspected of manipulating the electoral law to secure pro-Syrian candidates. The Parliaments elected in 1992, 1996 and 2000 were all made up of pro-Syrian majorities.¹⁴⁶

Furthermore, Syria has cultivated an impressive group of political dependants. The "presidential troika" was formed in the interests of Syrian regime, Lebanese elites,

¹⁴⁴ Noura Hamladji, "Do Political Dynamics Travel?: Political Liberalization in the Arab World", EUI Working Paper SPS No. 2002/ 11, <http://cadmus.eui.eu/dspace/bitstream/1814/331/1/sps200211.pdf>, [last accessed on 8th June 2009], p. 12.

¹⁴⁵ Asad Abukhail, "Determinants and Characteristics of Syrian Policy in Lebanon", In *Peace for Lebanon? From War to Reconstruction*, ed. D. Collings. Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1994, p. 128.

¹⁴⁶ Oussama Safa, "Lebanon Springs Forward", *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 17, No. 1, January 2006, p. 27.

and Syrian allies who came to power between 1990 and 2005. In addition, several ministers, and numerous members of parliament also reached their positions through Syrian influence. Political decisions made with first consulting Damascus. Lebanese politicians, including all three members of the troika, regularly traveled to Damascus to hear Syria's opinion before proceeding with a policy. Disputes between members of the troika were settled by Syria.¹⁴⁷

From 1990 until 2005, Syria both became the dominant domestic actor in Lebanon and the main external party controlling the transition from war to peace. Control over Lebanon served the Syria in the Arab-Israeli negotiations launched in the October 1991 Madrid peace conference and sustained Syria's role as a major regional power. Control over Lebanon meant that there could be no comprehensive peace settlement in Middle East without Syria's participation.¹⁴⁸

After 1993, Syria supported Hezbollah increasingly and declined to restrain the movement attacks on Israeli troops. Syria's main objective by using Hezbollah as a strategic instrument was to enable itself to strike at Israel without direct confrontation. Syria provided Hezbollah with weapons and logistic support, piped up the rival voices against the movement, and allowed it a heaven in Lebanon. With its ties to Hezbollah, Syria tried to indicate that Israel could not end that conflict without accommodating Damascus. Although Hezbollah exercised independent attacks, Syria participated in negotiation process with Israel after these attacks. For instance, in 1996 when Israel launched Operation Grapes of Wrath against Lebanon, Hafez al-Assad negotiated on behalf of Lebanon.¹⁴⁹

The cohesiveness of two countries showed itself when Israel withdrew from Lebanon in May 2000. The withdrawal threatened the Syria's position in Lebanon and Syria found another resolved problem to keep its dominance in foreign politics of

¹⁴⁷ Tom Najem, "The Collapse and Reconstruction of Lebanon", *Durham Middle East Paper* 59, July 1998, pp. 24-25.

¹⁴⁸ Bassel Salloukh, "Syria and Lebanon: Abrotherhood Tansformed", *Middle East Report* 236, Fall 2005, pp. 18-19

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid*, p. 19.

Lebanon: Israeli occupation of Shebaa Farms. This thin strip of land, which was captured by Israel during the 1967 conflict with Syria, led the dispute over border demarcation between Lebanon and Israel. The Syrian and Lebanese governments claimed Shebaa was Lebanese territory and pointed out that Hezbollah military activity in that sector constituted legitimate resistance to the Israeli occupation. Israel considered this land as a part of Golan Heights and its occupation meant that Israel did not comply with UN Resolution 425, which called on Israel to withdraw immediately its forces from Lebanon. The UN concluded that the question of Shebaa should be addressed in the future as a bilateral issue between Syria and Lebanon after the Golan Heights had been returned from Israel to Syrian control as a part of broader peace agreement.¹⁵⁰

Syrian influence over Lebanon was started to question with the assassination of Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri. Hariri had dominated the political arena of Lebanon since his first assumption of office in 1992. As the primary domestic political force, he used his huge influence over the Lebanese economy, and his connections with Saudi Arabia, France and the USA to establish an impressive political base. Syria saw him as an independent leader who they could not control as they controlled most other Lebanese politicians. For that reason, his power was curtailed by Syria through the other two members of troika, and several cabinet ministers. Syria and its political dependants were determinant in key issues related to foreign policy, security concerns, and many domestic political decisions.¹⁵¹

In 1998, the Syrians supported the army commander, General Emile Lahoud to assume the presidency. This was the beginning of the six years of political confrontation and deadlock between president and Prime Minister that slowed down government decision-making as well as the economic recovery. The event that led to political upheaval in Lebanon was the Syrian decision in August 2004. When President Lahoud's term came to an end, Syria persuaded the Lebanese parliament to amend the constitution and extend the President's term for another three years. The

¹⁵⁰ Tim Youngs and Claire Taylor, "The Crisis in Lebanon", <http://www.parliament.uk/commons/lib/research/rp2007/rp07-008.pdf>, p.17, [last accessed on 31 May 2009].

¹⁵¹ Tom Najem, "The Collapse and Reconstruction of Lebanon", p. 28.

Syrians even forced Hariri to submit the amendment in the cabinet and vote for it in the parliament.¹⁵²

The extension of Lahoud's term led the international opposition, headed by France and US, to Syrian domination in Lebanon. France was boycotting the president and hoping he would step down before the end of his mandate in conformity with the terms of Resolution 1559, which called for an immediate and total withdrawal of Syrian forces from Lebanon, disarmament of Hezbollah, and the return of full sovereignty to the country.¹⁵³ This resolution surfaced the confrontation between Syria and the West. Syria accused Hariri of being behind the Resolution and forced Syrian allies in Lebanon to denounce it as interference in the relations between Lebanon and Syria. The adoption of Resolution also divided Lebanon's communities and political elites into two camps: the loyalists and the opposition. As the loyalists supported the re-election of the president and wanted to maintain Syrian control in the country, the opposition camp rejected the anti-constitutional initiative and opposed to Syrian tutelage. Contrary to the loyalist camp that refused the interference of the Western powers, the opposition considered the involvement of international community as a chance that could recover Lebanon's political independence. The polarization of political parts pointed out that the post-war Lebanese politics had only been apparently stable.¹⁵⁴

On 14 February 2005, Hariri was assassinated in Beirut and his assassination deepened the turmoil in the country. After his assassination, the hundreds of thousands of Lebanese took to the streets and called for the setting up an international commission of inquiry into the assassination of Rafiq Hariri, the withdrawal of the Syrian army from Lebanon, and the setting of dates for the parliamentary elections. By the end of June, all these demands had been met. On 7

¹⁵² Paul Salem, "Lebanon At the Crossroads", p. 2.

¹⁵³ Daniela Pioppi, Nathalie Tocci, and Karam Karam, "Domestic Politics and Conflict in the Cases of Israel, Palestine and Lebanon", p. 25.

¹⁵⁴ Tamirace Fakhoury-Mühlbacher, "The July War and Its Effects on Lebanon's Power-Sharing: The Challenge of Pacifying a Divided Society", *EUI Working Paper*, <http://www.peacestudiesjournal.org.uk/docs/Lebanon%20power-sharing%20FINAL%20EDIT.pdf>, [last accessed on 30 May 2009], p. 6.

April 2005, UN Security Council authorized an independent international commission to investigate Hariri's assassination. In May 2005, the first free parliamentary elections since 1972 took place leading to the formation of a fairly representative coalition government led by Premier Fuad Siniora. Syria ceded to the pressure and withdrew its 14,000 military and intelligence personnel on 27 April 2005.¹⁵⁵ However, Syria maintained significant assets in Lebanon: a mixed government in Lebanon comprising both pro and anti- Syrian elements; a possible residual presence of Syrian intelligence assets in Lebanon; and Hezbollah, which has refused so far to relinquish its arms and apparently continued to support Syria's agenda by periodically attacking Israeli military positions near the Israeli-Syrian border.¹⁵⁶

6.3 Israeli Incursions and Hezbollah

The Taif Agreement, with respect to relations with Israel, demanded the Israeli withdrawal and called for the enforcement of UN Security Council resolutions. Liberating Lebanon from the Israeli occupation, the agreement called for the implementation of resolutions concerning the Israeli presence in Lebanon, particularly resolution 425. Furthermore, Taif directed the Lebanese and their supporters to "taking all the steps necessary to liberate all Lebanese territories" and also "making efforts to reinforce the presence of the UN forces in South Lebanon to guarantee the Israeli withdrawal and to provide opportunity for the return of security and stability to the border area."¹⁵⁷ In that way, Taif identified the Israeli occupation illegal and assigned the UN to end the occupation. However, it was clear that a UN-enforced end to the Israeli occupation was not reasonable for Israel.

During the civil war and in the post-war period, Israeli aggression toward Lebanon was demonstrated in a number of destructive attacks: Operation Litani of 1978,

¹⁵⁵ Daniela Pioppi, Nathalie Tocci, and Karam Karam, "Domestic Politics and Conflict in the Cases of Israel, Palestine and Lebanon", p. 25.

¹⁵⁶ Tim Youngs & Claire Taylor, "The Crisis in Lebanon", pp. 19-20.

¹⁵⁷ "The Taif Agreement", (October 22, 1989), <http://www.mideastinfo.com/documents/taif.htm> [last accessed on 8 January 2009].

Operation Peace for Galilee of 1982, Operation Accountability of 1993, Operation Grapes of Wrath of 1996, and Operation Just Reward of 2006. In July 1993, Israel launched its heaviest bombardment of Lebanon since the 1982 invasion. The political and economic recovery of Lebanon was again interrupted in April 1996, when Israel carried out air and artillery against southern Lebanon and the suburbs of Beirut which sought to diminish Hezbollah's ability to strike northern Israel. There was a remarkable danger of escalation, leading fears that the fighting might draw Syrian forces stationed in the east of the country.¹⁵⁸

Likewise, Israel tried to give two important messages to the internal and external world. Firstly, the invasion was a response to terrorism that was needed to secure a victory for the Labor government. Secondly, by bombing the electric power plants near Beirut, Israel warned the Lebanese authorities that their economic recovery and the building of the infrastructure were in danger if they did not stop Hezbollah's actions.¹⁵⁹ The Operation Grapes of Wrath served only to surface the weakness of the Lebanese government and strengthen Syria's control over the country. Disarmament of Hezbollah was not possible as long as UNIFIL or its troops were prevented from entering Israel's security zone.

From the Israeli perspective, the occupation of southern was necessary for ensuring the security of the northern border and preventing Palestinian and Hezbollah rocket attacks on the northern Galilee region. However, by the 1990s, the security zone created problems in both financial and human terms. Additionally, public support for the zone began to reduce after a rise in the Israeli casualties. By the time of the Israeli election of May 1999, Ehud Barak, leader of the victorious Labor Party gave signals for withdrawing by July 2000. The problem with the withdrawal was how best this could be achieved. A unilateral solution which disregarded an overall peace with Syria and Lebanon was considered useless as it would indicate weakness of Israel. Another option was negotiating only with Lebanon but it would fail considering Syria's demands over Golan and Damascus's influence in Beirut. Despite Ehud Barak's effort to settle the peace as part of a wider deal with Syria on

¹⁵⁸ Tim Youngs and Claire Taylor, "The Crisis in Lebanon", p.15.

¹⁵⁹ Kail C. Ellis, "The Regional Struggle for Lebanon", p. 38.

the Golan, it became clear during the early part of 2000 that negotiations with Syria were making little progress. As a result, Israeli troops withdrew from the southern Lebanon in May 2000 unilaterally.¹⁶⁰

Furthermore, Israeli incursions strengthened the Hezbollah's position in the country. Hezbollah emerged as the most important militia during the war and was the only Lebanese militia not to disarm in post-war period because of its special status as the resistance movement against Israeli occupation of Lebanon. They fought in the southern security belt, in another words, the completely isolated southern part of the country. Unable to compete with Israeli exports into the south, this part of the country was also destroyed economically. This signaled another phenomenon of change from the war, the rise of Hezbollah and a feeling of Lebanese-ness among the Shiites, a sign that could be understood in the future.

During Israel's invasion of Lebanon, Lebanese officials were indifferent towards Shiites who were living in poverty in the south of the country. Hezbollah benefited from this situation and with Iran's help, it struggled for building a social welfare infrastructure for the Shiite community. It improved farming activities, created an educational mobilization program, and developed a network of organizations and institutions in the field of health, education, and charity. Social work served to enrich supporters' confidence in Party's cause and direction as well as collaborated forces to remain strong and tenacious in its political and resistance roles.¹⁶¹

Political participation became an instrument to achieve change and was seen as in the group's interest and as a necessity for conveying the concerns of the people up to the national political level. Hezbollah's decision to participate in the parliamentary elections of 1992 started the change of organization. The results of this decision were successful. In the first electoral competition, the organization achieved significant political representation by obtaining eight of the twenty-seven seats that belonged to Shiites. In addition, Hezbollah became the first Islamic group to be included in the parliament. The reasons for this success originated from the religious background

¹⁶⁰ Tim Youngs and Claire Taylor, "The Crisis in Lebanon", p. 16.

¹⁶¹ Naim Qassem, "Hizbullah: The Story from Within", Saqi Books, London, 2005, p. 86.

that provided it with a stronger voter base, the resistance against Israel that provided support from inside and outside of their community, and the social service network that strengthened the image of the party. With its political and social activity, Hezbollah won the leadership of the Shiite community. This was clear from its overwhelming victory in the municipal elections in the years 1998 and 2004.

In the elections of 2005, Hezbollah gained an unexpected success gaining almost one third of the seats in the parliament. For the first time, the party formed part of the government with two ministers. They also legitimized their armed presence in the southern Lebanon against the Israeli occupation in the Shebaa farms. This could be also meant that people's votes supported Hezbollah to reject UN Resolution 1559 that calls for disarmament.¹⁶²

The success of Hezbollah can be explained by its ability to present itself as a new kind of political party. Previously, political parties in Lebanon were the expression of the interests of the elite and were ruled by members of the most dominant families of their respective communities. Instead of that, Hezbollah presented a comprehensive political program. It diverged from the standard campaign that focused on publicizing candidates without declaring any particular plan or program. Hezbollah emphasized the program over the person and this made a mark on Lebanese political tradition.¹⁶³

However, the political participation could not be sufficient for the transformation of the organization from militia into a political party. The conflict of July-August 2006, between Israel and Hezbollah, proved that disarmament of the organization was impossible unless Israeli attacks came to an end.

Despite the Israeli unilateral withdrawal from southern Lebanon in May 2000, the unresolved issues of the Lebanese – Israeli conflict remained. These included the Israeli occupation of Lebanese territory in the Shebaa Farms, seizure and arbitrary

¹⁶² Luigi Masciulli, "Hizbullah: Resistance and Representation", <http://www.humanrights-observatory.net/revista5/articulos8/LUIGI%20MASCIULLI.pdf>, [last accessed on 8th August 2009], pp. 9-10.

¹⁶³ N. Qassem, "Hizbullah: The Story from Within", p. 192.

detention of Lebanese citizens, persistent and ongoing violations of Lebanese territorial sovereignty through the use of ground aerial and maritime force, and currently through various manifestation of political pressure on the Lebanese government.¹⁶⁴ These problems re-surfaced with the war in July 2006 and the stability in Lebanon was disrupted again.

The conflict began on 12 July 2006 when a group of Hezbollah fighters crossed the Lebanese border into Israel and attacked an Israeli military patrol, capturing two soldiers and killing eight. This led to the outbreak of a large-scale war in southern Lebanon which ended with the destruction of the Lebanese infrastructure and the death of 160 Israeli and 1500 Lebanese civilians. Israel's asymmetric response to Hezbollah's seizure of the two soldiers had main objectives: enforcing a rash application of UN Resolution 1559, and constituting a Lebanese consensus around dismantling of Hezbollah's armed wing by causing nationwide destruction, and finally the destruction of the Hezbollah. Israel planned to use three main strategies for achieving these objectives. The first idea was the bombardment of Hezbollah. By killing fighters, destroying Hezbollah's infrastructure and assassinating key figures as Secretary General Hasan Nasrallah, Israel would seek to weaken the organization or leave the organization without a leader. Secondly, Israel tried to blame Hezbollah for the tragedy for breaking up the ties between Hezbollah and the Shiite community and for this end, Israel destroyed infrastructure, houses and even whole villages of Shiites. Thirdly, Israel tried to limit the social life so that non-Shiite Lebanese people could revolt against Hezbollah's actions. It would also make easier for the Lebanese government to make military attacks against the organization.¹⁶⁵ These strategies were far away from both dismantling Hezbollah and instead the war strengthened the organization with the popular support from the Shiites, other confessional groups in Lebanon and the Muslim world.

¹⁶⁴ Andre Bou Maachar, "Lebanon: Strategic and Political Challenges and Opportunities", <http://www.dtic.mil/cgi-bin/GetTRDoc?AD=ADA479599&Location=U2&doc=GetTRDoc.pdf>, [last accessed on 31 May 2009], pp. 6-7.

¹⁶⁵ Karin Rammerstorfer, "The Lebanon War 2006: A Country Between Terror And Resistance", Diplomarbeit, Universität Wien. Fakultät für Sozialwissenschaften BetreuerIn: Bunzl, John, 2008, http://othes.univie.ac.at/1372/1/2008-10-01_0306768.pdf [last accessed on 8th August 2009], p. 62.

In order to end the war in Lebanon, UN Resolution 1701 was implemented. All parties involved in this conflict, the Hezbollah, Israel and the Lebanese government, as well as international and regional key actors made consensus on the text of the Resolution. Resolution that was adopted on 11 August 2006 included a number of aspects. Firstly, it called for a full cessation of hostilities between Hezbollah and Israel. It then called for the Lebanese government and UNIFIL to deploy their forces together throughout the south. Secondly, the UN Security Council authorized an increase in the strength of UNIFIL to a maximum of 15,000 troops. The force was also charged with monitoring the cessation of hostilities, helping to ensure humanitarian access to civilians and the safe return of displaced persons, supporting the Lebanese armed forces as they deployed in the south, and helping Lebanese government secure the country's border to prevent the entry of illicit weaponry. Thirdly, the Council called for Israel and Lebanon to support a permanent ceasefire and a long-term solution. Fourthly, in support of a long term solution, the Council requested that the Secretary General develop proposals for delineating the international border. Fifthly, the council emphasized on the importance of a "comprehensive, just, and lasting peace in the Middle East".¹⁶⁶

Hezbollah welcomed the Resolution since the United Nation could finally report and respond to Israel's constant violations. Hezbollah was part of the Lebanese government; disarmament was an internal political matter and should be resolved within this framework. It had nothing to do with the International Community. Hezbollah saw the strengthening of the UNIFIL officially as positive because then, there was no more need for resistance. Also, Israel respected to Resolution especially its focus on Hezbollah's disarmament and insists on an arms embargo. As long as the Hezbollah did not regain strategic weapons and make confrontations in the southern border, Israel was satisfied with the Resolution.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁶ United Nations Security Council Resolution 1701 (August 11, 2006), <http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N06/465/03/PDF/N0646503.pdf?OpenElement>, [last accessed on 9th August 2009]

¹⁶⁷ Karin Rammerstorfer, "The Lebanon War 2006: A Country Between Terror And Resistance", pp. 74-75.

The expanded UNIFIL force served to manage tensions and was considerably stronger than its predecessor, but it was obvious that a peacekeeping mission could not reconstruct peace if no supporting political settlement was put in place. The lack of progress on the political elements of UN Security Council Resolution 1701 proved that the lull in violence since mid-August 2006 would not end the hostilities between Israel and Hezbollah. Israel would not tolerate the reconstruction of Hezbollah's fortified zone in southern Lebanon and would be forced to strike as long as a comprehensive peace settlement was made.¹⁶⁸

Strengthened after the war in July in the internal and regional realms, Hezbollah claimed to have achieved a historical and divine triumph. For transforming this victory into a political gain, the party called overtly for the resignation of the Siniora-led cabinet, and for the formation of a more solid 'national unity government' able to confront external threats. Hezbollah's call for restructuring political alignments in post-Syrian Lebanon indicates that the party will sooner or later claim political gains for its regional triumph, and challenge the rigid institutionalism of the Lebanese national formula.¹⁶⁹

Facing calls for Hezbollah's disarmament, the movement considered the government of Prime Minister Fouad Siniora and its backers as the hostile actors who intended on destructing the Hezbollah and further aligning Lebanon with the West. As a result, Hezbollah continued its fight on the domestic scene, removing Shiite ministers, taking to the streets and pushing for the government's ouster. The large numbers of Shiites taking to Beirut's streets alarmed many among the Sunni community who considered this as a sign of a confessional power-play designed to weaken them. Lebanon badly lost its balance and was under the risk of new collapse, moving ever closer to explosive Sunni-Shiite polarization with a divided, weakened Christian community in between.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁸ Tim Youngs & Claire Taylor, "The Crisis in Lebanon", p. 43.

¹⁶⁹ Tamirace Fakhoury-Mühlbacher, "The July War and Its Effects on Lebanon's Power-Sharing", pp. 4-6.

¹⁷⁰ International Crisis Group, "Lebanon at a Tripwire", Middle East Briefing, No.20, 21 December 2006, p.15.

6.4. The 2007 Presidential Crisis

The impact of the Hariri's assassination, the protests, and the withdrawal of the Syrian military led to formation of a National Dialogue process in Lebanon. This process which began in March 2006 continued until 2006 war. The lack of consensus on the legality of an armed Hezbollah and the debate over the legitimacy of President Emile Lahoud's position resulted in the failure of this process. Dialogue Process came to Lebanese political agenda again, when the 2007 presidential crisis broke up. The leaders from major sectarian groups came together in order to discuss the reform during the Dialogue Process. This process purposed to regain political authority and to find a political solution to the problems that have created chaos in Lebanon since the end of civil war in 1990. There were five main points that the participants should reach consensus: normalizing relations with Syria, collecting weapons from militants outside Palestinian refugee camps, the position of Emile Lahoud as President, disarming Hezbollah, reforming the electoral system.¹⁷¹

The Syrian withdrawal created the need to rebuild the political, social and economic relationship between two countries. The proposal of establishing mutual embassies in Damascus and Beirut was seen by the Syrian politicians as a strange step for relationships between "brother" countries. This was meant that Syrian preference for control over their neighbor as opposed to cooperation and dialogue between equals.¹⁷² Furthermore, the process of founding a new relationship with Syria was difficult for the Lebanese because of the ongoing investigation of Syria's meddling in the assassination of Hariri. There was still support for Syria ; every anti-Syrian protest organized by the March 14th movement was responded by a pro-Syrian demonstration. At the same time, major political actors were divided along pro- and anti-Syrian lines.¹⁷³

¹⁷¹ Vanessa E. Shields, "Political Reform in Lebanon: Has the Cedar Revolution Failed?", *The Journal of Legislative Studies*, Vol.14, No. 4, pp. 477-478.

¹⁷² Hazem Saghieh, "Big Brother No More", *New Statesman*, 5 June 2006, <http://www.newstatesman.com/200606050019>, [last accessed on 5 August 2009].

¹⁷³ N. Ladki, "Hezbollah Draws Vast Pro-Syrian Crowd in Beirut", Reuters, 8 March 2005, <http://www.commondreams.org/headlines05/0308-06.htm> [last accessed on 6 July 2009].

Lebanese President Emile Lahoud was a pro-Syrian and supported the formation of a government of National Unity in which the opposition including Hezbollah would have a veto right in the cabinet. This was opposed by the anti-Syrian Prime Minister Fouad Siniora and by the majority in Parliament. The position of Lahoud was discussed during the Dialogue Process. Politicians such as Saad Hariri and Walid Jumblat demanded him to resign because they regarded his position as illegal as well as dangerous due to his close ties with Syria. The amendment of the constitution to reappoint Lahoud for an additional three years in 2004 was viewed as the result of Syrian hegemony on internal Lebanese politics.¹⁷⁴ For this reason, many anti-Syrian politicians saw Lahoud as the symbol of Syrian tutelage and wanted to end his term to complete Syrian withdrawal from Lebanese politics, too.

The most controversial issue debated during the Dialogue Process was disarmament of Hezbollah. Many Lebanese considered Hezbollah as heroes because they had forced Israel to withdraw in 2000. The disarmament of Hezbollah was opposed by Shiite community due to the fact that they represented a legitimate resistance and they could save their communities from outside threats. External actors did not support Hezbollah and believed that the presence of such an irregular army was undemocratic. UN Resolution 1559 called for the withdrawal of all foreign troops as well disarmament of all armed militias.¹⁷⁵ Hezbollah both participated in Lebanese politics and operated a military and intelligence structure which the state had no control. Rather than forcing disarmament of Hezbollah by the Lebanese army, the UN was urging Hezbollah to integrate into the Lebanese army. During the National Dialogue Process the Hezbollah question remained unresolved and the war in July 2006 proved that disarmament of Hezbollah was not an easy task as long as Israeli threat was over the country.¹⁷⁶

Lebanon was politically paralyzed when the Shiite opposition parties Hezbollah and Amal withdrew their ministers from the government of Fouad Siniora in November

¹⁷⁴ Vanessa E. Shields, "Political Reform in Lebanon", p. 479.

¹⁷⁵ "United Nations Security Council Resolution 1559", (September 2, 2004), <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2004/sc8181.doc.htm> [last accessed on 4 July 2009].

¹⁷⁶ Vanessa E. Shields, "Political Reform in Lebanon", p. 479.

2006. The Hezbollah-Druze-Aoun alliance stated that, according to Article 95 of the constitution a resignation of one-third of the cabinet automatically brought down the government. President Emile Lahoud also declared that Siniora was ruling in violation of the constitution. Hezbollah aimed at undermining political process by restricting Siniora's government. Hezbollah and its 8th March Alliance demanded the reorganization of the cabinet in order to have more than a third of the cabinet ministers. If this veto power was granted it could allow Hezbollah and its allies to bloc voting on vital issues. In that way, rather than reaching consensus with other sectarian groups, Hezbollah could affect political process underlying confessional differences. Despite closing Beirut's commercial centre with a permanent sit-in protest from December, the opposition could not reach its goals through a national dialogue launched in March 2007. Yet the rival anti-Syrian March 14 Alliance could not also disregard the opposition and elect its preferred candidate to succeed the pro-Syrian president Emile Lahoud. When Lahoud's term ended in September, the post was left vacant and a constitutional crisis emerged.¹⁷⁷

As the end of the Lebanese presidential term neared and then passed on November 23, the political focus of the presidential elections shifted from democratic and constitutional ideals to concerns about preventing civil strife. Lebanon has failed to elect a new president since November 24, 2007 as a result of the ongoing political imbalance and unsettled dispute over needed political reforms. The divisions between the Lebanese religious and political factions continue to risk another round of civil war. The current Lebanese political system has reached a deadlock in ensuring the continuity and performance of the Lebanese institutions and the constitutional order. The Lebanese Parliament could not provide the absolute majority required for a constitutional parliamentary quorum necessary for the election of a president. Hezbollah refused to cooperate with the majority in electing a new president before it receives promises that it would obtain additional political power, and not serve merely as a symbolic opposition. The opposition wanted assurances regarding the reallocation of political power within the future cabinet and its agenda; and secondly, an agreement about the basis of the future electoral law.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁷ "Lebanon's Stop-gap Peace", *Strategic Comments*, Vol.14, No. 5, 2008, p. 1.

The presidential crisis underlined that the political representation in line with sectarian proportion could block the democratic process and left a country without a president for six months. Also, as a historical feature, this stalemate could not solve without foreign intervention. Through the autumn of 2007 and into 2008, the United States demanded an immediate unconditional parliamentary election of a Lebanese president as the first step in resolving the current political crisis. At the same time, the United States condemned the Syrian efforts to prevent such an election and the perceived Syrian efforts to destabilize Lebanon. In the end, Qatar's prince Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani invited all Lebanese political parties to its capital Doha to negotiate a settlement in order to end the ongoing political crisis and avoid an eventual civil war.¹⁷⁹

After two weeks of unrest, the parties reached a deal on 21 May 2008 in Doha, comprising three key elements: appointment of a new national unity government, headed by Siniora, in which the opposition would hold a 'blocking' third of the ministerial posts; the election of Lebanese army commander Michel Suleiman as President; and the holding of new parliamentary elections in a year's time on the basis of a revised electoral law.¹⁸⁰

The Doha Agreement underlined the urgent problems of Lebanon and tried to give immediate response to them. Firstly, by reaching a consensus to elect candidate General Michel Suleiman, Lebanese politics proved that this was the best constitutional method to elect the president under these exceptional circumstances. In fact, this reminded the election of General Fuad Shihab after the Civil War of 1958 which was the result of other presidential crisis.

Secondly, forming a national unity government composed of 30 ministers distributed among the majority (16 ministers), the opposition (11 ministers) and the president (3 ministers). In this way, Hezbollah got veto power over major policy decisions in the new government.

¹⁷⁸ Andre Bou Maachar, "Lebanon: Strategic and Political Challenges and Opportunities", pp. 24-25.

¹⁷⁹ Ed Blanche, "Lebanon: At The Crossroads", *The Middle East*, July 2008, http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m2742/is_391/ai_n28048767/, [last accessed on 30 May 2009].

¹⁸⁰ "Lebanon's stop-gap peace", p. 1.

Thirdly, the Doha Agreement decision about electoral law meant that, instead of applying the heavily gerrymandered 2000 law devised by Syria, the new law will double the number of electoral districts in the country and tend to focus on voters according to religious sect. Meanwhile, the renewed electoral law can work to the advantage of Hezbollah and its fellow Shiite party, Amal. The Shiites are now the most harmonious and united among Lebanon's major communities and, by fielding a joint list as previously, the two parties would be guaranteed victory in Shiite-majority districts.

As a result, Hezbollah was the winner of the May 2008 crisis. It managed to endorse Suleiman as president without losing its strategic alliance with Aoun. It took the veto right over major policy decisions in the cabinet, and because disarmament was not on the Doha agenda, it got to keep its weapons for the time being. Hezbollah as an organization, who rebelled to Taif settlement with its armed struggle, proved itself in the political arena and gave signs of the abolishment of confessional system.

However, the Doha Agreement could not solve the fundamental problems that create trouble in Lebanon. These problems include the sectarian rivalry that provoke the way of a united nation, and the need for a more equitable distribution of political power than the French-style independence constitution that was written in favor of the Maronites and Sunnis. The main problem here is the lack of political reform process which can unite all the sects around the interests of Lebanon. If there is no progress on political reform, the civil war continues to be in the agenda of Lebanese politics.

6.5. Post-Taif Era: The Failure of Reconciliation

The end of civil wars with negotiated settlements is a rare situation but the Lebanese civil war ended in this way. The peace settlement did not involve Western countries as key players or guarantor of peace. Instead, the treaty was a production of an initiative from the Arab League created the Tripartite Arab High Commission comprising heads of state from Algeria, Saudi Arabia and Morocco. The main purpose of the Taif Agreement was to facilitate post-war reconciliation, overcome

war-time divisions and solve the most complex problems that the country had faced. In fact, the Agreement confirmed the principles of the National Pact of 1943 and turned it into a binding written agreement.¹⁸¹

The Lebanese post-war period lack any peace-building process. The Taif Agreement should facilitate post-war reconciliation but the foreign intervention, sectarianism, political confessionalism and the acceptance of Syrian tutelage blocked the implementation of reforms in the soul of the agreement.

The post-Taif political system was the outcome of Syria's role in Lebanon. In short, Syria was the ultimate arbiter and was the dominant political and military power in the country. Both the Syrian army and the Syrian intelligence units penetrated nearly all facets of Lebanese society, making any form of opposition to either Syria, or the Syrian-sponsored political order in Lebanon, extremely difficult.¹⁸²

The pos-Taif era witnessed the assassinations of political leaders and rivals following intra-sectarian conflicts politics. The main motive of these assassinations was the Lebanese tradition for silencing political opponents by seeking outside allies.¹⁸³ However, the assassination of Rafiq Hariri sparked the "Cedar Revolution" and pushed the Lebanese people into the streets to call for Syrian withdrawal from Lebanon.

In the post-civil war period, there were battles along country's southern border with Israel as in 1993 (Operation Accountability) and 1996 (Operation Grapes of Wrath) which destroyed thousands of home and killed Lebanese civilians. In addition to these large-scale operations, there were many campaigns which were held by Hezbollah. The cross-border war came to an end in 2000 when the Israeli forces withdrew, following Hezbollah's long military campaign. After the pullout of the Israeli army from South Lebanon in May 2000, some protesting voices called for the

¹⁸¹ Are Knudsen, "Precarious Peacebuilding", p. 2.

¹⁸² Tom Najem, "The Collapse and Reconstruction of Lebanon", p. 24.

¹⁸³ Are Knudsen, "Precarious Peacebuilding", p. 10.

withdrawal of the Syrian army and questioned the continuing resistance of Hezbollah. However, the war between Israel and Hezbollah in 2006 proved that Hezbollah made the armed struggle against Israel's regular violation of Lebanese territory.¹⁸⁴

The confessional system of Lebanon came to its turning point with Doha Agreement. The dismissed Shiite popularity gave voice in politics. Hezbollah as an organization, who rebelled to Taif settlement with its armed struggle, proved itself in the political arena with its victories in the elections and gave signs of the abolishment of confessional system. This agreement showed that Lebanon's only option was democracy and it could be reached by consensus with all sectarian groups. The issue that must be addressed most immediately is equality and fairness in representation. Eventually, the development of parties based not on sectarian identity but on real practical or ideological platforms, would be desirable in Lebanon.

Another important element emerged from the Doha Agreement stresses on the recent developments in the Middle East and the obvious limitations of American foreign policy and power projection in the region. Setting a precedent for the Middle East, the Doha Accord, is the 'first concrete example in the Arab world of a negotiated, formal political agreement by local adversaries to share power and make big national decisions collectively while maintaining close strategic relationships with diverse external patrons in the United States, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Syria.'¹⁸⁵

However, the Doha Agreement could not solve the fundamental problems that cause trouble in Lebanon. These problems include the sectarian rivalry that provoke the way of a united nation, and the need for a more equitable distribution of political power than the French-style independence constitution that was written in favor of the Maronites and Sunnis. The Shiites, who are the most repressed, sentenced to poverty by other sectarian groups, and the single largest sect, demand a greater

¹⁸⁴ Daniela Pioppi, Nathalie Tocci, and Karam Karam, "Domestic Politics and Conflict in the Cases of Israel, Palestine and Lebanon", p. 24.

¹⁸⁵ Rami G. Khouri, "New Rules Define the Middle East", *Agence Global*, May 2008, <http://www.agenceglobal.com/article.asp?id=1588>, [last accessed on 10 August 2009].

representation in the parliament. This could not be achieved unless there is a change in the proportional representation according to a new census.

The Doha Agreement might have provided a breathing space for all competing factions that have been engaged in violent political and military 'battles' in recent times. Yet, they are still fundamentally divided over many vital issues that need to be dealt with over a longer period of time. Doha's slogan 'No Victor, No Vanquished' might be appropriate at the time being, but do not certainly purpose any solution for the future.

7. CONCLUSION

This work claims that confessionalism as a democratic system which can be implemented in many societies did not work well in Lebanon case for several reasons, and this system contributed to the civil wars and political crisis that Lebanon faced over two centuries.

The theoretical basis of this study is Arend Lijphart's theory of consociationalism. His theory which focused on power-sharing and group autonomy could not be applied to the Lebanese case because of its weaknesses. Firstly, most important source of this weakness in the consociational system is that its success depends on cooperation among all communities. Lijphart pointed out that consociational democracies were always threatened by a degree of immobilism.¹⁸⁶ In Lebanon, this immobilism emerged from the Maronite Sunni dominance in politics which later turned into political stalemate and civil wars.

Secondly, he argued that unless there is a social and economic equality in the society, consociational politics can not be successful.¹⁸⁷ The burdens in the system increased especially in 1960s and 1970s, and social and economic developments resulted in a complete breakdown of the system. Furthermore, the civil war proved that the Lebanese consociational system began to seriously deviate from the model described by Lijphart. There was no longer a consociational government which was balanced and formed carefully and it reflected on the changing political dynamics of the state and its neighbors.

Thirdly, veto system in consociational democracies should work for the elimination of extremists who want to gain political power without cooperating with other sects. In Lebanon, the veto is used in the fact that the President, the Prime Minister and the Speaker of Parliament are interdependent in their decisions. The problem with this issue is that it can create political stalemate and this argument was proved in the last

¹⁸⁶ Arend Lijphart, *Consociational Democracy*, *World Politics*, Vol. 21, No. 2, p.218.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid*, p. 219.

political crisis which ended with the execution of Doha Agreement. The veto power was given to Hezbollah in return for the election of the president.

Fourthly, the most important feature of consociational system is the fair share of seats in the parliament. In Lebanon, these seats are equally shared by Muslims and Christians, but it should be underlined that although Christians represent less than the half of Lebanese population, they still get half of the seats and therefore, this distribution is an unproportional representation. Groups that are growing in size demand revision of the existing distribution of political power, whereas groups decreasing in size would resist such demands as they have a fear of losing their position. For this reason, all governments since the mid-1950s have refused to publish any statistics which shows the demography of the religious groups.¹⁸⁸

The weakness of the Lebanese state and its institutions has originated intently from the complexities of the confessional system of government since Ottoman period. At the time of independence, in an attempt to reconcile the interests of the country's diverse religious and cultural groupings, this system of governance was strengthened by 1926 Constitution, 1932 Census, and 1943 National Pact. The political system has often struggled to adapt to the shifting sectarian population balance, undermining the authority of the central government and creating perception among some groups that the state is either too weak to protect them. Consequently, national institutions have been regarded as serving to the interests of particular population groups, rather than to a broader Lebanese national interest.

While searching for the traces of consociational democracy, historical background of Lebanon's power-sharing system has been analyzed in many respects. Contrary to many studies that found the roots of confessionalism in the state building period, this study has searched for the origins of confessionalism in the Ottoman times. Under Ottoman rule, first signs of confessional system were seen as a result of intra-sectarian clashes and of *Réglements* that sought to solve these communal problems.

¹⁸⁸ Muhammad A. Faour, *Religion, Demography, and Politics in Lebanon*, p. 910.

Moreover, the Ottoman *millet* system can be seen as the root of the confessional democracy in Lebanon. Religious communities enjoyed a form of self governance under the *millet* system of the Ottoman Empire, in which various religious leaders governed and were responsible for their own sect under the rule of the Sultan. However, while this system aimed at unifying all members of the entire empire, confessional mechanism diverged the religious identities, and marginalized the communal groups by distributing power in respect of their size in the population. But this system resisted a change as the realities of demography favored the most repressed group (Shiite Muslims) and put pressure on the most dominant group (Maronite Christians).

The first European intervention in Lebanese politics was realized by establishing *mutasarrifiyya* regime, as a result of the War of 1860 in Lebanon. In the nineteenth century, Lebanon witnessed deepening divisions between the factions, and increasing demand for regional and international support to resolve inter-communal political disputes.

The establishment of the French mandate in 1920 formed the second foreign intervention period which transformed the Lebanese political system. Although the adopted political system was based on power-sharing among religious communities, it awarded the Christian community a dominant political position. The Lebanese Christians sought French support to maintain an independent nation while assuring their own political power base. On the other hand, Arab nationalism motivated the majority of Muslim community and prevented them from fully engaging in the domestic Lebanese politics. As a result, the Christian Lebanese, who also constituted the majority of Lebanese population at that time, gained a virtual monopoly of political power. The main contributions of the mandate period were the 1926 Constitution which was the sign of an independent state and the 1932 census that placed the proportional representation in all levels of governance.

Lebanese independence produced the National Pact, an unwritten “gentlemen’s agreement” that supplemented the formal constitution of the country. This agreement delineated the division of power between the Muslim and the Christian communities

in the leading political positions. The Civil Strife of 1958 proved that the National Pact could not exist anymore. President Chamoun's ambitions for extending his term and Lebanon's position between Arab nationalism and Western interventionism deepened the dissidences among religious facts. The civil clashes brought foreign intervention for the third time and this time it was USA. It led the first American military intervention in Lebanon as well as an enactment of the Eisenhower doctrine.

The Lebanese civil war of 1975–90 threatened Lebanese peace and security for over a decade and was a result of deep-rooted conflict between confessional groups. This conflict mainly manifested the dissatisfaction of Lebanese people for accessing economic, social and political rights as well as their struggle for identity. The Arab-Israeli conflict, Palestinian refugee issue, Israeli attacks, and Syrian military intervention resulted in internationalization of the conflict. As other civil war periods pointed out, the Civil War transformed into a power struggle of foreign actors. The end of the civil war period came as an initiative of Arab League, too. Rather than terminating the long civil war period, the Taif Agreement repeated the principles of National Pact, re-institutionalized the confessionalism, and built up Syrian tutelage that would shape the country's next fifteen years.

Legitimizing Syrian military presence in Lebanon and calling for a Syrian military redeployment, Taif expressed the last level of foreign intervention which made permanent effects on Lebanese politics. During and after the civil war, Syria, like many foreign powers before it, used the Lebanese confessional divides to its advantage, shifting alliances with various communities as they successively called on it for help. Thus, Syria became the main power broker, controlling the presidency, the judiciary, and the intelligence and security apparatus, as well as many Lebanese politicians who owed their power and survival to Syrian authorities.

Opposition to Syria escalated after September 2004, when the Syrian government pushed Lebanon's parliament to amend the constitution and extend the presidential term of General Emile Lahoud, who was widely seen as a Syrian puppet and whose term was due to expire in

November 2004. The assassination of Rafiq Hariri in a bomb blast in Beirut on February 14, 2005, created a clear political demarcation between anti-Syrian forces and Syrian allies. The opposition movement, which, at this point, included prominent Christian, Druze, and Sunni figures, immediately blamed Syria and formed an unprecedented unified front. These events resulted in Syrian withdrawal from Lebanon in 2005.

Israel has been another important player although Taif Agreement forced it to withdraw from Lebanon. The Agreement also provided for the disarmament of all militias. However, Israeli incursions that continued during 1990s led the failure of disbanding Hezbollah as a militia. Hezbollah helped the population during the war period after the Israeli bombing, and other military operations, and built up development programs in education, health and charity fields.

Hezbollah emerged as the winner of conflict and aftermath of the war with Israel in July 2006, and it demanded for a greater representation of its allies in the parliament. This demand which was rejected by the 14 March group reached its top level with the presidential crisis in 2007. Insisting that any presidential election requires two-thirds of the majority, Hezbollah blocked the election process and demanded veto right in the cabinet. With another historical agreement, the Doha Agreement, Hezbollah-led opposition got a veto power in a newly formed national unity cabinet in exchange for facilitating the election of General Suleiman to the presidency.

The Doha Agreement signified the breaking point of the confessional system that minimized the Shiite communities' rights with proportional basis. The presidential crisis which gave rise to the constitution of "national unity" government also showed that only consensus and national unity could overcome political crisis. Consequently, rather than seeking group interests, the various factions may bring stability and peace in Lebanon by establishing national interest and identity. Rather than holding tightly the religious identity as a Shiite, Sunni, or Maronite, the various factions should unite over being Lebanese. Contrary to that, the foreign actors intervene in the multi-religious fragmented states in favor of their own interests, and as we have witnessed

also in Iraqi example, these actors have left an unstable and devastated country behind them.

Throughout this thesis, I have tried to analyze the contribution of confessional system to sectarian conflicts and political crisis in Lebanon. As Chapter 2 indicates, the present custom of confessionalism could be traced back to Ottoman rule and Tanzimat reforms, and the external actors had a significant role in institutionalization of confessionalism in Lebanon. The first confessional regulation made by Şekib Efendi and the Western sponsored *Réglement Organique* are emphasized as the first signs of confessional power-sharing model. Here, it is assessed that the violence between sectarian groups began to rise, as one foreign protector gained power or to withdraw. Power-sharing has brought extended periods of peace to Lebanon, including the fifty years under the *Règlement Organique* (1864-1914).

The third chapter analyzes the level of success of French mandate to create a modern state. The discussion of the first constitution of Lebanon and 1932 census showed that the French mandate did not advise and assist for creating modern Lebanon but failed to fulfill the requirement of preparing the territories for independence. In that sense, Maronites was the most favorable sect who benefited from French presence and secured their interests both in the 1926 Constitution and 1932 Census. As a result, under French mandate, there was not a national-state building and Lebanon was established as a state of *millets* lacking any general sense of nationality.

In the fourth chapter, the National Pact of 1943 and the outbreak of the insurrection in 1958 is analyzed. After independence, Lebanese political leaders sought to strengthen communal integrity through distributing political power among religious communities. They searched for channels that would be useful to establish communication between Lebanon's various segmental groups. The outcome was the Constitution of 1926 and the National Pact which were the products of the cooperation between Maronite and Sunni groups in Lebanon. However, neither the National Pact nor the Constitution provides basis for a strong civic consciousness. Instead, political leaders sought to advance their own interests rather than building a Lebanese identity. This caused unrest and, as a consequence the Muslim community

increasingly called the National Pact in question in the mid 1950s which finally ended up in the Civil Strife of 1958. In this chapter, the president's role in Lebanese politics and the significance of presidential elections are also underlined. The re-election of the Chief of General Staff election as the President of Lebanon in the country's history indicates that when Lebanese democracy was stuck between presidential election and civil strife, the common choice was electing a soldier. This electoral behavior would demonstrate itself in the forthcoming political crisis.

In the fifth chapter, the causes of the fifteen years' civil war period, external power intervention and importance of the Taif Agreement are discussed. The Palestine-Israel conflict and inter-Arab rivalries challenged with the political system of the Lebanon. The focus here is that the contribution and intervention of foreign factors in the civil war is not a new phenomenon. The Ottoman government and European powers were on the scene in the confessional strives of 1840s and 1860s. Creation of Greater Lebanon was a French initiative. Besides, Crisis of 1958 was the result of adoption of Eisenhower doctrine that divided the country into two factions. This analysis indicates that foreign intervention and internal turmoil have potential to bring new civil wars to Lebanon unless a different political system is applied.

The sixth chapter emphasized the post-Taif period in Lebanon. Power-sharing, Syrian tutelage, Israeli-Hezbollah conflicts, and presidential crisis are evaluated as the parameters of the post-civil war period in Lebanon. The Taif Agreement was nothing but the repetition of the mechanism that the National Pact formed. For that reason, the external actors like Syria, Israel and Iran continued to use the sectarian feature of Lebanon to intervene in internal politics. Coupled with the dissatisfaction of Shiite community about political representation, Hezbollah, a different type of new power base emerged. While the world recognized this organization as a terrorist, the Lebanese Shiites saw Hezbollah as its only legal representative in Lebanese politics and proved their belief by providing them seats in the parliament. Hezbollah, as the most effective opposition group, increased its power and reached a position that could block the election of the president. Consequently, with Doha Agreement by gaining veto right for government's decision, this organization started a new

phase in Lebanese politics. In other words, the dissolution of National Pact, the Taif Agreement and, the confessional system took place on the agenda of Lebanon.

The history of confessional democracy of Lebanon has shown that confessional mechanism is not enough to solve internal problems of the Lebanese. The distribution of power and the proportional division of three important executive powers among religious groups did not end sectarian strives over two centuries. The Ottoman past and the colonial legacy made regulations for abolishing the sectarian differences, but they could not achieve this goal by disregarding the country's own realities. The definition of 17 sects in a constitution could not unify a state but could prepare it for dissolution and also manipulation of it by external powers. In that respect, the Lebanese have only one choice: building up national citizenship.

People see themselves as a part of factions rather than Lebanese people. The single national identity can guarantee rights of all Lebanese and ensure peace. Lebanon whose citizens are unified around language, culture, and historic roots can be a nation-state in that way. The government should take initiative to reconstruct Lebanese identity and this task should be to get all the other groups in Lebanon to declare themselves as Lebanese. Signs of unity were seen in "Cedar Revolution". They were the Lebanese who were on the streets during the protests of the Hariri murder those days; they were not politicians, but everyday Lebanese people of all factions under the common banner of the Cedar tree.

The national identity of the Lebanese is bound to community identity, the historical Lebanese identity, membership in the Arab world, and Lebanon's contact with the West. The common political culture based on the historical Lebanese identity is necessary for unifying all factions. Building up this identity can be done by recognition of common values, participation in political institutions, and participation in social and economic development. Commitment to an egalitarian ideal and the fight against sectarian policies and regionalism will signify the sharing of identical values by all Lebanese citizens.

These common values led the Lebanese to participate in their own political institutions. In the past, the feudal system dominated the political system, and Lebanese citizens did not show their commitment to any institution, but to the feudal leaders who ruled them. In that way, Lebanese citizens became strangers to the workings of their own political system and they left action to their representatives. But there can be no real democracy without participation. The Lebanese must participate at every level of the decision-making process: in the local authorities, the regional units, and the national institutions. Here, civic education would have an important role.

Finally, there can be no common political culture without participation to national, social and economic developments. The state should provide everyone in every region with the same opportunities and conditions for economic development. Political and social cohesiveness will not be achieved without the feeling of national identity.

The confessional system should be dismantled as it was emphasized in Taif Agreement. Instead of this system, national citizenship should be built and power-sharing should be based on nationality, not on religious identity. This form might prevent new civil war periods and political crisis in Lebanon which is the most fragmented country in the world.

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