



NEAR EAST UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE OF GRADUATE STUDIES
DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

**FOREIGN POLICY OF LEBANON REVISITED:
REFLECTIONS OF POWER-SHARING AND 17 OCTOBER REVOLUTION**

M.A. THESIS

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Nicosia

January, 2022

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Supervisor
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Approval

Declaration

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My sincere gratitude to God almighty for giving me the grace through his son Jesus Christ who is my source strength from the beginning of this thesis to the very end. I thank the Holy Spirit for constantly reminding and encouraging me to never give up.

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Abstract

FOREIGN POLICY OF LEBANON REVISITED: REFLECTIONS OF POWER-SHARING MODEL AND 17 OCTOBER REVOLUTION

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The purpose of this thesis is to have a vast understanding of Lebanon's power-sharing system and the contributing factors causing more sectarian division in the state that leads to the absence of a united foreign policy towards external actors both regional and international following the effects it has on Lebanon as a state. This research will also focus on the ongoing 17 October Revolution that took place in 2019 in order to understand the reasons leading to Lebanon's collapsing economy and a demand for political system change. The power-sharing system is structured in a way that only Lebanese elites and politicians can access power and with a society deeply divided along sectarian lines as they also placed their allegiance with their various sectarian groups. Lebanon as a sovereign is not able to exercise absolute sovereignty due to the strong influence of external powers, who are affiliated by sectarian groups and Lebanese lean more to their external affiliated powers than to the state. This action has led to Lebanon having a weak state. Lebanese took the stress starting in 2019 to protest against the failed political system, which led to the economic collapse Lebanon is facing as a result of corruption in the system. As a qualitative research, the data collection is done through secondary sources such as; academic journals, books, articles, newspapers, websites and international news channels.

Keywords: Power-sharing model, Foreign policy, Economy, External powers, Sectarianism, 17 October Revolution

Öz

LÜBNAN'IN DIŞ POLİTİKASI ÜZERİNE YENİDEN DÜŞÜNMEK: GÜÇ PAYLAŞIMI MODELİ VE 17 EKİM DEVRİMİNİN YANSIMALARI

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Bu tez çalışmasının temel amacı, Lübnan'daki güç paylaşım modelinin mezhepsel bölünmeye sebebiyet vermesini araştırmak ve bahse konu paylaşım modeli nedeniyle Lübnan iç siyasetinin hem bölgesel hem de uluslararası dış aktörlerden etkilenmesinden dolayı bir dış politikasının yokluğuna neden olan unsurlarını ortaya koymaktır. Bu araştırma, aynı zamanda Lübnan'ın çöken ekonomisine ve siyasi sistem değişikliği talebine yol açan nedenleri anlamak için 2019 yılından beri devam eden 17 Ekim Devrimi'ne odaklanarak güç paylaşım sisteminin aksaklıklarına işaret etmektedir. Bu minvalde, bölünmüş bir toplum olarak ifade edilen Lübnan'da siyasal elitlerin güce erişebileceği ve çeşitli mezhep gruplarına bağlılıklarını ortaya koyan mezhep çizgileri analiz edilmiştir. Lübnan, mezhep gruplarına bağlı dış güçlerin etkisi altında olması nedeniyle mutlak egemenliğe sahip olamamakta ve Lübnan'ın siyasi istikrarı, kendi siyasal otoritesinden ziyade dış güçlerin onayına bağımlı bir durumdadır. Bu durum, Lübnan'ın zayıf bir devlete sahip olmasına yol açmıştır. Ülkedeki yolsuzluğun bir sonucu olarak ekonomik çöküşle karşı karşıya kalan Lübnanlılar, başarısız olarak nitelendirdikleri siyasi sistemi protesto etmek için 2019'dan itibaren sokaklarda eylemler yürütmektedirler. Nitel bir araştırma olan bu tez çalışması; akademik dergiler, kitaplar, makaleler, gazeteler, web siteleri ve uluslararası haber kanalları gibi ikincil kaynaklardan yararlanmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Güç paylaşımı modeli, Dış politika, Ekonomi, Dış güçler, Mezhepçilik, 17 Ekim Devrimi

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List of Abbreviations

EU	European Union
FPM	Free Patriotic Movement
IDF	Israel Defence Forces
IMF	International Monetary Funds
PLO	Palestinian Liberation Organization
SU	Soviet Union
UN	United Nations
US	United States
WB	World Bank

CHAPTER I

Introduction

Lebanon has traditionally been regarded as a miniature of the Middle East. One of the key motivations behind this expression is rooted in the reflections of regional politics and developments on Lebanese domestic affairs. In other words, being at the heart of the Middle East and surrounded by major powers in the region, it is no doubt that whatever happens in the region has a direct or indirect effects in Lebanon, to the North East of Lebanon, Syria stands as one of its neighbour, and heading towards the South, Israel serves as another neighbour.

It is imperative to state that; the permeable borders of the country, which makes it susceptible to the regional developments, is closely interwoven with the model of governance of Lebanon. Lebanon's model of government is one that can be named as "consociational democracy", which has been a highly contested issue for decades until this present time. As has been postulated by (Lijphart 1977), consociational democracy is a power-sharing model among various sectarian/ ethnic or linguistic communities. It precisely helps to accommodate plural societies such as Lebanon. The recent events and public protests taking place in Lebanon over the decade now has led to the emergence of scholarly debate by Tamirace Fakhoury on whether or not the power-sharing system still allows the various communities in Lebanon to achieve political accommodation or measures need to be taken gearing towards another system of governance. On top of that, the ongoing public protests by the Lebanese citizens towards the failure of their political leadership in providing basic amenities such as adequate health care system, quality education, high rate of unemployment, massive national debt is a clear indication that the country is confronted with protracted instability.

In light of this, the consociational democracy based on power-sharing model in Lebanon sporadically lead to escalation of divisions alongside the lack of trust amongst the various sectarian groups in the political space as sectarian

groups pave the way for creating allegiance to their various external actors. These key regional powers time to time intervene and involve themselves in Lebanese internal affairs that had explicitly seen during the Lebanese civil war (1975-1989). This issue, however, has raised questions on the possibilities of having an agreed or cohesive foreign and the democratic status of the country in view of the concept “Pacted Democracy” which in the case of Lebanon, citizens had the right to vote leaders in their various sectarian groups to represent them according to the 1943 National Pact arrangement (Fakhoury 2014).

Background of the Study

Having approximately six million population, the Republic of Lebanon can be easily considered as a heterogeneous society with a diverse demographic structure –which includes 18 recognized ethnic and religious groups. The largest groups in Lebanon are Maronites, Sunnites, and Shiites. Moreover, Lebanon also is a homeland for Greek Orthodox, Protestants, Armenians Christians and Druzes (Saliba 2010; Yapp 1995).

The power allocation in Lebanon traces back to the 1932 national census results as well as the unwritten National Pact in 1943 which paved the way for the election of the President of the Republic from the Maronites (Catholic Arabs); the position of the prime minister will be elected from the Sunnite sect (Muslims); and lastly the speaker of the parliament is to come from the Shiite sect (Muslims) (Hudson 1997). The deputy prime minister and deputy speaker of the parliament would be from the Orthodox Greeks and the General Chief of armed forces would be from the Druze community. Bearing in mind that all ethnic and religious/sectarian groups in Lebanon are minorities, it is important to indicate Lebanon is a homeland to a majority of the minorities (Williams and Paul 2010). Therefore, the 128 seats in the legislature today are equally split amongst Muslims and Christians, representing different sectarian groups in Lebanon with the seats being allocated proportionally .

Practising confessionalism, a system of government having the mixture of politics and religion and Lebanon is a good case study for such a system of government. Christianity and Islam as major religions, in Lebanon led to the

agreement on the fact that Christians would not seek protection from the Western world as they (Christian population) maintain their cultural and spiritual ties with them. Likewise, the Muslims populace would forsake their aspirations of uniting Lebanon with Syria and with other Arab nations in the Arab world but they would maintain their language as an Arab nation and practise their religion.

Significance of the study

As a divided society in the Middle East region (Salloukh 2006; Salamey 2009: 92), Lebanon cannot escape the repercussions of whatever happens in the region. The Middle East itself is a hotbed of conflict. Despite their agreement and accommodation on not allowing external influence on the internal affairs of Lebanon, it is clear that over the years that agreement hasn't been kept which has resulted in a number of conflicts with a significant one dating from 1976-1990 roughly 15 years of civil war in Lebanon. In addition, the outbreak of the Arab-Israeli War in 1948 left hundred thousand Palestinians displaced in the region and a significant number of Palestinian refugees since then are hosted by Lebanon.

The Cold War years –also known as the proxy war between the United States and the Soviet Union –had a powerful disintegrative effect on Lebanon (Cleveland 2018). During the war, the Maronites sided with the West while leftist and Pan-Arabic groups aligned with the Arab nations who were on the side of the Soviet Union. Experiencing the involvement of external regional powers such as Israel, Syria and Iran (and Hezbollah in Lebanon) during their civil war has brought a lot of external involvement into their internal affairs and that has left a great deal of internal division that until date Lebanon is still experiencing. It was during the Cold War that Lebanon went through a Civil War. The Lebanese Civil War (1975-1990) was both an inner Lebanese conflict and a local struggle involving a large group of territorial and global entertainers. It spun around a portion of the issues that overwhelmed provincial legislative issues in the Middle East, it added on the conflicts including the Palestine-Israel struggle, Cold Conflict rivalry, Middle Easterner patriotism and political Islam. Clashes over these issues met with longstanding conflicts in the Lebanese political tip top, and in pieces of the populace, over the partisan division of force, public character, civil rights and Lebanon's essential unions. During 15 years of battling, it is

believed that around 90,000 individuals lost their lives. The influence of external powers on the Lebanon's political affairs have been one which has always left the country in a state of disarray and making it difficult for elected and appointed leaders to have an understanding or a common ground once it comes to the matters arising on national affairs, national interest and foreign policies towards external powers that will protect their right to sovereignty as an independent state (Yapp 1995). Notwithstanding the huge number of deaths during its Civil War, quite a bit of Lebanon's foundation was broken, similar to Lebanon's notoriety to act as an illustration of cross-partisan concurrence in the Middle East. The Lebanese Civil War was one of the most decimating clashes of the late 20th century. The conflict has proceeded through different means in the post-war time frame, and the occasional rounds of rough clash tormenting Lebanon beginning around 1990 are straightforwardly connected with the Civil War (Sune, 2011).

Today, Lebanon as a case study of “pacted” democracy (Fakhoury 2014) is under threat as the nation continues to experience demographic shift with the vast growing Shiite population. The various sectarian groups at the beginning of Lebanon's independence gave their commitment for the maintenance of this power-sharing system to safeguard their historical coexistence. Even though this political system has proven for decades to stand as a litmus test of time for the Lebanese political elites, Lebanon seems not to catch a break from numerous conflicts in the region nowadays.

Having felt a devastating socio-economic recession in the country, Lebanon at present is not only politically fragile –in which the future of the consociational power sharing model is questioned –but also the recent economic grievances and popular unrest since 2019 have triggered the existing challenges and culminated in making the overall system not functioning. In this regard, having a cohesive or unified foreign policy of Lebanon is not only a matter of contention, but the persistence of socio-economic and political problems makes it almost impossible to pursue a stable foreign policy-making, too. The 2020 explosion in the port took place on 4 August 2020 after a fire detonated 2,750 tonnes of ammonium nitrate. It was obvious that the combustible chemical, which is widely used as agricultural fertiliser, had been stored unsafely in a port

warehouse for almost six years (BBC, 2021). “The blast shook the city to its core, blowing boats out of the water and destroying vital grain stores. Lebanon's complex and delicate political system balances power between the country's different sects, something critics say has entrenched the political elite and stifled the possibility of reform” (BBC, 2021).

Lebanon’s consociationalism and *pacted democracy*

In the context of Lebanon’s system of government, this thesis aims to widen the scope of understanding of why “pacted” democracy was a better option in a multi-sectarian society. As a country practising pacted democracy since 1943, the power sharing method in Lebanon is designed to enable accommodation of a plural society, maintain balance of power among the political elites as a result of the allocation of political power among the various sectarian groups. Having said that, this allocation of power or power-sharing formula in Lebanon makes the country to be fragile and susceptible to instabilities. In line with this argument, this thesis also stresses the point that, the consociational model of governance in the country does not allow the communities it possesses to articulate a unified foreign policy making. The case of Lebanon’s pacted democracy is, therefore, one that gives a clearer view and understanding of power-sharing method in such a diverse society and mainly to be able to manage conflicts on outbreaks of conflicts within the Lebanese sectarian groups.

The pacted democracy came into existence after the nation gained independence in 1943. Having multi-sectarian groups in the nation, it is no doubt that pacted democracy is what suits the nation on gaining independence as two important political leaders the Maronite Christian President Bishara el-Khoury and Sunni Prime Minister Riad al-Solh verbally came to an agreement of bringing the French Mandate to an end. This agreement is known to be the National Pact also called ‘*Al-Mithaq al-Watani*’ (Saliba 2010). Following the outcome of the national pact, which is an unwritten agreement on the power-sharing system in a multi-sectarian society concerning the power sharing mechanism in the nation. This unwritten national pact permitted the creation of Lebanon’s grand government coalition in 1943 playing a fundamental part in the establishment of Lebanon’s nation building (Fakhonry 2010).

With Lebanon being a state comprising minorities the 1943 National Pact led to the majority of the minorities becoming the president which according to the 1932 census, it was the first and last census till date, carried out by the French Mandate. Following the result of the 1932 national census, the National Pact of 1943 stipulated that Maronite Christians would hold the position of the presidency, Sunni Muslims would be assuming the office of the Prime Minister and Shiite Muslims would be responsible for the position of the Speaker of the House of Parliament in that order and other public positions were allocated to various sectarian groups (Yapp 1995; Cleveland 2018). The parliamentary seats ratio was agreed as 6:5 in favour of Christians having six public officers while Muslims were assigned five public officers. The division of political power along religious and sectarian lines in Lebanon's consociational system of government is to avoid any form of violence and ensure the survival of Lebanon's pact democracy. To further understand the National Pact, dating back to 1920 when power was relinquished to France by the League of Nations after World War I to oversee Lebanon following the petition of the Ottoman Empire. The French Mandate went ahead with the declaration of creating the modern-day state of Lebanon under then named 'Greater Lebanon' (Yapp 1995) during the administration of the French General Henri Gouraud, who served from 1919 to 1923 as a representative of the French Government in the Middle East and commander of the French Army of the Levant, greater Lebanon was made up of historical province of Mount Lebanon as the inhabitants were largely Christians and Druzes while various districts in other province consist of mostly Sunni and Shiites inhabitants (Saliba 2010).

Statement of the Problem

In light of the historical background given above, this dissertation aims to analyse the case of Lebanon with a specific research question; how the power-sharing system or the pacted democracy plays a key role in the internal political affairs of Lebanon. As the corollary of this question, this research addresses the lack of foreign policy of Lebanon due to the influence of external powers contributing further division amidst the country's internal affairs.

Over decades, Lebanon's political system has been a contested topic amongst the political scientists and international relations scholars. There seems to be an imbalance when it comes to the nation's consociational power-sharing system and this ongoing debate has raised questions surrounding Lebanon's pactured democracy which states to what extent is Lebanon pactured democracy today. Following the nation's independence from the French mandate Lebanon is considered to be a society divided along sectarian lines (Salamey and Payne 2008). Over the years Lebanon's pactured democracy has been under threat as it has experienced mistrust and divisions along sectarian lines some camp of scholars has argued the fact that the nation's power-sharing system has, however, promoted the deepening of sectarianism rather than promoting pactured democracy to reaching its full potential of evolving into of full democracy (Hudson 1985).

As a country which was not engulfed by the 2011 Arab Uprisings, Lebanon today is confronted by growing popular unrest and Lebanese people have taken to the streets calling for ending corruption and addressing the socio-economic grievances. In addition, the massive protests by the citizens call vocally out for a genuine systemic change. Lebanon's political arrangement has in a way failed to live up to the expectations of Lebanon's larger population as sectarian elites are those who tend to benefit from the system as well as those who run the national affairs politically, economically with the influence and support of religious leaders in high positions. However, over the years academic research has shown that the roots of political tension and fragmentation along sectarian fault lines is as a result of the nation's political elites alongside sectarian organisations that used their positions in government to strategically manipulate the political system in line with their personal interests. The group of elites are capable of influencing the democratic political process and to a large extent have authority over the state affairs which the state as an institution is supposed to possess more authority than sectarian elites. This power is, however, being transferred to the religious institutions of the nation which causes the weakening of the state and strengthens sectarian division in Lebanon.

With such a controversial and debatable political system, it is difficult for Lebanon to transition into a full-functioning democratic state. With Lebanon

being at the heart of Middle East region and being homeland for diverse sectarian groups, it is clear that; whatever happens in the region has a direct or indirect effect on the Lebanese internal affairs as we have seen during the Arab-Israeli wars, the Israel-Palestinian conflict, even as far as US- Iranian conflict and the reflections of the Cold War politics which had a huge effect on Lebanon. For instance, as Michael Hudson (1987) argued the Civil War between 1975-1989 is an indication of the breakdown of the consociational power sharing formula in the country which crystallised the internal divisions in Lebanon as sectarian groups are left with apparently no choice than to supports the external powers in which it has sectarian affiliations with. With internal sectarian groups supporting their ethnic/ sectarian lines various external affiliated countries. Lebanon is thrown into a state of dilemma when it comes to internal political affairs as it faces and is still facing challenges when it comes to having a unified foreign policy or making foreign decisions that is going to aid the state moving forward.

Purpose of the study

This research is to further expand the knowledge surrounding Lebanon's consociational power-sharing political system in relation to the Pacted Democracy, Lebanon seems to be practising. Critically analysing the suitability and sustainability on the impact power-sharing system has on Lebanon, adding to the understanding and possibilities of the nation's pursuit on their realisation of transitioning into a full democratic state. This study crucially examines Lebanon's system of government as a society divided along sectarian lines through the lens of consociationalism as the research focuses on the role of key factors influencing the political system and the state at large. Such as political elites, sectarian and religious groups, political parties, external powers and the Lebanese people especially in the recent political happenings of the nation. These actors each play vital roles in shaping the political system of Lebanon and determining how it's been governed.

Research Questions

This research work is guided by the following questions:

- To what level is Lebanon's consociational power-sharing model limiting/ framing its foreign policy-making? In other words, what is the linkage between the lack of foreign policy of Lebanon and Lebanon power sharing system
- How has the influence of external powers altered Lebanon's internal political affairs to the extent at which it leads to the absence of foreign policy?
- What are the implications and possibilities of the 17 October protests in Lebanon in transitioning its "Pacted Democracy" into full democracy in the coming future?

Hypotheses

The expected hypotheses to this research are as follows;

- The power-sharing model of Lebanon, which led to the crystallisation or strengthening ethnic/ sectarian loyalties in the country, hinders a unified foreign policy in the country to emerge;
- Looking above their differences along sectarian lines as they advance towards forming a united front as a nation in order for them to have a solution in terms of their internal political affairs likewise socio-economic situation and external advances. solutions such as political and economic reforms that will benefit the Lebanese society.

Methodology and Research Design

This research is done through a careful selection of literature review regarding Lebanon and its concessional power sharing model and benefited only from the secondary data.

For the purpose of this thesis, a qualitative research methodology is used; because this research topic is non-statistical and can be developed through secondary sources. The sources which include books, journals, literature and online materials from the internet such as reports were employed in examining the topic. Despite the motivation behind this thesis which aimed to conduct surveys

through distributing questionnaires in Lebanon, resulting from the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic this research was benefited primarily by secondary sources.

Data Collection

A qualitative research requires credible information in order to add more insight to the topic, sources of data collections are of primary importance to the research. The data collection of this research was gathered through secondary sources such as academic journals, informative articles on the topic, books and insightful news videos concerning the topic, reliable state and private newspapers and watching live news on channels such as, Al Jazeera, British Broadcast corporation and reliable websites.

Data Analysis

In view of the discourse analysis done in this research following the secondary data collections through, academic journals, articles and academic book, scholars and analysis are able to broke down the informative interconnectedness of Lebanese cultural sectarian society and how it is shaped by historical events and the power dynamics of Lebanon's system of government as well as external powers influence on Lebanon's internal political affair and how the falling of Lebanese economy leading to a demand in a change in political system.

Timeline

This research is carried out within the period 8 months.

Limitations of the study

This research is faced with the limitations of not having to collect data primarily as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic which is faced with travel restrictions. Another limitation of this research was the lack of funds to be on the field in order to have access to direct information in regards to being able to interview people who are facing the current economic and political crisis in Lebanon first hand. The insecurity in Lebanon is also one of the limitations and

outbreak of violence between sectarian groups during a series of protests has erupted.

Thesis structure

Chapter One of this thesis is formed as the introductory part of research and becomes a guide to understanding Lebanon as a state and how the state formation came to be as an independent entity after being in the hands of the French Mandate. One of the things that makes a state important in the international community is what the state has to offer and as small as Lebanon is, the chapter One of this thesis gives a clear knowledge of how the state is small (population wise and size) but at the same time mighty as a result of Lebanon's strategic geographical location in the region. Lebanon is at the heart of the Middle East and its location attracts external powers, the world hegemonies as well as regional hegemonies with various national interest which made Lebanon become a card in the hands of its players and as a result of external powers being involved in Lebanon's internal affairs, the proxy war between the United States and Soviet Union led to the outbreak of civil war in Lebanon and also being caught up in the regional Arab-Israeli conflicts. Another important aspect of the Chapter One is the diversity of the Lebanese society, the various sectarian groups which is one of the reasons that continues to draw regional powers such as Syria, Iran, Israel and Saudi Arabia leading to Lebanon being in the middle of their regional rivalry. The Chapter One also has an in depth about Lebanon's pactured democracy as it ushered the research into Chapter Two of the thesis following the exploration of other academic research on the power-sharing of Lebanon's confessionalism through the National Pact in 1943 which is an unwritten agreement between the sectarian elites on how power should be shared among the various sectarian groups in Lebanon. The 1943 National Pact was championed by then president Bishara al-Khuri and prime minister Riad al-Solh in order for all the sectarian groups to have good representation in the parliament and not be left out in the happenings of Lebanon's internal affairs. Chapter Three further discusses Lebanon's absence of foreign policies and relations with key external powers directly involved in having strong influence in the internal political affairs of Lebanon. With Lebanon being a strategic location geographically and surrounded by regional hegemonies, it is no doubt that Lebanon is experiencing the influence of these external powers and

with weak state central which is as a result of Lebanese leaning more on their external affiliation than having a unified central state. Chapter Four is focused on the present economic and political crisis Lebanon's contemporary society and engaging in critical discussion on the root causes of Lebanon's collapsing economy and the failure of the sectarian system on the Lebanese as a result of corrupt political system run by sectarian elites who are after their personal and sectarian interest rather than that of the state which has thrown more than half of Lebanese into poverty and Chapter Five ends with the conclusion part of the thesis and the possible ways to move forward for the Lebanese nation to rise again as recommendations are given at the end of the thesis.

CHAPTER II

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework of the Study

The power-sharing system in Lebanon has always attracted scholars to research on Lebanon as a case study with the aim of using terminologies such as consociationalism, democracy, political-sectarianism, power-sharing and confessionalism. These terminologies often have similar meanings and best describe the political system of Lebanon. For this purpose, this chapter of the thesis addresses the historical trajectories of the Lebanese political system that resulted in the system called consociationalism as well as providing a theoretical and conceptual framework for the thesis.

Historical Background

Lebanon is mostly considered as a divided society, which accommodates officially registered 18 sectarians and religious groups (Majed 2017). Since 1943, it has been governed by a power-sharing mechanism along sectarian lines. In this regard, the disposition of power among sectarian groups enable adequate political representation and autonomy to various sects following the preservation of sectarian's personal status in the society alongside their cultural and educational affairs as it is often of notable important to vital communities such as the Christians and Muslim constituents in the state in order to maintain balance of power in a multi- sectarian state.

It is imperative to examine Lebanon's political system through a historical and cultural perspective to note the influence of colonial legacies, especially that of the French mandate rule dates on the present Lebanon's sectarian power-sharing model. Much ink has been spilled on how the Ottoman Empire "*millet*" (nation) system in 1861 played a significant role in the formation of the nation as a multi ethnic and religious society (Salamey 2014). The Ottoman Millet system basically gave recognition to two communities having diverse ethnic and religious groups the right to govern itself in accordance with their own personal law. The sources of this non-territorial autonomy is acknowledged by social scientists and historians as they argue the facts but the Ottoman Millet system is profoundly

appropriate for geographical dispensation of minorities (Barkey and Gavrilllis 2015).

Until its collapse, Lebanon was a part of the Ottoman Empire. The region was ruled by the Ottomans from 1516 to 1918. With the end of the Ottoman rule, Lebanon was handed over to France as a mandate under the auspices of the League of Nations in 1920. With the end of the French mandate rule in 1943 a system of government known as confessionalism was established in Lebanon. With the unwritten National Pact (*al-Mithaq al-Watani*) confessionalism, which is a consociationalism type of political system to run the government comprising different sectarian groups with a power-sharing mechanism based on religious communities was institutionalised. The power-sharing in the country since then is allocated in accordance with the national census conducted in 1932. The 1932 census was carried out during the French mandate rule, which was the first and until date has not been able to undergo another census even with the demographic shift in the country. The 1932 census has no doubt played a very fundamental role in the nation-building process of modern-day Lebanon and has guided the power-sharing system in the country hitherto.

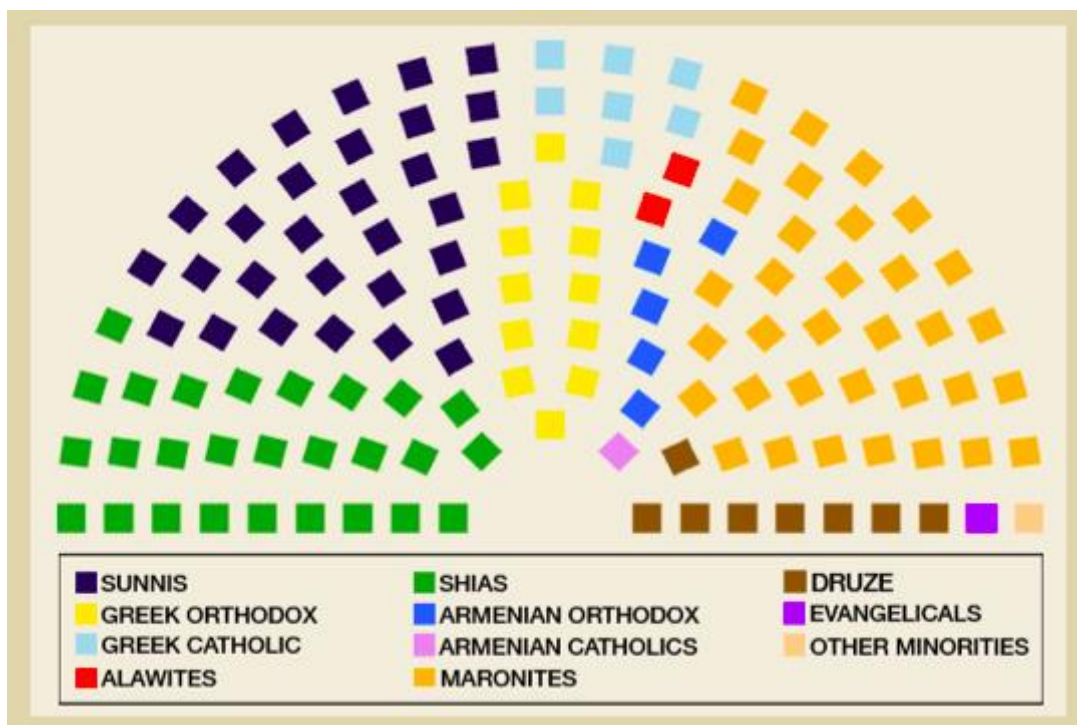


Figure 1 Lebanon's sectarian groups (Petallides 2011)

The 1932 national census, aiding the power-sharing allocation among the various sectarian groups at the National Pact agreement, but serious measures have not been taken in order to conduct another census for the state as the Lebanese government feared from the fragile nature of political system and was not ready for the consequences following the possible results because there was a drastic demographic shift from 1932 till date. The factual results indicate that; Maronite Christians have the largest population in the country, following the six major religious sectarian groups Maronite Christians, Orthodox Christians, Sunni Muslims, and Shiite Muslims. The dominance of a Christian community referring mostly to Maronites in the state bureaucracy did not originate in the 1943 National Pact, but rather under the French mandate (Faour 2006). Christians were politically active and participated in various political and administrative institutions while the Muslims on the other side were of profound resentment towards the French going as far as taking decisions to not be part of the political structure. This situation gave Christians an edge over the Muslims in the state bureaucracy. Thus, the formation of Lebanon's political affairs has its origins from the Article 24 of the 1926 Constitution (during mandate rule) –which stipulated the equal distribution of public office on the foundation of confessionalism and the 1932 census to guide power-sharing amongst the various sectarian groups.

Lebanon in the Post-1989 era and *Taif* Accords

A significant event that shaped Lebanon's power-sharing system has been the 1989 Taif accords which brought an end to the 1975-90 civil war. The 1975 civil war broke out because of the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union. During this period, Lebanon was already experiencing a demographic shift following the effects of establishing the state of Israel in 1948 leaving hundreds of thousands of Palestinians displaced, leaving them with no option than migrating to Lebanon, their neighbouring state, as refugees. The Palestinian refugees increased the number of Muslims in Lebanon. The Cold War had major effects on Lebanon as Maronites took sides with the Western bloc and the Pan-Arab groups and leftist aligned with the Soviet Union bloc. This cost more damage to a fragile consociational system of Lebanon which the government

has been trying to maintain relative peace in the nation, but not long enough in 1975 there was an outbreak of fight between Phalange (*Ketaeb* Party) who happened to represent the Maronite and Palestinian liberation organisation who represented the Palestinian refugees siding with Lebanese National Movement who are the coalition of secular lefties and supporters of Arab Nationalism resulting to great loss of human life, destruction of infrastructures, numerous casualties and properties and the fall of economy. The military intervention of major external powers in the region played a significant role such as the presence of Syria, Israel and Iranian Revolutionary Guards (Hezbollah) as Israel and Syria tried to control the intensity of the violence while Palestinians and Iranians did not back down (Seaseen 1990-91).

In light of this, the heated civil war lasted for 15 years and came to an end with the Taif Accord of 1989 Saudi Arabia. It was notable that the unwritten National Pact was able to end the French mandate but was not able to hold Lebanon as a united front state internal affairs in order to ensure a cohesive functioning state under one umbrella. However, the 1989 Taif Accord, which is a binding written agreement, made a constitutional amendment towards the already existing power sharing system of the state. This agreement is seen in Lebanon's history as the Second Republic following the constitutional amendment that was made in the 1943 unwritten National Pack. The presidency, which was the single most powerful position before the second Republic, transferred most of the presidential jurisdictions mainly his constitutional power and vested it to the cabinets. The President who is also the Supreme commander in chief of the army while categorically the Lebanese army is under the cabinet's authority which in turn the president has no right when it comes to voting (Issam Saliba 2010). The reconstruction of the unwritten 1943 National Park through the 1989 Taif accords, the written agreement brought about the numerical increase of Muslim members of parliament, which gave the Muslim community more edge to be at an advantageous side political affair with now having equal seat proportion with the Christians in the cabinet. For instance, during Lebanon's parliamentary and local elections, the nation's influential and powerful sectarian families do act as coalitions as they play a significant role in the area of mobilising votes from members of their various constituencies. The following families who have been

given political communal leadership in Lebanon include Jumblatt, Arslan, Al-Khazen, Jemayel, Al-Khalil, Frangieh, Al-Assad, Hamadeh, Slam, and Hariri (Salamey 2014). Some of these families come from the country's feudal history, while others are from post-independence and contemporary politics. A plethora of domestic political parties (some of which predate independence) are seen as evidence of a profoundly fragmented Lebanese national identity and polity. They reflect a wide spectrum of sectarian political orientations and ideologies. The majority of regimes have been established with the involvement of as many major sectarian groups as possible (grand coalition).

Lebanon's power-sharing system and its predicaments

As coined by Arendt Lijphart, the sectarian state paradigm in Lebanon is a clear example of a consociational political arrangement (Salamey 2014). The sectarian groups in Lebanon are profoundly divided when it comes to their political orientations and national identity (i.e. their allegiance is to their various sectarian groups in comparison to their national identities as a united Lebanon). The inequalities experienced by sectarian groups in Lebanon have become more entrenched as a result of a tradition of inter-sectarian grievances and disputes that have served to claim communal differences. However, the future of Lebanon as a whole in terms of realising either ideological/majoritarian democracy or federalism has in a way been ruled out due to the immense divide on the sense of national identity among Lebanon's population of over four million living in the country. However, the consociational power sharing system is the most relevant suitable and practical model to be implemented in a society such as Lebanon which is divided along sectarian lines. In regards to consociational mechanism, the disadvantage, which follows suit, is the requirement of universal consensus, which thwarting by a single veto is something that comes effortlessly. In the case of Lebanon, "instances of decision-making that requires the presence of various sectarian groups on the decision-making table is a difficult process to handle in a divided society," Lijphart (Salamey 2014) states that including the fact on how "consociational democracies to a large extent are often threatened by some level of immobilism" (Lijphart 1969: 208). Although Lebanon has a total number of 128 seats, which are equally split amongst Muslims and Christians, with the different sectarian groups of each confession being allocated proportionally, there

are people in high places who have the power to influence both parliamentary and local elections, as this powerful sectarian families act as cartels in playing crucial roles in terms of mobilising members of their various sectarian groups to vote. Some of the influential families who in the past and present have been given political communal leadership includes, The Hariri's, Al-Assad, Jumblatt, Arslan, Al-Khazen, Jemayel, Frangieh, Al-Khalil, Hamadeh and Slam. These Lebanese prominent families are few amongst other families that have served as elected leaders in their various sectarian communities. Quite a number of these families come from Lebanese feudal history, as some of them are products of the post-independence and contemporary politics of the state. To an extent, Lebanon's profusion of political parties domestically (with some being predated to the nation's independence) are however seen as confirmation of a profoundly fragmented Lebanese national identity and polity. Following their reflection on a larger range of sectarian political orientations and ideologies, which caused more national division rather than having unified Lebanon at the state level. So far, quite a number of the government were permanently set up with the possible involvement of as many major sectarian groups in Lebanon as possible especially with the grand coalition as the system highlighted that, any removal of sectarian groups from position of authority will be highly considered as a contravention of the national pact and constitution.

In Lebanon, having a side by side religious court system with jurisdictions concerning key issues such as rules involving individuals' inheritance, marriage, divorce and custody, as well as a person's sectarian civil status codes system, in a way have solid indications, however noticeable to the distinctions of autonomies directing to communal sectarian. According to (Lijphart 1977), the fears behind the successful continuity of consociational politics is the issues surrounding the system that keeps escalating beyond the government's control and over the years, Lebanon has experienced the same cycle of sectarian elites in the political system who have been leading the country from the 1960s, 1970s 2000s till date. As time progressed, Lebanon's consociational paradigm began to take a different direction compared to Lijphart's theory. The domination of Lebanon's politics by sectarian elites in every aspect of the nation's culture and government, led to severe weakening of political consociationalism as it supports the connection of various

societies together even amidst power struggles and the dynamics of regional disputes. Knowing that, being at the heart of the Middle East, Lebanon has a very vital geostrategic place in the region and international context. Having said that, Lebanon has experienced a great deal of sponsorship from external powers around the region, as these foreign-powers around the region have their fair share of influence on their various sectarian groups in Lebanon (Salamey 2014). Thus, the outcome of these influences have led to Lebanon having political trajectory which is shaped by a two-tier power struggle: at the domestic level, which somewhat promotes pitting sectarian groups in competing for political supremacy against each other and at the international level, casting the nation's sectarian groups in proxy roles within a great extent of regional power struggle, following this outcome, the dynamic of Lebanon's sectarianism and its consequences changes back to back with geodemographic politics in response to the confessional power-sharing agreement. Following the intertwining of both domestic and regional politics is beyond visible in the Lebanese political landscape when major historic events took place (the three confessional agreements Lebanon as a state have agreed with since their independence in 1943) Lebanon's 1943 National Pact, the 1989 Taif Agreement and the 2008 Doha Agreement.

Consociational democracy is acknowledged as a specific method of establishing political rule in religiously and ethnically divided society, commonly called as power-sharing democracy (Fakhoury 2014). Lebanon has had its fair share of conflict even though the power sharing method was designed to hold the divided society together but the power sharing mechanism along sectarian lines for over decades has not been able to sustain the peace an outbreak of conflict in the nation as there has been a growing division, and mistrust within inter-communities which has amount to political instability leading to numerous recurring conflicts and protests against the system of government.

However, this democratic arrangement provides adequate representation of the sectarian groups that gives power of autonomy as a community to be able to elect their national representatives through election within the sect. This method aids diffuse tensions among sectarian groups as more responsibilities to maintain

the political pluralism and sustain the relative peace in a state that lies greatly on the shoulders of political leaders who are also sectarian elites.

Lebanon's power-sharing system in particular correlates with consociational democracy as this system is necessary in our society for diverse sectarian groups such as Lebanon. For Fakhoury (2014) looking at the two sides of the coin concerning Lebanon's power-sharing formula whether it is constructive or destructive is of key importance to understanding the political system and how it works. Lebanon has an underlying case study and is used as a yardstick for consociational situationist scholars internationally in comprehending and research on the concept of consociational democracy. In examining Lebanon's political development, it is of notable value to have a critical analysis of Lebanon's pre-and post-war political processes. During the pre-war era, the Lebanese political system gained academic recommendation as a replica for multi-ethnic non-religious societies whereas with the current happenings following the unrest of Lebanon presently those pre-war political systems which received appraisal on good recommendation have taken a turn in becoming penurious remarks. Even as at that, the consociational model is being used in the post war era for further comprehension of Lebanon's power sharing system.

Scholarly debate has emerged regarding the power sharing paradigm of Lebanon and have come up with the notion of having to look at the political system of the country through its historical and cultural lens in order to aid the understanding of how sectarianism plays a major role in the political system of Lebanon. Ongoing debates surrounding Lebanon's power sharing origins and progression has been sought to analyse critically from the field of history likewise sociology and anthropology as a discipline. These disciplines tend to understand the perspective of Lebanon's political system formation through the historical lens of the society as well as behavioural patterns surrounding secretarial identities. Following quotes from "Fawwaz Traboulsi", "Potras communities in Lebanon as "Politicise religious sects as historical products rather than historical absence rooted in religious differences" (Fakhoury 2014).

Binary debate on Lebanon's Pacted Democracy

In view of the accommodationist perspective (Fakhoury 2014) “Pacted Democracy” aids in stabilising the Lebanese system of government, nevertheless also recognising the peril That comes along with an unregulated sectarianism. If a practical estimate is made. Scholarly debates have been made Surrounding the consociational system of government Lebanon on how it has shown to be a functional model for sectarian differences in Lebanon as a whole revolving around the binary debates.

The binary debate centres around the question of Lebanon’s stability when it comes to the power sharing system among sectarian groups on whether or not it fits Lebanon as a society. Another crucial point concerning consociationalism being a source of internal conflict in the state is the system perceived as a solution for a society having diverse ethnic and religious groups. One camp of scholars out of the nation say that the power sharing system is the best Democratic achievement as a model to govern Lebanon’s divided society while some scholars say that Lebanon should explore order paradigms as sectarianism tends to fuel division in Lebanon’s political system. Furthermore, contributing so that this integration on conflicts of the society faces or is likely to face the portrayal of sectarianism has been a problematized concept which is a “foreign conspiracy or a native malignancy”, (Fakhoury 2014) which is seen as tribal occurrences on a larger picture is portray. As a hindrance to modernisation. Scholars argue on the complexity of Lebanon’s sectarianism through the lens of constructivists, noting that Lebanon’s sectarianism is socially constructed and it’s been delineated associations of communities" Instead of unitary bloc. Nevertheless, scholars have drawn the attention surrounding the facts that a good surrealism might not take full responsibility as a phenomenon in causing a divided front in Lebanese society but to some extent there is the belief that states use sectarianism as a tool for power to govern Lebanon. Further engagement in this debate is given more emphasis on Lebanon’s consociationalism not just as a political system but in the quality of consociational democracy. Being a gateway to conflict in Lebanese society and also the reason the nation faces stagnation while other Social scientists have sided with consociationalism as a system that gives Lebanon the ability to maintain fragmentation despite countless setbacks (Fakhoury 2014).

Another group of scholars' view Lebanon is as a blessing and a curse at the same time which has in a way fostered peace and stability in a divided society as well as Being the source of conflicts being the source of conflict in the states especially during the Lebanese 1975 civil war (Salamey 2009; Fakhoury 2014). Numerous research has been carried out by scholars on the root causes of the 1975 Civil War but were not able to come up with concrete causes of the war. Even though speculations on confessional system of government has been said to be part of what failed in 1975 civil war as they continue to experience regional military confrontations from external powers such as Israel, Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), Syria and Iran through the revolutionary guard (*Hezbollah*) aside from intercommunal already existing conflict taking place. This caused more division in Lebanon's consociational society as some scholars depict the Lebanese consociational system as one which promotes violence and deepening sectarianism in the society. Another camp of scholars argue the consociational system is established in a way that will be difficult for the state not to experience sectarian divisions and with such frame establishment, penetrating the system to create change is one of the hardest tasks especially with them social demographic shift Lebanon has witnessed during the civil war making the already designed political system firm during the war period of 1975 to 1990 as the system became a major catalyst. Some groups of scholars argue on Lebanon's consociationalism system as a good model for divided society, underlining the system's ability to be able to withstand the difficulties and having the capacity to sustain the political system which in their opinion is what suits our society with multi ethnic and religious groups like Lebanon. They further highlight the susceptibility of Lebanon remaining conflict prone states as it is having a vulnerable political system that regionally on international powers can easily pierce through their direct or indirect influence in the nations internal political affairs and disagreed with the scholars who argued on power sharing along sectarian lines Is what causes more divide in Lebanon likewise objecting the notion surrounding power sharing system as the genesis of the 1975 civil war. They also focus more on the external factors causing Lebanon to be upon conflict states as they look at the external dynamics likely to penetrate Lebanon's vulnerable political system and cause division. The case study of the Arab Israeli conflict shows that the region had experienced with the perspective that whatever happens in the region would

have a direct or indirect influence on Lebanon and it plays a major role in testing the limitations of the political system.

Another external factor to take into consideration in Lebanon is the presence of Palestinians in their territory. After Israel was recognised as a Jewish Home in 1948, this recognition left thousands of Palestinians homeless and as a result they moved to their neighbouring country of Lebanon as refugees and as a result of this, PLO established its strong hold in Lebanon, which has led to a major demographic shift in the nation and has directly influenced the political system with some sectarian groups feeling threatened by the numerical increase of other sectarian groups. The ongoing debates by social sciences on measures to be taken in the case of Lebanon's post-civil war era concerning ways to maintain and sustain relative peace domestically as well as managing to keep in order the police car system of power sharing along sectarian lines. This however, raises questions on Lebanon's power sharing system if such arrangements can't progress without experiencing any form of conflicts or if there is a need for a mediator for the system to be in place and function as expected.

Pointing out Syria as an external arbitrator and the role it plays in the 1989 Ta'if agreement, it is said Syria's international recognition as a protector of Lebanon aided the consensus of the 1989 Ta'if Accords falling in place and implemented. Scholars have agreed to a great extent but the presence of Syria in Lebanon was of major influence in the implementation of the Ta'if Accords. Syria was viewed as one of the major superpowers of the region. Emphasis has been laid following the role of endogenous and exogenous dynamics which is looking deeply into the internal and external causes of instability Lebanon faces as a consociational system. Some scholars, however, took an internal stand in criticising Lebanon's power sharing system along sectarian lines connecting the system's instability and supposed solidarity to nationalism, having a divided society Lebanese athlete too there are various sectarian groups then the state as a whole (Tairace 2014). So, to a large extent the absence of national unity is felt and a political system which aggravates sectarian differences rather than unifying the political system. Other camps of scholars who are conscious of the importance and see the need of consociationalism as a useful system of governance for a

society such as Lebanon to sustain sectarian division aids in fostering engagements among regional and international communities.

Arguments surrounding how democratic is the consociationalism system in Lebanon has been raised and moving forward does Lebanon have the capacity to transit its government system into a full democracy? In this argument, the need to critically look at the contradictions between democracy on sectarianism is of great importance. For group of scholars, it points out the facts on how sectarian norms and values hold or place in the state of Lebanon then the practise of democracy and its institutions, while all the group of scholars who objects to this view lay emphasis on Lebanon's democracy being viewed with the lens of western democratic model instead of the conceptualise Lebanon's consociational system as a democratic fit for a society with "plural political culture" and historical trajectory (Tairace 2014). They further backed up the view of sectarianism as a practical framework of democracy suitable for a society, whose political system arrangements are based on religious and ethnic lines. The "Pacted democracy" in Lebanon has survived the 1975 civil war and the "Syrian brokered peace" has led to the following conclusions that democracy and sectarianism are difficult to function together as a whole. For democratic discourse on institutions so again stability turned into sectarian conflicts and experienced a crucial turn around, it will provide justification for such a claim. Starting the Lebanese political structure is hampered by the already in place binary viewpoints; in fact, at this point the uncertainty of the impact of power sharing on conflict and democratic dynamics using the following mentioned collections of compositions. In regards to the established perspective, the debate concerning Lebanese power sharing democratic method interprets the latter as an occurrence can also be viewed in two opposing directions as well as the binary arguments that makes Lebanese sectarian political structure a concrete problem to solve and undermines the endless efforts when it comes to developing a paradigm in democratic studies for its reform. There is a universal consensus that further research should be carried out to enable the Lebanese flawed consociationalism to get the right suitability for the nation, but nevertheless caution concerning the absence of coherence academic discourses should not be neglected towards this direction.

Further scholarly arguments on how democracy studies on Lebanon's political system (Salloukh 2006; Majed 2017) appear to overemphasise consociational democracy theory in their attempts to test the limitations of Lebanon's political structure and come up with the decision of whether sectarianism is consistent with democratic growth in the nation. In other words, scholars such as May Darwich set out to carefully study the Lebanese model and see if it matches the classical consociational democracy paradigm. Scholarly debates, however, reveal important information in this area as well as over the consociational model, and their divisions. Power-sharing democracy in a society such as Lebanon, in view of the proponents of consociationalism, is the most practical political solution for divided societies (Gifanabki 2012). Scholars such as William W. Harris criticising this theory, on the other hand, continues to argue on how the paradigm is insufficiently egalitarian since it relies on elites' ability to exploit socio-political differences. As a result, consociationalism rigidifies political borders, ensuring ethno-national divisions. Critics also believe that the paradigm is to a large extent "impressionistic" to encourage effective policy recommendations. Furthermore, this camp of scholars laid claims concerning the normative and empirical derivatives of consociational democracy lacking compatibility. Political scientists examine the consociational theory to be an empirically based normative theory, as researchers and practitioners often use it as a guideline in terms of policy making. Nevertheless, the model's theoretical and policy prescription dimensions are most times seldom in similarity, since no real consociation might attain the high goals which has been set out by consociationalist theoreticians. The literature however did not elaborate on the conditions that help consolidate power sharing structures or what are essential to the survival of the system, with the exception of some restricted attempts by consociationalist scholars. Few research differentiate between the circumstances leading to the formation of consociations and the conditions that lead to their consolidation. Even though some groups of scholars argue that elite compromise is necessary to sustain a power-sharing democracy, others place a greater emphasis on structural factors like demographics, segmentation, and the form and perceptiveness of cleavages. Following this result, the required conditions for the combination of power-sharing democracies are unclear. Moreover, the literature on power sharing omits the relationship between democratic and consociational

components in Lebanon's political system, as well as how these components interact.

Since the consociational paradigm is constantly relying on “the study of changes in already democratic societies,” (Fakhoury 2014), it lacks conceptual tools in addressing the “democratic aspects of power sharing.” Apart from these flaws, consociational theory does not give much attention to whether, and if so, how, static consociations threatened by political gridlock and internal malevolence develop into more coherent types of power sharing. Instead, the hypothesis centres on how communal elites maintain segmentation in order to prevent disputes along sectarian lines. However, maintaining segmentation is most times not enough to reduce tensions because it freezes contentious problems and empowers the political elites over their constituencies. Since consociational theory is the most commonly debated theoretical paradigm for Lebanese politics in democracy studies, debates over its limitations that inevitably leads to further arguments concerning Lebanon's consociationalism, that is to say, attempts to apply it to the Lebanese case puts scholars in a bind when it comes to defining the merits and threats inherent in Lebanon's political model, a bind that consociational theory finds it difficult to come up with solutions for.

Controversies on the Theory of Consociationalism

Following the controversies surrounding the theory of consociationalism, it comes as no surprise that it misses the mark when it comes to capturing the prescription on Lebanon's consociational system of government on one side and Lebanese post-1990 political realities on the other. The prescription for consociationalism in Lebanon (meaning its inclusion in the country's fundamental texts) is based on a paradox. The constitution of Lebanon and negotiation settlements, both however recommend sectarian power sharing as a governance mode, while laying emphasis on it being only for a period. There are different interpretations when come to the attitude given to power sharing based on sectarianism which can be traced back to Lebanon's founding as a nation-state, Article 95 of the 1926 Constitution to be precise, “stating the establishment of a committee for the purpose of abolishing confessionism and any principle representation of confessionism in public service jobs as to foster national

reconciliation by replacing the principle of confessionalism with the principle of expertise and being competent to carry out delegated duties and there shall be equal distribution of positions amongst Christians and Muslims” (Lebanese Constitution May 23, 1926). Political sectarianism has a transitory quality, according to Article 95. At the same time, by rendering the arrangement's abolition an open-ended issue, the article indirectly legitimises its long-term existence. The 1989 Ta’if Accords, in turn, restored power sharing while reaffirming non-sectarianism as a long-term aim but without laying out a plan to achieve it.

With the above provisions stated, it calls for questioning the viability of consociationalism as a long-term project for the Lebanese nation by prescribing power sharing as a temporary solution for resolving sectarian divisions in Lebanon. Paradoxically, by reiterating the transient existence of political sectarianism decades after the establishment of the Lebanese state, Ta’if made the "transitory" nature of political sectarianism more permanent than it could ever be. The dilemma when it comes to establishing and abolishing political sectarianism can be found at contextual stages making itself obvious in political discourse. Continuous study of policy debates in Lebanon shows decades of differences surrounding the mechanism and goals of sectarianization in Lebanon. The aim of the ongoing political project and protest of Lebanon as a state is to replace the current power-sharing formula, as well as the degree to which staging out political sectarianism would be at the detriment of Lebanon's minorities, are both points of contention. It is important to note the fact that political reforms should be implemented at the right time so as to avoid conflict. Furthermore, social scientists tend to differ with political elites following what should be carried out, whether or not to keep Lebanon’s political model as it is or to forge ahead in introducing partial and incremental secularisation at the government level, or the implementation of absolute secularisation in Lebanon. Addressing system transformation is hardly being solved by consociational theory and as a result, failure in providing an appropriate context for handling the consociational prescription's tension in Lebanon. Putting it in another perspective, social scientists raise the question concerning how one crosses the difference among political sectarianism's pragmatic "short-term" usefulness and the declared

intention to stage it out over time. At the contextual level of Lebanon's political system, the prescription for power sharing along sectarian lines is supposed to be transitional, but there are factual contradictions to this purpose. Political sectarianism, described as "the entire Lebanon's political culture" in the post-war period, has become a pervasive occurrence that has become so difficult to suppress by any means. Nevertheless, even though by factual witness consociational arrangements of Lebanon has nonetheless survived the 1975 brutal civil war, the post-war political sectarianism departs from the consociational democracy paradigm. Lebanon's power-sharing arrangements have not completely succeeded in ensuring an inclusive government or being able to satisfy various sectarian groups. The 1989 Ta'if Agreement implementation was predicated on a "stark non-implementation of its consociational variables" (Fakhoury 2014 pp 137). As the role Syria's hegemony had a significant influence over the Lebanese internal affairs, for example, thwarted Lebanon's power-sharing arrangements until 2005. Moving forward, the sudden change of execution on the post-war political pact has hampered the development of "a culture of accommodation," which however is thought to be critical when it comes to long-term sustainability of peace and democracy in Lebanon. In spite of the demographic shifts, Lebanon has experience; social scientists are beginning to define sectarianism in terms of conflict rather than simply seeing and defining communal dissimilarities as boundary markers. The idea inter-sectarian culture of accommodation is now under the threat of both Sunni-Shi'i fragmentation and Christian feelings of marginalization due to the increase of Muslim population in Lebanon.

Lebanon's power-sharing system is, however, yet to experience the anticipated political benefits in which the nation as a whole has expected for quite a while now, sectarian groups in the long run have had less motivation to trust one another and have in a way expressed continuous discontent with present political arrangements. Issues of dispute have further caused more division along sectarian lines; for example, have recently split Lebanese sectarian groups rather than cultivating a sense of common predicament. Lebanon's patterns when it comes to intercommunal conflict are aggravated by political elites who are all about their personal interest at the expense of the national interest. The independence *intifada*

(uprising) in Lebanon's aftermath is a good example. Disagreements arose amongst various sectarian groups in the aftermath of the 2005 famous protests as the political elites were not in one accord over key domestic and foreign policy problems have aggravated division among Lebanon's broader communities' representatives as a result of these divisions, the combination of two opposing national programs, each with its own set of issues as they compete, following conflicting external alliances intensify the already existing problem.

Formation of 8 March and 14 March Camps in Lebanon

In general, the two opposing sides, the 14 March alliance which promotes a vision of a Lebanon free of Syrian influence and Hezbollah's power. The 8 March alliance, however on the other hand, has advocated for stronger strategic relations with Syria and has been adamant concerning the preservation of Hezbollah's military weapons, which is perceived as an important shield against the Israeli threat on Lebanon. To consolidate their influence on the domestic and regional levels, the two coalitions use sectarianism as a dividing tool amongst the Lebanese.

Meanwhile, consociationalism according to one camp of scholars, was once a useful model for understanding the nature at which sectarian politics work, nevertheless, it no longer apprehends Lebanon's post-war complexities in this metamorphosed sense. The country's changed political sociology casts doubt on the model's relevance in present day Lebanon, and even more so, how impactful it is as a model for democratic growth in the nation. Furthermore, the theory is of lesser impact in reducing the Lebanese political sectarianism and presenting a complex model for its transformation, given the inconsistencies in debates about the requisites that help consociations succeed and democratise. As a result of the happenings in Lebanon as a whole; social scientists have thought it wise to however propose new democratisation models that can be used to further explain and understand Lebanon's political structure.

The edge of Lebanon's power-sharing system

Lebanon's political system has the tendency of decreasing the rate of conflict from reoccurring; it tends to create division among sectarian lines causing more deterioration of Lebanon's national unity. The power sharing system benefits and favours mostly the sectarian elites, this political elite add those who make the laws and decide how things should be run in the political and economic space off Lebanon. This group of political elites have major influence when it comes to assessing basic needs such as good healthcare job opportunities, education as most of the schools and universities in Lebanon belong to political or religious organisations. Along with the sectarian lines most of virtually all spares of Lebanon's is influenced by sectarianism for example the media is used by political added as a tool to control what is send out to the masses to consume as information on over the years the media outlets of deliberately promote sectarian division as most of these media corporations are owned and run by political elites of various sectarian groups as the media outlet is used as means of influencing their followers on their Personal political ideologies and interests (Baytiyeh 2019). An example of this division is the case of the Minister of Labour submitting a draught document concerning the prohibition of land sales across Various religions in Lebanon so the cabinets. This ban is being enforced in places like the town of "Hadat" which used to be mainly dominated by Christian population but has since experience a growing Muslim majority population. The ban on sales of properties by Christians to Muslims but Muslims in the community who are landowners for half purposes are allowed to rent out or sell their properties (Mroue 2019). The draft article submitted to the cabinet by the Minister of Labour stated that property still should be carried out or done within members of the same religious affiliation for the next 15 years. Another example of a controversial law generating tension and division among Lebanon's inter-consociational system of government is the proposed electoral system also known as "orthodox law". This electoral law states that voting of various elected positions will be as close if carried out by members of that particular sectarian group, for instance the 34 allocated seats for the Maronites in the parliament. Maronite voters are responsible for electing those candidates likewise the other sectarian groups same procedures imply. This electoral law have further led to mistrust on voters from difference of sectarian group in pessimistic on each other's candidates as the principle concerning absolutely freedom of expression when it comes to

Democratic system of voting is absent. Living small upgrade on circuit sectarianism at all levels in Lebanon rather than promoting the Democratic system (Gifanabki 2012). The Orthodox law was supported by the political elite as well as by the religious authorities, which at the end of the proposed orthodox law was approved by the parliamentary committee and is being practised as Lebanon's electoral law.

Lebanon's power-sharing system has generated a high competition amongst political allies with their interest even within the sectarian groups. These political elites do whatever it takes in their power to gain the support of members of their constituencies. Such acts have led to practice of things such as favouritism, as political elites tend to favour they are loyal constituents and as a result of this action others who are not in the favored group imaginary eyes are not being given what we call opportunities as they ought to be given. The role of social economic disparities comes into play as it has widened the gap of class disparity amidst Lebanese society. The power sharing system has in a way cripple the active rule of the state by giving more power to the political elite not in a situation where government as a whole, needs to take actions concerning political consensus on political elites home in most cases put their personal interest above the national interest, the government as an Institute finds it difficult to bring such fellow so book due to the power on influence he has other political elites. According to Bayitieh (2019) the theory of securitization which Ole Waves stated; it is a process whereby us political leaders or community add large shoes what do you perceive to be a straight are going to be a church to society and take action in order to prevent that threat into existence, so naming an issue as a security threat should be handled with immediate effects even if it means outside the political rules. The theory of securitization gives a broader explanation on how political elites create division alongside Syrian lines in order to achieve their personal interests when it comes to matters concerning the organisation of what is of top security issue and how it should be solved. The civil war in the country is a clear example of how they perceive each other as a threat Christians and Muslims acted on it by using extraordinary measures that led to the 15 years civil war political elites have been succeeding in creating search narrative and it's working to their advantage.

Does Lebanon have a foreign policy?

Lebanon as a divided society along sectarian lines with their external sectarian affiliations having so much influence in Lebanon's internal political affairs has led to the nation having turbulence when it comes to their foreign policies as they are constantly being pulled in different sectarian directions which hinders the nation to have a unified foreign policy. Even though over time, there has been agreements concerning the unity of the nation in other words, having the interest of Lebanon as a nation first before sectarian affiliations which an example of such agreement is the National Pact which was discussed in the previous chapter, the National Pact is meant to help the nation stand in one accord not minding the sectarian differences and ensuring that the national principles and values is not abundant. With the strong influence of sectarianism on the Lebanese rather than nationalism, the functioning of Lebanon's foreign policy has been a questionable one for decades now as we try in a way to assess the possibility of a nation rich with sectarian groups and whether or not there is the presence of foreign policy in Lebanon. Scholars, such as Ghassan Salame, have also thrown such crucial questions concerning Lebanon "Is a Lebanese foreign policy possible?" (Salloukh 2015). To be able to examine this open-ended question, it is necessary to travel down the history lane of Lebanon in relation to foreign policies.

Lebanon's foreign policy dilemma can be traced back to the nation's history of independence to note how the contentious issues fracturing into political problems and armed conflict in the history of Lebanon has turned out to be in relations with foreign policy sphere majority of the time instead of domestic politics. Looking at conflicts such as the Civil War in 1958, the outbreak was as a result of influence from the two major power after the Second World War (WWII) when the world system was experiencing a bipolar system, a division between the United States and the Soviet Union, also known as the Cold War between the Western Bloc and the Soviet Union that ended up having a direct effect on Lebanon claiming the fragile unity Lebanon has built being a state with various sectarian group which most of Lebanese allegiance is to their external sectarian alliances not the state of Lebanon. Another external power who played an active

role in Lebanon during this period was Egypt, in between the month of May to October of 1958, the Civil War heated up Lebanon and as the conflict took turn in rebelling against the President Camille Chamoun following his six-years tenor in office as Lebanese Muslims, Druzes and some Christians rebelled against his idea of constitutional amendment which will permit the president a second tenor in office. During this period, the relationship between Lebanon and Egypt was rocky due to Lebanon's refusal to support Egypt when the Suez Canal crisis was going on to the extent of breaking diplomatic alliances with Britain and France. For the lack of support from Lebanon, Egypt under President Nasser fuelled the ongoing rebellion against President Chamoun during that time, by encouraging Muslim supporter in the state of Lebanon to create a very firm opposition against the Lebanese president.

Even after President Chamoun stated his withdrawal surrounding his intention to come back to office for the second tenor, it did not stop the crisis from escalating as Egypt intervention in Lebanon was a contributing influence in the 1958 revolution that took place in Lebanon (Salibi 2006). The 1969 and 1973 conflict between Lebanon and Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO). The growth of PLO in Lebanon resulting in them having such a strong hold was as a result of the Israeli – Palatines conflict after the independence of Israeli in 1948 had a direct effect on Lebanon. During the period of the conflict, most Palestinians lost their lands and prosperities as they migrated to their neighbouring country, which is Lebanon as refugees. The Palestinians however formed a military defence in the name of *fedayeen*, they are Arab guerrillas with the aim of defending Arab states and they operate especially against one of their common enemies in the region, which is the state of Israel (Salibi 2006). These groups of guerrillas manifested into the Palestine Liberation Organization as they created a stronghold in Lebanon to promote the Palestinian identity in fear of their identity going into extinction in the coming future. These resistant armies raised arms against the Maronites in Lebanon during the cold-war era as taking sites by sectarian affiliations during the cold war. Over the years, Lebanon's civil war has created some irreversible gaps in their foreign relations with regional super powers surrounding Lebanon such as Syria, Israel, and Egypt including the western world, scholars have one way or the other attempt answering a very

crucial question in regarding the Civil War, as to whether or not the war is domestic or it was domesticized which led to the gap Lebanon faces when it comes to the nation's foreign relations and these conflicting perspective has led to the absence of a united foreign policy in the nation (Hitti 1989). As the chapter continues, the standing of these key actors in Lebanon will be looked into in depth and the foreign relations of the European Union and that of Lebanon as well.

CHAPTER III

Aspects shaping or hindering Lebanon's Foreign Policy

The study of Lebanon's foreign policy requires some measures to be put in place due to the Lebanese state being a very diverse society with numerous sectarian groups whose allegiance is to their external sectarian affiliation be it regionally or internationally rather than the state of Lebanon and its national interest. Measures to consider is the regional contested power by the influential powers alone in the Middle East region in the state affairs of Lebanon, which makes the sovereignty of the nation vulnerable. Being geographically located at the heart of the region, Lebanon is also a strategic position for not just the regional superpowers but also international super powers do not hesitate in showing interest when it comes to Lebanon's strategic location in the Middle East region. One will think the state of Lebanon should be at an advantageous side due to its important position in the region but it is not the case in Lebanon's situation; rather, it opened more doors into Lebanon's fragile system of government and for decades now, the state has not experienced absolute sovereignty as an independent state.

A very critical and important measure to put in place when it comes to Lebanon's foreign policy in a state divided by sectarian lines is, who is going to have a major influence in deciding the nation's foreign policies. When it comes to political positions held in hierarchical order, the president who is elected from the Maronite community would want to have a great deal of influence concerning the nation's foreign policies which will also be in favour to its sectarian group, likewise the position of the Prime Minister who is a Sunni Muslim and also the Shia Muslims will want to have a major say in the state's affairs even though it occupies the position of the Speaker of Parliament and the growing power together with influence Hezbollah is having in the state of Lebanon. Over the years especially after Lebanon's Civil War, the demography of the state has shifted and it's drastically shifting as time goes on and Lebanon has witnessed a growing population of the Shia sectarian group in comparison to other sectarian groups in the nation. With these measures being put into consideration, having a united foreign policy will be difficult, as power struggle amongst the sectarian

groups will play out on influencing the decisions the state is likely to make on other states which each sectarian group might want to give preference to the external affiliation and by doing so, there will be clashes of interest. Furthermore, it is obvious that political intersection is bound to happen between the domestic and foreign policies in Lebanon considering the absence of national consensus on numerous strategic issues in the state. (Salloukh 2015).

Lebanon's bipolar culture is another factor examined in terms of the nation's foreign policies. Having two identities which are absolute in Lebanon has contributed a great deal in shaping Lebanon's politics in various ways. These exclusive identities which are Lebanonism and Pan-Arabism have aided in eliciting some conflicts the nation has experienced over the years and also rendering some of the crisis unsolvable leading to the national divide the nation faces at the expense of its domestic and foreign policies. This however shows the difficulties in tracing the historical model of Lebanon's foreign policies that shaped the nation leading to the state's contemporary foreign policies (Najem 2007). The fundamental concept of Lebanonism which aims at the neutrality of Lebanon as well as doing everything within the state's power to maintain the Lebanese status quo by championing a constituency dominated by the Maronite identity and cultural system which draws its historical inspiration from *Phoenicianism* (an ancient cultural civilization from the Mediterranean and Canaanites). It takes pride in thousands of years of history, looking to the Mediterranean and beyond to the West, with which it shares cultural and political affinities, while relegating Arabness in Lebanese society (Salameh 2020). The preservation of this historical heritage is one of the reasons that shows Lebanese lack of foreign policy is not a contemporary issue but it's way back centuries and the nation's history of civilization in terms of historical settlement.

The brotherhood between Lebanon and Syria

For decades, Syria has been a dominant external player in Lebanese politics especially during Lebanon's Civil War in 1975 and the post war era. It says, 'whenever it rains in Syria, the Lebanese have to open their umbrellas'. This saying goes to show how close and deep the connection between Lebanon and Syria are and how Syria is seen as a big brother to Lebanon with no hesitation in

playing its big brother role. The tie that binds Lebanon and Syria runs deep as Lebanon was once part of Syria but as a result of colonial design by the French mandate, it was separated at birth following the establishment of the two states by the French mandate at the end of First World War (WW1). With such a bond and shared history, both nations share similar societal structures like having various sectarian groups, mixed regions, having homogeneous cultures and values. Being a regional hegemon in the Middle East, Syria plays a significant role in the happenings in the region particularly the political aspect of it. Lebanon is one of those nations in the region in which Syria has and might continue to have a notable influence on the nation's internal political affairs as we've seen over decades and due to how great of an influence Syria is to Lebanon, two of the nation's strong political coalitions were formed as a result of the presence of Syria in Lebanon. Syrian interests became a priority in Lebanon as Syria got deeply involved in the internal affairs of the state and in the long run, their interest took precedence over Lebanese sovereignty. Syria began to exhibit colonial behaviour towards Lebanon instead of an intervention to restore peace and stability during the Lebanese Civil War as they witness an 'Alawite Ghazi Kan'an who served within the period of 1982 until 2002 as the head of Syrian military intelligence in Lebanon, and Rustum Ghazali who was his Sunni deputy and successor, began behaving like the colonial high commissioners (Harris 2005). The Syrian regime was so involved in Lebanon's political affairs to the level at which they make decisions and strategically chose people who would fill the highest positions in the Lebanese government making sure Syria's interest is not being compromised. overseeing Lebanon's foreign policy was paramount for Syria as a regional hegemon, making sure other regional great powers such as the state of Israel doesn't have so much influence on Lebanon knowing that it's a strategic state in the Middle East. More than anything, Syria was extremely concerned about the presence of Israel in Lebanon as it witnessed how complicated the Civil War situation became when Israel invaded the southern part of Lebanon in 1978 as Syria feared the Lebanese might turn their backs against Syria and side with the Israelis knowing how influential Israel can be on Lebanon. Syria did everything within its power to tighten up their presence in Lebanon so as to prevent its rival state from having a stronghold just as it did with one of the major powers in the Middle East which is none other than Egypt during the Camp David accord 1978.

The Camp David Accords which paved the way for Egypt-Israel peace making was an important moment that brought a major setback in the Arab World and left them feeling betrayed by a super power they look up to in the region, so Syria was left with no choice than to prevent a strong Israeli encroachment on Lebanon and other external powers who were highly interested in Lebanon. The Syrian regime did all it could do to make sure the Lebanese foreign policy is to their advantage as the influence of Syria on Lebanon went as far as interfering in the state's national elections with Syria aiding in rigging elections as Lebanon experience parliamentary figures having close association with the Syrian regime of President Bashar al-Assad made their way back to occupying parliamentary seats. Party's such as *Amal* Movement had always had the Syrian regime's support since formation in 1974, so when it comes to national elections (Perry 2018). The Amal Movement in a way has the assistance of Syria to gain a good number of seats in the parliament and the party has maintained a close relationship with Syria as well. Another party who over the years has enjoyed the support of the Syrian regime as it has grown over the decades to have a stronghold in Lebanon is Hezbollah, reason being that Hezbollah as well armed militia is a key player for Syria in fighting or blocking Israel's interference in Lebanon. Over the decades, Hezbollah took part in fighting Arab - Israeli Wars (Perry 2018). Syria also pushed hard for the extension of Laloud's term in office as the president, after his 6-year tenure they wanted 3year added to his time in office due to how cooperative Laloud was to Syria's military interest being that one of his main achievement was to push out Israel's 22 years military occupation in Lebanon and with such achievement Laloud became a very close ally with Syria. With Syria having such an influence on Lebanon's politics, the Lebanese politicians compete amongst themselves to be in favour with Beirut. Syria was also known for its role in smuggling protection rackets to their Lebanese ally's is one-way Syria strengthens and maintains its influence in the state and the rate at which Syrian workers gain employment in Lebanon provides Syria with essential access to outside financial networks with an economic lifeline.

A year following the eruption of the Lebanese Civil War in 1975, the Syrian troops made their way as a region hegemon into Lebanon in 1976 and as

years went by, Syrian forces continue to remain on Lebanese soil even after the Civil War was over despite redeployment obligations made in the 1989 Ta'if agreement, Syrian troops had the support of George H.W. Bush administration as it tacitly allowed Syria to stabilise its western neighbour (Harris 2005). About 30,000 Syrian soldiers were still on ground in Lebanon for years even during the Post Civil War era, though this number subsequently decreased as Syria gained confidence in the success of their intelligence and security penetrating the state of Lebanon as it further secures its presence in Lebanon by both nations signing a treaty regarding brotherhood, coordination and cooperation in Damascus 22nd May 1992 following Syria's position as hegemon in the region. As time went on, Lebanon's establishment of multiparty has since coalesced into two alliances named after pivotal events, which took place in 2005. This alliance, the 'March 8th and March 14th' blocs was formed as a result of the event surrounding Syria's role in Lebanon's internal affairs even during the postwar era. This however, is also a contributing factor to Lebanon not having unified foreign relations with Syria which also in the long run, both camps might still not back down from their political standing.

The March 14th alliance is a formation of various political parties and independent coalition consisting of the following political bodies, the Hariri Future Current, Walid Jumblat leader of Progressive Socialist Party allied with the March 14 bloc, Lebanese Forces as well as Phalangists also joined the March 14 camp and thereafter, General Michel Aoun's leader of the Free Patriotic Movement joined the alliance but later decamped to join the opposing alliance. This coalition was launched against Syria on the bases of Lebanon's liberation from Syria's strong influence the Lebanese internal affairs in 2005. The March 14 alliance is also named after the "Cedar Revolution" which the revolution was instigated by the assassination of Lebanon's former Prime Minister Rafik Al-Hariri on the 14th of February 2005. The unification of March 14 coalition had a firm stand as an anti-Syrian alliance united by a common threat, having experienced a heavy influence of Syria on Lebanese internal politics after their military intervention in June 1976 during Lebanon's Civil War. March 14 bloc is led by Saad Al Hariri aimed at maintaining the status quo of Lebanon such as rights and freedom of individuals, structural reforms, rule of law and having free

competitive markets while March 8th alliance is also a coalition of political parties in Lebanon, parties mainly controlled by Hezbollah and Amal Movement. Tayyar Al-Marada and Tashnaq also belong to the March 8 bloc (Hadad 2009). It is also known to be the ruling coalition in Lebanon following the outcome of the 2005 elections, the bloc had about 44 percent of the parliament with the number of 59 members of parliament out of the total number of 128 parliamentary seats. The result of this election was however a theoretical indicator of the next election that will be held, meaning that, the March 8 fraction led by Hezbollah would in a way have legal right to above 13 ministers out of 30 next national unity government which will be in favour of the Hezbollah led fraction towards gaining veto power as 11 ministers is the required number. With Hezbollah gaining political grounds in Lebanon and its alliance with the Free Patriotic, it is no doubt the balance of power in the Lebanese government will be to the advantage of Hezbollah. As time went on, the power shift worked to the advantage of the March 8 coalition. From the period between June 2011 until March of 2013, was majorly controlled by the March 8 bloc, with preference of having open relations alongside seeking financial aid from eastern countries under sanction such as Iran, one of its measure external ally. The March 8th alliance stands to be an opposition to the March 14th alliance as well as being pro-Syrian, acknowledging the presence of Syria in Lebanon as they stated how the presence of Syria has aided to end the Lebanese Civil War and the stabilisation Syria has helped restore in Lebanon after the 1975 Civil War. March 14 and March 8 alliance, were created due to the strong influence of Syria in Lebanon even after the Post Civil War era. Considering Syria as a hegemon in the Middle East region, it was and still is able to interfere in Lebanon's internal affairs. With both blocs having different dynamics in terms of Syria's presence in the state. Due to this, the socio-political life of Lebanon has been divided into two rivalry factions. Until this present day, Lebanon's broken party system comprises different collections of political parties representing their various confessional factions to differing degrees. The influence of Syria in the state of Lebanon caused a bipolar system in the political affairs of the state for the past decades. Political tension between March 14 and March 8 blocs hasn't been resolved; rather, tension keeps growing amidst Lebanon's internal politics.

The presence of Syria in Lebanon was becoming a deteriorating situation, as there was a continuous internal divide amongst the two major blocs in the state. Not withholding both states' shared historical background along with Syria's big brother role, past events kept unfolding as pressure was on Syria to leave the state of Lebanon. These events however have been the shaping factors of Lebanon and Syria relationship as it determines the state of their future engagements. April 2005 was a turning point for the Lebanese and Syrians as Syrian forces exist. Lebanon has been in the state after nearly three decades of occupation. Syria's military occupation was legitimised in the 1991 May 22nd Treaty of Brotherhood, even though Syria recognized Lebanon's sovereignty as a state, the treaty was an explicit invitation by the Lebanese for Syria to have access to its state internal affairs and in a way, dominating the sovereignty of Lebanon itself as it was given the rights to interfere in key issues of the state. For instance, in the case of Rafik Hariri he was elected as Prime Minister in 1992 with the support of Saudi Arabia, due to how actively involved Syria was in Lebanese internal politics, Syria accepted Hariri as a Prime Minister but also gave him conditions in order for them to have a cordial relationship. Hariri was to respect Syria's special brotherhood relationship with Lebanon following the Taif Agreement, another condition he had to put in place is accepting the military presence of Syria in Lebanon, Syria was able to use its power as they succeed in separating Lebanese economic affairs and that of the military as they put themselves in the position of heading the military affairs with Ghazi Kanaan who belongs to the Alawite sectarian group became the head of Syrian military intelligence in Lebanon as he served from the period of 1982 until 2002 as he took military orders direct from Syria in order to implement it on Lebanese soil, While Hariri was to focus on economic aspect.

The 2005 assassination of Rafik Al-Hariri was a turning point in Lebanon which made a huge mark in the Lebanese-Syrian relationship as it left the Syrian regime in a position where its significant influence on Lebanon's political affairs began to weaken as a cascade of Syria's accusations regarding Hariri's assassination led to international pressure for Syria's exit as history repeat itself making anti-Syrian Lebanese point fingers to Syria as prime suspect for the assassination as it did back in 1989 in the case former president Rene Moawad which it was said that, as a result of his refusal to accept the terms and conditions

of Syria while in office was what led to his assassination 22nd November 1989 (Rainovich 1990) Syria's miscalculations was the fact Syria kept pushing and energized opposition as Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's in August 2004 mount pressure on Lebanon's sitting president Elias Hrawi to serve a second term. The escalation of diplomatic sanctions was facilitated by a misreading of the international climate. The assassination of former Prime Minister Rafik al-Hariri on February 14, 2005 sparked a wave of anti-Syrian animosity as the event was followed by an intense decision for Syrian troops existing Lebanon following pressure from both internal and international community. This event had a major impact on Syria as it did on Lebanon having depended on Syrian regime on most military matters and its influence in the state internal and external affairs, it was a hard time for the pro-Syrians in Lebanon and on the other hand, Syrian regime's internal stability and regional reputation for decades depended on its command of Lebanon to stay relevant as a regional hegemon in the Middle East. Having lost command alongside influence on Lebanese soil, it felt like a blow to the Syrian regime, as it could be a psychological turning point for Bashar al-Assad, which might be an indicator of a further breakdown of his authority (Harris 2005).

The escalation of the Arab Spring starting from December 2010 was another event that threatened and still threatens the role of Syria as a hegemon in the Middle East region. The Arab Spring became a turning point in the Arab world as citizens of various Arab nations demanded in protest for change in regimes, economic freedom, human rights, democratic states and the unemployment rate. Syria was not excluded in this event as the Syrian revolution began in March 2011 trying to overthrow and the Syrian regime lost major political influence in Lebanon. With Syria not having much power leverage on Lebanese state affairs, Najib Miqati former Prime Minister who came into office from the period of June 2011 and February 2014, looking at how the conflict in Syria went on for some time, Miqati implement a policy called the "dissociation policy" with the intention of making sure Lebanon was kept out of the Syria's regional war and protecting the state as well. Within the period Miqati served as the prime minister, politics of the state witnessed the deepening schism between Hezbollah and the Future Movement which aided in weakening Lebanon's central administration. As a result of the deep political friction, the Syrian-Lebanese

border became a gateway that neither the Lebanese nor the Syrian regime could control as it became a conduit used for smuggling weapons and Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) fighters. Due to lack of both Lebanon and Syria's government presence at the border, it eventually paved a way for Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) presence as they gained a strong foothold on the Lebanese-Syrian border. Their presence prompted Hezbollah to act by launching a strong and direct military operation in Syria following their intercession in the conflict. The conflict in Syria created a huge instability in the country, as citizens are unable to go about their normal lives without fear of being attacked by Islamic State of Iraq and Levant (ISIL) members; the terrorist organization however fought Hezbollah at the Lebanese-Syrian border and eventually took hold of the border. With having so much control over the border, it gave ISIL easy access to operate between Lebanon and Syria with no hesitation as ISIL carried series of suicide attacks within areas which are predominantly controlled by Hezbollah in Lebanon (Macaron 2017). This however, had a drastic effect on Syria's economy, political and social lives of people in Syria. As the situation grew worse in Syria, Lebanon began to experience high inflow in Syrian refugees. The continuous inflow of Syrian refugees became an issue in the internal affairs of Lebanon as most Lebanese politicians feared history repeating itself like during the Israel-Palestine conflict when Lebanon experienced the flood of Palestinian refugees which led to a great shift in Lebanon's demography and with how fragile the central state system is, experiencing another demographic shift is not a good idea for the Lebanon. In February 2014, Tammam Salam took over the position of the Prime Minister from Miqati. Miqati, who was perceived as a threat by Hariri as a result of his affiliation with the Syrian regime, it was no doubt that he is a pro-Syrian supporter. With the growing tension in Lebanon, because of the situation Miqati was facing a lot of pressure from the Future Movement and Hezbollah because of the state of nature of the state and also trying to manage every so as to avoid any outbreak of conflict as a result of its relationship with Syria. Following Miqati's resignation letter, it created an opportunity for Salam to rise into power as a moderate Lebanese politician who had the support of Lebanese and at the same time benefited from Saudi Arabia's assistance. After been elected to serve as a neutral party in the political affair, claims were made concerning Salam in regards to him having a closer than normal relationship with Saudi by former President

Hassan Rouhani and Michel Suleiman but on the other hand, this claim were dismissed and ignored by Hezbollah and Aoun (Macaron 2017).

The Lebanese and Syrian relationship continues to be an estrange relationship, with two main situations which has till date hinders Lebanon as a unified state to have a foreign policy towards Syria, one of the issue is the case of Rafik Hariri's assassination which has been ongoing for over a decade with neither Syria or Lebanon's Hezbollah taking responsibilities of bringing the alleged perpetrators to justice even with phone calls discovery linked to some members of Hezbollah, the leader of Hezbollah is doing all in his power not to bring his members forward with the backing of Syria. The ongoing conflict in Syria is another situation having a direct effect on Lebanon as the inflow of Syrian refugees continues to create a demographic shift in the nation as the Shia sect keeps growing numerically and Hezbollah gaining more political grounds in parliament. Leading them to have so much power on the decision making of the state which over the years, Lebanon has witness growing ally between the Maronites' Presidents and Hezbollah just for Maronites to gain political favours from Hezbollah since the group turned political party continues to grow its power and influence in both Lebanon and Syria.

With Lebanon now facing tremendous economic, political and social crisis in recent years till date, the Lebanese present situation has in a way given way for Syria as one who once had great influence over the state to once again step into the Lebanese state affairs. Even though the Lebanese government for almost a decade had tried to distance association with the Syrian regime due to the outbreak of Civil War in Syria as a result of the 2010 Arab Spring, till date the Syrian regime is under threat by the conflict in Syria. The ongoing Lebanese crisis is seen as an opportunity for Syria not only to restore its influence in Lebanon but also an opportunity to regain hegemonic position in the region. With the ongoing economic crisis in Lebanon, the government plans to strike a deal in regards to importing natural gas and electricity and Syria has opted to take responsibility for allowing the transmission of gas from Egypt as well as that of electricity from Jordan to Lebanon through the Syrian territory. The action by the Syrian regime will make Syria a broker to Lebanon and once again gives the Syrian regime

leverage towards the Lebanese, and to the advantage of Syria, it will gain legitimacy to assess Lebanon's internal affairs regarding the present situation. Even though Syria has been under the United States sanction following the prohibition of any form of official transaction alongside the 'Caesar Syria civilian protection Act 2019' which the sanction is as a result of the human right violations during the ongoing Syrian conflict (Congress.Gov 2019). Both the Syrian regime and Syrian president Bashar Assad are faced with this sanction following war crimes against the Syrian population. but the sanction did not hinder the United States from approving Syria's offer to step in to aid the Lebanese by offering to use their border in transmitting gas from Egypt and electricity from Jordan to Lebanon. With Syria's offer to Lebanon as both parties hold meetings with high delegates in order to achieve solutions affecting the economic crisis in Lebanon, these actions are likely to strengthen the relations Syria has with Lebanon.

Lebanon's relations with Israel

Israel, as one of the major powers in the Middle East region, shares a border with Lebanon on the southern part of Lebanese territory. Israel is one of states in the region that Lebanon has a cordial relationship with, as the Maronite sectarian group in Lebanon have a shared religion/ethnic history with Israel in a region surrounded by Arab Muslims. This prompted and further led to strengthening the ties between the Maronites in Lebanon and the state of Israel with the aim of preserving their identity in the region. Most studies however, attribute the close relationship between Israel and Maronites as one that is seen to be dated back even before the 1975 Lebanese Civil War. The ties between Maronites and Jews in Palestine was seen to be established as early as the 1930s, persisted into the 1940s, leading to the relationship between them attaining its peak in the years immediately prior, shortly after, the creation of the state of Israel was done in 1948, following the formation of the state, it began to build the state's regional policies tapping out possible allies in the region and Lebanon was one of Israel's ally having a Maronite president was a win situation for Israel towards Lebanon and also Israel did not hesitate to build up defence conceptions, knowing the fact that they are surrounded by enemies, Israel wasted no time in mapping out a defence strategy even though it was just beginning to mature as a state in the region. As time progressed in the region, Lebanon and Israel continued

to create deeper connections, making sure the relationship between them and the Lebanese Maronite community grew stronger with the progression of time (Zisser 1995). During the 1975 civil war in Lebanon, the war became a window of opportunity for Israel, which eventually led to increased Israeli engagement in Lebanon as the Lebanese witnessed Israel's military invasion pushing through the North to occupy west Beirut to support mainly the Maronites Christians in the southern part of Lebanon. One of Israel's targets was the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) which fled Palestine and became refugees in Lebanon and created an army that will fight Israel and its allies. In 1982 there was an operation called the "Peace of Galilee operation", which was created to combat Israel's growing threat in Lebanon which is none other than the Palestinian Liberation Organization, found it footing in the Lebanese society and its activities was becoming a threat to Israel as tension grew along the border between Lebanon and Israel in 1970s and early 1980s. while a ceasefire was declared in July 1981, it did not hinder the continuation of attacks as activities of PLO in Lebanon was on the increase and a call for action as PLO progress and grew strong to the extend it influence was beginning to reflect on Lebanese society as well as gaining political impact in Lebanon The PLO, which had founded an informal state-within-a-state in Lebanon after being pushed out of Jordan in 1970, did not relent in carrying out terrorist attacks including firing of rockets against Israeli civilian targets in Israel and overseas as Shlomo Argov, Israel's ambassador to the United Kingdom became a victim of the terrorist attack as he was shot and critically injured by the Palestinian Abu Nidal organization on June 3, 1982 (Lorch 2009).

With Israel' Defense Forces launching the military operation 'Peace of Galilee' in Lebanon on June 6, 1982, with the initiative having the goal of removing military threats especially terrorist activities going on in the southern part of Lebanon which is also sharing border with Israel from the northern part. Defeating PLO forces was one of the aims of the operations and these terrorist activities in a way tighten Lebanon's relationship with Israel and with Israel's invasion of southern Lebanon, during the Civil War. Palestinian Liberation was able to be forced out of Lebanon through the aid of Israel's Defense Forces, terminating Syrian influence on Lebanon was another goal of the operation, even though it wasn't achievable as at 1982, it aid in creating the deeply divide along

two camps which is the March 8 alliance an anti-Syrian movement of wanting Syrian troops out of Lebanon and also March 14 alliance which is in support of the presence of Syria in Lebanon. Aiming at assisting in the formation of a more favourable government in Lebanon was important and strategic so as to enable its capability of signing a peace treaty with Israel. Having a high level of influence on the Lebanese government as at that period of time led Israel attempting to build a new order in Lebanon by establishing a regime based predominantly on the Maronite sectarian group who are known for their allegiance towards the state of Israel. The active military and political involvement of Israel in Lebanon, most especially during the disastrous years of Lebanon being at its peak in the ongoing Civil War within the period of 1982 to 1985, ignited a critical public debate in Israel (Zisser 1995). This debate however sparked an attempt to understand the roots and need of Israel's involvement in Lebanon, particularly the political conception on which it was founded and whether or not the influence of Israel will reflect on the Lebanese government, which the state of Israel will need as an ally in a region such as the Middle East where it is dominated by Islamic states as these factor is one of the reasons Israel was pushing hard to have the major influence on Lebanese politics in order to have a large Christian representation in the Lebanese government. Most studies tend to see the roots of Israel's involvement through the military lens. With the fact both states share borders, when it comes to military involvement, it becomes the burden and responsibilities of the two states because a military threat to one is a threat to both which Lebanon and Israel had always had history especially when it comes to Palestinian refugees who became a threat to Lebanon as a result of them fleeing from Palestine during their territorial conflict with Israel. This shows how the relationship between Jews and Maronites evolved during this period, which lasted until the collapse of Israel's involvement in Lebanon as attacks became heavy on Israel's military leading to an increase in casualties, which resulted in the failure of Israel's involvement in Lebanon through Operation Peace of Galilee in regards to creating a government which will be in full support of Israel's peace treaty and with the formation of Lebanon's political system, it is close to impossible for the government to be united in supporting any external power be it regional or international. Following Israel not being able to fulfil its goal, it was persuaded by the new national coalition government, which came into power in 1984,

requesting the immediate pull out of Israel's military in Lebanon. Even though Israel did not withdraw its entire troops from the border as some were left behind to assist the people living in the southern part of Lebanon in order to keep patrolling the Security Zone in order to prevent any form of terrorist infiltration into Israel, it is a small strait of land near Israel's border serving as a crucial tripwire for Israeli settlements around that area, following the location of the area which isn't a distance from the border (Lorch 2009).

In July of 2006, Lebanon and Israel's relationship became more complex following the attack by Hezbollah on the border between Lebanon and Israel and further splitting into Israel's territory with both military and civilian casualties. This conflict was termed the second Lebanon war as Hezbollah had a big hit launching rockets on Israel's residential areas. Israel on the other hand was able to fire back by sending airstrikes to Beirut which landed on civilians. The 34-days war was a massive loss on both camps, military and civilian wise. This event was a turning point in the relationship between the two states as it caused more diplomatic drift amongst them, with Hezbollah now having more influence in the Lebanese government alongside the society, the Maronites who are supporters of Israel were in a dilemma and did not want to involve themselves in the crossfire between Israel and Hezbollah which in the long run put a strain in the relationship between the Maronites and Jews. The war escalated and drew international attention as numerous of meetings were held concerning a ceasefire and after series of negotiations involving the United Nations, Lebanon and Israel was able to come to a consensus as both Israel and Hezbollah accepted the resolution passed by the United Nations called Resolution 1701 following the agreement to ceasefire on the 14th of August 2006 (Luft 2000). So far on the border region between Lebanon and Israel, the United Nations peacekeeping force is present on the border as well as the Israel Defence Force but Hezbollah does not have an official presence on the border in accordance with resolution 1701. Even with the resolution, Lebanon and Israel are always on guard due to the fragile nature of the region when it comes to conflicts and not having a strong political tie with each other.

In recent years, Lebanon and Israel have maintain a cordial relationship even though Israel seems not to have a strong influence on Lebanese political affairs as it used to three to four decades back, the relationship between the Maronites and Jews isn't as it close as it used to be back in the 1960s, 70s and early 80s. Over the years Maronites have moved towards having a closer relationship with Hezbollah than their external sectarian affiliation with Israeli due to the growing influence Hezbollah has not only in Lebanon but also spreading its impact on parts of the region through their military strength especially in the case of Syria who have been facing more than a decade Civil War with Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, Hezbollah has shown solidarity with the Syrian regime by sending fighters and military aids to help combat ISIS in Syria. With the growing power of Hezbollah, the relationship between Lebanon and Israel might not exceed beyond a cordial one looking at the history Hezbollah has with Israel (Makdisi 2016).

Another event unfolding between Lebanon and Israel which is bringing them to the negotiating table, is the discovery of oil and gas in the Mediterranean as indirect talks commence over marine boundaries between both states with the US being the mediator. The ongoing border dispute on the eastern Mediterranean Sea is a conflict that both states need to come up with a solution for, following Lebanon's state of economy and also its beneficial factors to Israel. This issue is of great importance to both parties who have been in a state of war for years, in order to commence drilling gas from the sea by foreign companies, the need to know each state's boundary is crucial and United State have given Lebanon and Israel till March of 2022 to generate a common ground on the issues. Lebanese President Michel Aoun is caught up in a complicated position in the ongoing situation being a Maronite Christian as a fraction of his sectarian group are supporters of Israel but on the other hand, his political affiliation leans more towards Hezbollah and Hezbollah seeing itself as a resistant group especially towards Israel following historical conflict, Aoun will have to compromise his Hezbollah allies and come to terms with Israel taking out an open position, as making a deal is necessary for Lebanon at the moment due to the state of their economy, they will have to set aside their conflict and come up with an agreement that both Lebanon and Israel will be satisfied with in the long run. So far, Lebanon and Israel have managed to maintain stability in their relationship with the aid of

Resolution 1701 as a contentment policy at their border and at the same time Lebanon has stated out Israel's violation of airspace with its continuous airstrikes on Syria using the Lebanese airspace (Daily Sabah 2021). Moving forward, Lebanon and Israel will always have a form of relationship be it directly or indirectly and as the saying goes, "whatever happens in the Middle East region has an impact on Lebanon" as a nation in the heart of the region, having sectarian affiliations with external powers which Lebanese lean more to their external sectarian affiliations than Lebanese nationality.



Figure 2 Discovered gas and oil in the Mediterranean between Lebanon and Israel (Sabah 2021).

Lebanon's relationship with the Iranian regime

Iran has appeared to be the most dominant external power in Lebanese society, having decades of influence in both society and political affairs of Lebanon dating back it has withstood its long-standing influence in Lebanon. Over the years Shiite community in Lebanon has become the largest growing sectarian group out of the 18 recognized sectarians' group, having long religious and political relations with Iran which is one of the Hegemony in the Middle East regions. Many Lebanese Shiite clerics trace back their place of birth in Iran and are strongly affiliated with Iran to which most of them are trained by Iranians. In 1974, Lebanon's first Shiite leader Musa al-Sadr, an Iranian born whose family settled in Lebanon but had a strong and significant tie with Iranian roots, being a leader, Sadr established a movement called "Disinherited Movement" he created it

with the aim of seeking assistance from Iran towards Lebanese Shiites. As the movement grew, the establishment of an armed wing known as Amal in 1974 during the civil war in Lebanon but later disarmed and Amal became a political party despite Sadr vanished during his trip to Libya in 1978, till date, *Amal* is one out of two major Shiite political party in Lebanon (Hokayem 2010). With Iran having such a strong representation in Lebanon, it was no doubt that their presence and impact on Lebanon was going to be felt by the Lebanese society. During the Lebanese Civil War, Iran just like other external sectarian powers in the region who came to the aid of their sectarian affiliated groups, Iran did not hesitate to step in and send aid to the Shiites in Lebanon. After the invasion of Israel during the Lebanese Civil War in 1982, which said to have opened a new chapter during the war and Iran took the opportunity and initiated the idea of building a resistant army towards Israel in Lebanon came to be and the birth of Hezbollah militants became a reality in Lebanon in the year 1985 from the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps 27th Brigade (IRGC). The act of sending military forces to resist Israel's invasion and defend Islam as well, expanded Iran's religious and military influence not only in Lebanon but also in the Middle East region as a whole.

Not long after Iran aided the formation of Hezbollah in 1982, the relations between Iran and Lebanon were changed towards a different dimension and became deeper as Hezbollah kept growing into a potent militia and a significant deterrence to Israel during its invasion in Lebanon as credit of the success of the militant group is to be given to Iran following Iran's heavy operational presence and financial backing which Iran does not delay in sending to Hezbollah. Following the symbolic and strategic victories the Lebanese Shiite militia group has had against Israel, these have however continued to elevate Iran to a central role in Lebanese politics and has widened Iran's respect throughout the Arab world. Over the years Hezbollah has also supported Iran's external efforts in the region.

The 15-years Lebanon's Civil War came to an end and most militant groups were disarmed with the exception of Hezbollah who is seen as a resistant group towards Israel were not disarmed as Israel is been perceived as a threat in

the region, the Iranians who have become heavily involved in Lebanese politics was able to influence the government in other for Hezbollah to keep its arms. Mid 2000 Hezbollah experienced the dilemma of just being a military group and with the war now over, they began to think of widening their presence in Lebanon beyond just being a militant group or know as Israel's resistant group and in debating future position in Lebanon moving forward as a group, they encounter severe internal dispute about whether or not to focus and be actively involved in Lebanon's internal political affairs or retain their resistance status in Lebanon and the Middle East at large (Zisser 2011). Hezbollah however with the aid of Iran's involvement in Lebanese politics gained legitimacy in Lebanon through resisting Israel as the Lebanese Shiite community embraced their ideologies alongside their set of institutions claiming the presence of the militant group will serve as a deterrent to Israel's aggression to many Lebanese living at the shared border between Lebanon and Israel and with that, they became a strong political party over the years and had a significant number and positions in the Lebanese parliament seats. Some anti-Hezbollah groups who opposed Hezbollah in becoming a political party and were still armed were met with a counter opposition statement of Hezbollah's formal legal authority, Iranian leader Ali Khamenei, who did everything within his power to ensure the party announces and laid more emphasis on the task of liberation was still incomplete until Israel leaves Lebanon (Hokayem 2010).

As much as Hezbollah is heavily sponsored and supported by Iranians, which they Iranians use as tools to influence Lebanese politics, this does not mean it keys into Iran's interest all the time as they also want to be perceived as a sovereign Lebanese political party. Nevertheless, Lebanese Shiites value Iran's assistance in pressuring Israel's total withdrawal from the border. However, Hezbollah holds a wide range of opinions about Iran as a political model, with many of the group's members expressing reservations concerning Hezbollah's long-term political ambitions (Hokayem 2010). Due to Iran's influence on Hezbollah in Lebanon, the political party has found it difficult to create an image for itself without being linked to Iran be it domestic or regional reputation.

With the current economic situation in Lebanon, the Iranian regime has not hesitated to render a helping to the Lebanese government despite sanctions being placed on them by the United States, Iran is under U.S sanction due to Iran's nuclear weapon program and sponsoring group which the U.S have tagged as terrorist organizations such as Hezbollah, Palestine Islamic Jihad, Hamas, Houthis in Yemen as well as the Shiite militants in Iraq and other Shiite organizations in the region. However, this sanctions did not stop Iran from stepping in the Lebanese situation as Hossein Amir-Abollahian, Iran's foreign minister, offered to assist Lebanon's government with the electricity crisis the Lebanese society has been facing "the construction of two power plants in under 18 months" (Al-monitor 2021) was proposed by the minister in order to overcome the electricity crisis which has interrupted day to day public life knowing that electricity is a basic amenity and essential to human livelihood and activities as the situation has been a threat to Lebanese government. Abdallah Bou-Habib Iranian minister, stated the readiness of Iranian enterprises will not delay in assisting to rebuild Beirut Port, following the 2020 explosion that virtually brought down Beirut Port to a complete pile of ash beyond recognition. The Iranian regime has always maintained an amicable relation with the Lebanese government which is highly influenced by Hezbollah. Hezbollah has been accused of intervening in Lebanon's internal affairs more than the government itself to the extent of joking about who the real leader of Lebanon is referring to Hassan Nasrallah the leader of Hezbollah due to how influential Hezbollah is in Lebanon. With Hezbollah dominating the Lebanese system, it is no doubt that Iran's political and religious relations with Lebanon will continue to grow moving into the future.

Lebanon's relationship with Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia being a hegemon in the Middle East region, always had an influence on Lebanese society and its political space at large. The relationship between Lebanon and Saudi Arabia is a very significant relationship as Saudi is one of the hegemons in the region that stands as a peace broker in Lebanon's political affairs. Having sectarian affiliation, the Lebanese Sunni are highly influenced by Saudi Arabia who is a Sunni power in the region and Saudi does not hesitate to show support to Lebanon be it economic, political or religious wise. The relationship between these two states came to be as a result of the prominent

families in both states. The House of Saud's strong relationship with the Hariris in Lebanon has long been the epitome of what Lebanon and Saudi shares, even though the Saudi dynasty's ties with Lebanon can be traced back to the period of the collapse of the Ottoman Empire in the twentieth century, Saad Hariri a Lebanese who moved to Saudi and worked/has business with a construction company named "Oger" in Riyadh. His good works gained him a good reputation with Saudi royals. Joining Lebanese politics, Hariri had the full support of Saudi Arabia (Kebbi 2021). Lebanon benefits greatly from Saudi in the aspect of economy because as a result of their relationship, it opened doors for other Gulf nations to develop relationships with Lebanon throughout time and Lebanon being in a strategic location in the Middle East having good tourist attraction considering it a destination for vacations, education as well, foreign investments were flowing into Lebanon, following the nation's banking and financial sector. One key important factor of Saudi relationship with Lebanon is the fact they extend their support to not just the Sunni community in Lebanon but Maronites and other sectarian groups have benefited from Saudi Arabia.

Saudi Arabia played a very vital role during the Lebanese Civil War, being a peace broker as well as sending financial aid to the Lebanese government. Saudi Arabia became the safe haven for Lebanese civilians during the Civil War as they went in search of stability for their lives, Saudi did not hesitate to extend a helping hand to those Lebanese seeking for refuge during the war and Saudi went further by granting them benefits in terms of employment in other for them to have a better life. With the opportunities Saudi gave Lebanese, there was a flood of Lebanese population trooping into Saudi Arabia estimating 25,000 during the Civil War period and by 1980's, the numbers rocket up to about 127,000 (Kebbi 2021). Saudi Arabia became the negotiating grounds for the ceasefire which gave them so much influence in Lebanon's internal affairs. The Ta'if accord also known as "The 1989 National Reconciliation Accord", this reconciliation agreement brought the Lebanese civil war that began in 1975 to conclusion, the power of Saudi Arabia increased both in Lebanon and the region. The agreement aided in decentralising political power in the Lebanese system which is equal power sharing between the Christians and Muslims in the parliamentary seats as presidential decreased while that of the prime minister increased in other to have

political fairness in the Lebanese system, the Ta'if accord also gave acknowledgment to Hezbollah as a “resistance force” against Israel (Macaron 2017).

In 2005, Lebanon and Saudi Arabia's relationship experienced a turning point following the assassination of who both states will call “the pillar” holding their relationship. The assassination of Rafik al-Harir was a heavy loss for both nations as Saudi Arabia accused Hezbollah and the Syrian regime for being responsible for the assassination of Hariri and over the years, Saad al-Hariri son of Rafik al-Hariri has gotten the full support of Saudi in trying to get justice for the assassination of his father. Lebanon and Saudi Arabia continued to have cordial relations through Hariri's son but the relationship might not be as strong as that of his father. In recent years, the alliance between Lebanon and Saudi isn't as strong as it used to be due to Lebanon being caught up in the regional powers proxy conflict between Saudi Arabia and Iran. They have been having clashes when it comes to who has the most influence in Lebanon and as a result of the rise of Hezbollah and the Lebanese government leaning more to Hezbollah knowing fully well they are influenced by Iran is what is beginning to affect Lebanon's relationship with Saudi Arabia. Hariri's resignation is an action that might further push Saudi away from Lebanon. With the ongoing economic and political crisis in Lebanon, in 2019 during the heat of Lebanon's protest, Hariri tender his resignation while in Saudi Arabia due to not being able to have a united front with President Aoun in forming a cabinet to will aid in saving Lebanon's economy but they fail to agree in other to proffer solution to the crisis.

Lebanon and Saudi Arabia's relationship is taking an unpleasant turn which if care is not taken, Saudi might have almost no influence on Lebanon. Series of events continues to unfold during Lebanon's economic and political crisis, a statement was made by Lebanon's minister of information condemning Saudi's actions on the Houthis a terrorist organization in Yemen. The minister who is a supporter of Hezbollah made a statement which angered and triggered Saudi Arabia resulting in the expulsion of the Lebanese ambassador to Saudi as Saudi brought back their ambassador from Lebanon as well as demanding other Gulf states to follow suit. Having benefited heavily on economic and financial aid

from Saudi over decades, Saudi's actions will affect the Lebanese economy and political system.

Lebanon's relationship with the United States

Lebanon is a very strategic nation for the West and it is no surprise that the United States being one of the world's hegemon, also had an interest in Lebanon just like other regional powers surrounding the state of Lebanon and one of US interest is for Lebanon is to be fully democratic in terms of their political system. Lebanon practises Pact Democracy as elections are being done according to various sectarian groups in the state. The United States has always pushed for sovereignty when it comes to Lebanon in the Middle East knowing how the state is strongly divided along sectarian lines, the U.S wants Lebanon to be totally free from the influence of regional hegemons such as Iran and Syria. It is obvious that Lebanon seems not to catch a break due to its geographical location in the region be it Civil War, Proxy Wars, internal political conflict, refugee crisis, sectarian conflict and so on. For the following reasons, The United States as a global hegemon seeks to intervene and mediate in Lebanon in order to restore some form of stability in any form of unrest in the nation.

During the Lebanese Civil War, the US intervened in the war under the administration of President Reagan. Following Israel's invasion of Lebanon 1982 and Israel being an ally of the U.S in the Middle East, it was difficult for the Reagan administration to agree on decision making concerning how to react to the invasion. As at that time, Alexander Haig the Secretary of state, supported the presence of Israel in Lebanon and said, U.S shouldn't compel the withdrawal of Israel unless it is going to mount same pressure on other states who is also having strong representation in Lebanon as a result of invasion too such as Syrian and Palestinian Liberation Organization while there was another camp who were against Israel's invasion and demanded Israel's withdrawal without hesitation or Israel should be ready to face sanctions as Vice President George Bush, William Clark the National Security advisor and Caspar Weinberg Secretary of Defense were in support of Israel's Defense Forces withdrawing from Lebanon. The debate between US divide camps intensified when they reported to the Reagan administration on what the Israel's Defence Force had done. The IDF's destruction

of Syria's missiles on the 9th of June at *Biqā*, Israel's actions were a signal on the possibility of the conflict escalating and being out of control but a demand for ceasefire by President Ronald Reagan was given to Israel and the IDF paused its advance towards *Biqā*. The United States also sent Military forces and it is said to be the first time the United State is engaging its army in directly fighting Arab Nationals on Arab soil. The United States as a world hegemon gave its blessings to the Ta'if accords. The growth of Hezbollah's power and influence in Lebanon rivalry with American backed prime minister Fouad Siniora resulted to a mini civil war in 2008 as U.S supported the prime minister and continues to tag Hezbollah as a terrorist organization in Lebanon and a growing threat to the Lebanese and the region as a whole due to the organization's influence.

The US is one of Lebanon's security providers and it is seen through their policies over the years. For instance, in 2006 the Bush administration in their 2006 foreign affairs budget, Lebanon benefited from it as Foreign Military Financing (FMF) gave Lebanon 1 million dollars to aid them militarily (Adiss 2009).

Lebanon's current economic crisis has, therefore, caused the US to step in, the situation which warrant every international help it will need has brought the US to Lebanon's negotiating table with Israel in regards to the oil discovery in the Mediterranean and also the United State is working on countries who are under US sanctions such as Syria who is extending border support for gas and electricity to come through the Syrian border to Lebanon in order to aid the economy situation. In order to find possible solutions to the collapsing economy, the US continues to urge the Lebanese government to come up with reforms that will aid the rise of the fallen economy.

The current economic crisis has further complicated Lebanon's foreign policies as various external actions are involved in both internal and external affairs of the country, especially external influence having hegemonic powers in the Middle East region such as Iran, Syria, Israel and Saudi Arabia. The crisis is deepening the already existing sectarian divide amongst the Lebanese society following the position and actions the external actors are taking as mentioned in this chapter.

CHAPTER IV

Contributing Factors Leading to Lebanon's Economic and Political Predicaments

A nation once known as the Switzerland of the Middle East with a booming economy, is at the verge of collapsing as it faces one of the world's worst economic crises today. The Lebanese economy has been exemplified as a flying crashing plane yet to land. The current economic situation in Lebanon did not happen overnight, this is the consequence of decades accumulations of mismanaged natural resources and finances as a result of bad governance, a weak central state, failure of accountability on the part of the government, the nation's corrupt sectarian elites who are also in the political spaces, the politicians making laws that favours and protect their actions, making the above the law and untouchable which leads to lack proper check and balance system, circulation of same leaders in government for more than three decades for a nation practising semi democracy. Of course, with such factors taking place in Lebanon, it was only a matter of time for the country to start bleeding economically, politically and socially.

Lebanon's present economic crisis is caused as a result of decades of economic decline, especially after the 1975 Civil War. In a nation where there is civil unrest, it is bound to face economic challenges. During the wake of Lebanon's Civil War, foreign banks were robbed leading to the majority of the banks leaving Beirut while banks that remained were left with no choice than to be at the service of the militia economy and Lebanon which was once a financial mediator between East and West its role due to the unreliability of the insecurity during the war. Even though there was a period of resistance between (1975-1982) where the economy was sustained by external militia who were influencing Lebanon as at that period but it didn't take long for the militia not to be able to hold the economy of the state and Lebanon began to experience economy collapse from the period of (1982-1991). The port being the main sources of income for the Lebanese government, was seized by the militias and fuel which happens to be one of the main resources was also under the control of the militias as they kept

making money from trading fuel, smuggling through loose borders, they were responsible for currency speculations (Baumann 2019). Even when the state was able to gain back control of the economy, the aftermath of the war made Lebanon not to be able to return to its past economic days when it was favourable and with the insecurity in the state, it became difficult for foreign investors to invest in the country as the power sharing system of government made it more difficult for foreign investor due to how weak the central government is and influential sectarianism is and as a result, economic policies became difficult to agree upon as a state.

Lebanon through capitalist lenses

The capitalist system is one which has been a dominant economic system in many nations of the world. Capitalism however, is a system that allows private individuals to run the economy of the country by privatising virtually everything regarding the economy as governments of such countries have little or no say in the economic activities of the country. This act is called “Laissez faire” by Adam Smith, one of the founding fathers of capitalism and with the absence of a central authority to control the economy of a state, it gives room for citizens handling the economy to run the state economy on their terms and conditions. Those controlling the economy tend to be the major benefactors of the profit made in the economic progress of the state and In the case of Lebanon, sectarian elites who are make up ten percent out of Lebanon’s hundred percent in the society happens to hold such positions in Lebanon making them more wealthier than other average Lebanese.

To understand the present economic predicament Lebanon is facing, we need to see Lebanon’s economic situation through the lens of capitalism. Just like most nations of the world, Lebanon is not exempted from the world organised economic system of capitalism. In Lebanon, the large businesses that aids in booming the nation’s economy are owned by sectarian elite, the privatisation of companies which companies are built on sectarian elites’ satisfaction not minding whether or not the workers are suffering, there are lots of private schools in comparison to that of the states and these private educational institutions are owned by the sectarian elites or sectarian groups. The health care system is not left behind as they are also owned by the ruling class in Lebanon, communication

companies, media houses and so on, with the power sharing system being restricted to few rich sectarian elites, the kept on accumulating wealth for themselves while neglecting the state by not providing basic amenities for the masses.

The drastic decline of Lebanon's economy became visible in 2017 reaching up to 153 percent Gross Domestic Product (GDP) ranking it the third highest in the world following Greece and Japan. This however, showed how in debt the Lebanese government is, as it was always borrowing from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) without refunds or making economic policies that will aid Lebanon to generate income to pay back. Lebanon had been sustaining current account deficits in double digits for as long as 19 years for the past 25 years, Lebanon's deficit is financed by a steady infusion of short-term cash as Lebanon's economy is heavily dependent on the Gulf states, resulting them to be Lebanon's primary source of foreign direct investment, which is mainly concentrates on real estate which are mostly owned by the sectarian elites. This goes to show how weak the state central is with the continuous dependence on the Gulf states.

Lebanon's unprecedented economy and financial crisis 2019-21 and an open-ended political crisis

In accordance with the data provided by the World Bank, the economic situation in Lebanon is as follows:

The Spring 2021 Lebanon Economic Monitor finds that Lebanon's economic and financial crisis is likely to rank in the top 10, possibly top three, most severe crises episodes globally since the mid- nineteenth century. In fact, Lebanon's GDP plummeted from about US\$55 billion in 2018 to a projected US\$20.5 billion in 2021, while real GDP per capita fell by 37.1%. Such a brutal contraction is usually associated with conflicts or wars. Monetary and financial turmoil continue to drive crisis conditions. The exchange rate deteriorated more briskly over the past six months (March-August 2021), with the US\$ banknote rate depreciating by 68% to LPB 19,800/US\$, compared to an 18% depreciation over the preceding six-month period. Meanwhile, the inflation rate averaged 131.9% over the first six months of 2021 (6M-2021) (World Bank 2022).

LEBANON

What can you buy with 10,000 Lebanese pounds?

A **continuing economic crisis** has caused food prices to soar leaving many **unable to buy basic items**.

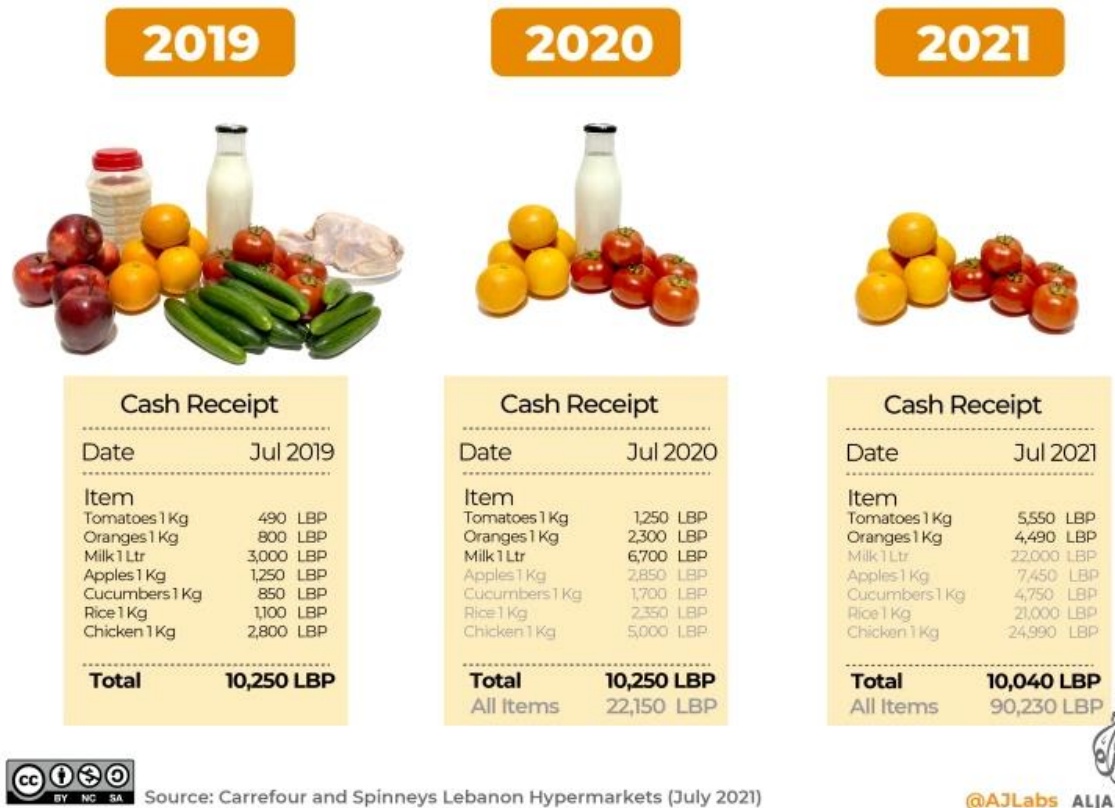


Figure 3 Picture description of Lebanon's economy crash (Al-Jazeera 2021)

The 2019 nationwide protests also known as 17 October Revolution in the country marks an event that shocked both the government and the masses. The nationwide protest was in retaliation of the taxes imposed by the government on gasoline, tobacco and WhatsApp calls which later escalated to the state of the nation's economy following the World Bank prediction of what is meant to be a mild recession in 2019 even before Lebanese thought of demonstrations, it was clear that Lebanon was on its way to recession but not knowing the magnitude of the recession. Prior to the protest, Lebanese were facing an unusual banking

holiday, following that from 18th to 31st October, banks stopping for retail and other transactions, restrictions on withdrawal of hard currency, the banks then resumed with uncoordinated capital controls and other measures while the Lebanese lira fell drastically.

The piling of economic events and inconsistent banking arrangement led to another ten days of the banks closing starting from 9 November 2019. Business operators couldn't access short-term funding with the banks being disrupted and unreliable, resulting in the disorganisation of the supply chain as it led to negative impact on workers (e-Library 2019). Lebanon's banking crisis came to be as a result of banks giving out loans to the government without regulations through investing in Eurobonds and Treasury bills. Nevertheless, there is profit-making in the process and borrowing was financed by the banks' agents. There was no concerted attempt by the bank or government to diversify their holdings so when everything came crashing down, the banks were severely impacted when the government failed and went into a financial crisis. With the currency crashing, everything became very expensive and inflation was really high because 90 percent of items in Lebanon are imported goods, also people's savings and salaries have tanked meaning the value of the currency is worth less and if nothing is done about it as soon as possible, it will continue to make even importing things more difficult. With the rate at which Lebanon's economy is rapidly falling, the government itself can't import things. It is said to have taken Lebanon the period of 2-years to get to where Venezuela is from 6-years which is a very terrible comparison and a troubling situation for the Lebanese even though the economy has not been strong enough for a long period of time to justify the present situation. Alongside with the currency crisis, there is also fuel scarcity, the government is trying to manage the scarcity by subsidising the price in order to aid ordinary people to be able to afford it, it is still expensive and lots of fuel stations closed down their stations and the fuel market and currency now expressing the rise of black market which is like triple the normal price currency is sold in the banks or fuel in their station.



Figure 4 17 October Revolutionary Protest 2019 (Quart 2020)

The mismanagement of funds as a result of the nation's corrupt leaders is another trigger for the protest in 2019. Lebanon's power sharing system created an avenue for few sectarian elites to have access to power and with power comes access to the national wealth and treasury as this has created ways for Lebanese leaders to enrich themselves instead of working for the state and generating means for the people to flourish as well but rather you find how the state is in heavy debt while the leaders are having billionaire titles for instance, the present Prime Minister Najib Mikati whose net worth is estimated 3billion dollars. These are some of the reasons the Lebanese are fighting for a change in political system and wanting an end to sectarianism because the system has led more than half of the population into abject poverty within the space of 2019 to 2021. Following the high rate of unemployment in Lebanon, many graduates are roaming the streets without jobs and there are no government jobs compared to the ratio of college graduates. It is difficult to get a job even if there is to be opportunities, it takes someone with really high sectarian connections to get the job as the politicians and elites award jobs and contract to people they know not giving the job based on

merit, with such nepotism and favouritism in play, the masses are not relenting in fighting the corruption in the public sector.

Lebanon continues to face a shortage of basic amenities meant to be provided by the government such as the health care, Lebanese healthcare use to experience medical tourism but in recent years, the very important healthcare system has become nothing to write home about with the economic conditions of Lebanon, the care system is also facing one of the greatest challenges in decades, with the unfortunate coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic the entire world faced and still facing, it was a heavy weight on Lebanon as drugs were so expensive and scarcity of drugs as well, shortage of adequate medical facilities, negligence of healthcare system by the government and with the devastating Beirut port explosion which happened on the 4 August 2020 recorded to be the largest non-nuclear explosive to happen in the world due to the storage of ammonium nitrate for a long period threw Lebanon into a more devastating humanitarian crisis as more than 200 people lost their lives and about 7,000 persons were injured which amidst Lebanon's already existing healthcare crisis, it became worse following the country's lack of medical supplies it was facing in the beginning and medical personals are leaving the country. The event was such a huge cry for help for Lebanon that the United Nations had to step in, in order to assist Lebanon (Aboueid et al 2020).

Beirut port is one of the main sources of generating revenue for the government but the horrific blast made Lebanon's falling economy worse as the nation had a great lost which World Bank made an estimate of physical damage as \$38–46 billion worth as the economic worth of what the Lebanese government lost on the day is estimate as \$29–35 billion worth of economic value (Aboueid et al 2020). Lebanon continues to blame its government for the incident and said it was as a result of corruption that such dangerous chemicals were kept there for so long and the government was also blamed for its lack of concern and failure to protect its citizens from the danger they created with no government official held accountable for what happened. The Beirut port explosion created a new dimension in the ongoing Lebanese protest towards its government's recklessness as citizens who were mostly affected by the explosion had a massive protest on the 8th of August as they continued to express how fed up they were with the

government not being able to come up with economic solutions amidst the economic crisis but rather the economic situation worsened in Lebanon. The heat of the explosion and protest led to the resignation of some MPs in Kabaeb political party. (Assl 2020)

Lebanon continues to have an electricity shortage as the government is not able to provide power supply for more than 5 hours for its citizens. To make matters worse, Lebanese are not able to afford the luxury of buying fuel to use in their generators. The supply of electricity is essential to human livelihood because it is used for basically everything, be it in the home, office, companies and factories. As the country continues to descend into darkness, Lebanese are not able to store food for long and with how expensive food is, there is continuous growth of poverty rate as people are not able to afford food and water now sells for 4 times what it used to be. Lebanon's situation is critical for it to also have shortage of water supplies and water is said to be life as hunger and starvation is the order of the day in the lower-class society. It was reported by (Al Jazeera 2021) "of a father who committed suicide due to not being able to provide 1000 Lebanese lira for his child as requested by the school for the child to buy a sandwich " and lots of Lebanese are going into depression as a result of the economic crisis as 60 percent of the population are under poverty line and 25 percent are under extreme poverty which have forced Lebanese to go back to the old ways of trade by barter, Lebanese in rural areas now trade food items or other materials in their home that can be traded for food just to survive. Another rising issue the economic crisis is causing is, the increase in crime rate. There is a high crime rate in Lebanon as people who are desperate and stealing eventually becomes the only means of survival, that is to say, the security of Lebanese is not guaranteed especially if the crimes take place within the communities. Lebanon's lost border with Syria is another reason crippling the Lebanese economy due to smuggling of things.

Rare sight of hope for the Lebanese

Despite the continuous crisis economic crisis and Lebanese resilience to keep protesting using social media due to the Covid19 regulations demanding for basic human right of survival, Lebanon experience 13 month of the absence of

government due to the refusal to agree in some political amendments on the part of Michel Aoun the President and former Prime Minister Saad al-Hariri and once again, sectarian division continues to deepen with politicians still carrying out their selfish interest agenda without thinking of the masses or a possible way out which the United Nation has extended its willingness to support the state on the conditions the reform the system but so far, the government is yet to do that. The new government was finally formed in September 2021 Lebanese are still witnessing familiar faces coming back to the system which is one of the major problems the masses are fighting the sectarian system “circulation of leaders”, who are serving the nation and are part of the reason the economy is falling to the ground. The general election is meant to take place on the 22nd May 2022 and with the year just beginning, there is already a power struggle amongst sectarian groups regarding the election date as Lebanese fear such disagreement might lead to the election not happening.

Lebanon’s economic crisis has led to the involvement of another major international actor which is the European Union. The EU has been an active external player in Lebanon dating back to the Lebanese 1975 civil war era noting how Lebanon is of key interest to France. The European Union pushed towards ensuring that foreign troops in the southern part of Lebanon especially, (referring to Syrian and Israeli troops) on the Lebanese soil during the civil war evacuate in order to restore territorial integrity alongside Lebanese sovereignty. There is no doubt that the EU will have a say in Lebanon’s current economic crisis. The European Union has condemned Lebanese politicians on their little or no efforts in tackling the ongoing economic crisis in the state. In a statement made by Josep Borrel, EU's foreign affairs and security diplomat: “The Lebanese economic crisis is not caused by external factors rather it's a homemade crisis which has driven 40% of the population into unemployment and more than half of Lebanon’s population are now living in poverty” (Euronews 2021). The European Union however, is ready to extend financial assistance to Lebanon but has warned that the government needs to work on reforming the system that has been mismanaged by the sectarian elites and Lebanese politicians for the collapsing economy to get back on its feet.

CHAPTER V

Conclusion and Recommendations

Lebanon, a nation known as the Orient (the beginning of the West) who have seen different era of civilizations and enjoyed its flourishing diversity as tourists from all over the world trooped in to experience its unique cultural and tradition art, food, the beach and everything you need to have a perfect vacation was indeed provided in Lebanon, but this same nation has become the shadow of itself. A nation whose natural resources is meant to sustain the economy and livelihood of the Lebanese people if managed well, a state which would have used it unique sectarian diversity and geographical location to its advantage by bringing more foreign investment from their sectarian affiliation but still be loyal to nationalism by making sure they identify as Lebanese first before any form of sectarian identification but as one of international relations theories assumption goes, “Human nature is selfish and egoistic” and also “War is inevitable” according to realist school of thought as Lebanon experienced a devastating Civil War in 1975 as result of the Cold War between United States and the Soviet Union.

Lebanon’s sectarian power-sharing system has been in place from the inception of the country’s independence in 1943 from the French Mandate till date. The power-sharing model is creating an uproar in contemporary Lebanon as it continues to experience demographic shift, the country is witnessing power shift from rising warlords to having active political representation in the parliament. This power struggle is becoming a threat to the 1943 National Pact, which according to the unwritten agreement, the Maronites who were the majority of the minorities based on the outcome of the 1932 first and last Lebanese census, will hold the Presidential position while the Sunni Muslims will become Prime Minister and the position of the Speaker of Parliament will be come from the Shiites and other positions in the parliament will be allocated to the rest of the sectarian groups but the rise of Hezbollah in Lebanon is beginning to change the politics of Lebanon as the already existing division amongst the sectarian group is deepened.

For decades the Lebanese society and their experiences on the political realm can exemplify the realist theory of International Relations as the selfish and egoistic nature of humans dominated the political life as the sectarian elites and politicians continued to hold on to power and it became a vicious cycle. The absence of a united or coherent foreign policy in Lebanon is primarily attributed to the various sectarian groups having stronger affiliations with external allies, the regional hegemons in the Middle East, which constituted the driving force to a deeply divided Lebanon. Thus, the ethnic/ sectarian groups dominating the political life had led to a weak state in which the state is supposed to be the stronger entity.

The external powers also use Lebanon as a card for their national interests, to continue the proxy war such as Iran and Saudi Arabia are using Lebanon for their regional rivalry as both nations want to be major influencers for the region and for Lebanon in order to gain more respect from other regional powers as their aim to become regional hegemon countries. The compounded crisis Lebanon is facing is as a result of the failed government system led by sectarian elites who gravitate the national wealth to their personal pocket. This has left the Lebanese economy bleeding and in need of solutions that will aid people to survive.

Furthermore, the present economic catastrophe in Lebanon is a call to the Lebanese government that high time sectarian elites and politicians set aside their selfish interest and put the interest of the state first in order to bring Lebanon out of this economic crisis. Reforms need to be put in place with a check and balance system for the masses to be able to hold the government accountable and the state judicial system needs to be strengthened for corrupt leaders to face justice in other for other politicians who are vying for political positions to work for the people's interest not for their own personal interest. With the international community actively involved and ready to help Lebanon, the Lebanese government will need to cooperate especially with the United States and United Nations by creating a government system which has social protection for the Lebanese people.

The 2019 protest in a way showed that there are Lebanese who are willing to look beyond sectarian affiliations for the common good of Lebanese nationals

and hopefully as they continue to fight for a better political system and also bring down the economic model that only benefits the rich in the society in order to rebuild a united Lebanon in order to achieve fairness in the nations consociational democracy.

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Appendix A**Ethics Committee Approval Form**

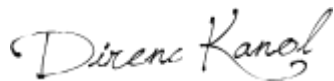
01.02.2022

Dear Atong Agwom

Your project **"Foreign Policy of Lebanon Revisited: Reflections on Power-Sharing and 17 October Revolution"** has been evaluated. Since only secondary data will be used the project it does not need to go through the ethics committee. You can start your research on the condition that you will use only secondary data.

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Direnç Kanol

Rapporteur of the Scientific Research Ethics Committee



Note: If you need to provide an official letter to an institution with the signature of the Head of NEU Scientific Research Ethics Committee, please apply to the secretariat of the ethics committee by showing this document.

Appendix B

Similarity Report

Foreign Policy of Lebanon Revisited

Yazar Atong Agwom

Gönderim Tarihi: 20-Oca-2022 02:58PM (UTC+0200)
Gönderim Numarası: 1744723694
Dosya adı: Atong_Agwom_-_THESIS_Lebanon.doc (2.28M)
Kelime sayısı: 25897
Karakter sayısı: 137870

Foreign Policy of Lebanon Revisited

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Submitted to Lebanese American University

Öğrenci Ödevi

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Submitted to London School of Economics and Political Science

Öğrenci Ödevi

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Muhammad Faour. "The demography of Lebanon: a reappraisal", Middle Eastern Studies, 10/1991

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Frederick Betz. "Political Theory of Societal Association and Nation-Building: Case of the Failed State of Lebanon", Open Journal of Social Sciences, 2021

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