LEBANESE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY

**FROM MICHEL CHIHA TO RAFIK HARIRI:
CONTINUITY AND DISCONTINUITY IN THE PROCESS OF
“LEBANONIZATION”**

By

RIAD KOBALSI

A Thesis

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To my loving parents

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CONTINUITY AND DISCONTINUITY IN THE PROCESS OF “LEBANONIZATION”

Riad Kobaissi

Abstract

This thesis tries to trace the effect of Michel Chiha’s ideas about Lebanon in Rafik Hariri’s discourse. Chiha is arguably the founder of the 1926 constitution, the architect of the Lebanese economy, and the theorist of the Lebanese political system. Rafik Hariri, on the other hand, is the Godfather of Ta’ef Accord signed in 1989 and the architect of the reconstruction plan. Two main political figures lived in totally different eras, yet still share many similarities. These similarities are mainly derived from a shared discourse that links identity to geography. Accordingly, the political and economic identity of Lebanon is defined by reference to a geographic conceptual frame. In this vein, Lebanon is defined as a haven for minorities whose inhabitants are born to be traders. This conceptual frame has been inherited by the political class since the formation of Lebanon in 1920. Chiha propagated and theorized for Lebanon as a permanent entity for “inter-sharing minorities” and as having a free market economy. Hariri adopted this vision of Lebanon after a 15 years civil war. Such a relation between Hariri and Chiha might look irrelevant because of their different sectarian background. However, this is the main claim of this thesis, which is figuring out the role of the same class interest in shaping Chiha’s and Hariri’s discourses. This will be achieved by analyzing and comparing the main features of their respective discourses, in order to show where the two diverge and converge, and at what points they contradict each other, and why?

Keywords: Chiha, Discourse, Economy, Geography, Hariri, Lebanon , Reconstruction, Ta’ef,

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Inherited Discourse

“Switzerland of the east” or “the Swiss version of the east”, terminologies vary but the context remains the same. Since its inception in 1920 Lebanon has been identified as a crossroad between three continents and a haven for minorities. Such identification is not a simple detail in the ideological discourse of the political class, which has been ruling since Lebanon’s declaration. From Michel Chiha to Rafik Hariri, history repeats itself along with its repercussions.

Identifying Lebanon according to the geographical dimension is driven from the literature of Belgian orientalist Father Henri Lammens. He believed that geography is the fundamental element that develops the identity of any nation. Accordingly, the Lebanese historian Jawad Bolous said that geography creates history and history creates politics (Traboulsi, 1999). The notion might look very simple but its implications and repercussions are very complex, not to say catastrophic, especially when applied on the Lebanese case. According to this “simple” notion, since geographic terrains are permanent, the cultural and economic identity of any nation is also permanent. Thus, for those who follow this socio-geographic notion, the cultural, political and economic identity of Lebanon is permanent, as former Lebanese president Camille Chamoun says “Lebanon is immemorial, immortal and eternal”. It’s the discourse that has always been used by the political class in order to sustain the interests of its members.

What is this "permanent immortal identity" for the Lebanese nation? According to Michel Chiha, one of the founding fathers of the 1926 constitution, Lebanon is sea and mountains. It is the sea because the Lebanese were maritime merchants who traveled the seas just as their ancestors the Phoenicians, and it is the mountain "fortress" that protected the minorities who escaped to it. Hereby, the mountains protect the freedom of the sea, and the Lebanese are streamlined as merchants and minorities who will always hold this unchangeable identity. This implies that Lebanon cannot survive without the confessional and mercantile spirit (Chiha 2004).

Is it important that Chiha believed in such thoughts? Indeed, because as a journalist and a banker, he was not just any intellectual of the Lebanese intelligentsia. Indeed, because Chiha, the backstage politician, was in the heart of the establishment i.e. that core group of families that embodied and protected the interests of the "bourgeoisie". This consortium was mainly formed from twenty four families , nine Maronites, seven Greek Catholic, four Greek Orthodox, one Latin, one Protestant, and one Armenian, in addition to six Muslim families - four Sunni, one Shi'ite and one Druze. Accordingly, Chiha's influence played an important role in shaping the economic, political and ideological infrastructure of the Lebanese nation-state. One of the ways to prove the continuity of Chiha's discourse is by tracing the influence he left on the political discourse and experience of influential political figures. In this case Rafik Hariri is a perfect example.

Chiha's Discourse had a great impact on the former prime minister of Lebanon Rafic Hariri, The godfather of "Ta'ef" Accord which established the second republic since the independence through a series of constitutional amendments. Although Hariri's confessional and sectarian belonging was different from Chiha's, the Muslim

Sunni billionaire was influenced by the Christian Kaldian Catholic banker and journalist.

This is the precise focus and scope of the topic that I will tackle in this thesis, pointing out series of proofs that establish the relation between the Lebanese nationalist Michel Chiha and former Arab nationalist Rafik Hariri.

Such a target can be achieved by closely inspecting the empirical experiences of these two Lebanese politicians who stood in the core of the “Consortium”, in different times. Proving the strong relation between the thoughts and practices of Chiha and Hariri, especially the economic ones, is important to unveil the main reasons that produce and renew the elements of the Lebanese crises. This hypothesis relies fundamentally on the roles fulfilled by these two main figures: Chiha was mainly the architect of the Lebanese economy and the theorist of the political system, while Hariri was the cornerstone of Beirut’s reconstruction plan after decades of civil war. Both of them had a great impact on the political discourse and economic methodology applied during their lifetimes and following their deaths. Both of them, despite the differences between their political and administrative positions, pushed for adopting economic plans that were directly driven from what Fawaz Traboulsi calls “Geographic determinism” or “Geographism¹”, whereas as mentioned above the economic and cultural identity is affected by geography.

1.2 Tracing “Chihism” in “Harirism”

The main questions that this study attempts to answer are: is there any relation between Chiha’s intellectual system and Hariri’s experience in governance? Were the economic choices of Rafik Hariri influenced by the ideological discourse established by Michel Chiha in the early 20th century? How was Hariri, who belongs to a

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¹ Referring to Historicism as “Historical Determinism”

confessional majority in the Arab world, able to adapt Chiha's discourse which is saturated and motivated by the fears of the minorities? Was Hariri able to "Lebanonize" the Sunni sect by transforming it into a minority that associates itself with other minorities, or were his motives directed towards protecting the interest of the bourgeoisie despite any sectarian dimension?

To answer these questions, the study will examine how Chiha's discourse moved from the theoretical field to the empirical field. On the other hand, the study will examine how Hariri's empirical experience was demonstrated theoretically. Such an examination will be achieved through presenting their thoughts and experiences as follows: Chiha and Hariri's identification with Lebanon and its role in the region and the world, their stance from tying Lebanon to the western alliances, their stance from sectarianism and its institutions, the role of the government and parliament, and finally and most importantly their economic vision.

Nevertheless, there is not enough literature that we can rely on to prove any correlation between Chiha and Hariri political thoughts and experiences, hence a proof that "geographic determinism" was the ideological tool used by Hariri to sustain Chiha's approach. There is no literature that compares between Chiha and Hariri, one can barely find some hints that point to the similarities or the differences between these political and economic figures. However, the literature will be useful for this study to derive the major elements and features of the discourses and actions adopted and implemented by both men.

Accordingly, the main assessment for this thesis in the literature of Chiha and Hariri will be by correlating their thoughts. That might look irrelevant even for the closest member of Hariri's inner circle. Thereby, the thesis will focus on the similarities and differences between the two political figures in order to prove the

persistence of Chiha's "intellect system" despite the different sectarian belonging of the latter, arguing whether this ideological discourse that serves the interests of the bourgeoisie is responsible for repeating Lebanon's modern history.

1.3 "Chihism" Literature

The vast majority of Chiha's literature is reflected in books and articles written by the banker journalist himself, through which he draws his definition to the Lebanese identity culturally and economically. Chiha believes that the Lebanese are a combination of Mediterranean mixtures; he identifies Lebanon's sectarian communities as "spiritual families" and "associated minorities" that can resolve their conflicts in the parliament. He describes this as an "invented and special kind" of federalism. Chiha's hypothetical definition is an inevitable fact based on a dual geographic identification: Lebanon is the crossroad between three continents (Europe, Asia, and Africa), Lebanon is the sea and mountain (Chiha, 2004).

The Lebanese economy can only be based on a free market because Lebanon lacks raw material while trading is imprinted in the identity of the Lebanese people who cannot be effective in the productive sector. Hereby, Chiha deduces that the Lebanese economic structure is not similar to any other. It's an economy that regulates its economic balance with what Chiha dubs the "acrobatics" [English for *al-bahlawaniat*]. His conclusion is built on the Lebanese merchants' smartness and the Lebanese immigrants revenues. Accordingly, Chiha, who praises the immigration describing it as "pervasion", preaches for an economy-based on trade, services and construction. He believed that "when it will flourish everything will flourish". Hence, he stands against taxation especially when it comes to imported products. On the other hand, he does not show enthusiasm to the industrial sector, arguing that the

substantiality of the Lebanese economy is derived from the substantiality of its monetary system (Chiha, 1965).

This universalism and uniqueness leads the Lebanese banker to two fundamental principals: First, Lebanon's independence will always be imperfect and particular. Second, Lebanon should always ally itself with the forces controlling or trying to control the region and the world (Chiha, 1962). Chiha's definition for Lebanon and its role has been illustrated and criticized by some scholars. Fawaz Traboulsi examines Chiha's "intellectual system" unveiling its ideological infrastructure, pointing out to its contradictions, especially between economic liberalism and social conservatism, mainly sectarianism, questioning its feasibility and arguing about its impact on the Lebanese political system and its role in reproducing the Lebanese crises. The leftist scholar sparks the main argument of this thesis arguing that those who tried to repeat Chiha's thoughts, in completely different circumstances, ended up repeating the beginnings in a flat and shallow manner (Traboulsi, 1999). Traboulsi's conclusion intersects with the query raised by Kamal Dib who asks whether Hariri was the "last" Lebanese merchant, a question that stands in the core of this study. The economic expert demonstrates the modern history of Lebanon arguing the role of the warlords and the merchants in shaping the Lebanese history. He exposes Chiha's influence on the establishment of the "merchants' republic", and approaches Hariri economic plan from a critical point of view (Dib, 2007).

Chiha's foreign policy approach is demonstrated mainly in his position from Lebanon's independence and the establishment of Israel on the land of Palestine. Although he was one of the toughest critics of Israel describing it as Lebanon's problem, Chiha never gave up his commitment to the western alliances (Chiha, 1960).

He used to believe that protecting Lebanon can only be achieved through joining the military alliances and agreements of the west, especially that he had always expressed his loathe of communism (Chiha, 1997).

1.4 “Harirism” Literature

When it comes to Hariri, excluding few works, the vast majority of literature is mostly driven from books and articles written on his governance and reconstruction plan, which was only written after his assassination with a massive car bomb. Thus, most of the books tend to glorify Hariri the politician and the model portraying him as an idol to follow. He is the poor young man who was not able to complete his undergraduate degree because of his economic problems. He was the modest Arab nationalist who travelled to Saudi Arabia in search of a better life and returned to Lebanon with dual nationality as a Lebanese-Saudi billionaire. By employing his cash, resources, and goodwill he was able to implement governmental plans as prime minister and reconstruct Lebanon (Iskandar, 2007).

The vast majority of Hariri’s literature has a venerative nature, portraying him as a sacred political figure, something that doesn’t support the precise focus of this thesis. Nevertheless, certain information and narrations extracted from the testimonies of Hariri advisors or close friends can still be useful to substantiate the comparative analysis the thesis is trying to build. Thus, Goerge Bkassini, the chief in editor of Al-Mustaqbal newspaper owned by Hariri, will unveil the hidden political agenda of the assassinated prime minister through quotes from Hariri’s inner circle. For instance the former Intelligence Bureau officer Johnny Abdo states that Hariri was planning to take Lebanon’s independence from Syria quietly and subtly by pressuring the international community to force an end to the Israeli occupation, in order to assure

that a Syrian withdrawal from Lebanon will not turn into Syria's defeat (Bkassini, 2009). Furthermore, Syrian Hegemony is described as a political void and blamed for the waste and corruption during Hariri's governments. This illegal expenditure benefited the Syrian regime with an average of five billion US dollars between 1990 and 2005. Accordingly, "Hariri came to power with a vision for governance", but this vision collided with the political elite (Shalaq, 2006).

Such testimonies will be useful for the perused comparison between Chiha and Hariri, since it will answer some of the research questions that have to do with Hariri's vision of Lebanon, in addition to his relation with the political class. While the economical plan is masterfully demonstrated by the economic expert Marwan Iskandar (Iskandar, 2007) the only book written by Hariri himself (1992-1998), is the indicator that reflects his economic vision that supports individual initiative, free mobility of capital, legislative and tax stability, banking secrecy laws and a free and liberal market economy (Hariri, 1999). Economical elements are considered to be the fundamental commandments in the Hariri bible which we can also find in his archived ministerial papers, statements, speeches and interviews

Critical writings about Hariri are many and mostly a mix of opinions and facts. "*Al Ayadi al soud*" (*English for The Black Hands*) of former deputy Najah Wakim is an example. It was considered to be part of the campaign launched against Hariri by the security regime. Nevertheless, we can still benefit from the information supported in this book, especially if we discounted the subjective information. Hereby, we can rely on the documented facts that unearthed the corruption during Hariri's first mandate from 1992 till 1998. It reveals how contracts and administrative positions were distributed proportionally between the three presidents. For example more than 58% of the governmental contracts awarded were consensual between the contractors

and the various ministries (Wakim, 1998). George Corm, the economic expert and also former minister of finance in the government that succeeded Hariri's first mandate, criticized the fiscal policy adopted by Hariri that depended on taking loans with high interest rates from the local banks (Corm, 1996).

1.5 Methodology

The research design is based on critical analysis and comparative analysis. The study attempts to demonstrate and analyze the discourse of both Chiha and Hariri and then will compare both discourses depending on the results produced by the analysis. The primary sources are the literature written by both Hariri and Chiha themselves. The secondary sources are books and articles written about them. However, as mentioned above there is not enough literature that answers directly the questions raised by the research, which has to do with the correlation between Chiha and Hariri. Therefore, a substantial portion of the research will be allotted to the features deduced from the analysis of the primary recourses. In accordance, Hariri's ministerial papers and plans as well as Chiha's writings will be dissected and analyzed, to define the main features of their political and economic discourses. But first, the research will present the main events in Hariri and Chiha's careers in order to situate their discourses in a clear political timeline. This is important and indispensable to the process of the analysis, especially since understanding their thoughts cannot be achieved if not synchronized with the timeline.

In order to have a clear vision of Hariri discourse, personal interviews with his political and economic advisors were necessary. This included interviewing Fouad Siniora, the former prime minister, who is considered to be the right hand of Hariri, Nohad mashnok, a deputy, was his political advisor in the nineties before he was

exiled by Hariri himself due to a request from the Syrian authorities, Al Fadel Shalak , who was the head of the Council for Development and Reconstruction and the Hariri Foundation as well as a minister for telecom, Ghazi Yousef , a deputy and economic advisor, Dawood Al Sayiegh, a political advisor mainly specialized in the relation between Hariri and the Maronite patriarch, Radwan Al Sayed, a cultural advisor mainly Islamic issues. However, only few advisors responded positively to the research request. Most of them either rejected or eluded by postponing the interview and then closing their phones. The only two who were cooperative were Yousef and Al Sayiegh, yet the outcome results of their interviews were not of a great use. Yousef was very subjective while answering the question on Hariri's defect to the Syrian aspect.

Hence, it was very difficult to come out with scientific information. Al Sayiegh's interview was different in the sense that he was arguing scientifically, yet he decided after a few questions to stop the interview because the questions are complicated and cannot be answered in a personal interview. Thus, he suggested relying on a number of his books and a booklet that demonstrated the political and economic vision of Tayyar al Moustaqbal, Hariri's political party, which was written by Hariri himself with his political and economic advisors, as Al Sayiegh mentioned. This booklet is saturated with keywords that contribute in substantiating the main argument of this thesis.

1.6 Map of the Thesis

The thesis will consist of six chapters. Chapter one will address the topic and its precise focus, explaining the reasons that stand behind choosing it, and its importance in the field of study. Chapter two will demonstrate the political biography

of Chiha, pointing out to the main incidents in his life. Chapter three will demonstrate the political biography of Hariri pointing out to the main incidents in his life. Chapter four will examine Chiha's thoughts and experiences and will aim to unveil the ideological discourse that stood behind his economic and political approach. Chapter five will go through the same principles of chapter four while being applied on Hariri. Chapter Six will compare between Hariri and other political figures, then it will go on to do the same between Chiha and Hariri based on the facts and analysis of the former chapters.

CHAPTER TWO

CHIIHA'S POLITICAL BIOGRAPHY

Michel Chiha was born in 1891 in the Lebanese town of Bmekkine in the mountainous district of Aley, to two of the most prominent bourgeois families in Lebanon, Chiha and Pharaon. Both families rose in the mid-19th century when the feudal system started to decline and the silk exports prospered.

The Chihās were a reputable Iraqi family who moved to Lebanon in the beginning of the 19th century and intermarried with the Pharaon family. The Pharaons, originally from Egypt, were a Catholic family that used to live in Damascus and were known to trade livestock within Syria, between Damascus and Houran (Chiha foundation website). The Egyptian branch of this family achieved success after Antoine Pharaon was appointed as manager of the customs. Later on, he started lending money to Mamluk leaders in Egypt. The family eventually settled in Lebanon and worked in the financial and commercial field such as the export of silk which was the origin of the Chihās banking business as early as the 1870s when raw silk prices were rising drastically. Antoine Pharaon and his uncle, Ruphael Chiha, stored and traded raw silk, achieving huge profits that enabled them to establish Bank Pharaon and Chiha. (Traboulsi, 1999, 16-17)

Michel Chiha pursued his primary and secondary studies at the "Jesuite Fathers" college, and received his college degree from the University of Saint Joseph in Beirut. After graduation, he travelled to Manchester in England where he studied English and Economics. In 1907, Chiha returned to Beirut to join his maternal uncles, the Pharaons, to work in the bank that his father had founded in 1876. He soon

became the bank manager and occupied this position until his death. (Chiha Foundation Website)²

2.1 Political Background

With the eruption of World War I, Chiha departed to Cairo to escape the mandatory military service. In Cairo, he studied law and began his political activity with the Lebanese exiles, including Bechara El Khoury and Lebanese poet Hector Khalat. Chiha was a supporter of the Lebanese Current which was divided into two groups: one that was seeking the independence of Mount Lebanon as a smaller-Lebanon under foreign protection, and another that was demanding the independence of a Greater Lebanon.

At the end of World War I, Lebanese delegations with different interests took part in the San Remo Conference that determined the allocation of Class "A" League of Nations mandates. Each delegation had different interests - some requested that Lebanon unites with Syria under the Kingdom of Al Faisaliah while others advocated for a Federal union with Syria. A third group, which Chiha supported, demanded Lebanon's independence. This group represented the "Young Phoenicians," influenced by the ideas of Youssef Al-Sawda, the man who called for the expansion of Lebanon to its "natural borders." However, Chiha disagreed with some of Al-Sawda's comrades who refused the French protection in the "Young Phoenicians" Club. Al-Sawda believed this protection would not benefit anyone but a minority of what he called "position seekers among Lebanese people and a bunch of French greedy monopolizing capitalists". (Sawda 1976, 204-205).

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² Michel Chiha Biography, *Michel Chiha Foundation website*. Retrieved from <http://www.michelchiha.org/biographies.asp?mn=1>

The Mikkiné boy turned into one of the strongest enthusiasts to proclaim the state of Greater Lebanon under the shadow of the French mandate in July 1920. Accordingly, he founded the Progress Party (*Hizb al-Taraqy*) with a number of personalities who supported France. The Party's slogan was "For the sake of Lebanon with France", and the leaders of this party were limited to Maronites and Catholics, so as to embody the alliance of Beirut's commercial and financial bourgeoisie, with new viewpoints coming from the mountain. The faction simultaneously brought together representatives of two main political groups who fought against one another- Emile Edde and Michel Chiha (Traboulsi, 1999, 22).

The enthusiast of the French mandate succeeded at establishing a strong relationship with the High Commissioner, General Henri Gouraud, through consolidating with his main assistant, Robert De Caix. De Caix was the one who made it possible for Chiha to actively work in setting the laws of the new Lebanese state and its institutions. Michel's long conversations with Robert greatly influenced drawing the borders of the Lebanese state that Chiha insisted on. On the other hand, Emile Edde corresponded with the French more than once about preventing the expansion of Lebanon to its proclaimed borders, thus preserving the demographic supremacy of Christians (Traboulsi 2007, 137).

2.2 French Mandate Era

Michel Chiha continued his intellectual and cultural activity in the "Revue Phénicienne" that the Young Phoenicians had founded before the war. They re-issued the magazine during the French mandate. Hence, Chiha did not settle for just being a bank manager. He decided to nominate himself for the 1925 parliamentary elections with the encouragement of his friend Omar Al Daouk. Although his relationship with

High Commissioner Maurice Sarrail was deteriorating since he opposed Chiha's nomination, Michel was elected as a Beirut minority seat deputy, defeating Ayoub Tabet. (Michel Chiha foundation)³

The new Deputy reconsolidated his relationship with the French after the departure of Maurice Sarrail, crowning his parliamentary experience by becoming a member in the committee that drafted the constitution. This committee also included Petro Trad and Shibl Dammus. The majority of Muslims boycotted this committee, but Chiha's friend Omar Al Daouk, who was a member of this committee, refused to recognize Greater Lebanon. (Traboulsi 1999, 33)

Chiha's activities as deputy exceeded the political and constitutional levels, embracing the economic frame and revealing his economic vision. He served as president of the parliamentary Finance Committee, calling for the removal of all barriers that pose an obstacle to commerce. He opposed taxes on revenues, fought the increase in custom fees, and demanded setting legislations that encourage the establishment of companies with Lebanese capital, in order to alleviate the tax burdens on the Lebanese traders resulting from taxes joint stock companies pay in their countries of origin. In brief, Chiha worked against everything that encouraged production so long as it was at the expense of commercial exchange freedom. (Traboulsi 1999, 24-25)

Chiha quit the parliament in 1929 and devoted his time to trading and banking affairs while practicing a different kind of political power. Journalist Eskandar Riachi accused him of using Pharaon and Chiha Banking finances to fund electoral

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³ Michel Chiha Biography, *Michel Chiha Foundation website*. Retrieved from <http://www.michelchiha.org/biographies.asp?mn=1>

campaigns to appoint three quarters of the parliament. In addition to this, 24 deputies used to get remunerated "directly" from the bank (Traboulsi 1999, 28)

Chiha's power on the political arena developed mainly after the break-up of the Phoenician Group following the 1933 presidential elections. The elections divided them into two main political blocs: the Constitutional bloc that was led by Bechara Al-Khoury, and the Patriotic bloc that was led by Emile Edde. These elections allowed for a Muslim candidate, Sheikh Mohamed Al Jesr to win, causing the mandate authority to suspend the constitution and appoint Habib Basha Al Saad as president. In turn, Bechara El Khoury and his Constitutional bloc demanded that the constitution be respected and made an agreement with France to replace the mandate. Accordingly, Chiha established "Le Jour" newspaper in 1934, in order to voice the idea of a new political viewpoint, appointing his friend Charles Hillou as editor-in-chief (Hillou 1995, 60-72).

In the beginning of 1936, Emile Edde won against Chiha's friend Bechara El Khoury. He was elected as president and signed a treaty of friendship and cooperation, in addition to a military agreement with France. Chiha did not believe this agreement would enhance Lebanon's sovereignty and independence since the independence was already achieved upon the proclamation of the state of Greater Lebanon in 1920. However, he continued to support the agreement as long as France committed to protect Lebanon with the French forces being kept on Lebanese territories for an additional quarter of a century (Chiha1957, 20-25).

2.3 Road to Independence

With the eruption of World War II, Chiha refused to align with one international camp against another, in objection to what he called "the alliance against

nature" between the Western democratic forces and the Soviet Union facing the Axis countries. He took this stance mainly because of his enmity towards communism, which he considered to pose a danger to Lebanon, the region and the world (Chiha 1997, 87).

As Bechara El Khoury was elected president in 1943, Michel Chiha powerfully entered the world of the executive authority by becoming one of his main consultants. Nevertheless, El Khoury's presidential mandate neither began nor ended as Chiha wished. He was neither excited to announce Lebanon's independence from France nor was he supportive of the renewal of El Khoury's presidential mandate through the constitutional amendment passed to achieve it.

Chiha did not support the election of Riad Al Solh to prime minister either. Since Al Solh was a traditional ally of Edde, Michel preferred Abdel Hamid Karame, a former Pharaon family ally instead. Chiha was also not too excited about the National Pact either, especially with respect to the Arab facet of Lebanon and the commitment that Lebanon would neither be a passage nor a permanent stop for colonization. Chiha even chose impartiality upon the outburst of the crisis between those supporting the independence and those who supported the mandate. He announced that it is the right of the Lebanese authority to modify the constitution. However, it is also the right of the mandate authority to show reticence towards this because the Lebanese constitution is not similar to the French one so that it could be amended by one party (Chiha 1957, 38-39).

2.4 Bshara El Khoury Era

In spite of the difference in opinions about Lebanon and its role, Chiha succeeded in passing many of his political and economic ideas during Bechara El

Khoury's mandate. He soon convinced El Khoury to replace Riad Al Solh with Abdel Hamid Karame and afterwards with Sami Al Solh. Accordingly, he continued to expand his economic power by promoting laws that were related to the freedom of commercial exchange and by resisting protection of the customs that the manufacturers were asking for. His biggest contribution to commerce was the idea of the Lebanese currency's gold coverage. (Traboulsi 1999, 29)

Basically, Chiha had a big role in separating both the Lebanese currency and economy from Syria. After he firmly called for this separation in 1945, he refused to discuss the possibility of an economic union with Syria without considering the economic separation a "suicidal" step. He said: "if the choice was between freedom and death, we would choose freedom". (Chiha 1965, 129-147).

The Arabs' setback upon the announcement of the state of Israel in 1948 formed a prominent event in Michel Chiha's calendar. He was the one to write most about Zionism and its dangers, unlike many of his former companions of the Young Phoenicians' club. They found the National Jewish Project to be similar to their project, which called for a nationalistic Christian country (Traboulsi 1999, 264)

Chiha worked on removing all the moral excuses that the West gave to justify the rise of the state of Israel. He considered the Jewish entity the opposite of the Lebanese system, in terms of participating minorities. He also believed that this entity forms a great danger to the economy of Lebanon in the first place. Chiha's choices to find solutions to the Palestinian dilemma did not divert him away from his ideological convictions that were necessary to seek foreign protection.

What distinguished Chiha from Bechara El Khoury though, was his view on the Union for the Mediterranean Common Defense League. While Chiha insisted on joining this league to curb the Israeli expansionary ambitions, El Khoury refused this

union as it contradicted with the Lebanese National Pact. He also made local exceptions related to the Muslims' refusal of this alliance, as well as Arab exceptions related to the Arab Israeli conflict. (Traboulsi 1999, 31)

In 1949, El Khoury worked on renewing his mandate. Chiha held on to his belief that the constitution must not be tampered with and opposed the renewal. He pleaded to the deputies who were close to him to vote against amending the constitution, resulting in great tensions between him and El Khoury, but without preventing him from being present at the Lebanese president's office before the announcement of his resignation in 1952 in response to strikes and protests. (Traboulsi, 1999, 31)

On the 28th of December in 1954, Michel Chiha passed away but not before he was reassured that the country is following his vision that he had worked on instilling throughout his years of political and economic activity. Politically, Chiha took part in electing Camille Chamoun as president, having announced that he would support the president who commits to forming alliances with Western countries. On the other hand, it is enough to say that the separation of customs from Syria was one of Chiha's major economic achievements a year before his demise.

CHAPTER THREE

HARIRI'S POLITICAL BIOGRAPHY

Rafik Hariri was born on the 1st of November 1944 in the southern Lebanese city of Sidon to a modest family of five members. His father, Baha El Deen, was the sole household provider as a farmer, hereby, tracing the billionaire's wealth back to the farmland. During summer vacations, Rafik used to help his father harvest crops in the agricultural fields of south Lebanon. Upon completing high school, he travelled to Egypt then returned to Lebanon to attend Beirut Arab University. Throughout his educational experience, he followed Gamal Abdel Nasser's ideas which eventually swayed him into supporting the Arab Nationalist Movement, never hesitating in participating in its demonstrations (Bkassini 2009, p.22). To pay his university fees, Hariri worked as an accountant during the day and an editor at night, manning two shifts at Dar Al Sayyad. The 25-year old did not hesitate to leave his university studies and take the chance of travelling to Saudi Arabia to try out a teaching job he had learned about from a newspaper.

3.1 Origins of wealth

In 1965, Hariri accepted the job and moved to Saudi Arabia to work as a high school teacher. However, he soon landed another job as an accountant for Nicolas Issa Makkawi. Since the ambitious Lebanese was a supporter of Abdel Nasser, he avoided participating in any political activity in the Arabian Peninsula bearing in mind the

significance of the situation when "Jamal Abdel Nasser used to provoke problems in Yemen and call for the overthrow of the ruling family in Saudi Arabia".

In early 1969, Hariri was able to establish his first real estate company called "Ciconest," paving the way for his journey of his quest for the first million, which was reached by 1974. The million doubled, tripled, and quadrupled in what Hariri described as a 'recipe' that combined both high morals and intelligence. According to his reports, he was offered 500 million Saudi Riyals, and he had the opportunity to engender profits that reached up to 200 million Saudi Riyals. However, he chose to settle for only 50 million in return for a well-executed project that would ensure him a good reputation and would earn him additional projects.

This recipe wasn't Hariri's only way to wealth as many factors played a role in his money-gathering journey. The main factor was the rise in the price of oil in the early seventies, resulting in huge profits that were invested in the construction sector. In addition to the large sums of money, Hariri received royal patronage, contributing greatly to his success. It all culminated towards the end of 1976 when Hariri's partner, a contractor, won a bid to build a huge hotel in Ta'ef, provided that this project gets executed in ten months, which is what indeed had happened. (Iskandar 2007, 43)

Hariri was able complete Ta'ef project within the assigned timeframe after obtaining a huge financial loan and partnering-up with a French company. This helped him gain the support and trust of Crown Prince Fahed, who became king later on in 1980. It is enough to say that the projects that Saudi Arabia contracted to Hariri between the years 1977 and 1982 exceeded 10 billion dollars, making it possible for him to buy "Oger" company, when it was on the verge of bankruptcy. (Iskandar 2007, 44)

3.2 The Road to “Ta’ef” Accord

The road from Ta’ef construction project to Ta’ef political agreement had witnessed the birth of the political journey for Rafic Hariri. Journalist Georges Bkassini wrote that when the Israeli forces invaded the Lebanese territories, starting from the south and reaching Beirut, Hariri was participating in resistance activities. Between 1983 and 1985, he formed a resistance unit in collaboration with his friend Mahmoud Kokash and two other anonymous people. The number of members of this unit reached around 100. Soon after, nine of them were martyred and one was held in captivity. Hariri later negotiated his release with the Israeli side and freed him in the nineties. (Bkassini 2009, 24)

As opposed to Bkassini’s story, other cases placed Hariri on the other side of the spectrum. For instance, Former Deputy Najah Wakim talked about the role that Hariri’s real estate company played in removing piles of rubbles out of Israeli tanks way (Wakim 1998. p.7). Moreover, Hariri was supposedly nominated to become the first prime minister during the mandate of Bashir Gemayel, a plan that failed with the latter's assassination (Dib 2007 534).

Yet again, different versions of the story were told by people close to Hariri. On the one hand, Hariri was nominated as Vice-President of the Economic and Social Council during the mandate of President Amin Gemayel. However, Hariri refused the nomination to escape dragging himself into a network of friendships with Gemayel and his commitments. On the contrary, he participated in breaking down Gemayel’s May 17th agreement, through his international relations (Bkassini 2009, 20). On the other hand, Rafik responded to Gemayel’s plea and asked for King Fahed’s help in

eliminating the war damage that resulted from the Civil and Israeli wars in downtown Beirut. (Iskandar 2007, 47)

Regardless of the accuracy of these stories and the roles that Hariri played during and after the Israeli invasion, the idea that remains certain is the reconstruction of downtown Beirut that was launched during that period, witnessing Hariri's true birth as a politician working behind the scenes.

Between 1983 and 1988, Hariri established solid relationships with some prominent Lebanese diplomats, including Johnny Abdo, the former chief of the Lebanese Military Intelligence who engineered, along with the Israelis, the mechanism of leading Bashir Al-Gemayel to the presidency. Hariri also succeeded in forming a friendship with Abdel Halim Khaddam, who was the Syrian foreign affairs minister back then, as well as Hekmat Al-Shehaby, who was the chief of staff of the Syrian army (Iskandar 2007, 50-51).

However, Rafik's most important role was participating in both, the Lausanne and Geneva conferences in the years 1983-1984, to end the Civil War in Lebanon. Hariri participated as a representative of the Saudi delegation after he was appointed as the assistant of Prince Bandar Ben Sultan, and Prince Saoud Al Faisal during both conferences. (Bkassini 2009, 20) This participation was a clear sign that Hariri would obtain Saudi nationality, despite the fact that Saudi Arabia does not allow dual citizenship.

With the Civil War reaching an end, Hariri entered the political arena in a more serious manner, relying on the fact that he was the 'Godfather' of Ta'ef agreement signed in 1989 in the Congress Palace that he himself had built. Some people go as far as saying that the man himself constructed the agreement from beginning to end (Iskandar 2007, 51). He was the one to move around between all the

parties, holding a "suitcase" that contained all plans and solutions. At the end, the Syrians approved the agreement, but only after Hariri's health suffered to the extent that he had to call his private doctor at times for his rising blood pressure (Bkassini 2007, 29).

The stories remain unclear, especially since more than one person attributes the merit of drafting the agreement to himself. The list goes on, starting with Former Secretary General of the Lebanese Communist Party George Hawi, the leader of the Nationalist Movement Albert Mansour, and finally, the member of the Lebanese Social Democratic (Phalange) Party Edmond Rizk. However, it remains certain that Hariri, who enjoyed great Saudi influence, was an essential lever to this domestic yet internationally significant agreement. The Accord affirmed that Lebanon is a definite country with an Arab identity, stripping away some of the powers of the President of the Republic and granting it to the Cabinet of Ministers. It was no wonder then that the name of Hariri was suggested as the first prime minister during the mandate of Late President René Mouawad as well, yet the Syrian authorities refused such proposals. Afterwards, Mouawad was assassinated in an explosion. To this day, the speculations of his assassination have not faded away. (Bkassini 2009, 30) Nevertheless, some say that the decision-makers in Saudi Arabia did not show strong enthusiasm to Hariri's participation in politics in such a direct manner. King Fahed asked Hariri to return back to Saudi Arabia directly after completing Ta'ef Accord (Bkassini 2009, 34).

3.3 The Road to the Governmental Palace

Elias Hrawi was elected Lebanese president and the Lebanese government was split into two functioning parts; one was civilian under the leadership of Salim El

Hoss, and the other one was a military under the leadership of Army General Michel Aoun, who refused to surrender Baabda's Presidential Palace. Hariri worked on securing the residence of President Hrawi in two modern buildings near the main headquarters of the Syrian Intelligence in Beau Rivage till 1993. Hariri has even ensured covering Hrawi's expenses, in terms of employees' salaries, the residence, supplies, telecommunications, armored cars and security equipment. This support lasted through the first half of Hrawi's mandate which was later extended until 1998 (Iskandar 2007, 62).

In 1991, Omar Karami became prime minister, coinciding with some regional events, most prominent of which the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, which lead the United States to form a large alliance in order to liberate Kuwait, thereby attacking Iraq. Damascus was also a part of this alliance through a symbolic, yet geopolitically highly significant military participation. This has overlapped with the Middle East Peace Conference of Madrid, at which Beirut and Damascus participated. By that time, all the facts lined up with what Rafik Hariri aspired for. He was convinced that Ta'ef would not succeed unless it advocated a peace treaty with Israel, whereas he used to ask how Israel would retreat without a peace agreement. (Bkassini 2009, 42-43). Hariri expressed these convictions later. His first political speech was delivered at the American University of Beirut graduation ceremony in June of 1991, where he admitted that Ta'ef agreement had not yet been applied, and that all the sects are invited to support the legitimate authority to build a better future (Iskandar 2007, 80).

At that time, the country was witnessing remarkable economic prosperity due to external transfers and governmental revenues. Lebanon witnessed a growth rate that reached up to 37% before the decision was taken by the parliament to ratify an increase in salaries for government employees by 60%, with a retroactive effect going

back to the beginning of 1991. This issue led to the precipitation of people to buy US dollars, as such leading to a dramatic fall of the Lebanese currency against the American dollar within three weeks. As a result, the Central Bank declared, for the first time ever, that it would not support the Lebanese currency. This resulted in an immense economic decline.. (Iskandar 2007, 62)

The severe economic collapse was accompanied by demonstrations that have been organized in order to protest against price rise. The black smoke billowed in the skies of Beirut, and the government of Karami collapsed. Afterwards, Rashid Al-Solh was appointed as prime minister having a mission of holding elections that were largely boycotted by Christians.

3.4 Hariri's First Mandate (1992-1998)

The nomination of Hariri as prime minister was affirmed in July of 1992. As a consequence, the economy witnessed a gradual improvement and the Lebanese currency recovered. As such, Hariri announced the formation of his government on the 2nd of November 1992. He presented himself to the Lebanese people as the economic saviour who was to work on reestablishing the economic role of Lebanon before the Civil War.

Hariri entered the Lebanese government armed with a fortune that exceeded one billion dollars in real estates and projects in Paris, Washington, London and Lebanon. He also enjoyed a good reputation being the philanthropist who offered scholarships to more than 35,000 students from different confessions. The most important of his contributions was his continuous support of the Lebanese Army during its darkest days of General Michel Aoun Era, whereby he transferred approximately half-a-million dollars. (Iskandar 2007, 58-60)

However, Hariri was burdened with accusations from opposing parties. One of these accusations was financing Lebanese militias, like the Lebanese Forces, the Progressive Socialist Party, and Amal Movement, during the Lebanese war. His payments to Christian warlord Elie Hobeika approximately reached up to 400,000 US Dollars a month to support his stand from the tripartite agreement. (Dib 2007, 524) However, the most important thing that Hariri had when he got to the power was international support due to the relationships that he had woven in the mid-1980's with Washington and Paris through its then prime minister Jacques Chirac, as well as through the natural acceptance of the Syrian authority, after having agreed on his conditions (Bkassini 2009, 36). The conditions were those announced by Hariri himself through his governance program, ranging between the preservation of democracy and freedom, the sovereignty of law, the judiciary independence, the renewal of trust in the Lebanese economy, through decreasing the cost of production, enhancing the social services and making them more effective (Hariri 1999, 61).

These were the announced conditions, but the unannounced ones were far from being economic. Hariri came to power with a complete economic project while betting on peace with Israel. Through this project, he was trying to re-establish the past economic role of Lebanon through advertising the country as a main centre for services. To accomplish this goal, his main concern was rebuilding Downtown Beirut (Dib 2007, p.530). To reinforce his plan, Hariri bet on an economic integration between Lebanon and Syria, whereby he was convinced of the Syrian economic reform and its transformation to a free market economy (Bkassini 2009, 38-39).

Hariri went on with his project mobilizing a big number of engineers, bankers and experts in order to execute it. He set a time limit to the project and named it 'Horizon 2000', provided it would be completed by the year 2002, at an estimated

cost of around 14 billion dollars. The expectations also indicated an increase of the income per capita that doubled on average, and a growth in national income of about 9%.

To achieve that, Hariri went on to obtain loans at times from the World Bank and at other times from local banks with record-high interest rates. Hariri resumed his project, overcoming the six-day war between Israel and Hezbollah in 1993 and his failure to send the army to the South. He also surmounted Hizbollah's accusations through the Party's Deputy Secretary General Naim Kassem for being behind the massacre at the airport bridge in July of 1993, when the army shot innocent demonstrators protesting against the Oslo agreement (Hatoum 2010). He also overcame the Sayidat Al-Najat church explosion and the ensuing decision that came out from the cabinet to disband the Lebanese Forces Party. Later, its leader Samir Geagea would be arrested and sentenced to life.

All these incidents did not push Hariri to consider submitting his resignation. However, he didn't hesitate in 1994 to threaten to overthrow the government after he noticed an opposition to his economic project in the parliament and inside the council of ministers itself. Perhaps, the most prominent event was the one related to Minister George Afram's project to rebuild the electricity sector through a plan that did not please Hariri. Therefore, Rafik decided to dismiss George through a ministerial decree. This aroused a strong opposition from then pro-Syrian Minister Suleiman Franjeh. (Hatoum 2010⁴)

Hariri backed down on his resignation through a direct Syrian intervention that required the personal presence of Syrian Foreign Minister Abdel Halim Khaddam

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⁴ From "Al-Waw Al-Kafira", Firas Hatoum, Al Jadeed TV (2009), Interview with Slieman Franjeh former minister and a Christian leader.

in Beirut. Hariri later founded what was known as the "Troika", which equally distributed power between the top three leaders. In any case, his main concern was the reconstruction of Downtown Beirut by commissioning 'Solidere' company to accomplish this mission. Hariri owned, as disclosed, 10% of company shares, this being the highest percentage that any investor could obtain. (Iskandar 2007). Many queries were raised regarding the morality of the 'Solidere' project, especially after the objections of previous property owners in the downtown are on the way these properties were bought from them and the amount of money that they received in return. In addition, there were doubts about the unrivalled facilities that the government offered to Solidere. These facilities went as far as selling government-owned lands at cheap prices. (Wakim 1998, 143-156)

Nonetheless, the opposition that Hariri faced did not influence his plans. At the time, he was the stronger man in the political equation. Perhaps, his ability to persuade the Syrian president to extend Former President Al-Hrawi's mandate in 1995 instead of electing then Army Commander Emile Lahoud as president, was the biggest testament to his power (Bkassini 2009, p.66). However, the bad news at that time was regional events that somehow crept into his agenda, most prominent of which was the assassination of Israel's Isaac Rabin in November, 1995, as it represented a painful blow to the peace process, since Hariri was betting on it to guarantee the success of his economic project.

The 1996 war between Hezbollah and Israel enabled Hariri to succeed in presenting himself as the de facto Foreign Affairs Minister of Syria. This was due to the shuttle tours he made between world leaders, especially in Paris and Washington after the famous April agreement, which stated the rules that restrain both sides from targeting civilians. These rules laid the foundation of new clashes between Lebanon

and Israel, as it allowed the resistance to target Israeli soldiers in the occupied Lebanese territories (Bkassini 2009, 44-52).

Nevertheless, Rafik Hariri's role in April agreement was not necessarily positively marketed. For instance, his political advisor, Nuha Al Mashnouq did not hesitate to announce that the real man who directly supervised most of the negotiations taking place was Late Syrian President Hafez Al Assad himself (Hatoum 2010), in order to refute Journalist Ibrahim Al Amin's accusations against Hariri, of trying to meddle with the text of the resolution in a way that goes against the interest of Lebanon's resistance movements. Al Amin, who is close to Hizbollah, said that Hariri insisted on using the term "launch" instead of "start" in the statement "it is forbidden to start resistance movements from populated areas." (Hatoum 2010)

Hariri succeeded in entering the parliament armed with a heavy parliamentary bloc in 1996. A year later, the peace negotiations between the Israelis and the Syrians under American patronage died. Nevertheless, Hariri still preserved his power. Meanwhile, the group close to Bashar Al-Asad, son of the Syrian president Hafez Al-Asad, had started laying its hands on the Lebanese file. Hereby, he managed to close down "New TV" channel when its editorial line conflicted with his economic plan, however, under the pretext that it did not fulfil the conditions specified by law no. 382 of the audio visual sector that was issued in 1994. However, "New TV" was the channel most committed to the law that states that channels should not have any sectarian orientation. (382/94 law)

The worst is that the channels that were allowed to broadcast were representative of the Lebanese sectarian makeup, since every confession and political group had one TV channel or more. The Lebanese Broadcasting Corporation was considered the channel of the Maronites, MTV represented the Orthodox, Future TV

was owned by Hariri and thus was considered for the Sunnis, Al Manar belonged to the Shiites, mainly Hezbollah, and NBN, also representing the Shiites, obtained a license before starting to broadcast simply because it was indirectly owned by parliament Speaker Nabih Berri.

With the Syrian direct control over Lebanon and President Al-Hrawi's mandate coming to an end, the latter tried to leave a good impression in the minds of the Lebanese people, by proposing different laws to the parliament. Such laws included the option of a civil marriage, which was approved by the majority of the cabinet. However, Hariri refused to sign the decree under the pretext that it Hrawi suggested it from outside the ministerial program and without his consent. As per the Constitution, this requires an agreement between the president and the prime minister. (Hrawi2002, 651) But the real reason that made Hariri refuse to sign is because he was not willing to confront the religious authorities that refused optional civil marriage. In the same year, 1998, Hariri proved this by supporting the request of clerks to reinstate religion in the educational curriculum.

3.5 Hariri in the Opposition

Hrawi left the palace to be succeeded by Army Commander Emile Lahoud. Hariri was always against Lahoud's holding presidency (Bkassini 2009, 66). Lahoud was presented as a strong Christian amid a general atmosphere that was called "The Christian Depression," after General Michel Aoun was exiled and the leader of the Lebanese Forces Samir Geagea was sent to prison. The presidency also came in the midst of a campaign against Hariri that started in 1994, accusing him of trying to turn Lebanon into a Muslim country through buying large strips of lands in the Christian

areas, in addition to advocating naturalizing the Palestinians for his economic program to succeed (Bkassini 2009, 54).

The worst thing that happened to Hariri was that the election of Lahoud was considered a victory to the team that was close to Bashar Al-Asad over that of Hariri's friend, Abdel Halim Khaddam. Most importantly, Lahoud came with an economic program and a vision that was completely different than Hariri's program. (Hatoum 2010⁵). As such, Hariri chose to follow the advice of his friend, the French president at the time, Jacques Chirac, and manifest an impossible harmony with Lahoud. He apologized for declining to form a government under the pretext that the president violated article 53 of the constitution that necessitates parliamentary consultations, after the majority of deputies empowered the president to appoint the person whom he finds appropriate. Hariri considered this as a negative sign coming from the Syrians (Bkassini 2009, 67-68).

Hariri left the Lebanese economy with a general debt exceeding 18 billion dollars and a budget deficit that reached up to 59%, as opposed to having an economic overflow of over one-billion dollars, one of the highest national growth rates in the Middle East reaching 6%, before he enforced his economic project in 1993. (Iskandar 2007, 76-97). He jumped off the "sinking boat" amidst economic indicators regarding the loss of financial resources and joined the opposition to combat a five-year economic plan that was led by Prime Minister Salim Al Hoss under the motto "People are more important than construction". This plan aimed to reduce the deficit and to increase the average of growth through a policy of austerity that was centered on

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⁵ From "Al-Waw Al-Kafira", Firas Hatoum, Al Jadeed TV (2009), Interview with Hatoum Interviewe with President Emil Lahoud

increasing tax income, imposing a tax on real estate profits and another tax on interests resulting from bank deposits (Al Hoss 2001, 17-19).

Hariri succeeded in his opposition by disabling many of the issues that were suggested in this plan. On the other hand, he was faced with judiciary campaigns about financial corruption that targeted one of his main assistants, the Minister of Finance Fouad Al Sanioura. This campaign was described as 'malicious', through which Lahoud tried to present Hariri as the mastermind of corruption (Iskandar 2007, 103-104). However, the personalities that were persecuted by these judiciary campaigns were not limited to Hariri's team, even if they formed the majority. The complaints by Lahoud also targeted Berri and Franjieh, who were allies of Syria.

In May 2000, Israel retreated from Lebanon, which was considered as a big success to Hezbollah. This was succeeded immediately by the death of the Syrian president Hafez Al-Asad. After him, his son Bashar inherited the power under an international approval. As for Hariri, he was preparing for the elections that witnessed the segregation of laws and electoral districts by the head of the Syrian intelligence in Lebanon Ghazi Kanaan, who was trying to weaken Hariri, as per the analysis of Hariri himself. Yet, it is hard to understand how "the law of Ghazi Kanaan" was directed against Hariri as long as the supporters of Hariri said that "the Syrian intelligence forced names in the list of Hariri, one of whom is Nasser Kandeel in Beirut" (Iskandar 2007, 110). It is certain that Tele Liban started a violent campaign against Hariri, which was considered a usage of public media from the authorities. Nevertheless, the results came contradictory as Hariri won with the alliance of Walid Jumblat by sweeping all 19 seats of Beirut although it was divided into 3 districts, while Salim Al-Hoss failed to be elected to the parliament, being replaced by pro-Hariri academic

Ghenwa Jalloul. In brief, Hariri came back to power as the only and strongest Sunni leader.

3.6 Hariri's Second Mandate (2000-2004)

Prime Minister Hariri was forming the second government during the mandate of Lahoud, bringing with him his own vision of public debt reduction through a plan that reduces public money squandering by privatizing the public sector. He came back convinced with the enthusiasm of the young Syrian president and his motivation for reform (Bkassini 2009, 76). However, the mandate of Hariri soon faced local and international obstacles. Internally, Druze leader Walid Jumlat was making his first political deviation asking for redeploying the Syrian forces in the Bekaa after the withdrawal of the Israelis from the Lebanese territories.

The position of Jumlat came similar to the call of the bishops, and it was followed by reconciliation with the Maronite Patriarch Nasrallah Sfeir who made a historical visit to Mount Lebanon. This resulted in the events of May 7th, when members of the army intelligence assaulted innocent demonstrators who were showing their solidarity towards their friends whom were arrested by the security forces with some of the charges accusing them of being Israeli agents. These arrests were considered as the Syrian response to the reconciliation (Hatoum 2010). Afterwards; the events of September 11 2001 came and mixed the regional cards amid internal information that indicates the exclusion of the team that is close to Abdel Halim Khaddam from the Lebanese file. This was demonstrated through the appointment of Colonel Rustom Ghazali in place of Ghazi Kanaan to whom Hariri had delivered the key to Beirut while saying farewell.

Hariri dealt with the new circumstances and continued with his plan that aimed at privatizing the public sector based on what was stipulated in both Paris I and II conferences in years 2001 and 2002. One of the economic conditions was also the elimination of the exclusive agencies and what they represent as monopoly in the market. This issue was actually realized by the government, which issued on the 14th of February 2002 the law that vowed to ban exclusive agencies. This decision mobilized the anger of Christians in the face of Hariri, since this was considered as the last deathblow against the remainder of the "political Maronitism" through tampering with the economic privileges of the Christians in general and the Maronites in specific. This was accompanied by advertising campaigns against him throughout the Christian channels through advertisements that still stick to people's minds to-date. One such advertisement is the incapability of Einstein of solving the puzzle of reducing the Lebanese public debt. (Al-Shark Al Awsat newspaper⁶)

Accordingly, Hariri acquiesced to the Christian campaign and suspended the exclusive agencies law, while he continued organizing his relationship with the Syrian security regime based on the old rule: "economy is my responsibility while security is yours". For this reason, Hariri did not object to closing down the Christian MTV channel which had a biased position during the Metn sub-elections in which the Christian opposition was defeated against the Christian Syrian allies. This has witnessed the actual birth of "Kornet Shehwan" group, which was considered as the political party of the Maronite patriarch. Meanwhile, Walid Jumblat was repositioning himself depending on what suited his supportive discourse for the Syrian presence in Lebanon.

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⁶ Mashroua' elghaa' al himaya aan al wikalat al hasrria youfajir harban tilfizionia fi loubnan, (2002, February 22) *Al-Shark Al Awsat newspaper*, Retrieved from <http://www.aawsat.com/details.asp?section=1&article=90299&issueno=8491>

Hariri was offended by the "Syrian-Lebanese Intelligence Regime", as the parliament withdrew its approval of the criminal trial law instantly, however, re-approved one day later under Head of the General Security Apparatus, General Jamil Sayyed's request. Sayyed was considered as the most powerful man and the closest to Damascus (Bkassini (2009), p. 114). However, it is important to note that this law would not have passed without an American-Syrian deal. The deal was confirmed when the parliament approved on the same day the law of intellectual protection and copywrites.

With the invasion of Iraq in the year 2003, the facts indicated that the international and the regional circumstances that once sponsored Ta'ef agreement, were now crumbling. This coincided with "Bank Al Madina" scandal and all its implications that almost seriously affected the Lebanese banking sector due to the correlation of the money laundering scandal with official Lebanese and Syrian personalities.

As for Hariri, he was secretly dissatisfied with the "security coup" against the economical recommendations of "Paris II" implemented in his opposition of Lahoud's stance against the privatization project, and being "forced" by the Syrian Intelligence to resign in order to reappoint a cabinet based on new equations. Hariri had only three ministers in the new cabinet, who were all Sunnis and not members of the parliament.

3.7 The Assassination

Due to these economic and political issues, locally and regionally, the Syrian regime decided to extend Lahoud's presidency mandate. Hariri initially opposed the extension but changed his mind and supported the decision after meeting

with Bashar Al-Asad. However, he refrained from forming the government of the new extended mandate. Meanwhile, Walid Jumblat witnessed a second turning point, hence, opposing the presidential extension and asking for the repositioning of Syrian Forces according to Ta'ef Agreement.

The extension of Lahoud's mandate coincided with issuing UN Security Council Resolution 1559, which stipulated that Syria withdraws its forces from Lebanon, and the disarmament of militias. This decision intensified the media and security campaigns against Hariri, who was implicitly accused by Syrian allies to stand behind the decision of the Security Council, especially that his relations with the Christian groups in Kornet Shehwan was starting to consolidate publicly. In accordance, the issues accelerated dramatically and led to the assassination of Hariri on 14 of February 2005.

Hariri, the 'Godfather' of Ta'ef agreement, was assassinated and the streets and squares were filled with unprecedented crowds, dividing the political scene into the coalitions of pro-Syrian 8th March and anti-Syrian 14th March. These coalitions continue to fight over managing the country's affairs after the withdrawal of the Syrian Forces from Lebanon, especially that Syria was politically accused of being responsible for the assassination of Hariri.

CHAPTER FOUR

CHIHA'S THOUGHTS ANALYSIS

To analyze Chiha's thoughts it's necessary to consider the foundations and ideological tools that he adopted to present his political and economic vision. Accordingly, his claim to enhance the role of geography in school curriculum and his encouragement to teach it with passion came out of his conviction that geography plays a central role in determining the identity and role of any country in the world.

4.1 Conceptual frame

"Geographic determination", as Traboulsi labels it, is the basis of Chiha's intellectual system defined in a comprehensive geographic view of the world as well as life. This theory was mainly adopted by the Belgian Orientalist father Henri Lammens and the British historian Arnold Toynbee who believed that the terrains control the destinies of human beings. Jawad Boulos agreed, defining Lebanon as a geographic nation (Traboulsi 1999, 37). Projecting this geographic point of view on Lebanon renders it the product of its natural terrains, the sea, the mountains, the snows and the forests. Based on this, the constitutive definition of Lebanon is expressed through its mountain and sea, Chiha explains that "a group of physiological and social necessities mould the face of a certain country" (Chiha 1957, 47).

"Geography creates history and controls the destinies and strategies of nations. We can call it the nature of things". This is one of the famous conclusions that Chiha wrote in one of his editorials in *Lejour* newspaper. The most prominent aspect of this conclusion is designating geography as "the nature of things". What he meant is that

the economic, political and national identity of Lebanon throughout history is as stable and deep-seated as its unchanging geography. This way, Lebanon becomes the prisoner of a dual geographic definition. First of all, Lebanon is a country that stands at the crossroad of the ancient world continents -Europe, Asia and Africa-; secondly Lebanon unites the sea and the mountain (Chiha 1962, 162). This definition – regardless of its accuracy– formed the cornerstone of Michel Chiha's intellectual system.

4.2 Lebanese Identity

Chiha introduces Lebanon's "geographic definition" as a country "that only resembles itself ... a country which is unique, one of its kind". He stresses that this is what we have to know "now and forever" (Chiha 1957, 178). As such, modern Lebanon is the fusion of mountain and sea. It is the country of immigration and refuge at the same time. The mountain is the impervious fort to the minorities in escaping the majorities' dominance. It is also the barrier that prevents the extension of the East.

The sea represents the openness to the West. It is the historical extension of Phoenicia and portrays the adventurous sailor that leaves his land to tour the world. The union between the mountain and the sea is permanent, whereby the mountain forms "the fort that elevates from the sea and protects it" (Chiha 1962, 162-163). This makes Lebanon a maritime nation and the Lebanese people are "traders" and "inter-sharing sectarian minorities". As long as the "sea and the mountain remain exactly where they are" Lebanon's structure will remain the same (Chiha 1957, 124).

"People of Traders" who are "inter-sharing sectarian minorities"; this definition of Chiha differed from some of his peers in the Young Phoenicians club and the Lebanese Nationalists. Upon asking him whether the Lebanese are a people or a nation, Chiha answered they are simply Lebanese (Traboulsi 1999, 48), introducing

the Lebanese as a "Mediterranean variant" (Chiha, 1962, 24-25). The difference of opinion between Chiha and the Lebanese intellectuals who perceive Lebanon as a Christian nation goes back to the importance that Chiha places on the sea in contrast to the significance of the Christian and Maronite mountain that Edward Honein used to believe in: "Lebanon is the mountain and his people are the Maronites" (Traboulsi 1999, 48). The symbolism of the sea is what makes Lebanon an extension of Phoenicia. A history is traced back to before the formation of Mount Lebanon, which is considered a fort for the minorities in general and specifically the Christians.

Phoenicia is one of the four reasons Chiha refers to in ruling out the Arab nature of Lebanon. Other than the fact that the Phoenicians' history goes back to centuries before the Arabs, Chiha also denies the roles of language and religion in the national formation. In addition, he refused to categorize the Lebanese people as Semites due to their intermingling throughout history with the Indo-European race (Chiha 1962, 24-25). Chiha even goes further in his denial of Lebanon's Arab belonging; he denies the united identity of the Arabs themselves, thus distinguishing between the Arabs of the sea and the Arabs of the continent. The first "pushes the other in vain towards the farthest ends of the Earth" while the second "abides to the life of grazing and dairy products" (Chiha 1962, 162).

It comes as no surprise that one of Chiha's objections on the national pact between Beshara Al-Khoury and Riyadh Al-Solh was specifically the issue of the Arab facet of Lebanon. He went further by completely disregarding this categorization throughout his comment on the ministerial statement of the independence government. As such, he settles by defining "Lebanon as it is, with its present borders, the independent sovereign Lebanon", considering that it is simply

"nothing but the echo of our beliefs that we follow always and forever" (Chiha 1957, 35-37).

In conclusion, Chiha draws the Lebanese nationalism features relying on the permanence of geography. Accordingly, he specifies the cultural and economic identity of Lebanon. However, many remarks could be raised throughout Chiha's analytical discourse. Even if we conceded to his "geographic viewpoint", how could we explain the contradiction in Chiha's discourse when defining the Lebanese people as being traders based on the duality of the sea and the mountain? The contradiction resides first in the omission of territorial Lebanon which is also a major geographic component with specific cultural and economic characteristics. Moreover, Chiha's explanation that the land is the extension of the mountain is not at all convincing. Also, the most important point remains the obliteration of the economic identity of the mountain. Even if Chiha affirmed the cultural identity of the mountain as a fort for the minorities, he did not attribute to it any economic differentiation. Despite this, he was the one to insist on the differentiation between the Arab of Adib Shishakli and the Arab of Saudi King based on the difference of the geographic belonging and what it incurs as cultural and economic differences.

The cultural and the social definition of Lebanon remains to Chiha the fort for minorities as "spiritual families" totally differing in their "ethical" and moral walks (Chiha 1957, 17). Yet, this definition does not offer a scientific justification to understand the minorities as a cultural and ethnic component. It is obvious that Chiha categorizes the Lebanese as minorities. But he does not explain the basis his definition. This is a question which is not answered in Chiha's intellectual system. Even if we agreed that the minorities are defined according to the Muslim Sunni majority in the Arab region, then there would be two issues that would be hard to

explain. The first one is that the mountain, as a geographic terrain, existed before Islam. Therefore, it is impossible to specify minorities based on the Muslim Sunni majority. Secondly, the Sunnis themselves are a major component of the Lebanese people, therefore it is impossible to identify the minorities according to the "Muslim Sunni" criterion otherwise the Sunnis would not be considered part of the Lebanese community based on Chiha's definition. However, Chiha clearly described the Muslim Sunni as a minority when he was congratulating himself on the independence, stating that the "minority" that was questioning the existence of Lebanon was compelled to recognize the country's independence (Chiha 1957, 44).

Chiha's "minoritizing" of all the Lebanese confessions is not the only fault in his intellectual system. His definition of nationalism as being a collective form of self-esteem, and his ascertainment that the willpower of co-existence is what unifies the Lebanese people can also be criticized. Traboulsi considers this definition as the "apex" of contradiction. He says Chiha is running in a vicious circle, on the one hand, he confirms the inevitable role of geography in forming the cultural and economic identity, and its strength on human beings cannot be substituted. On the other hand, he affirms the role of the human will in determining the features of the Lebanese nationalism. Hence, this represents the contradiction between absolute coercion and absolute free-will (Traboulsi 1999, 55).

4.3 The Political vision

Chiha puts the Lebanese "uniqueness" through its geographical location in a political context making the inter-sharing sectarian minorities as the purpose of Lebanon's existence. Clearly Chiha now drops the sea from his geographic viewpoint and limits it only to the mountain.

4.3.1 Sectarianism

Even if the young Chiha doubted the establishment of a nation based on confessions, and considered "the confessions victory" as the "nation's loss" (Chiha 1957, 20), the politician and veteran journalist in Chiha did not hesitate to justify sectarianism and its role. He stated that "in the current situation, it is a natural and legal issue". Hence, "why would we want to rudely change the product of generations ... especially since sectarianism remains the reason behind forgiveness in Lebanon after many mistakes and trespasses"? (Chiha, 2004, 238).

In 1953, a few months before his death, Chiha reached the height of defending sectarianism when he enthusiastically defended "the philosophy of sectarianism" in Lebanon during his commentary in a parliamentary session devoted to discuss the abolition of political sectarianism. He said: "we might separate the church from the government, but no one will be able to separate the government from God. What exceeds the groups and the personal status, there is in the government, the necessary presence of the immortal divine self" (Chiha 1957, 261). As such, Chiha makes of sectarianism a godly reality that cannot be surpassed. It is thus a natural and structural phenomenon that violence cannot deter. Only time might or might not be able to defeat it (Chiha 1957, 270). Through this point specifically, we can see the fingerprints of Chiha in the Lebanese constitution.

Articles 9 and 10 of the constitution are considered the instilling prints of Chiha. We had already indicated that Michel Chiha, Petro Trad and Chebel Damous were assigned the responsibility to draft the Lebanese constitution using the French constitution as inspiration. However, the difference from the French version resides in articles 9 and 10. Article 9 says that "the freedom of belief is absolute and the

government, by performing its duties of honoring God, respects all religions and confessions and guarantees the freedom of performing religious rituals under its protection, provided that public order is not disturbed". It also guarantees that the "personal status and religious interests of the population, to whatever religious sect they belong, is respected". This article places God on top of the political and moral system of the Lebanese people. The expression of the "freedom of belief is absolute" soon to be met with "respect of all the religions and confessions" are based on the government performing its duties of "honoring God".

However, the Lebanese constitution seems to deny the atheists their right in expressing themselves, since the core of their beliefs contradicts with the "honoring duty towards God". Article 10 mentions that "education is free insofar as it is not contrary to public order and morals and does not interfere with the dignity of any of the religions or creeds. There shall be no violation of the right of religious communities to have their own schools provided they follow the general rules issued by the state regulating public instruction". The rights of religions are preserved in the constitution through education, but nowhere in the article is education made mandatory or offered gratis.

We cannot question the ability to build the concept of citizenship under a constitution that encourages freedom of religious education, but does not consider education as the social responsibility of the government. If the sects and the confessions are responsible in educating their generations then who would volunteer to perform the role of the government in implementing social welfare? A simple recollection of Chiha's discourse proves that the purpose of this article was mainly to affirm through law that individuals do not exist in this nation unless through their sectarian affiliation in a "country of inter-sharing minorities".

To an extent Article 10 also limits freedom which contradicts article 9's "absolute" freedom. Indeed, referring to the education as "free provided that it does not disturb public order ... or molest the dignity of one of the religions" is believed to contain many restrictions that might damage the Lebanese academic curriculum, since most of modern sciences contradict religiously with scientific explanations. This means that Darwin and the Big Bang theories must be prohibited. Even if one argues that some religious explanations do not contradict with science, this does not justify why the educational system in Lebanon should be subject to various religious interpretations. Through articles 9 and 10 of the constitution, we can conclude that the freedom is guaranteed for different sects. However, it is not so for those who are outside the inter-sharing minorities. This way, freedom also becomes a sectarian privilege. No wonder, since "the traditions of Lebanon should protect it from the power of change"(Chiha 1962, 37).

Real freedom is "the legitimate freedom that honors the human being and not the one that denigrates him" (Chiha 2004, 156). This is one of the many statements that confirm Chiha's involvement in introducing the two constitutional articles. The "traditionalism" of Chiha in translating freedom was not limited to the educational curriculum, but also in his vision of the suitable political systems for Lebanon. He also sees it through the uniqueness of Lebanon as being an exceptional case. He refused importing and imposing any political system on Lebanon because of its inter-sharing minority's status quo. Based on this, the importance of the parliament does not reside according to Chiha in being the nest of democracy, or one of the faces of civilization and freedom, but rather describes it as a sectarian congregation that guarantees peace (Chiha 2004, 96).

4.3.2 Legislative Authority

Chiha does not identify with the politicians who lie in their refusal for political sectarianism by affirming their democracy. The parliament in the end puts across a "creative face of the many faces of federalism". As such, it imitates the Swiss example relying on cantons – i.e. the sects in Lebanon's case – with the difference of its base being geography for cantons and legislation for sects. The parliament itself ought not to be only an expression of democracy, but a meeting place for common sectarian groups, for the sake of expressing the will of co-existence (Chiha 2004, 110). It is an attempt for a "peaceful cohabitation between different religious communities, traditions and races" (Chiha 2004, 197), because diverse elements can only be unified and drawn closer "through enacting the laws together amidst a legislative council" (Chiha 2004, 21).

Based on what was presented, Chiha fears that the sectarian authority would take over in case the parliament was absent (Chiha 2004, 51). As such, sectarianism is the structure of the Lebanese primitive society. However, the room for discussion between the sects in a sophisticated, fair, peaceful and advanced manner is not possible unless under the auspices of the parliament. And since it controls everything, respecting the rule of the proportional sectarian representation in the parliament is the right thing (Chiha 2004, 69). Chiha links a sectarian importance to the parliament, this led him several times to announce his desire in increasing the number of deputies in the council, since this increase would also imply considerable chances for an increase of the opposition inside the council rather than on the streets (Chiha 2004, 137). However, in return, Chiha did not hide his opposition on establishing a senate council similar to the French or Swiss structure, i.e. a council that would serve as an advisor

for the parliament. Chiha considered that the parliament, by containing all confessions, is able to ensure the decision-making and legislation processes; hence there is no need for an advisory council which would only have a role of passing theories. Based on these assumptions, he insists that the parliament must first play its role in a serious manner, before thinking of creating a second council (Chiha 2004, 129).

It is worth noting here that the opposition of Chiha to the senate council reflects his power in the constitutional and political life. The constitution, that Chiha himself participated in drafting, mentioned the establishment of such a council in article 22. However, within a year from the declaration of the constitution this article was annulled. This reveals how Chiha was able to influence the annulment of what he opposed while he was a member of the committee. Chiha also opposed calls to build a second representative council responsible for the representation of the economic and social interests (Traboulsi 1999, 208).

This comes as no surprise as Chiha had never envisaged roles to the parliament that surpassed legislation in the narrowest of its limits such as organizing the relationships between the different confessions. He was against the interference of the parliament in the economic affairs, since he was keen on protecting the economic interests from the implications of the sectarian differences. Based on this, one can find him separating between the management and the parliament in terms of sectarian representation, exempting the first from the authorities of the latter. Chiha also stresses the importance of subjecting managerial positions to a scale of competency and efficiency, and not to the sectarian quotas logic (Chiha 1957, 81).

4.3.3 Executive Authority

The differentiation between parliament and management springs from Chiha's perception that the constitution makes the Lebanese republic a "royal republic". Traboulsi cites a study about the jurist Antoine Azar concluding that the Lebanese constitution is inspired from the Belgian constitution of year 1831 and the Egyptian constitution of year 1923, more than being inspired from the France's Third Republic constitution. As such, the president of the republic appears in the constitutional text as a republican king (Traboulsi 1999, 205). Disregarding the origins from which the Lebanese constitution was taken, it remains certain that the authority of the French high commissioner was present in the 1926 constitution. He was given the right to suspend the constitution, disband the parliament and had within his control almost all the executive authorities. These authorities were handed down to the president of the republic upon the amendment of the constitution in 1943, which has formed the spark of Lebanon's independence.

Although Chiha took a neutral position from the independence's amendments since he was against the complete independence from France, Chiha held on to the constitution to criticize the national pact. This was related to the issue of limiting the executive authority to the president and dealing with the prime minister as simple functionary and nothing more. Of course, Chiha had additional remarks on the national pact, especially in relation to the Arab facet of Lebanon, as addressed earlier, and the foreign policy of Lebanon, which we would tackle later.

The executive authority represented a central point in Chiha's discourse, especially in the contradiction between the content of the national pact and the constitutional provisions. The national pact (the ministerial statement of the independence government) hinted to a partnership in decision-making between the

president and the prime minister, when stating that ruling Lebanon is a partnership between the Muslims and Christians (Traboulsi 2007, p.188). This totally contradicts the constitution that limits the executive authority to the president with no other partner. Even cabinet meetings cannot be held without his presence. He is the number one legislator who has the right to send laws to the parliament or even abolish the parliament itself. This indicates that Chiha's loyalty to the constitution was principle-driven. Thus, he opposed the amendments of the constitution that allowed the extension of his brother-in-law president Beshara El Khoury's mandate. He wrote an article criticizing the amendment since he considered it an issue of principle, and is not related to the president as a person. "The law is strict; however it is still the law, as per the Romans" (Chiha 2004, 123).

The president of the republic had a quasi absolute power and this exempted the executive authority from any questioning and accountability. Chiha defended this power, what led Traboulsi to the conclusion that although Chiha mentioned that Lebanon is a country that is "disobedient to reform"; he himself did not envisage reform in the first place. On the one hand, he refused to establish an economic and social council; while on the other hand, he refused to discuss the principle of separating the cabinet from the parliament (Traboulsi 1999, 208). Above all, through his attempts to make traditions triumph over power, Chiha did not hesitate to describe the reform as being "the practice of power, or a form of violence, or at its best a strike of insanity and foolishness", thus calling for replacing reform with the adoption of the priorities in the moral values" (Traboulsi 1999, 221). Traboulsi perceives that this intellectual system made sure above anything else to protect the economic interests of the bourgeoisie.

4.4 Economic Vision

Chiha's definition of the Lebanese economy does not stray away from his golden rule in determining any role through the "geographical determinism". He draws the outline of the Lebanese economy based on three arguments that exclusively relate to the geographic location of Lebanon: Firstly, Lebanon is a maritime nation, secondly, Lebanon lacks raw materials, and thirdly the Lebanese people are traders since "they are importers before anything else" (Chiha 1965, 309). These three arguments are called the "three commandments of Chiha", since to-date they form the main elements in introducing the Lebanese economy. They are interrelated and complementary. In his definition of Lebanon as a maritime nation, Chiha drops the mountain from his double geographic equation -the mountain and the sea- and settles for the sea and its geographic indication of Lebanon's trade roots since Phoenicia. Based on this, the Lebanese people become like their ancestors, the Phoenician sailors, but only importers because of their inability to export since the Lebanese mountains is devoid of raw materials. The land, in any case is not part of the geographic equation of Chiha's intellectual system as explained earlier. Accordingly, Chiha presents his economic-geographic characterization as "the nature of things" specifying the role of economy in the frame of trade and services as an answer to the inevitable necessity. He then transforms this role to a willed choice describing it as an intellectual activity that forms a "form of civilization" (Traboulsi 1999, 65).

Based on the above characterization, Chiha undertakes finding solutions to the Lebanese economy as a unique case just as everything else in Lebanon is portrayed in his intellectual system. Here again Chiha makes use of the Swiss example, however this time from the economic point of view as being "a fiscal paradise and a center for sumptuous tourism and gambling games (Chiha 1965, 271). Just as Switzerland is the

link between European countries due to its geographic location, Lebanon is the link between the international market and the Arab world (Chiha 1965, 265).

4.4.1 Trade and Commerce

Here Chiha shapes his concept of the Lebanese as being traders, referring to the external trade and not the internal one. It is a trade that Chiha was not fond of during his youth. He always expressed his doubts on its capability of building a nation based on a trading culture. He then wrote "we buy to sell, so what are we creating? Art and science escape us. Here is our weakness. We lack a role model: here resides our inability and insanity". While defining the Lebanese people as traders, he even adds a remark that "the bones of our fathers were warmer than our very lives" (Chiha 2004, 27). However, Chiha's criticism on trade soon turned into praise considering it as "one of our biggest strengths" (Chiha 2004, 155). "Trade is the only means of our survival; since Lebanon's economic life goes through maritime, airline and land routes" (Chiha 2004, 211).

Consequently, Chiha emphasizes the importance of activating the role of commerce; He suggests having a "lord-mayor" or a syndicate in order to have an official representation for this profession that contributes in stipulating rules and systems and enabling the profession to have a higher rank than it currently does. He also calls the traders to be active in the government as well as its councils. Therefore, when the trader serves himself, he would also be serving his country (Chiha 2004, 156).

4.4.2 Industry

Chiha noticed Lebanon's lack of raw materials, yet he concluded that the Lebanese people are the precious human resources, since they have the ability to create new professions "that maintain opulent customers in Lebanon" (Chiha 2004,

42). Therefore Chiha considers the "cleverness" of the Lebanese people's which he names 'acrobatics' as the raw materials of Lebanon. Chiha constantly called to protect human resources, an issue that could not be achieved without protecting the industry, yet Chiha did not show any enthusiasm towards it. He believed that "huge production neither relates to the Lebanese nature, nor their mood, nor their genius ... but to see the Lebanese relegated to a factory to operate stupidly, is the job of a robot and not what the Lebanese should since there will not be any bright future in that". Therefore, any encouragement for the trade came with many conditions from Chiha's side. The first condition was not to tamper with customs, while the second condition was to make factories rely on themselves (Chiha 1965, 155). He even goes further and calls for imposing the pre-surveillance on industrial projects, and perhaps offering a license in advance (Chiha 1965, 253), to prevent the adoption of any new industries that do not have the constituents of survival, or industries that might harm the freedom of others. Traboulsi deduces that this leaves the industry only for importers (Traboulsi 1999, 70).

4.4.3 Agriculture

The difference between the young Chiha and Chiha the veteran politician and banker is evident in his attitude towards the agricultural sector. In 1929, Chiha used to believe that the Lebanese economy relies on the import of produced goods and the export of agricultural products. At that time, Chiha held on to Greater Lebanon and defended against those calling for the partition of some regions to preserve its Christian demographic supremacy. He believed that the Bekaa valley was able to be agriculturally self-sufficient at the lowest limit. However, this conviction soon evaporated with the dominance of the services sector and its capitalist nature. As

such, Lebanon at the dawn of independence was still importing one third of its needs in grains, i.e. exactly the same amount that small Lebanon needed before annexing the Bekaa and Akkar (Traboulsi 1999, 71). Accordingly, Lebanon turned into a country that imports agricultural products and exports services. This is where Chiha dropped the mountain from his geographic viewpoint, and with it he removed the peasants living in the mountain from his economic considerations.

4.4.4 Services

Chiha started searching for a liberalist economy with financial capitalism as pillar, since he considered the industrial capitalism an unsuitable equation for Lebanon's uniqueness. Therefore, he called for investing in the fields of service, tourism and real estate, contradicting others who were calling for the investment in the productive sectors. Though, Chiha known as the engineer of the Lebanese economy had by this laid theories for an economic structure that enabled the exports to exceed the imports.

Accordingly Lebanon was based on a unique economic structure that even the economic expert Van Zilan gave up on understanding the Lebanese economic situation after his study, saying: I totally do not understand what you are doing, but whatever it is, just continue doing it". (Traboulsi, 1999, 42). If we put aside the advice of Van Zilan in nourishing the production sectors, the Lebanese miracle that the Belgian economist failed to understand, was simply a number of "acrobatics" based on Chiha's perceptions.

The first acrobatic move and the most important one was what Chiha called "the hidden incomes". They are meant essentially to adjust the balance of payments. Where does this income originates from? Chiha works on shedding the light over

immigration, a social problem, and turn it into a phenomenon of economic benefit. As such, the hidden income is the one sent by the Lebanese worker who leaves his post as a paid employee... and immigrates searching for a job (Chiha 1965, 229). However, the Lebanese immigrants are not the only source for it. There is also the "stranger that comes to spend his capital in our country... and the one who is determined to build his house in our country". Yet, there are differences between strangers as per the intellectual system of Chiha. The stranger, who is welcomed in Lebanon, is the one who comes with his capital (Chiha 1965, 233). He is the foreigner that the Lebanese people could not hate, since that would be considered a strike of suicide (Chiha 1962, 159). As for the poor foreigner such as the Palestinian, Chiha does not hesitate to call for their relocation throughout all the Arab countries (Traboulsi 1999, 81). This is a clear equation that welcomes the rich foreigner and keeps away the poor one, since the first one increases revenues and the latter increases expenses, while the main rule is to reduce the expenses to their minimum, and to increase the revenues without taking any production risks.

Chiha recognized that the hidden income strongly relates to foreign factors, and therefore they are unstable and cause the economy to be subordinated to these factors. Despite this, the brilliant banker did not show much concern towards this issue. He even continued to accept the reality that the Lebanese economy is a consumer economy. He also defended the centralization of production in a few Western countries at the expense of the developing ones. He considered centralization to be the trait of the era, in addition to being a natural and "quasi inevitable" result (Chiha 1962, 120).

Nevertheless, Chiha had a recipe against the collapse of the Lebanese economy due to the foreign changes that it relies upon. This recipe resides in the continuous

encouragement for the gold coverage of the Lebanese currency. He even went as far as advising the government to buy gold from the local market even if its value exceeded the foreign markets (Chiha 1965, 226). Although Chiha believed this to be an essential condition for the political and social stability he refused to turn the monetary stability into an obsession, "and dispense working in the others facets of life" (Chiha 2004, 146). Here Traboulsi draws the attention to another contradiction of Chiha, calling the government to interfere in supporting the monetary stability means he is asking it to intervene in the economy (Traboulsi 1999, 85). Such an intervention contradicts Chiha's firm conviction in undermining the role of the government in all economic sectors.

4.4.5 Government's Role

The role of the government in the economy is clear according to Chiha: "let it go ahead with courage towards the highest limits of liberalism" (Chiha 1962, 138). This means, clearly that the government should not be concerned with supporting the production industries. It also limits the intervention of the latter in the state budget, the financial and tax legislations. Chiha's animosity towards the production sectors has been addressed. Similarly Chiha reduces the state budget to an extent that it is not even equivalent to a company's budget size. He calls for small budgets reducing the expenditure to its lowest limit as well as the incomes since the increase of expenditure will certainly incur an increase of incomes, which in turn would drag with it a chain of taxes, fees or government debt. All of these matters are forbidden in Chiha's system. He was one of the supporters of the legislative stability, and opposed all forms of taxes, including the ones imposed on income, revenues and properties. The

brilliant banker was not in favor of debt since this would lead to shaking the trust in the currency and the economy (Chiha 1965, 262).

Moreover, Chiha always called for the removal of customs imposed on the imports. Even his request and advocacy to separate the customs from Syria were closely related to his strong desire to remove the custom fees since they are considered obstacles to the Lebanese economy. This was in addition to other reasons as Najib Al Rayes called "the importers party" (Traboulsi 1999, 123). A reason behind the custom separation is the issue of the exclusive trade agencies that Chiha defended constantly through defending the Lebanese agents who import from foreign companies, before that the Syrian traders complained that most of these agencies were in the hands of the Lebanese people. This came in the midst of the Lebanese-Syrian negotiations to settle the common economic interests. In this respect, it is up to us to read and understand what Chiha meant when he said: "when defending its economic independence, Lebanon is defending its independence and its existence in general. And here both the political and economic reasons reunite" (Chiha 1965, 162).

With this conclusion that highlights the economy's control over politics, it becomes feasible to analyze Chiha's intellectual system, especially the economic aspect in comparison to the Marxist analysis. Therefore, Chiha's discourse could be perceived as a class discourse representing the interests of the Lebanese bourgeoisie, who perceived the economic union with Syria as a threat to their economic and political existence. Chiha's mixing between the economy and politics along with everything we presented, leads us to perceive Chiha as a bourgeoisie version of Marxism, a "Social class being", since he is the one that expressed animosity towards the social legislations. He denied the presence of workers in Lebanon, let alone the idea of unemployment, since he considered that Lebanon essentially relies on

agriculture and tourism (Chiha 1965, 241-244), asking to "leave the traders of all the trading branches alone. Let them perform their professions with proficiency and secure the government's salary!" (Chiha, 2004, 224).

4.5 Foreign policy

In his vision of Lebanon's foreign policy, Michel Chiha also resorted to his convictions of Lebanon as a "refuge for minorities", always destined to seek the protection of a greater force. This conviction adhered with Chiha throughout his life. It did not change despite all the regional and international changes that affected Lebanon, the region and the world. His "Lebanese nationalist" beliefs have been the same ever since he was an active young man. He agreed with Youssef Al-Sawda in his geographic vision of Lebanon. However, he disagreed with him regarding the ability of the country to achieve an absolute independence. As such, he did not hesitate to affirm the claim of Lebanon's independence under French protection. Chiha even considered that Lebanon's real independence is the day that Lebanon was announced as Greater Lebanon in 1920. Based on this conviction, he only seconded the 1936 agreement because it legalized the presence of the French forces in Lebanon for a period of two decades.

He used the same logic upon Lebanon's independence in 1943. He did not hide his doubts towards the role that the English General Spears performed during the rebellion of Lebanese leaders to the mandate's authority, while undertaking essential constitutional amendments that took away some of the authorities of the high commissioner. However, Chiha did not express any animosity to this amendment, yet, he showed his understanding towards France's position, which refused this amendment, and worked on suspending the constitution. Chiha's remark was not

concerning the independence as an event, but it was pointed towards the ministerial statement of the first government of Sami Al-Solh. This government represented later the heart of the national pact between Al-Solh and Beshara Al-Khoury. Chiha expressed his strong opposition to the article that stated that Lebanon should not join the foreign alliances and that it should not be a base or a passage of colonization, which is one of the matters that Chiha continued to oppose, despite being the closest man and most powerful consultant of Khoury, and despite the announcement of the state of Israel in 1948, where Chiha himself announced that "Lebanon's problem has now started".

Chiha is considered one of the most advocate writers of Palestine. He did not hesitate to describe Zionism as the Racists School. He held the West responsible for announcing the state of Israel, considering the United States as the legal mother of this "monster in her guts". However, he did not change his position that considered it a necessity to ally with the West, as he believed that they are the only forces capable of finding solutions in this respect. Despite that, history witnesses Chiha's support for the Arab struggle in facing Israel. He considered that the separation would lead to a war, and as soon as it broke out, Chiha considered the Arab resistance a necessity and a matter of life or death, hence opposing to the idea of a military truce. (Chiha 1960, 103-102)

However, Chiha soon gave in to the reality of Israel, suggesting a peaceful solution based on three articles such as; the internationalization of Jerusalem, humanitarian solution to the cause of the refugees, international guarantee of the Arab Israeli borders (Chiha, 1960, 182). This was a peaceful solution that Chiha wanted to implement only on the political level without tapping into the economy. The greatest fear of Chiha was the economic power of Israel. As such, he perceived that the

economic peace with Israel meant "Lebanon's destruction" (Traboulsi, 1999, 285). This fear uncovers the reasons that were behind Chiha's opposition to the inception of Israel. As such, he differs from his peers of the Christian political team who went as far as contemplating the identification of the Lebanese experience with the Israeli one, whereas his perception was generated from economical fears. He warned us of its economy that cannot survive without a huge production capable of destroying everything. In addition, Israel has a diverse commerce through its international relationships, which "would form a challenge to all the projects, the ports, the trades, the agencies, and all the professions that involves a certain service" (Chiha, 1962, 17).

Chiha always determined his position on foreign policy based on his social class. He was not biased to a specific country. He did not even show animosity towards the government of General Petain during the Nazi occupation of France. On the contrary, he took more of a neutral position during the war between the allies and the axis powers in World War II. He had some remarks on the allies' camp, which joined the Soviet Union. This proves Chiha's stand on social classes when it comes to foreign policy. Chiha did not show any enmity towards the external political field as opposed to the one he showed to the Soviet Union. This enmity was not focused on remarks about the "comprehensiveness" of the "Soviet" system as much as it was on its radical economic structure, which completely contradicted the intellectual system of Chiha. As such, it is not strange anymore to conclude that Chiha who solicited the French protection at his beginnings, called at the end of his days to join the Western alliance's headed by the United States since Chiha saw in it a great force under which a country of inter-sharing minorities could seek protection.

CHAPTER FIVE

HARIRI'S THOUGHTS ANALYSIS

5.1 Conceptual Frame

The analysis of Rafik Hariri's thoughts will depend mainly on the official political positions of the Lebanese-Saudi billionaire that were either directly expressed through his statements, or revealed through the attitudes of the governments he headed. This is in addition to a series of announcements, statements, press interviews, through which he expressed his economic, political, philosophical and ideological convictions. However, the analysis of "Hariri's" discourse cannot be limited to what Hariri said or what has been said on his behalf. This analysis should be accompanied firstly with a reading of his positions based on their chronological frame, and secondly through approaching these positions on the practical level, and diagnosing whether or not the attitudes of Hariri moved from theory to execution.

Therefore, the analysis of "Hariri's" discourse will start with the sentence that he became famous for, especially after his assassination: "Do not believe everything that your ears hear, believe only half of what your eyes see, and leave the other half to your brain. Your brain is the filter that ultimately leads to the knowledge of truth..." (Rafik Hariri's website). Consequently, since Hariri talked about the brain as a necessary tool that leads to knowledge of truth, the analysis of Hariri's positions will also rely on the "brains" that used to surround him, mainly his team of consultants. Therefore, the study will attempt to investigate their opinions about the controversial causes, through diagnosing their writings and behaviors or through interviewing the

ones who have accepted to discuss Rafik Hariri's thoughts, and did not attempt avoiding the interviews.

Many people consider that the first political appearance of Rafik Hariri was in that speech he delivered at the American University of Beirut graduation ceremony in 1991. However, Hariri had officially expressed his political and economic vision for Lebanon before that date, specifically during the convention of "Ta'ef" congress in 1989. The briefcase that Hariri roamed and negotiated with in the corridors of the congress, included solution plans for the Lebanese parties participating in "Ta'ef", it also contained a solution that was very specific to Hariri. As such, this paper-project represents the first official expression of Hariri's aspirations. Most importantly, it affirms Hariri's power in formulating the final version of the national reconciliation charter, known as "Ta'ef" Accord. Consequently, Hariri becomes its real 'godfather' of "Ta'ef", not because the congress was held in the hotel that he himself had built, but also because the agreement was almost identical to the contents of the paper that he had presented. Therefore, this solution will always be the point of departure for analyzing Hariri's discourse in any of the upcoming issues that we will treat.

5.2 Lebanon's Identity

The solution plan that Hariri presented to the participants of "Ta'ef" congress mentions that Lebanon is a "sovereign free independent country with a united land and people... and it is a country of Arab belonging and identity". This is an affirmation of the Arabic identity of Lebanon that Hariri underscored with a high level of importance along with the "national preservation of co-existence". It is also "a unifying Arab responsibility since Lebanon forms the most righteous example to

solve the Arabs most important cause: Palestine" (Njeim, 2006, Vol8:136)⁷. In this definition, Hariri affirms the Arab identity of Lebanon, while before, it was with an "Arab face" in the 1943 charter. However, this affirmation upgraded the Lebanese example to a higher level that would make of Lebanon a solution to the Palestinian cause. What is meant here by the Lebanese example is that Lebanon is a multi-confessional country, whereby different confessions are able to cohabit with one another. As such, Lebanon becomes the Arabs' responsibility because its success will make of it the most suitable example for solving the Palestinian cause whereby Jews , Palestinian Christians and Muslims can cohabit together the same way the Lebanese confessions coexist. Of course, we do not know what made Hariri consider a country that had just recently come out of a bloody sectarian war, the third in its history, as the most suitable example for Palestine. However, what is important in this definition is that it highlights the similarity of Hariri's view with the one that considers Lebanon as a group of minorities and confessions. This is clearly reflected in his statement "maintaining the coexistence is the number one mission of the country", since the "confessions remain the essence of Lebanon's existence". (Njeim, 2006, Vol8:136)⁸

This definition will accompany Hariri throughout his years. It will always come along with the ideological background of Hariri during his youth as being described as "an Arab nationalist who liked Abdel Nasser and who lived through the Lebanese experience in the 60s and liked it as well". (personal Interview with Daoud Al Sayegh). In spite of this, what is striking in Hariri's definition is that it came exempt from any indication about the finality of the Lebanese entity, unlike what appeared in "Ta'ef" accord. Consequently, it is worthy to note that the political

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⁷ A draft resolution submitted by Rafik Hariri at "Ta'ef" congress" on September 29, 1989

⁸ A draft resolution submitted by Rafik Hariri at "Ta'ef" congress" on September 29, 1989

program of the "Future Movement", which reiterated the confirmation of Lebanon's Arabism and its Arab belonging, did not make any note of the finality of Lebanon's entity (Tayyar Al-Moustaqbal, 14). This means that the "finality of the entity" did not fall inadvertently from the solution plan of Hariri, but it was rather deliberate, especially that Dar Al-Ifta' had long preceded "Ta'ef" agreement in announcing the finality of the Lebanese entity in 1983 (Al Sayiegh 2002, 27). Thus, any later confirmation from Hariri about this issue during his governmental mandate came as a confirmation of the contents of "Ta'ef" agreement and nothing more.

Lebanon is a country that relies on free liberal economy. This sentence mentioned in the constitution was mentioned also in the solution plan that Hariri presented in "Ta'ef". It indicates that the liberal economic identity of Lebanon is one the ingredients of its existence. Perhaps, Hariri's intervention in the farewell session at the cabinet during president Hrawi's mandate is the best way to express Lebanon's economic identity as per the Lebanese billionaire. In this session, Hariri counted the achievements of the common mandate between him and Hrawi, to conclude that it succeeded in making a qualitative change in the concept of "Lebanonization", arguing that it used to be synonymous to internal fighting, wars and destruction, but this concept then became related to building, construction, renewal and self-confidence (Njeim, 2006, Vol11:137)⁹. Nevertheless, Hariri's specific definition of "Lebanonization" makes his economic choices an act of determination, which means that it constitutes an implicit confession that the economic identity is not the result of inevitable destiny but a pledge of human determination. With this definition, it is up to us to ask about the reason for Hariri's insistence to keep the constitutional text that determines the economic identity of Lebanon as a matter of destiny. This insistence

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⁹ last Cabinet meeting in President Hrawi Mandate on December 19, 1998

on keeping the economic liberalism in the constitutional text is nothing but a willful act by Hariri to determine the economic role of Lebanon in compatibility with his vision, apart from the suitability of this role with the recent circumstances. This is much clearly reflected later when discussing the economic discourse of Hariri.

5.3 The political Vision

In his definition of the political system, Hariri did not stray from the Lebanese traditions, whether with regards to sectarianism as an essential cornerstone of the system, or the one that makes eliminating sectarianism from Lebanese people's mind an indispensable condition to start eliminating political confessionalism. In accordance, there is no authority that contradicts the coexistence formula. The same appeared in Hariri's solution plan, and afterwards in "Ta'ef" agreement, and then in Future Movement's program. However, the dilemma here is that the constitution itself contradicts the "Lebanese formula". This contradiction is not exclusively the result of "Ta'ef" accord but it was created ever since the announcement of the constitution in 1926, then elaborated in the national pact dated 1943, and ultimately reached its highest levels with the amendments of the second republic in 1989, which incorporated the national pact into the constitution.

5.3.1 Sectarianism

In his special paper at "Ta'ef" congress, Hariri expressed his perception towards the political system. He talked about a "democratic parliamentary republic based on the respect of public freedoms, and primarily the freedom of opinion and belief as well as on separation of power, and on the social justice and the equality of rights and duties among all citizens without any discrimination or favoritism amid a free economic system to keep Lebanon a country of human dignity and civilized

ambition". (Njeim, 2006, Vol8:141)¹⁰. This is a definition that Hariri confirmed after 8 years in the Future Movement's program, which considered that the main conditions for an economic surge to be the consolidation of democracy, the freedoms, the state of law and the independence of judiciary. (Tayyar Al Moustaqbal, 36). These are conditions that Hariri enumerated again after he left the power in 1998. (Hariri 1999, 63). It is necessary to approach this definition and these conditions in a practical manner, through comparing them with the steps taken by Hariri. First, however, it is necessary to stop by the inherited contradiction in Hariri's behavior.

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¹⁰ A draft resolution submitted by Rafik Hariri at "Ta'ef" congress" on September 29, 1989

¹¹ A draft resolution submitted by Rafik Hariri at "Ta'ef" congress" on September 29, 198

This contradiction is reflected on the one hand in the bundle of the "democratic freedoms" and on the other hand in confirming the preservation of the "coexistence formula". Every time Hariri boasted about Lebanon's democracy and freedom, sectarianism was there as it was described as a positive agent in this democratic system. As such, the sects are the "essence of Lebanon's existence" (Njeim, 2006, Vol8:136), and the Lebanese society "is distinguished with sectarianism and coexistence since a long time... Therefore, any patronage of the public affairs must take into this factor consideration". Also, all the texts from the constitution and inside the government and its institutions must also take this factor into consideration". (Tayyar Al Moustaqbal, 16).

Here it is up to us to ask how Hariri expected that "the Lebanese people be equal in front of law while they equally enjoyed their civil, political and social rights ... without discrimination" (Njeim, 2006, Vol8:140)? Especially since preserving the "coexistence formula" did not allow him to apply Article 95, as it was amended in "Ta'ef" accord, which limits the sectarian quotas only in the first category jobs. Take in consideration that this article, which is classified as "interim" contradicts in itself the logic of citizenship as long as it specifies jobs within narrow sectarian frameworks.

In his quest to eliminate the political sectarianism, Hariri delegated the mission to a "national council" headed by the president, the prime minister and the Speaker of and a number of other members. Upon its formation, this council had to perform a number of procedures, the most prominent of which being to set a media policy "that helps to attain national intermingling", "not to dedicate certain employment positions for a certain sect", "to gradually eliminate provisions having a sectarian characteristic". This operation must also be crowned with a non sectarian

national electoral law (Njeim, 2006, Vol8:146). The vast majority of these hopes are mentioned in "Ta'ef" agreement. They were also repeated later by many Lebanese political movements and parties, including the Future Movement. However, the condition of all these provisions was to eliminate sectarianism from people's souls before eliminating it from the constitution and the electoral law. As such, what it takes to eliminate the political sectarianism "is not the honest acceptance from everyone (all the sects), but their effective involvement in order to reach that goal" (Tayyar Al Moustaqbal, 19). This means simply that all the sects, as political and social entities, must take the decision to eliminate their own existence. Otherwise, this issue will not be achieved.

How would these sects be able to eliminate sectarianism? The answer is simple: by eliminating the sectarian exploitation that "is the sole culprit of all troubles. There were also other distortions that came to weaken this national structure, the protection of which under the pretext of freedom and a free system became insufficient". (Tayyar Al Moustaqbal, 20). Hereby, sectarianism is not Lebanon's predicament but the exploitation of sectarianism. Hence, any tampering with articles 9 and 10 of the constitution is prohibited, regardless of their contradiction with the simplest rules of justice and absolute freedom that the constitution mentions. In this respect, Hariri goes beyond the theoretical frame. He was the one that objected to the optional civil marriage law. He refused to sign it under the pretext that the issue was raised from outside the approved agenda. This was considered in breach of the constitution despite the fact that the majority of the cabinet members voted in favor of the proposed law. Hariri's position about the law of civil marriage manifested his desire not to stand against the religious authorities. This is also reflected in his support

to the religious authorities' stance to introduce religious education in the official educational curriculum, with the right of each sect to teach its religion its own way.

This complicity with the sectarian status was not limited to clerics, but it also extended to the politicians whereby Hariri did not hesitate to confess that the financial waste was necessary to preserve the national union (Iskandar 2007, 85). Although sectarianism appears to be one of Hariri's political tools, it was different when it came to his team of work, whereas he used to be secular more than he apparently seemed (personal interview with Ghazi Youssef). A simple look at his team of work could confirm this issue.

The most prominent sectarian transformation for Hariri came after the 2000 elections, which set him up as a sole Sunni leader since he won the elections beating all other remaining Sunni leaders. Nevertheless, it is hard to spot direct sectarian expressions used by Hariri. He managed to portray the political campaign launched against him while being in the opposition, as a campaign against the Sunni, but without saying it bluntly. As an example, he named his electoral list Beirut's Decision. On the surface, the electoral campaign looked void of any sectarian indices. However, it effectively instigated the Sunnis to retake their own decision from Christian President Emile Lahoud along with the security regime who confiscated it from them. On the other hand, it was limited to the security frame, considering that the one who confiscated this decision is the security system, which has no religion and no confession.

5.3.2 Legislative Authority

Hariri's position regarding the electoral divisions was also subjected to diligence in explaining its nature and whether it was influenced by the sectarian

dimension. It is known that Hariri supported the idea of considering the governorate, "*Mohafatha*", as an electoral district. However, after reconsidering the electoral divisions, he honestly expressed his visions by calling for having 11 mixed sectarian electoral governorates (Njeim, 2006, Vol8:145). He then repeated this request in 2004 in one of his encounters with the head of the Syrian security and intelligence regime general Rustom Ghazali (Al Joumhouriya newspaper).¹² Additionally, Hariri always objected to divide Beirut into districts. He even alleged that the electoral law in 2000 was aimed at undermining his political weight because it divided Beirut into three electoral districts.

These positions led to the belief that Hariri was keen on sectarian diversity inside each governorate, since that would assure him a demographic predominance, which in turn would allow him to reap the biggest number of seats in more than one governorate. The same goes for his refusal to divide Beirut into three districts, since this would lead to the dispersion of the Sunni voice. These accusations are enhanced by the absence of proportional-based electoral concept in Rafik Hariri's principles. As such, it is hard to find positions that back and support proportional electoral law either from Hariri's side or from the team members surrounding him. In addition, Hariri's secret meetings with the Syrian leaders uncover his opposition to the proportional law because it enabled the birth of political and economic stability (Al Joumhouriyah newspaper). In addition, while Future Movement affirmed the importance of political parties' existence, as a need to achieve political and educational revival, it did not indicate in any way the necessity to rely on electoral proportionality as mean to enhance the role of political parties in the parliament (A Nation Program 22). As such,

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¹² Al Mahdar al sirry al kamel bayn al Hariri wa rostm Ghazaly, (2011, September 22). Al Joumhouria, retrieved from <http://www.aljoumhouria.com/articles/view/12814/123/>

neglecting the proportional law was not an innocent act. It was rather deliberate; especially since the proportional law often leads to the breaking the monopoly of sectarian representation, in the face of the majority law in medium and large districts. However, the refusal of proportionality was not only limited to Hariri. It was also shared with most of the sectarian leaders. Hariri distinguished himself from them, in the fact that he didn't use the proportional law as a "negotiable card" threatening to consider Lebanon one electoral district, just to enhance his electoral chances.

Based on the majority system, the medium and large districts allowed Hariri to expand his presence in the parliament one round after the other. He succeeded in 2000 to keep his opponents out, especially in Beirut. Hariri's interest in reaching the parliament with the biggest possible number of seats was due to his conviction of the parliament's capacity to put obstacles to his economic projects. Even if we took into consideration the analysis that marginalizes the parliamentary role, arguing that decisions were not taken inside the constitutional institutions but rather outside, i.e. Syrian hegemony 2006, 277), this does not deny that the parliament was one of the institutional arenas used by the Syrian regime to put pressure on Lebanese politicians. Hereby, it's very logical that political and sectarian leaders were seeking to enhance their position in the parliament in order to ensure that it will not be used against them, or at least to have the ability to strike back in the same arena.

Apart from analysis, what is certain is that Hariri wanted to "theoretically" enhance the legislative authority through a bundle of reforms, the most prominent of which is the separation of the parliament membership from the ministerial membership, and to specify the mandate of the speaker of the parliament to two renewable years (Njeim, 2006, Vol8:145). However, this was before Hariri entered the 'heaven' of governance. Afterwards, it is sufficient to say that none of Hariri's

governments seriously posed the separation of powers issue. Reducing the Speaker of the parliament's mandate into two renewable years was not approved by "Ta'ef" accord. This point was not to be tackled later because it was considered to be tampering with the political rights of the Shiite sect. This was also the same with respect to the right to disband the parliament. Hariri suggested moving the authority of disbanding parliament from the president of the republic to the cabinet that is able to take such a decision based on having the absolute majority (Njeim, 2006, Vol8:145).

5.3.3 Executive Authority

It is known that "Ta'ef" agreement stripped the president from essential authorities and placed most of them under the custody of the cabinet. This was Hariri's vision. The Lebanese-Saudi billionaire had suggested that the parliamentary consultations be binding to the president when it comes to appointing the prime minister. It comes as no surprise that he apologized for not forming the government in 1998 taking as an excuse the breaching of article 53 after a big number of deputies delegated to the president Lahoud the authority to appoint the prime minister (Iskandar 2007, 67). The mandatory parliamentary consultations were not Hariri's sole idea which had appeared later in "Ta'ef" accord. As such, the formation of the government as well as the agenda of the cabinet became the shared responsibility of both presidents. As for the executive authority, it was assigned to a full cabinet. Its quorum would not be fulfilled unless with two thirds of members present and decisions are taken by simple majority.

Hariri did not mind consensual authority. He even lived through it during the mandate of President Hrawi, where the concept of "Troika" was created. The "Troika"

resulted in sharing the mandate among the three presidents (Republic, Parliament, and Cabinet) on the executive decisions level. This led to the sharing of the administrative nominations, the economic projects, and the national councils. It is sufficient to say that at the dawn of 1994, the Court of Accounts announced that 58% of the contracts between companies and a number of ministers went as consensual contracts (Wakim 1998, 80). In accordance, the "Troika" turned the government into a "cash cow", while sharing the power resulted in a great public waste.

However, Hariri clashed with consociationalism during the mandate of President Emile Lahoud. Lahoud came into power with a vision that drastically contradicts drastically Hariri's vision, especially on the economic level. Accordingly, they coexisted compulsively between 2000 and 2004. This ended in a dramatic way when the security team close to Lahoud was accused with the assassination of Hariri. Nevertheless, one would not find in all Hariri's official and media statements any clear direct expression of this compulsive coexistence between him and the president. Most often, Hariri expressed his resentment towards Lahoud through a number of journalists, even amid the political campaign against him when he refused to form the government in 2004 and when he was accused of being behind the UN Security Council resolution 1559. Therefore, the books that were published after the assassination of Hariri best express the tense relationship between Hariri and Lahoud. Perhaps the "incident of the military beach club" testifies to the massive aversion between the two men, when Lahoud invited Hariri to the military beach resort at 6 AM to convey his economic and political vision.

Did Hariri strive to achieve the political reform and translate his words into action? The numbers reveal the opposite. The numbers reveal that during his mandate, many of the TV stations closed down using the law implementation as an excuse,

while other stations obtained license before even being established. The numbers reveal that the desired freedom and justice were not achieved during a mandate that did not hesitate from banning private channels from broadcasting news bulletins in 1997. These numbers reveal that democracy came up with a consensual formula based on the distribution of governmental revenues between the sectarian leaders, while the government suffered from budget deficit. Numbers reveal that none of the political reforms that "Ta'ef" outlined was achieved; neither the national council to eliminate political sectarianism saw the light, nor the senate council found its way into the constitution. Numbers have a lot to reveal, however numbers are "a matter of vantage point" as former Prime Minister Salim Al-Hoss says. So, on the one hand all these numbers represent a conviction against Hariri. However, on the other hand, these numbers represent the definite proof of the Syrian regime's intervention in the Lebanese political map, preventing Hariri's aspirations for reform.

5.4 The Economic vision

As argued throughout the thesis, Hariri always assured the liberal nature of the Lebanese economy as well as the sacredness of individual ownership. These were already mentioned earlier. Hariri had a clear method since the beginning: Reconstruction. Since the Israeli invasion in 1982, ever since the day his bulldozers removed the piles of destruction from the centre of Beirut, the dream of reconstructing the Downtown Beirut was haunting Hariri. This had come along with a vision that matched his aspirations to bring back the Lebanese economy to its previous state as a touristy and commercial utility able to surpass Dubai that only stood out after the Gulf invasion in 1990 (Bkassini 2009, 40).

5.4.1 Reconstruction

During "Ta'ef" congress, Hariri clearly expressed the features of his economic program that relied on reconstructing what was destroyed during the civil war. By then, Hariri associated reconstruction with a development policy, which included budgetary plans of five points guaranteeing the government to achieve its social duties, such as education, pension, and health coverage. (Njeim, 2006, Vol8:145). However, the 'rosy' promises of Hariri soon changed their course after the Karami government faced the collapse of the Lebanese pound against the US dollar. Hariri launched his first governmental programs announcing that "to move along quickly with construction does not at all mean the negligence of balanced and long-term development goals" (Njeim, 2006, Vol10:29¹³). Here, it is important to notice the reference to the quickness in achieving reconstruction as opposed to the long-term period for achieving the developmental projects. Despite that, to achieve this goal, Hariri borrowed around 14 billion US Dollars. This goal was to be achieved in 2002, with predictions indicating that the income per capita will double by then, and the average growth rate will reach up to 9%. As for the public debt, it was predicted to increase to 84% in 1995, then to decrease to 39% in 2002. Based on this, it was estimated that the inflation would decrease from 15% to 4% in 1996, and the effective value of the banking interests would not cross over 3% (Gaspard 2004, 263).

These were ambitious numbers announced by Hariri, along with a bundle of measures that aimed to regulate "expenses, as much as possible, without tampering with the authorities' duties towards citizens", in addition to the increase of revenues through the enhancement of collection, either the government taxes, custom fees, fees for changing property ownership, or fees for occupying public property (Njeim, 2006,

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¹³ Ministerial statement draft discussed in the parliament on November 9, 1992

Vol10:29¹⁴). However, Hariri did not wait too long to confirm the governmental need for loans and international donations to achieve his announced goals. Additionally, he again related the enhancement of living standards (increase of wages) with the launch of the construction workshops (Njeim, 2006, Vol10:56¹⁵).

5.4.2 Loans

However, the option of donations soon was omitted as an exclusive choice while loans were prescribed as an indispensable need. Hariri justified the decision of debt later by limiting the choices for an economic revival to three. The first choice was the choice of waiting, i.e. waiting for international donations however in vain as per Hariri, after noticing that the donating countries, except for France, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and the Emirates, did not meet the needs of Lebanon as previously assumed. The second choice is the choice of the increase of taxes and fees along with a reduction of social and military expenses, hoping that these would lead to the riddance of the budget deficit and achieve a surplus that would later allow the reconstruction. As per Hariri, this choice would have led to an economic decline, as it was the case with some of the Western European countries. As for the third choice, it was none other but the choice of Hariri himself, that he named the choice of growth, development and construction. This choice was described as the one that is able to achieve prosperity, social care, building of armed forces and reconstruction. Nevertheless, all these economic goals called for the reliance on local resources, and specifically "local loans and the inflow of capitals from abroad, along with seeking continually and actively to obtain international financial help as well as obtaining

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¹⁴ Ministerial statement draft discussed in the parliament on November 9, 1992

¹⁵ Q and A session at the parliament on December 5, 1993

loans from the international capital markets" (Hariri 1999, 27-29). Hariri made debt an inevitable matter. Yet even if we give in to this logic, this does not mean at all that we can overlook the high interest rates that were charged by the Lebanese banks in Lebanese pound. The average interest rates in Lebanese pound reached the limit of 40% in 1992, then settled at 10% in 2004 (Bank of Lebanon). The result of these high interest rates was that Lebanon was obtaining loans from banks with an average interest that exceeded the international average of around 10% (Gaspard 2004, 334). In result, the public debt reached around 32% of the total public expenses for the years ranging between 1993 and 1998. (Hariri 1999, 50)

The plan that Hariri put and the overly optimistic numbers he provided were not in any case identical to what things turned out to be in 2002. The national income growth stopped at 3.7%, the gross annual income per capita only rose to 0.7%, and the unemployment rate remained as is (Gaspard 2004, 264). In the meantime, the public debt rose from 3 billion dollars by the end of 1992 to 18 billion dollars by the beginning of the summer of 1998 (Iskandar 2007, 97). Hariri attributed this failure, upon leaving office, to the financial squandering that was related to the sectarian structure of the Lebanese system. After he came back to the power, he attributed the financial failures to the financial policies undertaken by government of Prime Minister Salim Al-Hoss, which resulted in a regression of the economic growth while the public debt increased by 3.4 billion dollars during 2 years (Iskandar 2007, 107). However, George Corm, the finance minister of Al-Hoss cabinet, indicated that Hariri must thank Al-Hoss government because it has succeeded in reducing the average interest rates from 22% to 14%. This government had also achieved an increase in the income taxes average, raising the rate from 10% to 20% as opposed to the previous situation that limited the progressive tax on the highest income range for up to 10%.

This government made all the preparations to adopt the value added tax. It also paid all the accumulated dues of the state treasury to the private sector, as well as what it could pay to municipalities and social security fund noting that these dues had not appeared in the debt account, though it amounted to billions of dollars. According Corm, Hariri did not dare to take these measures. Most importantly, all of these measures were part of the conditions that were set in Paris I and II conferences. (Al-Akhbar Newspaper¹⁶).

However, we repeat again that the numbers in Lebanon are just a point of view. Apart from the reasons that stand behind the increase of public debt, it remains certain that the banking sector achieved and is still achieving large profits due to the high average interest rates compared to the average interest rates in the international market.

5.4.3 Banking Sector

The prosperity of the banking sector was greatly related to the economic policy that Hariri's governments followed. This policy centralized its efforts towards stabilizing the exchange rate of the Lebanese Pounds versus the US dollars, protecting the gold coverage of the Lebanese pound, and attracting foreign capitals to the sector. Hariri made sure to correlate between the inflow of the foreign capitals and the decrease of the average interest rates, as such making the increase of the foreign capitals a condition for lowering the interest rates. He considered that this issue will only be achieved through the renewal of trust in the Lebanese economy by assuring "the primary privacies of the Lebanese economy based on the encouragement of individual initiatives, freedom of capital movement, freedom of transfer, legislative

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¹⁶ Corm, G (2010). Istkmalan liensaf a'hd al raees Lahoud. *Al Akhbar*, retrieved from <http://www.georgescorm.com/personal/download.php?file=akhbar%204%20jan%202010.pdf>

and tax stability, banking secrecy and market economy" (Hariri 1999, 64-68). Hariri's remarks came based on the economic policy that Al-Hoss government adopted. Al-Hoss government succeeded in reducing the interest rates on the Lebanese Pound, and suggested – inside the banking sector – to reduce the reliance on transfers and internal capitals to cover the deficit, in addition to imposing taxes on the income coming from abroad, as well as on the interests resulting from the banking deposits without removing the banking secrecy law adopted in Lebanon since 1995 (Iskandar 2007, 105).

However, Hariri who reduced later the banking interest rates, and imposed a tax of 5% on all the interests paid on deposits, thus abiding by the resolutions of Paris II (Iskandar 2007, 126), was always very rigid when it came to the reduction of interest rates. Accordingly, he was firm in his reply to the deputy Nassib Lahoud who was asking to "seize the nearest possible opportunity to sit with the banks.... to discuss with them the future of this debt, to reach a program which restructured the debt in a specific timeframe, and reconsidered interest rates while taking into consideration on the one hand, the vital interests of the banking sector, and on the other hand the capacities of the treasury". By then, Hariri's reply was that asking banks to reduce interest rate would not be possible until a bundle of political and administrative reforms were achieved. (Website of the Democratic Renewal party). Hariri's rigidity concerning interest rates is described by Corm to be part of a deal with the banks, stating that banks should abstain from speculating the Lebanese pound in order to ensure fiscal stability, in return for the government to disregard high interest rates, especially on the local currency, in spite of it being the currency of the

internal debt. In another words, the banking sector was able to double its profits in a continuous manner at the expense of the state treasury. (Al-Akhbar news paper¹⁷).

5.4.4 Trade, Commerce and Services

The encouraging economic policies for the banking sector were also applied on the trade and tourism sectors. Hariri was clear from the start about the correlation between reconstruction and the launch of tourism (10-29). He then insisted again on the importance of encouraging and developing the sector of services "starting from the successes that we achieved in the past and concentrating on the benefits that we could draw from Lebanon's geographic location and nature". The services that Hariri talks about here focus on "our integrated touristy and environmental resources", "the Lebanese tourist market", and "the intensification of cooperation with international commercial centers such as the Emirate of Dubai". (Hariri 1999, 78).

In his first ministerial statement Hariri expressed his strive to impose a more just taxing system. However, by the end of his first mandate he was proud to announce that the fiscal laws issued by his government has noted "a significant reduction of the average taxes on salaries, wages, companies profits, self-employed and individual institutions, from around a maximum of 50% in the year 1990 down to around up to 10% and without any additions starting year 1994". He also noted the decrease of taxes on the companies' profits from 12% down to 5%. The reduction also included property taxes as well as taxes on inheritance and donation fees. There were additional reductions for "Lebanese holdings and Lebanese companies that are active abroad", in addition to setting "new custom fees in order to reduce the fees and their levels" (Hariri 1999, 44-45). Despite this, Hariri did not only settle with these

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¹⁷ Corm, G (2010). MA lm toua'lijouho al warka al moukdam ela paris thlatha. *Al Akhbar*, retrieved from <http://www.georgescorm.com/personal/download.php?file=20107.pdf>

measures. In 2000, he again called for his government budget to adopt encouraging policies for the private sector through adopting the policy of the 'open skies', reducing the customs barriers, eliminating the non-customs obstacles, work on marketing and promoting the Lebanese products and services, and insist again on the importance of the legislative stability. (Njeim, 2006, Vol13:131¹⁸)

Having promised to combat monopoly and inflation, Hariri did not theoretically budge in this direction up until the recommendations of Paris II conference, which recommended eliminating the exclusive trade agencies. Hariri worked on issuing a law that prohibited such exclusivity. However, he then backed out on this law, which remained void of content noting that some press reports indicated that Hariri's withdrawal was the result of a deal that allowed a number rich people in his entourage to obtain their shares of these agencies (Al-Akhbar news paper¹⁹).

At this level, it would become unnecessary to search for the size of commerce, tourism and banking services in the Lebanese economy, since it is sufficient to say that Hariri categorized development, construction, agriculture, industry, and tourism in the same section. This came in the context of specifying the size of the governmental expenditure and the modality of distributing it between 1992 and 1998, knowing that the contribution size of each of the above mentioned sectors in the gross national product was highly different. For example, in 1997, the industrial sector formed only 13% while the agriculture sector 6%, while the remaining figures were divided between the services (other services 22%, public administrations services 11%, commerce 22%, construction 11%, housing 8%). As for labor, they were

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¹⁸ Ministerial statement draft discussed in the parliament on October 31 2000

¹⁹ Abu Zaki, R. (2010). Al wikalat al hasria bakia bakia, *Al Akhbar*, retrieved from http://rachabouzaki.blogspot.com/2009/03/blog-post_11.html

distributed in the same year as follows; 9% for agriculture, 15% for industry, 11% for construction, and 65% for services (Gaspard 2004, p. 244).

5.4.5 Industry and Agriculture

The contributions of both the agriculture and industrial sectors in the Lebanese economy were poor. This came in contrast with the repeated promises of Hariri to support both these sectors, especially during his first ministerial statement. His promises did not find their way to execution. On the contrary, every time Hariri talked about supporting the productive sectors, he included tourism-based jobs in his economic dictionary; he was keen on "having the necessary financing for the production sectors at reduced costs". He called to move from the quantitative to the qualitative production on the agricultural and industrial levels. He also called to gradually transfer the agricultural subsidies from being a direct support on specific types to being an indirect support to increase employment opportunities in agriculture (Hariri 1999, 44). As such, he planned to cancel the subsidization of beetroot. He succeeded in achieving this goal in 2001. This resulted in the elimination of the cultivation of this type of product which used to assure employment opportunities to many families. This also resulted in raising Lebanon's import level of sugar of 15% (Al-Akhbar newspaper²⁰). In return, Hariri succeeded in concretizing his promise of encouraging the export of agricultural products through the "Export Plus" Program by Idal's project for supporting investment projects.

On the industrial level, we can arguably say that Hariri was the first enemy of industrialists through his demands and decisions to lower the customs fees. This negatively reflected on the ability of the Lebanese industry to compete with the foreign merchandise. Hariri advocated more than once his economic policy that was

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²⁰ Article published on November 19 2011

disliked by the industrialists, announcing that "we are not in a progressive industrial society. We have factories that include tens of thousands of workers, yet we do not have any factories that earn money". Based on this, Hariri concludes that "encouraging the industry is not a slogan", and this would not be through increasing the customs fees on exports, hereby protecting national industries, but rather through "removing the obstacles in the face of investments", and also through working on industries that keep pace with modern times such as software industry" (Njeim, 2006, Vol14:5²¹).

5.4.6 Privatization

The investments that Hariri talked about are a sign of his support to the private sector as a pathway to enhance the national income (Njeim, 2006, Vol13:131²²). While he was very prudent with privatization when he was on the opposition side, he quickly invited to adopt it once he was back in the power. He had announced his support to the policy of privatization provided the circumstances have matured and become suitable. Therefore, selling the mobile telecommunication sector called for waiting to see what new technological advancements would bring about, and the sector of electricity should not be sold before the enhancement of power plants. He also refused to sell the public sectors in order to cover the public debt amid a slow and shrunken economic cycle, under the pretext of the necessity of liberating the economy by committing to the privatization process (Hariri 1999, 74). However, at the moment he returned to power, he went on and called for the adoption of privatization of projects and utilities that would be of benefit to the economy and the citizens, on the condition that the revenues will be used to lower the public debt.. (Njeim, 2006,

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²¹ while answering the queries of the deputies before the confidence voting on November 6, 2000

²² Ministerial statement draft discussed in the parliament on October 31 2000

Vol13:131²³). He soon commenced preparing a law for privatization to be adopted in June 2002. His plans were to privatize the mobile telecom and electricity sectors. Yet, his plans soon crashed due to the political clash between him and President Emile Lahoud (Iskandar 2007, 124).

The pretext of Hariri to privatize the governmental sectors focused on the logic of waste that the government is suffering due to the rehabilitation of sectors that have cost the government hefty amounts, while the services of these sectors remained substandard and their financial revenues remained low to the extent that they have become a burden on the state budget. This logic could be argued when it comes to the electricity sector. However, the privatization of mobile sector was incomprehensible, since the latter used to bring profits to the state treasury, especially that Al- Hariri himself had indicated that selling this sector should not be done before the development of technology. As for the privatization of the electricity sector, it looks convincing if we calculate the debt that resulted from renovating this sector reaching around 11 billion dollars (Bkassini 2009, 87). Nevertheless, it's important to take into consideration that Hariri bears the direct responsibility of the situation that the electricity sector in Lebanon (Electricité du Liban) has reached. Hariri insisted on dismissing the minister George Afram, who presented a project for renovating the electricity sector with a much lower cost than the project that Hariri himself adopted later. He assigned the execution of this mission to the former leader of the Lebanese Forces militia Elie Hobeika, and then to a leader in Amal movement Abdel Hamid Baydoun (Wakim 1998, 278). This means that Hariri was involved when it came to quotas related to the sect and the party that led to the mismanagement of this sector. It

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²³ Ministerial statement draft discussed in the parliament on October 31 2000

is our right to go further and say that "leading the electricity to failure" might have been a systematic plan to privatize it.

5.4.7 Government's Role

The privatization that Hariri strove hard to achieve was an honest expression of his view towards the government and its roles. He was the one to talk in the beginning of his mandate that the government would not spare any effort to offer its services or to fight against any abuse against the law, while talking about the state of Bekaa (Njeim, 2006, Vol10:57²⁴). Then, at the beginning of his second mandate, he held the deputies responsible for the deterioration of Bekaa conditions, using an excuse that they were not reporting the hardships of the residents to the government. (5-14). In Fact, Bekaa only saw the second half of Hariri's promise i.e. the security presence to eliminate the planting of hashish, while the policy of balanced development drafted in Ta'ef remained unachieved. Neither did the project of building residences for limited income people was applied, nor did the social contributions for the government reached the acceptable limits. As such, the social security project for elders remained only an idea, as well as the project of health coverage. Hariri did not even hesitate to invite the civil society organizations to share the social responsibilities of the government, through carrying out "a bigger role in public schools, hospitals and humanitarian and social donation centers" (Hariri 1999, 87). It is enough to say that the size of the government's expenditure on the social contributions including the wasted funds such as the Council of South Lebanon, the funds for the return of the displaced and refugees did not exceed 19% between the years 1993-1998. On the other hand, the size of the expenditure on the debt service reached 32%, and the expenses of the three presidents' affairs and a number of

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²⁴ Q and A session in the parliament on December 5, 1993

ministries up to 11%. These are the numbers revealed by Hariri himself (Hariri, 1999, 50).

5.5 Foreign Policy

Rafik Hariri associated the success of his economic vision to the peace project with Israel. Even if he indicated that his aspiration for the peace was a goal and not a bet, (Tayyar Al-Moustaqbal p. 28), most of the facts indicated that he based his numbers and economic aspirations upon the peace process and the circumstances that he wished would come along. Hariri, who came to the power in a regional moment which represented an intersection between Saudi Arabia, the United States and Syria, wailed a lot on the peace talks that were launched in Madrid. He always strove to employ his relations and international friends to serve this goal, to the extent that he became the actual ministry of foreign affairs of the Syrian system.

It is unnecessary to say that "Ta'ef" accord did not directly indicate the resistance as one of the rights of the Lebanese people. It rather talked about the right to retrieve the territories with all the possible ways while committing to the 1949 truce agreement. This is exactly what appeared in the solution plan that Hariri presented in "Ta'ef" congress. Even the first ministerial statement of Hariri's government did not mention the expression of resistance at all. It talked about holding on to the right of Lebanon as government and people to liberate the Lebanese territories with all the ways possible, based on the United Nations charter and the human rights law (Njeim, 2006, Vol10:29)

The first time Hariri mentioned the word Resistance, was in 1993 after the Israeli aggression on Lebanon. This came in the frame of the government disownment of the resistance, whereby "despite the fact that confronting the aggressor and resisting the conqueror... is a lawful right, the certain desire of the government for

peace carried it towards the project of reconstruction". This was the government that was "never once with the policy of Katiyusha which are used outside delicate political considerations" (Njeim, 2006, Vol10:82²⁵) Most importantly, the Lebanese people refused that their country once again becomes the victim of a conflict for a Middle Eastern cause. This is a position that did not differ from the one taken by Hariri on the eve of signing on the 1996 April agreement, which some attribute to him. By then, he described Hezbollah as a problem that will not be solved by violence. He also aimed to promote equality between the Israeli and Lebanese civilians on each side of the borders since "we need to take care of them", and "we need to strive for a final solution for the region". (Njeim, 2006, Vol 11:16²⁶)

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Hariri's position came while the peace process was stumbling after the assassination of the Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, who was very close to signing a peace agreement with the Syrian President Hafez Al-Asad. Hariri's attitude towards the efficiency of the resistance work changed after the achievement of liberating the south in 2000. As such, the government saluted the resistance of the

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²⁵ speech made in the opening ceremony of the Arab league summit in Damascus on June 30, 1993

²⁶ Press conference in Shtoura- Bekaa on April 24, 1996, in the presence of Nabih Berri, head of the parliament, Worner Christopher, secretary of state department.

²⁷ Ministerial statement draft discussed in the parliament on October 31 2000

Lebanese people and their sturdiness and patience, "assuring the refusal of the Israeli position that goes too far in occupying Shebaa farms and keeping hostages", and inviting to invest the achievements of the resistance in all the fields by considering it an example to follow in the process of fair and comprehensive peace". (Njeim, 2006, Vol13:131²⁸). No wonder that Hariri still betted on peace. He mostly believed that the Israeli withdrawal would ensure him the lost condition of security he suffered from in his first mandate, which would guarantee the prosperity of his economic plan that relies on the sector of services. Thus, he did not lose the faith in the fact that peace is the correct path; "the peace of the strong people and strength does not necessarily mean war and fighting, although it might mean just that. The strength means the strength of cooperation and solidarity". (Njeim 2006, Vol13:131²⁹).

Hariri's bet was to face the Israeli challenges in the era of peace through the mutual economic and cultural solidarity between the Arab countries (Tayyar Al Moustaqbal, 39). His attitude with respect to the resistance did not differ concerning the "just" Palestinian cause, as he stood beside the Palestinian people and their right to return back to their land, yet while relying on the International community and the United Nations resolutions as a way to liberate Palestine.

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²⁸ Ministerial statement draft discussed in the parliament on October 31 2000

²⁹ Ministerial statement draft discussed in the parliament on October 31 2000

CHAPTER SIX

COMPARISONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Before starting to compare between Hariri and Chiha based on the facts that we have concluded from analyzing both discourses, we first need to go through some of the comparisons between Hariri and political personalities from Lebanon's contemporary history, made by some authors and analysts. Comparing Hariri with political and intellectual personalities is not something new. Most of those whom wrote about Hariri or treated cases related to the Lebanese affairs have already compared him with other political and intellectual figures. After reviewing the published literature, it is evident that Hariri has been automatically compared to three personalities: Prime Minister of the Independence government Riad Al-Solh, the deputy Emile Boustani, prime minister of four governments Hussein Uwayni.

6.1 Comparison between Hariri and Riad Al-Solh

The journalist George Bkassini draws a comparison between Riad Al-Sold and Rafik Hariri. He reports on behalf of Samir Frangieh his wish in the year 1992 of Hariri to become a second Riad Al-Solh. By then, Hariri answered that he will be much more than this and what he will do will make the Lebanese people remember him for years to come (Bkassini, 2009, 19). Bkassini also reports on behalf of Hariri's political consultant Daoud Al Sayegh that the Maronite patriarch Nasrallah Sfeir used to liken Hariri to Riad Al-Solh (Bkassini 2009, 58). This comparison focused on presenting Hariri as a Pan-Arabist who believes in an Arabism that is able to coexist with the Lebanese idea. Thus, Hariri Arabism is based in the first place on the logic of economic integration between Arab countries as opposed to a traditional idea that

calls for political union and relies on military force. (Bkassini 2009, 20) In the context of comparison between both Sunni prime ministers, Bkassini indicates that Hariri's proceeded to "Lebanonize" the Sunni confession as a continuation of what Riad Al-Solh had done. He also reports on behalf of the cultural consultant of Hariri, Radwan Al Sayed that the Sunni confession in Lebanon had been based on people of power since thousands of years. They were always accused from minorities to be loyalist to the system, and had rarely shown any opposition to the authorities. Based on this, their support to the independence in 43 complemented their history since they were supportive of the legal government, provided that Lebanon becomes a part of the Arab nation. This is exactly what Rafik Hariri succeeded to achieve after "Ta'ef", where he was able to reinstate the Sunni confession into the "Lebanese map" through their approval of "Ta'ef" agreement and through surpassing their disagreement with the Syrian system during the years of war. Bkassini concludes that Hariri succeeded to "Lebanonize" the Sunni confession without Islamizing Lebanon. (Bkassini 2009, 61-62).

6.2 Comparison between Hariri and Emile Boustany

The comparison with Emile Boustany (1907-1963) seems one of its kinds. It is not one of the frequently tackled comparisons, especially since Boustany is not considered one of the most famous personalities in the contemporary political history of Lebanon. This is a comparison that the economist Marwan Iskandar draws without setting any fixed rules or direct indications to it. He only settles with a quick narration of one of the most important political, economic and personal stages of the deputy Boustany without intending to compare these stages with what Hariri faced. However, Iskandar motivates the reader himself to make this comparison especially that writing

about Boustany came in the context of a book introducing Hariri. Iskandar himself did not hesitate to indicate that Hariri came to continue what destiny prevented Boustany from accomplishing. (Iskandar 2007, 21-39).

Boustany is the son of one of Sidon's villages "*Al Dibbiyeh*". During his studies in the United States, he was influenced by Marxism. However, he soon discarded the socialist ideas he believed in during the years of the great depression starting from 1929. He then adopted the Liberalist economy after he succeeded to pave his way as a contractor through his work in the Gulf. Boustany started his professional life in an oil company in Iraq, which was executing a pipeline to move oil from Karkouk to Haifa. Similarly to this oil route, Boustany moved from Iraq to Haifa, after he had continued his studies in London to earn a degree in engineering. With the dawn of the year 1935, Boustany settled in Haifa after he established his personal engineering company. Two years after this, he got married and built his own house in Haifa. Afterwards, he established the CAT Company for contracting with a group of friends, benefiting from the consolidated relations with the oil company that he used to work at previously in Iraq. With CAT, Boustany succeeded in extending his hopes since his company became one of the most famous companies in the Middle East in the field of contracting, especially when it comes to oil facilities. The first construction projects in both Dubai and Abu Dhabi emirates held the prints of Boustany himself. With the end of the 90s, Boustany's company had offices in more than one place in the world, from Syria to Lebanon, Pakistan and Britain. (Iskandar 2007, 21-23).

This success and economic prosperity is believed to have a direct political significance, whereby he succeeded in entering the Parliament in the early 50's. Boustany played more than one role, whether through heading the foreign affairs

committee or through governmental reconstruction contracts his company took after the destruction that was caused by the earthquake in 1956. He also succeeded to cope with the political quake that Lebanon witnessed in 1958 following the revolution against the Presidency of Camil Chamoun (1952-1958) who was striving to engage Lebanon with the western alliance against the flourishing of Nassarite movement (footnote needed) in Lebanon and the Arab world. The success of Boustany came through his neutrality from conflicting parties. He stood at a distance from president Chamoun and Egyptian president Jamal Abdel Nasser whom he had built a friendship with after his refusing position with respect to the Tripartite Aggression against Egypt in 1956. (Iskandar 2007, 26)

Despite the differences in their economic inclinations, the friendship between Abdel Nasser and Boustany was a reason for the tension in the relation between President Fouad Chehab (1958-1964) and Boustany. The former perceived Boustany's ambitions to become a president as a danger to his mandate. Therefore, their relationship was tensed most of the times (Iskandar 2007, 28). However, Boustany's ambitions to become president soon collided with destiny after he passed away in a tragic plane crash in 1963. This tragedy accident prevented the arrival of a president who is capable of joining between the revolutionary governments in the Arab world and the oil-producing countries in the Gulf, as per the analysis of Iskandar. He even goes further arguing that Boustany had the ability to stand in the face of the Soviet plans to dominate the Arab world (Iskandar 2007, 36-37).

Accordingly, we can conclude from what has been presented that Iskandar wanted to draw a comparison between both political and economical figures, firstly with the common roots being Sidon, secondly with the ideological background that altered from socialism to capitalism, thirdly with the professional progression and the

accumulation of wealth through working in the contracting sector, hereby benefiting from the oil booming in the Gulf. Moreover, the comparison is manifested through Hariri and Boustani's political power, despite the fact that they occupied different positions, also through their contribution to reconstruction - earthquake of 56 versus civil war- ,their ability to compromise between Anti West regimes and the oil-producing countries, the repulsion between the politician coming from the world of economy and the military president -Fouad Chehab, Emile Lahoud-, and finally the absolute advocacy to the Liberal system as being the most successful system for Lebanon and all the countries of the world.

6.3 Comparison between Hariri and Hussein Uwayni

The comparison between Hariri and Hussein Uwayni goes back to a study prepared by the historian Fawaz Traboulsi, which he presented in 2007 during a conference in the University of London entitled (Saudi expansion: the Lebanese connection, 1924–1952). The study itself did not strive for comparison as much as it aimed to document the expansion of the Saudi power in the Lebanese political life in the period that preceded the independence and during the mandate of the president Bechara El Khoury. Traboulsi listed the most important stages that Oueini passed through; from his beginnings as a young Arab nationalist being against the French mandate and belonging to an average family, to his immigration to Jeddah in Saudi Arabia where he formed his fortune through textile trading and then gold trade, and ending with a political position as a finance minister and then prime minister in the last year of the renewed mandate of the president Bechara El Khoury. Traboulsi presents Uwayni as the young man who was imprisoned for two months after he was accused for participating in the assassination of the minster of internal security in the

first government of the French mandate Assaad Khorshid. After he was released, Uwayni traveled to Jeddah, which was under the rule of Abdel Aziz Ben Saoud. He went there to work in the textile trade, and then he expanded his trading activity to include Palestine, where he opened a factory for textile in Haifa.

This growing economic role allowed him to act as a mediator between the Sultan Najed Abdel Aziz Ben Saoud and the King of Al Hijaz Al Sharif Ali during the conflict between the Hachemite and the Saoud family. However, this mediation was not successful due to the military operation that Al Saoud family succeeded in, and consequently made Al Hijaz join their flag in 1926 and announce their Kingdom in 1932. However, Uwayni succeeded in approaching Al Saoud family to become, at the beginning of the 1940th, the commercial agent of Al Saoud family as per the description of General Spears, the minister of Syria and Lebanon in the British government. Uwayni, who was forbidden to enter the territories that were under the rule of the French mandate, soon became the representative of the French commercial interests in the kingdom of Saudi Arabia after his ban was removed.

Upon his return to Lebanon in 1937, this commercial activity allowed him to establish Banque du Liban et D'Outre Mer –BLOM-. However, the essential turning point that contributed to the growth of his wealth came through the gold commercial operations. At that time, Beirut formed a center for these operations, where 20% of the international gold operations used to pass by. The size of the revenues from gold trade reached around 100 million dollars with the year 1951. Hereby, he succeeded in doubling his fortune through his position as the finance minister in 1949, specifically after being the man behind the decision of linking the Lebanese pound to the gold standard, thus committing to the recommendations of Michel Chiha. It is enough to say here that the size of gold trade in 1946 was around 553 Kg and reached up to 89

thousand Kg around the year 1951, whereas Uwayni himself was responsible for the gold transactions between Banque Indochine of Jiddah and the Beirut branch. This enormous fortune allowed Uwayni to become part of the Christian Oligarchy that controls the essential joints of the Lebanese economy. Accordingly, Uwayni's participation in the "Consortium", the families that dominate the economic sectors, coincided with his investment in the fields that constitute the pillars of the Lebanese economy, whether in the banking sector through Banque du Liban et d'Outre Mer, or through tourism, or through the transportation sector by participating in establishing Lebanon's airlines, or through the construction sector.

Uwayni became a prime minister for the first time at the end of Bechara El Khoury's renewed mandate. The road to the government palace was paved after he was elected a deputy during the 1947 election, which was named "Black May election" due to the "fraud" that tainted it. The goal of this fraudulent election was to form a parliament having a mission of endorsing the modification of the constitution in order to renew El Khoury's mandate. Uwayni indeed committed to this, whereby he voted in favor of the renewal. Thus he got appointed as a finance minister in the first renewed government, and afterwards a prime minister in the last year of the same mandate. The government could not serve until the end of its renewed years, due to a popular opposition in 1951. Afterwards, Uwayni held the position of prime minister three consecutive times; however they were short in period. All of them came at the end of President Fouad Chehab's mandate and the beginning of President Charles Helou's mandate. (February 1964 –July 1965).

The years that Uwayni passed in the ministry of finance and then as a prime minister were influential on the economic level, especially with respect to the liberation of economy whether in terms of commercial or financial exchanges. He

also played a central role during the Lebanese Syrian negotiations with regards to the common economic interests. These negotiations resulted in the fiscal and custom separation. Uwayni also played a central role with respect to the agreement of Lebanon on extending the oil pipeline named Tapline (Trans-Arabian pipeline) across the Lebanese territories. The Syrian parliament had refused this matter, protesting the small Syrian share as opposed to allowing the oil pipeline to run across the Syrian territories.

In 1951, Uwayni – through his position as a prime minister and a foreign affairs minister – contributed with the Lebanese government to sign the 4-point agreement, in which the United States pledged to protect the countries which are threatened by communism.

As per Traboulsi, the comparison between Uwayni and Hariri manifests through three levels; firstly both of them belong to economically modest families, and they both had Arab nationalist inclinations. They both traveled to Saudi Arabia and succeeded through their relationships with the royal family in building a huge fortune, which they soon employed in the Lebanese political life. Secondly, both of them obtained the Saudi nationality; Hariri was nicknamed Sheikh and Uwayni Hajj. Both succeeded in introducing themselves in the Christian bourgeois club, after they have made their fortune abroad. Thirdly, both held the position of prime minister and strove through this position to incorporate the Saudi power into the Lebanese political life, whether in the economic or political inclinations.

6.4 Comparison between Hariri and Chiha

The comparison between Hariri and Michel Chiha coincide with the above mentioned comparisons. However, Chiha remains the essential theorizer of the Lebanese system

both on the economic and political levels. The similarities between Hariri and Chiha are many, despite the differences that might be considered numerous as well.

6.4.1 The personal aspect

Upon presenting the personal aspect of Hariri, especially his beginnings and the way he built his fortune abroad as compared to the beginnings of Chiha, it is normal to conclude that both men demonstrate a binary opposition. Hariri seems through his resume that he is the closest to Emile Boustany and mostly to Hussein Uwayni. This is concluded based on the superficial level. However, if we take into consideration the content level we can conclude that Hariri is the actual demonstration of Chiha's concept. The similarities are evident in Chiha's vision of the Lebanese worker who refuses his social status, leaves his position as an employed person and turns into an employer or prefers to immigrate (Chiha, , 228-229), more specifically he is that expatriate "philanthropist" who is able to spend his money in Lebanon. In Chiha's intellectual system, there are no rich people in Lebanon, but rather foreigners who spend their money or Lebanese expatriates who return with their money to Lebanon.

6.4.2 The identity of Lebanon

When it comes to the identity of Lebanon, we can enumerate on the direct level the differences between Hariri and Chiha, whereas the former was with Arabism contrarily to the latter who insisted on the differentiation between the Lebanese and Arabian identities. From this perspective, Hariri seems to resemble more Riad Al-Solh who tried to adapt between Arabism and Lebanonization. Hariri was even one of those who assured the Arab identity of Lebanon, which was to be one of the worst

nightmares for Chiha, if he was alive today. Nevertheless, if we marginalized the text on its direct level, we cannot find anything in Hariri's path that contradicts with Chiha's definition of the Lebanese identity whether the entity, or the political and economic vision.

On the existential and political level, Hariri did not stray away from the idea that considered Lebanon as a country for inter-sharing minorities. He expressed this many times through practice and preaching. Some even go further by saying that Hariri succeeded in Lebanonizing the Sunni confession through turning them into one of the inter-sharing minorities based on the mechanisms that Ta'ef agreement specified. He worked on applying this mechanism through connecting the economic interests of the Lebanese confessions in a way that would make it hard to stray away from Ta'ef (Bkassini, 2009, 62). Sure, this is a deduction that needs to be approved in the future. None can guarantee that the Sunni's of the periphery, who went out in hundreds of thousands to the streets in 2005 supporting "the independence uprising" after the assassination of Hariri, will still hold on to the motto "Lebanon comes first", which was adopted in 2006 by Saad Hariri whom inherited the political position of his father. The Sunni confession, who showed animosity towards Syria after the assassination of Hariri, might ask to join with Syria in case the regime there collapsed due to the Arab revolutions and was preceded by government controlled by the Sunni's.

What is certain is that Hariri did not only settle for the concept of "Lebanonization" but he rather strove to renew it through re-assuring Chiha's idea that focuses on optimistic morals being the essential support of the Lebanese personality. Thus, reconstructing what the civil war had left behind, tells the legend of the Phoenician bird that flies from under the ashes. This leads us to the comparison

between Hariri and Chiha on the economic identity level. As such, nothing equals the assurance of Chiha on the liberalism of the Lebanese economy, other than Hariri's official and unofficial Statements. According to both Hariri and Chiha, the economic identity relies on the geographical location of Lebanon. Exactly as Chiha used to repeat, the announcement of Solidere project identifies the location of Lebanon as being a link between the civilizations of the ancient world since thousands of years. Daoud Al Sayegh was not at all far from this definition of Lebanon as a special entity situated on the crossroad of civilizations, religions and continents. (Al-Sayegh, 2011 , 143). This makes us conclude that the basis that Hariri relied on in his definition of Lebanon's identity was not far from the ones that Chiha adopted on all levels.

6.4.3 The political and administrative vision

Even though the statements and the writings of Hariri greatly held on to the democratic system, the political practice of Hariri affirms that he did not once rebel against the "uniqueness" of Lebanon's special system. He was one of the fiercest defenders of the articles 9 and 10 in the Lebanese constitution. He was also one of the few politicians who did not tackle the elimination of political sectarianism, whereas his demand remained within the limits of the folklore requests of any political leader's agenda. In this respect, Hariri seems to be similar to Michel Chiha although Chiha was clearer on his refusal of the elimination of political sectarianism. In my opinion, this difference is related to the disparity of the surrounding environment, in addition to the difference in the official position between Chiha and Hariri.

At the power practicing level, Hariri showed a discretionary flexibility in dealing with the constitution. On the one hand, he insisted on abiding by the constitutional amendments of Ta'ef that shifted the executive authority from the

president of the republic to the council of ministers. On the other hand, he was flexible on amending the constitution only if it was in his own interest. For example, he was behind extending Al Harawi's mandate, but resisted the extension of Lahoud's mandate. Hariri's discretionary approach in dealing with the constitution also appeared when he accepted to stay loyal to the participatory formula although it contradicted the constitutional law. Perhaps, the Troika "novelty" – that governed the country for six years – best incarnates this issue. At this point, Hariri differs from Chiha in terms of form and content, because the latter held on to the constitution in a way that rendered the text quasi-sacred. He opposed the renewal of his brother-in-law Bechara El Khoury. He was also very keen on applying the constitution and not the national pact, believing that the constitution – unlike the pact – best interprets the Lebanese formula.

With regards to the parliament, the similarity between Hariri and Chiha soon re-appear since both of them strove to have a parliament with the legislative stability as a main pillar, thus preserving the economic identity of Lebanon. Both found in the parliament a platform where the inter-sharing minorities meet. Some remarks were noted that Hariri was part of the political system that worked on the marginalization of the Christian figures, preventing them from being presented in parliament, similar to the Syrians desire in marginalizing Christian leaders. However in return, we should also note that the Lebanese "Consortium" families were always present either in Hariri's electoral lists or other lists supported by Hariri. As such, Michel Pharaon was always a candidate on Hariri's list in Beirut, and Nabil De Freige entered the parliament in 2000 running on Hariri's list, Pierre Helou and afterwards Henri Helou won the strong support of Hariri and his allies during the elections. The presence of

these families indicates that Hariri did not breach the essential rule, through the core Christian representation of the “importers party” in the parliamentary seminar.

As such, we can conclude that Hariri did not drift from Chiha’s rule. He had even similar methods at some point. The same way Banque Pharaon & Chiha contributed to getting a big number of candidates to the parliament, Hariri succeeded in entering the club of the political “rollers”. This term became famous when indicating leader of certain confessions and their ability to get their candidates into the parliament. The famous sentence of Hariri “just as it is” (*Zay ma hiye*) is still stuck in the minds of people, and its significance is clear since it shows his ability to get anyone to parliament.

Exactly as Chiha, Hariri differentiated between the legislative position and the executive one when it came to sectarian representation. Hariri, at least in his own cooperation, was keen on neutralizing the sectarian factor in the executive administration. Even when the sectarian rules forced him to appoint people from a certain sect for an executive position, he used to be keen on appointing the most competent person.

However, the similarity between Chiha and Hariri does not apply on the desired authorities of each for the president of the republic and the prime minister. While Chiha adhered to the authorities that made the president a republican king, Hariri was very prudent to strictly apply Ta’ef, especially in terms of transferring power from the president’s hands to the ministerial council. He even aspired to transfer some of the “royal” authorities to the cabinet, including the authority to disband the parliament. Yet, this authority was eliminated by Ta’ef accord.

6.4.4 The economic vision

While dissecting Chiha's discourse, Traboulsi specifies key words in the economic discourse. He stops at the following definitions: international road, crossroad, station, link, bridge, public market, warehouse, public square, free zone, shelter for people and capitals (Traboulsi 1999, 62). We can find one third of these definitions or their likes in one statement of Hariri in 2004 where he stated: "wants for Beirut to become more organized and to become a center for tourism, finance, culture, commerce and health, and a point of attraction for different conferences in the region. I expect that in ten years it would become the jewel of the Middle East". It seems obvious that the similarity between Rafik Hariri and Michel Chiha reaches its highest degrees when it comes to economy. However, this does not mean that there are no contrasts between them. Some of these contrasts are even very essential.

Principle wise, both Chiha and Hariri called for liberal economy and for an economic system that relies on the service sector, the geographic location of Lebanon as well as on the legislative, fiscal and monetary stability. Chiha assured on backing the Lebanese bank with gold through purchasing tons of gold via Bank of Lebanon. Hariri followed this approach and even inculcated it as an economic norm that is stronger than the law itself. Chiha asked to eliminate the custom obstacles through eliminating custom fees and others. Hariri did the same throughout more than one stage. Chiha called to reduce the expenses and the revenues of the government and transforming the treasury budget to something that is similar to a "deposit". Hariri tried to do the same, whereas his overall idea that focused on reconstructing downtown Beirut – Solidere project – worked on bringing back the economic role of Lebanon as a center of services. Nevertheless, the legitimate father of this idea is none other than Michel Chiha, as previously discussed in more than one instance.

Such an economic role had catastrophic consequences on the agricultural and industrial sectors during the days of Chiha and Hariri. Both did not hesitate to neglect the importance of the industry arguing that it hardly contributes to the economy. Moreover, both did not present any reasonable excuses to justify the negligence of the agriculture sector. Accordingly, they both propagated for an economic vision that balance this unbalanced structure by covering the fiscal deficit via attracting “foreign capitals” to the Lebanese banks. It is sufficient to say that in 2004, the size of the money transfers reached around 4.5 billion USD (Iskandar, 2007, 144), which exceeded by 1.5 billion USD the average national income between the years 92 and 2006 that was around 3 billion USD (Bkassini 2009, 84). In such an economy, the absence of the social welfare government becomes natural, despite the ‘rosy’ promises of the ministerial statements.

Hariri’s investment in the construction sector even if it was similar to Chiha’s call for investing in the real estate sector, it also pushed him – whether he liked it or not – to breach one of the most prominent rules in Chiha’s system. The difference between Chiha and Hariri reveals here on the economic level. Chiha was strict with respect to his refusal to get indebted because that would incur costs that the government could spare, while Hariri always argued that indebtedness was the solution as opposed to waiting for international donations. This indebtedness, despite its high interest rates, had contributed to attract more foreign capitals, as well as to break more of Chiha’s rules due to the conditions that were imposed by the donating countries. These conditions made Hariri’s economic vision clash with Chiha’s in two main matters. The first matter is the elimination of the exclusive agencies, based on the recommendations of the Paris II conferences. This triggered the rebellion of the “consortium” on Hariri, until the latter accepted to leave the ministerial decision

words on paper. The second difference is evident in the recommendations emanated from the Paris conferences to adopt the value added tax. As known, taxes are disliked and not conform to the Lebanese liberal system, which is described by Chiha as one of a kind.

This difference between Chiha's theory and Hariri's execution resulted in catastrophic consequences. Chiha argued for a government that gets remunerated from companies, Hariri's execution of this theory – due to his reliance on the policy of indebtedness – lead to a government that is financially incapable, yet responsible for funding the banking system that is achieving huge profits due to the high interest rates. In accordance, Chiha called to liberate the government from any economic burdens, while Hariri came to liberate the government from its social burdens while committing it to banking burdens. This made banks boast in their annual balance statement, which exceeded the Lebanese government's entire national income.

Despite all this, the common denominators between Hariri and Chiha remain present. Most importantly, both dropped the plain from their calculations as a geographic asset with its influences on the economic combination. In addition, even if they both drastically argued about the importance of economic freedom, they did not show the same enthusiasm towards public and individual freedoms. While Chiha's contributions in this respect were mostly theoretic, Hariri - through his executive position and his support to the practices of the Syrian custody – did not place at any stance public freedoms at the same level as economic freedoms. In this context, the justifications of his consultants that he was forced to do abide by the standards of the security regime imposed by the Syrian intelligence, condemn him rather than render him innocent. This justification affirms that Hariri agreed on the bargaining between public freedoms versus economic freedoms, and thus the latter prevailed.

6.4.5 Foreign policy

If we set aside the relationship of Hariri with Syria, which is a current matter that has still not been illustrated in a scientific manner, Hariri's foreign policy would almost be identical what Chiha called for. Of course, Hariri did not go to the extent of inviting openly to join with the western allies. However, he always presented himself the protector of Lebanon and Syria through his strong foreign relations. As such, he always bet on the peace process and the ability of the international society to achieve this without resorting to violence. Even after he admitted to the ability of the resistance that resulted in the liberation of the South, he still believed that the international society should proceed with the peace process.

Hariri's vision of the phase following the peace process with Israel is based on an economic integration between Arab countries. At this point, Hariri relatively differs from Chiha, since the animosity of the latter towards Israel was mainly associated with its economic ability. In this context, Hariri's call for an Arab economic integration would not have been necessarily approved by Chiha, since this had never been part of his principles. Perhaps Chiha's position during the negotiations on the mutual economic interests between Lebanon and Syria indicates that the man would not demonstrate any enthusiasm to Hariri's idea.

6.5 Conclusion

While Rafik Hariri was launching his reconstruction project for downtown Beirut, calling the Lebanese people to be optimistic about the future, the artist Ziad Al Rahbani was launching his new play after a long absence, entitled "Lawla Foushat Al

Amal” -If it weren’t for hope-, inviting the Lebanese people to be pessimistic about the future. Around the same time, Joseph Samaha, then a journalist in Al Hayat, drew a parallel between these two visions about the future of Lebanon. Today, as the desired future has become the present, or even the past, it is our duty to learn our lessons from history. In retrospect, we realize now that the years that followed Chiha’s death, the ideologue of the optimistic vision, witnessed two civil wars, one of which lasted 15 years. Regardless of the various interpretations of these wars, the staunchest defenders of the Lebanese political and economic system cannot ignore the role of the latter in fueling these wars. As for Hariri, it was barely three years after his assassination, when internal bloody conflicts erupted in the streets of Beirut, due to the failure of the 'inter-sharing minorities' once again in solving their problems through the parliament. To say the least, this reality clearly shows the dramatic failure of the Lebanese formula in overcoming the problems generated by the dominant socio-economic system. The most consistent contribution made by this formula was the creation of opportunities for the minorities to 'unevenly' steal the country's wealth using governmental channels, and luring external intervention to defend and/or increase their share when threatened by a real opposition.

The precise focus of this study was not to discuss the reasons that led to the failure of the Lebanese system. Nevertheless, since Chiha and Hariri were the main contributors in constructing and re-constructing the Lebanese system based on a paradoxical combination between economic liberalism/neo-liberalism and socio-political conservatism, the aim of this thesis was to draw a causal link between Chiha's vision of Lebanon as reconstructed by Hariri's discourse and the recurrent dramas experienced by Lebanon.

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Appendices

Personal interview with Daoud Al Sayiegh, political advisor to Rafik Hariri

Personal interview with Ghazi Youssef, economic advisor to Rafik Hariri