LEBANESE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY

The Politics of the Armenians in Lebanon: 1975-1989

By

Vera ChoulhadjianYacoubian

A thesis

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in International Affairs

School of Arts and Sciences

September 2013

Thesis Proposal Form

Name of Student: Vera Choulhadjian Yacoubian I.D.# 200904404

Program / Department: International Affairs/Social Sciences

On 11/12/12:

has presented a Thesis proposal entitled:

The Politics of the Armenians in Lebanon: 1975-1989

in the presence of the Committee Members and Thesis Advisor:

Advisor: Dr. Bassel F. Salloukh
(Name and Signature)

Committee Member: Dr. Sami Baroudi
(Name and Signature)

Committee Member: Dr. Ohannes Geukjian
(Name and Signature)

Comments / Remarks / Conditions to Proposal Approval:

Approved

Date: 11/12/2012 Acknowledged by

Ass.(Dean, School of Arts and Sciences)

Sandra Rizk

cc: Department Chair
School Dean
Student
Thesis Advisor

Thesis Defense Result Form

Name of Student: Vera Choulhadjian Yacoubian I.D.: 200904404
Program / Department: International Affairs/Social Sciences
Date of thesis defense: ✕ 25/9/13
Thesis title: The Politics of the Armenians in Lebanon: 1975-1989

Result of Thesis defense:

- ☒ Thesis was successfully defended. Passing grade is granted
☐ Thesis is approved pending corrections. Passing grade to be granted upon review and approval by thesis Advisor
☐ Thesis is not approved. Grade NP is recorded

Committee Members:

Advisor:

Dr. Bassel F. Salloukh
(Name and Signature)

Committee Member:

Dr. Sami Baroudi
(Name and Signature)

Committee Member:

Dr. Ohannes Geukjian
(Name and Signature)

Advisor's report on completion of corrections (if any):

Changes Approved by Thesis Advisor: _____ Signature: _____

Date: 25/9/13

Acknowledged by _____
(Dean, School of Arts and Sciences)

cc: Registrar, Dean, Chair, Thesis Advisor, Student

Thesis Approval Form

Student Name: Vera Choulhadjian Yacoubian I.D. #: 200904404

Thesis Title : The Politics of the Armenians in Lebanon: 1975-1989

Program / Department: International Affairs/Social Sciences

School: Arts & Sciences

Approved by:

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Bassel F. Salloukh

Committee Member: Dr. Sami Baroudi

Committee Member: Dr. Ohannes Geukjian

Date: 25/9/2013

THESIS/PROJECT COPYRIGHT RELEASE FORM

LEBANESE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY NON-EXCLUSIVE DISTRIBUTION LICENSE

By signing and submitting this license, I Vera ChoulhadjianYacoubian grant to Lebanese American University (LAU) the non-exclusive right to reproduce, translate (as defined below), and/or distribute my submission (including the abstract) worldwide in print and electronic format and in any medium, including but not limited to audio or video. I agree that LAU may, without changing the content, translate the submission to any medium or format for the purpose of preservation. I also agree that LAU may keep more than one copy of this submission for purposes of security, backup and preservation. I represent that the submission is my original work, and that I have the right to grant the rights contained in this license. I also represent that my submission does not, to the best of my knowledge, infringe upon anyone's copyright. If the submission contains material for which I do not hold copyright, I represent that I have obtained the unrestricted permission of the copyright owner to grant LAU the rights required by this license, and that such third-party owned material is clearly identified and acknowledged within the text or content of the submission. IF THE SUBMISSION IS BASED UPON WORK THAT HAS BEEN SPONSORED OR SUPPORTED BY AN AGENCY OR ORGANIZATION OTHER THAN LAU, I REPRESENT THAT I HAVE FULFILLED ANY RIGHT OF REVIEW OR OTHER OBLIGATIONS REQUIRED BY SUCH CONTRACT OR AGREEMENT. LAU will clearly identify my name as the author or owner of the submission, and will not make any alteration, other than as allowed by this license, to my submission.

Name: Vera ChoulhadjianYacoubian

Signature: *Vera Yacoubian*

Date: 22 August 2013

PLAGIARISM POLICY COMPLIANCE STATEMENT

I certify that I have read and understood LAU's Plagiarism Policy. I understand that failure to comply with this Policy can lead to academic and disciplinary actions against me. This work is substantially my own, and to the extent that any part of this work is not my own I have indicated that by acknowledging its sources.

Name: Vera ChoulhadjianYacoubian

Signature: *Vera Yacoubian*

Date: 22 August 2013

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my honest gratitude to my advisor Dr. Bassel F. Salloukh for the continuous support of my thesis. His insightful comments helped me in all the time of my research and writing of this thesis.

Besides my advisor, I would like to thank the committee members of this thesis, namely Dr. Sami Baroudi and Dr. Ohannes Geukjian who, despite their hectic schedules, kindly agreed to be part of the committee.

Many thanks also to all the interviewees for their help and the precious time they offered to make this work possible. Last but not least, I express all feelings of gratitude to my family members and friends for all the support they showed when I wrote this research.

To Those Who Contributed to Maintain Peace in Lebanon

THE POLITICS OF THE ARMENIANS IN LEBANON: 1975-1989

VERA CHOULHADJIAN YACOUBIAN

Abstract

This thesis examines the role of the Armenian community in ending the Civil War and in the negotiation of a new, postwar, power-sharing agreement. It does so by analyzing the circumstances that led to the adoption of positive neutrality by the Armenian community, and highlights the main principles upon which the Armenian political parties articulated their policies in Lebanese internal politics. The thesis also explores the role played by the Armenian political parties in the drafting of the Ta'ef agreement, and the reform plans they initiated and presented to the Lebanese warring parties to end the internal conflict. This thesis contends that by adopting the policy of positive neutrality, the Armenians not only contributed to national reconciliation, but also played a central role in protecting the consociational political system.

Keywords: Lebanon, Armenians, Power-sharing, Positive neutrality, Ta'ef.

TABLE OF CONTENT

CHAPTER ONE.....	1
INTRODUCTION	1-6
1.1 Introduction.....	1
1.2 Research Questions.....	3
1.3 Methodology	5
1.4 Map of Thesis	6
CHAPTER TWO	7
ARMENIAN POLITICS AND POWER-SHARING IN LEBANON.....	7-23
2.1 Introduction.....	7
2.2 Consociationalism as a Power-sharing Arrangement	8
2.3 The Armenian Privileges and Lebanon’s Power-sharing	15
2.3.1 Armenian Participation in Politics	18
2.4 Conclusion	22
CHAPTER THREE	24
ARMENIAN POSITIVE NEUTRALITY AND THE LEBANESE CIVIL WAR	
OF 1975.....	24-53
3.1 Introduction.....	24
3.2 Armenians in Lebanon: Historical Overview	25
3.3 Armenian Policy Determinants in Lebanon	28
3.3.1 Ethno-National Identity	29
3.3.2 Loyal Armenian Citizens.....	31
3.4 Armenian Politics in Lebanon before the 1975 Civil War	34
3.4.1 The Mandate and the Struggle for Independence.....	34
3.4.2 The Years of Independence	38
3.4.3 The 1958 Civil Strife.....	41
3.5 Armenian Positive Neutrality and the Civil War of 1975	44
3.6 Conclusion	53
CHAPTER FOUR.....	54
THE ARMENIANS AND THE TA’EF AGREEMENT.....	54-73
4.1 Introduction.....	54

4.2 Armenian Reform Plans to End the 1975 Civil War	55
4.2.1 Political Reforms.....	56
4.2.2 Lebanon's National Identity	59
4.2.3 Lebanon's Sovereignty.....	60
4.3 The Armenian Role in Ta'ef.....	61
4.4 The Armenians and the Ta'ef Agreement	69
4.5 Conclusion	73
 CHAPTER FIVE.....	74
 CONCLUSION	74-79
5.1 Summing Up the Thesis.....	74
5.2 Marginalization and Future Prospects	76
 BIBLIOGRAPHY	80-83
 LIST OF INTERVIEWS	84
 APPENDICES	85-103

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Lebanon's socio-political structure is a unique arrangement based on consociational democracy (Lijphart 1977). The religious and ethnic communities in Lebanon are structured in a way that promotes conflict. Lebanon is a pluralist country with a multi-party system that makes every ethno-religious group or sect a minority. The treaty of Lausanne in 1924 legitimized the presence of Armenians in the Lebanese socio-political scene (Geukjian 2009). Muslim Sunnis, opposed this decision because it strengthened the Christian majority; but the Maronites were satisfied since it preserved their leading political power in the country.

Participation in the political sphere started in 1929 when a Maronite-Armenian alliance granted Abdallah Ishaq, an Armenian Catholic, a seat reserved for minorities in parliament (Migliorino 2008). In the 1934 parliamentary elections, when a seat was allocated to the Armenian Apostolic community, it went to the French-supported Vahram Leylekian. In 1972, the Armenian Apostolic community was allowed the right to elect four representatives, while the Armenian Catholics were assigned a single seat (Geukjian 2009). Between 1953 and 1972 all the parliamentary seats reserved for the Armenians were won by candidates supported by the Tashnak party. The Lebanese census of 1932 gave the Armenians a role in the political power structure of the country (Der Karabetian 1984). With time, the early hostile attitude of the Muslims and the preconceptions of the native population decreased as Armenians contributed to post-WWI reconstruction process and led a policy of "least interference" in Lebanese internal

confessional politics. In fact, they adopted pro-government policies and supported the president (Geukjian 2009).

The Armenian-Maronite cooperation changed during the 1958 civil war, when some Armenian parties (Hunchaks, Ramgavars, and Armenian communists) sided with the Muslim-led leftist opposition. Furthermore, as the Muslims began to encounter Christian dominance in the political sphere, “Armenians declined to throw their full weight behind the Christians” (Der Karabetian 1984). When the civil war broke out in 1975 the Armenians adopted a policy of positive neutrality.

This thesis investigates the circumstances that led to the adoption of positive neutrality by the Armenian community during the 1975-1989 Lebanese Civil War, and highlights the main principles upon which the Armenian political parties articulated their policies in Lebanese internal politics. These principles had to do with the political objectives of the Armenian political parties based on preserving the Armenian national identity, and projecting a loyal citizenship. This thesis describes how the Armenian leadership was able to anticipate the dangers of civil war. Moreover, it reveals that the Armenians of Lebanon had a different understanding of the crisis, and a different vision of the country they wanted to live in, than that of other Lebanese parties. This study also tackles the issue of confessional power-sharing arrangements that gave the Armenian community a political role and legitimate access to political institutions. In this context, the thesis explores the role the Armenian political parties played in the drafting of the Ta’ef agreement, and the reform plans they initiated and presented to the Lebanese warring parties to end the internal conflict.

1.2 Research Questions

This thesis asks two questions in an attempt to examine the contribution of the Armenian community to Lebanon and the Ta'ef agreement. First, why did the Armenians adopt the policy of positive neutrality vis-à-vis the Lebanese factions during the civil war? Second, how did the reform plans presented and initiated by the Armenian parties contribute to the Ta'ef agreement, hence the end of the civil war?

The aim of the first question is to explore the causes and motives that contributed to the adoption of this positive neutrality. To answer this question, Geukjian (2007) underscores the following important aspects: a) the Armenian political leadership was determined not to repeat the mistakes of 1958, during which the Armenian political leadership was divided, b) taking into consideration issues related to the future of the Armenian Diaspora, the political leadership was afraid that abandoning cooperation towards communal goals such as preserving the Armenian national-identity, adopting a least interference policy in politics, and pursuing the unresolved Armenian Cause could harm the Armenian community in Lebanon, and c) the Armenian community was undoubtedly committed to Lebanon's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

This thesis argues that the policy of positive neutrality did not mean that Armenians did not have a political position concerning Lebanese internal and communal issues. The Armenian community is part of the Lebanese confessional system and it could not remain indifferent towards Lebanon's socio-economic, cultural, and political concerns. This thesis argues also that the position of positive neutrality of the Armenian community stemmed from the confessional power-sharing system of Lebanon's institutions. The Armenians feared that with the breakup of the state and changes in the

confessional political system, the Armenian community could lose control over its internal affairs. Bedoyan (1983) asserts that Lebanon's political formula fully recognized the existence and the rights of the various communities in Lebanon: "one of the main principles of this political formula, better known as the National Pact, was acceptance of the idea of confessional power-sharing in the country's political institutions". This formula, unlike to other Middle Eastern authoritarian regimes, endorsed the Armenian community, to enter the main political institutions and play a role in Lebanese politics.

The aim of the second question is to examine two different proposals presented by the Armenian community, to analyze the contribution of this community to the promulgation of the Ta'ef agreement. In fact, the issue of sectarianism in Lebanon was a very delicate issue for the Armenian political leadership. It advocated "maintaining the status quo of the consociational system in Lebanon" (Avsharian 2009). The first proposal was presented in 1983, at the Geneva talks, and the second was entitled the "Lebanese peace initiative" of 1986, which was presented in collaboration with other Christian groups. Therefore, during the Geneva talks in 1983, the Armenian parliamentarians presented a proposal in which they proposed an amendment to the Lebanese constitution to institutionalize the confessional quotas in the unwritten Lebanese Pact, by reserving the presidency of the republic to the Maronites, the premiership to the Sunnis, and the speaker of parliament to the Shias. They also proposed the creation of a Senate where all Lebanese religious sects would be represented in order to preserve equilibrium between them. They also proposed an increase in the number of MPs and the adaptation of the principle of equality in the distribution of seats between Muslims and Christians in parliament (Avsharian 2009).

In 1986, the Armenian parliamentarians, along with the other Christian groups, reiterated the idea of equal allocation of parliamentary and ministerial seats between the Muslims and the Christians by increasing the number of MPs to 108 (Avsharian 2009). They also suggested creating the office of the vice-presidency of the republic, which was to be composed of six people representing the major sects in Lebanon except the Maronites. In the 1986 Lebanese Peace Initiative, the Armenians agreed on the term “Lebanon is an Arab country”; but with the presence of foreign troops in Lebanon, the leaders of the Armenian community reconfirmed its neutrality and used a very cautious language on the topic of sovereignty of Lebanon (Avsharian 2009). This thesis argues how the Armenian community used the consociational nature of the Lebanese political system into their favor, and how it protected its own privileges.

1.3 Methodology

This thesis relies on a qualitative methodology because it aims to examine the deep and detailed history of the Armenian community and highlight the role of ethnic-religious groups’ role in Lebanon’s consociational system. In addition, a qualitative methodology provides a historical backyard to highlight and examine the roots of the conflict and draw appropriate attention to the context and period that helped to shape the policy of the Armenian community during 1975-1989.

This thesis uses the secondary literature, such as articles, to examine the contribution of the Armenian community to politics, society, the economy and administration, and, to explore the special circumstances that shaped the decision making process of the Armenian community and contributed to a better understanding of

their policies. It also uses primary sources such as memoirs, Armenian newspapers (Aztag, Ararat, and Zartonk), and Armenian archives available at the headquarters of the three Armenian parties (Tashnak, Hunchak and Ramgavar). Moreover, open-ended interviews with prominent Armenian and non-Armenian political and public figures in Lebanon will be conducted. The interviews will be chosen from different Armenian parliamentarians, to learn about to what extent these structures and policies determined conflict and shaped the policies of the Armenian community during the Lebanese civil war of 1975-1989. However, lack of access to archival material may pose a limitation to this thesis.

1.4 Map of the Thesis

This thesis is composed of five chapters. Chapter one introduces the thesis, its aim, the research questions, and provides an explanation about the approach, sources and the methodology of the research process. Chapter two unpacks the different arguments concerning power-sharing formula and explains how the Armenian community incorporated the consociational nature of the Lebanese political system into their favor. Chapter three offers a historical overview of the Armenians in Lebanon and examines the role of the Armenian community during the war. It analyzes the political actions taken prior to and during that war period, and explains the policy of positive neutrality in regard to the Lebanese groups. Chapter four highlights the reform plans that the Armenian leadership initiated and presented to the Lebanese warring parties to end the internal conflict. It also analyzes the contribution of the Armenian community to Lebanon and the Ta'ef agreement. This thesis is brought to conclusion in chapter five.

CHAPTER TWO

ARMENIAN POLITICS

AND POWER-SHARING IN LEBANON

2.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the literature examining the problem of power-sharing in divided societies. It will stress the most widely accepted model of power-sharing: consociationalism. The critical objective is to reveal the achievements and the limitations of this theory in addressing important challenges that threaten governing in divided society. This chapter also reviews the Lebanese consociational model and highlights Lebanon's experience with power-sharing.

Consociationalism in Lebanon has been the choice of all communities, including the Armenians. This chapter explains how the consociational nature of the Lebanese system helped the Armenians to transform themselves from an unknown community to a fully integrated group which participates in Lebanese politics on equal basis with all other confessional groups. The chapter then highlights the way in which Lebanon's political system and its confessional arrangements shaped the political behavior of the Armenian community and its relationship with other major confessional groups. It demonstrates how the Armenian community incorporated the consociational nature of the Lebanese political system in its favor. The chapter ends by spelling out the advantages that power-sharing arrangement carries over other forms of ethnic conflict management for communities like the Armenian in deeply divided societies.

2.2 Consociationalism as a Power-Sharing Arrangement

Ethnic conflicts and political disputes are not a new phenomenon. Political scientists and constitutional expertise have acknowledged some connections between the type of institutions selected, and ethnic mobilization and conflicts. The supporters of consociationalism (it is also often called consociational democracy, or consensus democracy) suggest it as a viable solution for deeply divided societies to overcome the problem of political instability. Consociationalism is based on four important principles: territorial or cultural autonomy, proportional representation in governmental institutions, veto power to all existing groups and a grand coalition of all the ethnic groups.

Arend Lijphart suggests ethnic-based consociational democracy as a reasonable alternative to conflict management for plural societies (2008: 31). He demonstrates that.-

A plural society is a society that is sharply divided along religious, ideological, linguistic, cultural, ethnic, or racial lines into virtually separate sub-societies with their own political parties, interest groups, and media of communication. These sub-societies will be referred to as segments. The segments can differ from each other in terms of religion, language, ethnicity, race, and so on (Lijphart 2008: 67).

Lijphart argues that for a consociational democracy to be successful it requires the existence of a number of conditions useful for the establishment and the perseverance of this kind of democracy. He underscores: “these have to do with inter-subcultural relations at the elite level, at the mass level, and elite-mass relations within the subcultures” (2008: 32). Furthermore, he explains that when plural societies are divided along religious, ideological, linguistic, regional, cultural, racial and ethnic segmental lines citizen’s loyalty is directed to their groups rather than to the national government (1984: 22). Hence, under such conditions majority rule becomes

undemocratic and threatening, because minorities will feel excluded and victimized if they are deprived of power, and consequently will lose their commitment to the state (Lijphart 1984: 22-3). Micheal Kerr finds Lijphart's aforementioned variables for consociationalism insufficient; however, he argues that these consociational variables all have different values under different political conditions: "the absence of some variables, as opposed to others, can help to explain the failure of power-sharing under consociational government" (2005: 27). However, he goes on to explain that the consociational debate has largely "revolved around the comparison of established democracies that use the consociational model in states where the maintenance of consociationalism was not the only thing preventing state collapse and the outbreak of civil war" (2005: 27).

Lijphart characterizes consociational democracy as possessing four main institutional arrangements which are "grand coalition, proportional representation, a mutual veto and segmental autonomy" (1977: 25). This form of power-sharing preserves minority rights. Ulrich Schneckener builds on Lijphart's theory, and adds a fifth characteristic for conflict settlement: arbitration. He assesses that in case of a dispute between groups in conflict, it is "necessary to develop mechanisms, such as informal meetings among the group leaders, ombudspersons, formalized mediation committees, independent commissions or special arbitration courts in which all sides are represented" (2002: 205). He contends that for the successful application of power-sharing components several necessary conditions must be secured of which he stresses: "the smaller the economic and social differences between the groups, the better the conditions for consociationalism" (Schneckener 2002: 211).

Eric Nordlinger highlights six conflict-regulating practices which are 1) Stable coalition, 2) Proportionality, 3) Depoliticization, 4) Mutual veto, 5) Compromise, 6) Concessions by the stronger to the weaker (1972: 21-9). Brendan O'Leary attempts to give separate meanings to consociation and to power-sharing. He suggests that consociation is proposed to prevent governments from committing ethnic cleansing, while power-sharers wish to share political power between different communities (O'Leary 2005: xxi). Theodore Hanf identifies consociation as the result of a conflict where there are "no winners and losers"; he rather calls it "a civilized form of ceasefire". In his opinion, there are two types of successful consociational democracy: (a) consociation in which the ethnic changes are considered positive, as for example, in Switzerland; (b) and consociational systems in which, although differences are accepted, but these are not basic difference. He mentions the Netherlands and Austria, where consociational arrangements have succeeded in reducing the existing cleavages and encouraging assimilation (Hanf 1981: 248).

Lijphart eagerly supports consociationalism as an ideal option for plural societies, stressing that such an arrangement would guarantee a fair procedure of power-sharing and group autonomy particularly in educational and cultural areas. In this context he indicates that the two ingredients for successful democracy in divided societies are the sharing of executive power and group autonomy: "power-sharing means the participation of the representatives of all significant groups in political decision-making; group autonomy means that these groups have authority to run their own internal affairs, especially in the areas of education and culture" (Lijphart 2002: 39). Group autonomy is also discussed in Sammy Smooha's and Theodore Hanf's model of consociationalism where "the groups enjoy institutional and sometimes even territorial

autonomy. They keep separate schools, community organizations and a distinct identity while sharing certain overarching values, institutions and identity with the rest of society” (Smootha and Hanf 1996: 332).

Lebanon is a plural society with large number of strictly self-contained ethnic groups (Lijphart 1981:148). Hanf’s “Lebanese Formula” as he labels it, consists of a political system based on the sharing of power between the religious communities in the country, i.e. the arrangements defined by the “Lebanese Formula” give religious communities responsibility for the daily life of every Lebanese from schools to marriage, from inheritance to professional and political life (1981: 232). Marie-Joelle Zahar calls power-sharing arrangements in Lebanon “regimes” and discusses these regimes in the light of foreign protectors, domestic peace, and democratic failure. She shares some of Kerr’s ideas when she argues that power-sharing has brought long periods of peace, but only when this has depended on external protectors (2005: 234). Zahar points out that all power-sharing regimes were shaped to lead Lebanon towards a non-sectarian democracy and concludes that none of these requirements was able to end sectarianism (2005: 237-8). Hrair Dekmejian argues that Lebanon was governed by elite cartels that promoted co-optation and circulation without changing the basic principles recognized by articles 24 and 95 of the 1926 Constitution and by the National Pact of 1943 (1978: 254). He concludes that Lebanon’s experience with consociationalism has been short and the thirty years of power-sharing since the French withdrawal could not create the perfect political system (1978: 260).

Kerr approaches the issue from a different viewpoint. He argues that the National Pact was the perfect mechanism to reach independence, and to regulate Christian-Muslim conflict potentials over Lebanon’s national identity and its position in the

Middle East (2005: 112). He contends that the pact was not intended to maintain long-term consociational formula for ending inter-confessional conflict, but rather a “*realpolitik* compromise undertaken by the dominant Maronite and Sunni leadership to rid themselves of the French” (Kerr 2005: 124). For Kerr the Pact is the continuation of an inter-confessional political agreement that had developed under both the Ottoman Millet system and the French Mandate. Actually Kerr’s discussion of consociational democracy and power-sharing in Lebanon adds a new characteristic to the theories of Lijphart, O’Leary and John McGarry. He concludes that the consociation model cannot provide permanent solution to the Lebanese ethno-national conflicts if powerful positive external pressures are absent (2005: 2). As a matter of fact he cites the presence of a third party actor in managing ethno-national conflicts (2009: 4). To confirm his argument he highlights the fact that Lebanon’s problems after 1969 were due to the lack of positive external support needed to preserve the inter-communal balance (Kerr 2005: 36). At the same time he illustrates how the Ta’ef agreement succeeded in 1989 due to the “convergence of international and regional interests” in regulating the Lebanese conflict, granting the Lebanese elites an opportunity to re-establish their position in power through consociation (2005: 159).

For the consociational systems to work correctly McGarry and O’Leary, suggest that at least three fundamental conditions should be present.-

First, the rival ethnic segments must not be unreservedly committed to immediate or medium-term integration or assimilation of others into their nation or to the creation of their own nation-states. Second, successive generations of political leaders must have the right motivations to engage in conflict regulation and sustain the consociational system, which means that leaders of the rival ethnic communities must fear the consequences of ethnic war, and desire to preserve the economic and political stability of their regions. Third, the political leaders of the relevant ethnic communities must enjoy some political autonomy

themselves, so that they can make compromises without being accused of treachery (1993: 36-7).

Kerr's study on consociationalism contributes a fourth condition to McGarry's and O'Leary's conditions: "the existence of positive external regulating pressures, from state and non-state actors, which provide the internal elites with sufficient incentives and motives for their acceptance of, and support for, consociation" (2005: 28). Zahar argues that the unwritten pact of Lebanon would improve the formal constitution of the country, because it preserved three principles; segmental proportionality, segmental autonomy, and foreign policy neutrality (2005: 228).

O'Leary states that in consociational democracy, proportionality is used for the allocation of positions in the state, especially in the public sector. However, he claims that in 1958 President Fuad Chehab introduced the principle of equality between Christian and Muslim appointees to the civil service. This preserved communal relations, but nevertheless tensions continued to prevail because of Maronite privileges in the security sector. With time when Muslims increased in number they demanded the end of the quota and the proportionality principle (O'Leary 2005: xxix). For Nordlinger proportionality is a conflict-regulating practice described "as an encompassing manner when contrasted to the majority principle of winner takes all" (1972: 23). Hence, the basic characteristic of proportionality is that all groups influence a decision according to their numerical strength.

Critics placed great emphasis on the failure of power-sharing democracy in Lebanon in 1975. Lijphart argues that power-sharing failed to thrive in Lebanon not because of its internal problems triggered by the power-sharing system itself but because of "Lebanon's position in the international arena" (2002: 42). In his opinion power-

sharing in Lebanon needed to be modernized rather than substituted. Kerr also demonstrates that only through the establishment of a “stable and unthreatening contiguous environment can consociation positively regulate ethnic conflict in divided societies” (2005: 197). Hanf concludes that in order to reduce the fear of those “who wish to preserve their group identity, Lebanon needs a formula which makes group membership optional instead of obligatory” (1981: 249). This might provide a useful transition to help peaceful coexistence between various ethnic groups (Hanf 1981: 226).

These power-sharing arrangements suffer from major shortcomings. Donald Horowitz criticizes Lijphart’s and Nordlinger’s consociational structures because they construct on the idea that each ethnic or religious group is represented by “a single set of leaders” (1985: 574). He argues that if that was the case then cooperation between these parties would have been predictable. Moreover, Horowitz criticizes Lijphart’s concept of “grand coalition” as the main instrument of consociationalism. While Lijphart identifies four countries as having followed consociational practices, Lebanon, Malaysia, Surinam, and the Netherlands, Horowitz states that none of the four was truly grand coalition, because each ethnic group had more than one party (1985: 575). He concludes that consociationalism may only be practical in moderately rather than deeply divided societies (1985: 572).

Kerr indicates external imposition of power sharing as an instrument in framing consociationalism. He argues against Lijphart’s different standards for the successful implementation of consociation for divided societies, suggesting that “the consociational model is not a self-sufficient model for the regulation of ethnically divided societies”. He attributes its success to the interest of neighboring states or regional powers in stabilizing consociation. Addressing Lebanon as a classic example of this, he stresses the

fact that its first consociational agreement “was founded on the basis that it would have a foreign policy based on neutrality”. Consequently, “Lebanon’s political dependence on the external status quo illustrated both the potential and the limitations of its consociational framework” (Kerr 2005: 32). In this context, Kerr evaluates the importance of power-sharing as a conflict-regulation process in the short term and not democratization or democratic transition, thus opposing Lijphart’s argument that the consociational model requires some commitment to democratic practice. He argues that “if consociation can be replaced in plural societies as a process of democratization develops and, equally if consociation can be abandoned on societies divided by ethno-national conflict when civil war breaks out, then maintaining consociation is crucial” (Kerr 2005: 35). The next section discusses how Lebanon’s power-sharing formula gave the Armenian community legitimate access to the main political institutions and a political role which they lacked in other Middle Eastern countries.

2.3 The Armenian Privileges and Lebanon’s Power-Sharing

Despite its small area and population, Lebanon is a multifaceted mosaic of ethnic and religious groups. The Lebanese government officially recognizes eighteen religious communities. After the Ta’ef agreement, seven of these, including the Armenian community, are regarded “as being of major importance” (Bedoyan 1979: 119). The constitution of the Lebanese Republic, promulgated in 1926, institutionalized and legitimized the existing pluralism of Lebanese society. It set two basic principles. The first was that all Lebanese citizens were equal before the law; enjoy the same rights and duties, without any distinction (Articles 7 and 12). The other was that, the confessions

should be fairly represented in public offices and in government according to their numerical ratio of the total population (Article 95) (Hourani 1947: 70).

The contemporary Armenian community in Lebanon goes back to the 1915 Genocide which marked the formation of the Armenian Diaspora. In the 1920s, the Armenians constituted the least integrated group in Lebanon. At the early stages of refuge, they did not participate in the political, social and economic life in Lebanon. Instead, “they considered themselves a nation in temporary exile and were ready to return to their homeland as soon as political conditions allowed” (Schahgaldian 1979: 1). Contrary to any other Arab country in the region, Lebanon provided a most ideal place for the Armenians. Lebanon’s sectarian setting gave the Armenians communal autonomy and substantial political participation both in parliament and cabinet (Dekmejian 1997: 426). Moreover, the Armenian community in Lebanon has become the only diaspora community that exercises a strong, active and crucial role in the political life of the country in which it exists (Bedoyan 1979: 129).

Most scholars agree that Lebanon was a consociational democracy from its independence in 1943 until the outbreak of the civil war in 1975. Consociational governments are governed by a power-sharing arrangements articulated by leaders who represent and speak for their communities.

In 1943 the Lebanese National Pact established consociationalism as legal power-sharing arrangement between the various sects or communities within the state:

The consociational system allocated the presidency to a Christian Maronite, the premiership to a Muslim Sunni, and the speakership to a Muslim Shiite. All public offices were corporate according to confessional and sectarian affiliations. They were assigned confessions on the proportional principle of 5 Muslims to every 6 appointed Christians. Along the same confessional office-allocation principle, all elected seats of Parliament were divided. Cabinet ministers and ministry general-directors as well as heads of the Armed Forces, the Central

Bank, and the National University, among other sensitive public positions, were distributed along sectarian lines to accommodate the delicate confessional balance (Salamey 2009: 1).

The power-sharing formula, which legitimized the existing political institutions fully, recognized the existence and the rights of the Armenian community as well.

Hanf explains that the system of power-sharing is based on the supposition that the shares in the political system are related to “the proportion each community represents in the overall Lebanese population” (1981: 230). In 1972 and based on the proportionality principle, the Armenian Apostolic community was granted the right to elect four deputies, while the Armenian Catholics were assigned a single seat in parliament. Thus, the Constitution of 1926 and the Lebanese formula of power-sharing which developed with the national pact protected the political and juridical rights of the Armenian community (Migliorino 2008: 94).

By the Treaty of Lausanne of 1924, Armenians became citizens in their new host states and gradually developed a sense of loyalty to their “second fatherlands” (Sanjian 2001: 162; Bedoyan 1979: 120). Furthermore, the Lebanese census of 1932 legitimized the role of the Armenians in the politics of the country (Der Karabetian 1984). These events offered the Armenians the privilege of becoming a permanent component of the Lebanese society and to play a part in its public life. Nicola Migliorino argues that one of the main political impacts of granting Armenians citizenship was that they were given the right to play a role in politics and participate in elections (2008: 55). Participation in politics started in 1929 when Abdallah Ishaq, an Armenian Catholic, became the first elected Member of Parliament. He took the seat allotted to the representative of the minorities (Migliorino 2008: 57).

In the absence of civil and personal status codes, the Armenians, like the rest of the communities depended on their religious laws and courts; “Lebanon tolerated the organization of cultural events and political outlets” (Geukjian 2012: 14). Hrach Bedoyan argues that Armenians organized their communal life through two important institutions: the church and the Armenian political parties. The Armenian Church remained the only vibrant institute of Armenian life, performing both a religious and a national-political role since the loss of Armenian political independence in 1375. In fact, the church was regarded in the past, as in the present, as “one of the principle strongholds of Armenian nationalism in preserving the Armenian national heritage and identity” (Bedoyan 1983: 34). Moreover, the confessional political structure of Lebanon supported the role of religious authorities and institutions. Religious communities in a sectarian society, as Hanf states, enjoy a large degree of autonomy, particularly in the field of personal status legislation and jurisdiction, and in the field of education (1981: 231). Hence, the Lebanese authorities officially recognize the Armenian Apostolic and Armenian Catholic Churches as legally independent communities. They were authorized to have their own educational institutions that follow state instructions concerning the official curriculum. Moreover, Armenian political parties emerged in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. These parties played a leading role in the various aspects of Armenian life in the diaspora. The next section examines the Armenian participation in Lebanese politics.

2.3.1 Armenian Participation in Politics

By 1934, the Armenians were already represented in the Lebanese parliament (Schahgaldian 1979: 2). The French-supported Vahram Leilekian was elected deputy.

By the end of the mandate period in 1946, Armenians were confident that their organized community life in Lebanon would continue in peace under the new circumstances of national independence. Supporting Hanf's argument that secularism is the choice of smaller communities (1981: 235), Armenians efficiently maintained their reserved share in Lebanon's confessional arrangement during the five decades since the country's independence (Sanjian 2001: 162). By 1960, The Armenians were also represented in the Lebanese Cabinet. Therefore, Armenians increased their share of parliamentary seats from one in 1934 to six in 1972. Nikola Schahgaldian asserts that in a more than half a century Armenians succeeded to modify themselves from an alien community to a fully empowered community that participated in Lebanese politics on equal basis with all the other Lebanese communal groups (1979: 2).

The re-division of the quotas under Chehab gave the Armenians a new chance to maintain their social and cultural rights and to consolidate their communal strategies on the basis of returning to the power-sharing formula that became known as *Chehabism*. Migliorino argues that Chehab "neutralized external pressures" on the Armenian community, and offered the Armenian political parties "the opportunities to disengage from local, Lebanese issues and to autonomously re-plan their strategy" (2008: 107). The Armenian community, and particularly the Tashnak party, regarded the Chehabist ideas appropriate for the political and social development of the Lebanese consociational system (Bedoyan 1983: 50). By the 1960s, the Lebanese Armenians had become an active community in the Armenian diaspora. For Bedoyan, a political system based on the communal configuration fully resonated with one of the main objectives of the Armenian community in Lebanon: the preservation of Armenian identity (1983: 38).

This theme is discussed later in chapter three, while examining the main principles upon which the Armenian political parties articulated their policies.

The community supported the Lebanese confessional system which tolerated the preservation of its national identity through its educational, religious, social, and political institutions. While in neighboring countries (Syria, Iraq, and Egypt) governments placed constraints on Armenians, intent on their total assimilation into the local population, in Lebanon the community enjoyed full freedom in handling its internal affairs (Bedoyan 1979: 128). The confessional system in Lebanon has therefore contributed greatly to the preservation of the national identity of Armenians. Moreover, Lebanon's Armenian population grew in number due to the immigration of Armenians from other Middle Eastern countries, especially from Syria, attracted by the political and economic opportunities that Lebanon appeared to offer, doubled during 1950s and 1960s, and in the early 1970s. At the beginning of 1970, information provided by the Armenian churches estimated the Armenian population in Lebanon to be 180,000 (Migliorino 2008: 147). Thus, Lebanon became the new home for Armenian life in diaspora, as Armenians began to prosper and benefit from the country's political structure and economic resources.

The outbreak of the civil war in Lebanon in 1975 placed the Armenians in an undesirable situation. The Armenian community declared its neutrality vis-à-vis the warring factions, hence advocating dialogue, reconciliation, and negotiation to solve the Lebanese conflict. The issue of sectarianism and maintaining the consociational system was a very delicate issue for the Armenians. Armenians feared that they would lose many of their political and economic constitutional rights under "a more decentralized political structure" (Sanjian 2001: 165). To contribute to the peace initiatives and to the

consolidation of Lebanese power-sharing, the Armenian community, like other Lebanese groups, presented two different proposals. The first was in 1983, at the Geneva talks, and the second was the “Lebanese Peace Initiative” of 1986. These two proposals are discussed in details in chapter four.

Despite the fact that Lebanon was the appropriate environment for the Armenians to develop politically and enrich their communal diversity, Migliorino claims that the political integration of the Armenians in Lebanon was “problematic” (2008: 91). He argues that ethno-cultural diversity hindered their political integration:

Existing internal and external pressures to the community fostered communal solidarity and discouraged individual, cross-cutting initiatives. Besides these ethnic factors, the political integration of the Armenians was also made difficult, or at least not encouraged, by factors of class and ideology. Armenians were not part of the (mostly Sunni or Maronite) elite oligarchy in power nor they aspire to join it (Migliorino 2008: 91-2).

Schahgaldian states that the evolution of this immigrant community from refugees to citizens differed extremely from the experience of the Palestinians in Lebanon: “while showing certain ethnic, linguistic, and religious similarities with the Lebanese, the Palestinian refugees never integrated into Lebanese society” (1979: 2).

A crucial debate over the future of Armenian cultural diversity came to surface in post-war Lebanon and the process of reconstruction of the Lebanese state that started after Ta’ef in 1989-1990. For Migliorino:

The trend toward the future ‘Lebanization’ of part of the community has encouraged some marginal elements to adopt openly assimilationist approaches; for the majority, however, it seems to have revived and given momentum to the already mentioned shift from the feeling of being a ‘nation in exile’ to that of being a ‘permanent transnational diaspora’, based in Lebanon and attached to both its Armenian and Lebanese identity (2008:180).

The Ta'ef agreement, which readjusted the confessional balance in Lebanon, confirmed that the Armenians are part of Lebanon's power-sharing formula: the Armenian community was now considered as one of the seven main confessions of the country. Ta'ef granted the Armenians a fair share of political participation in parliament, cabinet and public administration. Today, there are six Armenian deputies (five Armenian apostolic and one Armenian Catholic) in Lebanon's 128-member parliament. Since the early 1960s, Armenians have at least one minister in any Lebanese cabinet with more than 14 members, and after the Ta'ef agreement of 1989, two Armenian ministers in any cabinet encompassing 28 or more members.

2.4 Conclusion

This chapter has shown that the existence of a political system based on a communal structure fully resonated with the main objectives of the Armenian community: the preservation of a distinct identity as an ethno-culturally diverse group. The Lebanese political formula, which legitimized the existing political institutions, gave the Armenian community legitimate access to the main political institutions and a political role which they lacked in other Middle Eastern countries due to their political systems.

One of the key principles of this political formula known as the National Pact created the ideal setting, constitutional space and political condition for the integration of the Armenians into the Lebanese system. This system endorsed the Armenian community to organize itself in various political, educational, and religious fields and to preserve local autonomy in its internal affairs. The next chapter discusses the role of the

Armenian community during the civil war of 1975 and analyzes their political actions prior to and during the war. It also highlights the policy of positive neutrality in regard to the Lebanese groups.

CHAPTER THREE

ARMENIAN POSITIVE NEUTRALITY AND THE LEBANESE CIVIL WAR OF 1975

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter discussed how the consociational nature of the Lebanese system helped the Armenians change themselves from an alien community to an integrated group participating in Lebanese political life on equal basis with other confessional groups. This chapter examines the role of the Armenian community during the Lebanese civil war of 1975, and highlights the policy of positive neutrality adopted by the Armenian political parties to face the threats of this war. Moreover, it analyzes the political actions taken by these parties prior to and during the war period.

To understand the reasons and motives that contributed to the adoption of positive neutrality, this chapter deals with the policies of the Armenian community between 1920 and 1975, focusing on three important political evolutions that Lebanon experienced: the mandate period, the 1943 independence, and the war of 1958. In order to analyze the political attitudes of the leadership of the Armenian community during each phase, this chapter explains the main principles upon which the Armenian political parties shaped their policies. The importance of this policy stems from the commitment of the Armenian community to Lebanon's sovereignty and territorial integrity. After all, Armenian identity would be threatened in a partitioned Lebanon.

By refusing to participate in the war, the Armenians did not take sides with either the Christian or the Muslim communities. However, like other communities, they took appropriate actions to shield their physical safety and security. This thesis argues that the

position of positive neutrality of the Armenian community stemmed from the confessional power-sharing system of Lebanon's institutions. The Armenians feared that with the breakup of the state, and changes in the confessional political system, the Armenian community could lose control over its internal affairs. The chapter argues that by adopting the policy of positive neutrality, the Armenians not only contributed to national reconciliation, but also played a central role in protecting the consociational political system.

3.2 Armenians in Lebanon: Historical Overview

Lebanon's Armenian community is the consequence of two waves of immigrations at the turn of the twentieth century. The first wave occurred at the end of WWI when approximately 40,000 Armenians escaping Turkish atrocities settled in Beirut and the northern region of Mount Lebanon, almost all of them from Cilicia, a medieval Armenian province in Anatolia. The second wave of refugees, nearly 15,000 arrived in Lebanon between 1937 and 1940, following the entry of Turkish forces to the sanjak of Alexandretta. They settled in Bekaa, mainly in Anjar, and a smaller number of them settled in Tyre. Compelled by Maronite notables, the French Mandatory authority granted Lebanese citizenship to Armenians on 31 August 1924, on the provision of the treaty of Lausanne of 1924 (Schahgaldian 1979, Bedoyan 1983). It treated them on equal basis with the other citizens of the country, and shortly after they were able to become part of the Lebanese political structure as a unique ethno-religious community. By 1926 there were almost 75,000 Armenians residing in Lebanon and the Lebanese Constitution

granted them civil rights similar to other confessions in the country (Bournoutian 2003: 345).

Armenians arrived in Lebanon penniless and dependent on international relief organizations. With time their economic situation substantially improved. At the early years of refuge they were not welcomed by the Sunni Muslim population, who considered their presence as one of the factors supporting the maintenance of the Christian majority, especially the Maronites (Hourani 1961: 100). Hourani explains their situation as follows:

Foreign in Language and appearance and socially half-isolated, they have not been popular with the inhabitants. Some nationalists disapprove of them because they are still unassimilated and because they have added another minority problem to those already existing. Their competitors accuse them, as minorities in their position are often accused of depressing the level of wages and of monopolizing the trades and crafts to which they have applied themselves (1946: 136).

In fact, the Maronites, with the help of the French, facilitated their settlement and regarded them as an important factor for the preservation of Christian political dominance in the country, so their “sheer number altered the balance in favor of Christian majority” (Bedoyan 1983: 33). This and many other Muslim and anti-French conflicts in Lebanon encouraged the cooperation between the Armenian and Maronite leaders (Schahgaldian 1979: 60).

The hostile Muslim attitude that appeared during the early years of refuge changed as Armenians participated in the post-WWI reconstruction process and adopted a policy of “less interference” in Lebanese internal confessional affairs (Geukjian 2009: 741). Actually, they opted to adopt pro-government policies and support the president of the republic. But during the Lebanese civil strife of 1958 the Armenians split, and side in

with both warring factions. The Tashnak party sided with the pro-Lebanese nationalist political forces in the country represented by the Phalanges and President Camille Chamoun, while the other two Armenian political parties, the Hunchaks and the Ramgavars, supported the Muslim-led leftists and anti-government groups. This resulted “in intra-communal violence and gained no political benefits. The Armenians were not even represented in cabinet” (Geukjian 2009: 741).

The Armenian economic and social status improved quickly, and Lebanon’s confessional system helped all Armenian political parties to organize themselves as political structures. This included the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF), known as the Tashnak party, socialist in doctrine but a nationalist party throughout its history; the Social Democratic Hunchakian party, or the Hunchak, Marxist in doctrine but with nationalist principles; and the Democratic Liberal Ramgavar party, that promoted liberal principles. The Armenian communists, did not establish a party, but supported the Lebanese communist party (Geukjian 2009:741).

As far as religion is concerned, the majority of the Armenian community belonged to the Armenian Apostolic Church (or the Armenian National Church). Supported by the French Mandatory authorities’ official attitude, the Catholicosate of Cilicia returned to Lebanon from exile. The establishment of the Catholicosate “not only marked the recognition of the Armenian Apostolic community as an accepted member of Lebanese sectarian family, but also made Lebanon the spiritual center of the Armenian Church in the Diaspora” (Schahgaldian 1979: 58). The rest of the community was distributed between the Catholic and Evangelical beliefs. The Armenian Evangelical community is considered a part of the Lebanese Evangelical Churches (Bedoyan 1979: 121).

In the interwar years, the Armenian community underwent radical changes and organized itself. During the 1930s, Armenian schools were opened; churches, community centers, sport clubs, educational, benevolent, and youth organization were also created. Armenian political parties, mainly the Tashnak, began functioning regularly. In 1934, Armenian political parties officially participated in the Lebanese parliamentary elections. In 1948, and because of the Arab-Israeli war, many Armenians arrived in Lebanon from Palestine. The early 1960s witnessed the migration of a large number of Armenians from Syria. By the 1970s, the numbers of Syrian Armenians residing in Lebanon was between 40,000 to 60,000. Moreover, in the same period smaller Armenian groups from Egypt, Turkey, Iraq and some East European countries settled in Lebanon (Schahgaldian 1979: 61-64). By 1974 there were over 200,000 Armenians living in Lebanon. Thus, Lebanon's Armenian community grew to become the center of Armenian life in the diaspora, and Lebanon became a second homeland for Armenians. However, the civil war of 1975 placed the Armenian community in a difficult situation. The political leadership of the Armenian political parties adopted the policy of positive neutrality, to avoid "controversy and partisanship" (Sanjian 2001: 165). Thousands of Lebanese Armenians left the country for safer coasts, especially in the United States, Canada, and Europe, reducing in half the demographic size of the community.

3.3 Armenian Policy Determinants in Lebanon

Armenian political parties in Lebanon articulated their Lebanese politics based on two important principles, which constituted the dynamics of their political behavior.

The first comprised the notion of national self-preservation that is the preservation of the Armenian ethno-national identity, which later came to be called *hayapahpanoum*. This norm still dominates the discourse on Armenian identity especially in the Middle Eastern diasporan communities. The second principle was based on the notion of generating loyal Armenian citizen in Lebanon. This principle was interpreted as ‘least interference policy’ in Lebanese politics.

3.3.1 Ethno-National Identity

Different Armenian communities around the world involved in different process of identity formation after the Genocide of 1915, hence giving rise to different political behavior. Moreover, certain diasporan communities played a significant role in forming and maintaining Armenian national identity, particularly in the absence of a state in the homeland.

Razmig Panossian argues that until the 1930s the Armenians of Lebanon were unable to establish a community-wide secular and political structure based on common consciousness of ethnic belonging. However, he contends that within one generation the secularizing elite were able to create a sense of national identity and a politically integrated community (2006: 293). Khachig Tololyan indicates that the post-Genocide Armenian communities thought of themselves as in “exilic, existing provisionally, for an uncertain period of time, waiting for the return to their homeland, while enjoying in an organized struggle to sustain Armenian identity” (2002: 9). Panossian explains the process of identity formation in the case of Lebanon by pointing out two reasons:

First, the Lebanese Armenians constituted the archetypical diasporan community in the 1920s and 1930s, subsequently Beirut becoming the ‘capital city’ of the Armenian diaspora in terms of its political leadership and cultural production.

Second, Lebanon, along with Syria and Egypt with their similar community dynamics, was the root of many other Armenian diasporan centers throughout the world (2006: 292).

Ara Sanjian calls this process '*Armenianness*', by which he means the maintenance of endogamy and traditional family values, the use of Armenian language, the establishment of Armenian neighborhoods, schools and the preservation of Armenian names and traditions (2001: 158). Similarly, Geukjian argues that the Armenian community's identity is "anchored in clear collective symbolic foundations" (2012: 8), by which he means common language, shared historical memories, common heritage, biological connections, and a distinct degree of national solidarity, which had a critical impact on its political behavior in Lebanon. Lebanon's confessional system allowed the Armenian community to enjoy broad autonomy and communal freedoms and preserve its national identity.

Schahgaldian divides the political behavior of the Armenians in Lebanon into two different categories: factors related to Lebanon's political culture, and to internal factors encouraged by the Armenian social structure, history and cultural values. The first of these internal factors had to do with the arrival of a secularist and nationalist elite in Lebanon during the 1920s. Schahgaldian claims that the Tashnak's wide influence as a political party helped against the assimilation of the Armenian community into the "dominant Arab culture of Lebanon" (1979: 260). This influence, coupled with the party's determined efforts to create a secular educational system and to promote modern Armenian nationalism, noticeably reduced the risk of assimilation of the community. The Armenian community produced a sense of communal consciousness and a strategy to ensure its needs and interests in Lebanon. This communalist strategy, as Gabriel Sheffer contends, aimed at "preserving the ethno-national identity, and achieve a

reasonable degree of “absorption” of community members into the host society, but without full integration however, for fear this may lead to assimilation” (2003: 164). Moreover, Schahgaldian argues that the political behavior of the Armenians in Lebanon and their willingness to integrate in the Arab society were also affected by two important issues: the massive emigration of diasporan Armenians to Soviet Armenia during the 1940s and 1960s, and a possible solution for the Armenian question, which the Armenians consider “a major national objective” (1979: 263).

3.3.2 Loyal Armenian Citizens

The diasporan leadership always anticipated that the encouragement of loyalty towards host states, and limited involvement in local political activities, would bring for Armenians maximum political advantages. Since the 1920s, the Armenian presence in host countries was seen as provisional; hence, political parties chose to establish good relations with host governments and avoid direct interference in local political arguments. Moreover, they refused to be identified with one local political faction with the intention of harming another (Sanjian 2001: 161).

Hratch Bedoyan argues that an Armenian loyal citizen means not having strong involvement in Lebanese internal politics, a principle interpreted as ‘least interference policy’ in Lebanese politics, not siding with one community against another, and adopting a pro-government policy and gaining the confidence of the authorities, hence building a better understanding between the government of the host country and the Armenian leadership over issues related to the community (1983: 37). However, this policy changed after Ta’ef, when the Armenian community decided to become more involved in domestic politics.

The study of the resolutions of the world congresses and the regional conventions of the Armenian political parties gives a better explanation of this issue. Since 1925, the Tashnak party emphasized the above-mentioned ideas. In this context, the Eighteenth World Congress of the party, held in Lebanon in 1963, called for “the active participation of the Armenians in the diaspora to preserve the independence and freedom of their second homeland, to remain loyal citizens, and to work for the improvement of the economic conditions of their host countries” (Bedoyan 1983: 37). Similarly, the Twentieth World Congress of the party, held in Vienna in 1972, reiterated the same position:

The Lebanese-Armenian community has the duty to strive for the freedom and independence of its second fatherland... to demand from each Armenian individual to remain always, as in the past, a loyal and dutiful citizen (Bedoyan 1983: 37).

Irrespective of their ideological differences, the position of the other two Armenian political parties did not differ substantially on this issue. The General Congress of the Ramgavar party reiterated the 8th article of the party’s program, which indicated that “the party will ensure that the Armenians in the diaspora remain loyal and law-abiding citizens of those countries in which they are citizens” (Bedoyan 1983: 37-8). The approach of the Hunchak party was similar to that of the other two parties.

From the very beginning of the independence period, the Tashnak party adopted a pro-government policy and sided with pro-Lebanese nationalist political forces, while the Hunchak supported the anti-government political groups, and the Ramgavar party was caught in the middle. During the Lebanese civil strife of 1958 the Armenians split and sided with both warring factions. The Tashnak Party, which always adopted a pro-government policy in parliamentary elections, sided with pro-Lebanese nationalist

political forces in the country represented by the Phalanges and President Camille Chamoun, while the Hunchaks and Ramgavars supported the Muslim-led leftists and anti-government factions. This resulted in intra-communal violence (Bedoyan 1983: 38). In the late 1960s, during the first serious clashes between the Lebanese army and the Palestinians, the Tashnak party announced its official political position on the various political, social, and economic issues threatening the country. The party considered Lebanon as a country where different communities should work together for the development of their country. It believed that the Lebanese government should respect the rights of the communities as a key factor for a peaceful coexistence and mutual cooperation between these communities. Finally, the party called for social justice and the creation of a more socially and economically equitable society (Bedoyan 1983: 51).

The position of the Ramgavar party regarding the Lebanese communal political system was the same as that of the Tashnak. Actually, the party articulated its internal Lebanese policy based on the preservation of the Armenian national identity and on generating a loyal Armenian citizen. Bedoyan argues that the presence of the Ramgavars in the anti-government political bloc in the 1950s was a result of inter-Armenian conflicts and the pro-Tashnak attitude of the Lebanese authorities. But in the 1960s and 1970s this position was dropped and the party adopted good relations with the pro-system moderate forces (Bedoyan 1983: 40). The position of the Hunchak party differed on this issue from the other two parties. The party's close relations with Lebanese leftist political factions and anti-system parties created problems. During the 1950s and the 1960s the party cooperated closely with the Lebanese Progressive Socialist Party and actively supported Kamal Joumblatt. However, in the early 1970s the party changed its position and adopted a more adequate policy, in which it considered national unity as the

cornerstone of the existence of the state and the basis for peaceful inter-communal coexistence.¹ Bedoyan attributes the change of the Hunchak's policy to the conditions of the Armenian communities in the neighboring Arab countries in the early 1970s. The socialist regimes in these countries especially in Syria deprived the Armenian communities' educational and political rights that they enjoyed under previous regimes as ethnic minorities (1983: 41).

In sum, the three Armenian political parties adopted a communalist strategy that aimed to preserve Armenian national identity by sustaining Armenian culture and heritage ensuring that the Armenians remained loyal citizens in Lebanon as well as in the entire Armenian diaspora. Moreover, the three Armenian parties were committed to the Armenian cause according to which they claim the international recognition of the Armenian Genocide and the liberation of the Armenian territories occupied by Turkey during WWI after the expulsion of its Armenian population towards the Syrian Desert. Obviously, the Armenian political parties believed that by losing the above mentioned objectives, the Armenian communities could become assimilated with the mainstream cultures in their respective host societies.

3.4 Armenian Politics in Lebanon before the 1975 Civil War

3.4.1 The Mandate and the Struggle for Independence

In the early phase of the French Mandate, the Armenians constituted the least integrated community in Lebanon. They were neither a welcomed member of the country's confessional family, nor did they wish to participate in Lebanon's politics.

¹ See Ararat Newspaper, 21 November 1970, P.1

Twenty-five years later, they were already a part of the Lebanese system, and were officially recognized as a confessional community. They were integrated politically and economically, and they had their representatives in parliament.

The relation between the Armenians and the French was based upon common interests. Migliorino argues that cooperation between the French and the Armenian refugees was visible in two ways: firstly, the French administration contributed to the early support of the Armenian refugees, by providing them “food and resettlement”. Secondly, the French post-war administration engaged Armenians and other minority people in the “public services, the army and security apparatus”, with the intention of separating these bodies from Arab nationalists. Moreover, he claims that the events that had involved the Armenians provided the French the opportunity of enrolling them “among those who could assist in the task of controlling the region” (2008: 53-4).

To support their strategy, the French granted the Armenians citizenship in 1924. This step was welcomed by the Christians, and met with opposition from some Sunni Muslim leaders, who accused the government of intentionally increasing the Christian population in the country. By 1928 the Mandatory authority had recognized the community as one of Lebanon’s confessional groups and brought Catholicos Sahak II from Jerusalem to Antelias-Beirut as the head of the Apostolic Armenians. Furthermore, it allowed thousands of Armenians in Syria, who had become target for Muslim rebels between 1925 and 1927, to come to Lebanon to increase the numerical strength of the community (Schahgaldian 1979: 177).

The political consequence of granting citizenship to Armenians was allowing them to participate in politics. Armenians supported the forces “loyal to the French with their votes and later with the votes of their elected representatives” (Migliorino 2008:

55). In 1929 Vahram Leylekian an Armenian Catholic was elected a member of parliament as a result of Armenian-Maronite cooperation. The Armenian religious leadership and the merchants (Migliorino 2008: 55) generally supported Armenian collaboration with the French. A policy never encouraged by the nationalist secular leadership and specially the Tashnaks, who criticized the clergy and their merchant associates for being unqualified to lead the community and for “meddling in politics with local and foreign elements rather than pursuing a ‘national’ strategy” (Schahgaldian 1979: 155).

The real steps towards Armenian participation in political life were taken few years later. This phase coincided with the acceleration of the process that led to Lebanese independence. The Armenians played a more “active role, became gradually more emancipated, and eventually contributed to their own ‘political *dédoucement*’”, to legitimize their presence on the political scene (Migliorino 2008: 58). In 1934, the Apostolic Armenians were for the first time given the right to elect their representative in parliament. The Armenian deputy was to be elected from Beirut where the Armenians represented 29 percent (9,403 votes out of 32,811) of total voters (Schahgaldian 1979: 178). Efforts to agree on a unified Armenian candidate failed to succeed. “Pragmatic bargaining” and collaboration with the most important forces on the ground characterized the Tashnak’s position. They cooperated with the Arab nationalists in opposition headed by Abdullah Yafi (the future Premier of Lebanon), while the Hunchaks, Ramgavars, and the Apostolic Church supported French-backed candidate Vahram Leylekian (Schahgaldian 1979, Migliorino 2008). The results of the first round were in favor of the Tashnak party, whose candidate received about 2000 more votes than his rival did. However, since no candidate had received the required votes needed

to be elected, a second ballot was scheduled, and the French-supported candidate won (Schahgaldian 1979: 179-80).

By 1935 a series of events in the region had given a new push to the struggle for independence in Lebanon. The new developments had an impact on Armenian political participation. The Armenian nationalist parties enhanced their emancipation and were ready to “forge electoral alliance with moderate local forces calling for Lebanon’s independence” (Schahgaldian 1979: 183). At the same time they acted cautiously with the Mandatory authorities. The Armenian nationalists, namely the Tashnaks, found their natural allies in the Constitutional Bloc party headed by Beshara El Khoury, who represented the moderate wing of the Maronite community and whom the Tashnaks considered the future leader of Lebanon (Migliorino 2008: 61). This alliance was strengthened by the parliamentary elections of 1937, when the number of parliamentary seats reserved for the Armenian community was raised to two. Movses Der Kalousdian (Tashnak) and Hratchia Shamlia (an independent Armenian) were elected (Schahgaldian 1979: 184). In the elections of 1943 a strong Armenian bloc by the Tashnak and Hunchak parties supported Abdallah Yafi and Saeb Salam, in spite of attempts by the French to obtain Armenian help for their candidate Sami El Solh (Migliorino 2008: 61). However, in the last years of the French presence in Lebanon, the Armenian community’s support for the nationalists was strengthened when the French handed the Sanjak of Alexandretta to Turkey, which resulted in a new wave of Armenian emigrants to Lebanon and Syria.

3.4.2 The Years of Independence

The bases of Armenian communal life in independent Lebanon were set during and immediately after WWII. The interaction of international, local, and purely Armenian issues not only influenced Armenian political behavior, but also predetermined the political and communal developments of Lebanon's Armenian community in the next two decades.

The first elections after independence, held in 1947, marked the dynamics of Armenian participation in Lebanese politics. The electoral alliances established between Armenian and Arab political parties were to a large degree subjugated by Armenian issues: the position of the diaspora vis-à-vis the USSR and the question of the repatriation of Armenian refugees to Soviet Armenia. The repatriation campaign, which was launched in June 1945, offered many Armenians the chance, or the impression, "of bringing to an end their experience as refugees and of contributing to a 'territorial solution' of the Armenian question" (Migliorino 2008: 94). Unfortunately, this issue promoted tension and hatred among the local Armenian political parties who, at first, put aside their differences and cooperated in the repatriation programs, but ended up in communal unrest. However, Armenian communists or communist affiliates, anti-Tashnaks who soon isolated the latter (Migliorino 2008: 94) dominated the repatriation committees. The marginalization of the Tashnaks from the organizational work of repatriations had a very negative impact on the Armenian community that was under the direct influence of the Tashnak party. Apparently, the Soviet Union succeeded in intervening in Armenian communal affairs and established community wide bodies not accountable to any local authority (Schahgaldian 1979: 201-2). As a result, the

Armenian political spectrum was sharply divided between the Tashnaks and anti-Tashnaks (including the Hunchaks, Ramgavars and the Armenian communists).

In May-June 1947 the Tashnaks, led by the incumbent Movses Der Kalousdian, sided with the strong list of government majority and won both parliamentary seats. The Hunchaks, the Ramgavars, and the Armenian communists joined the opposition and formed a 'Lebanese-Armenian Democratic Front', which was included in the electoral list headed by former president Alfred Naccache. The result of the elections led to violent incidents and bloodshed in Armenian neighborhoods, where party members, mostly Tashnaks and Hunchaks, were assassinated in Beirut (Migliorino 2008: 95).

The early 1950s were characterized by the radicalization of intra-Armenian political tension. The Tashnaks and their adversaries engaged in a struggle to control the diaspora institutions, and particularly the Apostolic Church. For the Tashnaks the Church was a central constituent of the national identity the party claimed to protect (Migliorino 2008: 101). The elections of 1951 raised seats in parliament from 55 to 77. The Armenian quota was increased and the apostolic community was given three seats, while the Armenian Catholics were, for the first time, granted one seat. The Tashnaks joined the government list and their two apostolic candidates were re-elected in Beirut, but failed to obtain the third apostolic seat in the Metn, where the Armenians constituted about 20% of the population, mostly due to internal rivalries. As for the Catholics, the church set an electoral alliance with the Phalange party and succeeded to lead Joseph Chader to parliament (Migliorino 2008: 95).

In May 1953, president Chamoun dissolved parliament and the existing electoral law was amended, seats in parliament were consequently reduced from 77 to 44.² The Armenian apostolic community was allotted two seats, one in Beirut and the other in Metn. Movses Der Kalousdian and Dikran Tospat were elected to Parliament. The elections deepened the division that had already existed in the Armenian community. The Hunchaks daily *Ararat* wrote; “The Armenian people have no deputy in the parliament; the Armenians have the sons of the chivalrous Arab people as their deputies” (Schahgaldian 1979: 213). The Tashnaks described their victory as “the devastating defeat of the Bolsheviks and their fellow travelers” (Schahgaldian 1979: 213).

The electoral law of April 1957, which increased the number of parliamentary seats from 44 to 66, assigned four seats to the Armenian community (three to the Apostolic Armenians and one to the Catholics). During this period, Armenian political parties were again split between Tashnaks who sided with the government (supported by President Chamoun), and the other parties that sided with the opposition (supported by Abdullah Yafi and Saeb Salam). The Tashnak’s candidates in Beirut were the MP M. Der Kalousdian and a young lawyer Khatchig Babikian, while D. Tospat was their candidate in the Metn (Schahgaldian 1979: 217). The elections in Beirut were held in June 1957, in “calm but tense atmosphere, the only exceptions were the Armenian neighborhoods where there was bloodshed” (Schahgaldian 1979: 219). The Armenian factions that sided with anti-Chamounist rebels fought against the Tashnak forces, which were armed by the government.

² See Aztag Newspaper, 2 June 1953, P.1

3.4.3 The 1958 Civil Strife

The 1958 civil strife divided the Armenian community into two hostile camps. The first was led by the Tashnak party, who supported the Lebanese government and pro-Chamoun forces, and the second, was headed by the Hunchaks, Ramgavars, and the Armenian communists, who joined the Muslim-left opposition forces. The civil strife created harsh hostility in the Armenian community, “where more than 120 Armenians were killed during violent clashes” (Bedoyan 1983: 49).

When the Lebanese crisis intensified in May 1958, the Armenian neighborhoods of Beirut turned into a battlefield between opposing Armenian sides. The Hunchaks were mostly based in Hadjin, Kalil Badawi and Charchabouk; while the Tashnaks were on the opposite side of Nahr Beirut, mainly in Bourj Hammoud. The hostilities in the Armenian quarters continued until the end of 1958, when an agreement was set between the Tashnaks and Hunchaks through the direct intervention of the Minister of Interior Reymond Edde (Schahgaldian 1979, Migliorino 2008). To illustrate the degree of hysteric hostility between the two factions, Schahgaldian explains the situation as such:

Armenian families were divided into the two factions while intermarriage or even ordinary interpersonal relations between the two ceased altogether. The schools, churches, clubs and other public centers of one faction were closed to members or sympathizers of the other faction. Entire Armenian neighborhoods were sealed off to members of the opposite camp, and a good number of Armenian families had to change their place of residence (1979: 221).

The divisions between the Armenian political parties also pertained to the elections of a new Catholicos of the Armenian Apostolic Church. The Tashnak’s struggle for the Church had ideological bases, and was a central factor of the ‘Armenianness’ that they claimed to protect. The Armenian parties failed to agree on the name of the new Catholicos and all elections failed. The Soviet interference in the 1956

elections, at a time of heightened cold war tensions, radicalized the situation, when the Catholicos of All Armenians in Etchmiadzin-Armenia Vazken I became directly involved in the elections. The Tashnaks, however, finally succeeded in placing the Primate of Aleppo, Zareh Payaslian, as the head of the Cilician See in October 1956 (Schahgaldian 1979, Bedoyan 1983, Migliorino 2008).

A number of principles governed the policy of the Tashnak party during the civil strife of 1958. The party always considered the preservation of the Lebanese confessional political system and the power-sharing formula as an important dynamic for securing Armenian interests. The Tashnak was committed to Lebanon's independence and territorial integrity. Moreover, the restraining policies of the Arab governments in neighboring countries towards religious and national minorities did not encourage the Tashnak leadership to support Arab nationalists or Arab unity. Finally, the party leadership was careful not to jeopardize the lives of the Armenian community as well as the lives of thousands of its members in Syria. It consequently maintained a low profile in the fighting, and most of the time its participation was under the cover of pro-government forces (Bedoyan 1983: 45-7).

The political perspective of the Hunchak party towards the crisis was based on two factors. The first was related to the attitude of the party towards President Chamoun and his government. The party regarded Chamoun responsible for the "occupation of the Cilician Catholicosate". The second factor had close connection with Chamoun's "pro-imperialist" policy and his "acceptance of the Eisenhower doctrine". Moreover, the party regarded the internal policy of Chamoun as another cause of the civil war (Bedoyan 1983: 47-8). The position of the Ramgavar party matched that of the Hunchak. The party supported the role played by the Armenian religious institutions. However, the party

boycotted the elections of the Catholicos of Cilicia and criticized the role played by the Lebanese government in the elections (Bedoyan 1983: 49).

These internal divisions and disagreements had a very severe impact on the communal integration of the Armenians in Lebanon, and a change in the balance of political forces within the community. The emergence of the Tashnaks as an influential political party, especially in the late 1940s and early 1950s, radicalized Armenian communal life and divided them into two opposing factions. The Tashnak party was able to establish itself as the “hegemonic” political force (Migliorino 2008: 105) in Lebanon and in the Diaspora as well, relying on its control over the Apostolic Church and many communal institutions related to it. Moreover, the end of the 1958 crisis coincided with a major shift in the Tashnak’s political ideology. The party’s 17th World Congress brought new insights to the political life of the community. The Congress rejected harshly the approach that led to intra-Armenian violence, and began to drop its anti-communist stance, as new possibilities of cooperation appeared with the USSR on the development of the Armenian Question (Migliorino 2008: 105).

The re-establishment of the consociational system under President Fuad Chehab benefited the Armenians. The Armenians were able “to maintain their exclusive social and cultural spaces, and to consolidate their communal strategies” (Migliorino 2008: 107). The Tashnaks, now the leading political power in Lebanon, sided with the Chehabist government against the Chamounist. The elections of 1960 increased the Armenian share. The Armenians were allotted five seats (four Apostolic and one Catholic) (Schahgaldian 1979, 240). From 1960s until 1974, the Tashnak party grew stronger, and the community enjoyed the privileges of the country’s economic success.

3.5 Armenian Positive Neutrality and the Civil War of 1975

A comprehensive study of the policy of positive neutrality and its implications for the Lebanese Armenian community, and Lebanon in general has yet to be undertaken. Beyond passing references in studies on the civil war in Lebanon and the few articles on positive neutrality, no scholarly work on the topic is available. This section addresses the policy of positive neutrality that the Armenian community adopted during the civil war of 1975 and the contribution of the community during the war and in its immediate aftermath. Moreover, it endorses the argument that diasporic or organized communities can have a profound impact on a conflict as peace makers.

Jacob Bercovitch claims that diasporas or organized communities function on four political levels: the domestic level; the regional level; the trans-state level; and the level of the entire dispersed group in other countries. At each of these levels “the main objective is to maintain and protect its interests” (Bercovitch 2007: 21). Moreover, he argues that diasporas or organized communities can influence the course of conflict in four major spheres: political, military, economic and socio-cultural. Furthermore, he asserts that a diasporic community can effect a conflict positively (contributing to end or resolve a conflict), negatively (making the conflict worse), or neutrally (it does affect either the course or the termination of the conflict) (Bercovitch 2007: 28). Geukjian notes that organized communities that have had painful experiences of violence, like the Armenians, Greeks and Jews may have different approach towards conflict from those who did not experience violence (2012: 2). Diasporas can have a constructive role in any internal conflict by cooperating and supporting reasonable position, or they can play a destructive role by provoking hostile attitudes (Bercovitch 2007: 26).

With the beginning of the Lebanese civil war in April 1975, the leadership of the three Armenian political parties adopted a policy of positive neutrality. The importance of this policy stems from the commitment of the Armenian community to Lebanon's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Irrespective of their ideological differences and political positions regarding various Armenian issues, the three Armenian political parties united their efforts to adopt a common policy to face the dangers of the war and to ensure the interests of the community. Migliorino contends that the 1975 civil war created for the Armenian leadership two types of problems: "the first was concerned with the position of the Armenian political position vis-à-vis the conflict and the warring forces participating in it; the second, was related to the influence that the war was having on Armenian life in Lebanon in general and the measures to be taken to protect the community" (2008: 152-3).

To understand the motives that contributed to the adoption of this policy, it is important to refer to two key factors: first, the experience of the 1958 Lebanese crisis, and second, the early 1970s, when Armenian political parties gathered to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide. As aforementioned, and during the 1958 civil strife the Armenian political parties were deeply divided between two political camps. The Tashnaks supported President Camille Chamoun and the pro-government groups, while the Hunchaks, Ramgavars, and the Armenian communists supported the Muslim-led opposition groups. This and other political disagreements that shaped relations between the Armenian political parties led to intra-communal violence. Moreover, the early 1970s marked the beginning of a new era for cooperation between the Armenian community leadership. The 60th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide congregated the Armenians over the issue of finding the best means to pursue the

Armenian Cause, and to improve relations with the Catholicosate of Cilicia in Antelias, and the mother See of Echmiadzin in Armenia (Geukjian 2007: 65-6).

According to Bebo Simonian, a prominent Hunchak leader the 12th congress of the Hunchak Party held in Beirut in 1972 underlined the need for cooperation among Armenian political parties to defend Armenian interests in the country and called for immediate discussions and meetings with the other two Armenian political parties: the Tashnaks and the Ramgavar (2000: 50-6). Haroutun Goujouni, another prominent Hunchak leader described the situation in Lebanon at that time as follows:

the country is heading towards a civil war; on the one side Lebanon is witnessing an ungoverned Palestinian activities after the Cairo Agreement; and on the other side Lebanon has turned into a battlefield for inter-confessional disparities, workers strikes, Muslims growing demands, and repeated Israeli intrusions (Jerejian 2007: 204).

The Congress was followed by the establishment of an inter-party committee in 1974 encompassed of Tashnak, Hunchak, and Ramgavar representatives to organize the commemoration of the 60th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide on 24 April 1975. These inter-party meetings led in the early 1975 to the creation of the “Armenian National Front (ANF)” which contributed to mutual understanding and cooperation among the Armenian parties (Eblighatian 2005: 47).

The creation of the ANF, which signaled the adoption of the policy of positive neutrality, coincided with the beginning of the Lebanese civil war on 13 April 1975. The Armenian community’s leadership wished to “steer clear of partisanship with any of the warring Lebanese parties as well as to avoid potential intra-Armenian communal violence” (Geukjian 2009: 743). For the first time Armenian communists, Haroutun Madayan and Karnig Attarian, participated in those meetings. Armenian communists supported the policy of positive neutrality (Eblighatian 2005: 47). Melkon Eblighatian,

an Armenian and Tashnak MP, defined the policy of positive neutrality as “not to be with any party which endorsed its political objectives by force, on the contrary, to be with all the political parties that promote dialogue and gather around a united Lebanon” (2005: 48).

Parliamentarians Katchig Babikian and Melkon Eblighatian were in charge of explaining the “motive behind this policy to various leaders of the Lebanese communities so as to avoid potential conflict with any of them. Both MPs carried the task on behalf of the Armenian bloc that represented all the segments of the Armenian community” (Geukjian 2009: 743). However, Eblighatian contends that positive neutrality harmed the Armenian community, because Lebanese warring factions tried to “misjudge our political position; they ignored the positive and remembered only the neutrality” (2005: 48). Yervant Pamboukian, an Armenian historian and a member of the Tashnak party’s World Committee states, that “our positive neutrality was a constructive political attitude, and its aim was to bring the warring factions to dialogue and to stop the war. However, it was not enough to adopt such a position; we had to defend it no matter how high the price was going to be” (2000: 18).

The adoption of the policy of positive neutrality did not mean that Armenians did not have a political standpoint regarding Lebanese internal and communal issues. Geukjian argues that Lebanese Christians, such as the Phalange and the National Liberals, misinterpreted the Armenian positive neutrality and insisted that Armenians should join the war on their side and fight the Muslim warring factions. He claims:

On the one hand and from the Christian perspective, Armenians were described as betrayers, and were asked not to alienate themselves from the objective of creating a Christian enclave within a federal Lebanese system. On the other hand, the Muslims approached the Armenians with some degree of suspicion,

because they thought that Armenians as Christians would take side with Christian militias against them (Geukjian 2007: 69).

Karim Pakradouni, a former minister and a member of the Phalange party, claims that “the period that extended from 1975 to 1982 was the worst for the Armenians; this period witnessed huge problems between the Armenians and the Phalangists; Armenians were submitted to immense pressures to guarantee their involvement in the war besides the Christians”. He goes on to explain: “Armenians neutralized themselves to protect Bourj Hammoud and to spare Armenian lives. Moreover, the Armenian leadership, especially the Tashnak, did not want to bear the consequences of deporting Lebanese Shias from the area.”³

Boutros Harb a member of parliament and a former Lebanese minister claims that “Armenians though Christians, but they were not convinced that they should be involved in war with the Lebanese Forces and the Phalanges”. Then he notes that “there was time when they became part of the problem, especially when they involved in battles in Tel Zaatar and Karantina camps.”⁴ However, Hagop Pakradounian an Armenian MP and a member of the Tashnak party, argues that Armenians were involved in battles to defend their position of positive neutrality and to secure Armenian lives, specially that Bourj Hammoud was located on the cross road between Christian forces, and Palestinian and leftist militias “our role was confined to prevent Bourj Hammoud from being used as a passage by warring factions”. Moreover, he claims that “our involvement was purely for humanitarian reasons; we helped the Palestinians to escape

³ Interview with Karim Pakradouni, a Former Minister and a Member of the Phalange Party, Beirut, 28 Feb. 2013.

⁴ Interview with Boutros Harb, Lebanese MP and a Former Minister, Beirut, 24 June 2013.

the area and rescued them from getting captured or killed by the Lebanese Christian militias.”⁵

Bedoyan states that the Armenian community in Lebanon eagerly defended the idea that “Lebanon is a refuge country for all persecuted religious communities” (1979: 119). Hence, being part of the Lebanese confessional political structure the community could not stay indifferent towards the political decisions related to the socio-economic, cultural, and political rights of all the communal groups. Kamal Joumblatt a prominent Lebanese Druze leader was one of the few politicians who acknowledged the Armenian political behavior during the war. He wrote:

Much to the dismay of the isolationists, the Armenians have refused to take part in this fratricidal war we have just been through; their attitude has remained truly liberal and patriotic. They showed that their own Armenian nationalism was fully compatible with their loyalty to Lebanon (1982: 41).

Pakradounian notes that “actually our policy should be called ‘committed neutrality’ and not positive neutrality, because we were truly committed to Lebanon’s independence and territorial integrity, and we believed that the war in Lebanon would only lead to more destruction, killing, migration; and more importantly it would jeopardize the peaceful coexistence between the different Lebanese confessions. We have predicted from the beginning, that the continuation of the war will only bring external interventions, which in turn would extend the duration of war”. Pakradounian concludes that “the Lebanese understood our policy only after 15 years, when we went to Ta’ef to solve our problems through dialogue, but it was too late because the country was already in ruins and there were huge human and material losses.”⁶

⁵ Interview with Hagop Pakradounian, an Armenian MP and Member of the Tashnak Party, Beirut, 24 May 2013.

⁶ Interview with H. Pakradounian

Geukjian contends that important factors influenced the Armenian community's adoption of positive neutrality. The Armenian political leadership was determined not to repeat the mistakes of 1958, during which the Armenian political leadership was divided. Moreover, taking into consideration issues related to the future of the Armenian Diaspora, the political leadership was afraid that abandoning cooperation towards communal goals such as preserving the Armenian identity, adopting a least interference policy in politics, and pursuing the Armenian Cause could harm the Armenian community in Lebanon. Finally, the Armenian political leadership was undoubtedly committed to Lebanon's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Geukjian also argues that two main aspects, "military and political", characterized the policy of positive neutrality (2007: 67-8).

Militarily, during the early phases of the war, the Armenian community was armed for self-defense. The Armenians did not take sides with either the Christian or the Muslim communities, refusing to participate in the war. However, like other communities, they took actions to safeguard their physical safety and security. Jacob Bercovitch argues that diaspora communities can take physical protection measures if the conditions in the host country are either hostile or restrictive (2007: 22). In fact, the Armenians of Bourj Hammoud found themselves dangerously close to Palestinian-controlled areas in Karantina and Naba'a; where violent battles took place between Christian militias and the Palestinians (Migliorino 2008: 153). From the early years of the war the Armenian Tashnak party leaders convened meetings with both the Phalange and the Palestinian leaders to explain their political views concerning the conflict (Eblighatian 2005: 36-41). In the absence of state provided security, Armenian partisan groups acted as security forces and kept order in the Armenian quarters of Bourj

Hammoud, Khlail Badaoui, and Hadjin,. Bourj Hammoud and Khalil Badaoui were of strategic importance for the Christian militias. Moreover, the Armenians provided humanitarian aid to refugees regardless of their political affiliation (Geukjian 2007: 68).

Politically, the Armenian leadership supported Lebanon's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Armenian parliamentarians argued that only through unity and dialogue are internal disputes solved, so they met with several Lebanese parties and politicians to convince them to end the violence and start a dialogue. In a communiqué published in the Armenian daily *Aztag* on 23 October 1975 Armenian politicians stressed that national solidarity should be developed among all Lebanese warring factions and they should think about reconciliation and stop the disastrous war.⁷ In this context, Migliorino argues:

positive neutrality revealed that the Armenians of Lebanon had a different understanding of the country and of the role they wanted to play in it; arguably, they wanted to be citizens in a peaceful, confessionally-balanced Lebanon that allowed them to live as an Armenian community and contribute to the transnational activities of the Armenian diaspora (2008: 153).

As an organized community Armenians tried to play a constructive role in managing the Lebanese conflict by “introducing norms and practices of cooperation, helping to reframe a conflict, and generally supporting moderate positions” (Bercovitch 2007: 26).

Although the Armenians did not take side in the conflict, they nevertheless paid a high price. In 1978, during the so-called ‘hundred days war’, the Armenian quarters were heavily bombed by the Christian militias, the Syrian army and their affiliated groups. Bourj Hammoud was destroyed substantially and 80 percent of Khalil Badaoui was ruined (Geukjian 2007: 69). In addition, unidentified gangsters attempted to destroy

⁷ See *Aztag* Newspaper, 23 October 1975, p.1

the Armenian Genocide Memorial in Bikfaya. Moreover, acts of revenge took place in 1979 against Armenians living in Zalka, Jel Edib and Mar Mekhayel neighborhoods. Pakradounian notes that “these neighborhoods were under the control of the Phalange party’s north Metn leadership, namely Amin Jemayel.”⁸ As a result of these anti-Armenian attacks a large number of Armenians migrated from Lebanon towards Canada, USA and Europe. According to the sources of the Catholicosate of Antelias, 15,000 to 16,000 Armenians left the country in the years 1974 to 1978 (Varjabedian 1983: 353-89).

The policy of positive neutrality continued in the 1980s, during which the Armenian community was often targeted by the warring parties in an attempt to change its political position. In 1985, the media in West Beirut criticized the Armenians when their political leadership visited president Jemayel to express their support for his policy (Geukjian 2007: 70). Consequently, some Armenians were kidnapped and killed in West Beirut. Moreover, many Armenian families migrated to the eastern part of the capital, where the majority of Armenians resided (Migliorin 2008: 154).

Armenian positive neutrality faced new challenges in 1988, when General Michel Aoun launched the “War of Liberation” against the Syrian presence in Lebanon, followed by the “War of Elimination” against the Lebanese Forces. The Armenian leadership reiterated its position vis-à-vis the warring parties; refused to participate in both wars and called for dialogue to solve the disputes. Yervant Monofarian, the General Secretary of the Tashnak party at that time, states that “it was important to keep our policy and to stand at equal distance from the two warring factions, because any change

⁸ Interview with H. Pakradounian

in our political position would lead to the destruction of Bourj Hammoud and cost the Armenians many losses” (2000: 44).

3.6 Conclusion

By the second half of the 1940s Lebanon became the second homeland for the Armenians. During those years Armenians were already a part of the Lebanese system, and were officially recognized as a confessional community. They were integrated politically and economically, and they had their representatives in parliament. Beirut was turned into the capital of the Armenian Diaspora and the community enjoyed the benefits of Lebanon’s power-sharing system. Moreover, the Lebanese consociational system was a sustainable model for the presence of ethno-cultural and religious diversity, from which the Armenians benefited profoundly.

During the fifteen years of the Lebanese civil war the Armenian political leadership was able to assess the disastrous consequences of the war, and spare the community immense material and human losses. The Armenian policy of positive neutrality advocated dialogue, reconciliation, and negotiations at state and party levels to resolve the issue and establish sustainable peace. The importance of this policy stems from the commitment of the Armenian community to Lebanon’s sovereignty and territorial integrity. The Armenians feared that with the fragmentation of the state and changes in the confessional political system, the Armenian national identity could be threatened, and the community could lose control over its internal affairs. The next chapter examines the role of the Armenian community in the promulgation of the Ta’ef Agreement.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE ARMENIANS AND THE TA'EF AGREEMENT

4.1 Introduction

The power-sharing arrangement in Lebanon collapsed with the outbreak of the civil war in 1975. From the beginning of the conflict there were regionally and internationally supported efforts to stop the fighting and put an end to the war. The challenges that Lebanon faced to solve the consequences of the war began in the early months of the conflict, and resulted in a series of initiatives and proposals made by different Lebanese groups during the 1980s, which finally constituted the basic material of the Ta'ef agreement. The Armenian community was one the main confessional groups that played a constructive role in promoting dialogue and peace, and in the termination of the conflict.

To understand the contribution of the Armenian community to the promulgation of the Ta'ef agreement, it is crucial to trace the political developments that impacted the Armenian political behavior prior to the Ta'ef agreement. This chapter examines two different proposals presented by the Armenian community; the first was presented in 1983, at the Geneva talks, and the second was entitled the "Lebanese Peace Initiative" of 1986, which was presented in collaboration with other Christian groups. The chapter argues that the Armenian political leadership advocated maintaining the consociational system in Lebanon, so as to preserve Lebanon's unique character based on the peaceful coexistence between its confessional communities, and within this context the preservation of the Armenian ethno-national identity and cultural norms.

4.2 Armenian Reform Plans to End the 1975 Civil War

Attempts by Lebanese to resolve the conflict and bring peace to Lebanon began in the early months of the war and resulted in a number of political initiatives and agreements throughout the civil war years. These proposals divided the Lebanese involved in the conflict into two major camps; those advocating changing the political system and making it more accommodating to social and political deviations, and those pursuing to keep the status quo and maintain the system (Avsharian 2009: 392).

Bercovitch argues that Diasporas or organized communities can have a deep impact on a conflict, and this impact can affect any stage, and any kind of conflict (2007: 22). He suggests that communities can be mobilized for positive action before the termination phase of a conflict occurs, and claims that when the parties in conflict, having “experienced some losses and costs”, acknowledge that the only way to deal with their conflict is to bring it to an end by “non-violent” means (2007: 28). He also asserts that organized communities can help end a conflict by promoting dialogue and other processes that break down “inflexible perceptions of the conflict”. In his opinion, “peace needs political support” if the conflict is to be terminated (2007: 32-4). Moreover, Bercovitch believes that a community can have a constructive influence on the conflict resolution process by becoming involved in problem-solving workshops; “such workshops bring together unofficial but influential parties to explore different perceptions and ideas about conflict termination” (2007: 33). Finally, he concludes that organized communities can provide support by speaking publicly about the need for new “state structures”; by which he means, structures that respect people, ideas and group

diversity. Hence, communities can assist in conflict management in the postwar period (Bercovitch 2007: 34).

The Armenian community contributed to the sustainability of peace process in Lebanon by promoting dialogue and reconciliation. During the Lebanese civil war the Armenian political parties engaged in many political initiatives and actions to end the conflict. Moreover, besides their positive neutrality in the conflict and their refusal to participate in the destructive war, they presented two different peace proposals. The first official proposal was made in 1983, during the Geneva talks held on 31 October. The second was entitled the “Lebanese Peace Initiative” and was presented in collaboration with other Christian groups on 6 March 1986, namely the Independent Maronite Parliamentary Bloc, the Phalanges (*al-Kataeb*), the Liberal National Party (*al-Ahrar*), and the Lebanese Forces. These proposals underlined three main arguments.

4.2.1 Political Reforms

The first important argument between the Lebanese warring factions was the issue of reform of the political system in Lebanon. The Armenian community was very “sensitive to any change to the sectarian system” in Lebanon, and advocated “maintaining the consociational system” because it helped in preserving their national identity (Avsharian 2009: 393). The proposal presented to the Geneva talks in 1983 by the Armenian parliamentarians indicated:

The preservation of the sectarian form still has its vital role at this stage. However, it has to be based on mutual respect and recognition among all religious sects, and the relationships and dealings between them ought to be

solid, deep, stable and loyal. Furthermore, there should be equality of rights and obligations in a fair and balanced distribution.⁹

To emphasize the centrality of the confessional system, the Armenian community proposed an amendment to the Lebanese Constitution to institutionalize the confessional allocations in the unwritten Lebanese National Pact of 1943 that reserved the presidency of the republic to Maronites, the premiership to Sunnis, and the speaker of parliament to Shias:

In view of the fact that the sectarian form is still prevailing and effective, we propose, by virtue of an explicit constitutional article, to constitutionally ... [define the] confessional affiliation to the Presidency of the Republic, the Presidency of the Cabinet, the Vice-Presidency of the Cabinet, the Presidency of the Parliament and the Vice-Presidency of the Parliament, as well as the Presidency of the Senate and his Vice-President.¹⁰

Consequently, to reserve equilibrium between confessional groups in parliament and cabinet the proposal suggested the creation of the Senate institution based on granting all ethnic groups equal rights without any discrimination:

The preservation of the Parliamentary democratic regime and the creation of the Senate institution representing all religious sects so that the participation of the Lebanese sects in the government may be at the highest level in order to preserve equilibrium between them.¹¹

Regarding Armenian communal rights, the Geneva proposal argued that the size of the Armenian participation in cabinet and in first tier administrative positions should be determined based on the assumption that the community is one of the seven main confessions in Lebanon. The Armenian community is a fully integrated group and

⁹ See Paragraph 2 of Sub-title “Political and Administrative Reforms” of the Armenian Parliamentary Proposal at the Geneva Talks, Appendix A.

¹⁰ See Paragraph 5 of Sub-title “Political and Administrative Reforms” of the Armenian Parliamentary Proposal at the Geneva Talks, Appendix A.

¹¹ See Paragraph 3 of Sub-title “Political and Administrative Reforms” of the Armenian Parliamentary Proposal at the Geneva Talks, Appendix A.

should participate in the structure of Lebanese politics on equal basis with all other confessional groups:

Undoubtedly, the Armenian confession, one of the seven large confessions, shall be granted an effective role and a special position in the structure of the modern Lebanese state and its institutions.¹²

Moreover, in the 1986 Lebanese Peace Initiative, Armenian parliamentarians, along with other Christian groups; the Independent Maronite Parliamentary Bloc, the Phalanges, The Liberal National Party, and the Lebanese Forces, reiterated the idea of equal allocation of parliamentary seats between Muslims and Christians, by increasing the number of MPs to 108:

The number of Parliament members shall be increased to 108 for broader representation within the framework of equality between Christians and Muslims.¹³

They also advocated creating the office of Vice-Presidency of the republic, which was to be composed of six people representing the major sects in Lebanon except the Maronites:

For more comprehensive participation in the governance, there shall be introduced the position of Vice President to be filled by six persons who represent the major sects in Lebanon except for the President's sect.¹⁴

In fact, the reform projects of the Armenian parliamentarians accentuated the preservation of a balanced confessional framework, a Lebanese plural society based on the concepts and principles of the modern pluralistic society, and, consequently a

¹² See Paragraph 4 of the General Principles of the Armenian Parliamentary Proposal at the Geneva Talks, Appendix A.

¹³ See Paragraph 2 of sub-title "The Legislative" of the Lebanese Peace Initiative, Document B.

¹⁴ See Paragraph 1 of sub-title "Vice Presidency of the Republic" of the Lebanese Peace Initiative, Document B.

political structure aiming at the establishment of social justice through the appropriate democratic institutions.

4.2.2 Lebanon's National Identity

Another important dispute that polarized Lebanese politics many years and divided the Christians and Muslims over its implementation was the issue of the state's national identity. Lebanon's national identity divided the country's confessional communities over Lebanon's relations with the Arab and Western worlds. The Armenian parliamentarians tried to keep a neutral stand on this very delicate issue, and presented a very cautious language in the 1983 Geneva peace initiative regarding this subject (Avsharian 2009: 395). They proposed:

The preservation of the distinguished proper identity of Lebanon and its consolidation, as well as the preservation of its international relations and their consolidation, namely its close and harmonious ties with Arab countries on the basis of full respect without undermining its independence, sovereignty and regime, and within the framework of the UN Charter as well as the Arab League Charter.¹⁵

Avsharian argues that in the 1986 Lebanese Peace Initiative, the Armenian community “registered a major shift in its neutral standing by agreeing, that Lebanon is an Arab country” (2009: 395). The initiative stated that Lebanon is an Arab country, and a full and founding member of the Arab League:

Lebanon is an Arab country and a full and founder member of the Arab League as well as the United Nations and is committed to the charters thereof.¹⁶

¹⁵ See Paragraph 1 of sub-title “Political and Administrative Reforms” of the Armenian Parliamentary Proposal at the Geneva Talks, Document A.

¹⁶ See Paragraph 2 of the sub-heading of “General Principles” of the Lebanese Peace Initiative, Document B.

However, Pakradounian affirms that “for Armenians the phrase ‘Lebanon is an Arab country’ was a fact and not an issue to be discussed”. He suggests that “this statement was actually a controversial issue for Christians in general and the Maronites in particular. Thus, to recognize Lebanon as an Arab country was never a shift in our positive neutrality position.”¹⁷

4.2.3 Lebanon’s Sovereignty

The Lebanese warring factions considered Lebanon’s sovereignty, integrity, and independence sacred principles, but they differed in their interpretation of “what constituted a breach of the country’s sovereignty” (Avsharian 2009: 396). Although the Armenian community tried to distance itself from being involved in the Lebanese war by adopting positive neutrality, it reaffirmed its commitment to Lebanon’s sovereignty and territorial integrity. The Joint Resolution of the Armenian community representatives of 7 October 1983 called for the first time the removal of all foreign forces in Lebanon in order to support the nation’s unity and sovereignty:

We declare that each citizen has the duty to contribute in making the country stronger and able to spread its authority throughout the country; this cannot be realized unless all foreign forces are removed.¹⁸

Similarly, in the 1986 Peace Initiative, Armenian parliamentarians along with other Christian denominations demanded the liberation of Lebanese territories in full, and the restoration of the Lebanese sovereignty on all its territories:

Liberation of the Lebanese territories in full and restoration of Lebanese sovereignty on all its territories and ensuring the integrity thereof and execution

¹⁷ Interview with Hagop Pakradounian, an Armenian MP and Member of the Tashnak Party, Beirut, 24 May 2013.

¹⁸ See Paragraph 7 of the Joint Resolution of the Armenian Community Representatives of 7 October 1983, Document C.

of the UN resolutions, particularly resolution No. 425 and revocation of Cairo Agreement.¹⁹

Avsharian considers this statement a new phase and a major shift in the political performance of the Armenian community, which led to the ousting of several Armenians in the Western part of Beirut in May 1986 by Syrian affiliated military groups (2009: 397). Pakradounian clarifies that the real reason behind these assassinations was the participation of the Armenian community's representative, namely Khatchig Babikian, in the Bkerki Committee which was formed to discuss the reconciliation document proposed by the Tripartite Committee to end the war. He claims that Babikian's meetings with the leaders of the warring factions to promote dialogue and national reconciliation gave the impression that this initiative was supported by the Tashnak party and demonstrated its official political position. This position was later clarified when Armenian political leadership visited various Lebanese leaders to explain its political views.²⁰

4.3 The Armenian Role in Ta'ef

Bercovitch indicates that each phase of a conflict “denotes different types of behavior, potentials for conflict management, and possibilities for intervention” (2007: 25). He points out that conflicts can be managed constructively and promote better communal relations, or they can be achieved destructively and lead to violence (2007: 22). As for the role of organized communities in conflict management, Bercovitch argues that their role depends on many factors, such as its “strength and level of political

¹⁹ See Paragraph 6 of the sub-title of “General Principles” of the Lebanese Peace Initiative, Document B.

²⁰ Interview with H. Pakradounian.

organization”, its ability to “exert political pressure”, and the “international attention” given to the conflict (2007: 26). Like Bercovitch, Hazel Smith and Paul Stares argue that Diasporas or organized communities intervene in conflict because they have the potential: “Diasporas without access to power of some sort, whether direct or surrogate, communities do not intervene in conflicts” (2007: 5). However, the Armenian community contributed to the promulgation of the Ta’ef agreement to preserve Lebanon’s consociational system, the peaceful coexistence between its different confessions, and consequently Armenian ethno-national identity. To understand this contribution it is crucial to highlight the political developments that impacted the Armenian political behavior prior to the Ta’ef agreement.

The Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982, the deportation of the PLO to Tunisia and the 17 May 1983 agreement between Lebanon and Israel created new challenges for the Lebanese government, for the warring factions, and consequently for the Armenian community. Within this domestic and regional dynamics, the Armenian community tried to interpret the policy of positive neutrality as being “compatible with participatory democracy to secure its communal rights” (Geukjian 2010: 31). The Armenian political leadership believed that the interests of the community could be achieved only in a modern pluralistic society, where the equal rights of the communities are protected. Consequently, they underscored the importance of communal participation and understanding between the Lebanese groups during their direct relations with important domestic and foreign representatives (Geukjian 2010: 31).

Furthermore, the 23 August 1982 presidential elections demonstrated a challenging situation for the Armenian community. The Tashnak party’s Central Committee was divided over voting for Bashir Jemayel as the future president.

However, after long debates, the committee voted in his favor (Geukjian 2010: 30). Two days after the vote, gunmen broke into Eblighatian's house in West Beirut and set it on fire after stealing its contents (Eblighatian 2005: 53). For Pakradouni voting in favor of Bashir was a big shift in the Armenian positive neutrality position. He asserts that "prior to his election and to ensure Armenian votes, Bashir suggested that the Armenians should be recognized as the seventh main community in Lebanon, a proposal appreciated by Armenians, one that encouraged them to vote for him."²¹ After Bashir's assassination, the Armenian community voted for his brother Amin Jemayel.

In 1983 the Armenian parliamentary bloc adopted a program to accentuate the community's worries over political and socio-economic issues. The program was later presented to the Geneva peace talks, where representatives from major Lebanese factions held a meeting in 31 October 1983 for a national dialogue. The Armenian community was not invited despite the efforts undertaken by Amin Jemayel to secure Armenian representation (Eblighatian 2005: 55). Later, Jemayel informed Eblighatian that the Armenians were lucky not to participate in the conference, because if they were there they were going to be forced to take side in the conflict (Eblighatian 2005: 55).

To further emphasize the Armenian presence on the political scene, the three Armenian political parties met in 6 October 1983 at the Ramgavar's Tekeyan Cultural Center, days before the Geneva peace talks. The meeting issued a five point joint resolution²² that demonstrated the parties' commitment to bring a contribution to the National Reconciliation Dialogue that President Jemayel initiated to solve the Lebanese conflict. The Armenian parties refused all partition plans, and supported the country's

²¹ Interview with K. Pakradouni

²² See Aztag Newspaper, 7 October 1983, P. 1

sovereignty and territorial integrity. Moreover, an editorial in the Armenian daily *Aztag* stressed the importance of national dialogue between all Lebanese factions, to solve issues that would set the foundations for future Lebanon. The editorial criticized the attitude of ignoring the Armenian community in the peace talks, and stressed their vital contribution to the development of the country.²³

On 7 October 1983, a meeting was hosted by the Catholicosate of Cilicia in Antelias that gathered Armenian parliamentarians, religious leaders and party representatives. The meeting issued a joint resolution, which reiterated the community's belief in the principles of dialogue and understanding to alleviate the tension and solve the conflict, the necessity of including the community in the forthcoming national dialogue as being an important part of the Lebanese society, and finally underscored the fact that the Armenians should not be marginalized in a future settlement. Ever since the outbreak of the war in 1975, the community had been a faithful supporter of national reconciliation; it feared marginalization in a prospective settlement.²⁴ Excluding the community from participation in the national dialogue meetings was tantamount to violating the concept of consociationalism. The Armenian parliamentary bloc thus met President Jemayel and conveyed to him the decision of both meetings (Geukjian 2010: 33). Another editorial in *Aztag* wrote:

Nations could not flourish and sustain, when their members approach intra-communal tensions with dissent and hatred, and as a result they lose control. During nine years of conflict the Lebanese had reached deadlock and plunged into the unknown because of being shortsighted in their performance. It was time that all the Lebanese indiscriminately demand a final solution by the participation of all the communities. Equally important was the withdrawal of all

²³ See *Aztag* Newspaper, 7 October 1983, P.1

²⁴ See Paragraph 5 of the Joint Resolution of the Armenian Community Representatives of 7 October 1983, Document C.

foreign forces so that Lebanon would be able to create a strong and representative government (Geukjian 2010: 34).

In 1984, the representatives of the Armenian community were invited by the Maronite Church to a meeting in Bkerki, to discuss a solution to the conflict. The meeting discussed several issues concerning the unity and sovereignty of Lebanon, administrative decentralization, withdrawal of foreign troops, preservation of the democratic political system, human rights, adoption of a national foreign policy, and commitment to the liberal economic system.²⁵ Moreover, Armenian religious leaders emphasized the importance of establishing dialogue between Christians and Muslims that aims at “cooperation and tolerant coexistence between the communities” (Geukjian 2010: 34-5). In fact, the Armenian leadership reiterated its political position that advocated dialogue, reconciliation, and negotiations between the various Lebanese communities to solve problems.

The abolition of the Lebanese-Israeli agreement on 17 May 1984, presented the Lebanese with another opportunity of national dialogue. Lebanese representatives met on 12 March 1984 in Lausanne to complete their efforts over reconciliation. The conference discussed political and social issues and recommended the creation of a “founding body” comprised of 32 members to draft a new constitution. In addition to the Armenians, the Greek Orthodox and Greek Catholic communities were also not invited to Lausanne (Geukjian 2010: 35). Jemayel’s decision not to include these communities distressed the Armenian leadership. The Tashnak’s position was expressed by MP Babikian who argued that the “participation of the Armenian community in the conference was a duty and not only a constitutional right” (Geukjian 2010: 35). The

²⁵ See Aztag Newspaper, 26 September 1989, P.1

Tashnak party contacted former president Chamoun and requested that he include an Armenian member in the Christian delegation, but the request was denied.²⁶ The Armenian leadership discussed the Armenian participation in Lausanne, and decided to send a telegram to president Jemayel. The telegram stated:

We closely follow the workings of the conference. It seemed that the conference would adopt the concept of establishing a senate in parliament. Hence, we demanded and stressed that the Armenians must be represented in the senate and in all the new state institutions that would be created so that the community, as it did in the past, would bring its positive contribution to the rebuilding of Lebanon (Geukjian 2010: 36).

Despite the marginalization of the Armenians from the Lausanne talks, the Armenian parliamentary bloc sent MP Khanamirian to participate informally in the meeting and explain the bloc's view regarding the issues under discussion. Khanamirian's mission was to meet with all the participants and lobby for Armenian communal rights, but especially to elicit recognition for the Armenians as one of the seven main communities in Lebanon (Geukjian 2012: 24). Moreover, in March 1986, the Armenian community, and in an effort to illustrate their presence on the Lebanese political scene, participated in the meetings that led to the declaration of the Lebanese Peace Initiative with the Christian denominations namely the Independent Maronite Parliamentary Bloc, the Phalanges, The Liberal National Party, and the Lebanese Forces. This initiative was presented on 6 March 1986, immediately two months after the signing of the Tripartite Agreement between Elie Hobeiq, Nabih Berri and Walid Jumblatt. Pakradouni claims: "after the abrogation of the Tripartite Agreement, we needed to seek an alternative and ensure a broader Christian participation in any peace settlement which would lead to peace. At the same time there was a French-American

²⁶ Interview with H. Pakradounian

demand to end the war. So we came out with the Lebanese Peace Initiative, in which we encompassed all the Christian forces including the Armenians, despite the fact that they were already supporting the Tripartite agreement.”²⁷

A state of political impasse prevailed in Lebanon between 1986 until the end of Jemayel's term in September 1988. In fact, the failure to elect a new president led to a political vacuum that threatened to lead to partition. At the 11th hour of his presidency, Jemayel appointed an interim cabinet headed by Army Commander General Michel Aoun. The cabinet was only accepted in the predominantly Christian areas, while a cabinet headed by Selim Hoss was regarded as the legitimate one in West Beirut and other regions of the country. The two governments claimed legitimacy. On 14 March 1989 Aoun began a self-declared “War of Liberation” against all foreign forces, but mainly against Syria. This situation intensified and caused another unparalleled political and military escalation. As a reaction to the devastating War of Liberation and intra-confessional (inter-Christian and inter-Shia) battles, the Arab states, led by Saudi Arabia, held a summit meeting in Casablanca in May 1989, and formed a Tripartite Committee composed of King Fahed bin Abdul Aziz of Saudi Arabia, King Hassan II of Morocco, and President Al-Shadily Bin Jdid of Algeria to deal with the Lebanese crisis. The Committee succeeded in formulating a seven-point ceasefire on 29 August 1989, followed by a meeting of the Lebanese parliamentarians outside of Lebanon.

The Armenian MPs, particularly Babikian, played an instrumental role in the Tripartite Committee as the community's positive role in Lebanon's conflict continued to widen. Moreover, Babikian was an active member of the committee formulated by the

²⁷ Interview with K. Pakradouni.

Maronite Patriarch Sfeir that comprised of six MP- Rene Mouawad, Michel Saseen, Nasri Al-Maalouf, Boutros Harb, and George Saadeh- later identified as the Bkerki Committee, and tasked with discussing the reconciliation document proposed by the Tripartite Committee to end the war (Geukjian 2012: 25). While the Bkerki Committee was engaged in negotiations on behalf of the Christians and Armenians, the Arab League representative Lakhdar Ibrahimi met with MPs Babikian, Eblighatian, and Manoukian on 26 September 1989, in an effort to prepare the groundwork for the Ta'ef meeting.²⁸ Eblighatian states that the Armenian MPs conveyed to Ibrahimi the community's position of positive neutrality since the early years of the civil war, its vision for a country based on political stability and social justice, and finally, the importance of solving the problems through dialogue and cooperation between the Lebanese communities (2005: 61).

In September 1989, after a ceasefire was reached between the warring factions, 63 out of the 99 members of 1972 parliament attended the Ta'ef meeting in Saudi Arabia. The Armenian delegation to Ta'ef was comprised of parliamentarians Khatchig Babikian, Melkon Eblighatian (Armenian apostolic), and Antranig Manoukian (Armenian Evangelical). Parliamentarians Souren Khanamirian and Ara Yerevanian were not able to join the meetings (Avsharian 2009: 401).

In Ta'ef a group of sixteen deputies (8 Muslim and 8 Christian), including Babikian and Hussein Hussein, shaped the discussions to escape political gridlock. Moreover, the participants in the meeting were allowed to make phone calls to any part in the world except to Lebanon; even journalists who came from different parts of the

²⁸ See Aztag Newspaper, 26 September 1989, P.1

world, were not allowed to come near the Palace where the meetings were held. The only exception to this rule was Babikian who after receiving Saudi Prince Saud El Faysal's permission contacted Aoun in an effort to persuade him to participate in this "big national achievement". Unfortunately, he failed, however (Eblighatian 2005: 64).

A new power-sharing agreement was finally negotiated in October 1989, as a first step to reconstruct post-war Lebanon. It represented the culmination of a Syrian, Saudi, and US agreement to end the war in Lebanon. Henceforth, Syria assumed direct responsibility for Lebanon. Eblighatian argues that the Armenian parliamentarians like the majority of the Lebanese MPs were convinced that the Ta'ef agreement was the right formula to end the civil war: "it was the only possible option, because refusing the agreement could have resulted in more destructions, and could have threatened the physical existence of all the Lebanese confessions and among them the Armenian, by opening the doors towards migration" (2005: 66). The Armenian Parliamentarians signed the agreement and supported it politically.

4.4 The Armenians and the Ta'ef Agreement

In Ta'ef the new power-sharing agreement established a confessional balance between Christians and Muslims in parliament with "a shift in power from the President to the Council of Ministers" (Kerr 2005: 161). Yet, it did not make any changes in the confessional affiliation of the Prime Minister (Sunni) and the Speaker of the House (Shia). Actually, Ta'ef avoided an "all-out Christian defeat" (Kerr 2005: 160). According to Marie-Joelle Zahar, Ta'ef accentuated confessional compromises and inter-communal cooperation as transitory processes to reach an integrated, non-

confessional democracy. However, while she argues that no real actions were taken to establish a non-confessional system, she contends that confessionalism became deeply institutionalized (Zahar 2005: 232). In fact, the agreement announced thirty-one important constitutional amendments which were approved by Lebanese parliament on 21 August 1990, and signed into law by President Elias al-Hraoui on 21 September 1990. Similarly, Hassan Krayem argues that the reforms did not modify the political sectarian structure: “although the agreement stated that the abolition of confessionalism was a national goal, no specific deadline or time table was provided for its actualization” (2003: 9). Hence, confessionalism was replicated and further institutionalized.

Harb argues that Ta’ef was not implemented properly “because of the Syrians on the one hand, and Hezbollah on the other hand; but nevertheless it was the best of what can be reached to end the civil war”. He claims that the agreement contributed to the preservation of the National Pact and coexistence between various Lebanese confessions. It created a formula where the Muslim felt a partner in power; “Ta’ef changed the proportional principle of 5 Muslims to every 6 appointed Christians and recognized the principle of parity, regardless of the number”. Harb also states that the war conditions in which the meeting was convened “did not allow us to discuss the Ta’ef agreement in its political and constitutional dimensions, so as to bring out a viable system, which would not generate problems.”²⁹

Armenians did not lose any privileges within the re-arrangement of the confessional balance. Ta’ef confirmed that Armenians represented one of the important members of the Lebanese family. In fact, the agreement indicated them as the seventh

²⁹ Interview with B. Harb.

main community of the country (Migliorino 2008: 182). Pakradounian also asserts that Ta'ef recognized the Armenian community as one of the seven main communities of Lebanon: "before Ta'ef the Armenians participated in political life and had their representatives in parliament, but were not recognized by the Lebanese system as equal as the other main six confessional groups. With Ta'ef a government cannot be formed without an Armenian representative." To enhance his idea, Pakradounian quotes the Lebanese Constitution Preamble's last article; "there shall be no constitutional legitimacy for any authority which negates the pact of mutual coexistence."³⁰

According to Eblighatian, recognizing the Armenian community as one of the seven main communities was an important issue in Ta'ef. He quotes the words of the Speaker of the House, Hussein al-Hussien, at Ta'ef: "I personally have suffered from the injustice that inflicted my community for a long time, and I understand the grief of our fellow Armenians and their rightful demands in this regard, so from now on Armenians will have their permanent representatives in the government" (Eblighatian 2005: 69). Hussein was convinced that the Armenians deserve to be recognized as Lebanon's seventh basic confession (Eblighatian 2005: 69). Similarly, Harb affirms that "Armenian demands were fair. The Armenian community is not an ordinary community, but an important part of the Lebanese confessional family; moreover, its number was equal to that of the Catholics and the Druze. Therefore, no one objected to this issue, on the contrary Christians were encouraged, and the Muslims approved."³¹

³⁰ Interview with H. Pakradounian.

³¹ Interview with B. Harb.

Nevertheless, the Ta'ef agreement improved Armenian representation in different Lebanese parliaments and cabinets. As far as parliamentary representation was concerned, in the new 108-member chamber the total ratio of parliamentary seats assigned to the Armenians “decreased from 5 per cent to 4.6 per cent” (Migliorino 2008: 183). The community upheld the number of deputies of the 1972 parliament (four apostolic, and one Catholic). But when electoral law No. 154 was signed by President Hraoui after Ta'ef, Armenians were awarded a sixth seat in the Bekaa (Geukjian 2009: 744). Thus, the total number of seats reserved for the Armenian community in the 128-member chamber became five seats to Apostolic Armenians and one to Catholics, moreover, the Armenian Evangelicals could also contest the Protestant seat in Beirut (Geukjian 2009: 744).

In the legislative branch thirteen different Armenians were elected to parliament between the years 1927 and 1991 (Avsharian 2009: 405). Leylekian was elected before Lebanon received its independence, whereas Shamlian and Der Kalousdian represented the Armenians after independence. As for the executive branch, Armenian representation in Lebanese governments before Ta'ef was very poor: “out of 67 different Lebanese governments, only 8 cabinets had Armenian ministers” (Avsharian 2009: 407). Ta'ef improved the Armenian representation in successive Lebanese governments. Consequently, Armenians were assigned one ministerial post in any cabinet formed of at least 14 members, and at least two portfolios in cabinets encompassed 28 members or more. Furthermore, in the first tier administrative positions, divided equally between

Christians and Muslims, Armenians received 4 positions, in addition to the Vice Governor's position of the Central Bank.³²

4.5 Conclusion

In Ta'ef the Lebanese political elite re-negotiated the terms of the country's power-sharing arrangements, but could not alter its basic character and take actual steps towards real deconfessionalism. As a result, sects still dominates the political scene in Lebanon.

The Armenian political leadership played an important role in the drafting of the Ta'ef agreement and advocated maintaining the consociational system to preserve Lebanon's unique character based on the peaceful coexistence between its confessional communities, and, consequently the preservation of the Armenian ethno-national identity and cultural norms. This new power-sharing pact was cosidered positive for Armenians. Most importantly Ta'ef consecrated the Armenians as one the seven main confessions in Lebanon, and consequently their representation were improved in the postwar parliaments, cabinets, and public administration positions. The final chapter will sum up the thesis and question the consequences of Ta'ef on the Armenian community.

³² Interview with H. Pakradounian.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

5.1 Summing up the Thesis

This thesis examined the politics of the Armenian community during the Lebanese civil war of 1975 and its role in the promulgation of the 1989 Ta'ef agreement. Lebanon's socio-political structure and its unique character as a consociational democracy created for the Armenians the best environment to flourish and consequently establish themselves as a diverse community. At the early years of refuge the Armenian community was regarded as the least integrated group in Lebanon; they did not participate in the political life of the country. Instead, they considered themselves in temporary exile waiting to return to their homeland as soon as political conditions permitted. However, after twenty-five years Armenians became part of the Lebanese confessional system and succeeded to maintain their ethno-national identity.

The political system that was based on a communal structure fully resonated with the main objectives of the Armenian community: the preservation of a distinct ethno-cultural identity in a plural society. The Lebanese power-sharing arrangement that gave political and cultural rights to the various sects and communities within the state, gave the Armenian community a political role that they lacked in other Middle Eastern countries because of the latter's authoritarian political systems. Moreover, this arrangement allowed the Armenian community to organize itself in various fields and to preserve segmental autonomy over its internal affairs.

In the interwar years schools were opened, churches, community centers, clubs, educational and youth organizations were established. By the 1940s, the Armenians

were integrated politically and economically, and had representatives in parliament. The Lebanese census of 1932 gave the Armenians a role in the political power structure of the country. By 1960, the Armenians were also represented in cabinet. Beirut became the capital of the Armenian Diaspora, and the community enjoyed the privileges of Lebanon's power-sharing arrangement.

The outbreak of the civil war in 1975 troubled the Armenian community; it decided to adopt a policy of positive neutrality and called upon the warring factions to sit for dialogue. In fact, by pursuing active communication and negotiation with every segment of the Lebanese society the Armenian political leadership was able to avoid the disastrous consequences of the war, and spare the community material and human losses. The policy of positive neutrality advocated dialogue, reconciliation, and negotiations at state and party levels to resolve the contested issues and establish a sustainable peace. The importance of this policy stems from the commitment of the community to Lebanon's national unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity. The Armenians emphasized the pluralism of Lebanese society and feared that with the breakup of the state and changes in the confessional political system, Armenian national identity could be endangered, and the community could lose control over its own internal affairs. A plural society erected on mutual coexistence between every segment of the Lebanese society was the appropriate environment where Armenians could live and prosper.

The new power-sharing arrangement represented by the 1989 Ta'ef Agreement had a positive effect on the community. The Armenians played a constructive role in promoting dialogue and reconciliation by presenting different political viewpoints and peace initiatives to stop the war. In Ta'ef, the Armenians were consecrated as one of the

seven main sects in Lebanon. Although their representation was improved in postwar parliaments, cabinets, and public administration positions, nevertheless, during the 1990s and early 2000 the community suffered intra-communal political tensions and the Armenian representation in state structures was not fully respected.

5.2 Marginalization and Future Prospects

Albeit Ta'ef consecrated the Armenians as one of the basic sects in the country, however the Armenian community remained marginalized in the postwar era, at least until the Syrian withdrawal from Lebanon in April 2005. The Tashnak party dominated the 1992 parliamentary elections, the first held after the promulgation of the Ta'ef agreement. Although a joint list by the Tashnak and Hunchak parties won in Beirut and the Metn districts, the Ramgavars boycotted the elections. However, during the 1996, 2000 and 2005 elections the community was again marginalized. The parliamentary elections were influenced by Hariri and by Syria's intervention in Lebanese affairs.

In the 1996 elections the Syrians imposed on both the Tashnaks and Hariri a coalition electoral list, in which the three Armenian political parties (Tashnaks, Hunchaks and Ramgavars) were represented. The Tashnak's decision to contest the elections with Hariri on a joint list stemmed from the community's traditional position to side with the government and support pro-government decisions. The Armenians were thus given the opportunity to maintain their sovereign decision making process regarding Lebanese political issues and form an independent parliamentary bloc. However, the political scene changed in 1998 when Emile Lahoud was elected president

of the republic. The Lahoud-Hariri political contest forced the Armenians, along with other political groups, to take sides.

In the 2000 elections, the Hariri effect deepened the division already existing between the Armenian political parties over policy alternatives. Hariri, pressured by the Syrians, challenged the Tashnak's traditional leading role by preventing the formation of an independent Armenian parliamentary bloc, something that existed since the 1950s under the dominance of the Tashnak. Moreover, Hariri insisted on nominating a non-Armenian candidate for the protestant seat and on selecting all Armenian candidates that would join his list. The Hunchaks and Ramgavars agreed, while the Tashnaks refused and joined then Prime Minister Selim el-Hoss' list. In fact, Hariri was the first Sunni prime minister who challenged the Armenians and interfered in their communal life. Hariri's policies continued to provoke a large segment of the community headed by the Tashnaks, who strongly rejected his conditions and insisted that Armenians should choose their own representatives. The Tashnak party managed to mobilize the community and obtain the majority of Armenian voters. They scored a victory in the Metn and Bekaa, but failed to elect party candidates in any of the Beirut districts.

Prior to his assassination in 2005, the Tashnak leaders succeeded in negotiating a formal understanding with Hariri that promised to produce a future electoral and political alliance. After Hariri's assassination, a Tashnak delegation met with his son Saad to discuss a fair and just representation of the Armenian community in the three constituencies of Beirut. The request was denied, as the Tashnak party did not participate in the anti-Syrian 14 March rallies. Furthermore, S. Hariri refused the idea of an independent Armenian bloc in parliament. During the same period cooperation started with General Aoun who declared from Paris that if he were to form any list in

Metn, he would take an Armenian from the Tashnak who represented the majority of Armenian voters in Lebanon. The Tashnak boycotted the Beirut elections but won in the Metn and Bekaa.

As far as Armenian participation in postwar governments, in 2000 Hariri formed a cabinet of thirty members. It included one Armenian minister instead of two. This led to protests by the Armenian community, which regarded the act as a violation of the community's confessional rights established in Ta'ef. Moreover, the 2003 cabinet intensified Armenian anger over its representation, when K. Pakradouni, an Armenian Apostolic and a member of the Phalange party, was appointed to replace the second Armenian position. After Hariri's assassination, the Armenian community's representation grew weaker. Fouad Saniora formed a 24-member cabinet in which he assigned a pro-Hariri Armenian representative. The Tashnaks joined the opposition along with Aoun, marking the first time since the 1940s that they adopted an anti-government stance.

Despite the differences among the three Armenian political parties, a joint delegation representing their MPs regularly took part in all the National dialogue sessions held after March 2006 in Lebanon. Furthermore, in May 2008, an Armenian delegation comprised of three Armenian MPs – Hagop Pakradounian (Tashnak), Yeghiya Djerejian (Hunchak), and Hagop Kassarjian (Ramgavar) – participated in the Doha deliberations. The concomitant national unity government discussed in Doha restored the Tashnak's participation in cabinet after three years of interruption. The Tashnak MP H. Pakradounian was the only Armenian nominated to the subcommittee that decided on a new electoral law and the distribution of Armenian seats and votes in each constituency. Moreover, Pakradounian was the sole Armenian MP who signed the

Doha agreement in the name of the Armenian community, thus, underscoring the Tashnak's traditional role as the leading political pole in the community.

In the 2009 parliamentary elections, the Tashnaks formed joint lists with Aoun in the Metn, Bekaa and Beirut electoral districts. The Hunchaks and Ramgavars allied with the 14 March camp, and were elected by non-Armenian votes. Although the Tashnak preserved their complete share of Armenian votes, they nevertheless won only two of the six seats allotted to the Armenian community. With the country divided along two binary camps (14 and 8 March), Armenian political cooperation also suffered. Intra-Armenian cooperation was torpedoed; a stark contrast from the policy of positive neutrality adopted in 1975. The Hunchaks and Ramgavars now joined the 14 March camp, while the Tashnaks sided with Aoun-Hezbollah political alliance. The unfair and partial implementation of the Ta'ef agreement, raises serious questions about the future of the Armenian political role in Lebanon as an ethno-national group.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Avsharian, R. (2009). The Ta'ef agreement and the Lebanese-Armenians. In A. Boudjikianian (Ed.), *Armenians of Lebanon: From past princesses and refugees to present-day community* (pp.386-408). Lebanon: Haigazian University & the Armenian Heritage Press.
- Bedoyan, H. (1979, June). The social, political and religious structure of the Armenian community in Lebanon. *The Armenian Review*, 32, 119-130.
- Bedoyan, H. (1983). The policies pursued by the Armenian political leadership in Lebanese internal politics (1943-1970). *Panorama of Events, a Quarterly on Lebanese Affairs and the Middle East Conflict*, 30(7), 31-56.
- Bercovitch, J. (2007). A neglected relationship: Diasporas and conflict resolution. In H. Hazel & P. Stares (Eds.), *Diasporas in conflict: Peace-makers or peace-wreckers?* (pp. 17-37). Tokyo, New York, Paris: United Nations University.
- Dekmejian, H.R. (1978, January). Consociational democracy in crisis: The case of Lebanon. *Comparative Politics*, 10(2), 251-265.
- Dekmejian, H. R. (1997). The Armenian diaspora. In R. G. Hovannisian (Ed.), *The Armenian people from ancient to modern times* (pp. 413-443). New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Demirjian, A. (2000). *Hayoutian yev lipanani Hamar* [For Armenians and Lebanon]. Lebanon: Aztag Press
- Der Karabetian, A., & Proudian, A. (1984). Ethnicity and civil war: The Lebanese Armenian case. *University of La Verne, California*. Retrieved from <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED251344.pdf>
- Eblighatian, M. (2005). *Kaghtagayanen khorhertaran* [From the refugee camp to parliament]. Aleppo: Cilicia publishing House.
- Eblighatian, M. (2000). *Hayoutian yev lipanani hamar* [For Armenians and Lebanon]. Lebanon: Aztag Press.

- Geukjian, O. (2007, January). The policy of positive neutrality of the Armenian political parties in Lebanon during the civil war 1975-90: A critical analysis. *Middle Eastern Studies*, 43(1), 65-73.
- Geukjian, O. (2009, September). From positive neutrality to partisanship: How and why the Armenian political parties took sides in Lebanese politics in the post-Taif period (1989-present). *Middle Eastern Studies*, 45(5), 739-767.
- Geukjian, O. (2010, December). *ARF's politics in the Diaspora: The Taif accord and the Armenians of Lebanon (1968-1989)*. Paper presented at the ARF at 120: History in the making conference, University of Southern California.
- Geukjian, O. (2012, November). *An ignored relationship: The role of the Lebanese Armenian Diaspora in conflict resolution (1975-1990)*. Paper presented at MEZA conference, Denver, Colorado.
- Hanf, T. (1981). The political secularization issue in Lebanon. *Annual Review of the Social Science and Religion*, 5, 225-253.
- Hudson, M. (1999). Lebanon after Ta'if: Another reform opportunity lost?-Ta'if accord. *Arab Studies Quarterly*, 21(1). Retrieved from <http://law-journals-books.vlex.com/vid/lebanon-ta-reform-opportunity-lost-54001573>
- Horowitz, D. (1985). *Ethnic groups in conflict*. USA: University of California Press.
- Hourani, H. A. (1946). *Syria and Lebanon: A political essay*. New York, Toronto: Oxford University Press.
- Hourani, H. A. (1947). *Minorities in the Arab World*. London, New York, Toronto: Oxford University Press.
- Hazel, S. & Stares, P. (2007). The analytical and conceptual framework. In H. Hazel & P. Stares (Eds.), *Diasporas in conflict: Peace-makers or peace-wreckers?* (pp. 3-16). Tokyo, New York, Paris: United Nations University.
- Jumblat, K. (1982). *I speak for Lebanon*. London: Zen Books.

Jerejian, V. (2000). *Hayoutian yev lipanani hamar* [For Armenians and Lebanon]. Lebanon: Aztag Press

Jerejian, V. (2007). *Geanki yev mdadzoghoutian entmechen* [Through life and thinking]. Lebanon: Shirak Press.

Krayem, H. (2003). The Lebanese civil war and the Taif agreement. *American University of Beirut*. Retrieved from <http://ddc.aub.edu.lb/projects/pspa/conflict-resolution.html>

Kerr, M. (2005). *Imposing power-sharing conflict and coexistence in Northern Ireland and Lebanon*. Ireland: Irish Academic Press.

Lijphart, A. (1977). *Democracy in plural societies: A comparative exploration*. New Haven & London: Yale University Press.

Lijphart, A. (1984). *Democracies, patterns of majoritarian and consensus government in twenty-one countries*. USA: Yale University Press.

Lijphart, A. (2008). *Thinking about democracy: Power- sharing and majority rule in theory and practice*. London, UK: Routledge.

Lijphart, A. (2002). A wave of power-sharing democracy. In A. Reynold (Ed.), *The architecture of democracy: Constitutional design, conflict management, and democracy* (pp.37-54). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Migliorino, N. (2008). *(RE) Constructing Armenia in Lebanon and Syria*. New York: Berghahn Books.

Philip G. R. & Donald R. (2005). *Sustainable peace: Power and democracy after civil wars*. London: Cornell university press.

Pamboukian, Y. (2000). *Hayoutian yev lipanani hamar* [For Armenians and Lebanon]. Lebanon: Aztag Press.

- Sanjian, A. (2001). The Armenian minority experience in the Arab World. *Bulletin of the Royal Institute for Inter-Faith Studies*, 3(1), 149-179.
- Schneckener, U. (2002). Making power-sharing work: Lessons from successes and failures in ethnic conflict regulation. *Journal of Peace Research*, 39(203), 203-228. DOI: 10.1177/0022343302039002004
- Salamey, I. (2009, September 22). Failing consociationalism in Lebanon and integrative options. *International Journal of Peace Studies*. Retrieved from <http://www.thefreelibrary.com/ /print/PrintArticle.aspx?id=238179020>
- Smootha, S. & Hanf, T. (1996). Conflict-regulation in deeply divided societies. In J. Hutchinson, & D. Smith (Eds.). *Ethnicity* (pp. 326-341). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Schahgaldian, N. (1979). *The political integration of an immigrant community into a composite society: The Armenians in Lebanon, 1920-1974* (Doctoral dissertation). Columbia University, USA.
- Tololyan, K. (2000). *Redefining Diasporas: Old approaches, new identities*. London: Armenia Institute.
- Varjabedian, S.H. (1983). *Hayere lipanani metch* [Armenians in Lebanon] (Vol.4). USA: Rosekeer Press.
- Zahar, J. (2005). Power-sharing in Lebanon: Foreign protectors, domestic peace, and democratic failure. In P. Roeder. & D. Rothchild (Eds.), *Sustainable peace: Power and democracy after civil wars* (pp. 219-244). USA: Cornell University.

LIST OF INTERVIEWS

- 1- Personal Interview with Karim Pakradouni, a Former Minister and a Member of the Phalange Party, Beirut, 28 February 2013.
- 2- Personal Interview with Hagop Pakradounian, an Armenian MP and Member of the Tashnak Party, Beirut, 24 May 2013.
- 3- Personal Interview with Boutros Harb, Lebanese MP and a Former Minister, Beirut, 24 June 2013.

APPENDICES

Document A

The Lebanese-Armenian proposal at the Geneva Conference (1983)

The Reform Project of the Armenian Parliamentarian Group proposals for the political, administrative, economic and social reforms to the National Dialogue Committee held in Lausanne, on March 12, 1984.

1. The Armenian Parliamentarian Group's work is based on its conviction that Lebanon has a self-distinguishing feature in its structure and constituency. It is the country of peaceful coexistence between all religious confessions and sects that were constituted throughout the centuries by groups seeking refuge and shelter from oppression and all sorts of deprivation (religious – political – social - racial).

Despite our conviction that secularism is one of the main traits and most distinguished characteristics of developed countries, nevertheless we discover that the Lebanese are committed to stay under the influence of their past and be bound to it, until Lebanon may have the opportunity to achieve the status of true secular society, apart from confessional or religious ties. However, the truth is that every segment of Lebanese society is closely attached to its specific idiosyncrasy and identity, with a careful, discreet and fearful attitude from the experience and attempts of integration in social groups larger than them. Therefore, based on such assumption, it is mandatory to preserve a balanced confessional framework.

Any project in political reform, or in simple terms, any political system that does not take into account such a fact as well as the prevailing Lebanese situation shall be currently considered by the Lebanese as a rogue intervention affecting their basic liberties, such liberties being at the very root of Lebanon itself and making evident its right to exist, and without them, its existence as an entity is deemed meaningless.

With the aforementioned, we can emphasize that the Lebanese society is a plural society and as such, no current political regime can fully join and merge such society unless it is based on the precepts and principles of the modern pluralistic society as well as the society of coexistence.

2. Despite the bloody events that took place in the past few years, contradictions have increased between several Lebanese parties and widened the existing gap between them. However, there is no doubt that the crisis has also actually and explicitly consolidated a union and consensus of opinion among the majority of Lebanese, thereby emphasizing in a nutshell on the necessity of

maintaining a single unified Lebanon as well as a homeland for all its citizens.

Any reform project ought to have a starting point from such basis and from fundamental principle, and to be committed to indicate clearly and explicitly such willingness for peaceful coexistence.

3. The social situation is neither separate nor dissociated from the political situation. In fact, the Lebanese society is characterized by a significant number of inequalities, and the manifestations of the prevailing gap are evident and deep rooted in this society, being incompatible with the principles and rules of equality that are convened in modern societies, and even in transgression of them. The gap separating the Lebanese from each other is getting wider and deeper, when its framework sometimes extends to affect and include the confessional limits. Hence, starting from such assumption , any project of political reform is not deemed as full and complete if its main proposals are not based on granting equal rights to everyone without exception or discrimination, and if opportunities and possibilities of development and prosperity are not made available to everybody on an equal basis, especially in view of the fact that taking advantage of the creed of freedom and principles of democracy in the Lebanese society often lead to the subjection and oppression of the weak by the strong and powerful.

4. Any political reform aiming at the establishment of social justice ought to target, in the first place, the establishment of a strong authority with firm pillars and foundations, so that this authority may be able to defend the full liberties of the Lebanese whether it is freedom of intellect with all means of expression or defending their lives and properties by imposing the law on everybody. Such a law ought to be the fruit of the will of the Lebanese people being expressed through the appropriate democratic institutions.

Lebanon ought to be strong with the competency and potentials of its citizens in the homeland and the Diaspora. The Armenian denomination happens to be one of the pillars of Lebanon, not only with its institutions and bodies along with the capability of its members for creativity and innovation in Lebanon, but also in the entire world when considering their potentials and capabilities as well as their prestigious situation in the world of innovation and genius. The Armenian community in Lebanon has its close relationship and ties with several eastern and western countries and most frequently, it has a direct influence through its political parties or through sports, cultural and welfare associations, as well as due to its two international religious centers denominated as follows:

- a. The Catholic Armenian Patriarchate, established and operating in Lebanon since 1949.

- b. The Catholicosate of the See of Cilicia for the Armenian Orthodox with the headquarters in Antelias since 1923.

The Lebanon of tomorrow ought to mobilize all its citizens as well as all its resources and capabilities for the sake of peace, prosperity and progress. Undoubtedly, the Armenian confession, one of the seven large confessions, shall be granted an effective role and a special position in the structure of the modern Lebanese state and its institutions.

Henceforth, starting from such principles, conceptions and considerations, we propose the following reform project:

Political and Administrative Reforms

1. The preservation of distinguished proper identity of Lebanon and its consolidation, as well as the preservation of its international relations and their consolidation, namely its close and harmonious ties with the Arab countries on the basis of full respect without undermining its independence, sovereignty and regime, and within the framework of the UN Charter as well as the Arab League Charter.
2. The preservation of sectarian form which still has its vital role at this stage. However, it has to be based on mutual respect and recognition among all religious sects, and the relationship and dealings between ought to be solid, deep, stable and loyal. Furthermore, there should be equality of rights and obligations in a fair and balanced distribution.
3. The preservation of the Parliamentary democratic regime and the creation of the Senate institution representing all religious sects to that the participation of the Lebanese sects in the government may be at the highest level in order to preserve equilibrium between them.
4. At the level of the legislative authority: the increase in the number of deputies and the adoption of the principle of equality in the distribution of the seats between Muslims and Christians.
5. In view of the fact that the sectarian form is still prevailing and effective, we propose, by virtue of an explicit constitutional article, to constitutionally set apart confessional affiliation to the Presidency of the Republic, the Presidency of the Cabinet, the Vice-Presidency of the cabinet, the Presidency of the Parliament and the Vice-Presidency of the Parliament, as well as the Presidency of the Senate and his Vice-President.
6. The election of the President of the Cabinet at the Parliament and taking into consideration and representation of the seven large confessions during the establishment of ministerial formations.
7. The rehabilitation of the Superior Council and granting it competencies and role as laid out in the constitution.
8. The rehabilitation of the mode of nomination of secretary Generals in some ministries for the sake of programming and coordination.

9. The elimination of the confessional criteria for employment currently adopted in job opportunities for government offices except for the first degree occupations, provided that nominations are made on the basis of confessional equilibrium.
10. The decentralizing of administration related to a higher centralization of large projects and prosperity is an urgent, indispensable matter non-susceptible of postponement. Granting more power to the administrative authorities and municipalities that shall be able - by means of its permanent connections and contacts with administrations and central committees - to put in order, plan, coordinate, direct, observe and achieve.
11. The reform and organization for all the departments and institutions of state in a fundamental and essential way by employing qualified individuals who are specialized in modern management skills and who are fully prepared for hard work and sacrifice.
12. The establishment of a social and economic council.
13. The adoption of the naturalization law and its fair implementation.
14. Guaranteeing and respecting the principle of culture plurality for the Lebanese confessions and the guaranteeing of their right of freedom of action for the revival and prosperity of their cultural heritage for the sake of preserving Lebanon, the homeland of civilized plurality.
15. The organization of the army because a strong and capable Lebanon eventually implies a strong, national army. The army ought to be constituted in its majority by elements performing military service and they must be allowed to get experience in social services during their performance of compulsory military service. As for the reserve, action should be undertaken through experimental sessions for safekeeping and increasing the expertise, capability and resources of participants.

On Economical and Social Reforms

- 1- Preserving the economical form based on individual initiatives provided that it is programmed and monitored by the state as well as combating all forms of economic monopolies.
- 2- Achieving the distribution of taxes in a fair manner and seeking their collection.
- 3- Studying a general plan for the national economy, executing and showing interest particularly in the miscellaneous regions for their development and prosperity as well as taking into account the local and regional situations and capabilities.

- 4- Approving the mode of procuring work for the workers, and approving insurance against unemployment as well as pension and retirement insurance.
- 5- Procuring compulsory and free education at the elementary stage at least through public and private institutions.
- 6- Developing of the network o cooperatives and its expansion.
- 7- Consolidating established syndicates that should aim to procure work and defend the rights of the working classes.
- 8- Combating emigration by creating new domains for work as well as new work opportunities for the specialized youth, establishing professional institutions and higher education institutions along with the procurement of facilities for affiliation to said institutions.
- 9- Periodical reviewing of the minimum wage and its determination in accordance with the evolution of livelihood necessities.
- 10- Monitoring of consumer prices for the first necessity items, and in cases of extreme necessity, procurement of such essential items through the government.
- 11- Creating and insuring the success of a special housing policy for the procurement of adequate housing to all segments of the population, namely the working class, the employees and the payroll nominees.
- 12- Expanding the network of public hospitals and medical centers in a special geographical setting.
- 13- Encouraging the effective participation of Lebanese women in all the domains of public life with equal rights and obligations.

Source: Avsharian, R. (2009). *The Ta'ef Agreement and the Lebanese-Armenians, Armenians of Lebanon: From Past Princesses and Refugees to Present-day Community*, Haigazian University & the Armenian Heritage Press, Beirut.

Document B

The Lebanese Peace Initiative March 6, 1986

Reform paper prepared by the following political parties and organizations:

- 1) Independent Maronite Bloc
- 2) Lebanese Armenian Deputies Bloc
- 3) Al-Kataeb Lebanese Party
- 4) Liberal Nationalists Party
- 5) Lebanese Forces
- 6) Members of Drafting Committee

Introduction

Due to our belief in the absurdity of this war and the invalidity of military solutions and the necessity of adoption of dialog, negotiation and agreement to settle disputes among Lebanese people for achieving just and sustainable peace,

And for getting out of the present crisis which has extended and complicated due to the intervention of various factors, local and foreign, regional and international, religious and political, economic and social, historical and civic whereby the Lebanese crisis has become compound and consequently needs urgent, comprehensive and effective solutions. The best solution which we look forward to is the foundation of a complete secular regime if the historical reality permits the achievement of total secularism, particularly in this situation which witnesses a radical religious setback that necessitates the adaptation of a sectional consistent system that provides practical participation and permits each group to exercise their natural right and embody their free and unique character,

And for the solution to handle this deep crisis through the provision of complete equality among the Lebanese people, individuals as well as groups, and achievement of social justice and equal opportunities and complete participation by all sects and motivation of the spirit of development in the state institutions of different levels and tasks and approval of innovation and change to fulfill the Lebanese people wishes and future expectations,

And for the solution to be objective, it should stem out from the human specifics or Lebanon and its societal structure distinguished with diversification as well as its historical specifics that make it the home of freedom and human beings as well as its sovereign, independent, free, democratic state with institutions that guarantee the rights and features of all groups as well as the mutual admission and interaction and eliminate the causes of suppression, hegemony and deprivation and the possibilities thereof,

And for the foundation of a national solution that takes into consideration the will of the Lebanese people, Muslims as well as Christians, to cohabitate together and to achieve internal unity and the Lebanese interest for reaching and understanding that ensures equality and balance on the internal lever as well as neutrality and elimination of alliance policy on the foreign level,

And for taking a practical step towards peace and for saving the time which exhausts man, country, territory, economy and society, the state of war should be declared as ended immediately and forever and a national conference should be held where different parties, organizations, forces and characters should be represented to acknowledge the Lebanese principles that constitute a written national charter and political reforms would be agreed to draft a new constitution provided that all this would be done through the legitimate and constitutional institutions. In view of this aim and content, our peace initiative arises. We consider it as a debatable issue.

Chapter One

General Principles

1. Lebanon is an absolute, free, sovereign and independent country within its borders stipulated in the constitution and internationally recognized.
2. Lebanon is an Arab country and a full and founder member of the Arab League as well as the United Nations and is committed to the charters thereof.
3. Lebanon is a parliamentary democratic republic based on the respect of public freedoms, particularly the freedom of opinion and belief as well as on the principle of separation of powers and equality of rights and duties and social justice between all citizens.
4. Lebanon is the convergence point of civilizations and religions. It is committed to the freedom of human beings and believes within the frame work of the unity of country based on solidarity and balance rather than on a religious or ethnical racism that would divide the people and the territory. In Lebanon, sects exist, vary and have the right to be different from each other, qualifying them to interact within the frame work of balanced, just and humanitarian cohabitation.
5. Insistence on the unity of Lebanon and refusal of all plans for division and settlement.
6. Liberation of the Lebanese territories in full and restoration of Lebanese sovereignty on all its territories and ensuring the integrity thereof an execution of the UN resolutions, particularly resolution no. 425 and revocation of Cairo Agreement.
7. Comprehensive national commitment to draft the agreement of ending the state of war in Lebanon and final enforcement thereof and re-extending the state sovereignty and the law power by means of the Lebanese legitimate security tools and the return of homeless Lebanese and the release of the kidnapped immediately.
8. As Lebanon is a country of minorities and interaction of civilizations whose composition is based on fair balance between sects and as any change in conflict with the historical standards and facts endangers its entity, unity, borders, democratic regime as well as the

state structure, this reality necessitates the development of the present political formula for promotion of participation and elimination of any feeling of injustice, fear and deprivation by means of serious controls that prevent the elimination of any sect or deprivation of their roles and rights by another sect. Such development should be made through the legitimate institutions according to the constitution provisions.

9. The true solution of the Lebanese crisis is the deep foundation of constant and permanent national harmony based on free and direct dialogue among the Lebanese.
10. Approval of the broad administrative decentralization and modernization of institutions and promotion of control on departments and adoption of reward and penalty policy.
11. Adoption of the liberal economic system based on individual initiative while emphasizing the state role of organization and control and the necessary approval of the total development planning for Lebanon reconstruction, upgrading its production capacity and developing its economic and social structure.
12. Maintenance of the liberal educational system open to all civilizations and cultures all over and support of the public education which should be free and comprehensive and promotion of professional occupational education and development of educational programs and courses for increasing the national spirit and citizenship among the future generations.
13. Promotion and development of relations between the resident and expatriate Lebanese in view of the Lebanese spreads importance and efficiency in terms of national, humanitarian, economic and social aspects.
14. Keeping Lebanon away from the axes policy and its openness to all countries all over the world in the basis of cooperation and friendship for maintenance of its sovereignty and declaration of its neutrality together with its commitment to the charter of Arab League and the Arab issues and the United Nations Charter.
15. As there are close relations between Lebanon and Syria as well as common interests, these should be organized and developed between the two countries in accordance with their applicable rules subject to compliance with the rules of sovereignty, independence and mutual recognition and the specificity of each country.

Chapter Two

Termination of the State of War

The state of war termination stage in Lebanon is fixed to be six months. It shall start with the formation of a national unity government. During this period, the war termination mechanism shall be according to the following rules and principles:

1. Immediate comprehensive ceasefire and termination of combat on the Lebanese territories by all parties forever.

2. Unconditional release of all kidnapped person.
3. Formation of a new security committee comprising all concerned active parties and forces. Its powers shall cover all the Lebanese territories for enforcement of the security plan approved by the government.
4. Fortification of the army as well as the internal security and public security forces and opening the door for recruitment and assignment of the task of security maintenance at all Lebanese to the army and internal security forces to extend the state power thereon without any exception.
5. Military and paramilitary Lebanese organizations and militias of different types shall be observed within the state institutions after rehabilitation of their elements in accordance with legal conditions subsequently set. Before this could be done, all non-Lebanese military and paramilitary organization and militias of different types shall be dissolved.
6. All arms shall be collected from the Lebanese and non-Lebanese factions without exception in accordance with time schedule prepared by the Lebanese army command.
7. Provision for Lebanese free movement, employment and residence in all Lebanese areas.
8. The return of homeless Lebanese and acknowledgement of the right of each Lebanese expatriate to return to his land and home as owner or tenant and preparation of necessary legislations that promote and guarantee this right and provision of security conditions appropriate for their return as well as the necessary means for village reconstruction and house renovation. The execution stage shall immediately and shall be gradually completed within six months.

Chapter Three **Political Reform**

For the deep establishment of the national affiliation and democratic movement and the realization of freedom, equality, social justice, equal opportunities, development and security, the Lebanese formula should be developed through more effective participation and broader representation to reflect the people aspirations and expectations based on the following principles.

1. Establishment of the customs related to the allocation of three presidencies: the republic residency for a Maronite, the parliament presidency for a Shiite and the Prime Minister a Sunni.
2. Equal allocation of parliamentary and ministerial seats between Muslims and Christians and proportionately within each group.
3. Adoption of half division of public positions, public institutions, the army and security forces and application of the rule of efficiency and scientific rules for selection of employees.

A – The Executive Branch

The Presidency of the Republic

The executive power shall be headed by the President of the Republic. He shall exercise the same with the participation of the Prime Minister and ministers in accordance with the approved constitutional provisions. He shall be liable for the exercise of this powers only in the cases provided in the Constitution.

1. Election of the President:

a. Election of the President:

The President of the republic shall be elected by two thirds majority in the first session and 55% majority of the quorum of the Parliament in a subsequent session.

b. The President's Powers:

The following amendments are made up of the power of the President of Republic as specific in the Constitution:

- i. The President of Republic is considered the head of the State and symbol of the country's unity. He shall respect the Constitution and maintain Lebanon's independence, national unity and territorial integrity. The President of Republic shall administer the constitution oath and chair the Cabinet. He shall be vested with the executive powers in collaboration with the Cabinet.

ii. The President of the Republic is considered as the Supreme Commander of the army as well as the Head of the Higher Defense Council.

iii. The President of the Republic shall sign the decrees and promulgate the laws and refer the bills within the specified time periods after signature thereof by the Prime Minister and the relevant Minister.

iv. The President of the Republic shall issue a decree to commission the Prime Minister who will be elected by the Parliament, to form the Cabinet and will accept the resignation. The President shall issue a decree before acceptance of the Cabinet resignation, and before accepting the resignation of any Minister, the Prime Minister shall give his approval of the Prime Minister.

Vice Presidency of the Republic

1. For more comprehensive participation in the governance, there shall be introduced the position of Vice President to be filled by six persons who represent the major sects in Lebanon except for the President's sect.
2. The Vice Presidents shall form a consultative board for the President of the Republic and shall carry out representation tasks inside and outside Lebanon as assigned to them by the President of the Republic.
3. The Vice Presidents shall collectively replace the President in case of his absence. They will be collectively vested with the executive powers if the Presidency is vacant for whatever reason.

The Prime Minister

- a. Election of Prime Minister:

The Prime Minister shall be elected by the parliament by the majority of 55% at least of the members of such parliament.

- b. Power of the Prime Minister:

The Prime Minister shall carry out the following:

- i.* The elected Prime Minister shall form the Cabinet according to the Fourth Article below.
- ii.* He shall chair the Ministerial Council.
- iii.* He shall accept the resignation of one or more ministers and shall present decree to the President of the Republic.
- iv.* He shall together with the President of the Republic sign the decree of minister's resignation and dismissal.
- v.* He shall together with the President of the Republic sign the decrees and bills except for the decree of appointment of the Prime Minister and acceptance of his resignation as well as the cabinet resignation.
- vi.* He shall be the Deputy Head of Higher Defense Council.
- vii.* He shall supervise the execution of the Cabinet decisions and follow the works of ministries and departments.

The Cabinet

a- Formation of the Cabinet:

- i.* The elected Prime Minister shall carry out parliamentary consultations in view of **which the Cabinet shall be formed in agreement with the President of the Republic** and then the necessary decrees shall be issued.
- ii.* In case of non-agreement between the President of the Republic and the Prime Minister regarding the list of ministers and the President of the Republic refuses to sign the Cabinet Formation Decree within two weeks from the presentation of list to him, the elected Prime Minister shall present the list to the Parliament for vote. If his point of view is approved by 55% of the members of Parliament, the President of the Republic should sign the Decree. If the Cabinet formation does not receive the above mentioned parliamentary majority, the Prime Minister shall be deemed as resigned for non-ability to form a Cabinet, and a new Prime Minister shall be elected.

- iii.* If the Prime Minister does not present the list of his Cabinet to the President of the Republic within one month from the date of his election, such act would be considered as apology for non-formation of the cabinet and new Prime Minister shall be elected.
- iv.* After the issuance of the decree of Cabinet formation, the Parliament shall hold a special session for vote for confidence.
- v.* The Cabinet submits its resignation immediately upon the election of a new President of the Republic.

b -The Power of the Cabinet:

The cabinet shall exercise executive and administrative powers including:

- i.* Drafting the state's public policy in political, economic, defense, financial, development, educational, social and other fields.
- ii.* Drafting bills of laws and decrees, making necessary decisions for executing the state policy and giving the bills the character of urgency and repeated urgency, when necessary.
- iii.* Control of the execution of laws and regulations as well as control of the state bodies and institutions.
- iv.* Approval and revocation of state of emergency, declaration of war and public mobilization, conclusion of international treaties and agreements subject to the legislative power's authorities.
- v.* Direction of the acts of ministries and public departments and institutions affiliated with the state and coordination among them.
- vi.* Preparation of the public budget project and the comprehensive long term development plans.
- vii.* Dissolutions of the Parliament upon the proposal of the President of the Republic under a justified decision.
- viii.* Appointment of the employees of the first degree or their equivalent and dismissal or acceptance of their resignation according to the legal rules

- ix. A 30 days period shall be set for signing the bills of decrees as well as the decrees of referral of laws approved in the Cabinet by the President of the Republic or dismissal of the same within the same period of acceptable reason. This period shall start on the date of loading the bills at the General Directorate of the Republic Presidency. If this period expires without signing or justify reply, the decree shall be deemed as valid and effective. If it is dismissed, it shall be presented to the Cabinet once again. If the Cabinet insists on its decision once again, the President of the Republic shall sign the decree.

This period shall also apply to the ordinary decrees. In case of disagreement between the Prime Minister and the relevant Minister and if both of them insists on their position, such disagreement shall be referred to the Cabinet for decision. The Prime Minister shall be granted the same period for giving with effect from the date of lodging of bills at the General Secretariat. Regarding the laws approved by the Parliament, the respective period of publishing thereof shall be subject to Article no. 56 of the current Constitution.

c- The Cabinet resignation:

The cabinet shall be considered as resigned in the following cases:

- i. If the Prime Minister resigns.
- ii. If the Parliament votes for non-confidence.
- iii. If half of its members resign. The decree of acceptance of resignation shall bear the signature of President of the Republic only.

B – The Legislature

In addition to the rules and powers stated in the Constitution related to the legislative powers, the following rules shall apply:

- 1 The members of the legislature shall be elected on the basis of a new election laws that ensures the correct and just popular representation within the framework of equal shares of Christians and Muslims.
- 2 The number of Parliament members shall be increased to 108 for broader representation within the framework of equality between Christians and Muslims.

- 3 The Speaker of the Parliament, his Deputy and the members of the Parliament Office shall be elected for two years, renewable.
- 4 The Parliament's powers shall be specified according to the provisions of the current Constitution.

C – The Judicial Branch

1. Necessary procedures shall be taken to achieve the rule of the independence of the Judiciary Branch.
2. A Constitutional Court shall be formed to control the constitutionality of laws and settle all disputes and objections arising from the Presidency and Parliamentary elections as well as the disputes that may arise between the central administration and decentralized departments.
3. A Higher Council shall be formed for trial of the Presidents and Vice Presidents and the ministers as provided in the Constitution.
4. An optional legislation shall be drafted for the civil personal status for the interested Lebanese.

D – Administrative Decentralization

There must be a revision to the administration as stipulated in the Legislative Decree No. 116 dated 12/6/1959. To promote administrative decentralization, the following rules must be followed:

1. Increase and redistribution of governorates to secure the country interests.
2. Promotion of local councils, municipal unions and governorates and extension of their financial, administrative, organizational and development powers.
3. Approval of the public representation in the governorate councils for more effective participation by the citizens.
4. Transfer of more tasks and administrative responsibilities from the central power to the decentralized power.

E – Defense and Security Policy

1. Drafting a defense policy compatible with the Lebanese national security requirements whereby the army would be responsible for the country security and protection of borders. The internal security forces shall be responsible for maintenance of the order and the citizen security with the possible assistance of the army for handling the big security events.
2. Consolidation of the army and internal security forces and public security and national security in terms of human resources and equipment and reorganization of their central bodies and regional branches to make them more effective.
3. Updating the laws and regulations related to these institutions.
4. Enforcement of the social and development science service law.

F – Economic and Social Policy

1. Lebanon's liberal economic system guarantees individual initiatives and maintains private ownership and fulfills economic efficiency conditions and social justice requirements. The state plays the role of the coordinator in this regard. This is reflected in the monetary, fiscal, production, housing and social protection fields including the broad application of the social security, old age security, free medication and treatment and handling of unemployment.
2. Preparation of comprehensive development and reconstruction plan for Lebanon as a whole, in particular the areas inflicted with the work and deprivation together with the foundation of central and regional departments and institutions, as a necessary.
3. Formation of a socio-economic council that represents economic, social, union and scientific bodies. Its powers shall be specified under a special law.

G – Educational Policy

1. Emphasis on free education as well as private education system, educational diversity and support of official education to meet the expectation of all Lebanese within the framework of the country unity and development of its human wealth and promotion of the spirit of initiatives and innovation.

2. Development of education to be extensive, free of charge, compulsory and comprehensive, updating educational programs and promotion of civil and national education.
3. Emphasis on the role of occupational and technical education by giving it the priority and connecting to the total development plan.
4. Support of higher education and permitting the Lebanese university and private universities to play their role within the scope of development plan, in particular giving special attention to the Lebanese university and its applied colleges.
5. Promotion of scientific research and evaluation studies through the provision of support to the public institution in this field.
6. Foundation of higher culture council and supporting culture councils in all areas to enrich the public culture among the citizen and emphasize and protect the national heritage and materialize the creative powers in different fields.

Signatories:

For the Independent Maronite Bloc: Boutros Harb and Jubran Tawq.

For the Lebanese Armenian Deputies Bloc: Melkon Eblighatian and Khatchik Babikian.

For the Al-Kataeb Party: Georges Saadeh and Joseh Al-Hashem.

For the Liberal Nationalist Party: Michel Sassin and Nabeel Karam.

For the Lebanese Forces: Kareem Bakradouni, George Edwab and Emile Rahmeh.

For the Drafting Committee: Jubran Tueini

Source: Avsharian, R. (2009). *The Ta'ef Agreement and the Lebanese-Armenians, Armenians of Lebanon: From Past Princesses and Refugees to Present-day Community*, Haigazian University & the Armenian Heritage Press, Beirut.

Document C
Joint Resolution of
the Lebanese-Armenian denominations

The Bloc of Armenian Denominations held a meeting on Friday, October 7, 1983 at the Catholicosate of Cilicia in Antelias. The meeting was attended by the heads of the three Armenian churches - Apostolic, Catholic and Protestant - the Armenian members of parliament, and the representatives of the Armenian organizations and parties, Tashnak, Hentchak and Ramgavar. The following is the text of the resolutions taken at the meeting:

1. We thank God the almighty that Lebanon has resisted and remained faithful of its future in spite of the consecutive events that have shaken its existence since 1975. This was due to the people's willpower and their attachment to their land and liberty.
2. Our nation is Lebanon where we have shaped our lives and planted our faith and traditions in its land, and gave all our experience and skills for its construction and development.
3. Lebanon was and still is the center of vivacity not only for the Armenians in Lebanon, but also for the Armenians in the whole world who have always considered this country the source of faith and hope.
4. During the past 9 years of distress, the Armenian denominations declared their belief in the principle of dialogue and understanding in order to alleviate the tension and solve the conflict. And today, it is becoming clearer that the dialogue and the understanding is the only way for salvation and achievement of national unity. The Armenian denominations are willing, as in the past, to present all their capabilities to salvage Lebanon and help in its rebuilding whether by bearing responsibilities or taking a suitable stand.
5. In these fateful and difficult days, the Armenia denominations believe that it is not enough for them to consider only Lebanon's national unity, sovereignty and legitimacy. They demand that they participate actively with the rest of the Lebanese denominations in their effort to build Lebanon and sound bases.
6. It is distressing to witness the tragic circumstances of the refugees. Therefore, we can upon the Lebanese in general, the Armenian benevolent organizations, and the Armenians in general to provide their assistance to alleviate the sufferings of the refugees and, when the situation allows, help them to return to their homes.
7. We declare that each citizen has the duty to contribute in making the

country stronger and able to spread its authority throughout the country; this cannot be realized unless all foreign forces are removed, and the Lebanese army is deployed in order to support nation's unity, which is fundamental principle that should not be meddled with by schemes to divide the country.

8. We believe that peaceful co-existence among the Lebanese, and their agreement and brotherly treatment of one another is the basis to ensure the freedom of individual and the right of the denominations; and therefore, it is the basis that should be provided to build a society where equality and justice exist in one unified nation.

Source: Avsharian, R. (2009). *The Ta'ef Agreement and the Lebanese-Armenians, Armenians of Lebanon: From Past Princesses and Refugees to Present-day Community*, Haigazian University & the Armenian Heritage Press, Beirut.