LEBANESE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY

Post-Conflict Governing Options for Syria

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A thesis

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

School of Arts and Sciences
May 2014

Lebanese American University

School of Arts and Sciences; Beirut Campus

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Post-Conflict Governing Options for Syria

Bassem Karabibar

ABSTRACT

As domestic, regional, and international parties struggle to win the battle over Syria, a protracted conflict emerges without a revolutionary prospect. This thesis, examines different post-conflict mitigation propositions that have been implemented in ethnic and sectarian conflict prone countries. Three models are entertained: convocational, federal, and con-federal models. Countries compared are Lebanon, Iraq, Northern Ireland, and Bosnia and Herzegovina. The choice for comparison is established based on the ethnic and sectarian similarities imbedded in these countries. Each arrangement is then mapped over Syrian context in order to reveal potential success. The thesis reveals that power sharing arrangement based on a combination of consociationalism and federalism is among the most plausible options for a successful post-conflict transition in Syria.

Keywords: Syrian Conflict, Consociationalism, Federalism, Assad Regime, Arab Spring

Table of Contents

Abstract	iiv
Chapter I: Introduction.....	1
1.1 Introduction.....	1
1.1 Overview	2
1.2 Relevance of the Study	9
1.4 Methodology	11
1.5 Possible Limitations of the Research.....	13
1.6 Plan of Research	14
Chapter Two: Theories of Power Sharing	16
2.1 Introduction.....	16
2.2 Implementing democracy in divided societies.....	17
2.3 Power Sharing.....	23
2.3.1 Grand Coalition.....	24
2.3.2 Proportional Representation.....	25
2.3.3 Autonomy	27
2.3.4 Mutual Veto	28
2.4 Power Sharing Doubts	29
2.5 Rebuilding a Nation	31
2.6 Power Sharing for Syria.....	32
2.7 Conclusion	33
Chapter Three: Governing Models for Syria - Consociationalism vs. Federalism.....	34
3.1 Introduction.....	35
3.2 Background	35
3.3 Consociational Democracy	37
3.3.1 Syria's Divisions.....	40
3.3.2 Examining The Prospects Of Consociationalism In Syria.....	41
3.3.3 Comparison	43
3.3.4 Anlaysia on the applicability of Consociationalism in Syria.....	44
3.4 Federalism.....	45
3.4.1 Syria's Outcomes	47
3.4.2 International Tug of War	49
3.4.3 Autonomy	51
3.4.4 Conclusion	55

Chapter Four: Comparative Analysis.....	57
4.1 Introduction.....	57
4.2. Syrian Consociationalism	57
4.3 Syrian vs. Lebanese Consociationalism.....	60
4.4 Consociationalism and the Threat of External influences	63
4.5 Syrian Federalism	65
4.6 Syrian vs. Iraqi Federalism	67
Chapter Five: Conclusion	72
5.1 Introduction.....	72
5.2 Consociationalism.....	73
5.3 Federalism.....	74
5.4 Comparative Opportunities and Challenges	75
5.5 Conclusive Thoughts	76

Table of Figures

Figure 1 Religious Make-up of Syrian and the region	44
Figure 2 A Representation of the various strongholds in Syria.....	50
Figure 3 Ethno-linguistic groups in Iraq's 18 Administrative Districts.	53
Figure 4 Syrian Balkanization.....	66

Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Syria is one of the most sophisticated nations in the world and the Levant in particular; Syria has been playing a key role in regional politics for many years. When the contagious Arab Spring effect spilled into Syria, the public protests were confronted by a regime of oppression, which is so violent in nature. Consequently, a civil war flared up between that regime and what became known as the opposition. Due to this timely aggravation of the situation, all outcomes became possible along with the continuity or the end of Al Assad's Baath regime. However, Al Assad's failure to maintain control of the situation raises the need to consider possible future scenarios in addition to the question if the regime should finally collapse. Therefore, political systems that could work for Syria shall be evaluated in light of the current situation.

American journalist Robin Wright¹ says in her book, *Dreams and Shadows: The Future of the Middle East*, "the human toll in the struggle for political change is the Middle East's most inspiring tragedy. Tales of hardship and loss are often passed around only in whispers." Over the next decade or two, the pace of change in the Middle East will be determined in part by the democratic opposition's strength, ideas, and growing defiance. Is it left then to determine what type of democracy would apply? And what are the main factors that would shape this democracy? Wright continues to say: "A regime's response will in turn indicate whether it can be salvaged"¹. Perhaps, this remark forces the reader to take a look at the present events that are rocking Syria and realize that this

¹ Wright, R. (2008). *Dreams and Shadows: The Future of the Middle East*. New York, NY: Penguin Group US

is the age of struggle between the past and the future. Moreover, the latter will be determined either by the very same groups who held the reigns in bygone eras, or by new factions that believe in states and societies that are harmonious with the 21st century and by which basic human rights should be met. The Middle East, however, is home to some of the most stubborn ideologies, belief systems that have dragged on into the 21st century². So what are the ideologies present in Syria and how could a new political system be selected in order to create a better future for Syria?

The story of Syria has turned into an action-filled blockbuster. The country's ongoing crisis, which broke out as a popular uprising in 2011, has become one of the main and heated issues in the area. Thus, this crisis will undoubtedly stir immeasurable changes in the Middle East due to the long-standing role of Damascus as a strategic player in regional politics. While the regime is seemingly willing to allow for the destruction of the whole country before giving up power on one hand, the opposition is not any less resilient and is in some areas reacting with the same violence that the regime has exercised. As a result, a solution for the conflict is unlikely at least in the near future. Perhaps the only clear outcome is the death toll that is growing every day.

1.1 Overview

The Assad regime's excessive military campaigns lead to an exertion of international pressure on the ruling political system in Damascus, and the global responses have varied from one country to another. For example, in August 2011, US President Barack Obama declared that it was time for Assad to "step aside." In turn, Germany, Britain, France and other western countries also supported this. It is also

²Wright, R. (2008). *Dreams and Shadows: The Future of the Middle East*. New York, NY: Penguin Group US

worth noting that even Tehran's Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Salehi urged Syria to heed its peoples' "legitimate" demands³. As for Ankara, it denounced Assad's "savagery." In addition, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait and other states pulled out their ambassadors from the country. Moreover, the Arab League and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), which rarely devises plausible solutions for many crises in the region, slammed the course of action which the Assad regime has been embracing so far³. At this stage, all scenarios are possible. Since there is a possibility that Assad's regime might be toppled, research has already commenced to determine the adequate post-Assad political system.

In order to determine what possible political body might take hold of Syria in the aftermath of the crisis, it is essential to review the development of the Syrian regime since the independence all the way to current times. Modern Syrian politics can be summarized in three major generations. The first generation, which spans from 1950s to 1960s, is characterized by instability during early independence. The second generation, which ranges from the 1970s to 1980s, is characterized by the establishment of an authoritarian state. Finally, the third generation, unwrapped between 1990s and 2000s, is characterized by gradual liberation in order to cope with the applied internal and external pressures. After independence, Syria began the pursuit for its political identity. During the changes occurring in Palestine and due to independence, Syria faced identity problems that impacted its stability as the full loyalty of the citizens was not yet captured by any ruling authority. Thus, the country was characterized by a period of fragmentation. At that stage, despite their cultural and political differences (the different cultural and political backgrounds in Syria include the Baath Party, the Muslim

³ Anderson, J. H. (2011, November/December). After the fall: What's next for Assad and Syria? *World Affairs*,

Brotherhood, and the Syrian Social National Party), all were united under the Arab identity and belonged to a greater Arab nation.

After the decline of the Ottoman Empire, the Arab tongue was able to unite the Christians and Muslims (majority of Sunnis, Alawites and other minorities) of Syria. At that stage, the Arab identity had to be incorporated into the regime in order to acquire power against external threats. The latter replaced the management of the internal threats through implementation of defensive unionism. The Baath Regime later developed in 1963. The remarkable transformation, however, wasn't achieved until 1970 when the political system shifted to a durable and realistic one capable of facing different types of challenges -- including economic challenges, war and attempts of Islamic revolution against this new system. Later, during the nineties, liberalization on both the economic and political fronts was actualized. Notably, the economic liberalization exceeded the political liberalization. The latter was minimal because power was solely grabbed by Al-Assad. After Hafez al-Assad passed away in 2000, his son inherited authority due to various reasons (as claimed by the regime), which were preserving the country's stability (as fear from Lebanonization of Syria in the absence of an Assad spread), his expected modern approach and closer relation to young generations.

Hence, since independence, Syria has passed through differing political systems each aiming to achieve a certain kind of balance in the country. Yet, this balance was crippled by the Arab Spring because it inspired protests in Syria. These protests possibly emerged as a spontaneous response to the first public movement that ignited in Tunisia a few months earlier.

The military campaigns, launched by the Damascus regime for almost two years and which threatened to spin the area out of control, forced some western countries to slap sanctions against top Syrian officials. In August, the United States imposed a set of financial sanctions on a number of Syrian officials, and the European Union forbade the importation of crude oil from Syria. Such measures sought to cripple the Syrian regime given that “approximately thirty percent of its revenues are derived from oil exports,”⁴. On the other hand, Russia has been supporting the regime. That is not to mention the support from Iran through Hezbollah and its direct involvement in the war.

As for the crimes that have taken place in Syria, the United Nations has “found evidence of summary executions, torture of detainees, and other unlawful acts by the regime”⁴. Perhaps, aside from any reports produced by any missions, the videos posted all over the internet (namely via YouTube) expose the hideous war happening in Syria, which has recently turned into violence practiced by both sides: the regime and the opposition. Maybe, this civil war as can be called nowadays is not like anything Syria has ever witnessed before and perhaps is one of the most gruesome in the world right now. Right after the Syrian army was forced out of Lebanon, Syria got involved in this civil war. As required by some analysts, the regime would reach an end once it was out of Lebanon. Yet, no one expected that the changes in the Arab world would be transferred to Syria and would contribute in the current situation. In light of this quagmire that has befallen Syria, the Syrian opposition and the many different groups it includes seem to be disunited with no clear vision or agenda for the upcoming phase.

⁴ Anderson, J. H. (2011, November/December). After the fall: What’s next for Assad and Syria? *World Affairs*

In addition to the failure of the Syrian opposition and the raging civil war that has engulfed Syria, radical Islamists groups have started to mushroom across the country. These include: the Al-Nusra Front (*Jabhat al-Nusra*), which is affiliated with the terrorist network of Al-Qaeda; the Sukur al-Sham Brigade (*Hawks of Greater Syria*), which is an Islamic organization, in northern Syria, led by Ahmed Issa al-Sheikh; the Al-Tawhid Brigade (*Uniqueness of Allah*), which is an Islamic organization, in the Aleppo area, led by Abd al-Kadr al-Salah, and it is also identified with the Muslim Brotherhood; Tadamon Ansar al-Islam (*Union of Supporters of Islam*), which is a Salafist Islamic organization -- formed in August 2012 and includes a number of Damascus-based military groups -- that wants to establish a caliphate. In addition to the aforementioned Islamic companies, there is also the *Al-Farouk Brigades*, which is a Salafist Islamic organization, in the north and center of Syria. At this stage, and with all these stakeholders involved, forming an adequate political system would be one of the most controversial points of discussion. It is as hotly a debated topic as deciding whether the regime will fall or not.

To address a society as deeply divided as that of Syria, we can look at several trends. One way to take is the secular path which aims to completely separate sects and ethnicities from politics and the state. A second path is a power sharing model that caters to the many religious and ethnic actors in the Syrian state.

Secularism can be defined as a complete separation between legal and juridical processes on one hand and religious control on the other. It also implies that the state has

adopted neither an official religion nor atheism⁵. Although it is one of 95 secular countries in the world, Syria's well-protected minorities have lost that cover in the face of the current crisis. The Baathist version of secularism is beginning to wane in the face of the massive internal struggle.

⁶Observes that secularism is a byproduct of modernization by which societies begin to view religion as an old and decaying phenomenon, that has no place in a civilized society. The economy also plays a large role in moving away from a religious approach. In its current tattered state, Syria is in no position to modernize. This, coupled with a stagnating economy, could push the country away from a truly secular approach, and religion might step in to fill the gap.

A sectarian approach would redistribute the weight of power among all the relevant parties. Serious questions arise, however, regarding who will regulate what percentage each sect deserves to receive. Nonetheless, a consociational approach is one way to go.

A consociational democracy strives to turn a fragmented democracy into a stable one by introducing a compromise of power among all the religious and ethnic stakeholders⁷. It might be the best solution in plural societies where divisions cannot be resolved. In order for a consociational democracy to work, however, various stakeholders must be able to

⁵ Kuru, A. (2007). Passive and assertive secularism: Historical conditions, ideological struggles, and state policies toward religion. *World Politics*, 59(4), 568-594

⁶ Kuru, A. (2007). Passive and assertive secularism: Historical conditions, ideological struggles, and state policies toward religion. *World Politics*, 59(4), 568-594

⁷ Lijphart, A. (1969). Consociational Democracy. *World Politics*, 21(2), 207-225.

accommodate the diverse needs of all parties involved. All parties must be committed to the success of this model in order for it to thrive.

Furthermore, it is important to understand that the danger of political fragmentation is imminent if stakeholders fail to maintain a balanced sectarian regime. The necessary environment and conditions must be present to incubate a consociational democracy.

Since the 10% Alawite minority took control of the country, unstable domination has been the case in Syria for decades⁸. Domination may have been tolerated at a time in the past when autocracy was more prevalent, but the scene has shifted dramatically since then. Among the strategies that Smootha and Hanf⁸ propose to retaliate against oppression, such as that in Syria, are partition, ethnic democracy and liberal democracy.

Partition would reinvent Syria since several states divided by cultural and ethnic lines. Unlike consociational democracy, ethnic democracy, with ethnically homogenous Syrian states, would resolve the issue of having to get all stakeholders to agree on governing matters⁸.

Ethnic democracy would establish one ethnic group as the dominant group, with some leeway for other participants. All would have their basic liberties ensured, but one group would always be superior to the rest⁸.

Liberal democracy deems all ethnic and religious diversities in the one society irrelevant⁸. It is all about the individual citizen. In this light, all members of the state are

⁸ Smootha, S. & Hanf, T. (1992). The diverse modes of conflict regulation in deeply divided societies. *International Journal of Comparative Sociology*, 33, 26-47.

treated equally, irrespective of their religious and ethnic background. In such a democracy, no attention is given to any groups or ideologies. In fact, it is all about the individual rights.

The five proposed government alternatives for Syria are mere suggestions at this point. To truly determine which models fit and which do not, further studies should be conducted. Looking at various countries that have adopted these modes of government and conducting comparative studies with Syria would help in determining what might work best.

1.2 Relevance of the Study

The Syrian crisis has been raging on for almost two years, and the solution for the civil war has yet to see the light. The country has become, like Lebanon, a battlefield on which regional and international players play out their ideological and political conflicts. Perhaps this instability in Syria highlights the basic similarities the country possesses with Lebanon. Based on this, it would be reasonable to deduce that the post-Assad Syria would face the same challenges Lebanon is facing. It should be noted, however, that the ethnic distribution in Syria is different from that in Lebanon, particularly because of the prominent presence of Islamist extremists. Perhaps another factor influencing the Syrian politics is the enduring brutal war in which violence has escalated to unthinkable extremes. The impact of this violence, as well as the economic challenges, shall be considered during the evaluation of possibilities for the post-Assad Syria. According to Barak Obama, “Something has been broken in Syria, and it’s not

going to be put back together perfectly immediately, even after Assad leaves”⁹. Although Assad had previously witnessed “sticky situations”, such as the Beirut popular uprising that called on the Damascus regime to pull out its forces from Lebanon after the assassination of Rafik Hariri, former Lebanese Prime Minister, in 2005, “the developing national resistance he now confronts and the furious conviction of this restriction that now is the right time has come—exhibits a test of a through and through diverse extent”¹⁰. Even if Assad is confident that most of his senior civilian and military leaders, most of whom belong to the Alawite confession (which makes up around 12 percent of the population), will maintain their loyalty to him, the waves of defections from the “Alawite-dominated rank and file” reveals that even “tribal loyalty” cannot go on forever¹⁰. Despite the fact that the Syrian government forestalls the gathering of data on the ethnic breakdown of the Syrian guard, it is accepted that the Alawites rule the officer corps while Sunnis involve a much higher rank and file”¹¹.

1.3 Research Question

In the three years during which the crisis has played out one of the ugliest times in Syria’s modern history, the country has become, like Lebanon, a battlefield on which regional and international players fight their ideological and political conflicts. Drawing on a comparison with Lebanon, will the future of Syria hold a consociational system similar to the one we find in the Lebanese model, or will it possibly result in a federal or federalized system, similar to the one some Lebanese politicians have been lobbying for

⁹ MacAskill, E. (2013, March 22). Obama: post-Assad Syria of islamist extremism is nightmare scenario. *The Guardian*.

¹⁰ Anderson, J. H. (2011, November/December). After the fall: What’s next for Assad and Syria? *World Affairs*

¹¹ Clawson, P. (2012). *Post-Assad Syria: Opportunity or quagmire?* Informally published manuscript, National Defense University: Institute for National Strategic Studies, Fort Lesley McNair, Washington

and still lobby for today? What has been broken? Will Assad fall, or will he stay in his own Alawite statelet and draw up the future of Syria with other Islamist and secular groups? If he falls, what will Syria look like in post-Assad times? The post-Assad time and the political system, which Syria is likely to witness in the future, will be the focus of this thesis.

Furthermore, the thesis will examine the application of various proposed models for Syria, as they were exercised in other countries. In addition, comparisons from the experiences of those countries will be drawn. By studying in-depth the rules of democracy as well as alternative measures, it will be easier to apply these governing systems to Syria.

1.4 Methodology

The methodology which will be used in this study can be divided into two primary categories: first, a comparative study will be performed on the Syrian situation in comparison to other neighboring Arab countries. That is to say that the Syrian uprising and revolution will be systematically compared to that of other Arab countries in order to create a better understanding of the Syrian design itself with its weaknesses and strengths.

In short, dissatisfaction with ruling regimes across the Arab World can be divided into four basic categories: the case where a regime was toppled without an outright war (Tunisia and then Egypt), the case where the regime was toppled with the aid of international intervention (Libya), public movements and/or protests that ended

without regime toppling (Kuwait, Morocco, and Bahrain), and the lack of serious public movements against a system (such as in Lebanon).

Unlike Syria, the countries which managed to topple their regimes without any outside help, generally encompassed movements involving all the sectors of the public. Despite being unorganized, the public movements led to a change, that even though is not the ultimate change those countries were hoping for, was still a change and perhaps a transitional stage toward reaching real democracy. The case of Gaddafi's regime, on the other hand, represents the case involving opposing outside intervention. In comparison to the Syrian situation, Syria has strong allies including Russia, Iran and Hezbollah. Thus, any outside intervention against the regime would worsen the situation. On the other hand, in Kuwait, the public didn't have a very obvious reason to protest as they enjoy a relatively acceptable quality of life -- unlike the Syrians. As for Morocco, the regime responded to the protestors by making reforms, which were not exactly what the people wished for but were considered acceptable as a first step toward reformation. This is promising news -- especially when we consider the horrible situation in Syria that is at, the moment, very discouraging. Now, if we look at the case of Lebanon, the country has already been divided into different sections. Despite the presence of civil movements, they are not strong enough to influence a change especially because the deeply divided country is always on the verge of starting a civil war. Therefore, the case of Syria is particularly unique, and what happened in other countries is not necessarily what will happen in Syria. The regime is not yet toppled, and the opposition is as persistent as ever. The regime is ready to withstand the probable international punishment to defeat the opposition at any cost. The opposition, on the other hand, is in

favor of sectarianism and Islamist extremism. Noting that any outside intervention -- as in the case of Gaddafi's regime -- seems impossible, the future looks vague, and all the possibilities are open. Despite the fact that Assad believes the situation can be contained and everything would get back to order, this is unlikely. What is more possible is a long term war that would bring the regime more external acceptance due to the fact that the violence practiced by the opposition is not any less brutal than that carried out by the regime. Still, according to the numbers, the regime, up until this moment, has committed more mass murder -- especially that the country's military resources have been used against fellow countrymen, women and children.

The second objective of this research will be a systematic comparison between the states of similar demographics such as Northern Ireland, Lebanon, and Bosnia and Herzegovina. As a result, the question that poses itself is why these states? In an effort to include different crises across history, these three different examples adopted either a consociational system or a national system to solve destructive and sectarian and/or ethnic crises. In the case of Northern Ireland and Lebanon, consociational power-sharing models were established. As for Bosnia and Herzegovina, a federal system was used.

1.5 Possible Limitations of the Research

The dissertation tackles Syria, which is currently witnessing a civil war. The study could have been conducted inside the war-torn country to better understand the situation there and draw conclusions based on accurate observations. Moreover, the Syrian crisis has yet to come to an end, and it is to evolve every day. Therefore, the researcher derived his information from the events that were taking place while he was conducting his research.

It is worth noting that the future of the Syrian conflict is vague. So, assuming that the regime will topple could be either an optimistic or pessimistic assumption since both the regime and the opposition are involved in this civil war and are responsible for the violence. It is true that the violence was initiated by the regime, but it continues to spread, as an action or a response. Also the country's wounds will not heal easily.

This research is being conducted under mercurial conditions. In other words, the facts might shift in the future. The researcher will maintain an objective approach that caters to any possible outcome, but it is not easy to draw conclusions and adopt a suitable governing model for Syria whilst the situation is still playing out.

The complexity of the situation will also not make it easy to draw solutions. The researcher is attempting to draw on various governing models to apply to a nation, which is engaged in such a violent war, so any solutions seem very difficult at the present. There are still many unknowns to be determined and at this point, the scene may shift in any unanticipated direction. Another challenge is the obscurity of what is happening in Syria right now. This obscurity has been the result of very tight control over media coverage of the war. Journalists have often been violently targeted and the war is not being effectively scrutinized or even exposed to the global audience. Often times, what we have had to rely on are leaked images and questionable testimonies. All these attributes present challenges to the research.

1.6 Plan of Research

The thesis begins with an overview of the Syrian crisis, how it began, the major phases that occurred throughout the crisis, and the main players in the ongoing conflict

(including local and international players). In addition, the thesis will discuss the causes behind the crisis and the survival of the regime up until this time. A comparison between the situation in Syria and that in other Arab countries is carried out in order to outline the uniqueness of the conflict in Syria and its sensitivity. The paper also discusses the influential roles which each of Iran, US and Russia play in the Syrian battle in an effort to explain how the conflict in Syria is a battle being fought between international players who are seeking to settle scores (US and Iran). The intervention of Iran through Hezbollah as an ally of the regime, on one hand, and the intervention of Israel, on the other hand, has shown that external intervention further increases tension in the area rather than pushes forward toward a nearby solution. In the next section, the thesis sheds light on the possible power-sharing models that might be embraced in a post-Assad Syria while highlighting a number of cases in an effort to discuss whether each model has any chance of surviving in future Syria.

For illustration and exploration of the study, the second chapter will include the literature review which forms the theoretical background of the research topic retrieved from peer reviewed journal articles, books and relevant and reputable resources. The third Chapter of the study will address the research methodology that will be utilized in the research. Chapter four will reflect on the research results and analysis while focusing on the findings pertaining to national and consociational systems. Also, this chapter will focus on the comparison between the Syrian model and those of neighboring Arab countries. Chapter five will encompass the research conclusions and recommendations.

Chapter Two

Theories of Power Sharing

2.1 Introduction

The era of decolonization was especially marked by the hardships involved with countries regaining their independence and more importantly, national identity. This came with the nametag labeled sovereignty. The reestablishment of institutions meant new constitutions or new forms of government. Whilst some countries have restored their colonizers' rule of law, others have overthrown them in an effort inaugurate an authentic state. Two things have occurred in response to these transitions: the first response was the surfacing of ethnic cleavages after independence. This has to do with the fear that the majority will rule over the minorities. Specific to the Arab world, the transitions that have occurred have predominantly been authoritarian. The eruption of violence within divided societies as a desperate cry for acknowledgment is the second response, which is characterized by being long term in retrospect and most apparent today. The conundrum that arises is establishing forms of governance that allow divided societies to seek political participation and territorial rights. A post-civil war reconstruction must occur to alleviate preoccupied divisions in their quest for gaining power. This section explores this issue by making use of sources from peer-reviewed journal articles, books on politics and economy, international relations and models presented by scholars. Furthermore, the chapter will focus on Syria, but will include case studies that aim to provide a comparison.

Finding the ideal model for government has occupied scholars for many decades. What is truly the best governing model to adopt? Views are divided on this: some propose models that attend to the various ethnic and sectarian representations found in one country while others opt to rid the system of any ethnic and sectarian implications.

This is a debate that has grown more relevant in recent times and with the unraveling of the Arab Spring revolutions. It is especially relevant in Syria which is ripe with ethnic and sectarian issues. Today, Syria is undergoing a conflict that is unparalleled in 21st century in terms of its violent nature. The fierce struggle that has raged on for two years strongly demands a revision of the current power model. This paper tries to examine various propositions for the restructuring of the current power model so that an effective solution is reached.

2.2 Implementing democracy in divided societies

The complexity of the concept of democracy is evident when we consider the diversity of definitions under this concept¹². Indeed, there are many types of democracy. Nevertheless, the most basic definition can be summarized as a government by the people – or the representatives of the people. The problem that arises with such a definition is that it does not address the challenge of finding a suitable solution when those people reach a divided conflict on various issues. Who then can overcome this disagreement in the democratic state? The logical answer is: the highest possible majority or what is referred to as the majoritarian model. The majoritarian model may be interpreted as undemocratic by some because although it caters to the majority, it still

¹² Lijphart, A. (1999). *Patterns of democracy: government forms and performance in thirty-six countries*. New Haven, Conn: Yale University Press

excludes some – the minority – and this minority becomes the opposition. It is a plausible argument to consider that anyone affected by a decision or rule should be able to participate in the process of making up this decision or rule. To address this, and in certain nations, an alternating two-party system has been achieved. In such a system, the minority can accept rule of the majority because it will have the chance to alternate roles with the majority in the next electoral term and become itself the majority. Still, such an option is not viable in nonhomogeneous societies and certainly not a solution in Syria.

In his book, *Patterns of Democracy*, Lijphart discusses many models of democracy. For example, the consensus model of democracy is closer than the majoritarian model to a democratic ideal in that it seeks more than the minimum majority. In the consensus model, the focus shifts from putting the power in the hands of a clear majority. This approach aims to disperse power in such a way that everyone has some participation¹³.

Lijphart defines some of the ways by which this is achieved. For instance, instead of having one powerful party take in all the political power, it can be shared among all or most political parties if they form grand or broad coalitions. Perhaps, the minorities of Syria can organize themselves under a broad coalition that has more potential to participate with majority-representative parties. Another concept is the multiparty system which allows no party to become the majority. What occurs instead is a group of parties in equilibrium. They coexist side by side irrespective of their size and without any single one of them achieving majority status. Yet, this might be difficult to

¹³ Lijphart, A. (1999). *Patterns of democracy: government forms and performance in thirty-six countries*. New Haven, Conn: Yale University Press

achieve in Syria because various parties have expressed such heightened levels of animosity that it is near impossible for them to function and coexist side by side. However, another idea under the consensus model is strong bicameralism which gives more emphasis to minorities and smaller parties. Unlike a unicameral legislature, a bicameral approach makes for concurrent majorities which, in turn, hinders the oppression of minorities.

We must distinguish between single party on one hand and majority governments and broad multiparty governments on the other hand. The two aforementioned concepts constitute the two types of democracy. The former is a power concentrated approach and the latter is a decentralized power-sharing approach. Aside from the single-party system, a two-party system typifies the majoritarian model while a multiparty system is in line with the consensus model¹⁴. With all these various possibilities, the question that raises itself is: what is the ideal number of ruling parties within a democracy? First of all, to determine this, the smallest parties must be accounted for. In other words, we must consider the minimum eligible size of a party – some parties might be too small to count. The size of a party might be more effectively measured in how many parliamentary seats it is able to secure.

There are many gaps in the electoral systems of majority and consensus democracies. While a majority democracy looks at a winner-takes-all approach, the consensus democracy takes a more proportional approach¹⁴. The latter's approach

¹⁴ Lijphart, A. (1999). *Patterns of democracy: government forms and performance in thirty-six countries*. New Haven, Conn: Yale University Press

ensures that no part is overrepresented. Instead, all parties have been given proportional weight.

According to Robert Dahl¹⁴, there are eight defining measures of democracy. These are right to vote, right to be elected, right of political leaders to compete for support and votes, free and fair elections, freedom of association, freedom of expression, alternative sources of information, and permitting votes and other expressions of preference to interfere with and influence institutions that generate public policies. When studying Syria based on these eight criteria, Syria does not fare very well. For one thing, policies cannot be challenged by public vote, and the right to be elected is an alien concept that contradicts the long-standing ruling tradition of the Al Assad family. Indeed, there are many democratic rights that are completely bypassed in the Syrian regime.

Sammy Smootha claims that the “classical, historical and dominant model of the state in the West is a democratic nation-state” According to Smootha, this western model revolves around the person, who resides in the core of society and enjoys equality. This design more or less dictates that “the system is based on the principles of equality of individual rights, individualism, competition, achievement, free mixing of people, and privatization of ethnicity and religion”¹⁵. The person enjoys liberty and envisions a society whose individuals are tied together through citizenship and who, however, “need common goals, do not feel solidarity with fellow citizens and do not have moral commitment to the state”¹⁵. For this to occur, the society must survive on

¹⁵ Smootha, S. (2002). Sammy smootha classical, historical and dominant model of the state in the west is a democratic nation-state. *Nations and Nationalism*, 8(4), 423-431

homogenization: one culture and one language. This model is nearly impossible to achieve for Syria because there are too many ideological factions that push Syrians further apart although they share one culture. Several political parties in Syria have different followers.

Smootha's definition of a democratic nation-state is still very appealing as it unites different ethnicities, languages and cultures. However, it might be a little too idealistic to combine individuals of unrelated and unconnected affiliation and who do not share common goals. It cannot be a desirable thing to create a society where no sense of community is prevalent.

In the midst of the Arab Spring, the world has witnessed a reconciliation struggle. Citizens have come to see that a sacrifice must be made for change to occur. This sacrifice has been defined by violence, a characteristic that has dominated the condition of Syria for three years now. The multi-ethnic civil war that is taking place hopes to replace the regime. The possibility of the toppling of Bashar Al Assad's regime has raised many questions.

One of these questions is the following: can Syria post-conflict enjoy democratic-styled governance? Essentially, this means that the Syrian people -- mainly the oppositions -- must find common ground in their ethnic cauldron. The Syrian people are divided into terms of allegiance or opposition. This has now developed into more serious religious factions, with more strain on the ethnic shackles crippling the

country¹⁶. With a division comes recognition; these factions will translate themselves into a post-Al Assad Syria. Nonetheless, the question that outlasts is will they experience social cohesion through democracy?

The mid 1970's witnessed the "third wave of democratization," with countries adopting democratic models and organizations paired with constitutional reforms. The Arab world could be embarking on a fourth wave in the hopes of achieving similar civilizations as the West. There is an expectation offered by the west concerning how the state should operate. This involves non-violence and diplomacy to the highest extent. However, the West is built on a homogenous foundation. The West has superseded their conflict phases and did not witness colonization. Therefore, the west can enjoy their idea of democracy. As for the Arabs, different historical developments have left nations tangled in conflict with the production of division. Different ethnic categories must be acknowledged in the democratic process as they grow in organization and mobilization¹⁷. This slippery slope involves the eruption of conflict in the formation of democracy. Horowitz¹⁸ recognized this and discussed his idea of "permanent winners and losers." This idea implies that, through democratic elections, parties are created. At the time of election, the bigger coalition wins and "since ethnic cases for force are commonly incongruent, the victors extricate the profits of regulating the state for their own particular ethnic assembly and prohibit different assemblies from state resource"¹⁸. This is the democracy many multi-ethnic countries are struggling with, such as Lebanon's election battles between liberal March 14 coalition and conservative March 8.

¹⁶ Slattery, G. (2013, October). The Gangs of Syria

¹⁷ Lijphart, A. (2004). Constitutional design for divided societies. *Journal of Democracy*, 15(2), 96-109

¹⁸ Horowitz, J. & Long, J. (2006). *Democratic survival in multi-ethnic countries*. Manuscript submitted for publication, Department of Political Science, University of California, San Diego, CA

Eventually, the government reaches a deadlock and the cycle resumes.

In a multi-ethnic society, each faction strives to protect respective interests; a question of equality emerges as “intra-group competition compels leaders to favor their own group”¹⁸. The call for equality, a synonym for democracy tossed around, will ensure power struggles, perhaps for domination, or country resources or other allures. The democratic model specialized for Syria must safeguard the integration of ethnic interests. Syria must pass the phase of the reform conflict in order to secure diplomatic coexistence.¹⁹ agrees that a democratic potential of equality could boost the ethnicisation of politics. The problem with the effort to achieve democracy in itself can cause abating ethnic conflict not only to emerge but also to escalate.

2.3 Power Sharing

Power sharing is one alternative to majoritarian democracy among ethnic elites. It became a popular prescription for post conflict societies, such as Nigeria, Lebanon and Kenya ²⁰²¹. The rationale behind power sharing is that if all the conflicting parties are incorporated into the governance system, then they are more likely to find commonalities and form alliances. With these vested interests, the state can establish stability. Nonetheless, power sharing remains a contested model and many academics

¹⁹ Wimmer, A. (2003). Democracy and ethno-religious conflict in Iraq. *Survival*, 45(4), 111 - 134

²⁰ Lijphart, A. (2004). Constitutional design for divided societies. *Journal of Democracy*, 15(2), 96-109

²¹ Salamey, I. & Tabar, P. (2008). Consociational democracy and urban sustainability: Transforming the confessional divides in Beirut. *Ethnopolitics*, 7(2), 239-263

and political scientists have pointed out flaws based on “elite pacts, which do not necessarily forge genuine intergroup reconciliation”²²

A power sharing democracy is one that highlights the necessity of a distributive power structure. According to Lijphart, this kind of democracy is exemplified by four different attributes: grand coalition, proportional representation, autonomy and mutual veto. This means that all organizations will participate in the decision-making process. For a social order “portrayed by sharp cleavages and with few covering participations, societies need a fundamentally distinctive political framework than social orders with crosscutting cleavages and covering dependability”²³. Therefore for Lijphart, a post conflict society will create immense distrust and wariness between the groups as well as the difficulty in maintaining levels of security.

2.3.1 Grand Coalition

A Grand coalition requires the elite leaders of all the significant divisions to devise rule together with the intention of compromise and agreement. For divided societies in the post conflict phase, different segments will have varying degrees of importance allocated to different issues, leaving the stakes high. The parties, who were entrenched in the civil war with one another, will mostly be preoccupied with gaining executive power²³. Distribution of power is more favored as opposed to rivaling competitors; therefore, the allocation of guaranteed power positions is preferred in a power-sharing government²⁴. Countries of post conflict have installed consociational

²² Cammett, M., & Malesky, E. (2012). Power sharing in post conflict societies: Implications for peace and governance. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 1-35

²³ Binningsbø, H. (2006, August 21). Power-Sharing and Post conflict Peace Periods. Retrieved February 15, 2014

²⁴ Snyder, J. & Walter, B. (1999). *Civil wars, insecurity, and intervention*. New York: Columbia University Press

democracies with the application of a grand coalition, whereby segments are present in the governance process. This means that there is no simple majority due to trust issues. It is preferred for an ethnic group to be a counterpart in the state than to trust a rival in a majoritarian system. This will protect the group's interests ²⁵.

Grand coalitions are convenient in nations, where hostility is high, because otherwise, strict majority rule is too threatening to the various stakeholders of that nation. Having opposing teams come together in grand coalitions resolves conflict -- especially in very grave political environments²⁶. One way to shift power from single concentration to various stakeholders in a grand coalition is through the separation of power, which is exactly what consociational democracies do.

2.3.2 Proportional Representation

Lijphart's power sharing model is based on the appropriate distribution of power, otherwise known as the proportionality principle²⁶. The literal translation of proportionality is the apportionment of legislature seats in the parliament; however, it also involves representational distribution in judicial, economic and military branches. Opposing combatants must be present in a new national army²⁷. Reynolds emphasizes that elections for a divided society should satisfy certain objectives: image and accessibility to vote for a government that offers motivations for reconciliation and stability. With such a system in place, a minimum winning coalition becomes undesirable. Furthermore, because of the neutrality of the nature of proportionality,

²⁵ Lijphart, A. (1977). *Democracy in plural societies*. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press

²⁶ Lijphart, A. (1977). *Democracy in plural societies*. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press

²⁷ Snyder, J. & Walter, B. (1999). *Civil wars, insecurity, and intervention*. New York: Columbia University Press

tensions that commonly arise in consociational democracies – especially when it comes to decision making -- can be minimized as “all groups influence a decision in proportion to their numerical strength”²⁶. The weakness of proportionality, however, is clear in decisions of a dichotomous nature as such decisions demand a clear yes or no and there is little room for the third option or a division of views among various stakeholders. In such instances, majority rule or minority vote will have to replace proportionality.

It is claimed that proportional representation brings the voices of the people and the government closer²⁸. With the proportional approach, there is more room for the representation of a diversity of opinions within the elected body, which means more of the people’s concerns are being addressed. However, does this make the government more responsive? The general answer is yes, with higher quality representation – which is guaranteed in proportional representation -- there should be better government to citizen interaction. After all, many opinions are better than a few opinions.

With or without proportional representation, it is still impossible for any government policy to satisfy all citizens. One solution to this problem is to find the compromise or adhere to the median voter with regard to pending policies. Effectively, finding that median voter will reduce distances among all voters of the democratic system. This is called a centrist policy. The compromise of the median voter will give the incentive for various parties to participate in a proportional representation democratic system. All governments, whether functioning under proportional representation or not, face pressure to yield to the median or average voter, but that does

²⁸Blais, A., & Bodet, M. A. (2006). Does proportional representation foster closer congruence between citizens and policy makers? *Comparative Political Studies*, 39(10), 1243-1262

not guarantee that these governments will achieve congruence with citizens. Because proportional representation allows for more parties to form, each of these individual parties will be inclined to find its own niche and less likely to seek congruence with other parties. On the other hand, proportional representation still has a strong pull toward congruence because it engages parties that are more inclined to form coalitions and shuts out extremist parties²⁸. When there is a strong pull toward involvement, there is a strong pull toward congruence.

In the case of Syria, it is tricky to anticipate the ramifications a proportional representation. One thing is certain, though, that extremism must be eliminated. If there can be room, in Syria, for a plurality of political parties, and an environment where all these parties can coexist, form coalitions and function, this would resolve much of the political tension in the country.

2.3.3 Autonomy

For a plural society, Lijphart agrees that it is best to leave the decision-making concerning the different segments to them as much as possible²⁹. Autonomy refers to the self-rule of minorities, who are distinct in their religious, social and political affiliations. Segmental autonomy “can be based on either a personal self-identification or a territorial principle, depending on the demographic distribution of the people”³⁰. A focus on regional cleavages translates to more national form of power sharing. Requests for more elaborate self-administration or secession during the civil war are often derived from identity issues. For some countries, the only solution to a prolonged civil war is greater

²⁹ Lijphart, A. (1977). *Democracy in plural societies*. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press

³⁰ Binningsbø, H. (2006, August 21). Power-Sharing and Post conflict Peace Periods. Retrieved February 15, 2014

autonomy under the federal form of governance, such as in Ethiopia.³¹, concluded that the territorial autonomy has positive effects on stability for settlements. However, Mozaffar and Scarritt³² debate that territorial autonomy is only favorable if there are complimentary conditions. With an identity issue, it seems that Lijphart's autonomy is necessary. Good fences make good neighbors³².

This segmental autonomy still allows for the various self-ruling minorities to come together in matters of common interest. In such cases, all minority groups participate in the process, but otherwise, each party is left to its own means.

2.3.4 Mutual Veto

In large coalitions, minorities may still lack a sense of security because the larger parties can easily outvote them. Yet, introducing a minority veto will give these smaller parties the security they seek. This mutual veto, which all minority segments can adopt, lessens the anxiety and insecurity of smaller parties. Yet, this veto may also induce the tyranny of these small parties that can be tempted to exploit their veto power. Small parties understand, however, that exploitation of the veto power can be turned against them and often times just having the option of veto is security enough without the need to exercise it.

³¹ Roeder, P. & Rothchild, D. (2005). *Sustainable peace powers and democracy after civil wars*. Cornell University Press

³² Lijphart, A. (1999). *Patterns of democracy: government forms and performance in thirty-six countries*. New Haven, Conn: Yale University Press.

2.4 Power Sharing Doubts

Cammett and Malesky³³ argue against power sharing models as feasible solutions for divided societies. The authors agree that civil war is often intricate and involves “deep-seated historical and social grievances; however, good governance can play an important role in reducing violence in even the most intransigent settings”³³ regard improved governance through the delivery of good standard civil service as crucial because this will “satisfy the fundamental human needs of its citizenry and ward of the desperation that can trigger violence”³⁴. By giving the people basic needs, such as healthcare and the rights to education in a free or even semi-free economic setting, the citizens will have less reason to spark civil strife.

In critiquing the approach of proportional representation, Horowitz and Long claim that by allowing all these small parties to acquire seats in a power sharing government, the election can enable the appointment of extremist candidates. As opposed to foster a violent-free environment, this could further disintegration and deepen divisions³⁵. Roeder and Rothschild³⁶ agree in that power sharing models, such as consociationalism and federalism, only propose short-term peace and stability. Nevertheless, these models fail to implement long-term efforts of democratization.

For an idea of elite compromise, Cammett and Malesky³⁴ argue that the reality of divided societies in post conflict politics is being neglected. Sensitivity heightens

³³ Cammett, M., & Malesky, E. (2012). Power sharing in post conflict societies: Implications for peace and governance. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 1-35

³⁴ Cammett, M., & Malesky, E. (2012). Power sharing in post conflict societies: Implications for peace and governance. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 1-35

³⁵ Horowitz, J. & Long, J. (2006). *Democratic survival in multi-ethnic countries*. Manuscript submitted for publication, Department of Political Science, University of California, San Diego, CA

³⁶ Roeder, P. & Rothchild, D. (2005). *Sustainable peace powers and democracy after civil wars*. Cornell University Press

disagreements over resources, which become politicized leading to political deadlock. Arguments about splitting the shares could also result in veto insistence encouraging ineffectiveness and conclusively, bad governance. In the suggested case that segments form alliances in an effort to win election seats, many would argue that as long as alliances are formed, there are efforts in setting aside grievances. However, this looks better on paper than in reality. Interethnic alliances are temporary agreements that do not have long lasting results to solidify multiethnic coalitions³⁴. This has been the case with many nations including Lebanon whereby citizens witnessed shallow alliances that lead to further disagreements in the future. Moreover, these alliances are built on an ethnic or sectarian basis rather than on an ideological one which aims to invest in national projects. These ethnic cracks are doomed and almost always result in violent confrontations and lead to the perception that power sharing is unlikely to foster a functioning support system in the conflict state and instill resilient peace.

Representatives should all participate with equal political power. This leads to the creation of independent local administrations and divides the country into districts that grant elites the power to govern themselves³⁷. Power sharing models bring about the contested idea of autonomy. This form of governance emerges as territorial self-governance (TSG), a supposed strategy that curbs conflict in divided societies. Regardless of the generation of “a significant literature within and without the consociational school of conflict management and among its critics, there are impressive calculated and observational issues with the meaning of TSG as a system of clash

³⁷Roeder, P. & Rothchild, D. (2005). *Sustainable peace powers and democracy after civil wars*. Cornell University Press

managemen³⁸. While the local units are somewhat independent in a decentralized manner, the central government supersedes their independence and has more power over independent or federal divisions. Antonio Cassese has argued that autonomy is inadequate, as it does not cater to the demands of minorities that have not been recognized as a “people”.

2.5 Rebuilding a Nation

Rebuilding the country after a conflict period through the establishment of institutions that can offer peace and stability is an urgent need. Democracies have been able to emerge in non-homogenous states, such as Switzerland, Belgium or Sierra Leone and states that have emerged from colonial empires. These countries share a common feature in their history, which is the effort to build unity through bloody conflict. The key is to establish a state that accepts all types of diversity—including political diversity. By achieving this, states have adopted forms of power sharing settlements whereby a majority doesn’t rule, but instead all communities do so irrespective of ethnicity, language, religion or even the ideology they have. All groups’ share of the state is proportional or due to equal representation³⁹. The fathers of this model, Lijphart and Lehmbruch brought attention to nations that have only accepted the constitutional laws that have been passed on by colonists. Lijphart⁴⁰ asserts that a successful institutionalization of democracy in these divided societies “requires two key elements: power sharing and group autonomy”. He defines power sharing as the “interest of

³⁸ Wolff, S. (n.d.). *A consociational theory of conflict management*. Manuscript submitted for publication, Department of Political Science and International Studies, University of Birmingham, Birmingham, United Kingdom

³⁹ Hanf, T. (2008). Foreword. In *Power Sharing: Concepts and Cases* (Vol. 18, pp. 5-7).

⁴⁰ Lijphart, A. (2004). Constitutional design for divided societies. *Journal of Democracy*, 15(2), 96-109

delegates of all noteworthy common associations in political choice making, particularly at the official level,” and bunch self-rule entails “these assemblies have power to run their own particular inner issues, particularly in the regions of training and society,”⁴⁰ This idea of power sharing has been coined as “consociational democracy.” The basis of this theory is that it defies the “one size fits all” western style democracy. Having said that, it is important to maintain that no two conflicts are the same; each is defined by its own variables and outcomes.

2.6 Power Sharing for Syria

What system will emerge as the primary one in a post-Assad Syria? This central question holds many assumptions within it, including the idea that Syria will remain united and not split into different territories or various states, be they sectarian (a Sunni state, or several Sunni states, minority states of Alawite, Christian, or Druze dominance, etc.), ethnic (a Kurdish state may claim their secession from Syria in favor of joining, along with Iraqi Kurds, in the formation of a Kurdish state, for example, or only geopolitical division that have not been anticipated. Another assumption would be that Syria’s emergence from the Assad Ba’ath Party’s demise will witness a completely independent state or semi-independent state as is the case today (the Golan Heights are still occupied by Israeli Defense Forces and have been so for at least forty years); furthermore, will Iran and its Lebanese proxy, Hezbollah, allow this to happen? This may also relate to the first assumption of a divided Syria. In the case of a unified Syria, one must look at possible future scenarios and different political systems of government. Having put these various scenarios on the side, one must then ask the question of what

kind of system the future Syria will adopt. Will it be a democratic system or, at the least, a democratizing system?

After the fall of Saddam Hussein and his regime, Iraq prepared for its 2010 parliamentary elections. An already far from a smooth transition was crippled by dispute over who was allowed to run and who would be banned. These disputes concerned the 511 candidates who had alleged relations to Hussein's Baathist regime⁴¹. Such developments shed light on the weaknesses in power-sharing literature for post conflict divided societies. Essentially, the flaws of power-sharing models have been blamed on "elite pacts, which do not necessarily forge genuine intergroup reconciliation"⁴². The stern focus on democracy has forced many to overlook a fundamental concern, which is whether whatever system is put in place conveys operative governance for its people.

2.7 Conclusion

This chapter has explored the theories of power sharing and the meaning of democratizing the country. A general overview of divided societies and their nature is given. This allows the reader to gain an understanding of how intricate ethnic cleavages in divided societies are. There is a simultaneous struggle of managing them as well as satisfying their needs. Apart from the citizens who show loyalty toward their elite leaders, the issue of how elites must behave, or rather participate, in various governments is addressed. Furthermore, the pioneer of literature on divided societies, Lijphart is used as the backbone reference to the critical line of thought that is presented

⁴¹ Human Rights Watch, (2010). *Iraq: Candidate ban jeopardizes election*

⁴² Cammett, M., & Malesky, E. (2012). Power sharing in post conflict societies: Implications for peace and governance. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 1-35

in this chapter. Critics of the power-sharing models have voiced their doubts claiming that these models look good on paper but do not perform efficiently in practice ⁴³.

Lastly, since this paper fixates on a post-Assad Syria, the dynamics of the country are given in the context of how Syria will develop in the post conflict phase. This is accompanied with a general comparison to Iraq in a post-Saddam phase. The purpose of this chapter is to facilitate the understanding of various forms of governance that are applicable to Syria. Sequentially, the third chapter will explore two models of power sharing for Syria as a deeply divided society in its post conflict stage. Questions about how these models could be implemented and whether or not they are sustainable will be answered in chapter three.

⁴³ Lijphart, A. (1999). *Patterns of democracy: government forms and performance in thirty-six countries*. New Haven, Conn: Yale University Press

Chapter Three

Governing Models for Syria - Consociationalism vs. Federalism

3.1 Introduction

Syria has long lived under the authoritarian rule of the Assad family and has been subject to this type of governance for decades. The Syrian people lead a conservative life complimentary to the oppressive regime and the rules upheld by it. This means that any anti-regime behavior was met with severe punishment, forcing the country to be united as one with an undying loyalty toward their president, army and state. Now that Syria has managed to challenge the regime, citizens have been visualizing a Syria without Bashar Al Assad. Embraced by the opposition, the goal became to topple the regime and its leader to fight for a new Syria. But the ethnic divisions that came into the surface have led to different imaginations, envisioned by different groups. This pushed Syria into the unfortunate ‘divided societies’ category. The question becomes, can Syria establish a form of governance that aims to control the various groups allowing for equal representation and harmonious co-existence? Two theories that have been applied to divided societies will be examined: consociationalism and federalism. Each will be defined and applied to Syria.

3.2 Background

The early stages of the peaceful uprising that began in Syria were quickly substituted with a bloody and violent struggle for power. The debate of violent versus

nonviolent rebellion had been rapidly settled in Syria's case. It is, then, to be a long and blood littered road to freedom. In examining the dynamics of the uprising, we see that what started as shy demonstrations has spread into many major cities as more and more people joined the revolution. The cause was able to manifest itself in all aspects of Syrian life (i.e. the arts).

Underlying the excessive stream of violence is the fact that Syrian society is deeply divided under sectarian lines with minority Alawites having manipulated power to the disadvantage of the Sunni majority. The outcome was a repressive regime that exploited sectarian politics by allying with other minority groups, such as Druze and Christians and putting one group against another. At other times, the regime claimed non-sectarian affiliations and a secular orientation above the sects and presented itself as the ultimate and only solution to the country's sectarian diversity.

Because the Syrian system rewards citizens according to their loyalty, there is no democratic life nor is there adequate representation of various sects and ethnicities. All political life is held to a minimum beyond involvement in the Syrian Baathist party. The party contains most – if not all – political activity within itself. There is only pro and anti-regime. Lack of democracy has also given way for army intervention – a scenario not witnessed in other Arab revolts such as Egypt and Libya. Unlike the other Arab resolutions, Syria has not been able to oust its current ruler, Bashar Al Assad, a feat that was accomplished in a matter of days in Tunisia and Egypt. This speaks volumes about the suppression and power of the current regime.

Any solution for Syria must take into consideration the international aspect and the Arab world aspect along with, of course, the Syrian aspect. Whatever it is, it has to cater to the imminent chaos of a headless state. This is sure to follow after decades of monocracy. So far, the Arab states have been helpless in their quest to put out the fire raging in Syria. Diplomatic initiatives have proven futile while the international community is divided or worse stalling for personal benefits.

World powers, such as Europe and the United States, are crippled with economic crises and previous failed Mideast ventures, respectively. They along with other Western players have not been able to reach a consensus on Syria. Regardless, sanctions on Syria have been increasing in the span of the last two years. To date, the European Union (EU) has launched a series of serious economic sanctions on Syria while hoping to stop the ongoing bloodshed. Though the lack of Russian support – in fact Russian weapons’ export near tripled since 2008 -- is hindering some of the results the EU hopes to achieve, it has left an economic dent in Syria, but it was not enough to stop the bloodshed. Russia, keen on keeping its only alley in the Mediterranean, is not likely to give up the other end of the fight either.

3.3 Consociational Democracy

Consociationalism consists of a grand coalition of participants in a plural society, who work together to operate in a government. It is a form of governance, which guarantees that the group is represented, suggested for the organization of extremely

divided societies⁴⁴; Consociationalism averts conflict in heterogeneous communities as opposed to simple majority rule. A sectarian structure that is divided into sub-communities, such as Belgium, the Netherlands and more severely Lebanon and Syria allows for the implementation of consociationalism, a “functional democracy”⁴⁵. In other words, consociationalism, as a political system favors above all and gives priority not to the individual citizen but the collective, in the case of Syria either a particular geographic collective or the most likely case, a sectarian collective of some sort. This stems from the fact that different sects have their own set of demands and interests; therefore, it is worth repeating that the backbone of Consociationalism is proportional representation. Another key feature of this model is ‘grand coalition’ which involves elites that represent different groups proportionately in the electoral system. The theory seems tempting on paper, however, in practice difficulties surface.

Anyhow, consociational democracy has its limits, in that it cannot apply in instances where a balance of power is constantly challenged. When there is a majority party or sect that is able to exercise its hegemony over the remaining parties in the coalition, this coalition will not sustain. This situation is further exacerbated by the numerical strength of such majority parties. The example of Lebanon is most significant here. Since independence and for several decades, Lebanon maintained a fairly well functioning democracy during which the Christians – with a slight majority – occupied the highest positions in the government. This relative peace did not last however as the numerical representation of Lebanon began to shift. After 1932, no further consensus

⁴⁴ Lijphart, A. (1984). *Democracies: patterns of majoritarian and consensus government in twenty-one countries*. New Haven, Conn: Yale University Press

⁴⁵ Lijphart, A. (1984). *Democracies: patterns of majoritarian and consensus government in twenty-one countries*. New Haven, Conn: Yale University Press

was completed in the country in fear of the potential implications of the new numerical shifts. Still, this did not stop the rising tension between various sects. The Lebanese consociational democracy was compromised on various occasions, notably in 1985, and finally collapsed with the start of the civil war in 1975. The system resumed after the war ended, but it remains shaky.

Neighboring Lebanon has attempted consociationalism and can be used as an example. In *A History of Modern Lebanon*, Fawwaz Traboulsi claims that:

“Two distinctive features have had a significant impact on the shaping of modern Lebanon: its sizeable Christian community, on the one hand, and the country’s long exposure to the West, on the other. Their combined effect mainly accounts for the main themes around which Lebanon’s recent history is articulated: first, a political system based on the institutionalization of religious sects (‘sectarianism’); second, an outward-looking liberal budgetary framework dependent upon the administration area; and third, a hazardous connection to its territorial setting⁴⁶ “

When comparing this to Syria, one can clearly point out the difference in the distribution of sects and the socialist policy of economics that has been the norm for many years. Ziad Majed⁴⁷ says that a consociational system may have many disadvantages, such as “maintaining the shares that the administration assurances to the delegates of confession booth assemblies in its foundations, instead of the consociational logic that endeavors to disseminate obligations around the agents to guarantee the progression of their national contract”.

It is important to remember that no two conflicts are the same. Syria does not share Lebanon’s variables; it has different factors. The Assad family have closed Syria off from the West and labeled it the enemy. According to Syrian nationalism, there is an

⁴⁶ Traboulsi, F. (2007). *A history of modern Lebanon*. London: Pluto Press.

⁴⁷ Majed, Z. (2011). On consociationalism and confessionalism in Lebanon. *Near East Quarterly*, (5)

anti-western grudge among the Syrian people⁴⁸. This stems from ideological, cultural and religious differences. A self-dependent economy also closed Syria off from the west leaving the Syrian people isolated and unfamiliar with Western-styled systems.

3.3.1 Syria's Divisions

The Syrian people are roughly ethnically divided into 65 percent Sunnis, 12 percent Alawites, 10 percent Christians, 9 percent Kurds and 3 percent Druze⁴⁹. Within the Christian division are sub divisions such as Maronites, Greek Orthodox, Melkites, and others. On the other hand, The Sunnis, witness a class division between urban elites and rural masses⁴⁹. During Post-independence, three groups emerged in favor of an Arab identity: the Ba'ath party, the Muslim Brotherhood and the Syrian Social National Party. This was translated into government to secure a defense against external threats. Furthermore, Al Assad believed that the economic autonomy superseded political liberalization. Syria witnessed many failed coups aiming to overthrow the regime with significant violent confrontations in Homs and Hama. In fact, Bashar Al Assad's father, Hafez Al Assad, demolished cities to obstruct Sunni rebellion through the slaughtering of 20,000 Syrian citizens⁵⁰.

Bashar Al Assad took the presidential seat after the death of his father, Hafez in 2000. The country remained stable until the spark of the Arab spring. Syria's stability and unity did not survive. Syria's solidarity had very little to do with its ethnic divisions. Living harmoniously, though, had more to do with financial incentives offered by the

⁴⁸ Hirst, D. (2011). *Beware of small states: Lebanon, battleground of the Middle East*. New York: Nation Books.

⁴⁹ Kaplan, S. (2012, February 20). Syria's ethnic and religious divisions. *Fragile States*

⁵⁰ Bhalla, R. (2011, May 05). Making sense of the Syrian crisis. *Geopolitical Weekly*,

Assad family. Jobs were available as the country relied on self-sufficiency; therefore, citizens enjoyed low prices and local produce. With the economic perks, citizens were content with their standard of living.

Apart from the society, the Syrian Army has played a sturdy role, which has generated international pressure on the regime. The Syrian army has always been seen as one of the harshest armies. During their path toward the toppling of the regime, the Syrian army has been met with much criticism for its inhumane methods of warfare, specifically for non-proportional warfare. The Syrian army has violated codes of international law, such as article 48, which states “ensure respect for and protection of the civilian population and civilian objects”⁵¹. Furthermore, the principle of proportionality has been violated in that it is unjust for the army to target the opposition with air strikes while the opposition can retaliate with only missiles⁵¹. The army, however, possesses clear command and cohesion while the opposition does not.

The Syrian opposition, frail yet determined, has also met with shortcomings. The emergence of Islamic radicals has become noticeable. Extremist groups such as the Al Nusra -- an extension of Al Qaeda -- or Sukur Al Sham --a radical group calling upon Greater Syria -- Al Tawhid identified with the Muslim brotherhood and lastly Salafist Tadamon Ansar al Islam aim at the extension of Al Qaeda and solely fighting for Iraq .

3.3.2 Examining the Prospects Of Consociationalism In Syria

The existence of all these divisions renders Syria an international battlefield whereby all parties are fighting for their share of the pie. Many factors come into play

⁵¹ Barnidge, R. (2010). The principle of proportionality under international humanitarian law and operation cast lead. *Columbia University Press*

here, making the situation more complicated. For example, the fact that the opposition is no longer homogenous, and the hijack of the revolution by Islamists has enabled undisciplined individuals to turn to them given that the future of the Free Syrian Army appeared grim. Also, it is no longer a civil war between Assad and the rebels, but it has morphed into a world war with Assad, Hezbollah, Iran as well as international and regional players such as Russia, Saudi Arabia and the US. This leaves Syria as a geopolitical hub for battle. Even though Consociationalism is aimed at unstable societies, it remains feeble in the face of internal discord. The greatest criticism comes from Lijpharts's ⁵² "self-negating prophecy," which states "political elites can intentionally make channels of participation and oversee destabilizing structures that debilitate to indulge the framework into wild waters"⁵³. In other words, political elites may gather and construct strategies that offset division. It could be that, for Syria, the multi-ethnic arrangements in a consociational setting are doomed. A post conflict society that has experienced the bloodiest of civil wars is very possible to preserve deeply embedded contradictions between the parties. Lijphart⁵⁴ said that, in such a society, the individuals will express their loyalty on most aspects to one group or segment in particular.

This is not to say that Consociationalism is inevitably doomed for Syria; however, the necessity to retain security and engage in the seizure of illegal arms is essential for a post conflict Syria. Snyder and Walter⁵⁵ define this as "a situation in

⁵² Lijphart, A. (1969). Consociational Democracy. *World Politics*, 21(2), 207-225.

⁵³ Smootha, S. & Hanf, T. (1992). The diverse modes of conflict regulation in deeply divided societies. *International Journal of Comparative Sociology*, 33, 26-47

⁵⁴ Lijphart, A. (1977). *Democracy in plural societies*. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press

⁵⁵ Snyder, J. & Walter, B. (1999). *Civil wars, insecurity, and intervention*. New York: Columbia University Press

which each party's efforts to increase its own security reduces the security of others"⁵⁵. Another requirement would be the firm implementation of Lijphart's Group Autonomy. This means "in plural societies it can be wise to leave as many decisions as possible concerning the different segments to themselves"⁵⁶. Segmental autonomy is concerned with either identification with a group or territorial belonging. Self-administration is alive and well in Lebanon, whereby each sect follows its own rulebook and belongs to certain territories. There must be a lower risk of resumed conflict in the post conflict period for consociationalism to be successful.

Due to the differences in conflicts and conflict resolution efforts, it is difficult for one country to remedy itself according to another country that has already done so. Dissimilar dynamics will change the outcomes of countries in post-conflict. Therefore, there is a need for comparative study analysis to evoke the implementation of consociationalism for different states.

3.3.3 Comparison

For the sake of argument, it would be plausible to draw a comparative study between Syria and Iraq. This is not to suggest that the two nations suffer the same conflict. The onsets of their political instability are marked by completely different instigations. However, to explore why Consociationalism has failed in Iraq is worth considering due to the deep divisions both countries witness. The Iraqi government, essentially, has not been able to curb inter-ethnic violence and many political scientists and think tanks have tried to envision a post-Saddam Iraq. Many theorized that

⁵⁶ Binningsbø, H. (2006, August 21). Power-Sharing and Post conflict Peace Periods. Retrieved February 15, 2014

consociationalism would be the remedy for a deeply divided Iraq. Iraq's failure to implement consociationalism was constitution-based (Rees, 2007). Rees (2007) explains: "the constitution did contain federal provisions aimed at providing autonomy to Kurdish, Sunni and Shi'a communities [...], it does so while alienating Sunnis. [Therefore], federation -- given the Sunni's intense opposition to it -- may have actually undermined consociationalism's chances for success" (p. 14).

As with Syria, the factions are ideologically different; Lijphart⁵⁷ failed to exhibit the significance of a constitutional inclusion as a module of Consociationalism. The Iraqi Constitution implies "all powers not exclusively reserved for the federal government "shall be the powers of the regions". This means that the rights to "oversee regional educational institutions and security forces" are protected⁵⁸. Therefore while Consociationalism requires governmental power that symbolizes an obligation to regional autonomy, it will also, while doing so, intensify regional or religious tension between different sects.

3.3.4 Analysis on the applicability of Consociationalism in Syria

For consociationalism to be feasible in Syria, Wolff⁵⁹ suggests two strategies, feasibility and

Figure 1 Religious Make-up of Syrian and the region

⁵⁷ Lijphart, A. (2004). Constitutional design for divided societies. *Journal of Democracy*, 15(2), 96-109

⁵⁸ Rees, A. (2007). *Why consociationalism has not united Iraq*. (Master's thesis, University of Oregon)

⁵⁹ Wolff, S. (n.d.). *A consociational theory of conflict management*. Manuscript submitted for publication, Department of Political Science and International Studies, University of Birmingham, Birmingham, United Kingdom

viability. Wolff⁵⁹ states that “feasibility is about the primarily structural conditions under which different forms of power sharing and TSG (territorial self-governance), and combinations thereof, appropriately reflect the preferences of the immediate conflict parties.” This means that the divided groups must address structure or institutions that will determine the product of discussions and conferences. Attached to this, parliamentary members must neglect group dynamics during negotiations on the issue when reaching a settlement. Viability, according to Wolff⁶⁰, “is about the degree to which a negotiated outcome (i.e., a set of institutions agreed between the conflict parties) in actual fact addresses the core demands and concerns of each conflict party to such an extent that they do not take recourse to violence, but rather engage in the political process within the agreed institutional framework.” Ideally, elites must commit to a mutual understanding that all parties have the common goals of survival and legitimacy. When this is accepted, each group can maintain an identity with the avoidance of violence. Also, they must recognize that whilst embracing the interests within their respective organizations, they must work with one another to achieve a national settlement. The map shows the ethnic distribution in Syria paired with the settlement patterns particular to the different sects⁶¹.

3.4 Federalism

Federalism is a political concept aimed at preserving democracy in post-conflict divided societies. It is derived from the word *foedus* in Latin, which transliterates into covenant or pact. It can also be defined as a special type of segmental autonomy. Otto

⁶⁰ Wolff, S. (n.d.). *A consociational theory of conflict management*. Manuscript submitted for publication, Department of Political Science and International Studies, University of Birmingham, Birmingham, United Kingdom

⁶¹Kaplan, S. (2012, February 20). Syria's ethnic and religious divisions. *Fragile States*

Bauer and Karl Renner attempted to split federalism into territorial and nonterritorial federalism. The former and conventional concept involves a division according to defined borders and the latter involves virtual borders of ideology. Nonterritorial federalism would have been useful in instances of nationality crises where a citizen can just declare or choose their desired nationality⁶².

Joseph Proudhon, one of the first writers to comment on federalism (an anarchist himself), indicates that the term originally implied a kind of reciprocity or mutual benefits. Americans, Hamilton and Madison insist that federalism is part of a larger ideology of pluralism along with inclusivity within one large state. The core issue that federalism fixates on is territorial politics by addressing how and why territory can be used to maintain power and authority, whilst upholding legitimacy. When a national system is in place “administration and power are held and practiced at distinctive levels of government - a few forces are held by the focal, national, government and a few forces are held by the social or political solidarities that are constituent parts of the entire nation”⁶³. There are different cases far and wide of elected states, incorporating and obviously not constrained to the United States, Russia, Australia, and Canada⁶⁴. Federalism is a political hypothesis that attempts to start popular government in partitioned social orders; however, it is vital to recollect that the minor presence of ethnic clash makes this launch exceptionally troublesome. It is the idea that the decentralization that accompanies federalism is key to push conjunction between

⁶² Lijphart, A. (1977). *Democracy in plural societies*. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press.

⁶³ Friesen, M. (2005). Subsidiarity and federalism: an old concept with contemporary relevance for political society. *Federal Governance*, 2(1)

⁶⁴ Heywood, A. (2007). *Politics*. (3 ed., pp. 153-166). Houndsmill, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan

assemblies in debate, permitting gatherings of diverse political tastes and investment to be suited.

Academic research has shown that, with the implementation of federalism, there is the creation of regional governments, which translates into the strengthening of territorial identities⁶⁵. Such a result leads to the idea that the federalism exasperates the problem it attempts to solve. This research is challenging the misconception of federalism.

Nowadays, it is clear that the political and economic effects of federalism are complex, multidimensional, often contingent on a number of other factors and by no means always positive. As federalism becomes less of a black box, the challenge of developing a theory able to predict both emergence of federations and the nature and direction of its results appear even more gigantic.

3.4.1 Syria's Outcomes

Michael Eisenstadt⁶⁶, director of The Washington Institute's Military and Security Studies Program, says that the future scene in Syria will be colored by how the current Syrian regime decides to leave the political landscape. For example, less disruptive developments are likely to emerge if the government forces were rolled back from particular areas where the opposition would have the chance to establish “rudimentary institutions of governance”, but this would hinder the formation of a central government for a number of years. However, it is worth noting here that if the

⁶⁵ Martínez-Herrera, E. (2008). Federalism and ethnic conflict management: rival hypotheses, In J. Erk & W. Swenden (Eds.), *Exploring New Avenues in Comparative*

⁶⁶ Eisenstadt, M. (2012). *Syria after Assad: Heading toward a hard fall?* Informally published manuscript, The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, Washington, D.C

Assad forces lost their grip on the country, then Syria will witness an uncontrollable development since all fighting groups will seek to fill the vacuum. Moreover, if the second scenario turned out to be true, then Syria will definitely witness what its tiny neighbor, Lebanon, went through during the Lebanese civil war (1975-1990) and in the aftermath. Up until now Lebanon has no strong central government, but sectarian leaders with each one of their controlling particular parts of the country.

As for the establishment of an Alawite state in northwestern Syria, Eisenstadt ⁶⁷ says, “it might take the form of a unitary entity ruled by Assad, his successor, or a military junta; alternatively, it could be a loose federation of warlords (probably former military and security chiefs) ruling over fiefdoms organized along tribal, regional, or political lines”. Eisenstadt ⁶⁷ adds, “in the event that internecine pressures could be held in line around Alawites and the blended populace waterfront urban communities, such a statelet could be reasonable. It might control leftovers of the Syrian armed force and, maybe, the worldwide airstrip in Latakia and the ports at Tartus and Latakia, empowering it to gather levies on imports bound for Syria's hinterlands, Iraq, and Jordan.”

In going back to colonial times, it's safe to say that Syria, like Iraq was shaped by the French. Therefore, the land that is labeled Syria is conceived artificially compromising of different ethnic sects⁶⁸. Today, we see a war between different sects, it is no longer a war aimed at just toppling the regime. But by eliminating Assad, his institutions are eliminated, and it becomes a race to the ‘who's next?’ finish line.

⁶⁷ Eisenstadt, M. (2012). *Syria after Assad: Heading toward a hard fall?* Informally published manuscript, The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, Washington, D.C

⁶⁸ Maessen, J. (2013, June 24). Henry Kissinger: Balkanized Syria best possible outcome. *Explosive Reports*

Assad's administration will crumble, and Syria will mirror Iraq with heightened risk of conflict and no rule of law. Iraq which was struggling to achieve consociationalism, nonetheless, has failed to meet that goal because of its alienation of the Sunni political elite (Rees, 2007). Syria, bearing a Sunni majority, will also alienate minorities in consociationalism. The new administration will give power to the majority and marginalize the Christians, Kurds and Druze. A federal Syria, on the other hand, will ensure rights are protected.

3.4.2 International Tug of War

The international tug of war is comprised of two teams with the US, EU, Turkey and Gulf monarchies on one side of the rope and Iran, Hezbollah, Russia and China on the other. Victory for one of the camps means an ideological victory between rival groups, resulting in a centralized state. The federalization or decentralization of Syria would perhaps reduce international influence in Syria and refocus the pressure on the meddling states. Iran, already under the spotlight for its nuclear program, would be forced to suspend its program as a result of a setback in Syria -- this, however, is merely a thought⁶⁹. The dormant Christians and Druze have left the Kurds as the linchpin of Syrian politics. This mirrors the role of the Druze in consociational Lebanon. The Kurds, who believe Syria cannot reach a unitary objective, have pushed for federal autonomy and have asked for US backing⁷⁰. However, the U.S.A has placed the focus on arming the rebels as a rebuttal to Russia's weaponry efforts toward the regime. Autonomy for the Kurds has been met with support from the Turkish state that fears the Kurdistan Workers

⁶⁹ Anderson, J. H. (2011, November/December). After the fall: What's next for Assad and Syria? *World Affairs*

⁷⁰ Puder, J. (2013, June 24). The kurds and the future of Syria. *Frontpage Mag*

Party will gain ground to attack Ankara in an attempt to entice Turkish Kurds to join their cause⁷¹.

Fabrice Balace, French research center Gremmo director and specialist on Syria, claims that in the event of the creation of an Alawite ministate, Russia and Iran will show support. Balance conveys “for Russia; it can keep its [navel] base in Tartus (western Syria). For Iran, it’s not bad because it can keep [influence] in the Mediterranean Sea, and it can keep a small state to support Hezbollah in Lebanon”⁷². This mini-state can be achieved through federalism.

The Syrian conflict has further fueled Sunni-Shite clashes in the area; therefore,

Figure 2 A Representation of the various strongholds in Syria

countries have stood on either side of the spectrum in defense of their respective religious alliances. For example, it is clear where Saudi Arabia's allegiance lies: with the Sunnis. Therefore Saudi Arabia has taken a stance against the Syrian interim prime minister, Ghassan Hitto, claiming he was "too westernized" for their taste⁷³. Saudi Arabia has now taken the torch from Qatar regarding sponsoring the Free Syrian Army. This has been manifested so far in their agreement with Syria's Muslim Brotherhood to help in arming the free Syrian army faction, Liwa al Tawhid, an important brigade in Aleppo. As a result, Saudi Arabia has helped create a coalition for the ultimate purpose of toppling the Assad regime. Saudi Foreign Minister Al Faisal has refused to support any settlement negotiations and has bluntly stated that the kingdom's fundamental mission is the collapse of the regime. Such attitudes will help establish a pro-Saudi constituent in Syria's new democratic power structure.

3.4.3 Autonomy

In an interview with Sherkoh Abbas, President of the Kurdistan National Assembly of Syria (KNAS) on June 20, 2013, Abbas expressed his stance and the necessity of the US administration to back the formation of a national Syria. He claims that a federalized Syria would look like this: "building a Kurdish Federal district in the North, a Druze city in the Southwest, an Alawite locale in western Syria, notwithstanding a Sunni area in whatever remains of Syria"⁷⁴. This illustrates Abbas's vision of the distribution of territory in a Federal Syria

⁷³ Curtis, J. M. (2013, June 21). Kerry to Qatar for Syrian war talks. *The Examiner*.

⁷⁴ Puder, J. (2013, June 24). The kurds and the future of Syria. *Frontpage Mag*

In a nutshell, the Kurds are demanding autonomy. Federalism, as a form of territorial management, tries to address a functional arrangement. However, there is a gap in the mere idea of autonomy. In the overlapping federalization and cantonization there is a grey area in regards to the territorial control of ethnic differences. This is often found in combinations with external arbitration. International agreements between states can establish territorial autonomy of an ethnic community, even if the hosting state doesn't organize itself according to the cantonist or federalist principles⁷⁵.

In hypothesizing Syria without the transition to a federal state, two outcomes may emerge. If Assad's regime does not topple, dictatorial leadership will be restored with the support of the original Syrian allies, Hezbollah, Russia, China and Iran. However, Abbas fears that should the opposition, which has become a multi-ideological front, succeed, it would "initiate a bloodbath cleansing particularly minority groups that either worked or appeared to be working with the Assad regime"⁷⁶. Regardless of which side prevails, minorities will be shunned as a result of either victory. A national state will aim to protect these minorities by promoting the creation of autonomous regions whereby ethnic communities can control their own affairs and security. It is important to mention that without a quick, yet plausible solution, the west and even minorities in the Middle East are anxious about the prevalence of Islamist organizations that will spill over the borders of Syria only to present a greater threat⁷⁷.

⁷⁵ McGarry, J. & O'Leary, B. (2006). Consociational theory, Northern Ireland. *Government and Opposition*, 41(2), 249–277

⁷⁶ Puder, J. (2013, June 24). The kurds and the future of Syria. *Frontpage Mag*

⁷⁷ In D. Phillips (Chair)(2013). Dialogue on power-sharing in Syria, Paris

gap exists in that there is no central government ruling the country. It looks rather more like a government within a government. This is not sustainable because there is no intention for power sharing and without a binding arrangement that is based on the principle, federalism will collapse.

Former US ambassador to the UN, Richard Holbrooke discusses Iraq in a Federal democracy and claims the following:

*To govern this country, as a democracy, would be very hard, since a true democracy would almost certainly lead to Shiite, Sunni, and Kurdish leaders who hold extreme positions. This would be worse than Bosnia, because the passions are much deeper, and the Bosnian war will not resume, whereas fighting between Sunnis, Shiites, and Kurds could easily begin any day if we aren't there*⁷⁸.

Although ethnic conflict in Iraq has been consistent and resilient, Iraq can still establish a democracy. According to Brancati of the Washington Quarterly, regardless of initial incentives, the different sects have shown support for federalism and “the fact that religious and ethnic cleavages in Iraq are indeed crosscutting could help moderate behavior and even help develop political parties across religious and ethnic lines—that is, as long as it is within the proper federal political structure”⁷⁸. Brancati prescribes the cure for Iraq by suggesting that the country can be well on its way to a national democracy on the condition that all sects agree to work in a secular manner. But it is important that, without the proper application of federal principles, Iraq is bound for failure. This system failed in countries like Nigeria because practical implementation of regional autonomy was not granted. Having said that Iraq’s lucrative resource is bound to cause trouble, revenue coming from oil sales must be distributed. Nigeria, facing the

⁷⁸ Brancati, D. (2010). Can federalism stabilize Iraq? *The Washington Quarterly*, 27(2), 5-21

same dilemma, saw an eruption of violence concerning the division of oil wealth. Brancati offers the regional and national division of Iraq:

Drawing ethnically, regional lines that are identity-based allows the Sunnis, Shi'as and Kurds to coexist given that they are responsible for promoting their own policies, which will avoid conflict or negative repercussions⁷⁹.

3.5 Conclusion

Federalism for Syria means that there is more stress on territorial autonomy than in consociationalism. The different local administrations will govern their respective companies. But the fear with federalism is if these different groups demand independence after gaining their autonomy only to exasperate differences and conflict. Federalism may provide a temporary solution for Syria. Nonetheless, in the long run, it may not be the best option for a united Syria. This goes back to whether or not citizens want unity. Moreover, federalism eliminates the fear of a consociational majority takeover and the issuing of minority rights.

Also, a decentralized state meshed with group autonomy may relieve international pressure on Syria as a whole and allow for the various groups to govern themselves in peace. Because of how sensitive these countries tend to be to post-civil war, it is very difficult to provide a remedy. In order for either model to succeed, there must be security amongst the people; this means that weapons will be banned and an army that aims to protect the country as a whole will be present. While consociationalism has failed in Lebanon, it will not necessarily fail in Syria. Lebanon

⁷⁹ Brancati, D. (2010). Can federalism stabilize Iraq? *The Washington Quarterly*, 27(2), 5-21

has experienced civil strife for decades; however, Syria's conflict is young and can still be controlled without deep-rooted hatred that will live on for generations to come. Also, Lebanon has different armed coalitions that have been created to fight one another on an ethnic basis. But Syria's army, quintessentially, are devoted to either protecting the regime or toppling it. It seems that consociationalism is an appropriate form of governance, yet, only if it is applied correctly and legitimately.

This chapter has provided the backbone of rationalizing an appropriate governing power structure for Syria. The next chapter shall reveal a comparative model for Syria in light of Lebanon and Iraq's developments. The two models discussed in the next chapter will have an international response, which will affect Syria's transitional period. The next chapter will explore these factors and their implications.

Chapter Four

Comparative Analysis

4.1 Introduction

As the conflict enters its third year, it could be said that neither side will see victory without an upheaving change in the influence of the outside powers. Given that Syria's neighbors, along with major international powers, are involved in the Syrian conflict, there is financial as well as military backing to various organizations who are currently engaged in violent strife in Syria. Essentially this tug of war has led to serious deadlock, insofar that even if the regime falls, fighting will most likely intensify between regime supporters and opposition and more dangerously, between the fragmented branches of the opposition. Amongst the opposition itself, there is no common enemy -- more importantly, there is no common leader speaking on behalf of the rebels, which facilitates further division along ethnic and ideological lines. Going back to the idea of victory, any division that sees victory will be met with a disruption of the regional balance of power, which could spark conflict once again⁸⁰. Therefore, with such a complicated dynamic, a power sharing agreement must be established as the only form of conflict resolution.

4.2. Syrian Consociationalism

It is important to maintain that no two conflicts are the same. The Lebanese Taif agreement presented a power sharing solution for the confessional communities to

⁸⁰ Panikoff, J. (2013). Syria: The true chaos will begin after the fall of the regime. *Small Wars Journal*

coexist in a functional state. A Syrian Taif-like agreement would not function in the same way. The central differences between the two countries make this form of power sharing less functional⁸¹. Syria does not share the Lebanese society's more liberal lifestyle; the Lebanese people also experience a relatively free market, which was in place before the civil war. Lebanon had been experiencing different forms of power sharing traditions since before it became a recognized nation and during the days when it was no more than the wilaya of Mount Lebanon. The Mount Lebanon wilaya experienced power sharing namely between the Maronites and Druze⁸². Dissimilar to this, historically, Syria was ruled by a socialist party, which brought Hafez Al Assad to rule in 1963⁸³. The basis of a power-sharing model has been established for countries that have deep rooted conflict – such as has been the case of Lebanon for decades. Syria, however, is regarded as a secular and multiethnic society living in harmony⁸⁴. Moreover, there is a major ethnic distribution difference between Lebanon and Syria. Demographically, the Sunnis form the majority in Syria, whereas, in Lebanon there is no overwhelming majority in which a single community can hold the power.

Another difference is that the nature of the war in Syria involved the disintegration of state actors forming militias and battling one another, however, the Lebanese civil war involved outside militias who did not participate in the state such as Baath movements or Nasserite militias⁸⁵. The Lebanese civil war was disbanded by the intervention of Syrian troops who ensured the neutralization of the various armed

⁸¹ Mudallali, A. (2012, September 13). Why Lebanon's Taif accord is no road map for Syria. *Al Monitor*

⁸² Makdisi, S. & Marktanner, M. (2008). *Trapped by consociationalism: The case of Lebanon*. Manuscript submitted for publication, Department of Economics, American University of Beirut, Beirut, Lebanon

⁸³ Profile: Syria's ruling Baath party. (2012, July 9). *BBC*.

⁸⁴ Alhaj, A. H. (2012, June 10). Political Islam and the Syrian revolution. *Al Jazira Center for Studies*

⁸⁵ Rosiny, S. (2013). *Power sharing in Syria: lessons from Lebanon's experience*. Manuscript submitted for publication, German Institute of Global and Area Studies, Berlin, Germany

militias⁸⁵. For Syria, there is no ally that evokes eagerness to intervene. Russia has sternly maintained that it does not intend to interfere in Syrian affairs at any point.

However, recent developments in the Syrian conflict seem to be mirroring the Lebanese civil war in that the country consists of a militia break up. The Syrian crisis has been threatening the region; this has been apparent in Lebanon, Iraq, and Turkey, who have seen their fair share of violence. Therefore, it could be said that the force imparting plan is a sensible result as "further acceleration of the clash will bring about commonly harming results"⁸⁶. This echoes the self-negating prophecy of consociationalism⁸⁷.

Under the Assad rule, the Syrian people seemed to live in ethnic plurality with a nationalist attitude of a neutral state. There was no emphasis on group theory and affiliation; however, there was a single Syrian identity that thrived in national unity. But this was not the Syrian lifestyle in reality, however, as it was masked in the fear that any kind of rebellion will be met with cruelty. Therefore in successfully attempting to steer away from a result similar to Lebanese animosity, Syria's stability was essentially a ticking time bomb. The Assad regime expressed favoritism for the minority elite of Alawites who still dominate the majority and share in the power amongst themselves⁸⁸. Top leadership positions within the parliament and military have been reserved for Assad family members and Alawite loyals. Those shadowed by this domination were the Sunnis, Christian, Druze, Kurds and Shiites who have split into regime supporters and opponents. Those who have maintained their positions silently are of the groups that

⁸⁶ Sisk, T. (1996). *Power sharing and international mediation in ethnic conflicts*. Manuscript submitted for publication, United States Institute of Peace, Washington, D.C

⁸⁷ Lijphart, A. (1977). *Democracy in plural societies*. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press

⁸⁸ Bhalla, R. (2011, May 05). Making sense of the Syrian crisis. *Geopolitical Weekly*

have benefitted and still are benefitting from the Assad regime. Had Bashar Al Assad attempted to manage rather than control religious identities, protests might have stopped at basic demands.

After protests spread like wildfire, the opposition grew more impatient, and the lack of cohesiveness has led to a division of the opposition; different groups have separate political agendas as well as different military targets. Different ideologies have sprouted from these divisions, as decisions cannot be made about whether foreign players should intervene or whether the provision of weaponry from Saudi Arabia is legitimate. The Kurds have been pushing for autonomy, whilst the Salafists have been pushing for fundamentalism, others are pushing for liberalism or moderate Islamism or communism-incentives have dispersed. The fact that there are militias under the name of Jihadism and radical Salafism translates into an initiative that does not cater to the Syrian revolution, but rather a more global if not regional holy war in an attempt to incorporate Syria into a greater Islamic empire⁸⁹.

4.3 Syrian vs. Lebanese Consociationalism

The main obstacle to establishing a functional consociational government for Syria is the distribution of ethnic populations. This is what will allow for Syria to be governed in a power sharing democracy, with the appropriate distribution of power. However drawing from the Lebanese experience, the Lebanese can vow to the vicious cycle of disputes that cripples the nation. The assertion of proportionality exposes the risks involved with fairness. Issues like managing resources, passing bills, electoral

⁸⁹ Rosiny, S. (2013). *Power sharing in Syria: lessons from Lebanon's experience*. Manuscript submitted for publication, German Institute of Global and Area Studies, Berlin, Germany

laws, as well as day-to-day issues, are valued and considered differently per each sect. For modern Lebanon, the proportionality distribution has proved to be problematic as well as obsolete⁹⁰. Lebanese independence in 1943, and the emergence of the National Pact, granted the presidency to the Maronites, the premiership to the Sunnis and the parliament to the Shiites while other sects received seats according to their sizes⁹¹. President Bchara al-Khouri and Prime Minister Riyadh al-Solh steered the country into this transitional democracy. While the Christians feared overshadowing by the Muslims, the Muslims feared Western intervention. As a result, the Christians promised to avoid international protection from European powers and the Muslims promised to consent to Lebanon's independence and abandon ambitions toward a greater Syria (Bilad al Sham)⁹¹. Therefore the Lebanese consociationalism, satisfying all attributes, was built on the premise of these promises. The 1975 civil war in Lebanon proved that this was not sustainable.

As confessionalism strengthened, consociational democracy was betrayed. Disputes were too complex to resolve, and religious affiliations led the subgroups to resort to their alliances. In complete contrast with Lijphart's theory, the ongoing civil conflict since 1958 has shown that the implementation of consociationalism has not been successful⁹¹. The deep ethnic cleavages and leanings on international actors have not allowed consociationalism to flourish. The rise of the PLO in the 1960's and the Israeli invasion shows how external influence can bruise hopes. The Palestinian cause also maneuvered its way into Lebanese domestic affairs, and harmony could not be

⁹⁰ Rosiny, S. (2013). *Power sharing in Syria: lessons from Lebanon's experience*. Manuscript submitted for publication, German Institute of Global and Area Studies, Berlin, Germany

⁹¹ Majed, Z. (2011). On consociationalism and confessionalism in Lebanon. *Near East Quarterly*, (5)

recognized. The pitfall of Lebanon was the existence of too many sectarian divisions.

For Syria, the demographic does not seem to fit for a proportional consociational division due to the Sunni majority which constitutes approximately 75 percent of the population⁹². However, Stephan Rosiny, author of *Power Sharing in Syria: Lessons from Lebanon's experience*, claims that this argument is weak as “it is unlikely that Sunni Muslims will act as a homogeneous group because their ethnic composition, territorial fragmentation, socioeconomic splits and multiple practices of belief generate different (and sometimes contradictory) collective identities.” Therefore within this 75 percent majority, there are notable differences that are. Rosiny adds that the power-sharing model allows for modifications for cases such as Syria. These modifications include the “relative representation in parliament and government ensures minorities satisfactory support in the activity of force.” Moreover, the availability of a veto power would be most useful for minority groups. Therefore, if a Syrian Taif Accord were put into effect, “a weighted quota of representation in favor of minorities could counteract Sunni Arab pre- dominance”⁹².

Rosiny prescribes three steps for Syria. The first is to allocate a scheme of proportionality that allows for fair representation of all the political stances. The second is to create core organizations that cater to multiethnic needs. Finally, the third step is to impose a long-term plan that protects these organizations to assure rights to every identity regardless of religion ⁹². It is vital, however, to keep in mind that external factors can disrupt this motive.

⁹² Rosiny, S. (2013). *Power sharing in Syria: lessons from Lebanon's experience*. Manuscript submitted for publication, German Institute of Global and Area Studies, Berlin, Germany

4.4 Consociationalism and the Threat of External influences

As Syrian state institutions collapse and sectarian tensions grow, the initially Syrian conflict is becoming a regional and global crisis. The concerns that Russia and China have voiced revolve around a US-Saudi strategic agreement aimed at toppling Assad's regime. The allied nations have been assertive in their belief that US and Saudi intervention will have devastating consequences that will ultimately backfire. They have insisted on the White House that America's toppling of the Syrian regime will only throw Syria into the hands extremists⁹³. The US is associating itself with Al Qaeda once again, who have been fighting alongside Saudi-backed rebel groups in Syria. This proves once again how motives shape foreign policy. A US-Saudi pact will eventually tarnish relations for the US with China and Russia and strengthen ties with Saudi Arabia⁹³. This support has already been put into action as Kerry lent his backing to the Saudi initiative to overthrow Assad by visiting Jeddah, birthplace of Osama bin Laden. This was Kerry's first stride into the midst of a Sunni-Shiite conflict since Iraq. As the US has firmly stood against the regime, and Russia has not backed down from its support for Assad, action taken from either end is bound to take a toll on diplomatic relations between the two states⁹⁴.

However, Obama's rebuttal to Chinese and Russian expectations was put into words as he warns, "extremists thrive in chaos." Obama has expressed his concern over Syria's potential transformation into a haven for radical extremists. Being a lot more reluctant than secretary of state John Kerry, Obama has shied away from involvement in

⁹³ Curtis, J. M. (2013, June 21). Kerry to Qatar for Syrian war talks. *The Examiner*

⁹⁴ Newton-Small, J. (2013, September 6). Russian ambassador to U.S.: Relations aren't at cold war level, yet. *TIME*

Syria. With American forces due to depart Afghanistan by the end of 2014, it is not likely that Obama will throw his troops into another war⁹⁵. US ally, Israel, has been silent about the Syrian crisis for the most part. With mutual opposition, the future of Syria will undoubtedly affect Israel. For the latter nation and with the already unsettled situation in Egypt, it is unnerving to await Syria's outcome. Bhalla of the Geopolitical Weekly explains Israel's stance on Syria by saying that the virtue of the Syrian regime is that it is predictable. Assad's government knows that it is inferior in military capabilities compared to Israel, thus rather than starting a war with Israel; Syria wants to maintain its domination in Lebanon. The Assad government is an important supporter of Hezbollah, Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad. This support is, to some extent, negotiable. This was recently seen in Turkey's negotiations with Damascus regarding the containment of the Palestinian militant activity. How Israel views Syria is a good example of the profits of dealing with the devil you know - rather than the devil you don't know.

But Syria's strong alliance with Iran is neglected. Iran's ongoing interest in the Middle East consists of its strong hold over groups that threaten Israel. With the Shi'a empowerment in the region, the only way to weaken Iran is through the fall of the Assad regime, and the substitution of a more moderate state. The tight bond between Iran, Syria and Hezbollah is due to Syria's strategic geopolitical setting. With Syria's current influence in Lebanon, the fall of the Assad regime entails the isolation of Iran. Furthermore, Iranian opposition groups in Iran could see the toppling of the Syrian

⁹⁵ MacAskill, E. (2013, March 22). Obama: post-Assad Syria of Islamist extremism is nightmare scenario. *The Guardian*

regime as an opportunity to take to their own streets⁹⁶.

4.5 Syrian Federalism

As the Free Syrian army is overwhelmingly comprised of Sunni Syrian combatants, fears have surfaced over an absolute Sunni domination⁹⁷. Therefore, minorities fear a Sunni coup, whereby their civil rights will be overshadowed. Therefore, a possible power-sharing model for Syria could be the transition into federalism. This will allow a certain leeway for each ethnic sect to run its personal affairs according to its preferences. Having said that, all the constituent units will still be bound to core governing body, these units take on a major decision for the nation as a whole. Different sub communities can establish their own rules and protect the rights they deem fundamental thus allowing for a democracy to function.

⁹⁶ Mahjar-Barducci, A. (2011). *Iran's problem: Post-revolutionary Syria as an enemy*. Informally published manuscript, Gatestone Institute, New York

⁹⁷ Bhalla, R. (2011, May 05). Making sense of the Syrian crisis. *Geopolitical Weekly*

The Kurds

Figure 4 Syrian Balkanization

have been the primary

promoters of a

Federal Syria,

pushing for this

form of governance

as a solution for the

Syrian crisis.

Abdulhakim

Bashar, Syrian

Kurdistan

Democratic party's

secretary general, claimed in an interview that federalism is not only optimal as a power sharing strategy, but also the most sustainable solution. Bashar explains that after the social movements in the Arab countries fell, they were replaced by Arab nationalists, who were overthrown too. This might also happen to the Islamists, since it isn't easy for an Islamic movement to rule the state in these modern times. Bashar believes that one possibility is similar to what happened in Sudan: that Syria would be divided into four independent regions that would be based on geographic locations. The Alawite tribe won't accept the Sunni Arabs to rule in their state. Due to these problems, federalism is proposed as the only solution for Syria.

The Kurds, whose rights were overlooked by colonial powers and then by the Arabs, are now faced with another opportunity to claim their rights and fully participate in the

political transition of Syria as legitimate actors⁹⁸. The Kurds, seen as the middlemen bargaining with Washington, will gain significance once the Syrian map is restructured because they are part of a larger regional populace. Meanwhile, the Druze, who are located in the south of Syria, have played an interesting part. A pivoting force, the Druze, have served in the Israeli Defense Force. Henningsen predicts that, with the fall of the regime, it is doubtful that the Druze will protect the rich portions remaining of the Golan Heights; having said that, the rest of the Golan Heights may very well fall into the hands of the Israelis. Getting no end of the deal, Henningsen conveys that the Shiites will not be granted any form of power in Syria due to their Hezbollah affiliation and so will be found regionally dispersed. Finally the Christians, who have had no influential role in the conflict, will be inevitably driven out of the cities and potentially the nation. Henningsen refers to this as the “Balkanization of Syria,” and he provides a map of the division of Syria along ethnic lines.

4.6 Syrian vs. Iraqi Federalism

In Iraq, the three competing communities are the Shiites, Sunnis and Kurds. To clarify, the Shiites making up the majority, approximately 60 percent and the Sunnis and Kurds approximately 40 percent⁹⁹. During the rule of Saddam Hussein, the power resonated in the hands of the Sunni elites, which left the Shiites and Kurds suppressed. As institutions have crumbled in the aftermath of the war, the route to democratization is contested. Andreas Wimmer, professor at UCLA and author of *Democracy and Ethno-religious Conflict in Iraq*, claims that there are two downfalls. The first is that the

⁹⁸ In D. Phillips (Chair)(2013). Dialogue on power-sharing in Syria, Paris

⁹⁹ Karon, T. (2006, February 24). Understanding Iraq’s ethnic and religious divisions. *TIME*

current dominant leaders of the various sects will refuse a secular system without well-defined and fair divisions of power. The second reason Wimmer provides is “popular government involves the risk that the requests of the Kurds, Shia and Sunni pioneers winding up and unleash centripetal constraints that can't be kept under wraps by a frail center,”¹⁰⁰. Naturally, the suppression of the Kurds and Shiites has led to more assertive demands and determination since the fall of the Saddam Hussein's regime. Former US ambassador to the UN Richard Holbrooke agrees in that “to govern [Iraq] as a popular government might be quite hard, since an accurate vote based system might in all likelihood lead to Shiite, Sunni, and Kurdish pioneers who hold great positions. This might be more terrible than Bosnia, on the grounds that the energies are much deeper, and the Bosnian war won't continue, inasmuch as battling between Sunnis, Shiites, and Kurds could effectively start any day in the event that we aren't there,”¹⁰¹.

Similar to the Syrian Kurds, Iraqi Kurds have been insisting on federal rule. Though this does seem feasible, Turkey has strongly opposed federalism for Iraq with the argument that a federal Iraq would mean autonomous Kurds who will control the oil-producing region of Kirkuk¹⁰¹. The Turkish fear is that the Kurds will then ultimately demand independence, which might mobilize Turkish Kurds to join this movement for independence. When one ethnic group attempts to stand out amongst the others, the outcome could be civil war.

A federal Iraq must be divided along regional ethnic lines; this grants the separate groups control over the local affairs, such as their economic policies and social

¹⁰⁰ Wimmer, A. (2003). Democracy and ethno-religious conflict in Iraq. *Survival*, 45(4), 111 - 134

¹⁰¹ Brancati, D. (2010). Can federalism stabilize Iraq? *The Washington Quarterly*, 27(2), 5-21

codes. But similar to the Syrian concern, there is a fear that the national system could exasperate radicalization of ethnic stances as well as conflict over economic and resource gain. Both countries have an overwhelming majority -- the Sunnis in Syria and the Shiites in Iraq -- which could lead to more influence and consequently undermine minority autonomy.

4.5 International response

According to a report by Middle East analyst and leading editor of infowars.com, Patrick Henningsen, on RT news, the conflict cannot be resolved diplomatically. Henningsen adds that the diplomatic failure is not due to the international community, but rather the UN's inability to recognize that they cannot support the US and countries that want to arm rebel groups in Syria. He asserts that Russia and China cannot be confronted due to their leverage. China supersedes the west with its economic success, while Russia is not aligned with the west, but rather China. Speculation about a regional conflict is linked with the US's initiative to topple the Syrian regime in hopes of dissolving Hezbollah in the process, which will in turn, destabilize Lebanon. When Hezbollah is neutralized, that opens the gates for a US-Israeli joint venture against Iran. Henningsen describes this as the "precursor to world war three,"¹⁰². However, with regard to Syria, Henningsen maintains that democratic reform in Syria is a far-fetched notion, and the rebel groups' adamant refusal for negotiation is just another signal of dictatorship¹⁰².

The key to guaranteeing destabilization in the area with an international

¹⁰² Henningsen, P. (2012, July 10). *Bye-bye Syria: The globalist destruction of a nation state*

community presence is to ensure the dismissal of a secular country. Similar to the French mandate in 1921 for Syria, western powers will work toward the ethnic division of Syria (This is something that Assad had managed to contain during his rule, safeguarding ethnic civil strife. While the Sunnis represent the majority of Syria and are US and Gulf-backed, they also represent the guerilla movement. With governing success, the Sunnis will achieve what Saudi Arabia, Qatar and the other Gulf nations aspire to, which Sunni empowerment. Strongly allied with Assad's regime, the Alawites remain a Syrian minority. Western plans aim to isolate them in the northwestern region of Syria, far away from Damascus¹⁰³.

This ethnic federal Syria is bound to disrupt neighboring Lebanon. Syria, a provider of resources to Lebanon will destabilize economically, as well as politically. Because Lebanon is home to Hezbollah, a group that has made the transition from 'militia' to political party, it remains the only barrier to weakening Iran. The multi-dimensional perspective is that although Israel has been relatively indifferent toward Syria, its interests still lie in neutralizing Hezbollah. In 2006 Israel provided Lebanon with a preview of the damage, it can cause, if provoked. Therefore if the US planners are successful, Hezbollah will lose Syria as a strategic ally, this allows for the focus to be zoomed in on Lebanon. With the resistance of Hezbollah, Lebanon will erupt in ethnic flames. Essentially, the elimination of Syria and Hezbollah as threats means a political victory for Israel.

¹⁰³ Henningsen, P. (2012, July 10). *Bye-bye Syria: The globalist destruction of a nation state*

4.6 Conclusion

It seems that the civil crisis in Syria will end in one of two ways, the first being exhaustion and the second being a partial victory for one of the two camps. Global criticism has hovered over the rebels as well as the regime. It is safe to say that the lines of blame have blurred. Apprehension over Syria's future has become a global concern as the scale could tip in either way. Any outcome is bound to upset at least one group. What is necessary; however, is a smooth transition scheme of power sharing, whilst learning from the Lebanese experiences. If Syria does not want to fall under another dictatorship, it must achieve this transitory phase. Therefore, the battle of gaining influence, territory and power will occur in the long term through a series of failed governments and timely clashes because development cannot occur over night. A federal form of power sharing will be just as difficult to attain. On the other hand,, conflict would propagate on a more local or rather minimal level according to the principle of autonomy. The publication of The US or foreign military attack has brought about a global understanding that the crisis cannot be solved militarily. Even on the national level, distrust and animosity has grown too resilient between the ethnic communities and thus the existence of Syria as a secular nation functioning under a democracy is not expected to transpire immediately. Witnesses to a power-sharing agreement must be present, and the conflicting parties must consent to a treaty that is binding.

Chapter Five

Conclusion

5.1 Introduction

In conceptualizing about the varying proposed forms of government for Syria, these scenarios can only be witnessed once the conflict comes to an end. This study aimed to envision varying forms of governance applicable to Syria given the collapse of the Al Assad regime. There is no telling when the conflict will end; the Lebanese civil war proceeded for a hefty and violent 15 years. The end of the Lebanese conflict was brought through Syrian intervention; Syria's finishing line may be drawn out the same way. It may take countries, such as Russia or Turkey, a few more years to realize that the nature of the conflict outweighs the risks of international intervention. As countries squabble over the future of Syria, the death toll continues to rise.

Internally Syria's conflict may come to a close, if the rebels increase in cohesiveness and organization allowing them a quicker victory. Still, if the groups remain divided one group may supersede the rest creating yet another monopoly of power. The fear for many is the victory of the extremist rebels such as Jabhat al Nusra, aligned with Al Qaida. The fact of the matter is that a sectarian contagion has spread throughout Syria as followers show allegiance to their respective religious sects.

Forcefully bringing Al Assad's reign to an end won't solve the Syrian crisis. This act will more likely bring about a more complex problem dragging in different countries.

5.2 Consociationalism

The two forms of governance suggested in chapters 2 and 3, consociationalism and federalism, have been thoroughly evaluated. However, this evaluation has been purely theoretical. From this perspective, it is possible that both methods will be met with resistance and failure before one of them is ultimately met with acceptance. Consociationalism for Syria is seen as a viable solution due to the multi-ethnic setting of Syria. By fostering a power-sharing principle, all groups will be forced to compromise in order to reach a harmonious agreement. However, this means that when disagreement surfaces, the solution can be found through negotiation and dialogue as opposed to Lebanon's method of further conflict and governance deadlocks. The problem with a consociational rule is that it is very easy for the nation to resort back to confessionalism as a safeguard of interests. Once this occurs, the country will find itself divided yet again. Lijphart's model of consociationalism appears tempting on paper; however, implementation is gradual and very long term. The comparison to Lebanon aims to evoke that Lebanon's source of conflict has become its form of governance; consociationalism. This form of governance was chosen as a solution to Lebanon's fifteen years of violence yet, it is now deemed redundant. Consociationalism is essential to cases, such as Lebanon and Syria, however, in facing the facts it could be said that one size surely does not fit all.

Although Lebanon and Syria are not alike, this does not mean that consociationalism is doomed to fail in Syria. But the inequality in demographics leads to the assumption that the overwhelming majority could overshadow the minorities found in Syria. Skepticism derived from this idea leads to the fear of constructing an illegitimate consociationalism. The utmost necessity for this form of governance is correct and lawful implementation. Conversely, as seen in Lebanon, this is a slippery slope as conflict is easily sparked. The bludgeon of conflict in Syria leaves scars of animosity between different groups, which will be incredibly difficult to erase.

5.3 Federalism

Therefore, why not implement a federal state that allows for a singular autonomy for each sect? This will allow more room for each group to decide its own affairs. Federal rule is complimentary in the reduction of conflict that could occur when members of parliament attempt to decide on a relatively insignificant law.

However, the reduction of conflict will be small-scale. Larger problems can occur when bigger decisions are to be made, such as economic or military decisions. The division of Syria into local governments will undermine the concept of nationalism, which Syrians pride themselves on. As each ethnic sect experiences and enjoys its own autonomy, they will grow more independent of one another, particularly because hostility amongst the sects is at its prime. With this division, federalist Syria runs a high risk of the disintegration of the country and its people. The battle could also turn into how the country should physically be split up. With a land abundant in natural resources,

conflict on ownership is bound to surface. Dividing the country along ethnic lines further reinforces differences and alters the definitions of belonging and patriotism.

5.4 Comparative Opportunities and Challenges

At the time of deep confrontation and opposition, Syria stands to fail at any stab at a legitimate government. Therefore, a transitional or interim government is required to achieve some level of security or stability. Even a transitional government is a difficult initiative to arrange as disagreement could arise from questions, such as who would be appointed. A state will require two rudiments, elections and national consensus. These two factors are more or less absent in Syria today. The interim government will serve until these two rudiments prove functional and until elections could be held. The purpose of an interim government is essentially to end the crisis. Moreover, this state will allow the Syrians to retain their institutions to avoid definitive collapse.

The transitional government should call upon the loyalty of an army that answers to the government as opposed to a single voice. A representative interim government should be formed, mirroring a civil society and encouraging harmonious conduct through secular media. Lastly, economic liberation allows the country to grow economically and dodge a closed off society.

The challenges that will undoubtedly be faced pertain to national resistance to this interim government. Every Syrian citizen in Syria, regardless of ethnic descent, should have equal access to the state. However, group dynamics may resent this, believing that some groups should be shunned. Moderates may oppose the existence of

religious Islamism in the interim government and may object to their representation. On a larger scale, the interim government may see objection from international powers such as the US or Russia.

5.5 Conclusive Thoughts

Any prospective Syria will face challenges and opposition from any side. But, ultimately Syria faces one option: power sharing. Regardless of whether this manifests itself in the form of federalism or consociationalism, the end result would be the end of the conflict. Lebanon's failed consociationalism could be blamed on the lack of domestic and international support; however, the long lasting conflict did come to a close due to the adoption of this model. This was also the case of Northern Ireland in the 1970's. Both forms are not attractive in their long-term development; but, a compromise must be made to prevent state collapse.

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