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System of Political Parties

in Lebanon: Nature and Development of its Politics

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ABSTRACT

The main aim of the following paper is to examine the relationship between consociationalism and the political party system in Lebanon. The question is whether consociationalism consolidates a fragmented party system and whether it can mitigate its splintering dynamic. This paper examines this question by firstly introducing the current political system and secondly comparing it to other consociational regimes (Belgium and Malaysia). It then examines the different parties present, their nature, what makes them special, and how do they consolidate cleavages in comparative perspectives. Some of the comparative analysis utilized present related strategies followed by parties, the party system, and its correlation to the electoral system. This paper will be expanded and backed up by different literature reviews and theories in order to provide an idea about how Lebanon, is similar in comparative perspective and how it can benefit from the various international experiences in managing its party plurality.

INTRODUCTION

Since the episode of battle in 1975, Lebanon has been the subject mirroring the troublesome issues that have symbolized conflict. The same can be implied about another period, in particular, pre-independence Lebanon under the French command, starting in the mid-1920s with the foundation of the cutting-edge Lebanese state. The National Pact of 1943 was the new name that came to represent post-independence confessional politics. This way delegated the course of progress that happened during the French mandate inside Lebanon and in its surrounding territory. The main goal was to close the gap between Christians and Muslims specifically the Maronite and Sunni in order to seek independence and end the French mandatory rule (Khazen, 1991).

As we go in more depth we can note that in addition to the National Pact, the French mandate helped in creating three generations of political parties. The first generation emerged between 1920 and 1943. The second generation was created after the independence in 1943, while the third generation was created in the timeline of the civil war which was between 1975 and 1990. *"From independence until the outbreak of war, the influence of political parties was continuously on the rise in local and national politics, reaching a peak in the first half of the 1970s. In the 1972 parliamentary elections - the last held before the outbreak of war - the seven political parties represented in parliament made up over 30% of parliamentary seats"* (Khazen, 2003).

The following paper will focus on the system of political parties in Lebanon by discussing specifically the different parties present, their nature, what makes them special, and how they consolidate cleavages in comparative perspectives. The main question is whether consociationalism consolidates a fragmented party system and whether it can mitigate its splintering dynamic.

In order to fulfill the goals of the study, some points should be looked upon such as related strategies followed by parties, the party system, and its correlation to the electoral system. Through that, we should be able to articulate a certain question about democracy in order to see whether the political party system is a healthy arrangement for democracy to emerge in the country and how it really aborts democratization.

Here we will be concentrating on two variables which are a dependent variable and an independent variable. The dependent variable is how to arrive to democracy and what determines democratic politics. However, the independent variable will be concentrating on the plurality of a diverse system along with the cadre type that prevents the democratic system from diversifying in Lebanon. This may include how religious and authoritarian they are; hence, they influence sectarianism in Lebanon.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Though it is a misrepresentation to mention that Lebanese politics is based on religion, it is the only way to explain Lebanese politics. Religion completes Lebanese politics and defines the role of its organizations and decisions. The general look of the government reflects the religious structure of the Lebanese society (Crow, 1962).

Scholarly articles highlight how religion is highly related to the Lebanese political system and is one of the main constituents that led to sectarianism. It all starts with the Lebanese Parliament which follows a stable framework that focuses on conducting its elections based on the religious composition (Crow, 1962). Crow (1962) agrees with Khazen (2003) on the point that ties in sectarianism with politics and the evidence is present in his article "Religious Sectarianism in the Lebanese Political System" when he states, *"The political life is centered in the capital city of Beirut which contains almost 30 percent of the population"*.

In Lebanon, representing institutions emerged as a reaction to anarchy. From 1840 to 1860, and until the outbreak of World War I, Lebanon was controlled by a mutasarrif (a Christian chosen by Constantinople with the agreement of the Great Powers) who was advised by a representative council, which was the forerunner of the current parliament. When the French succeeded the Turks, they established a representative council to assist the High Commissioner, as well as a representative Chamber of Deputies and a short-lived appointive Senate following the Constitution of 1926. The French believed that these groups had to be represented if stability was to be preserved, thus these early representative organizations were based on sect, area, and family (Hudson, 1969).

In the absence of positive legitimacy for the state's institutions, Lebanon's divided political-historical-religious body necessitated a political system based on the balance of power. As a result, the balance of power has required the establishment of institutions that support democratic ideals. It would then become unstable without democratic institutions, and the state would cease to exist without stability. Hence, Lebanon's representative institutions are a core requirement for the country's stability. Obviously, this hasn't been taken into consideration by Lebanese politicians (Hudson, 1969).

Parties have generally failed to encourage national unity and develop channels for collaboration, with the exception of ephemeral electoral coalitions formed on election day. The lack of internal democratic practice was shared by all parties. Parties' internal structure, belief philosophy, and power structure were not conducive to democratic practice, transparency, nor accountability. Some parties involved have also cultivated a personality cult around the party founder and/or leader, with few managing to retain coherence and stick to their original political program after the founder's death. Regular functioning democracies depend on having a two-party or multi-party system; however, Lebanon does not depend on what's generally called a party system. The political process is centered on party-based politics as well as on

non-partisan "independent" politicians. "*Although no party in Lebanon reached power and ruled as parties do in parliamentary systems, parties have shaped parliamentary debates and participated in government, and party leaders, particularly those of established parties, are influential political figures*" (Khazen, 2003).

"*The most unusual characteristic of representation in Lebanon is confessionalism. Confessionalism is institutionalized separatism on a sectarian basis in the parliament, the cabinet, and the administration*" (Hudson, 1969). In districts where the sects are about equal in number, putting together a strong ticket necessitates enlisting the most popular members of each group. In all situations, confessionalism demands a candidate to be well-liked by his fellow religionists and to have the sect's best interests at heart. The list system has had two significant impacts on the power balance. It has reinforced the status of the two or three main notables of the dominant sect inside the electoral district, decreasing and consolidating the number of key power groupings in the state while without endangering the interests or security of the minority sects.

Lebanon As a Consociational Democracy

According to the following concept, political elites from all sects would agree and compromise within a specific perceptive structure in order to promote democratic stability and governance (Lijphart 1968). This type of democracy was intended to avert sectarian conflicts and also to bring stability to nations that were highly divided. The challenge in Lebanon is regulating a society made up of 18 diverse communities while respecting minority rights. "*The consociational system is the only kind of system that can accommodate the social and political needs of a country with such deeply rooted and closed confessional communities as we find in Lebanon today*" (Barclay,2007). Salemey (1994), on the other hand, tends to suggest that confessional democracy has been able to continue for more than half a century "*despite the*

dissatisfaction of the Muslim confessional elite, the attempts of the ruling confession to concentrate as much power as possible in its own hands".

As a result, Lebanon is still seen as an example of pluralism and stability in the Middle East. Conventional thinking is that a confessional setup ensures the political representation of the country's sects. Given Lebanon's high degree of internal heterogeneity, many advocates of the consociational model believe it is the best option. Furthermore, Lebanon has managed to retain political stability despite a lengthy civil conflict in neighboring Syria. In some ways, the country's stability is only guaranteed by its confessionalism, which keeps the country from devolving into yet another civil war. As a result, even when considering a consociational trade-off between this guarantee of institutional order and the ensuing democratic quality deficits, Lebanese confessionalism is still viewed as the most practicable political paradigm in large sectors of the study.

Despite their harsh criticism of Lebanon's consociational system, Makdisi and Marktanner (2009) believe that "*the most beneficial outcome of Lebanon's consociational democracy is that it allowed for levels of freedom and civil rights that placed Lebanon well ahead of other Arab countries.*" Ehrlich (2000) states without ambivalence, that the post-war system tries to allow sects to manage their own issues and keep their own beliefs while adhering to a shared Lebanese identity. Lebanon has maintained a relatively liberal and pluralist political climate with civil rights particularly freedom of expression, according to Makdisi, Kiwan, and Marktanner (2011). Even though the practice of consociational democracy has been faulty, notably in the post-civil

: Maronite 30%	: Protestants ....)	:
: Sunni 20	: Jews ....)	:
: Shi'ite 18	: Syrian Orthodox ....)	:
: Greek Orthodox 10	: Latin (Roman Catholic) ....) 4%	:
: Greek Catholic 6	: Chaldeans ....)	:
: Druze 6	: Syrian Catholic ....)	:
: Armenian Orthodox 5	: Others (Alawi, Baha'i)	:
: Armenian Catholic 1	Nestorians, etc.)	:
:	:	:

*Official Government estimates used for the 1956 elections, according to the Beirut daily *An-Nahar* No. 6249 (April 26th, 1956). (Rounded off to nearest whole number.)

Table 1. Lebanese Religious Communities

war period and even if there are evident benefits for the three main religious communities: Maronites, Sunnis, and Shia (Makdisi, Kiwan, and Marktanner 2011), Lebanon's model has provided a real chance for diverse religious communities to share power and voice their views openly in public policy discussions.

Disagreements on Fundamentals: Lack of Consensus on the National Identity of Lebanon

Tolerating conflict in a diverse society necessitates basic agreement among various factions. The constitution, the National Pact, confessionalism, and, most importantly, Lebanon's national identity are all issues on which the Lebanese people disagree. They disagree over whether or not Lebanon is a whole country. For example, Lebanon is "eternal" and "everlasting," according to Michel Shiha, Charles Malik, and Sa'id 'Aql. Several political parties acknowledge holding similar ideals and attitudes, including al- Kata'ib, the National Bloc, and ex-President Sham'iin's Liberals. On the other side, several Lebanese believe that the current

	1972	1992	1996	2000
National Liberal Party	11	—	—	—
Lebanese Kata'ib Party	7	—	—	1
Progressive Socialist Party	5	3	3	4
National Bloc Party	3	—	—	—
Amal	—	6	8	7
Hizballah	—	8	7	9
Syrian Social Nationalist Party	—	6	5	4
Ba'th Party	1	2	2	3
Al Jama'a al-Islamiyya	—	3	1	—
Society of Islamic Philanthropic Projects	—	1		
Al Wa'd	—	2	2	—
Tashnag	4	1	2	1
Hanchag	—	1	1	—
Ramgavar	—	—	1	1
Total	31	33	32	31
(Total Seats in Parlt.)	99	128	128	128
Percentage	31.31	25.78	25	24.21

Table 2. Political Parties in Parliament 1972 - 2000

arrangement is only transitory, as, for them, the current state of Lebanon was imposed on them by France on August 30, 1920. Some Muslims consider it to be an integral part of the Arab nation. Thus, according to Kamal Junblat, the leader of the Progressive Socialist Party and a frequent member of the Lebanese Cabinet: "*This society is not a society in the real sense of the word, because there is no such thing as a Lebanese community. There is no Lebanese social*

unit. Lebanon is a collection of sects and socio-religious communities. Thus, it is not a society, nor a community, nor a nation" (Barakat,1973).

A pan-Arab state is advocated by a number of political groups in Lebanon, including the Ba'th and the Arab Nationalist Movement. Others, including members of the Syrian Social Nationalist Party, consider Lebanon as an important component of wider Syria or the Fertile Crescent. This quest for a national identity continues, with or without consideration of public support and implementation ability. The lack of agreement on Lebanon's national identity is accompanied by a variety of social psychological phenomena, which, in turn, exacerbate existing schisms and may contribute to the formation of new ones. "*The well-known Lebanese poet Sa'id 'Aql talks on the necessity for the entire globe to be "Lebanonized." This inclination for self-aggrandizement might be described in part as a social psychological reaction to a large number of Lebanese expressing doubts about Lebanon's nationhood.*" (Barakat,1973).

This trend implies that Lebanese nationalists are conservative and, despite their desire, fatalistic, they embrace their political institutions and tolerate sluggish change, despite the fact that they recognize that these institutions are inefficient, corrupt, and incapable of resolving significant conflicts or confronting external threats. As a result, lack of unity extends to less basic and long-lasting concerns, particularly those that are indirectly related to the challenge of national identities.

How the Electoral System in Lebanon Works to Severely Manage or Actively Exclude Popular Participation and Entrench Control of a Fixed Set of Confessional Elites

The religious composition of Parliament has always been specified by election law when it is elected. The number of seats in each district has fluctuated from election to election, averaging three or four (with a few notable outliers). Each seat's religious affiliation is mandated by law. Within a single constituency, where there are usually multiple seats of several religions, the electorate forms a common role, with each

(Omitting eight abortive, emergency and interim cabinets)

SIZE OF CABINET	6	8	9	10	10	10	14	18
Sunni	1	2	2	2	2	3	3	4
Maronite	1	2	2	3	3	3	3	4
Druze	1	1	2	2	1	1	2	2
Grk. Orth.	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2
Grk. Cath.	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2
Shi'ite	1	1	1	1	2	1	2	3
Arm. Cath.							1	
Arm. Orth.								1
Number of Cabinets	4	11	2	1	2	4	1	1

Table 3. Sectarian Patterns of Cabinet Structure 1943 - 1961

voter voting for all seats, including those of denominations other than their own, regardless of religion (Crow,1962). The goal of this arrangement was to ensure that no electoral contests took place between candidates from different religious groups, but only between co-religionists, and that, because most constituencies are mixed, no candidate would be elected solely on the basis of votes from their own religious community, but that they would be acceptable to a significant number of other religious communities within the district. As a result, it was meant to bring moderate candidates to Parliament while excluding extremist, uncompromising ones. It was hoped that by doing so, a legislature with wide intercommunal support and a commitment to Lebanese national unity would emerge. The Christian-Muslim ratio agreed upon in 1943 and followed by all subsequent electoral legislation was six Christians for every five Muslims (including Druze).

According to (Crow, 1962) like the legislature, the executive branch of government has a sectarian division of offices. Presidents of the Republic have traditionally been Christians,

and since independence, Maronites. The President was made the major character in the political process by the constitution entrusting him with significant powers, as well as the oligarchical structure of society that existed until recently and that he alone was in a position to handle. The Prime Minister is appointed by the biggest Muslim sect (Sunni) to counterbalance the President. The remaining Cabinet positions are divided to ensure that the six greatest religious communities are represented. This approach is in accordance with Article 95 of the Constitution 1l and acknowledges that, in the absence of broad-based political parties, religious communities must be considered politically.

Does integration take place in the Cabinet, where the dilemma of getting to some consensus on policy topics and particular issues shows itself, given that the core sectarian issues and struggles are muffled in the electoral system and in Parliament? Regrettably, the answer isn't a resounding yes. Even if the country had been religiously homogenous, the elements of society in control of government would probably have behaved in a similar manner. Personal rivalry will not vanish if sectarianism is abolished. However, sectarian tensions compound these other variables, making coordinated and consistent government action even more difficult (Crow,1962).

In conclusion, the Cabinet's sectarian nature has exacerbated its predisposition toward "immobilism." The positions of the Lebanese governments and those of the Third and Fourth French Republics may be said to be analogous. Unlike in France, where irreconcilable party splits in the Cabinet impeded proactive action, religious conflicts play a similar role in Lebanon.

METHODOLOGY

In order to understand the nature and development of the political system in Lebanon, the research methodology relies on content analysis based on the scholarly articles provided. The content analysis will provide different views of the topic by comparing the Lebanese system to other consocation regimes (Iraq, Bosnia, and Herzegovina). Comparative party systems will be done through conducting and comparing societies that are divided ethnically like Lebanon and how it helped in moving democracy; therefore, a comparison between Lebanon and different countries will be performed.

The scholarly articles will firstly help in providing a general understanding of the political system present, how it's linked to religion and how it influences the decision of the government. Secondly, it will provide evidence to support all the information provided in this paper. Thirdly, the following methodology will help in the research process since the studies will be a reference for upcoming research studies.

Consequences of Lebanon's Consociationalism's Democracy

Lebanon is a parliamentary democracy under the framework of consociationalism, as previously stated. According to Arendt Lijphart (1977), the sectarian state system in Lebanon is an example of a consociational political organization. Domestic divides have become more entrenched as a result of a history of intersectarian complaints and clashes. The idea of implementing either ideological/majoritarian democracy or federalism has been ruled out due to a severely split sense of national identity among a population of four million people living on a very tiny piece of territory. The most realistic and practical option has been implemented: consociational power-sharing.

A fundamental disadvantage of the consociational method is that it requires unanimous consent and is readily thwarted by a single veto. "Decision making that requires

accommodation across all subcultures is a challenging process," Lijphart said, adding that "consociational democracies are always challenged by a degree of immobilism." (Lijphart, 1977).

Bosnia and Herzegovina Case Study

After a devastating civil war in the 1990s, Bosnia and Herzegovina have emerged with a complicated political structure. The state, as a consociational democracy, is nonetheless deeply divided and ruled along ethnic lines. The country's most powerful political institutions are subdivided in accordance with the Dayton Peace Accord's ethnic distribution criteria.

The Bosnian presidency is a three-part system, with the president chosen for a four-year term by popular vote. This three-member presidency, which rotates every eight months, is made up of a Serb, a Croat, and a Muslim (Bosniak) leader. The president is the nation's chief executive, and his responsibilities are mostly focused on foreign policy concerns such as international treaties.

The Parliamentary Assembly, or legislative branch, is bicameral. The House of Representatives, with 42 members elected by proportional representation for four-year terms, and the House of the Peoples, with 15 members chosen by indirect vote for four-year terms, make up the legislature. The 15 seats are evenly allocated among the three major ethnic groups, with five seats each. The Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Muslim, Croat) has 28 seats in the House of Representatives, while the Republika Srpska has 14 representatives (Serbian Republic). The Premier, who is appointed by the president and must be ratified by the House of Representatives, has executive powers over the state. All problems relating to diplomatic, economic, and budgetary policy are overseen by the Council of Ministers and its chairperson. The House of Representatives must approve the ministers nominated by the Premier, and

according to the Constitution, no more than two-thirds of all ministers can be appointed from the same territory in the Federation.

The biggest political parties are the Party of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Party of Democratic Action, the Liberals of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the Serb Radical Party. Bosnia has over 20 political parties, all of which represent solely their own ethnic group, although having a population of fewer than four million people. Bosnia remains fractured over two decades after the war ended, and ethnic tensions are still a severe concern for the majority of its population.

The political, economic, and social realities of the state left much to be desired, with the autonomous Republika Srpska pursuing independence from Bosnia and Herzegovina and the difficulty of Muslims and Croats to find common ground (other than having a common enemy, the Serbs). These considerations may be stated as reasons why the UN has established an extraordinarily powerful court in Bosnia and Herzegovina, a rare occurrence for weak consociational nations.

Lebanon and Iraq Comparative Study

Yahya (2017) also claims that Lebanon and Iraq have power-sharing systems based on sect and ethnicity and that these frameworks have enabled "corrupt sectarian and ethnic leaders who have compromised the rights of all citizens." In the summer of 2015, both nations held mass protests and civic movements against patronage politics and corruption, calling for the end of ethno-sectarian politics. Both protests were sparked by service shortages, but they quickly evolved into wide condemnations of the countries' political institutions and power-sharing arrangements (Yahya 2017). Similarly, Dalacoura claims that "the American handling of occupied Iraq has undermined the prospect of long-term democratization by strengthening sectarian and ethnic divisions between Shi'is, Sunnis, and Kurds, and indirectly encouraging

the re-Islamization of Iraqi politics," adding that "the American handling of occupied Iraq has undercut the prospect of long-term democratization by strengthening sectarian and ethnic divisions between Shi'is, Sunnis, and Kurds, and indirectly (Dalacoura 2005). Ethnicities have become the new elements around which a post-Saddam Hussein Iraq has been organized, according to Yahya. 'The sectarian power-sharing system put in place went even further than that of Lebanon. Not only were senior government positions allocated according to sect, but each representative had two deputies from other ethno-sectarian groups." In Iraq, this process was replicated at several levels across the government (Yahya 2017).

Both the Lebanese and Iraqi constitutions encourage communities to cling to so-called primal identities by distributing positions in the state according to sect or ethnic group. These identities "tend to trump other forms of association, whether ideological or political." As a result, by "reducing politics to questions of religion and identity, Iraq and Lebanon effectively established systems that allow for poor governance, the entrenchment of undemocratic practices, and patronage politics" (Yahya 2017).

Speculations about the future power structure of Syria have arisen in the aftermath of the country's civil conflict. Syria might achieve peace and stability, according to policymakers, by adopting a constitutional formula based on a confessional power-sharing structure similar to Iraq's and Lebanon's. In the literature on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, similar advice may be found. However, as the Lebanese and Iraqi models demonstrate, this "short-term conflict resolution strategy" leads to subsequent long-term conflicts, unequal allocation of state resources, and political marginalization of many people (Khatib 2015).

Due to the persistence of sectarian rhetoric and, most all, de facto sectarian politics, the instrumentalization of religion is highly common in the region. Sectarianism in Lebanon – and generally throughout the Middle East – is more of a recent political construct than it is socially organic, as Makdisi (2000) pointed out; after all, religious and sectarian identities were only

politicized and institutionalized in the 19th century (Majed, 2016). Sectarianism is the politicization of religious identities that is institutionalized or reinforced by historical governmental institutions. This sectarianism story – and its political manifestation – is still alive and well in national imaginations, and it emerges rapidly when regional crises erupt. We should "move away from a historical Sunni-Shi'a division and focus on the abysmal methods of patron-client dictatorships and economic inequalities between and within diverse communities," according to Al-Rasheed (2014). A rethinking of the Arab world's so-called everlasting confessional paradigm is long needed.

Sectarianizing, according to Hashemi and Poster (2017), is a process that informs all regional conflicts, rather than a consequence of anciently entrenched sectarian grievances or an old primal and unchangeable force. The term sectarianism is defined as follows: "tends to imply a static given, a trans-historical force – an enduring and immutable characteristic of the Arab Islamic world from the seventh century until today" Hashemi and Poster (2017). The main aspect that shapes the sectarianizing process is authoritarianism, not theology. Authoritarian regimes in the Middle East have purposefully used sectarian identities in a variety of ways to deflect demands for political reform and maintain power. This anti-democratic political environment is critical for comprehending sectarian strife in today's Muslim cultures, particularly in those with a mix of Sunni and Shi'a populations. (Hashemi and Poster 2017).

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

The Lebanese case study is noteworthy among consociational nations because it encapsulates the unique characteristics of consociational democracies while simultaneously pointing to the theoretical limitations of consociationalism. Consociational democracy's mechanisms, such as segmental autonomy, minority veto, proportionality 'of effects', and

grand coalitions, become insufficient for preserving democratic stability, genuine proportionality, and elite cooperation when crystallization reaches its maximum, as it has in Lebanon. Lebanon's institutional trajectory, which has steadily laid out

Distribution of parliamentary seats among electoral districts		Sunni	Shia	Druze	Alawite	Maronite	Greek Orthodox	Greek Catholic	Armenian Orthodox	Armenian Catholic	Evangelical/Protestant	Christian Minorities	Total seats per district
Beirut 19	Beirut I					1	1	1	3	1		1	8
	Beirut II	6	2	1			1					1	11
South Lebanon 23	Saida	2											2
	Jezzine					2		1					3
	Tyre		4										4
	Zahrani (Saida Villages)		2					1					3
	Nabatiyeh		3										3
	Bint Jbeil		3										3
	Marjeyoun + Hasbaya	1	2	1			1						5
Total seats per confession		27	27	8	2	34	14	8	5	1	1	1	128
Total Muslims and Christians			64					64					

Table 4. Parliamentary Elections Law No. 44, or Adwan Law 2017

and cemented power allocation between various confessions, ends up striving to repair any distortions and gridlocks by even more rigorous seat pre-assignments. If a light is thrown on the limits and impacts of consociationalism in the country, and, at the very least, a non-rigid consociational system is implemented, Lebanon will be able to avoid having to continually observe sectarian proportions and being held prisoner endlessly by stringent census regulations. Despite the fact that confessional consociationalism entrenches ethnic and sectarian identities over time, most of the international literature on Lebanon's democracy focuses on its long-term benefits. The acceptance of the confessional framework as the greatest possible democratic choice may also be seen in the numerous suggestions for electoral reform that call for more proportionality, decentralization, and female participation, but seldom mention de-confessionalization. In the end, despite its flaws, Lebanese democracy remains the most stable and democratic in the Arab Middle East. Overall, the research suggests that the system should be maintained, albeit with some modifications. This case study, on the other hand, showed that this is not the case. Indeed, Lebanon looks to be safe from a fresh civil conflict, but the country suffers from significant inelasticities, representational disparities, and institutional paralysis. Furthermore, in postwar politics, the juxtaposition of economic and sectarian elites makes political changes much more difficult. (Salloukh 2017).

In terms of norms, confessional consociationalism denies the Lebanese the ability to be represented as citizens in a representative democracy rather than as adherents in a certain faith. The process of naturalizing a solely political-religious type of identification prevents nuance from growing or being represented in political institutions. As a result, the system prevents the secularisation of the political and communal realms, preventing citizenship from taking the place of confessional identities. This erroneous regional diagnosis, which is so evident and intense in the Lebanese microcosm, explains why poisonous religious narratives and sectarian solutions still proliferate in the modern Middle East.

The findings of this study should also spark conversations about the analysis and prescriptions for sectarian solutions to modern Middle Eastern crises — one example that sticks out, in particular, is Iraqi institutional design after 2003. Sectarianism has been actively designed and employed by political leaders and regional forces from its origin, according to Majed (2016), to either retain or obtain greater power. Furthermore, throughout the Middle East, local and regional leaders have regularly emphasized historical grievances. Because the processes of identity politics in the area are so complicated and multifaceted, they should not be reduced to simple cultural explanations or self-contained identities that predate sectarianism. As a result, "the majority of sectarianism studies in the Arab area are incorrect," and "policy prescriptions, such as consociational democracy, are frequently founded on incorrect diagnoses." (Majed, 2016).

CONCLUSION

A political party's identification as a coordinated endeavor to win political power is sometimes seen as an adequate general definition. This has the advantage of defining parties by stating the function that they all play in any political system. However, once parties or some aspects of them are required in a particular country, this general definition must be revised. As

a result, non-autonomous parties were purposefully left out of Ranney's examination of the relationship between the US party system and democracy. Similarly, groups that do not satisfy the standard definition of a political party were considered as parties in this study since they performed well. The Lebanese situation demonstrates that a simple and straightforward distinction between "democratic" and "totalitarian" parties is insufficient; it reveals little about such parties' behavior or roles under various regimes. The significant divide in Lebanon is between "Lebanese" (whether democratic or totalitarian) and "transnational" (whether democratic or totalitarian). More research on party functions gives a better understanding of the elements that influence the multiplicity of parties (or lack of) in a given state. In any case, it is a better guide than the type of electoral system, which is primarily a reflection state of homogeneity or heterogeneity in the country. The argument, implicitly and widely accepted, by Sigmund Neumann that "only when the distinctive interests of parties are immersed in a common whole does the conflict not lead to the collapse of the entire group," is not supported by the Lebanese example. A negative expression of this premise, on the other hand, looks accurate. Though the various parties' interests are not "imbedded in the whole," and many deny the regime's legitimacy, the political system survives in the absence of a powerful enough group. Lebanon, then, provides an interesting case where the internal balance of power is maintained to maintain fragile peace and stability. Political parties play a critical role in maintaining that equilibrium. The nature of the interactions between the two reference groups has affected the nature of the relationships between the religious communities in Lebanon, which is one of the most important consequences of this scenario. Conflicts between Egypt and the West, in particular, have a history of causing domestic strife. This fact helps to explain the several crises that Lebanon has faced since 1943, particularly the 1958 crisis. While just one of the seven qualities listed previously may not be sufficient to preclude the emergence of pluralism, the presence of all of them at the same time results in the formation of a mosaic

society. Only the hope of unity and integration into a united national system exists. As long as the aforementioned circumstances are not addressed in a methodical and reasonable manner, Lebanon will remain a mosaic society with bleak prospects for stability and national unity, and hence will be threatened at its most vulnerable.

In comparison to political parties in Arab nations, parties have had a distinct experience. Parties of various political and ideological stripes were able to develop their bases and influence policy in Lebanon before to the war, while militias became de facto dominant parties in the regions they controlled during the conflict. Parties have failed to recover from internalized war-time traditions a decade after the conflict ended. Those who sought to convert from militias to parties were not always successful, and others were unable or unwilling to make the transition.

Parties have lost their moral claim that they represented a greater form of political organization than "conventional" politicians and that they were the vehicle for reform and democratic change prior to World War II. In other words, they're partisanship-seeking parties. The political structure that has arisen after 1990 has not aided parties in carrying out their responsibilities. Political plurality has a predefined boundary in a political system that confines foreign policy to a few slogans and domestic policy to perpetual bickering amongst politicians seeking for privileged access to Damascus, and competition between government and opposition is constrained to that margin. Political parties, under the current rules of the game, want to retain the power structure, regardless of its negative impact on political plurality and the democratic process. In this regard, postwar Lebanon's parties are serving tasks comparable to those of parties in authoritarian regimes.

Despite the challenges that the sectarian system implies, there is no immediate alternative that does not include the domination of one group over the others. It causes one to concentrate on ways in which the system may be improved so that, via its efficient operation,

it can provide pleasure and confidence, reducing intercommunal hostility. This is challenging, but not impossible, given the current world circumstances. Most Lebanese political leaders (from all communities) believe that maintaining an independent Lebanon benefits all parties, which by definition means a multi-communal society that will have to consider communal differences and maintain some form of sectarianism in the political system for some time in the future.

The solution then depends on the political leaders' foresight and ability to forego short-term personal gains in order to allow the necessary improvements to be made in a system that hasn't been completely successful but has the potential to provide the only solution that can be considered without shuddering.

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