

LEBANESE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY

Constructivism and Lebanon's Foreign Policy Following Syria's
Uprising

By

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Thesis Approval Form



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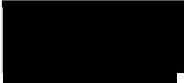


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Dedication

Every success, effort or challenging work requires will, determination and most importantly the encouragement of people close to our hearts.

This humble research is dedicated to my father, Alex, whose sacrifices, encouragement and beliefs in my capabilities made me a better and stronger person.

To my mother, Violette, whose love, prayers and support constantly enlightens my path and guides me to the right direction.

To my brother, Elias, whose affection, guidance and continuous presence gave me strength throughout difficult times.

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Constructivism and Lebanon's Foreign Policy

Rita Naoum

Abstract

This thesis examines the role of both domestic and foreign forces in the incapacity of Lebanon to draft a unified and coherent foreign policy. It argues that domestic actors go into alliances with regional as well as international powers to maintain their share of the power in their continuous struggle for control. Consequently, sectarian and sub-national identities have been manipulated by these actors to retain their rule. Therefore, an analysis of Lebanese foreign policy requires examining the role of sectarian and sub-national identities and how they have been constructed to serve the interest of the ruling elite. It also requires an examination of the sectarian nature of the country's political parties which have been mostly dominated by a single leader, otherwise known as the "*Zaiim*". In this regard, neither realism nor pluralism offer sufficient explanations of Lebanon's foreign policy, or rather lack of it. The examination of Lebanon's foreign policy requires a deeper look into the construction of identities in its complex society, the composition of state institutions and the rise of sectarianism as reflected in the composition of various political parties. Constructivism contributes in this regard by shedding the light on the primacy of identities and norms which are historically and socially created in determining a state's behavior. This thesis, although acknowledges the limitation of constructivism, examines the role of identities and how they have been shaped in Lebanon, paying particular consideration to the internal turmoil unleashed by the Syrian civil war and the failure of the Baabda Declaration followed by institutional deadlocks.

Keywords: Foreign Policy, Lebanon, Constructivism, National Pact, Taif Accord, Baabda Declaration

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Situating the Thesis

“Lebanon’s official foreign policy started when the country gained its independence in 1943”¹. The characteristic of its foreign policy since that year onward has been highlighted by the relation of its state and non-state actors with various countries. In fact, Lebanon’s foreign policy reflects a “two-leveled game” with the intersection of both internal and external policies². Not to anyone’s surprise, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants became one of the most significant and desired positions which parties fought over its control.

Preceding the outbreak of the civil war in 1975 Lebanese foreign policies referred mainly to the National Pact; an oral “gentlemen’s agreement between Maronite President Bishara al-Khouri and Sunni Prime Minister Riyad al-Solh”³. In this arrangement, a balance was sought to reconcile “between Christian and Muslim expectations of Lebanon’s foreign policy to maintain cordial relations with the Arab states, a Muslim demand, but not at the expense of Lebanon’s sovereignty and independence, a Christian demand”⁴. Therefore, Muslims will discard any plan to unite with Syria in return for Christian’s abandonment of Western tutelage, precisely from France.

¹ (Wilkins, 2013, p. 22)

² (Salloukh B. , The Art of the Impossible: The Foreign Policy of Lebanon, 2008, p. 283)

³ (Salloukh B. , The Art of the Impossible: The Foreign Policy of Lebanon, 2008, p. 285)

⁴ (Salloukh B. , The Art of the Impossible: The Foreign Policy of Lebanon, 2008, p. 285)

The conduct of the major policies in Lebanon and precisely that of its foreign policy were highly influenced by the presidency during that period⁵. The presidency before 1975 represented the most authoritative office in the country⁶. The presidential powers as stated in the 1926 constitution “empowered the president to appoint prime ministers, appoint and dismiss cabinet ministers (Article 53), promulgate laws (Article 56), dissolve the parliament (Article 55) and negotiate and ratify international treaties (Article 52)”⁷. Despite this fact, the National Pact guaranteed that no faction or decision-maker was influential enough to manipulate the identity or decision making of the state. When it comes to international treaties and foreign policy, the president had to respect the statement of the National Pact insisted that that Lebanon’s foreign policy should respect both the country’s Arab face and special relations with the West⁸. However, in order to ensure the protection of the interest of other identity groups as stated by the national pact, it became more of a precedent that the Prime Minister would sign all decrees signed by the president, especially following the Shehabist era.

By 1975, the historical mistrust and conflict between the various Lebanese sects prevailed and as the life span of the National Pact expired and the dispute deepened, Lebanon plunged into a civil war. The “civil war was the result of perceived injustices in the political system, as sectarian groups fought to both transform and maintain the status quo distribution of power

⁵ (Salloukh B. , *The Art of the Impossible: The Foreign Policy of Lebanon*, 2008, p. 286)

⁶ (Salloukh B. , *The Art of the Impossible: The Foreign Policy of Lebanon*, 2008, p. 286)

⁷ (Salloukh B. F., 2013, p. 135)

⁸ (Salloukh B. F., 2013, p. 135)

and influence in the government”⁹. Exacerbating the problem is Lebanon geographic location which made it a center of the Arab-Israeli conflict and highly manipulated by Syria, Egypt, Iran and Saudi Arabia. External and domestic actors became determinant of the making of a foreign policy in the weak state of Lebanon¹⁰.

The signing of the Taif Accord in 1989, an agreement interceded by both Saudi Arabia and the United States, brought a closure to the Lebanese 15-years civil war. This agreement came to reinforce the out-of-date National Pact, bringing in a new division of power by reducing the power of the Maronite president, increasing the parliamentary seats and dividing them evenly among Christians and Muslims while preserving the same sectarian distribution of key positions that prevailed under the prewar agreement¹¹. Adding to that, Article 54 of the Lebanese constitution stated that the “decisions of the President of the Republic must be countersigned by the Prime Minister and the minister or ministers concerned with the exception of the decree designating a new Prime Minister and the decree accepting the resignation of the Cabinet or considering it resigned”¹². Thus “Decrees issuing laws must be countersigned by the Prime Minister”¹³.

To sum it up, the Taif Accord revived the confessional system and exacerbated the distrust and marginalization sentiments among Christians. Adding to that, the Taif reflected clearly the Lebanese foreign policy that marked the beginning of the 90s until 2005; “it altered postwar foreign policymaking, and placed genuine constraints on the country’s foreign

⁹ (Bloomquist, Gilchrist, & Indelicato , 2011, p. 4)

¹⁰ (Moubarak, 2003, p. 21)

¹¹ (Bloomquist, Gilchrist, & Indelicato , 2011, p. 5)

¹² (The Lebanese Constitution, 1997, p. 242)

¹³ (The Lebanese Constitution, 1997, p. 242)

policy choices”¹⁴. The postwar agreement states that Lebanon should not constitute a fertile ground for any activity that might pose a danger to the security of Syria and vice-versa¹⁵. This statement gave primacy to security policies and provided Syria with an alibi to interfere in Lebanon’s politics, whether domestic or foreign¹⁶. Thus, the disarmament of militias which was called for in the Taif Accord only applied to those who were not allied to Syria and the later became the most influential regional player in the country. The Taif Accord gave Syria a legal recognition to station its troops on Lebanese soils and committed Lebanon to bilateral treaties giving it privileges in all fields especially in regard to the negotiations with Israel as stated in the Treaty of Brotherhood, Cooperation and Coordination signed in 1991¹⁷.

In short, foreign policy conduct in prewar Lebanon was a presidential advantage, in other words a Christian privilege. Following the Taif Accord, it became more penetrated by the Muslims and especially the Shiites as the agreement shuffled the highest ministries which include the “Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants” among the leading sects in the country, being Maronites, Greek Orthodox, Sunnis and Shiites. From the National Pact to the Taif Accord, Lebanon’s foreign policy has been highly vulnerable to domestic rivalries and penetrated by external players. Lebanon’s inability to meet with the economic, social and security needs of its people classified the country as a weak state. A state is characterized as

¹⁴ (Salloukh B. , *The Art of the Impossible: The Foreign Policy of Lebanon*, 2008, p. 386)

¹⁵ (Moubarak, 2003, p. 21)

¹⁶ (Moubarak, 2003, p. 21)

¹⁷ In reference to the articles published by the United Nations-treaties series (*Treaty of Brotherhood, Cooperation and Coordination*, 1992)

weak when it fails to provide security, basic services and civil freedoms to its citizens.

In other words, a weak state is one in which one or more of the following deficiencies exist; “security gap” which develops when a government fails to provide security. Thus, “rebellious armed groups or criminal nonstate actors may use violence to exploit this security gap”¹⁸. Another deficiency is known as the “capacity gap” when the government fails to “provide basic services such as education and health care to its citizens”¹⁹. Last but not least, the “legitimacy gap” which is the most dangerous and risky as it develops when the government is incapable of meeting the “needs to protect the basic rights and freedoms of its people, enforce the rule of law and allow broad-base participation in the political process”²⁰.

Weak states, like Lebanon, have gained international attention in post-cold war era as they “could breed terror, crime, instability and disease”²¹. The concern surrounding weak states escalated with the rise of Al-Qaeda and other terrorist groups. These non-state actors found weak states to be a fertile ground to launch their operation such as Al-Qaeda which “enjoyed the hospitality of two failed states, Sudan and Afghanistan, where it built training camps and enlisted new members”²². The capacity of these non-state actors to act independently and conduct their own foreign policy and the inability of weak states to control them shifted the attention of the international community to these states and precisely to those located in the Middle East.

¹⁸ (Eizenstat, Porter, & Weinstein, 2005, p. 136)

¹⁹ (Eizenstat, Porter, & Weinstein, 2005, p. 136)

²⁰ (Eizenstat, Porter, & Weinstein, 2005, p. 136)

²¹ (Patrick, 2006, p. 2)

²² (Patrick, 2006, p. 5)

Following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 which targeted the World Trade Center and the Pentagon in the United States, the latter adopted a new strategy and gave higher importance to weak states in its foreign policy agenda²³. Backed by France, the U.S successfully managed to advance United Nations Security Council Resolution 1595 which entailed the departure of all non-Lebanese forces from the country and the demilitarization of all actors except the military²⁴. The resolution brought little fruit and Syria increased its control over Lebanon.

However, the assassination of Rafik Hariri reinforced the position of the United States in Lebanon and forced Syria to cooperate with the international community by partially adhering to the previously mentioned resolution²⁵. This resulted in the withdrawal of the Syrian troops from Lebanon and the organization of free elections, with US support, in 2005. As a result, expectations rose about the possibility that drafting foreign policy in a post-2005 Lebanon will be converted into more of a domestic affair. Nonetheless, as the Cedar Revolution divided the Lebanese between two camps- March 8 aligned with Iran and Syria and March 14 aligned with the West- the old dispute over Lebanon's foreign policy was revived as the sectarian dispute for political control intensified.

Sub-state foreign policies highlighted the post-Syria period in Lebanon in a changing regional politics as was reflected in the 2006 Israel-Hezbollah war. Moreover, the increased rivalry among various Lebanese political groups over power control exposed the country to external interference.

²³ (Patrick, 2006, pp. 1-4)

²⁴ (United Nation Security Council, 2005, p. 5)

²⁵ The resolution also demanded the demarcations of borders between Lebanon and Syria which the latter neglected

1.2 Research Questions and Significance of Topic:

This thesis aims at providing an analysis of the obstacles facing Lebanon's foreign policy by examining the role of sectarian identities in its making. From this perspective, this paper aims at answering the following questions: How does constructivism help in explaining the attitude of different identities and their impact on foreign policy? How do external factors influence domestic actors and impact foreign policy? How did the elites in Lebanon construct sectarian identities? What purpose did it serve? How did these identities play as a constraint to Lebanon's foreign policy?

By examining the above questions, this thesis highlights that the obstacles to a Lebanese unified foreign policy are not merely found in the regional and international level of analysis, but also at the domestic level. In sum, this thesis argues that sectarian identities, which have developed in Lebanon, inhibits the creation of a unified consensus around many agreements dealing with its international affairs and opens a room for foreign intervention in its foreign affairs including external mediation as in the Cairo Agreement 1969, the Taif Accord 1989, and recently the Doha Agreement in 2008 thus posing a fundamental challenge to the making of a cohesive Lebanese foreign policy.

1.3 Methodology

This thesis employs the case-study method to examine how identity-oriented parties and groups within Lebanon responded to the Syrian crisis. It explains their behavior vis-à-vis the Syrian crisis not only based on the balance of power theory but also based on the importance of their identities which constructivism helps in the explanation of their development and

construction. This case study highlights the importance of sub-national identities in the making of Lebanon's foreign policy. The qualitative approach used in this thesis also refers to historical research. The latter helps understanding how identities and sectarianism have developed in Lebanon into its present forms taking into account the development of March 8 and March 14 identities. It also helps in understanding the continuous obstacles to Lebanon's foreign policy. It also puts the Syrian crisis into context.

This method employs both primary and secondary sources. The former consisting of newspapers articles (Al-Akhbar, Al-Jazeera, Al-Arabiya and The Daily Star), as the latter includes books, academic articles and internet references examining the literature on sectarianism in Lebanon as well as on the Lebanese foreign policy. It also refers to theoretical books which underline the main arguments of constructivism and the strengths and weaknesses of this approach in analyzing foreign policy.

1.3 Literature Review

The foreign policy of Lebanon is a mere reflection of its population and the country's relation with regional and international powers. From this context and following the re-construction of the Lebanese state after the country's fifteen years of civil war, significant amount of academic articles have been written about the country's foreign policy. In fact, many scholars as well as politicians have posed the lack of a unified foreign policy in Lebanon as the main obstacle challenging the statehood of Lebanon.

For starters, the definition of foreign policy in itself, according to Flockhart, is an "agent-level activity" which encompasses several policy

makers subject to both internal and external environments²⁶. These agents, according to constructivists, “do not have a portfolio of interests that they carry around independent of social context; instead they define their interests in the process of defining situations”²⁷.

This is not to say that constructivism ignores the national and material interests of actors. However, identities are placed at the core of interests and therefore, the foreign policy of a certain state is initially a product of socio-cultural factors, in other words identities. From this perspective, Lebanon’s foreign policy requires in-depth analyses of the identities and sub-identities and the domestic level which are posing various challenges to the making of a united foreign policy. In fact, Charbel Nahas, the former telecommunications and labor minister of Lebanon, published an article in Al-Akhbar newspaper stating that “foreign policy is the translation of internal choices and their extension into the state’s external relations”²⁸.

Ussama Makdisi, the author of the *“Reconstructing the Nation-State: The Modernity of Sectarianism in Lebanon”*, depicts sectarianism as a recent phenomenon in Lebanon dating back to the nineteenth century. Unlike popular beliefs, sectarian-based politics in Lebanon have not always existed; rather it has been deployed as a tool by the elites to maintain their influence by dividing the community along sectarian lines²⁹. Makdisi gives the example of communities in Mount Lebanon which were, prior to the

²⁶ (Flockhart, 2012)

²⁷ (Wendt, 1992)

²⁸ “Lebanese Foreign Policy: The Foundation of an Actual State” an article written by Charbel Nahas which explores the limitations to the re-emergence of a Lebanese state with a unified foreign policy (Al-Akhbar, 2013, April 30)

²⁹ (Makdisi U. , 1996)

nineteenth century, rooted in “hierarchical politics of notability that cut across religious lines”³⁰.

Bassel Salloukh elaborates on the role of sects and sub sects in inhibiting the making of a coherent Lebanese foreign policy in “*The Art of the Impossible: The Foreign Policy of Lebanon*”. He adds that alongside these domestic divisions, domestic actors ally themselves with external powers and employ “transnational ideologies” in order to consolidate their rule internally and these alliances permits external actors to interfere in Lebanon’s decision-making on a variety of issues³¹. Sam Khazai and William J. Hess examine, in their work “*Enemy Brothers: Conflict, Cooperation, and Communal Dynamics within Lebanon*”, the reaction of the seven major political factions in Lebanon to the Syrian crisis³². They also explore how each of these actors follow its independent foreign policy based on its interests which are dependent of their identities resulting in what Henrietta Wilkins refers to in her book “*The Making of Lebanese Foreign Policy: Understanding the 2006 Hezbollah-Israeli war*”, as multiple foreign policies³³.

As the Syrian uprising soon turned into a civil war, Lebanon opted for a policy of disassociation as expressed in terms of neutralization in the Baabda Declaration. However, Justin Salhani, an author at the Daily Star, highlighted in his article the failure of this policy as parties refused to impersonate the plan of disassociation³⁴. As such policy failed to translate into action, the problem of identities and their role in obstructing the

³⁰ (Makdisi U. , 1996)

³¹ (Salloukh B. , *The Art of the Impossible: The Foreign Policy of Lebanon*, 2008)

³² (Khazai & Hess, 2013)

³³ (Wilkins, 2013)

³⁴ (Salhani, 2012)

creation of a cohesive Lebanese foreign policy resurfaced to gain once again the consideration of various intellectuals.

1.4 Map of the Thesis

This thesis consists of six chapters. The first chapter introduces the main parameters of the thesis. Chapter two provides a theoretical framework by introducing constructivism and its contribution to explaining foreign policy in general and that of Lebanon in particular. Chapter three discusses the rise of sectarianism in Lebanon prior to independence and how it has been constructed and manipulated following independence. The chapter also examines the role that sectarianism played in the making of Lebanon's foreign policy until the Syrian uprising in 2011. Chapter four explores the nature of the Lebanese political parties and the culture of the *Zaiim*. Chapter five explains the outbreak of the Syrian uprising and its development into a civil war and its implication on Lebanon and its foreign policy. The Baabda Declaration serves as the case study to evaluate the overlapping disagreement over Lebanon's foreign policy which will be elaborated in this chapter. The sixth and final chapter summarizes the main arguments of the thesis and concludes with an evaluation of constructivism's strengths and limitations in explaining Lebanon's foreign policy and the continuing constraints it faces.

CHAPTER TWO

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Constructivism Overview

The ending of the Cold War and the inability of the two most popular theories, being pluralism and realism, to foresee, let alone explain, its ending, paved the way to the emergence of a relatively new theoretical approach in international relations, that of constructivism³⁵. “Constructivism can be seen as a middle ground or bridge between other conceptual approaches to international relations”³⁶. In other words, Constructivism can be placed in the middle of a spectrum on which the positivist, in other word the realist and liberal approaches are found on one end and their antagonist or anti-positivists approaches such as poststructuralist are located on the other end. Actors’ behaviors to positivist theories are driven by “materially oriented interests” and ideas are of second importance³⁷.

One of their main assumptions is decisions are taken by rational actors who evaluate the pros and cons of each alternative before settling on a choice³⁸. As for the other end of the spectrum, the emphasis is placed on the power of ideas and the importance of science is thus reduced³⁹.

Constructivism’s roots extend to other disciplines such as philosophy and sociology and can be traced back to the work of Giambattista Vico, an Italian philosopher in the eighteenth century. Vico distinguished between two worlds; a natural world created by God and a historical world fashioned

³⁵ (Flockhart, 2012, pp. 79-81)

³⁶ (Viotttil & Kauppi, 2012, p. 278)

³⁷ (Viotttil & Kauppi, 2012, p. 278)

³⁸ (Viotttil & Kauppi, 2012, p. 278)

³⁹ (Viotttil & Kauppi, 2012, p. 278)

by man⁴⁰. Additionally, Emmanuel Kant, the German philosopher, is another intellectual precursor to the rise of constructivism who argued that our knowledge of the world is a subjective understanding affected by our human consciousness⁴¹. Other key scholars whose influences are directly revealed in the constructivists approach are John Locke, Emile Durkheim and Max Weber. Locke's influence on constructivism is revealed in their assumptions regarding anarchy. At the domestic Level of analysis Locke claimed that society is established by a contract to bring together individuals and that an "anarchic state of nature" is not necessarily confrontational⁴².

Constructivists applied these arguments in their analysis at the international level of analysis. In other words, the realist assumption of self-help in an insecure world lacking a legitimate central authority is not the only valid interpretation of the international system. Constructivists also were influenced by Durkheim's argument that structure influences the relation between actors and this interaction has a causal effect⁴³. Durkheim also claimed that ideational and material structures can be studied scientifically⁴⁴. Last but not least, Weber's contribution lies in his "idea that human actions can be value-driven- a value rationality in which choices follow from beliefs or commitments often rooted in moral, ethical, religious or cultural understandings"⁴⁵. The intellectual contribution of the previously mentioned scholars will become apparent in the examination of the major assumptions of constructivism.

⁴⁰ (Jackson & Sorensen, 2006, p. 164)

⁴¹ (Jackson & Sorensen, 2006, p. 164)

⁴² (Viotttil & Kauppi, 2012, p. 280)

⁴³ (Viotttil & Kauppi, 2012, p. 281)

⁴⁴ (Viotttil & Kauppi, 2012, p. 281)

⁴⁵ (Viotttil & Kauppi, 2012, p. 281)

The word constructivism however was coined by Nicholas Onuf in the late 80's and with the contribution of Alexander Wendt and other scholars constructivism was established becoming an important approach in the discipline of international relations. Wendt, in his article "*Anarchy is what states make of it: the social construction of power politics*" published in 1992, sought to challenge the neorealist assumption that the anarchic nature of the international system unavoidably lead to self-help⁴⁶. It is not anarchy, according to Wendt, but rather the interaction between states that shape a particular set of state identities and interests.

To begin with, just as Vico distinguished between two worlds, constructivists have also separated the political and social world from that of nature. In fact, the social and political world does not simply exist in a vacuum; "it is not an external reality whose laws can be discovered by scientific research and explained by scientific theory as positivists and behaviouralists argue"⁴⁷. Individual's beliefs and ideas, therefore, determine the historical and social world. Constructivism places the emphasis on "normative or ideational structures" which are highly important when analyzing the behavior of states and individuals⁴⁸. Flockhart mentions that "structures are often codified in formal rules and norms, which agents are socialized into following"⁴⁹. Rules, in this regard, can either be formal as in the case of written constitutions and agreements or informal as in the case of unquestionable norms followed by particular groups⁵⁰.

⁴⁶ (Jackson & Sorensen, 2006, p. 168)

⁴⁷ (Jackson & Sorensen, 2006, p. 164)

⁴⁸ (Reus-Smit, 2009, p. 220)

⁴⁹ (Flockhart, 2012, p. 84)

⁵⁰ (Flockhart, 2012, p. 84)

However, this does not mean that material structures are of no importance. In fact, the physical structures construct the social world just as beliefs and ideas do. Jackson and Sorensen stated that “the international system of security and defense, for example, consists of territories, populations, weapons and other physical assets”⁵¹. However, they added that “it is the ideas and understandings according to which those assets are conceived, organized and used—e.g. in alliances, armed forces, etc.—that is most important”⁵². They added that the “physical element is there, but it is secondary to the intellectual element which infuses it with meaning, plans it, organizes it and guides it”⁵³. Indeed, a center belief of constructivism “is that people act toward objects, including other actors, on the basis of the meanings that the objects have for them”⁵⁴. The difference in state behavior, thus, is not solely determined by the balance of power in an anarchic international system, as realists, assume. The reason that the U.S. behaves differently when tackling the nuclear power of Iran than when dealing with the nuclear power of Israel “depends on the intersubjective understandings and expectations, on the distribution of knowledge, that constitute their conceptions of self and other”⁵⁵.

In short, states do not behave similarly towards rivals as they do when dealing with allies because the former are intimidating while the latter are not⁵⁶. Sovereignty, in this sense, “exists only in virtue of certain

⁵¹ (Jackson & Sorensen, 2006, p. 165)

⁵² (Jackson & Sorensen, 2006, p. 165)

⁵³ (Jackson & Sorensen, 2006, p. 165)

⁵⁴ (Wendt, 1992, pp. 396-397)

⁵⁵ (Wendt, 1992, p. 397)

⁵⁶ (Wendt, 1992, p. 397)

intersubjective understandings and expectations”⁵⁷. This term does not exist without the presence of an alternative. Constructivism takes into consideration agents other than the state such as transnational and international organizations in their analysis of actors and perceives “the world as a project always under construction”⁵⁸. Unlike realists who regard the state as a black box, constructivists look deeper into the components of the state and place an emphasis on the actions taken by individuals who constitute the state⁵⁹.

A core concept to constructivism is that of “inter-subjectivity”. In other words, “ideas must be widely shared to matter”⁶⁰. Nevertheless, “they can be held by different groups, such as organizations, policymakers, social groups or society”⁶¹. Those who adhere to the constructivist’s approach believe that identities and states’ interests are not innate, rather they are constructed. Therefore, it is crucial to understand how “non-material structures” influence and shape actor’s identities⁶². In fact, actors, being state or non-state, carry more than a single identity, each shaped by specific social, historical, political, cultural factors and these identities, in their turn, determine the interests of actors⁶³. State institutions, in this regard, are identified as an arrangement of interests and identities which are flexible and can be changed. These institutions can thus either be cooperative, conflicting or competitive⁶⁴. To sum it up, constructivism is an empirical

⁵⁷ (Wendt, 1992, p. 412)

⁵⁸ (Viottil & Kauppi, 2012, p. 279)

⁵⁹ (Viottil & Kauppi, 2012, p. 278)

⁶⁰ (Jackson & Sorensen, 2006, p. 166)

⁶¹ (Jackson & Sorensen, 2006, p. 166)

⁶² (Reus-Smit, 2009, p. 221)

⁶³ (Wendt, 1992, p. 398)

⁶⁴ (Wendt, 1992, p. 399)

approach focusing on shared ideas that characterize international affairs. Objective knowledge is a false notion according to this approach as our understanding of the truth is subject to our human consciousness.

The contribution of constructivism to the international affairs discipline is significant especially when it comes to foreign policy analysis. By including the social element and explaining how these interests are constructed, constructivism added an important component to the analysis of a country's foreign policy. The following section will delve deeper into the contributions of constructivism to the understanding and advancing of foreign policy.

2.2 Constructivism and Foreign Policy Analysis

Foreign policy denotes an arrangement “of official external relations conducted by an independent actor (usually a state) in international relations”⁶⁵. It should neither be confused with public policy which defines a state's actions within its boundaries nor should it be confound with diplomacy which represents one side of foreign policy⁶⁶. Foreign policy analysis, in this case, is the examinations of factors and motives that led the state to undergo a certain action. It also includes the decision-making process which led to this behavior as well as the outcome of that decision.

Until the cold war, the two dominant views that explained state behavior were that of realism and liberalism. The main realist perspective, as stated by Kenneth Waltz was that state interests arise from objective factors linked to national security and international threats in an anarchic international

⁶⁵ (Wilkins, 2013, p. 1)

⁶⁶ (Kubalkova, 2001, p. 35)

system⁶⁷. State is perceived as a unitary actor constantly struggling for power. As for the liberalist theory, states as well as international institutions share commercial interests that along with the spread of democracy will lead to cooperation and peace⁶⁸.

As the cold war ended, intellectuals “engaged in foreign policy analysis (FPA) have forged new paths of inquiry essential to opening the black box of domestic politics and policymaking in an effort to understand actors' choices in global politics”⁶⁹. Therefore, various levels of analysis influence foreign policy outcomes. The embracement of actors neglected by the two previously mentioned theories and the importance given to non-material factors allowed constructivists to engage in foreign policy analysis.

Constructivism disagrees with the realist assumption that states are unitary actors and takes into consideration other actors. Therefore, a “constructivist student of foreign policy would thus be interested in analyzing not only the interest construction process of state-based actors and the impact of unit-level factors on it, but also the influence of supranational bureaucracies and transnational units, such as non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and Multinational Corporations (MNCs) on constituting the agential interests at the state-level foreign policy making”⁷⁰. States, in this regard, are social actors who interact in a system constructed by ideas, rules, norms and material factors. Decision makers, according to constructivism, construct the social environment within which they carry out foreign policy in dealing

⁶⁷ (Snyder, 2004)

⁶⁸ (Snyder, 2004)

⁶⁹ (Garrison, 2003, p. 155)

⁷⁰ (Behravesh, 2011)

with other states. Human awareness and knowledge must be taken into consideration when dealing with international relations studies⁷¹.

Foreign policy, according to this approach, is a tool that links states. Constructivism delves into foreign policy by focusing on the impact of ideas and the construction of interests and identities and by linking norms and identity changes at both the national and international levels. Constructivism claims that constructed identities are determinate to interstate relations⁷². It holds that identities and interests shift depending on historical factors and social changes⁷³. To elaborate, states create identities which in their turn determine national interest. From this perspective, as “anarchy is what states make of it, the national interest is also what states make of it”⁷⁴.

To sum it up, state’s identities and interests are shaped by historical, cultural, and political factors. Therefore an analysis of a country’s foreign policy must include domestic and international factors. International politics is the social realm in which states interact and foreign policy makers’ understandings of this world depends on the meanings created in their domestic environment.

Looking at the Middle East from a constructivist perspective, foreign policy identities and states’ interests are endogenous and found within the state system itself. Sub-identities (ethnic or sectarian) and supra-identities (Islamic Ummah or Arab Nationalism)⁷⁵ in the Middle East compete and

⁷¹ (Wicaksana, 2008, p. 5)

⁷² (Behraves, 2011)

⁷³ (Walt, 1998, p. 44)

⁷⁴ (Wicaksana, 2008, p. 13)

⁷⁵ Nationalism in the Arab world is different than that in the Western World. Arab Nationalism refers to the unification of Arab states whereas nationalism in Europe for instance refers to the nation-

challenge state identities. As a consequence, “ruling elites are caught between *raison de la nation* (Pan-Arabism) and *raison d'état* (sovereignty) in foreign policymaking”⁷⁶. Therefore an analysis of the region’s foreign policy must combine top-down approaches to as well as bottom-up approaches taking into consideration “multiple roles and nested contexts that enable, constrain, and constitute the players and playing fields of foreign policymaking”⁷⁷.

Moving precisely to Lebanon, sub-state actors have taken advantage of the weak state which allowed them to possess their own interests and forge ties with external powers. This situation allowed for these sub-state identity groups to develop their own foreign policy even if it contradicts that of the government and to create policies serving their personal interest once they seize power.

Politics in Lebanon has been divided into two levels; one consisting of democratic institutions such as the elected parliament which is at the forefront of the political arena and a second which is more influential yet less observable consisting of kinship and sectarian ties⁷⁸. However, sectarianism has not always existed in Lebanese politics. Actually, sectarianism, according to Makdisi, is “a creation that dates back no further than the beginnings of the modern era”⁷⁹. This is not to say that security dilemmas are not essential especially when analyzing foreign states relations with Lebanon as in the case of Syria and Israel as well as the

state. Lebanese nationalism, on the other hand, refers to distinguishing Lebanon from its Arab entourage and considers Lebanese to be Phoenicians and not Arabs.

⁷⁶ (Hinnebusch, Introduction: The analytical framework, 2002, p. 8)

⁷⁷ (Garrison, 2003, p. 184)

⁷⁸ (Hottinger, 1961, p. 127)

⁷⁹ (Makdisi U. , 1996, p. 23)

security dilemma that exists among various Lebanese groups. “Sectarian power struggle has driven sects to seek foreign backing and support in order to balance against one another”⁸⁰.

However, just as security conflicts, domestic and ideological conflicts constitute an important factor in the study of Lebanon’s politics and thus the “strength of Constructivism is its ability to explain influences on international affairs that are not based on the balance of power between states, or military conflict”⁸¹.

Additionally, the political system in Lebanon, referred to as consociational democracy, indicates a power-sharing system whereby various sectarian groups and individuals are represented⁸². Such system places the emphasis on the domestic level when analyzing its politics. The division of the Lebanese community along confessional lines has been highly reflected in its foreign policy, or rather lack of it. Yet, it should not be denied that foreign policy in Lebanon witnessed some bright spots during the Shehabist era. In fact, Shehab adopted a policy of neutrality when it comes to foreign affairs. By grasping the pluralistic feature of the Lebanese system and its environment, he shaped the country’s foreign policy as to become “friendly but not tied to Nasser’s United Arab Republic, and friendly but not tied to Washington and Paris”⁸³.

In short, Lebanon lacks a unified foreign policy and this has been revealed in the limitations to the National Pact and the Taif Accord previously which have been repeated when looking at the current challenges to the Baabda

⁸⁰ (Salamey, 2009, p. 92)

⁸¹ (Bloomquist, Gilchrist, & Indelicato, 2011, p. 11)

⁸² (Makdisi & El-Khalil, 2013, p. 4)

⁸³ (Hudson, 1995, p. 205)

Declaration; being the primacy of elites' interests and alliances with regional or international forces over national well being. However, sectarian identities in Lebanon are not primordial and have been constructed due to historical and social changes. The following chapter explains how sectarianism was constructed in Lebanon and what role did it play in the making of the country's foreign policy.

CHAPTER THREE

SECTARIANISM AND FOREIGN POLICY

IN LEBANON

According to Clark and Salloukh, “constructivism assumes that ethnic identities are a product of material and political struggles in specific historical contexts”⁸⁴. Such identities are perceived as the creation of the interaction between domestic and foreign factors, the former characterized by the behavior of the Lebanese and the latter linked to the balance of power among regional and international powers⁸⁵. Class conflict and cleavages characterize societies in the industrialized world whereas racial, sectarian and ethnic differences marked societies in the developing world⁸⁶. In Lebanon, class mobilization is possible; one can move from a certain “socio-economic class” however “particularistic affiliation, on the other hand, is rigid and ascriptive”⁸⁷. One might find itself rejected from society should this person choose to move out of the group that the latter was born into. “Thus, one is born Arab, Druze, Shiite, Sephardic or Circassian and cannot opt out of the group with the same ease as one may marry into the upper class and, by doing so, espouse a different socio-economic class”⁸⁸. What are the historical and social factors that led to the rise of sectarian identities in Lebanon and made such affiliations significantly rigid?

⁸⁴ (Clark & Salloukh, 2013, p. 731)

⁸⁵ (Moubarak, 2003, p. 2)

⁸⁶ (Azar & Haddad, 1986, p. 1338)

⁸⁷ (Azar & Haddad, 1986, p. 1338)

⁸⁸ (Azar & Haddad, 1986, p. 1338)

3.1 Prior to independence

“Before the processes of sectarianisation, any number of identities could have been more powerful than those tied to religion”⁸⁹. These identities could have ranged from a person’s social rank to one’s political opinion. The divisions in Mount Lebanon were little related to sectarian contentions and more linked to the hierarchy found in the “politics of notability” whereby the notables belonging to influential families controlled various territories within Mount Lebanon creating an elite class that cut across sectarian lines⁹⁰. These “great families” were distinguished from the commoners also known as the “ahali” common people, by their acquisition of lands, their tenures and language and matrimonial bonds. Thus, beliefs “of a unified, territorially demarcated nationalism of adherents of a particular religion that transcended kin, village or region”⁹¹ were lacking.

Prior to independence, one could not talk about a Lebanese foreign policy. However, with the approach of the nineteenth century, several changes paved the way to the rise of sectarianism in Lebanon. To begin with, the Christian population grew in size which shifted the balance in favor of the elites belonging to this sect as they constituted more than half of the population (55.6% in 1956)⁹². Prior to the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, European forces distinguished the Christian community by giving advantages to its traders and placing it under its wing under allegation of protecting it from its Muslim counterpart⁹³.

⁸⁹ (Degerald, 2012)

⁹⁰ (Makdisi U. , 1996, p. 24)

⁹¹ (Makdisi U. , 1996, p. 24)

⁹² (Soffer, 1986, p. 199)

⁹³ (Makdisi U. , 1996, p. 24)

In 1830s, the Ottoman Empire sought to grant equality before law to all inhabitants of its provinces; a process called “tanzimat”⁹⁴. This and other reforms served to please European great powers; mainly France and Britain which took the role of the protectionist of Christian and Druze communities respectively. Adding to European interests, Ibrahim Pasha followed a strategy to quell any local discontent which is to pit a certain group over the other. In 1840s, the Druze rebelled against the Ottoman Empire and as a result Ibrahim Pasha mobilized the Maronites against them⁹⁵. “The civil war between Maronites and Druze in 1860 and the massacres it caused at a time of a weakening Ottoman empire, intensified the political intervention of European powers”⁹⁶. Undeniably, the intervention of French troops allied with Christian communities had culminated growing sectarian divide. To be sure, a web of factors played a role in the process of sectarianisation such as colonialism. Deliberately or not, colonial forces played a stimulating role in the development of sectarianism in Lebanon⁹⁷.

The Ottoman Empire’s breakdown and the signing of the 1916 Sykes-Picot Agreement signaled the beginning of a new era; that of colonialism. Indeed Sykes-Picot could be considered as the materialization of “colonial decisions permanently shaping (or misshaping) the Middle East, different regimes, both colonial and post-colonial have stimulated sectarianism for their own goals in terms of power”⁹⁸. Adding to that, colonialism had a major impact on the exploitation of politics based on religion by elites. The “drive to create a territorially unified Lebanese nation- state was in part the

⁹⁴ (Makdisi U. , 2000, p. 3)

⁹⁵ (Degerald, 2012)

⁹⁶ (Makdisi & El-Khalil, 2013, p. 7)

⁹⁷ (Degerald, 2012)

⁹⁸ (Degerald, 2012)

result of European (primarily but not exclusively French) colonial myth-making”⁹⁹.

With the French mandate, the Maronite and Druze leaders sought to take advantage of the European penetration and the economic integration by playing the sectarian card in order to appeal to these powers and maintain their ruling position¹⁰⁰. Thus, the sect and its security came to replace classes and social ranks and became a mobilizing card in the hands of the elites who manipulated it whenever their positions became jeopardized. The support of the Maronites with their strong ties with France led to the creation of Great Lebanon in 1920. Following this year, “the issue was no longer enshrining the taifa as a nation but forging a Lebanese nation-state composed of many taifas”¹⁰¹. The creation of Great Lebanon increased its territories and as a consequence its religious heterogeneity. The Maronites depicted themselves as the main leaders of Great Lebanon and referred to their demographic numbers and their alliance with the French to legitimize their claim. By that time, Sunnis became the largest Muslim community, outnumbering the Druze and Shiites, and rejected the idea of a Great Lebanon as they called for a Greater Syria¹⁰².

To keep their control and face the threat of Arab nationalism and other independent movements, the French deliberately kept sectarian divisions as they adopted a divide-and-rule strategy. Even though colonial power took the role of protectionist of Lebanon autonomy and Christian interests, they kept the Maronites away from dominating all state institutions. In fact, the

⁹⁹ (Makdisi U. , 1996, p. 24)

¹⁰⁰ (Makdisi U. , 1996, p. 24)

¹⁰¹ (Makdisi U. , 1996, p. 25)

¹⁰² (Makdisi U. , 1996, p. 25)

“power-sharing policies of French officials left vulnerable to political sectarianism, feudalism and clientelism”¹⁰³. Their policies resulted in the strengthening of the elites’ control as the latter portrayed themselves as the protectors of their communities’ interests and rights.

Additionally, Syrian intervention in Lebanese affairs can be traced back to that era. The policies taken by the French colonial power against nationalists and those calling for a Greater Syria paved the way for Syria to interfere in Lebanon by manipulating sectarian divisions to undermine French power¹⁰⁴. The German invasion of France undermined the latter’s power in the Middle East. This marked the beginning of a new era in the region characterized by national movements and quest for independence. As for Lebanon, three nationalist movements could be distinguished in that period; “Christian Nationalist” who continued to seek for French protection, “Arab Nationalists” who called for Greater Syria and Lebanese Nationalist who sought for an independent Lebanon that encompassed the territories agreed upon in 1920 declaration of Great Lebanon and which hold close ties with its Arab surrounding¹⁰⁵.

3.2 Following Independence

Lebanon’s foreign policy formally began when the country acquired its independence from French colonialism in 1943. Indeed, the “divergent conceptions of the identity of the state result in a collection of foreign policies that are held by various state, sub-state, and non-state actors”¹⁰⁶.

The relation of both its state and non-state actors with external powers

¹⁰³ (Zahar, 2005, p. 227)

¹⁰⁴ (Zahar, 2005, p. 227)

¹⁰⁵ (Zahar, 2005, p. 227)

¹⁰⁶ (Bloomquist, Gilchrist, & Indelicato, 2011, p. 2)

became determinant of the country's foreign policy. In fact, understanding domestic politics in Lebanon is essential to fully comprehending the multiplicity of foreign policies of actors. Additionally, "external regional and international actors direct their policies not only at the Lebanese state, but also at these sub-state and non-state actors"¹⁰⁷. Therefore, Lebanon's foreign policy is described as a two-level game as it encompasses both domestic and foreign political affairs.

As a result, actors contested over the control of the "Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants" as it became one of the mainly desired posts in the government. Prior to plunging into civil war, the National Pact; an informal agreement between the Maronite President and the Sunni Prime Minister, determined the country's foreign policy. The latter sought to achieve a balance between the Christians' wished to deepen their ties with the West and the Muslims' desires to join the Arab world and Ummah.

This power-sharing system also referred to as consociational democracy, comprised three major notions. The first principle is that of "segmental proportionality", meaning that a community's representation in the parliament reflect its demographic weight¹⁰⁸. Thus, the Christian community had the largest representation in the parliament as the latter's seats were divided among the two main sects based on a six to five ratio¹⁰⁹. Maronites were also guaranteed the position of the head of General Directorate of General Security, "the army and military intelligence, the supreme justice council and central bank"¹¹⁰. Additionally, until the time of

¹⁰⁷ (Bloomquist, Gilchrist, & Indelicato, 2011, p. 2)

¹⁰⁸ (Zahar, 2005, p. 228)

¹⁰⁹ (Makdisi & El-Khalil, 2013, p. 4)

¹¹⁰ (Salloukh B. F., 2013, p. 135)

writing, the presidency is reserved to the Christian Maronites whereas the Sunnis and Shiites are granted the positions of the prime minister and the speaker of the parliament respectively.

The second notion is that of “segmental autonomy” which allows each community the right to practice its religious beliefs, build its educational and social institutions without any state intervention¹¹¹. To illustrate, the Article 8 of the 1926 Lebanese constitution which was also maintained in the constitution of 1943 granted confessional communities the right to build and manage their private schools leading to a lack of common curriculum in the Lebanese educational system¹¹². The third notion is that of a neutral foreign policy. The National Pact was in fact “an agreement by the Sunnis not to seek union with Syria in return for a pledge by the Maronites not to steer the country towards the west”¹¹³.

Previous to the outburst of the Lebanese civil war, the presidency, being the most authoritative post, influenced the decision-making of the main policies in Lebanon and precisely that of its foreign policy. As mentioned earlier, Articles 52, 53, 55 and 56 of the constitution gave the president the right to “appoint prime ministers, appoint and dismiss cabinet ministers, promulgate laws, dissolve parliament, and negotiate and ratify international treaties”¹¹⁴.

The National Pact guaranteed that no group was powerful enough to take solitary control over the state’s identity or decision making in order to ensure harmony and stability in a multi-confessional society. As for the country’s foreign relations, policies were taken in reference to the wishes of

¹¹¹ (Zahar, 2005, p. 228)

¹¹² (Farayha, 2009, p. 2)

¹¹³ (Zahar, 2005, p. 228)

¹¹⁴ (Salloukh B. F., 2013, p. 135)

both the Christian and the Muslim communities. Yet, the historical mistrust and conflict between the various Lebanese sects prevailed and whenever the desires of these two communities would contradict, violent erupted. Foreign policy disagreements caused major turmoil in the country as the events of late 50s and 60s.

Moreover, the “rise of Nassir in Egypt and the spread of his pan-Arab, anti-western ideology in the 1950s deeply divided Lebanese confessional politics, contributing to the first Civil War of 1958”. In 1956, Jamal Abdel Nasser decided to nationalize the Suez Canal with the support of the Soviet Union. The decision infuriated Western powers mainly Britain, France, Israel and the U.S. and resulted in an attack on the Suez Canal by these powers. The Lebanese President Camille Chamoun came under pressure as he maintained diplomatic relations with the West. Adding insult to injury was Chamoun’s refusal to take part in the United Arab Republic which joined Egypt and Syria. As a result, an opposition was formed within Lebanon against Chamoun, mainly by the Muslim communities and escalated into a civil war which led Chamoun to ask for help from the United States¹¹⁵.

The previously mentioned events as well as other foreign policy dilemmas highlighted the failures of the National Pact to build a national unity and identity. The “National Pact, itself a result of elite compromises, essentially legitimated a system of patronage and a division of spoils among the elites of the new nation-state, thus betraying the inability to locate a genuinely

¹¹⁵ (Little, 2001, p. 26)

national base”¹¹⁶. The state in independent Lebanon failed to become the sole determinant of the country’s foreign policy as sub-state actors devised their own foreign policy and ties with external powers. Thus, Salloukh questioned on whether the students of Lebanon’s foreign policy should take into consideration the foreign policy of “the president, the prime minister, the speaker of parliament, the foreign minister, the variable sectarian sub-state actors, or all above the above?”¹¹⁷.

The quarrel in Lebanon culminated and as the life span of the National Pact ran out, civil war erupted. The civil war was a translation of the frustration with the political system. Sectarian groups resorted to violence in order to either maintain their influence and power within the government or to shift the distribution of power to their advantage. Lebanon geographic location placed it at the heart of the Arab-Israeli quarrel and left the country vulnerable to external manipulation especially by Syria, Egypt, Iran and Saudi Arabia. External and domestic actors became determinant of the making of a foreign policy in the weak state of Lebanon¹¹⁸.

Sectarian politics culminated and sectarianism reached its zenith in Lebanon in 1975 with the eruption of a bloody civil war that lasted around 15 years¹¹⁹. The rise of armed groups and militias who used sectarianism in their battle along with the signing of the Cairo Agreement by the Lebanese government in the end of the 60s which gave the Palestinian a legitimate right to armament in Lebanon reawakened the fear of marginalization

¹¹⁶ (Makdisi U. , 1996, p. 25)

¹¹⁷ (Salloukh B. , The Art of the Impossible: The Foreign Policy of Lebanon, 2008, p. 283)

¹¹⁸ (Moubarak, 2003, p. 21)

¹¹⁹ (Makdisi U. , 1996, p. 26)

among several sects, mainly the Maronite community¹²⁰. Such fear led to the dependency of various sects on foreign forces thus increasing the influence of non-Lebanese actors in the country's affairs.

On April 13, 1975, the head of the Phalange Party, Pierre Gemayel, attended a ritual ceremony at a new church in Ayn al-Rumana. This day would soon turn into a dark memory in the Lebanese History. During the ceremony, attackers opened fire at the participants leaving three Christians dead. This happening infuriated the Christians in general and the Maronites in particular. In their quest for revenge, a group of Maronite armed men ambushed a bus on which most passengers were Palestinians at Ayn al-Rumana leaving twenty-seven dead and the rest wounded. This incident unleashed the beginning of the Lebanese civil war and became known as the catalyst that enflamed it¹²¹. The conflict "had a devastating impact on human, political, economic, and social levels"¹²². The war led to the breakdown of the state.

With the intervention of Saudi Arabia, the United States and the blessings of Egypt, Syria, France, and Iran, the Taif Accord was signed and the Lebanese 15-years civil war was terminated¹²³. This agreement reinforced the expired National Pact and gave Syria guardianship rights over Lebanon. New division of power was introduced; 20 seats were added to the parliament making their total 128 divided equally among Christians and Muslims while keeping on the same religious distribution of key positions

¹²⁰ (Moubarak, 2003, p. 5)

¹²¹ (Seaver, 2000, p. 256)

¹²² (Makdisi & El-Khalil, 2013, p. 12)

¹²³ (Salamey, 2009, p. 93)

that prevailed under the pre-war pact¹²⁴. The executive power, following the signing of Taif, shifted from the presidency to the cabinet; in other words from the Maronites to the Sunnis thus empowering the latter¹²⁵. The Taif Accord revived the confessional system and power-sharing among religious communities. It only complicated the existing fears among the eighteen different sects as it relocated the power from the Presidency to the Council of Ministers thus “reducing the check and balance system between the three branches of government to a troika, a triangular relation between the President, Prime Minister and Speaker of Parliament” which led to more deadlocks¹²⁶. With the redistribution of parliamentary seats and high-ranking governmental posts following a ratio of 5:5, and the transfer of power away from the presidency, the Christians felt marginalized and lost the advantages that they once gained under the French mandate and the 1926 constitution. Additionally, the “prerogatives and role of the Speaker, from the Shiite community, were strengthened and the Prime Minister was made accountable to parliament”¹²⁷. As a result, the dissolving of the parliament by the cabinet became nearly unfeasible.

Taif reflected clearly the Lebanese foreign policy that marked the beginning of the 90s until 2005; “it altered postwar foreign policymaking, and placed genuine constraints on the country’s foreign policy choices”¹²⁸. The accord emphasized on the shared interests between Lebanon and Syria and the “distinct relations” that link them¹²⁹. Therefore coordinating on policies

¹²⁴ (Bloomquist, Gilchrist, & Indelicato, 2011, p. 5)

¹²⁵ (Salloukh B. F., 2013, p. 136)

¹²⁶ (Moubarak, 2003, p. 22)

¹²⁷ (Karam, 2012, p. 36)

¹²⁸ (Salloukh B., *The Art of the Impossible: The Foreign Policy of Lebanon*, 2008, p. 386)

¹²⁹ (Salloukh B. F., 2013, p. 137)

became obligatory and an alibi to Syria's intervention in the Lebanese affairs, especially in its foreign policy making.

To sum it up, "selective implementation of the Taif Agreement has belied the essence of its stated objectives"¹³⁰. "Arbitrary and partial application of reforms that have been initiated by Lebanese ruling elites under Syrian tutelage between 1990 and 2005 have in fact exacerbated confessional tension and competition, and have generated new imbalances in the post-war political system"¹³¹.

3.3 The Syrian Era

In November 1989, the Lebanese parliament endorsed and confirmed the signing of the Taif Accord. However, the violence did not end as a new cycle of fighting erupted but this time within the same sect; the Maronite community. General Michael Aoun and his supporter rejected the signing of the accord as it did not include a timeframe for Syria's withdrawal from Lebanon¹³². General Aoun's rejection to leave the presidential palace ignited a new round of confrontation with Lebanese Forces militia headed by Samir Geagea. However, the summer of 1990 brought with it the defeat of General Aoun and the actual realization of the Taif Accord.

According to Salloukh, "Lebanon post-war transition was obfuscated by Syrian fiat" as "Damascus applied Taif whimsically"¹³³.

The reconstruction of the Lebanese state resulted in what Karam referred to as the "allotment state (Dawlat al-muhâsasa)"¹³⁴. Leading ranks in the government and public bureaus are allocated to different sectarian

¹³⁰ (Karam, 2012, p. 37)

¹³¹ (Karam, 2012, p. 37)

¹³² (Saseen, 1990, p. 70)

¹³³ (Salloukh B. F., 2013, p. 137)

¹³⁴ (Karam, 2012, p. 37)

groups based on a fixed quota. The elite class in this era included two types; “warlords’ elite, resulting from the transformation and demobilisation of the militia system; and newcomers’ elite, following the arrival of reconstruction man and subsequently Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri”¹³⁵ who “paved the way for other businesspeople and entrepreneurs to enter the world of politics”¹³⁶. However, this class was more concerned with achieving its personal interests than with reconstructing state institutions. In fact, the distribution of lower-ranking posts as well as public and social services became dependent on sectarian affiliations and clientelism.

The Taif Accord gave Syria a legal recognition to station its troops on Lebanese soils. Syria’s intelligence apparatus dominated state institutions and infiltrated the Lebanese social and political order. In order to avoid strong opposition in the long term, Damascus repressed those that were perceived as a threat to its existence in Lebanon. In its strategy to eliminate such resistance, Syria forced Michael Aoun into exile and sentenced Samir Geagea to jail based on charges including the assassination of Rachid Karameh, former Lebanese prime minister¹³⁷. Yet, Syria did not face serious and effective confrontation within Lebanon and the situation remained unchanged and mostly secure till 2004¹³⁸.

Additionally, the three elections held in this era were manipulated and sought to bring to power those who maintain close relations with Syria. The Taif Accord also committed Lebanon to bilateral treaties giving Syria privileges in all fields especially in regard to the negotiations with Israel.

¹³⁵ (Karam, 2012, p. 37)

¹³⁶ (Karam, 2012, p. 37)

¹³⁷ (Khazai & Hess, 2013, p. 19)

¹³⁸ (Khazai & Hess, 2013, p. 12)

The “Treaty of Brotherhood, Cooperation and Coordination” signed in 1991 stated in its first article that the “two states will work to achieve the highest levels of cooperation and coordination in all political and economic and security and cultural and scientific and other fields”¹³⁹.

Few months later, The Defense and Security Agreement was signed by both countries which included an accord to coordinate and cooperate between the security institutions with all their components of both countries. It emphasized that Lebanon should not be a host to any anti-Syrian activity and the same applies to Syria¹⁴⁰. This gave primacy to security issues and gave Syria a green light to interfere in Lebanon’s internal and external policies and making it the most influential regional player¹⁴¹. Thus, although the Taif Accord called for the disarmament of all militias, those who were allied to Syria kept their armaments. Therefore, Hezbollah was the only militia granted the right to keep its armaments as it served Syria’s geopolitical interest using the Israeli occupation of the Sheba Farms as a tool to legitimize its military presence¹⁴².

In order to ensure that both countries abide by these treaties, a Lebanese-Syrian Higher Council was created. However, the lack of balance between the powers of both countries meant that Lebanon would be at a disadvantage as those treaties serve the interests of Syria without taking into account those of Lebanon. The relations between the two countries became summarized in one sentence: “wahdat al-masarayn” in other words “the

¹³⁹ (Salloukh B. , Syria and Lebanon: A brotherhood transformed, 2005, p. 19)

¹⁴⁰ (Moubarak, 2003, p. 21)

¹⁴¹ (Moubarak, 2003, p. 21)

¹⁴² (Moubarak, 2003, p. 21)

coordination or unity of the two tracks”¹⁴³. This underlined Syria’s dominance over Lebanon foreign policy decisions as the latter became prohibited from going into any form of negotiations or talks with Israel without referring to Syria foremost.

Syria dominated the Lebanese political and social life in all its levels. Freedom of expression was banned, high censorship was exercised on the media and protests were harshly repressed. Sub-state actors to bandwagon with Syria in order to gain influence. Loyalty to Syria became the norm and constant visits were recorded by political leaders, pro or against Syria, to Damascus in order to maintain their existence back home. All these factors empowered Syria and gave it control over Lebanon’s foreign policy. This period saw a focus on economic reforms and reconstruction.

Even when it comes to economic interests, Lebanon was linked to Syria. In 1994, the Labor Accord was sealed between the governments of both countries. This agreement legitimized the entrance of Syrian workers and their penetration into the Lebanese market. The number of the Syrian workforce recorded entering Lebanon in the 1990s was approximately 850,000 generating around US \$1 billion in remittances to their home country¹⁴⁴. Additionally, trade agreements and balance was more rewarding to Syrian than Lebanon. “Almost all profitable sectors of the post-war economy...were penetrated by Syrian officials, siphoning billions of dollars in personal profits” thus “the total Syrian revenues extracted from Lebanon

¹⁴³ (Haugbolle, 2010, p. 18)

¹⁴⁴ (Salloukh B. F., 2013, p. 138)

through licit or illicit activities in 1990-2005 amounted to some \$20 billion”¹⁴⁵

In short, foreign policy in postwar Lebanon became constrained by these “distinct relations” between Syria and Lebanon and manipulation of sectarian affiliations intensified.

However, the regional and international setting following the 9/11 attacks and the Iraqi invasion in 2003 challenged Assad’s hegemony in Lebanon¹⁴⁶.

The Bush’s administration invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq through its war on terror signaled a strategy aiming at remodeling the regional landscape and reducing Assad’s power. In 2004, Prime Minister Rafik Hariri's bloc along with its ally and the leader of the Druze Party, Walid Jumblat agreed on the promulgation of President Emile Lahoud for another term¹⁴⁷. Few days later, a series of resignation of ministers took place and was followed by the resignation of the prime minister himself. Hariri along with his allies and his close ties with Saudi Arabia formed an opposition force which challenged the authority of the Syrian regime and its presence in Lebanon¹⁴⁸.

In 2005, Valentine’s Day took the last beat of Hariri’s and over 20 other citizens’ hearts as they were assassinated in a blast in the heart of Beirut¹⁴⁹. Fingers were pointed at Syria, accusing it of being the main force behind the assassination. This stimulated a popular upheaval in Lebanon that cut across all sects and affiliation demanding the departure of Syrian military forces

¹⁴⁵ (Salloukh B. F., 2013, p. 138)

¹⁴⁶ (Khazai & Hess, 2013, p. 20)

¹⁴⁷ (Bosco, 2009, p. 353)

¹⁴⁸ (Bosco, 2009, p. 354)

¹⁴⁹ (Norton, 2007, p. 482)

and the resignation of the pro-Syrian government¹⁵⁰. This became known as the Cedar Revolution.

With UN Security Council Resolution 1595 and the withdrawal of Syrian troops from Lebanon in 2005, the country's foreign policy became more complicated, albeit more independent, and underwent further challenges. With Syria's withdrawal, foreign policymaking became a genuine battle between the two major political coalitions, pro and con Syria, in the country each made up of alliances of parties, supported by external actors and represented in the government.

3.4 Post-Syria Lebanon

“Political assassinations have been and remain an important (if secretive) feature of the foreign policies of states”¹⁵¹. Following Syria's withdrawal, the Christians sought to restore the sectarian balance to their favor. Samir Geagea was released from prison and Michael Aoun returned to Lebanon from exile in France¹⁵². This development casted away the feeling of marginalization shared by many Christians in general and by mostly Maronites in particular¹⁵³. Both Geagea and Aoun are leaders of the largest political parties in the Christian community. With blessings of the Maronite Patriarch, Christian politicians “demanded ultimate say in the election of a new president, a redistribution of bureaucratic positions to rectify what they described as a Muslim invasion of the bureaucracy since 1990, and a

¹⁵⁰ (Bosco, 2009, p. 357)

¹⁵¹ (Bosco, 2009, p. 349)

¹⁵² Aoun, a former commander of the Lebanese army conducted a military revolt against the Syrian presence in Lebanon. His attempt met with failure and led to his exile to France where he spent 15 years. Geagea, the leader of the Lebanese forces was sentenced to jail where he spent 11 years. He was blamed for bombing a church and carrying out a number of assassinations such as the murder of former Prime Minister Rashid Karami.

¹⁵³ (From exile and confinement arise Lebanon's lost Christian leaders, 2005)

reapportionment of posts throughout the state's multiple security institutions"¹⁵⁴. However, the electoral law selected in 2005 came at the disadvantage of the Christians creating a division in the political representation of the Maronites¹⁵⁵.

Following Hariri's assassination, tension among Sunni/Shiites grew in Lebanon as March-8 led by the Shiite Hezbollah allied with Iran and Syria faced an opposite camp, that of March 14 advanced by the Sunni Future Movement which bandwagoned with Saudi Arabia and the U.S to tilt the balance of power within the country to its own advantages¹⁵⁶. The newly elected parliament in 2005 signaled the victory of March 14 especially after the shift in the Lebanese political system which became dominated by the Sunnis under the Future Movement as was reflected in the new government formed following Hariri's death.

This led to the creation of a government led by Fouad Saniora and dominated by a Sunni majority, that being the Hariri Future Movement bloc¹⁵⁷. "The elections resulted in de facto confessional cantonization, dividing the country into four tightly knit, closed, unipolar, sectarian communities: the Shia'a led by the Hezbollah-Amal alliance, the Sunnis by Sa'd al-Hariri, the Druze by Jumblat, and the Maronites led by Aoun and a bevy of less representative political leaders"¹⁵⁸. Although the government received wide support from the West and Saudi Arabia, it remained

¹⁵⁴ (Salloukh B. F., 2013, p. 140)

¹⁵⁵ The 2005 electoral law was the same used in the year 2000. It was mainly engineered by Syrian officials and "known for its systematic gerrymandering of votes" as it joined Christians districts to Sunnis or Shiites districts and this Christian leaders were elected by the votes of other sects (Schwerna, 2010, p. 44)

¹⁵⁶ (Wilkins, 2013)

¹⁵⁷ (Wilkins, 2013)

¹⁵⁸ (Salloukh B. F., 2013, p. 140)

incapable of solving several political issues especially when taking the issue of Hezbollah's disarmament.

The deadlock brought to existence the National Dialogue in 2006. The Special Tribunal for Lebanon was established to inspect the murder of Hariri as it was labeled as a terrorist act with the encouragement of March 14 whereas March 8 perceived it as invading Lebanon's sovereignty and providing an excuse for external actors to interfere in the country's internal affairs¹⁵⁹. Although participants in the National Dialogue agreed on the disarmament of Palestinian groups they did not reach the same agreement on the issue of the Shiites militia's weapons¹⁶⁰. The talks reached a stalemate in the summer of 2006. Fearing from political marginalization following Syria's withdrawal, Hezbollah sought to assert its presence. Domestically and in an effort to balance against the influence of Saad Hariri, the son of Rafik Hariri and the leader of the Future Movement, Hassan Nasrallah signed "a memorandum of understanding with the most powerful Christian leader at the time, Michel Aoun, who had quickly fallen out with his March 14 partners following the 2005 elections"¹⁶¹.

Regionally, Hezbollah reasserted its alliance with Syria and Iran by rallying its supporters on March 8 to a thank you Syria protest. When Hezbollah and Amal perceived their political status being challenged by March 14 in general and Hariri's Future Movement in particular following the Syrian withdrawal from Lebanon, they resigned from the government. The government's continued activity without the Shiite element outraged the supporters of Amal and Hezbollah and their allies. The result was a major

¹⁵⁹ (Bosco, 2009, p. 359)

¹⁶⁰ (Schenker, Lebanese National Dialogue: Avoiding the Hard Questions?, 2006)

¹⁶¹ (Khazai & Hess, 2013, p. 29)

sit-in movement in Central Beirut calling for the stepping down of Sanioura and his government¹⁶².

The summer of 2006 witnessed another Hezbollah-Israeli war. Hezbollah “attacked Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) across the internationally recognized borders, killed three and captured two of its soldiers”¹⁶³. The operation according to the group aimed at exchanging prisoners as Israel also had in detention members belonging to Hezbollah¹⁶⁴. Israel responded by bombing various sites in Lebanon and thus Hezbollah reacted by launching missiles towards Israel. This conflict revealed that Hezbollah behaves independently of the state and conduct its own foreign policy. In fact, “Hezbollah’s actions highlighted the Lebanese state’s inability to act as a single, unitary, rational and quasi sovereign actor and to control decision of war and peace over its territory”¹⁶⁵.

Although the government condemned the Israeli attacks on Lebanon, it also did not side with Hezbollah¹⁶⁶. The war re-emphasized the influence of sub-state identities over national ones and highlighted the foreign policy conducted by sub-state actors such as Hezbollah without taking into consideration the foreign policy of the state.

In May 2008, the government decided to disconnect a telecommunications system operated by Hezbollah. The latter’s response came through its invasion of streets in Beirut in which a majority of Sunni resides¹⁶⁷. To avoid another slip into violence or another civil war, Qatar’s capital re-

¹⁶² (Salloukh B. F., 2013, p. 144)

¹⁶³ (Tür, 2007, p. 115)

¹⁶⁴ (Tür, 2007, p. 113)

¹⁶⁵ (Wilkins, 2013, p. 93)

¹⁶⁶ (Wilkins, 2013, p. 101)

¹⁶⁷ (Asfura-Heim & Steinitz, 2014)

united different Lebanese political factions, based on the calls of the country's Emir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani. The outcome saw the birth of the Doha Agreement that "called for the election of a consensus president, General Michel Suleiman, revised the country's electoral formula, revived its parliament and other state institutions and gave Hezbollah veto power over the new national government"¹⁶⁸. Although the accord ended an 18-months long stalemate in the country, it failed to prevent future deadlocks which have been reflected in the numerous rounds of National Dialogue which have taken place since 2006 without bearing any fruitful outcome. Both camps that emerged following February 14, 2005 "Both sides struggled to pursue their interests on how to advance their agendas, while foreign actors sought to utilize the divide to best achieve their goals in the region"¹⁶⁹.

At the regional and international level, although Syria's option to directly intervene in Lebanon through its troops was no longer at the table, it remained able to influence Lebanon's domestic affairs greatly following its withdrawal by taking advantage of the system's weakness in Lebanon. It exploited the internal divide by supporting March 8 and precisely Hezbollah using the latter as a pressure card to balance March 14 threat internally and the Israeli threat externally¹⁷⁰. Moreover, Syria was accused of carrying out a series of bombings around Beirut and assassinations targeting March 14 and anti-Syrian figures to further destabilize the country. Meanwhile, Iran continued to directly support Hezbollah as a strategy to deter Saudi's

¹⁶⁸ (Turkmen-Dervisoglu, 2012)

¹⁶⁹ (Bloomquist, Gilchrist, & Indelicato, 2011, p. 28)

¹⁷⁰ (Bloomquist, Gilchrist, & Indelicato, 2011, p. 29)

influence in the region on a political level and to create a significant Shiite alliance in a region dominated by Sunnis on the regional level¹⁷¹.

Additionally, the “assassination of Rafik Hariri served as the critical rallying point through which regional actors, particularly Saudi Arabia and the United States, could further pressure Syria to acquiesce to their vision of the regional order”¹⁷². In this regards, both the United States and Saudi Arabia supported anti-Syrian parties and perceived March 14 as an opportunity to weaken Syria’s power in the country and the region and as a chance to intervene in the country’s internal affairs.

From the National Pact to the Taif Accord, Lebanon’s foreign policy has been highly vulnerable to domestic rivalries and penetrated by external players. With the outbreak of the Syrian uprising in 2011, the risk of the conflict spilling across the border increased and sectarian tension mounted. As the outbreak of peaceful protests demanding the departure of Assad in Syria soon turned into a bloody civil war, Lebanon adopted a policy of “disassociation” and thus the Baabda Declaration, came to assert an accord between Lebanon’s two major coalitions and demanded “keeping Lebanon away from the policy of regional and international conflicts and sparing it the negative repercussions of regional tensions and crises”¹⁷³. Undeniably, this statement does not apply to Lebanon’s policy towards Israel with which Lebanon is at state of war. However, the responses of the country’s political parties and figures varied ranged a spectrum either backing or opposing to the regime in Syria. Thus, Lebanon’s foreign relations became a tool used by elites at the domestic level and foreign actors at the regional and

¹⁷¹ (Bloomquist, Gilchrist, & Indelicato , 2011, p. 24)

¹⁷² (Bloomquist, Gilchrist, & Indelicato , 2011, p. 28)

¹⁷³ (Dakroub, 2013, p. 1)

international realm and sectarianism has been exploited by these players to justify alliances.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE *ZAIM* CULTURE AND THE LEBANESE POLITICAL PARTIES

“In pluralistic societies, patronage is often a common feature of the political process; the promotion of the interests of a particular sect is frequently widespread”¹⁷⁴. In Lebanon, the confessional political system establishes clientelism whereby political and sectarian leaders control the masses. Clientelism is a dyadic relationship between a patron and client. In other words, the patron owns certain resources that are vital to the clients. These resources vary from materialistic such as money, employments and other services or non-materialistic as security and protection. In order to have access to these resources, the client has to give something in return such as his work or his allegiance and loyalty¹⁷⁵. Patronage is a form of clientelistic relations patronage defined as “the practice of using state resources to provide jobs and services”¹⁷⁶.

As the state weakens; the degree of patronage increases. Therefore, clientelism and patronage are characteristics of weak states such as Lebanon. In order to unpack Lebanon’s complexity, the following section will explore the development of the *Zaim* culture and describe briefly the most influential political parties in post-war Lebanon and their impact on Lebanon’s foreign policy.

¹⁷⁴ (Collelo, 1987, p. 143)

¹⁷⁵ (Muno, 2010, p. 4)

¹⁷⁶ (Muno, 2010, p. 10)

4.1 The *Zaiim* Culture

Political patrons in Lebanon are known as the *Zu'ama*. A *Zaiim* “is a political leader and rather than being exclusively an officeholder, he may be a power broker with the ability to manipulate elections and the officials he helps elect”¹⁷⁷. As a result, and in the nonexistence of a strong state and the rule of law, brokerage or “wasta” prevails. The citizen, for instance, will resort to the *Zaiim* in order to find an employment which eradicates the concept of meritocracy.

Even prior to gaining independence, patron-client relationship have developed in Lebanon. It could be traced back to the Ottoman era during which some families in Lebanon became labeled as *Zu'ama* for being tax collectors or feudal lords¹⁷⁸. Clientelism developed as landlords would allow peasants along with their families to use lands in return for infinite loyalty.

The culture of the *Zaiim* persisted despite the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. “The representatives in Lebanon’s first parliament in 1943 all emanated from a specific class of powerful clan leaders, which existed in the community, the *zu'ama*”¹⁷⁹. The latter became described as the representative of its community speaking on their behalf and forwarding their interests. The *Zaiim* will also connect its community “to the outside world, meaning the Ottomans, the Europeans, and since 1943, to the Lebanese state”¹⁸⁰.

¹⁷⁷ (Collelo, 1987, p. 144)

¹⁷⁸ (Haugbolle, 2010, p. 37)

¹⁷⁹ (Haugbolle, 2010, p. 36)

¹⁸⁰ (Haugbolle, 2010, p. 37)

In modern Lebanon, the political leader, or *Zaiim* came to replace the feudal lord, the peasants became the masses and services instead of lands are the resources provided by the *Zaiim* in exchange for loyalty¹⁸¹. In order to remain in power, Lebanese leaders resort to clientelism as well as electoral and non-electoral strategies. During election periods, politicians refer to “competitive clientelism” whereby these leaders compete in order to gain access to state resources which will be distributed, at a later stage, to their clients¹⁸². “Fundamentally, people vote for candidates whom they believe they can deliver those services to them”¹⁸³.

Electoral considerations and increasing the number of voters are not the only reason to why sectarian leaders resort to clientelism. Longer-term and non-electoral incentives are highly important to various political groups in Lebanon. These non-electoral strategies comprise both peaceful and violent repertoires such as organizing demonstration or building barricades and resorting to armed confrontations respectively.

The *Zaiim* in Lebanon seeks to have the ability to mobilize its supporters in large numbers in order to increase its influence in the government and on the political level. The services offered by the *Zaiim* renders the citizens vulnerable to manipulation and unable to hold their leaders accountable fearing that they might lose their access to these services. Additionally, each sectarian community in Lebanon has one or more *Zaiim* which is perceived as the protector of the sect and therefore unquestionable loyalty is in order

¹⁸¹ (Collelo, 1987, p. 144)

¹⁸² (Lust, 2009, p. 122)

¹⁸³ (Lust, 2009, p. 127)

to this *Zaiim*. “The position of *Zaiim* is frequently hereditary, and politics is often treated like a family business”¹⁸⁴.

According to Albert Hourani, three types of *Zu’ama* exist in Lebanon; the “feudal” *Zaiim* gains his popularity for being a landowner who descends from a family which held a rank in power traditionally. Such type is found mainly in regions where owning a sizeable estate is of high importance especially among the Sunnis in Akkar and the Shiites in Bekaa and also among the Druze community¹⁸⁵. People resort to these *Zu’ama* mainly for protection and services. For instance, Walid Jumblat, the leader of the Progressive Socialist Party, belongs to this category as he inherited his political status from his father and he comes from a feudal family who had been the man leader of the Druze community in Mount Lebanon. The Solh family also had four of its members elected as Prime ministers.

The second type is the “populist” *Zaiim*. Leaders belonging to this category rule over their subject by the virtue of providing services and protection on one hand and by adopting a certain ideology on the other hand¹⁸⁶. This category of *Zu’ama* is widespread mainly among the Maronite community and among Christian families, like Gemayel, Chamoun, Eddé and Frangieh.

The third type is the “urban” *Zu’ama* which prevails mostly among Muslim urban leaders. These leaders gain their popularity, just as the previous type, by offering protection and adopting an ideology. However, adding to these two sources, these *Zu’ama* resort to power and mobilize the masses with the

¹⁸⁴ (Collelo, 1987, p. 145)

¹⁸⁵ (Hourani, 1981, p. 173)

¹⁸⁶ (Hourani, 1981, p. 173)

assistance of “strong arm men” also known as “the qabaday’s”¹⁸⁷. Families, mostly Sunnis in Urban cities like Karameh from Tripoli fit in this type.

Following the Civil War, other families and sectarian figures have penetrated the scene and acquired the title of *Zu’ama* without being related to a previous leader. The majority of these newcomers do not descend from notable families however they are following the same path of the traditional *Zu’ama*. These are either warlords such as Nabih Berri, head of Amal Movement and the Speaker of the Lebanese parliament, Michael Aoun, head of the Free Patriotic Movement, Samir Geagea leader of the Lebanese Forces or local *Zu’ama* whose popularity grew after certain events. For instance Suleiman Frangieh, the leader of the Marada, gained his support in his region Zgharta following the assassination of his father and the same applies to Omar Karameh whose followers in Tripoli increased after the assassination of his brother Rachid.

The new *Zu’ama* played on the “confessional sentiment” of their subjects and “also tended to provide patronage, which was more bureaucratic than feudal in nature”¹⁸⁸. In order to maintain and increase their popularity, it became necessary for the *Zu’ama* to attain power through elections in order to have access to governmental patronage. Whether inherited or not, most of these leaders became in control of the most influential parties in post-war Lebanon. Therefore, political parties in Lebanon do not share the characteristics of political parties found in Western democracies.

However, not all leaders became in charge of political parties. In fact, not all *Zu’ama* have or had political parties but they were highly influential within

¹⁸⁷ (Hourani, 1981, p. 173)

¹⁸⁸ (Hamzeh, 2001, p. 171)

their groups and also had external relations. For example, Michel Mur, a Lebanese politician and former interior minister who had an influence within the Metn district and shared close relations with the Syrian regime during the 90s. Another example is former Prime Minister, Najib Mikati, also known for his pro-Syrian allegiance and his significant influence in Tripoli who until 2004 had no political party. Even late Emir Majid Arslan and his son Talal possessed a remarkable popularity among the Druze in Mount Lebanon and had no political party until 2001 during which Emir Talal established the Lebanese Democratic Political Party. Moreover, *Zu'ama* of tribes, such as the Ja'fars, for instance kept their loyalty to the tribe and maintained their autonomy by keeping their army.

Despite this, the majority of *Zu'ama* in the country organized and took charge of political parties in order to maintain their existence and influence within their community and expend their authority. In fact, “the stability of these parties’ ideological platforms was minimal in comparison with the influence of individual party leaders”¹⁸⁹. The policies and agendas of these parties became reduced to serve the interest of the *Zaiim*. Therefore, “the orientation of parties largely conformed to the outlook of their leader, rather than the other way around”¹⁹⁰. They have also kept their foreign connections which have contributed to their “*Zu'ama* legitimacy” and empowered them vis-à-vis other groups and *Zu'ama* in the country. For instance, Hariri’s close relation with Saudi Arabia and the West aimed at deterring the influence of Nasrallah who is supported by Iran and Syria.

¹⁸⁹ (El-Husseini, 2012, p. 38)

¹⁹⁰ (El-Husseini, 2012, p. 38)

Therefore, in order to understand Lebanon's complexity, the next section will describe the most prominent political parties in the country and their importance to identity formation.

4.2 Lebanese Political Parties

“Political parties have been active in Lebanon ever since the state was formed in the early 1920s”¹⁹¹. One thing these parties share in common is that they are headed by a *Zaim*.

Prior to 1975, parties, with various political and ideological affiliations and supported by outside powers, competed to increase the number of their supporters and to influence the decision-making process. All through the civil war, several parties took on an armed apparatus and militias became the parties that reigned over the different regions of the country. As the war ended, most parties became a mere reflection of the sectarian system describing themselves as the protectors' of the sect which they represent.

“Lebanese parties often have had no ideology, have devised no programs, and have made little effort at transcending sectarian support; in fact, despite their claims, most parties have been thinly disguised political machines for a particular confession or, more often, a specific *zaim*”¹⁹². To be sure, ideological groups proliferated in Lebanon during the heyday of the Arab-Israeli conflict in the 60s. These parties such as the Progressive Socialist Party, the Syrian Nationalist Party, the Ba'ath Party, Nasserite Party, and Lebanese Communist Party took the Palestinian issue as their main cause around which they gathered support. However, most parties in Lebanon, precisely following the civil war, have taken a sectarian form and became

¹⁹¹ (Khazen, 2003, p. 605)

¹⁹² (Collelo, 1987, p. 154)

divided into two factions made up of coalition of political parties; March 14 and March 8 anti and pro-Syria respectively.

An analysis of Lebanon's political parties requires referring to the sectarian community to which it belongs as well as to the regional context in which it is situated. For instance, Shiites are a majority in Lebanon however they are a minority in an Arab World dominated by Sunnis. "This regional-domestic dynamic, like many aspects of Lebanon's political identity, plays into a two-level game where internal concerns cannot be divorced from external competition"¹⁹³. Therefore, the study of the security dilemma is as important as that of identity in understanding the alliances of domestic actors with regional and international forces.

A quick pose is necessary in order to better understand the system of alliance of domestic groups with foreign actors. Lebanese political parties, especially since the seventies sought the protection of foreign actors as the conflict deepened between Muslims and the Palestinians on one hand and the Christians on the other. Thus Sunnis sought the protection of the Arab State mainly Egypt and Syria whereas the Maronites mainly the Phalangists sought the protection of Israel¹⁹⁴.

As the war approached its ending, the "inter-sectarian" conflict turned into an "intra-sectarian" one during which Christians as well as Muslims fought among themselves. As the war ended, the domestic alliance became a reflection of the regional and international conflict which saw the struggle between US and Saudi Arabia on one hand and Syria-Iran on the other.

¹⁹³ (Khazai & Hess, 2013, p. 51)

¹⁹⁴ (Salloukh B. , Syria and Lebanon: A brotherhood transformed, 2005)

Thus two main camps emerged in post-Syria Lebanon; pro-Syria March 8 and pro-West March 14.

With the Syrian uprising and the escalation of the Sunni-Shiites divide in the region, the alliances in Lebanon are becoming more sectarian-based. In fact, the focus is now less on March 14 or March 8 and more stressed on Hezbollah and Iran against the Sunnis and Saudi Arabia as well as against radicalists.

In sum, decision-makers and political parties are in constant need to preserve their existence and rule and thus they are in need of foreign alliance. Confessional as well as other types of alliances and the bandwagoning and balancing tactics used by groups aim at having the upper hand in the country vis-à-vis other groups. The following section explores the main parties in Lebanon.

4.2.1 Hezbollah

Hezbollah emerged following the Israeli invasion of Beirut in 1982 and shaped a profile two years later¹⁹⁵. It constructed a religious identity and as the war unfolded in the 80s, the militia was preoccupied in building “efficient institutions, including an array of public services, such as clinics and construction companies, while Amal¹⁹⁶ offered its members a familiar patronage system”¹⁹⁷. Thus, Hezbollah gained a significant popularity among the Shiite community and became recognized as a powerful actor in Lebanon. Theologically, Hezbollah follows the same stance of Iran's Ayatollah Khomeini. Thus the party's ideology follows the doctrine of

¹⁹⁵ (Norton, 2007, p. 477)

¹⁹⁶ A Shiite movement established by Imam Musa Al Sadr and currently headed by Nabih Berri, the Speaker of the Lebanese Parliament

¹⁹⁷ (Norton, 2007, pp. 477-478)

Wilayat Al-Faqih, meaning that the government should be headed by a Shiite cleric. Over the years, the constructed religious identity of the party weakened as its constructed resistance identity took priority. In fact, the slogan of the party as an “Islamic Revolution in Lebanon” switched to “Islamic Resistance in Lebanon”¹⁹⁸. Thus Hezbollah’s main goal was to resist the Israeli occupation of Lebanese territories. Although the 1989 Taif Accord ended the Lebanese civil war and called for the disarmament of armed factions in Lebanon, Hezbollah was the only militia allowed preserving its armaments due to its close alliance with Syria. “This situation implied a de facto recognition of Hezbollah’s role as the guardian of Lebanese sovereignty vis-à-vis the occupying force”¹⁹⁹.

With the withdrawal of the Israelis from Lebanon in 2000, the Syrian regime sought to preserve the existing of Hezbollah in order to serve the regime as well as Iran’s interest and to keep pressure on Israel. Thus, along with the Palestinian card, Hezbollah was given a new cause to its existence, that of liberating the Shabaa Farms²⁰⁰. The legal status of the farms however remains obscure. In fact, according to the maps of the UN and as claimed by the Syrian regime, the farms fall within Syrian territories²⁰¹. Yet, Syria kept on verbally supporting Lebanon’s allegation of its entitlement of these farms²⁰². Hezbollah also increased its role in Lebanese politics by participating in elections and taking part in the government. Hezbollah “was officially regarded as a legitimate and protected ‘resistance’ group and

¹⁹⁸ (Bassedas, 2009, p. 28)

¹⁹⁹ (Bassedas, 2009, p. 29)

²⁰⁰ (Moubarak, 2003, p. 30)

²⁰¹ (Moubarak, 2003, p. 31)

²⁰² (Moubarak, 2003, p. 31)

therefore, unlike other armed groups, entitled to carry arms as long as the state of war with Israel persisted”²⁰³.

Hezbollah’s military apparatus and constant struggle with Israel as well as its anti-American position increased its importance at the international level. During the Cedar Revolution following the assassination of Rafik Hariri in 2005, Hassan Nasrallah, the current leader of Hezbollah, mobilized its supporters in a thank you Syria demonstration on March 8. In 2006, Hezbollah plans an attack on Israeli soldiers beyond the Lebanese borders. As a response to the killing and kidnapping of its soldiers, Israel went into war with the party. “The 2006 Hezbollah war with Israel is a typical example of how Hezbollah used its popular support to present itself as a quasi legitimate institution that is capable to stand up against foreign aggression/occupation”²⁰⁴. This re-emphasized Hezbollah’s resistance identity. From this perspective, “the elimination of Hizbullah, and thus of the very idea of resistance, can be seen not just as a material objective but also as an ideational one on which Israeli domination and US hegemonic stability in the region depends”²⁰⁵.

In 2011, the Syrian uprising began and it soon escalated into a civil war. Hezbollah’s involvement in the Syrian conflict highlighted once again the religious identity of the group as a protector of the Shiites’ security, its political identity as an ally to the Assad’s regime and its ideational/material objective as a contender to the Israeli’s presence. The role of Hezbollah in the Syrian war will be further developed in chapter four. Yet, Hezbollah’s participation in the Syrian conflict underlined its capacity to conduct its own

²⁰³ (Makdisi K. , 2011, p. 6)

²⁰⁴ (Manyok, 2013)

²⁰⁵ (Makdisi K. , 2011, p. 6)

pro-Iranian foreign policy irrespective of the Lebanese government's disassociation position from the Syrian conflict.

Adding to its religious, resistant and political identity, Hezbollah also developed a social identity. With Iranian financial support, Hezbollah's role in various Lebanese regions, particularly those in which most inhabitants belong to the Shiite community, undermined the position of the state towards its citizens. To illustrate, regions in the southern suburbs of Beirut and the Bekaa Valley have suffered from poverty and poor infrastructure, in other words they have suffered from the absence of the state²⁰⁶. Hezbollah took on the role of the state in these regions Hezbollah and "built an extended network of welfare and social services"²⁰⁷. These services enhanced the image of the party among its community as well as other sects residing in regions to which these services extended. The religious, resistance, political and social identities as well as the ability to conduct of its own foreign policies, allowed Hezbollah to perform "as a state within a state".

4.2.2 Amal Movement

"Amal movement was established in 1975 by Imam Musa as Sadr, an Iranian-born Shia cleric of Lebanese ancestry who had founded the Higher Shia Islamic Council in 1969"²⁰⁸. Amal (meaning hope) was the military wing of the "Movement of the Disinherited" which was also created by Sadr to press forward the Shiite rights in Lebanon²⁰⁹. The decision of Sadr not to

²⁰⁶ (Bassedas, 2009, p. 20)

²⁰⁷ (Bassedas, 2009, p. 20)

²⁰⁸ (Collelo, 1987, p. 159)

²⁰⁹ Known by Harakat al-Mahrumin and the name describes the situation of the Shiite community which was the poorest and most neglected sect being a minority in the country.

engage this militia in the 1975 civil war and its support to Syria's intervention in Lebanon in late 70s weakened its popularity.

In 1978, Sadr disappeared in Libya turning him into a religious symbol. Thus, Amal constructed and developed a religious identity revolving around Sadr. Additionally, the Iranian Revolution of 1979 empowered the Shiites in the Arab World especially in Lebanon and with the PLO attacking Amal, the number of the Shiites supporters to the party increased significantly. "By the early 1980s, Amal was the most powerful organization within the Shia community and perhaps was the largest organization in the country"²¹⁰. The movement is currently headed by Nabih Berri and its ideology centers around supporting the Palestinian cause, resisting Israel. Amal is pro-Syrian and pro-Iran.

Divisions within the "Shi'a elite –empowered by the success of the Iranian Revolution and more sympathetic to the Palestinian cause- led to a schism in Amal with the result of the founding of Hezbollah"²¹¹. As a result, violent quarrel occurred between Hezbollah and Amal as each group sought leadership of the Shiite community and domination over the South²¹². The triumph of Hezbollah diminished the power of Amal in various regions resided by Shiites mostly, notably in Beirut's suburbs²¹³. Nevertheless, Hezbollah and Amal reached an agreement in 1991 in which "Amal movement was offered Shiite representation in the government, and

²¹⁰ (Collelo, 1987, p. 160)

²¹¹ (Bassedas, 2009, p. 21)

²¹² The disappearance of Al-Sadr in Libya, the success of the Iranian Revolution of 1979, the Israeli invasion of 1982, all led to a split within the movement. Hezbollah thus came as a result of the defection of the religious wing within the movement (Schwerna, 2010, p. 37)

²¹³ (Bassedas, 2009, p. 21)

Hezbollah the monopoly of resistance against the Israelis in South Lebanon”²¹⁴.

Currently, both parties belong to the same coalition and they forged alliances during elections such as those in 2005 which resulted in “a rapprochement between both organizations”²¹⁵. Although Amal and Hezbollah agree on many ideational objectives such as allying with Syria, resisting Israel and representing the Shiites, differences between both parties on various issues are as highly important in understanding the continuing cleavages between them. To begin with, unlike Hezbollah’s pan-Islamic ideology and religious identity, Amal movement shares a pan-Arabism ideology and a less religious identity²¹⁶.

Additionally, Amal remains distant from Iran and more closely tied with Syria²¹⁷. Amal was initially a social protest movement and not a militia as Al-Sadr “wanted to be seen as a figure that utilized state institutions for reform, or one “working within the system,” and wanted Amal to be seen as such”²¹⁸. Amal has sought to maintain its ties with the Syrian regime over the years and play the role of mediator between the Syrian regime and those who oppose to it in Lebanon. However, with the outbreak of the Syrian uprising, Amal found itself in an uncomfortable position. Although the party has publically announced its support to the Assad regime, the movement is seeking a channel through which it can remain in power and maintain its relations vis-à-vis many political groups in the county. “Berri’s priority is protection of the Shia community, however, he understands that

²¹⁴ (Majed, 2010, p. 4)

²¹⁵ (Bassedas, 2009, p. 21)

²¹⁶ (Cunningham, 2010, p. 25)

²¹⁷ (Cunningham, 2010, p. 25)

²¹⁸ (Cunningham, 2010, p. 16)

he must continue to work within Lebanon's political establishment to achieve that goal, and he seeks to minimize the spillover of the conflict into Lebanon"²¹⁹.

It is worth mentioning that Amal Movement, just as Hezbollah, plays a role in providing social services and welfare mainly to the Shiites. However, unlike Hezbollah which developed its own welfare institutions, Amal relied on "state patronage for its social initiatives" such as establishing schools and running "health clinics, at least two of which were run in cooperation with the Ministry of Public Health and Ministry of Social Affairs"²²⁰.

4.2.3 The Free Patriotic Movement

The Movement was established in early 90s by Michael Aoun, a former prime minister and Lebanese army commander. Aoun was sent to exile for rejecting the Taif Accord and the deployment of Syrian troops in the country and led the movement from Paris. He returned to his homeland following the departure of the Syrian army in 2005. Aoun participated in the Cedar Revolution. The party first developed a secular identity with an ideational objective to resist Syria's tutelage over Lebanon. However, its stances against the Taif Accord with its diminution of the Christians privileges increased the party's popularity among Christians. The movement gained the majority of the Christian parliamentary seats in 2005 and had the second largest coalition in the Lebanese parliament.

The result of the 2005 elections restored Aoun's image as a guardian of the Maronite. However, "March 14 coalition rejected Aoun's bid to become

²¹⁹ (Khazai & Hess, 2013, p. 35)

²²⁰ (Cammett, 2014, p. 205)

president, and in fact, offered him no government post”²²¹. Fearing from marginalization, Aoun shifted his alliance and following the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding with Hezbollah, his movement became considered within March 8 coalitions. Although Aoun claimed that his alliance with the pro-Syrian coalition strives towards national unity, Aoun’s main aim was to secure a road to presidency and balance along with Hezbollah the ascending power of the Sunnis headed by the Future movement. Even though the party is non-sectarian and follows a secular ideology, the majority of its members belong to the Maronite community. The memorandum signed with Hezbollah called for the drafting of a new electoral law and insisted on dialogue as the sole mean to resolve conflict²²². The memorandum also defended Hezbollah’s right to keep its arms as long as Israel continues to occupy the Shabaa Farms²²³.

Ever since, Aoun’s statement came to defend Hezbollah and this has been revealed in his position regarding Hezbollah’s involvement in the Syrian conflict. Aoun’s “decision was influenced by a fear of being politically isolated and a desire to balance with other factions”²²⁴. This comes as a limitation to constructivism which will be developed further in the final chapter. The party claimed that its response to the Syrian conflict came not to support the Assad regime in particular but to warn against the fall of Assad as it will bring extremists to power in Syria and thus put an end to pluralism in both Syria and Lebanon²²⁵. “Perhaps, as Lebanon’s only major

²²¹ (Khazai & Hess, 2013, p. 39)

²²² (Schwerna, 2010, p. 73)

²²³ (Schwerna, 2010, p. 73)

²²⁴ (Khazai & Hess, 2013, p. 41)

²²⁵ (Aoun warns against fall of Assad, 2011)

politician who has resisted significant external patronage, Aoun has nowhere to turn but within Lebanon itself²²⁶.

4.2.4 Progressive Socialist Party

The Progressive Socialist Party (PSP) “was founded in 1949 by members of various sects who were proponents of social reform and progressive change”²²⁷. The party became highly popular under the rule of Kamal Jumblat, who became considered as a *Zaim* to the Druze community. Jumblat called for a secular democracy and opposed the “confessional system, largely because the structural division of power excluded members of the Druze community- as well as other minority confessional group from holding any of the major political posts in the Lebanese government”²²⁸.

Although it started off as a non-sectarian party developing a secular identity, it took on a confessional apparatus especially following Jumblat’s assassination and the inheritance of the party’s leadership by his son Walid. Over the years the PSP has been highly known for its shifting alliances and policies. Its philosophy goes against armed confrontations however the party took part in Lebanon’s civil war of 1958 and 1975.

In 1952, Camille Chamoun became the new president of Lebanon. His desires to associate closely with the West, precisely with the United States under President Eisenhower who sought to limit Nasser’s influence and to increase the presidential power infuriated the Lebanese Muslims. Regionally, Arab Nationalism was expanding under Nasser. Additionally, Chamoun’s “attempted to seek reelection by means of a constitutional

²²⁶ (Khazai & Hess, 2013, p. 41)

²²⁷ (Collelo, 1987)

²²⁸ (El-Husseini, 2012, p. 59)

amendment”²²⁹. The government thus sought to reallocate “the electoral districts in such a way that they cut across the boundaries of the traditional regional and religious territories of certain zu'ama”²³⁰. Thus, Jumblat for example would have to compete “in a district only partly Druze and partly Christian”²³¹. This led to an anti-Chamoun coalition in which Jumblat was highly influential. Adding to that, Jumblat opposed the “Eisenhower Doctrine” supported by Chamoun which sought to reduce Nasser’s influence and he rejected any attack on Egypt and Nasser whom with he shared close alliance²³².

Portraying itself as a guardian of the underprivileged, Jumblat allied himself and his party with the Palestinians during the civil war of 1975 which led to an armed conflict against the Phalange militia and the Lebanese Army in the 1983 in Mount Lebanon. It should be mentioned that the Druze community was headed by both the Jumblat family and the Yazbak kin headed by Majid Arslan. These events led to the perishing of the party’s secular face and the construction of a religious identity revolving around the leadership of a Zaiim, in this case Jumblat who became the protector of the Druze community.

Since late 80s, Walid Jumblat has gathered the support of the majority of the Druze community. Its shifting position toward Syria has not affected the party’s popularity. Jumblat took part in the Cedar Revolution and became known for his anti-Syrian position within the March 14 alliance. Yet, in

²²⁹ (El-Husseini, 2012, p. 9)

²³⁰ (Hottinger, 1961, p. 131)

²³¹ (Hottinger, 1961, p. 131)

²³² (El-Husseini, 2012, p. 9)

2009, Jumblat took a decision to leave the March 14 coalition²³³. This statement came as no shock for as “Jumblat is known as a maverick that will move however the winds change”²³⁴. Jumblat expressed his willingness to enhance his relations with the Syrian regime describing his anti-Syrian statements as sins²³⁵. The PSP leader constantly seek to remain one step ahead on all changes and to be on the right side of the history once these changes take place in “order to stave off political insignificance for himself and the Druze community”²³⁶. These shifting alliances of Jumblat can be described as ones driven by necessity; but the necessities are not always materialistic. Although the alliance with March 14 gave Jumblat electoral advantages, yet the latter’s “obligation was to the Druze sect, and he would shift alliances in a flash to advance Druze interests”²³⁷. Thus, the calculations and strategy of Jumblat are not solely driven by material reasons, but also by ideational and sectarian ones.

Regarding the Syrian uprising, Jumblat’s response echoed his desire to safeguard the interest of the Druze. From this perspective, Jumblat is carefully crafting his words and statements in order to reduce the number of his foes in case Lebanon plunged into violence²³⁸.

4.2.5 The Phalange Party

Founded in 1936 by Pierre Gemayel, the Phalange Party or Kataib was characterized by its strong leadership and high centralization. It developed into a key Maronite power in Mount Lebanon and thus acquired a religious

²³³ (Prothero, 2009)

²³⁴ (Khazai & Hess, 2013, p. 44)

²³⁵ (Prothero, 2009)

²³⁶ (Khazai & Hess, 2013, p. 44)

²³⁷ (Cambanis, 2010, p. 121)

²³⁸ (Khazai & Hess, 2013, p. 44)

identity as the guardian of the Maronites. Under the French colonialism, the party sided with this colonial power only to become an active force calling for independence later on. However, the party kept its close ties to France and the West following the country's independence and gained popularity among the Lebanese Christians. The party took the slogan "God, the Fatherland, and the Family" and favored an open economy. Its "ideology focuses on the primacy of preserving the Lebanese nation, but with a Phoenician identity, distinct from its Arab, Muslim neighbors"²³⁹. The policies of this party were against the armament of the Palestinians and anti-communism and anti-Syrian. In other word, the party's decisions were driven by both the desire to remain in power and the need to safeguard the Lebanese Phoenician identity and the Maronite community's interests.

During the 1975 Civil War, the Phalange Party developed its own militia and became a recognizable Christian force. Bashir Gemayel, the son of Pierre, led various sectarian battles and took charge of the party's military wing, known as the Lebanese Forces. The 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon and the alliance between Israel and the Lebanese Forces resulted in the election of Bashir as president. The party was supported both by the United States and Israel especially when it comes to their battles against the PLO and as an anti-Nasserite force in Lebanon²⁴⁰. However, Bashir was assassinated and his post was inherited by his brother Amine, who is currently the head of the Phalange Party.

The death of Pierre Gemayel in 1984 weakened the party which was factionalized later on. Following the war, the party's influence dramatically

²³⁹ (Collelo, 1987, p. 155)

²⁴⁰ (Sloan & Anderson, 2009, p. 533)

decreased until the year 2000. Amine's son, Pierre tried, with the help of his father, to reconstruct the party. The anti-Syrian campaign unleashed by Pierre and his father pushed the pro-Syrian government to divide the party into two factions; "a pro-Syria faction, headed by Karim Pakradouni, and an anti-Syria faction, which remained under the control of the Gemayel family"²⁴¹.

With the Syrian withdrawal, both factions reconciled and the party was restored to its initial status under the leadership of Amine Gemayel. Currently, the party is part of March 14 alliance and continues to share special relations with the West, particularly France. Gemayel sought to distance himself and his party by adopting a neutral policy regarding the Syrian war claiming that it serves Lebanon's best interest and stimulate a reciprocal response from Syria to follow the same path²⁴².

In fact, the party expressed significant enthusiasm during the early beginning of the uprising in Syria. However, with time, the party began to articulate reservations regarding its initial stance. This is due in large to both the fear from the rise of radical Islamist groups and the fear that their decision would backfire should Assad survived²⁴³. The party's policy continues to be driven by ideational and strategic interests.

4.2.6 The Lebanese Forces

The Lebanese Forces (LF) was, as previously mentioned, the armed wing of the Phalange Party. The party "emerged as a political power in 1976 under the leadership of Bashir Jumayyil"²⁴⁴. It took anti-Palestinian policies and

²⁴¹ (El-Husseini, 2012, p. 47)

²⁴² (Khazai & Hess, 2013, p. 46)

²⁴³ (Satik & Mahmoud, 2013, p. 3)

²⁴⁴ (Collelo, 1987, p. 158)

sought to incorporate, willingly or forcibly, other Christian militias. As a result, in 1978 Tony Frangieh, the son of Suleiman Frangieh was killed along with his wife and daughter and the same was the fate of Dany Chamoun and his family in 1980. Thus, the LF became the most powerful Christian militia controlling East Beirut and Mount Lebanon. “Gemayel did not confine the LF to the military realm only; he created committees within the LF structure that had responsibility for health, information, foreign affairs, education, and other matters of public concern”²⁴⁵. The Lebanese forces thus not only advanced what they saw as Christian’s interests but also fought for them, thus giving the party a sectarian identity.

The assassination of Bashir Gemayel in 1982 left the party vulnerable to succession struggles.

The party suffered from internal power struggles and shifted from one leadership to another until it finally came under the leadership of Samir Geagea in 1986, a former militant in the Lebanese Forces. Geagea also went into intra-confessional battle with Michael Aoun, the head of the Free Patriotic Movement.

As the civil war ended, the new Syrian-backed government in Lebanon sentenced Geagea to a lifetime of imprisonment based on charges related to the murder of Dany Chamoun and his family, the assassination of Rachid Karameh and the explosion of Our Lady of Deliverance Church in Zouk Mikael. This action came under a bigger strategy to undermine the Christian’s role in the country.

²⁴⁵ (Collelo, 1987, p. 159)

After 11 years of imprisonment, Geagea was released and the party was thus reestablished. The party continued to voice discontent against the Syrian regime and built closer ties with the West and became an influential member in the March 14 coalition. It saw the Syrian uprising as a chance for revenge against the Assad regime. Thus the Lebanese forces became one of the main supporters to the Syrian opposition²⁴⁶. Additionally, the party views the potential fall of Assad as an opportunity to diminish the power of Hezbollah²⁴⁷.

4.2.7 Future Movement

Founded in 1993 by Rafik Hariri, the Future Movement has the support of the majority of the Lebanese Sunni community. Hariri was a powerful politician and an economic tycoon who amassed a significant fortune in Saudi Arabia working in the construction sector. Additionally, “by the 1970s, he had become one of the royal family’s most important and trusted businessmen”²⁴⁸. During and following the Lebanese civil war, he shifted his attention towards his home country and engaged in “charitable activities targeting mainly Sunnis but benefiting other communities as well”²⁴⁹. His political ties with key figures in Lebanon, Syria, Saudi Arabia, France and the United States and his efforts in the drafting to the Taif Accord led to Hariri’s recognition as a powerful Sunni leader²⁵⁰. This elevated the political aspirations of the Sunnis in Lebanon who suffered from a lack in

²⁴⁶ (Khazai & Hess, 2013, p. 50)

²⁴⁷ (Khazai & Hess, 2013, p. 50)

²⁴⁸ (International Crisis Group, Lebanon’s Politics: The Sunni Community and Hariri’s Future Current, 2010, p. 2)

²⁴⁹ (International Crisis Group, Lebanon’s Politics: The Sunni Community and Hariri’s Future Current, 2010, p. 2)

²⁵⁰ (International Crisis Group, Lebanon’s Politics: The Sunni Community and Hariri’s Future Current, 2010, p. 2)

leadership. Adding to that, Hariri's importance domestically and internationally caused discomfort in the Syrian regime and threatened the latter's quest to maintain its influence in Lebanon's politics. In other words, "Hariri had acquired an extraordinary stature as de facto head of state, bringing together broad Sunni support, a national vision and powerful international backing"²⁵¹. Thus, Hariri differed from the country's "traditional leaders, narrowly tied to their community interests, bitterly divided and thus – from Syria's standpoint – easy to manipulate"²⁵².

Following the assassination of Hariri, his son, Saad Hariri inherited the leadership of the movement and also the post of prime minister in 2009. The movement is "currently the largest group in March 14 coalitions"²⁵³. The movement is known for its affiliation with Saudi Arabia and the West. The party blamed Syria not only for the Hariri's assassination but also for not providing the Sunnis with the privileges granted to them in the Taif Accord²⁵⁴.

An analysis of the Sunni community in general and the Future Movement in particular cannot be complete without referring to the regional context. Sunnis unlike other sects in Lebanon are not a minority in the region as they are located in an Arab World dominated by Sunnis. Therefore, the Future Movement, being the main representative of the Sunni community in Lebanon, has received substantial support from various Arab countries such

²⁵¹ (International Crisis Group, Lebanon's Politics: The Sunni Community and Hariri's Future Current, 2010, p. 4)

²⁵² (International Crisis Group, Lebanon's Politics: The Sunni Community and Hariri's Future Current, 2010, p. 4)

²⁵³ (Schwerna, 2010, p. 36)

²⁵⁴ (Khazai & Hess, 2013, p. 51)

as Saudi Arabia. To this community, the Alawite dominated regime in Syria represents a form of repression to the Sunnis²⁵⁵.

In 2008, Hariri paid a reconciliation visit to Assad in Syria. However, this visit did not wash away the feelings of hatred and with the eruption of the Syrian conflict, the party sought vengeance by backing the Syrian opposition²⁵⁶. This stance faced two main problems; “one is a crisis of overconfidence, and the other the absence of leadership” as Hariri’s absence from the Lebanese’s scene damaged his image as a leader to the Sunnis²⁵⁷. In fact, Hariri’s “self-imposed exile” left the Sunnis without a visible leader which made increased the marginalization sentiment among the sect as Hezbollah’s domestic power increased and this led to the radicalization of various moderate Sunnis²⁵⁸. The role of The Future Movement and its support of radical Sunni groups in Syria will be explored in the next chapter.

In conclusion, political parties in Lebanon are characterized by their constructed sectarian identity, their leadership consisting of a *Zaiim* and their linkages with external forces all of which challenge the Lebanese state and its decision-making process specifically when it comes to foreign policy issues. These parties’ interests are divided between materialistic aiming at remaining in power and achieving electoral gains and ideational seeking to advance their particular vision of Lebanon (being Phoenician, part of an Arab Ummah, linked to Syria and so on) and to safeguard the sectarian communities’ interests. Specific laws on the creation and regulation of the

²⁵⁵ (Khazai & Hess, 2013, p. 51)

²⁵⁶ (Khazai & Hess, 2013, p. 51)

²⁵⁷ (Khazai & Hess, 2013, p. 51)

²⁵⁸ (Schenker, Hariri Returns to Lebanon: The Challenges Ahead, 2014)

political parties are not found neither in the constitution of 1926 nor in those that followed in 1943 National Pact and 1989 Taif Accord. The right to form political parties is thus taken indirectly from the freedom of association right found in Article 13 of the constitution. “Political party organizations have developed by default, based on the need to perpetuate and codify the electoral list system, which is the actual legal foundation of the multiparty regime in Lebanon”²⁵⁹.

Additionally, the largest political parties in Lebanon are lead by a sectarian *Zaiim*. The popularity of the party depends on the popularity of its *Zaiim*. Political parties in Lebanon do not undergo the process of elections in order to choose their leader. These parties have taken on the role of states in providing basic social services not only to their members but also to others as they can be beneficial to their electoral strategies. In fact, the “clientelistic and confessional character of Lebanese society had led most political leaders to rely more on their extended family allegiances, respective religious denominations (including the confessional family status courts), regional loyalty networks, and the flagrant use of illegal practices such as vote buying and the rigging of polling stations, rather than on partisan political structures, ideologically based party programs, and detailed election platforms”²⁶⁰. As these parties revolve around the patronage network of the *Zaiim*, the latter become the sole determinant of the party’s orientation. In order to survive domestically, this *Zaiim* must maintain relations with foreign forces which empower him, and thus his party, over other *Zu’ama* in the country. Therefore, safeguarding his foreign

²⁵⁹ (Sensenig-Dabbous, 2009)

²⁶⁰ (Sensenig-Dabbous, 2009)

relations becomes more important to his survival than abiding by the state's policies. In other words, the type of alliances a Zaim holds outside Lebanon has an important explanatory value inside Lebanon itself.

4.3 March 8 and March 14

The endeavors to create cross-sectarian coalitions in Lebanon can be traced back to the early years of Lebanon's independence which reflects an alliance between the Maronite President Bichara El Khouri and the Sunni Prime Minister Riyadh Al Solh. Yet, the most significant outcome of such coalition was the National Pact in 1943. This pact resulted in a sectarian regime. Thus cross-sectarian affiliations do not necessarily indicate the building of secular identities.

Following Hariri's assassination around one million Lebanese gathered in a massive anti-Syrian protest on March 14, 2005 and demanded the withdrawal of the Syrian troops from Lebanon. Various Lebanese political parties and figures rushed to take part of this historical event and a coalition was formed taking the date of this protest as a name and became known by the March 14 Movement. Following Hariri's death, Hassan Nasrallah and its allies gathered their supporters in a pro-Syrian protest to thank Syria for its assistance to Lebanon on March 8, 2005. Also a coalition was formed and was named after the day of the protest; March 8 Movement. Although Michel Aoun participated in the anti-Syrian demonstration on March 14, his party became considered part of the March 8 coalition following the latter's alliance with Hezbollah.

Each coalition constructed a secular identity as it comprised parties with various religious affiliations. Their identities revolved around their vision of Lebanon's foreign policy, particularly vis-à-vis Syria.

With Hariri's death and the Cedar Revolution, sectarian divisions within the country became more visible especially among the Sunnis and the Shiites. However, divisions mostly centered on foreign policy issues. The result was the creation of cross-sectarian coalitions known by March 8 and March 14. The former led by Hezbollah and its main allies being Amal Movement and the Free Patriotic Movement and the latter led by the Future Movement and its allies mainly the Lebanese Forces.

Each of these two political movements had its own vision of Lebanon. March 14 perceived Lebanon as a Western ally that shares close ties with Saudi Arabia, whereas March 8 saw Lebanon as an essential part of the Syrian-Iranian alliance. Whereas March 14 gave primacy to disarming Hezbollah and obstructing Syria's interference in Lebanon's internal affairs, March 8 gave priority to resist the Western interference in Lebanon's domestic affairs and to the Israeli threat. Thus, the period following 2005 and the withdrawal of Syria from Lebanon saw a redirection of sub-state foreign relations in a changing geopolitical regional setting.

To be sure, both coalitions fought over state control each using their external alliance to increase their domestic political gains. Additionally, each movement sought to balance the power of the other.

However, both coalitions developed their identities around ideational interests, to advance their own vision of Lebanon. March 8 saw Lebanon as a part of a greater regional alliance which aims at resisting at deterring the

Israeli threat whereas March 14 perceived Lebanon as a country open to the West and to Saudi Arabia. Just as the National Pact, the outcomes of these cross-sectarian alliances aim to serve the interest of sectarian groups. March 14 advances mainly the interest of the Sunnis whereas March 8 advances mostly the desires of the Shiites. This has been reflected in deadlocks and the inability to reach a consensus on new electoral laws for instance even within the same coalition.

CHAPTER FIVE

LEBANESE FOREIGN POLICY AND THE SYRIAN UPRISING

With the outbreak of the civil war in Syria in 2011, divisions in adjacent Lebanon intensified. “For half the country, Syria is a sister-state with which Lebanon shares a special relationship”²⁶¹. This relates specially to March 8 coalitions and its leading part, Hezbollah. “For the other half, Syria was a long time occupier who still has too much say into who governs Lebanon”²⁶² as in the case of March 14 coalition headed by the Future Movement.

The regional and international responses of various states to the Syrian war diversified. The reactions of governments ranged between the expulsion of Syrian diplomats, as the United States and Saudi Arabia, to calls for reform and the support of Bashar al-Assad regime, as Russia and China. When the eyes turned to Lebanon’s reaction, the government headed then by Prime Minister Najib Mikati took the decision not to interfere and adopt a policy of disassociation. Thus, Lebanon will neither publicly support nor oppose Assad’s regime²⁶³. The Baabda Declaration placed national interests over sub-national or supra-national ones. This restored many Lebanese’ faith in having a united and coherent foreign policy thus paving the way to the development of a national identity replacing sectarian and other forms of

²⁶¹ (Salhani, 2012)

²⁶² (Salhani, 2012)

²⁶³ (Salhani, 2012)

identities. However, parties in Lebanon did not abide by this policy and the government has adopted this policy only in rhetoric and not in deed. In fact, sectarian identities developed and intensified and once again came to be more significant than national identity. The following section explores the Syrian uprising and its culmination into a bloody civil war that persists until the time of writing. It also highlights the implication of the Syrian crisis on neighboring Lebanon and the latter's foreign policy revealing how ideational and sectarian interests took once again precedent over national ones.

5.1 Overview of Syrian Uprising

Prior to 2011, Syria has been described as a successful case of “authoritarian modernization”; the acquisition of the presidency by young and educated Bashar Al Assad raised hopes of reforms among Syrians²⁶⁴. However, eleven years following Bashar's election, or rather inheritance, of the presidency, the Syrian regime came under challenge from within. What are the reasons that led to the Syrian Uprising? How did a peaceful protest turn into a bloody civil war? In order to better understand the Syrian Uprising, it is important to explore the changes that took place under Bashar's presidency.

5.1.1 Bashar Al Assad's Rule

In 2000, president Hafiz Al Assad died after ruling over Syria for almost three decades. His son Bashar was prepared to inherit his father's position. In fact, the “party and army elite closed ranks and, to prevent a power struggle, ratified the process Hafiz had begun of establishing his son,

²⁶⁴ (Hinnebusch, Syria: from ‘authoritarian upgrading’ to revolution?, 2012, p. 95)

Bashar, as his successor”²⁶⁵. Holding an education from a western university and being relatively young, Bashar was perceived as the president who would modernize Syria. The country witnessed administrative, economic, political and social reforms.

The young president sought to incorporate the country’s economy into the world market. He also called for transparency and ending bribery. Under his rule, the “government took steps to end nearly four decades of state monopoly over banking and foreign exchange, introduced legislation to encourage foreign investment and relax rent control, spearheaded efforts to enhance the autonomy of state-owned enterprises and undertook some educational reforms, including private schools and universities”²⁶⁶. Politically, opposition parties such as the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood as well as leftists and Marxists parties became more dynamic. Calls for greater freedom and reforms were tolerated, private magazines were granted a license to publish, the internet was introduced and forums for public expressions thrived. Additionally, a significant number of political prisoners were released and two of the country’s well-known prisons were shut down²⁶⁷.

However, the jubilation surrounding the new president did not persist as reforms came to a halt.

“Bashar’s economic liberalization project, initially matched by an opening to Western Europe, was quickly jeopardized by the collapse of the peace process with Israel and the parallel souring of Syrian–US relations”²⁶⁸. As a

²⁶⁵ (Hinnebusch, Syria: from ‘authoritarian upgrading’ to revolution?, 2012, p. 98)

²⁶⁶ (International Crisis Group, Syria Under Bashar (II): Domestic Policy Challenges, 2004, p. 7)

²⁶⁷ (International Crisis Group, Syria Under Bashar (II): Domestic Policy Challenges, 2004, pp. 7-8)

²⁶⁸ (Hinnebusch, Syria: from ‘authoritarian upgrading’ to revolution?, 2012, p. 100)

result, Syria shifted to Saddam's Iraq who was also in bad terms with the US following the invasion of Kuwait in 1990²⁶⁹. Syria's revenues increased from the trade of low-cost Iraqi oil- being pumped into Syrian-Iraqi pipeline²⁷⁰. Although the invasion of Iraq in 2003 gave the Syrian regime authenticity and allowed it to play the nationalist card against the US occupation, it imposed serious economic costs on Syria.

Aiming at isolating Syria economically, the US imposed sanctions on the latter which reflected negatively on western investment and on the country's service sector²⁷¹. The fall of Saddam and his regime also posed serious threats to Syria and the Baath regime's survival. Expectations of additional reforms and fast change increased. Indeed the regime took several steps in the first few months following the 2003 invasion such as providing license to two private universities and allowing some NGOs, mainly those working on the environment and women's to function²⁷². In 2005, Syrian troops withdrew from Lebanon as a result of popular demand within Lebanon backed by an international support, mainly by the West. As a result, opposition within Syria was encouraged to forge alliance with foreign forces. However, the regime mobilized support by playing the nationalist card and strengthening anti-Western sentiments²⁷³.

Following this period, Bashar asserted "that democratization had to follow economic modernization rather than precede it"²⁷⁴. Bashar followed a path similar to that undertaken in China; stability is ensured through one-party

²⁶⁹ (Hinnebusch, Syria: from 'authoritarian upgrading' to revolution?, 2012, p. 100)

²⁷⁰ (Hinnebusch, Syria: from 'authoritarian upgrading' to revolution?, 2012, p. 100)

²⁷¹ (Hinnebusch, Syria: from 'authoritarian upgrading' to revolution?, 2012, p. 100)

²⁷² (International Crisis Group, 2004, p.10)

²⁷³ (Hinnebusch, Syria: from 'authoritarian upgrading' to revolution?, 2012, p. 103)

²⁷⁴ (Hinnebusch, Syria: from 'authoritarian upgrading' to revolution?, 2012, p. 103)

rule and modernization is achieved through economic reforms. In that year alone, Assad signed more than a hundred laws and presidential decrees addressing reforms in both the economic and administrative fields which stimulated the growth of the private sector and loosened the governmental grip over the economy²⁷⁵.

Although neither these reforms nor this growth reflected on the political scene of the country, Syria's economy prior to the outbreak of the uprising was diverse and witnessed a remarkable growth. In 2009, the government's revenue was estimated around 600 billion Syrian lira²⁷⁶. The government relied heavily on tax and oil revenues as pillars of its budget, the latter amounting to 150 billion Syrian liras²⁷⁷ in the year prior to the uprising²⁷⁸. Adding to that, until the outbreak of the uprising, the GDP per capita among Syria was counted around \$5,000²⁷⁹. Socially, "nearly 90 percent of Syrian children attended primary or secondary schools and between eight and nine in 10 Syrians had achieved literacy"²⁸⁰. That being said, what are the causes that led to the outbreak of protests in "stable Syria" and to the failure of "authoritarian upgrading" to inoculate Syria from the wave of the "Arab Spring"?

5.1.2 Roots of contention

"Contentious politics emerges in response to changes in political opportunities and constraints, with participants responding to a variety of

²⁷⁵ (Democracy and the Rule of Law Project, 2006, p. 7)

²⁷⁶ (Mahamid, 2013)

²⁷⁷ 150 billion SYP is approximately 954 million USD

²⁷⁸ (Mahamid, 2013)

²⁷⁹ (Polk, 2013)

²⁸⁰ (Polk, 2013)

incentives”²⁸¹. “Building on these opportunities, and using known repertoires of action, people with limited resources can act together contentiously- if only sporadically”²⁸².

In March 2011, 15 students from Daraa governorate were arrested after writing down “people want the fall of the regime” (“Ash-shab yurid isqat an-nizam”) on a school wall. This event sparked a wave of protest in the rural city and was perceived as the flame that ignited the Syrian uprising. However, just as the self-immolation of Mohamed Bouazizi in Tunisia, this event does not reflect the sole reason behind the emergence of discontent. In fact, just as Tunisians and Egyptians, Syrians shared grievances which are highly important in understanding mobilization.

To begin with, the growth of the Syrian economy in the past decade did not reflect in increasing the number of job offers. In fact, economic reforms and the invigoration of the private sector resulted in crony capitalism and the creation of “new monopolies controlled by members of the governing elite rather than avenues through which new players can gain wealth and political influence”²⁸³. Consequently, partnerships and cooperation between regime crony capitalists and the bourgeoisie grew and families and clans affiliated with the regime became influential economic players.

Additionally, UN reports highlighted that approximately 2million Syrians live in extreme poverty and more than half of the citizens in north-east Syrian are unemployed²⁸⁴. With the absence of unemployment benefits and the frustration of a growing young and educated population, the situation

²⁸¹ (Tarrow, 1998, p. 10)

²⁸² (Tarrow, 1998, p. 10)

²⁸³ (Democracy and the Rule of Law Project, 2006, p. 7)

²⁸⁴ (Coutts, 2011)

became aggravated. Adding salt to injury was the “removal of subsidies on agricultural inputs, decline of farm support prices and neglect of the system of agricultural planning and cooperatives, whose underpaid officials demanded bribes for their services, combined with the terrible drought of 2007–2010”²⁸⁵ all of which reflected negatively on the agricultural industry. Moreover, the country’s military branches are headed by elites who are related to and belong to the same religious sect of the Assad family, the Alawite sect which infuriated the Sunnis who represent the majority of the country’s population²⁸⁶.

The frustration increased further when the government failed to deliver the numerous political reforms which have been promised by Assad. Among the promises were enacting a law related to political parties, allowing private print media to be established and lifting the state of emergency that has been operational for almost five decades²⁸⁷. But if these grievances have existed among Syrians for the past decade what changed now? What led a number of Syrians to act contentiously?

The existence of similar sources of grievances among the citizens of the Arab World has facilitated the diffusion of protest movements within the Arab World various countries. This has also resulted in the spill-over of protests’ tactics and strategies as well as slogans. The effect of the Arab uprising and the overthrow of the Tunisian, Egyptian and Libyan presidents encouraged the Syrian opposition to follow the same path. Social media and the internet played also a catalyzing role in the evolution of protests within Syria. Just as Tarrow described the role of print media in connecting people

²⁸⁵ (Hinnebusch, Syria: from ‘authoritarian upgrading’ to revolution?, 2012, p. 102)

²⁸⁶ (Tashjian, 2012, p. 4)

²⁸⁷ (Democracy and the Rule of Law Project, 2006, p. 8)

and informing them about especially were contentious disruptions in distant areas, social media and the internet provided Syrians with knowledge of the occurrences in distant countries. Being uncontrollable by the regime, Syrian protestors relied heavily on the internet and social media to voice their discontent and break their news to the world.

Adding to that, “a key role was played by disaffected Diaspora-based Syrians, many the children of exiles, now able for the first time to use the internet to encourage dissent inside Syria”²⁸⁸. This provided an opportunity to the opposition at home to take the streets, taking the arrest of the students as their main event and calling for reforms. However, what came to be a peaceful protest calling for reforms soon tuned into violent confrontations calling for the fall of the regime and ouster of Bashar Al Assad and culminated eventually into a bloody civil war that persist until the time of writing.

5.1.3 From Peaceful Protest to Civil War

How did a peaceful protest calling for reform and justice in March 2011 turn into one of the most brutal and bloody civil war in recent history? To begin with, small protests took place in Syria on January 2011 being influence by the wave of the Arab uprising. The regime’s initial response was to “exploit citizens’ fear of civil war, as happened in Iraq with post-invasion ‘democratization’, pointing also to the chaos unleashed by the revolt in Homs”²⁸⁹. Assad’s regime also “played on fear of foreign

²⁸⁸ (Hinnebusch, Syria: from ‘authoritarian upgrading’ to revolution?, 2012, p. 107)

²⁸⁹ (Hinnebusch, Syria: from ‘authoritarian upgrading’ to revolution?, 2012, p. 108)

interference and raised the Palestine issue by organizing demonstrations on the Golan”²⁹⁰.

However when the protests intensified in the city of Daraa following the arrest of students, the Syrian government announced that it would undertake various steps towards reform. Among the announcements were decisions to increase salaries of state employees, lifting the state of emergency and granting licenses to political parties²⁹¹. Around one month later, the Syrian president fulfilled its pledge to lift the state of emergency, closed down the Higher State Security Court and released a decree that legalize the right to peaceful demonstrations²⁹².

Despite these announcements, the regime resorted to harsh repression cracking down protests and despite the lift of the emergency law, security forces kept on using “violence with impunity”²⁹³. The Syrian opposition presented itself as a secular and democratic entity in order to attract as many participants as possible and to draw support from the West.

However, as the regime’s response became more violent, the protestors became less numerous and more radical. “Contested by armed resistance from military defectors, the regime lost control over some areas, leaving a vacuum filled by a combination of civil society solidarity and criminality”²⁹⁴.

Additionally, the opposition’s weakness and fragmentation empowered Assad regime. The Syrian National Council (SNC) was created in Istanbul

²⁹⁰ (Hinnebusch, Syria: from ‘authoritarian upgrading’ to revolution?, 2012, p. 108)

²⁹¹ (Syria Civil War Fast Facts, 2014)

²⁹² (Syria Civil War Fast Facts, 2014)

²⁹³ (Hinnebusch, Syria: from ‘authoritarian upgrading’ to revolution?, 2012, pp. 108-109)

²⁹⁴ (Hinnebusch, Syria: from ‘authoritarian upgrading’ to revolution?, 2012, p. 109)

in August 2011 out of the need of international support²⁹⁵. However the SNC has not gathered the needed internal backing to become a serious threat to the Baath regime. As violence increased, the regime played on the fear of sectarian minorities portraying the opposition as a Sunni radical movement being supported by Saudi Arabia and the West²⁹⁶. The middle classes and the bourgeoisie in the country favored a peaceful transition to democracy and continued supporting Bashar fearing the loss of their interests and the arrival of radicals to power. It should also be mentioned that despite increased defections in the security apparatus, the regime as well as the army remained relatively unified²⁹⁷.

As days passed by, slaughters and violence committed by both sides were reported and both sides exchanged accusations on the use of hard explosives and weapons. Two years following the crisis, the regime was accused of employing chemical weapons which increased the talks about an international involvement as well as direct US intervention in Syria. China and Russia used their veto against UN Security Council and UN sanctions on Syria. A US-Russian deal was reached that requested the removal and destruction of Syria's chemical weapons²⁹⁸. Additionally, the opposition's fragmentation between the SNC, the Free Syrian Army (FSA) and the National Coordinating Council resulted in the discouragement of regional and international forces to provide them with arms capable of fighting the regime²⁹⁹.

²⁹⁵ (Phillips, 2011, p. 38)

²⁹⁶ (Hinnebusch, Syria: from 'authoritarian upgrading' to revolution?, 2012, p. 107)

²⁹⁷ (Hinnebusch, Syria: from 'authoritarian upgrading' to revolution?, 2012, p. 110)

²⁹⁸ (Veen & Abdo, 2014, p. 11)

²⁹⁹ (Veen & Abdo, 2014, p. 12)

What followed this phase “re-framed the conflict in religious and sectarian terms with terrorist overtones, and inextricably nested it in broader regional ‘conflict by proxy’ logic”³⁰⁰. This period saw the speedy emergence of radical religious groups. The Islamic Front which united various groups as Ahrar al-Sham and the Islam Army, Jabhet Al Nasra (JAN) as well as the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) depicted themselves as the guardians of the Syrian Sunnis which culminated the Sunni-Shiite divide and tension in the country and the region³⁰¹.

With more than 1000 deaths in the first year of the conflict and with its entry into its fourth year of conflict approaching 200,000 fatalities, there is no longer doubt that Syria has plunged into a civil war. The crisis has left around 3million refugees dispersed into neighboring countries. The majority of these refugees fled to Lebanon which currently hosts over 1,142,425 Syrians³⁰². The intensification of the conflict in neighboring Syria places significant risks on Lebanon’s political stability and security. How is the Syrian civil war casting being reflected into Lebanon? What is the link between the Syrian uprising and Lebanon’s foreign policy?

5.2 Effect on Lebanon

“It was inevitable that sooner or later the bloodshed in Syria, grafted onto existing tensions in Lebanon, would transform the Lebanese sectarian struggle from a primarily political one to an increasingly and notably more “religious” conflict (...) whereby communities, however imagined or over-constructed, perceive themselves as defending not only their share in the

³⁰⁰ (Veen & Abdo, 2014, p. 13)

³⁰¹ (Veen & Abdo, 2014, p. 12)

³⁰² As recorded for the month of October (UN Refugee Agency, 2014)

country's power structure, but their very existence and survival—so that interest-based political turf lines are being replaced by identity-based imaginary boundaries”³⁰³.

In the early beginnings of the uprising, Lebanon internal division intensified into two camps; those supporting the Assad regime and those supporting rebels. Responses to the Syrian crisis were at first limited to speeches made by some Lebanese figures and public peaceful demonstrations either in support or in opposition to the Syrian regime. However, as the conflict in Syria intensified, Lebanon descended into chaos.

The first and most visible effect of the Syrian crisis has been reflected in the clashes between Alawites and Sunnis residing in Tripoli. “Fighters of Bab Tebbaneh now see their actions against of the decades-long conflict opposing the areas of Jabal Mohsen and Bab Tebbaneh in Tripoli”³⁰⁴. A series of car bombings followed targeting Beirut suburbs resided by Shiites leaving behind a number of casualties. Fearing that the Syrian war would turn into a Lebanese war and in order to contain the surmounting sectarian tension, Mikati's government adopted a policy of disassociation reflected in the Baabda Declaration.

5.2.1 The Baabda Declaration:

As the outbreak of peaceful protests demanding the departure of Assad in Syria soon turned into a bloody civil war, Lebanon adopted a policy of “disassociation”. The policy was translated in the “Baabda Declaration”; an agreement between the various Lebanese political groups. This arrangement demanded to distance Lebanon from the Syrian conflict across the borders

³⁰³ (Bahout, 2014, p. 4)

³⁰⁴ (International Crisis Group, A Precarious Balancing Act: Lebanon and the Syrian Conflict, 2012, p. 7)

in order to avoid the negative spillover of such tensions into the country³⁰⁵. The Baabda Declaration came to place national interests over sectarian and ideational desires, thus raising the hopes of taking the first step towards building national identity. However, the supporting or opposing responses of Lebanon's political parties to the Syrian regime, made it difficult to abide by the demands of the Baabda Declaration asserting that sub-groups and non-state actors' identities are stronger than national ones. Thus, Lebanon's foreign relations became a tool used by the *Zu'ama* domestically and foreign actors regionally and internationally and sectarianism has been exploited by these players to justify alliances.

5.2.1.1 Its Content:

On June 11, 2012, the National Dialogue Committee headed by the Lebanese President, General Michel Suleiman issued the Baabda Declaration in response to the recent developments taking place in Lebanon as well as the region, especially in Syria. The declaration contained major decisions on which the leading parties in Lebanon agreed. To begin with, the declaration gave primacy to dialogue over any other conflict-solving mean and called for the avoidance of tension in speeches and the concentration on the commonalities rather than the frictions of all factions and called for the execution of socioeconomic development strategies³⁰⁶.

The agreement held all parties equally responsible in ensuring stability and in preventing the country from being pulled into any kind of strife and stress on the importance of enhancing "state institutions, encourage a culture of reliance on the law and legitimate institutions for the resolution of any

³⁰⁵ (Dakroub, 2013, p. 1)

³⁰⁶ (Statement of the National Dialogue Committee at Baabda Palace, 2012)

contention or urgent issue.”³⁰⁷. From this point, the judiciary must seek the imposition of the law equally and fairly and the army must be supported both morally and materially. Moreover, all factions were asked to respect the Taif Agreement as well as all international resolutions (such as that of the Security Council 1701) and Lebanon must be sidelined away from all regional tensions; therefore the Lebanese-Syrian borders must be controlled and Lebanon must maintain a policy of neutralization also known as the policy of disassociation in which no faction would participate in the Syrian conflict in order to avoid the Syrian crisis repercussion on its domestic scene³⁰⁸. The Baabda Declaration gained the consensus of all parties. However, it was destined to failure as it faced many limitations and breaching of its content.

5.2.1.2 Its Limitation:

As history repeats itself, the Baabda Declaration was fated to failure for the same reasons that challenged the National Pact in 1943; the incapacity of parties in Lebanon to remain neutral from regional crisis. In fact, Lebanon’s institutions have been historically weak which strengthened sectarian and kinship ties and encouraged the emergence of sub-state actors which are more powerful than the state itself. The state’s direction has been headed toward failure. According to Stewart Patrick, weak states “struggle to maintain a monopoly on the use of force, provide security from external and internal threats, control borders and territory, ensure public order and provide safety from crime”³⁰⁹.

³⁰⁷ (Statement of the National Dialogue Committee at Baabda Palace, 2012)

³⁰⁸ (Statement of the National Dialogue Committee at Baabda Palace, 2012)

³⁰⁹ (Patrick, 2006, pp. 7-8)

Additionally, a weak state is one filled with corruption in its judiciary and political institutions thus endangering the basic foundation of democracy ranging from accountability to justice and protection of rights. Not to mention, a weak state finds difficulties in meeting with the basic economic needs of its population such as health and education not to mention its weakness in providing an environment suitable for business and investment. The analysis of Lebanon based on this spectrum is beyond the scope of this research. However, the presence of armed factions who possess a certain level of autonomy within the state undermines the latter's presence and weakens it further and this has been revealed in the recent conflict within and over Syria.

To begin with, the sectarian strife among Sunnis-Shiites escalated following the assassination of Wissam Al Hassan in October 2012. The later was a key player in the Lebanese domestic politics. Prior to Hariri's assassination, Al Hassan took charge of the security guard responsible of safeguarding Hariri. In 2006, he became the head of the Internal Security Forces' Information Branch participating in the investigations surrounding Hariri's murder and uncovering Israeli espionage³¹⁰. "Hassan proved to be a key pillar of the Sunni community and of the March 14 coalition in terms both of security and intelligence gathering"³¹¹. The murder of Hassan posed a serious challenge to the survival of the Baabda Declaration.

Adding to that, the presence of Hezbollah's arms has been highly debated among different Lebanese actors. Its recent overt participation in the Syrian

³¹⁰ (International Crisis Group, A Precarious Balancing Act: Lebanon and the Syrian Conflict, 2012, p. 21)

³¹¹ (International Crisis Group, A Precarious Balancing Act: Lebanon and the Syrian Conflict, 2012, p. 21)

war has been perceived both as a breach to the Baabda Declaration which called for the neutralization of all Lebanese parties and as an independent decision which ignores the statehood of Lebanon and drags the country into a fierce conflict, portraying Hezbollah as a “state within a state”³¹². For Hezbollah, the survival of the Assad’s regime is necessary at all costs and for many reasons among which we mention the supply of arms, surveillance of roads to ensure their delivery, and the protection from regional threats (emerging either by Israel or from Arab countries)³¹³. Furthermore, Syria’s Alawite regime and Baath Party, prior to the Bashar’s presidency shared close ties with Shiite leaders in both Lebanon and Iran such as Musa Al-Sadr³¹⁴. In fact, Alawites and Shiites share the same religious doctrine. Both sects believe “that leadership of the Islamic world—and rights to interpret the faith—should have descended through Prophet Mohammed’s family after his death”³¹⁵. Therefore, in their belief, Ali, the prophet’s relative and son-in-law was entitled of being the first caliph³¹⁶. Sunnis, on the other hand, consider that the prophet’s advisors are entitled to succession. Since the 800s, “Alawites struggled for legitimacy and recognition from other Muslims”³¹⁷. Efforts to increase the Shiites – Alawites theological rapprochement increased in the past years. “This has been partly due to the decline of Arab nationalism and rise of the religious factor in making political alliances and defining identity”³¹⁸. Thus,

³¹² (Manyok, 2013)

³¹³ (Khoury, 2013)

³¹⁴ Al-Sadr issued a Fatwa which recognized formally the Alawites as an esoteric sect within the Shiite community (Sindawi, 2009, p. 83)

³¹⁵ (Khalaji, 2013)

³¹⁶ (Khalaji, 2013)

³¹⁷ (Khalaji, 2013)

³¹⁸ (Khalaji, 2013)

Damascus became a bridge that links the Shiite community from Iran throughout Iraq, Kuwait and Lebanon. Therefore, both Hezbollah and Iran have high interest in preserving the Assad regime in Syria and the geographical proximity of both Lebanon and Iran to Syria facilitated the interference of Hezbollah and increased the Iranian influence in Syria.

In short, the existence of the current regime in Syria justifies the existence and strength of Hezbollah in Lebanon. Undeniably, “within Lebanon’s two-level game, losing an external patron does not merely mean a loss of strategic depth or a supply source, but the risk of domestic political marginalization”³¹⁹. From this sense, Hezbollah was willing to disregard the impact that his participation in the Syrian war could have on Lebanon, being the fueling of sectarian divide and the loss of his Christian allies so as to support the regime in Syria. The resignation of Mikati’s government in March 2013 has loosen the bare for Hezbollah’s activity in Syria as it can no longer be held accountable under the existing void in Lebanon³²⁰.

On Monday July 22, 2013, the European Union foreign ministers met in Brussels and unanimously agreed to blacklist Hezbollah’s armed wing, labeling it as a terrorist group³²¹. The decision taken by the EU against Hezbollah did not provide an incentive for the latter to limit its interference in the Syrian conflict. Various Lebanese groups saw the crisis in Syria as an opportunity to either show their loyalty for or vengeance against the Assad regime such as Hezbollah and the Future Movement respectively.

The assassination of Hariri in 2005, the invasion of Beirut Sunni neighborhood in 2008, the collapse of Saad Hariri’s government in 2011

³¹⁹ (Khazai & Hess, 2013, p. 30)

³²⁰ (Khoury, 2013)

³²¹ (Laub & Masters, 2013)

and the hope of bringing in a new Sunni regime in Syria has shaped the Future Movement's position regarding the Syrian crisis. The party found in the Syrian uprising an opportunity for revenge against the Assad regime and a tool to reduce Hezbollah's weight within Lebanon and the region³²². Although it denied any direct participation in the Syrian crisis, "Future Movement MP Okab Sakr was acting as an arms coordinator between Syrian opposition fighters and Arab Gulf funders, presumably from Saudi Arabia"³²³. If truth be told, the Baabda Declaration was destined to failure from the start due in large to March 8 and March 14's indifference to the security and stability of the country they both allege to worry so profoundly about.

In addition to that, Sunni radicals operating under Lebanese leadership have been crossing borders to take part in the fights in Syria such as Jund al-Sham and Kataib al-Muqawama al-Hurrah which is headed by Ahmad al-Assir³²⁴. These factors have dragged Lebanon into the Syrian war and plunged it into more deadlocks and insecurity as series of assassinations and blasts has been rotating between Tripoli, Beirut and the southern district of the capital leaving behind many casualties and material damages not to mention bringing with it the failure of the Baabda declaration.

5.2.2 Foreign Policy of Sub-Groups

With the intensification of the Syrian civil war and the failure of the policy of neutralization, Lebanon became a fertile land to two groups crossing the poorly defined and monitored Lebanese-Syrian borders; rebels and

³²² (Khoury, 2013)

³²³ (Khoury, 2013)

³²⁴ (Asfura-Heim & Steinitz, 2014)

refugees³²⁵. To begin with, the uncontrollable flow of Syrian civilians arriving into Lebanon soon became a threat to the country's stability. Geographically small and lacking enough resources, Lebanon have already been struggling to meet the need of its roughly four million residents and the need of the approximately 450,000 Palestinians seeking refuge in this country³²⁶. Absorbing more refugees proved to be problematic to Lebanon's economy. World Bank report, as cited by the Daily Star in 2013, stated that the Syrian crisis in the past two years might result in cutting "Lebanon's real GDP growth by 2.9 percentage points each year, pushing a further 170,000 Lebanese into poverty, over and above the 1 million already living below the poverty line"³²⁷. Nonetheless, the economic cost of the refugee crisis is the least of Lebanon's worries.

In fact, it is the political and security risks that comes along with the decision of hosting around 1million refugees that are distressing. Bringing Syrians refugees into an unstable political and sectarian environment turned the refugee crisis into a ticking time bomb waiting to explode at any moment. "Mostly Sunnis who left their country on account of the violence exercised against them by the Assad regime, these refugees now saw their country as largely Alawite and as supported by their Shia relatives in Lebanon"³²⁸.

Moreover, most of the Syrian refugees reside in Lebanese regions near the Syrian border. These regions happen to witness the climax of the Shiites-Sunnis tensions such as Aarsal or Majdel-Anjar which metamorphosed

³²⁵ (Bahout, 2014, p. 3)

³²⁶ (Bahout, 2014, p. 3)

³²⁷ (Impact of Syria crisis beyond Lebanon's means, 2013)

³²⁸ (Bahout, 2014, p. 3)

rapidly into headquarters to “a Syrian mini-society, in open confrontation with a Hezbollah-led resistance counter-society, already powerfully present in the same regions”³²⁹. Ironically, Salafi networks in various Lebanese regions such as Akkar, Tripoli, and western Bekaa that were encouraged during the 80s by the Syrian regime and its intelligence in Lebanon, rushed into the help of their Syrian brethren either in sending them aid and smuggling arms or providing medical care to the Syrian Free Army³³⁰.

With the complete militarization of the Syrian uprising, Hassan Nasrallah, declared that complete involvement of Hezbollah in the Syrian war was not just for the protection of Shiite regions in Syria as alleged previously, but to support Assad. “From then on, the Assad regime’s fate would be inextricably linked to Hezbollah’s, and Lebanon’s political equilibrium would be fatally intertwined with Syria’s”³³¹. By sheltering and protecting Syrians in northern Lebanon, Islamists reactivated their communal ties. Prior to the Syrian crisis, Islamists followed one of the two available choices; they either kept a low profile or went into alliance with local politicians to obtain political and security shield.

However, following the uprising in Syria and the overt rise of Islamists in the region, Islamists in Lebanon no longer require political support as they are now acting on their own. Their mobilization no longer depended on the orders of the Future Movement or other political factions³³². Following the copy-cat logic, Islamists in the country sought to follow the same path of

³²⁹ (Bahout, 2014, p. 3)

³³⁰ (Bahout, 2014, p. 3)

³³¹ (Bahout, 2014, p. 3)

³³² (International Crisis Group, A Precarious Balancing Act: Lebanon and the Syrian Conflict, 2012, p. 4)

Hezbollah and arm themselves³³³. Being incapable of challenging Hezbollah's domination in several regions of the country, they have decided to imitate it.

The most dangerous spillover of Syria's crisis into Lebanon appeared in the beginning of August 2014, when Lebanon's army forces (LAF) and Islamist armed groups belonging to IS³³⁴ and Jabhet Al Nasra³³⁵ clashed in the Lebanese town of Aarsal. Members of the Lebanese army and security forces were taken captive by the militants³³⁶. As a result, Muslim clerics took the initiative to start negotiating the release of the soldiers. Moreover, IS succeeded in emboldening militants in Lebanon who share with them the same beliefs and radicalists began appearing in Beirut and its suburbs. The country's numerous political factions along with the clerics and Islamists groups have been pursuing their separate agendas enhancing or creating ties with foreign powers.

March 14 camp and precisely the Future Movement have fortified its relations with the West and Saudi Arabia whereas March 8 coalition and particularly Hezbollah have been increasingly supporting the Assad regime and strengthening its ties with Iran. The "shadow war between Hezbollah and al-Qaeda as well as the Iran-Saudi proxy battle in Lebanon intensify"³³⁷. Yet political leaders of Lebanon's multiple sects are losing their control over their communities as clerics and religious figures are gaining more importance and becoming more active in the political scene.

³³³ (International Crisis Group, A Precarious Balancing Act: Lebanon and the Syrian Conflict, 2012, p. 4)

³³⁴ Known before as the Islamic State in Iraq and the greater Syria, it shortened its name to become Islamic State in its attempt to expand into more territories.

³³⁵ Al Qaeda Branch in Syria

³³⁶ (Sunni fighters, Lebanese army extend fragile cease-fire in border town, 2014)

³³⁷ (Yacoubian, 2014, p. 2)

Lebanon's Sunni community has been suffering from a lack of a clear leadership over the years and this has encouraged radicals to fill the void³³⁸. As a result, a significant rise in Sunni militancy is taken place. These radicals have been allying with foreign Sunni radicals following their tactics in bombing civilian areas³³⁹. Syrian jihadist organizations such as Jabhat al-Nusra and Islamic State extended their territories and became visible in Lebanon. Lebanese citizens, feeling more and more insecure, organized neighborhood patrols and adopted self-protection strategies.

All this led to the paralysis of Lebanese state institutions. The continuing stalemate in the cabinet led to a political vacuum resulting in the adjournment of presidential elections and leaving the country to be governed without a president. The LAF, the institution that has the most national support, has faced increasing pressures and accusation and became target to Sunni extremists³⁴⁰. With weak state institutions, Lebanon is unable to control these groups. As each follow its personal agenda, disregarding the presence of a state, Lebanon's foreign policy sees no chances of developing a clear and coherent form. Sectarian identities have once again prevailed over national identity.

Briefly, the Syrian crisis revealed the significance of sub and supra-national identities in the analysis of Lebanon's foreign policy and in understanding the behavior of non-state actors which neglect the state by conducting their own external relations.

³³⁸ (Yacoubian, 2014, p. 2)

³³⁹ (Yacoubian, 2014, p. 3)

³⁴⁰ (Yacoubian, 2014, p. 3)

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

The confessional system which has been constructed in Lebanon due to several historical, political and social reasons strengthened the sub-identity groups and contributed to the eradication of state's authority. The state has been historically unable to be the sole holder of coercive means. The various confessional factions within the country have only enhanced their alliances with external forces which contributed to the lack of a unified foreign policy in Lebanon. Rather, the country ended up with multiple foreign policies "due to the power of sub-state actors and the absence of strong national identity"³⁴¹.

Adding to the domestic contestation, regional and international actors have been interfering in the country's affairs and trying to manipulate the foreign policy of the country through their alliances with local groups and parties in order to push forward their interests. The increase in the intensity of the conflict in Syria has deepened the polarization in Lebanon and amplified sectarian divides among Sunnis and Shiites. The fallout of the Syrian conflict in Lebanon has been revealed in the unrest which erupted in Tripoli between pro-Assad Alawite and pro-opposition Sunnis, the falling of Syrian missiles on Lebanese soils, the assassination of Mohammad Shattah³⁴² and the blasts in the Beirut's southern neighborhood which has been announced as a blow to Hezbollah by Syrian rebels linked to Al-Qaeda.

³⁴¹ (Wilkins, 2013)

³⁴² Chatah was an economist and the former minister of Finance in Lebanon. He was considered as a Sunni moderate as he favored diplomacy and dialogue to resolve conflict and deadlocks

More recently, the kidnapping of soldiers in Arsal and the clashes between the Lebanese army and Islamic State (IT) along with Jabhet Al Nasra signaled the plunging of Lebanon into the Syrian crisis. Moreover, the Saudi's pledge to grant \$3 billion towards military aid to Lebanon has been perceived as an attempt to empower the Lebanese government and to counter the power of the Iranian backed Hezbollah³⁴³, all of which poses further obstacle towards adopting a coherent Lebanese foreign policy. "Lebanon's domestic political balance, and the role of regional, or international actors hinder its ability to craft a unified foreign policy to achieve national objectives"³⁴⁴.

The interests and behavior of sub-groups in Lebanon can only be explained through understanding their identities and how they have been shaped. "In Lebanon, parochial interests take precedence over national ones"³⁴⁵. From this perspective, the constructivist approach provides an additional perspective through which Lebanon's foreign policy can be better examined. This is not to say that this approach faces no challenges whatsoever. This conclusion highlights the strength and limitation of the constructivist approach in explaining Lebanon's foreign policy before concluding with the current and persistent challenges facing the creation of a coherent national foreign policy.

6.1 Constructivism's Strength in Explaining Lebanon's FP

Constructivism offers an additional perspective to understanding Lebanon in which identities and ideologies represent a significant source of dispute.

³⁴³ (Blanford, 2013)

³⁴⁴ (Bloomquist, Gilchrist, & Indelicato, 2011, p. 45)

³⁴⁵ (Bloomquist, Gilchrist, & Indelicato, 2011, p. 45)

Constructivism as a result can be employed to explain the structure of alliances of sub-state actors in Lebanon with external actors and “is helpful in demystifying Lebanese foreign policy making”³⁴⁶. The deterioration of the state and the lack of a strong national identity provided a platform to sub-state actors to develop their personal agendas and build alliances with foreign actors, sharing similar political and pious desires. The presence of various sub-state identity groups each pursuing its own interest and developing its own foreign policy means that the government will issue policies based on the interest of groups. Adding to that, the foreign policy of sub-groups within the weak state of Lebanon does not always cohere with that of the central government.

Sub-state actors are loyal to their political or religious *Zaim* and are affected by their supra-state identities that determine their coalitions with outside forces. Constantly seeking to advance their agendas through alliances with foreign actors, domestic actors encouraged foreign intervention. Lebanon’s foreign policy thus is determined by the desires of sub-state actors who go into alliances with foreign actors in order to push forward their own agenda and challenge their opponents domestically. All this came at the expense of Lebanon’s autonomy and resulted in the failure to develop a unitary foreign policy.

From this perspective, constructivism’s strength in explaining Lebanon’s foreign policy lies in its ability to explain non-military conflicts as well as proxy wars. It also helps in understanding that the involvement of Hezbollah in the war in Syria goes beyond material interest and quest for

³⁴⁶ (Bloomquist, Gilchrist, & Indelicato , 2011, p. 11)

power. The reasons of such interference also are found in understanding the group's identity. Constructivism also explains how the threat to countries such as Lebanon is found not only at the external level but also from within as these sub-state identities have "a greater influence than anarchy on state behavior"³⁴⁷.

In fact, "Lebanon is not only a battleground for military conflict, but also an ideological battleground (and) domestic factors are another source of international ideological conflict"³⁴⁸. To exemplify, the regional contest between Saudi Arabia and Iran have been reflected on the Lebanese domestic scene. Both states seek to increase their religious and political influence in the region; Saudi Arabia aims with its pro-Western orientation at preserving its position as leader of the Sunnis whereas Iran challenges Saudi's status as a major regional player with its anti-Western policy³⁴⁹.

Constructivism assists in understanding conflicts among leaders and which realism deems as unimportant. Realism believes that leaders seek to safeguard the state's interests on the long run which is not the case in Lebanon as each leader aims at protecting his community's and sect's interests. Lebanon cannot be perceived as a unitary state as various non-state actors are highly important in the decision-making process.

To sum it up, the Lebanese government is not the sole determinant in the making of the Lebanese foreign policy. Sub-state actors with their supra-state identity and external relations, are key players in the making of the Lebanese foreign policy. The importance of these sub-state identity groups gave constructivism a step ahead in adding new perspective to better

³⁴⁷ (Wilkins, 2013, p. 19)

³⁴⁸ (Bloomquist, Gilchrist, & Indelicato, 2011, p. 10)

³⁴⁹ (Bloomquist, Gilchrist, & Indelicato, 2011, p. 11)

understanding the lack of a unified Lebanese foreign policy. This is not to say that this approach faces no challenges whatsoever. Constructivism “certainly holds considerable potentials as an applied framework for understanding foreign policy”³⁵⁰.

6.2 Limitations of Constructivism in Explaining Lebanon’s FP

Although constructivist acknowledge the importance of material interests their emphasis rest however on ideational factors and social norms. However, by looking at Lebanon’s system of alliances, constructivism faces various challenges. Although constructivism sheds an important light on the importance of identity in the building of alliance, it does not focus much on material interest which also plays a decisive role in Lebanon. To illustrate, constructivism fails to explain the cross-sectarian alliances that resulted in two coalitions March 8 and March 14 from a balance of power perspective. Additionally, constructivists fail to explain cross-sectarian alliances of the Free Patriotic Movement and Hezbollah which aims at deterring the power of the future movement and gaining more influence within the government. Therefore, both interest and identities are necessary in understanding the system of alliance within Lebanon.

Also, this approach does not explore the problem of “uncertainty” in an anarchic world system in which “states are always seeking security, moves in that direction can be misread by other states, that is what the security dilemma is all about”³⁵¹. This uncertainty other state’s intentions challenges constructivists who assume that interaction among states is based on the

³⁵⁰ (Flockhart, 2012, p. 80)

³⁵¹ (Jackson & Sorensen, 2006, p. 173)

understanding of intentions among them. Thus Lebanon became a platform on which major power contest.

Looking at Lebanon, the uncertainty among the various sub-state actors have resulted in fear and thus dependency on foreign actors. “Any change contains threatening possibility that one’s position may weaken, leading to a lessening of one’s status and rejection of one’s identity”³⁵². This has been a disabling factor when it comes to drafting a unified foreign policy. Additionally, the outbreak of the civil war confirmed the vulnerability of Lebanon to the influences of the regional and international system.

Social norms according to constructivists are determinant in the explanation of a country’s foreign policy. These norms precede interests, orient the behavior of actors, and are intersubjective. The importance given to these norms have created unanswered questions challenging the constructivist’s approach. Where do these norms originate from? How important are international norms when they are often disregarded if it serves the interest of powerful states? How are these norms applied in Lebanon?

There is not a single theory that can best explain the complexity of Lebanon’s foreign policy and its making. Neither realism nor pluralism or even constructivism seizes the overlapping domestic and foreign factors that are determinant in the making of Lebanese foreign policy as each focuses more on a specific level of analysis.

6.3 Current Constraints to Lebanon’s Foreign Policy

The current threats and obstacles facing Lebanese foreign policy are summarized in the spillover effects of the Syrian war. The geopolitical

³⁵² (Azar & Haddad, 1986, p. 1344)

conflict in Syria poses a major threat to the stability of the sectarian system in Lebanon. The Lebanese domestic scene is divided among those who support the Syrian regime and those favoring the opposition. The ongoing political and military intervention of Hezbollah as well as other Lebanese groups in the Syrian conflict has amplified tensions between Sunnis and Shiites in the country, threatening to trigger another sectarian civil war. Extremists and Salafis are rising noticeably in the country.

The Islamic State is at the border of the country clashing with the Lebanese army. The Iranian and Saudi Arabia proxy war as well is casting its shadow heavily over Lebanon as their Lebanese allies are more focused on serving their geopolitical leaders than serving their country. This highlights the role of sub-state actors, as independent entity that bandwagon with foreign forces and disregard the presence of the state, in the struggle over Lebanese foreign policy. As they carry their activity across the borders, the autonomy of these sub-state actors grew as the state once again fails.

The foreign policy battles that have always existed and culminated following the Syrian withdrawal from Lebanon in 2005, intensified with the participation of Lebanese factions in the Syrian conflict. This highlights the failure of the state as well as the confessional system as a whole in Lebanon. The system empowered sub-state identity groups and weakened state institutions. Personal interest surpassed national interests jeopardizing Lebanon's stability and sovereignty.

Moreover, "neighboring states such as Syria, Israel, Saudi Arabia, Iran, each with their own regional designs, are more than willing to interfere in

Lebanese politics when it suits their goals”³⁵³. Lebanon’s geographical location left it vulnerable to penetration by regional forces. Surrounded by Israel from the south and Syria from the north and east, both of which are “militarily more powerful and at war with each other in a region steeped in historic and violent animosities”³⁵⁴, Lebanon became a battleground for such rivalries. When it comes to Israel, its high interest in safeguarding its security which finds its roots in its history abundant with fear left it with a list of goals that are attained through its intervention in Lebanon³⁵⁵.

As for Syria, its history of fear is rooted in its geographical location between Israel, Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey, and Iraq. Each one of these neighbors posed a security obstacle to Syria. Iraq, for example, was under the Baath regime just as Syria, constituted a rival to Assad’s regime with Saddam trying to position Iraq as the most powerful regional player³⁵⁶. Whether to deter the power of other states or to achieve their own interests, regional players have played a central role in inhibiting any form of consent around a Lebanese foreign policy.

Although Lebanon has consistently faced similar challenges, this time the risks of plunging into another round of warfare are higher as the conflict in Lebanon’s backyard intensified. The foreign policy of the country remains undetermined as each group continues to conduct its own independent policies vis-à-vis foreign actors. Whether Lebanon will face another sectarian civil war or not is determined only with time. However, one thing is certain; Lebanon’s consociational democracy has failed to prevent the

³⁵³ (Khazai & Hess, 2013, p. 15)

³⁵⁴ (Moubarak, 2003, p. 2)

³⁵⁵ (Moubarak, 2003, p. 6)

³⁵⁶ (Moubarak, 2003, p. 10)

country from sinking into period of political crisis and from the outbreak of intense conflict.

With the intensity of conflict in Syria, The Baabda Declaration did not deter some Lebanese groups, like Hozballah and the Future Movement, from engaging verbally or physically in the Syrian war. Yet, with all things considered, Lebanon is still witnessing precarious stability which kept it away from plunging into another civil war. This is due to both internal and external factors. Internally, Lebanon's consociational system has played a role in maintaining the current stability in Lebanon as each party is granted its share of the rule. There is a consensus among the leading political parties and *Zu'ama* of the country not to drag Lebanon further into a war which no part could afford. This has been revealed in the latest statements of major leaders such as Hariri, Nasrallah, Geagea and Aoun who called upon their followers to support the army and to be caution and avoid being dragged into sectarian clashes.

Externally, Lebanon is no longer an arena for international and regional conflict at the present moment, Syria has taken this role. Therefore, internal conflicts within Lebanon are no longer high on the agenda of foreign actors, reason of which the presidential deadlock remains unsolved. This is also another reason to which Lebanese leaders are cautious when it comes to engaging into clashes as their foreign allies shifted their focus to Syria.

Adding to this, the Lebanese Army continues to be the most trusted institution that has the support of the majority of the Lebanese from all sects. This is due in part to its non-involvement in the civil war, its

neutralized position regarding internal conflict and its success in containing the spillover of violence from Syria.

In short, Lebanon's consociational system, historical experience, and the recent role of its army have to a certain extent preserved its precarious stability relative to its external environment. However, the mounting danger of the Syrian war has also necessitated the prevalence of international support for the preservation or protection of its independence as Lebanon remains a weak state and a subject to outside influences.

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