Reversing the "deeply divided societies" paradigm: The case of Lebanon

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Reversing the "deeply divided societies" paradigm: The case of Lebanon

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"The sectarian does not negate the sectarian, not in thought and not in politics but rather with [the latter, the former] becomes stronger, even if the latter had initially set out to negate him. There is no negation between the sectarian and the other sectarian even if it appears that there is a contradiction between them – there is no contradiction between identical sides, only a coalition that puts them all in the same trench." – Mehdi Amel (1985)[1].

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[1] *In the Process of Ibn Khaldun's School of Thought* (1985). https://lvarchive.wordpress.com/tag/mahdi-amelhttps://lvarchive.wordpress.com/tag/mahdi-amel-quotes/quotes/ [Accessed 1 August 2021].

1. Introductory note

The starting question underlying this thesis is "*What is so deep about deeply divided societies?*[2]"

The "deeply divided societies" paradigm emerged during the 20th century as a depiction of societies considered as fragmented and in need of a certain diagnostic for them to be able to live peacefully and with no constant fighting. For those societies to achieve peaceful coexistence, the diagnostic has been, until now, implementing a consociational model of governance, implying power-sharing among the segments of society and/or formerly belligerent factions.

However, why are some societies depicted as deeply divided, while others are not, although they share – obviously each within its own context – the same factors and dynamics implying deep division as prescribed by the paradigm? Moreover, where does the scientific literature put the threshold for considering a group of people as deeply divided, knowing of course that conflicts exist in every part of society, from the family unit up to state institutions?

Our focus for this thesis will be Lebanon. Our choice stems from two main reasons. The first being that Lebanon, in the political science literature, is depicted as an interesting case of deeply divided society, with, for some authors, a functioning consociational model that is successfully managing societal disruptions, and able to settle conflicts between sectarian groups in Lebanon, while for other authors consociationalism has failed to develop into a fully-fledged democratic model. The second reason is, as mentioned in the above paragraph, the blurry definition and conceptualization revolving around the "deeply divided societies" paradigm. Since no threshold seems to be able to set a clear definition of the paradigm, the idea remains very shallow. Arbitrarily categorizing a handful of countries and societies as deeply divided and not others, although they share very "similar" characteristics, seems quite a far-fetched problematic.

Insights from Lebanon reveal some interesting dimensions as per the "deeply divided societies" paradigm: no one actually seems in bad terms with the other, or hates the other. To put it in a simple way: if a Christian is asked about Muslims in the country, the answer would be far from expressing hostility. On the contrary, the questioned person will clearly show indifference

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[2] From Rima Majed's article https://www.lebanesestudies.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/What-is-So-Deephttps://www.lebanesestudies.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/What-is-So-Deep-About-%E2%80%98Deeply-Divided-Societies%E2%80%99.pdfAbout-%E2%80%98Deeply-Divided-Societies%E2%80%99.pdf

regarding the other's sect (Majed, 2021). If so, then what is really "deep" about the so-called division? What differentiates it from other normal divisions of any society?

Another *rationale* behind this work is the latest uprising that started in 2019 in Iraq and Lebanon. In the societies depicted as "deeply divided", light is always shed on identity-based cleavages (sect-based identities, or sometimes in Iraq a mix of ethnic and sectarian related identities (Kurds - Sunni muslims - Shi'a muslims)), even at a time when social and economic demands are taken at the forefront of country-wide protests (Majed, 2019). In the Lebanese case, it is indeed the economic reality which constituted the main drive of the uprising. Firstly, most of the protesters belonged to a 16 to 25 years old age range. They belonged mostly to popular classes with relatively low monthly incomes and are vulnerable to any eventual shocks due to their precarious situation (Bou Khater and Majed, 2020: 11). In addition to that, the interview sample clearly pointed out the dire economic situation pushing them to be part of the uprising. Secondly, protesters belonged to different geographical areas, and protests were not only focused in the capital Beirut (unlike for example other contemporary uprisings as the *"You Stink"* movement in 2015 for instance). Naturally, major Cazas (districts) such as Tripoli or Beirut attracted more protesters due to their size, but the other regions were equally "represented" (Bou Khater and Majed, 2020: 10). This geographical representation in the whole country brings some doubts about what the "deeply divided society" paradigm implies. How is the Lebanese society so deeply divided then if all of its social components, and especially its youth, rallied around the same socio-economic demands, and to a certain extent, political demands? Although these are preliminary questions – and cannot lead to any conclusion whatsoever in this promptness – they invite us to re-question the aforementioned paradigm.

As per the paradigm itself, does deeply divided societies imply as their core element pretending divisiveness, identities as they are? Or does it imply the polarization of identities? Imagining a causal chain leading to a deeply divided society is in fact quite a difficult task to achieve; for a society to achieve a great step towards divisiveness suggests a model of society where each group does not/cannot face the other directly. Here comes the role of the institutional arrangements where the consociational model of governance lies. Its role is appeasing these tensions and paving the way to a more peaceful and integrated society.

As shown by many scholarly studies, diversity does not form an obstacle to democracy (Fearon, 2004; Fish and Brooks, 2004: 162). In addition to that, it is argued that all civil conflicts share more or less the same underlying economic reasons, while the ethnic/religious aspect becomes relevant in the war's aftermath. If so, why did only a certain sample of countries/societies receive the "deeply divided society" description, and others not? Put differently, why is the emphasis on certain cleavages focal for certain societies and not others? Is it truly because these societies do have particularities, or because the religious cleavage is maintained at the forefront of the analyses and descriptions?

It is noteworthy to mention that many defenders and sympathizers of the consociational model of government have been advising policy-makers on many issues, be it at the United Nations, on Northern Ireland, Cyprus, South Africa or Iraq. We consider such recommendations as erroneous and inaccurate, since the description of the conflicts and of their aftermath is often – if not always – misleading, by putting forward the parameters and factors that are only relevant for the consociationalists. In this sense, policymakers, consultants and other "weighty" bodies are not remedying the source of the problem, but are rather enforcing and anchoring it (Majed, 2017).

This Master's thesis presents itself as an alternative *exploratory* roadmap to the study of what is usually presented as "deeply divided societies". It will explore the Lebanese case – which is usually presented as a deeply divided society – and will try, through an attempt at clarifying definitions, and a qualitative-historical analysis, to put into question the rigid idea of the aforementioned paradigm. The study will do so by questioning the traditionally used paradigm, and by inverting the variables of study by defining sectarianism as the dependent variable, rather than the explanatory one, as usually done to describe Middle Eastern societies (Ghosn and Parkinson, 2019: 494).

In order to set the frame of the work, it is worth noting what lies in the debate around "disciplinarians" and "area specialists" on the notion of sectarianism, since this thesis fits exactly in this middle ground: *"While the former, lack "conceptual sophistication and methodological rigor", favor "description over explanation", and have "no interest in parsimony and generalizations", the latter are "engaging in sterile conceptual and abstract theoretical debates providing little real insight into complex behavioral patterns"* (Valbjørn, 2021: 4).

1.1. The "who came first?" conundrum

In the following parts, we will enshrine our argument within a broader and more encompassing context. Starting first with the literature around consociationalism or the literature revolving around cleavages deserves thinking in the logical flow of the argumentation. Starting with the consociational literature would imply that the political regime "came first", and then cleavages resulted from that regime. Conversely, beginning with the literature around cleavages suggests that cleavages do exist in many forms, but it is the setting of the consociational structure that crystallized them. The aforementioned reflection is an ongoing quest for more in-depth knowledge of the question, put broadly, of "who came first?": the deeply anchored cleavages or the consociational structure? Is it the nature of cleavages that calls for the establishment of a consociational structure – regardless of potential future dynamics, or is it the consociational structure that nurtures different cleavages, and sustains their polarization and presence? Although that dichotomy and binary is not the reasonable framework to read and approach the topic at hand and political phenomena more generally, we only coin it here to mark the broad picture. We shall operate hereafter while bearing in mind the dialectical ingenuity of the argumentation, and we shall proceed as follows:

1.2. Plan

First, we will develop the concept of cleavage, its definitions and its ramifications. Since the "deeply divided societies" paradigm puts forth the cleavages where the identity-based dimension is the most salient, we shall establish a clear link between the paradigm itself and the notion of sectarianism, used to depict Middle Eastern societies broadly and more particularly Lebanon. Second, we will develop the literature around consociational democracy, and around the sources of the idea of deeply divided societies, since the two are intrinsically linked. Third, we will put an emphasis on clientelism, and on its modes of operation and its parameters, since we aim at showing a natural link between the corporate consociation in Lebanon and the clientelist dynamics, profoundly anchored in the country's political system. In all these three major parts, we will stand in between political science as a discipline and its literature, history, sociology and area studies. By doing so, our research will aim to be as encompassing as possible for us to better grasp the dynamics at stake, since we need to keep the attention on the particularities of the context into

which we are delving, and we need to be aware of maintaining the link and the relation to the broader realm of knowledge around the question, when possible and pertinent.

After putting in frame our literature review around the notions defining the "deeply divided societies" paradigm, and our theoretical stand through which we aim at answering our research question (and soft hypothesis), we will operate with an analysis that will set a clearer image regarding entrenched clientelism (in the corporate consociational political model) and sectarianism. In order to perform the analysis, we shall rely on the trends found in the literature and in the theoretical stand. The main idea underlying the research question and the hypothesis is to craft an encompassing and broad explanation of the sectarian phenomenon. Since we do know what our object of study is, and since we do not aim at evaluating or assessing its changes according to another variation, we will proceed with historical qualitative analysis. That will allow us to set a clear framework to understand under which circumstances sectarianism "is created" in Lebanon.

2. Research Question:

The main motivation underlying this research exercise is to switch the traditional parameters of approaching and analyzing "sectarianism". That is why, and in order to achieve – at least partially – this goal, we start by switching the variables of study. As the research question hereafter shows, sectarianism will not be used as an explanatory factor, as traditionally done but will be itself the object of study (Makdisi, 2000; Majed, 2020).

How does corporate consociationalism shape sectarianism in Lebanon?

With our variables defined (corporate consociationalism as the independent variable and sectarianism as the dependent variable), and with clientelism being embedded in the corporate consociational model in Lebanon, we argue the following:

Entrenched clientelism sustains identity-based cleavages, thus legitimizing the deeply divided society paradigm.

In the following part, we will clearly elaborate the concepts used in the research question and hypothesis. Consociationalism will be clearly explained, especially in its corporate nature. Moreover, we shall clearly define sectarianism in order to grasp it in a more comprehensive way. Definitions of *sect, sectarian¸* and other related terms shall as well be explained in order to focus on our object of research. Then, emphasizing on clientelism is primordial to linking it to corporate consociationalism.

The pivotal part of our research question remains the "*how?"* Our aim is not to quantify any sectarian behavior whatsoever, not even to quantify sectarianism (an explanation shall be elaborated in the part addressing our methodological stand hereafter). We aim at setting clear factors linked to the political establishment and the political system in Lebanon that shape sectarianism. We shall make the distinction clear between sectarianism of the State, as in confessional consociationalism, being the political system in Lebanon, and sectarianism as a state of being at a societal level, and not as an institutional aspect. The second aspect is disregarded in this research since it concerns personal religious beliefs, which is irrelevant for the research,

especially because we do not equate religious beliefs and sectarianism. The *"how?"* interrogation drives us to opt for a historical and qualitative framework rather than a strongly quantitative framework based on variables.

Although we do have a clear-cut research question and hypothesis with pre-defined variables we do not operate with a traditional research exercise. Problematizing and hypothesizing a research inquiry allows developing clearer concepts and goals. Having a research question with two clearly variabilized concepts suggests a measuring approach to the research. However, we shall explore the problem with a different set of tools. Importance will be given to broader explanations, based on secondary literature and conceptualizations. Again, the *"how?"* implies that our dependent variable does exist; thus putting the inquiry elsewhere than in attempting to prove its presence. We do not aim at searching for the difference in our dependent variable at a certain period of time, or in reaction to variations or changes in the independent one. Rather, our objective of study already exists, and always has. Difficulty of grasping it made us opt for that way of proceeding with the research. Thus, the idea here is to explain what are the factors and the conditions that are linked to the corporate model of governing in Lebanon, that contribute to shaping the "deeply divided societies" paradigm; a paradigm that has been used to describe, analyze and depict Lebanon, among other societies.

Since our objective of study is no quantitative or measured phenomenon, we shall rely on a set of periods and institutions that shaped and still shape sectarianism. These actors and institutions are the ones fueling and pushing sectarianization – the process of "creating" sectarianism (Makdisi, 2008).

3. Literature and theoretical stand:

3.1. On consociationalism and Lebanon, a historical perspective

3.1.1. Lijphart on Lebanon

Regardless of Lijphart's (1977) considerations about a certain set of factors existing in "Third World" countries (Lijphart, 1977: 168) that are favorable for the establishment of consociational models of governing because of primordial loyalties perceived as stronger than any national belonging, we will shed light on other factors that are crucial for understanding Lebanon – far from Lijphart's simplistic perception. Distancing ourselves from Lijphart's statements about Lebanon, we shall give a broader and more encompassing image of the country's experience with consociationalism, especially that its history – from the polity's stance – has shown proto-consociative endeavors for two centuries.

As a clearly defined concept and mode of governing, consociationalism only gained popularity in the mid-1950's, in the aftermath of the Second World War. The scientific concept itself thus does not particularly have deep origins, although countries such as Lebanon did present proto-consociational aspects since the 19th century, prior to the concept's diffusion (Iyer, 2007: 128).

Lebanon acquired its formal consociational structure back in 1943 at its independence, and the former was refashioned in 1989 in the aftermath of the Lebanese civil war. The changes in the power-sharing structure resulted in the shift of prerogatives and powers from the president of the republic, who must be a Christian Maronite, to the premiership, whose holder must be a Muslim Sunni. This distribution of "powers" between the president of the republic, the prime minister, and the speaker of the House of Representatives (who must be a Shi'a Muslim) goes back to independence period. Through a customary agreement between the three, the "National Pact" set the distribution of power "equitably" among the three main "components" of the Lebanese society, thus setting a proto-consociational framework in Lebanon. However, some authors stretch the consociational aspect of Lebanese politics to the period preceding the independence of Lebanon, and analyze the 19th century events and dynamics as proto-consociational that paved the way to the 1943 "National Pact" (Aboultaif, 2020).

3.1.2. <u>Power-sharing in Lebanon prior to Lijphart</u>

Lebanon has presented a form of power-sharing before the literature around the model grew in the 20th century (Iyer, 2007: 128). In the 18th century Ottoman Empire, power hierarchies and social stratification were closely linked (Labaki, 1988: 535). The top of the hierarchy, the Sultan, was followed by the governors of the various *Wilayat* (provinces), then by the notables (*ikta'iyyin*) whose tasks were, inter alia, the collection of taxes. These notables were themselves divided into various categories, Emirs, *Mukkadamin*, and *Sheikhs*. At the bottom of the hierarchy, the peasants in the rural setting, while in the urban setting the scene was more complex, where various categories were entangled, bureaucrats, merchants, master-craftsmen, among others (Labaki, 1988: 535). With the European expansion in the mid-19th century, educational, commercial and political factors contributed to a shift in the dynamics in Ottoman Lebanon. Sharp demographic rise resulted from the sanitary and educational European and American missions, in addition to a redefinition of trade and finance. This resulted in the weakening of both rural and urban crafts industries, which reoriented the production to exportations, most notably the silk production to the European markets. Gradually, notables of all communities saw their prerogatives and powers restraining, coupled with an increase in the fiscal pressure on the population. Revolts erupted between 1820 and 1858, among which the wars of 1840 and 1845 that resulted in the institution of the double Qaimaqamat regime (Labaki, 1988; Salam, 2021). The year 1842 consecrated confessional communities in Lebanon with the ending of the Lebanese Emirate period. Henceforth, confessional belonging obtained a political weight with the setting of the Double Qaimaqamat

Regime, and confessional communities had their "role" and their "nature" shifting towards political entities. The aforementioned regime consisted in having two governors for Mount

Lebanon: the first a Maronite, and the second a Druze (Rabbath, 1973; Corm, 1984; Labaki, 1988: 540; Salam, 2021: 27). In 1861 and 1864, with the protocols and the "Règlement Organique", the consecrated confessional communities were institutionalized through the constitution of the then created Mount-Lebanon *Mutasarrifiyya,* and the notables saw their privileges abolished. The latter consisted of a central administrative council based on the proportional representation of the confessional communities (Rabbath, 1973; Khalaf, 1979, Labaki, 1988). It is noteworthy to mention that clientelism was also institutionalized at this stage (Hamzeh, 2001). Indeed, patron-client networks and relationships were already present under the Double Qaimaqamat and the

Mutasarrifiyya systems. A first dynamic of the dyadic relationship consisted in the shift from ascriptive ties to ties based on communal and confessional basis. Moreover, the Double Qaimaqamat created two almost homogenous regions in terms of sectarian structure, thus making the patron-client relationship predominantly sectarian (Hamzeh, 2001: 170).

With the First World War shaking both Europe and the Ottoman Empire, new dynamics developed. The secret Sykes-Picot accords between the French and the British in 1916 paved the way for the San Remo conference in April 1920. The latter resulted in the attribution of mandates over the Ottoman provinces of Syria and Mesopotamia. The mandates over Lebanon and Syria were officially granted to the French, and to the British over Iraq and Palestine. Shortly after, on the 24th of July of the same year, the French army declared its victory against the Hashemite Emir Faysal of the newly born Arab kingdom in Damascus.

With the new parameters at stake, the French High Commissioner, General Henri Gouraud proclaimed the creation of the State of Greater Lebanon on the 1st of September 1920. The newly created polity consisted in adding to the former territory of the Mount Lebanon Mutasarrifiyya the three main coastal cities of the *vilayet* of Beirut – Beirut, Tripoli and Sidon – in addition to four *qadas* (districts), Baalbeck, Mu'allaqa, Rachayya and Hasbayya, that were formerly part of the *vilayet* of Damascus (Salam, 2021: 60-61).

In the sixth year of the French mandate, 1926, the first constitution of Lebanon was promulgated, in the continuity of the 19th century confessional logic. Then in 1943, with the Lebanese independence from the French, the National Pact was conceived as a formula of coexistence between all Lebanese. This unwritten customary law formula revolved around two main points: Christians should abandon French protection, and accept the Arab identity of Lebanon, and Muslims should abandon Arab unity intentions and fully accept and adhere to the newly created Lebanese entity (Corm, 2003; Salam, 2021). However, what that State failed to achieve is transcending confessional cleavages in Lebanese society. Rather, it accommodated the confessional organization and ensured its good flow, thus anchoring confessionalism.

The following major constitutional arrangement is the Taef Agreement in 1989 that put an official end to the long-lasting civil war(s) in Lebanon that lasted from 1975 to 1990. The agreement re-equilibrated the rules of power-sharing in Lebanon. Although fairer from a sectarian standpoint, and more equitable among the societal segments, the distribution of the sects was a step towards a

more assured confessional system. As Antoine Messara (1994) puts it, *"[…] the Chrysanthemum State is … where everyone snatches a handful of petals without worrying about the flower's beauty"*[3] (Antoine Messara, 1994, in Salam, 2021: 67).

1842	Double Qaimaqamat regime, first consecration of the confessional communities.
1861-1864	Protocols and "Règlement Organique", institutionalization of the consecrated confessional communities, *Mutasarrifiyya* regime.
1920	San Remo conference, attribution of the Mandates to France and Britain over Lebanon and Syria, Iraq and Palestine respectively.
1926	First Lebanese constitution.
1943	Independence of Lebanon for the French. National Pact setting the power-sharing formula among the communities. 6 to 5 parliamentary representation (Christians-Muslims), full prerogatives to the President.
1946	Evacuation of the French troops.
1975-1990	Civil war(s).
1989	Taef Agreement, reformulation of the power-sharing agreement, equal parliamentary representation of the communities, and a shift of prerogatives from the President to the Prime minister.

Table 1. Main dates related to the consociational setting in Lebanon (19th-20th centuries).

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[3] The translation was effectuated by the author – myself – from French. Original quote: " *Diverses appellations peuvent caractériser l'État, quand il est fragilisé dans une société de concordance: État minimal, ou État chrysanthème où chaque segment extirpe un pétale sans se soucier de la beauté de l'ensemble* ". (Messara, 1994, 2017: 89).

3.2. On cleavages and the "deeply divided societies" paradigm

The realm of knowledge around identities and identity-making is wide. In this research, we focus on the role of political institutions and political structures as identity-makers, and not the other way around. Our argument stems from the fact that it is the political structures and actors who have access to resources, be them economic or political. This justifies our choice of putting *"identities"*, *"sectarian groups", "communities"* as the dependent variable, rather than the explanatory/independent one.

The notion of identity is ever-changing, flexible and a multiple idea, it evolves and varies over time and is shaped by contexts and power dynamics (Aitken, 2007: 248). When and where to fix the threshold marking the "deep divide" in society then?

The "deeply divided societies" paradigm was first coined by Eric Nordlinger (1972) in *"Conflict Regulation in Divided Societies"*. "Plural", "vertically segmented" and/or "communally divided" were used as synonyms then. However, the underlying idea of such a description of societies is the ascriptive framework used to depict the society in question; a society based on terminal identities with high political salience (Lustick, 1979: 325). Lijphart (1977) defines these societies as *"divided by segmental cleavages",* and based on *"religious, ideological, linguistic, regional, cultural, racial, or ethnic"* salient differences (Lijphart, 1977: 3-4), where exist simultaneously *"sharp plural divisions and close elite co-operation"* (Lijphart, 1977: 2). Some have argued that such a description comes when groups in a society reach a certain level of polarization of their identity, hindering any possibility of coexistence (Aitken, 2007: 248). These descriptions induce the notion of cleavage as a determinant of divisiveness in a particular society. Moreover, they put forward the robustness of identity cleavages in a society and consider it as the main, if not the only type of relevant line of division.

Relatively to "cleavages", they represent the division of a community into religious groups, opinion groups, or voting groups (Rae and Taylor, 1970: 23-24), or a form of closure of social relationships (Bartolini and Mair, 1990: 216). As stated by Rae and Taylor (1970), *"formally, we define a "cleavage" as a family of sets of individuals. These sets might be called "groups" in the case of trait cleavages (i.e. religious groups) or "alternatives" in the cases of opinion and behavior cleavages"* (Rae and Taylor, 1970: 23-24). An interrogation arises here while tackling cleavages, concerning delimiting the "arena" of the cleavage as in whom does it concern directly, whom does

it affect. If talking about a class cleavage, do we assume that the class is synonym, or when talking about religious-based cleavage, are religious people part of/belong to the cleavage, or the ethno-linguistic cleavage from the ethnic and/or linguistic group (Bartolini and Mair, 1990: 216)? Lijphart (1977) defines a plural society as "*a society divided by segmental cleavages*", as in based on "*religious, ideological, linguistic, regional, cultural, racial, or ethnic*" salient differences (Lijphart, 1977: 3-4). He derives his definition, and particularly the "segmental cleavages" terminology from Harry Eckstein. Eckstein (1966) defines these cleavages in accordance with the existence of political cleavages that are linked to lines of objective social differentiation. Moreover, the definition of plural societies extended to include cultural differences as one of its main characteristics (Lijphart, 1977). As quoted by Lijphart, Furnivall defines plural societies as societies where "*each group holds by its own religion, its own culture and language, its own ideas and ways*", and where "*different sections of the community [live] side by side, but separately, within the same political unit*" (Lijphart, 1977: 17), a depiction which entails the vision of a geographical mixture but mutual social avoidance.

Boutros Labaki (1988) gives an accurate description of cleavages in Lebanon, where he states that one should stand in-between vertical and horizontal cleavages in order to grasp the whole dynamic. He considers that both are deeply entangled, unlike other industrialized societies where the horizontal-vertical distinction is quite clearer. Horizontal social cleavages correspond to income categories, social classes or professional categories, while vertical cleavages pertain to ethnicity, religion, and/or language (Labaki, 1988: 534).

The concept of cleavages entails a set of criteria which divide the members of a community or subcommunity into groups. The relevant cleavages are those which divide members into groups with important political differences at specific times and places (Rae and Taylor, 1970). Three main classes of cleavages exist according to Rae and Taylor (1970), and the typology is the following: ascriptive or "trait" cleavages as in race, caste or religion, attitudinal or "opinion" cleavages, as in ideology or preferences, and behavioral or "act" cleavages, such as those elicited through voting and organizational membership (Rae and Taylor, 1970: 1). It is worthy to note that the most central attribute of a political cleavage is the extent to which it fragments a community by setting its members apart from one another (Rae and Taylor, 1970: 22).

Ascriptive cleavages →	→ "Trait" aspects: race, religion
Attitudinal cleavages →	→ "Opinion" aspects: ideology, preferences
Behavioral cleavages →	→ "Act" cleavages: voting

Table 2. Typology of cleavages (Rae and Taylor, 1970).

The notion of political cleavage finds its *rationale* in its link with political conflict and political violence; almost all cases of analyzing the concept finds its theoretical motivation in the explanation of conflicts' characteristics, implying that the two dimensions are linked in an unchangeable way (Zuckerman, 1975: 238). "Cleavages" carry with it a semantic exercise (Zuckerman, 1975: 231). *"To cleave"* means *"to split along natural lines of division"*[4]. "Natural lines of division" entails that the divisions in question exist *per se,* which undermine any efforts of reconsideration regarding a contextualization or material condition that shaped or engendered the division. The verb "to cleave" denotes a distinctive division because of its source or its shape.

Thus, the categories of "political divisions" and "political cleavages" become different rather than synonymous.

Adding on this conceptualization, Lipset and Rokkan (1967) state that a political cleavage is implicitly a type of political divisions based on major social divisions. Cleavages draw their origin from the social realm, and they refer to conflict groups based on perceptions of association in opposition to other resembling groupings among large segments of a given population. It is the action of the politicization of these cleavages which makes them issues of large-scale conflict, in addition to their linkages to political parties capable of shifting the political order (Zuckerman, 1975: 234). By coining the notion of "segmental cleavages", Eckstein (1966) gives the concept a more distinct meaning and separates it from other political divisions such as disagreements over procedural or policy issues and form other cultural differences.

Three main propositions may be stated concerning the definition and the conceptualization of political cleavages (Zuckerman, 1975: 237): the first proposition puts social divisions as a necessary and a sufficient condition for the emergence of political cleavages, the second proposition considers that social divisions are a necessary but not a sufficient condition for the

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[4] Definition according to *The Random House Dictionary of the English Language,* College Edition, New York, 1968, page 251 (in Zuckerman, 1975).

emergence of political cleavages, and the third proposition considers social divisions as not necessary and not sufficient as conditions for the emergence of political cleavages. The first view then considers social divisions as somewhat intrinsically linked to political cleavages, in total opposition with the third view that finds no pattern whatsoever linking divisions at the social level with political cleavages. The second view lies in between and gives the social divisions a certain role in the emergence of cleavages, which may be creating a "fertile terrain" for the cleavage to emerge from, although its emergence cannot happen without efforts of politicization transforming a social division to a political cleavage of prime importance.

Cleavage-membership perceptions that are highly intense most probably result in a polarized cleavage system paving the road to violent political conflict (Zuckerman, 1975: 238). However, what types of cleavages are more prone to result in a high polarization? Lipset (1959, 1988) associates types of cleavages to a political output, in a sense where the nature of a cleavage determines the aftermath of its politicization. He states that conflicts pertaining to religious issues and parties would lead to instability. However, a society is seldom, if never, characterized by only one type of cleavage. Here Rae and Taylor (1970) focus on the role of the cross-cutting aspects of cleavages for the reduction of potential conflicts. *"The more cross-cutting [the cleavage], the smaller the number of persons who are in the same group in both cleavages, and hence the more difficult it is to build a coalition or potential conflict group containing only individuals who have no link with the opposition"* (Rae and Taylor, 1970: 88).

3.3.   Identity-based cleavages, sectarianism

Our object of analysis in this research is, as mentioned above, sectarianism – and the reasons behind the salience of sectarianism. In terms of cleavages, and in accordance with the realm of knowledge around cleavages, sectarianism belongs to both the first and the second classes developed by Rae and Taylor (1970), as in the ascriptive and the attitudinal cleavages. Indeed, sectarianism involves religious identity, but it does as well entail its politicization. In our case the rationale consists in depicting and understanding the process leading to sectarianism, or to sectarianism as the main axis of analysis of the Middle East and Lebanon. We aim then at focusing on **sectarianization** rather than sectarianism *per se*. Since sectarianism is an identity-based cleavage, the question consists of understanding how does sectarianism emerge? As mentioned,

through its process, sectarianization; but what does it really imply? Salam (2021: 30-31) focuses on the sociological nature of sects, as in sects as social phenomena. He insists on the role of the political regime in the reproduction of these sectarian groups in the legal framework of the State. Modern religious communities (*Tawa'if*, plural of *Ta'ifah* in Arabic) do not produce sectarianism. Rather it is sectarianism which breeds the communities, the sects (Bishara, 2018: 53). *Ta'ifah*, semantically speaking means a faction, so "a group of something", "a division under a certain category", "a section of the nation", "a *ta'ifah* of believers" (Bishara, 2018: 55; Encyclopedia of Islam, 2000). The word *ta'ifah*, in its descriptive and socioeconomic – rather than normative – dimension implied organized professionals and occupational guilds (Bishara, 2018: 57). However, nowadays, the meaning shifted towards referring to factionalism, be it religious or confessional. In a sociological dimension, *sects* differ from *Tawa'if* in Arabic, and is closer as a concept to what meant as *firqah*, stretching its etymology to 3rd century Latin. All in all, the religious *ta'ifah*, or sect, as we now use the concept, might be a community as well as an imagined community. What matters most is its identity-related dimension differentiating itself from others by means of affiliation of a creed or confession, which it deems a relevant and important social and political determinant (Bishara, 2018: 65). In plural and multi-confessional societies, the *ta'ifah* benefits from a role in the public sphere as a sociopolitical entity which forefronts certain affiliations, or identities. These affiliations determine consequently the individuals' self-perception and definition, in addition to the position of any "other" towards him, due to his "membership" or affiliation to a specific *ta'ifah* (Bishara, 2018: 65). The word's meaning is now used to mean grouping, or grouping and dividing, for the word means factions of people dividing into groups separated by religion or confession.

Arabic	*Ta'ifah* (as in	part of a wider group)	*Ta'ifiyyah*
	Fi'ah – Jama'ah		
Latin - English	**Sect**	**Faction**	**Sectarianism**
➔ *"[...] what matters most is its identity-based group differentiating itself from others by means of affiliation of a creed or confession, which it deems a relevant and important social and political determinant* (Bishara, 2018: 65)			

Table 3. Typology of the words and their etymology (Bishara, 2018).

Fuad Khuri's (2006) work on sectarian groups brings interesting insights concerning the role and the historical formation of sects and religions in the Middle East. Khuri explains that sects rely on "*moral measures, social bonds and the prevalence of different forms of inwardly oriented solidarities, which can be summed up in Ibn Khaldun's concept of 'asabiya[5]."* Three types of *asabiya* arise; the tribal *asabiya*, where solidarity derives from the belief of the unity of descent and genealogical origins, the ethnic '*asabiya*, meaning unity of the ethnic origin (Ibn Khaldun speaks of the Arab '*asabiya* that emerged during the Abbasid dynasty), and finally the sectarian *asabiya,* which arises from the unity of religious beliefs and practices (Khuri, 2006: 52). What is even more important here is the two criteria that distinguish '*asabiya*. The element of exclusiveness of the group and its image as being unique, and the non-hierarchical nature and structure of its authority (Khuri, 2006: 53). The non-hierarchical nature of sectarian groups is equally important. Khuri (2006: 54) explains that this non-hierarchical structure means that vertical rather than horizontal forms of differentiation dominate people's thinking, where entire collectivities (Maronites, Druzes, Shi'a, Sunni, etc…) are hierarchically ranked. If vertical differentiation entails ethnicity, religion, and other ascriptive traits (Rae and Taylor, 1970), horizontal differentiation falls under the measurement of class distinction (Khuri, 2006: 53). In the first instance, conflicts are bred between sectarian and/or religious groups, or any other form of ethnic or religious variation, while the second instance concerns social classes.

3.4. On consociationalism, elites' role, and "sectarianism as a process"

When framing Middle Eastern societies, and more generally "deeply fragmented" societies, two main approaches are widespread. Firstly, an institutional approach advocating for consociational

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[5] We rely on the definition given by Fuad Khuri (2006) for the concept of *Asabiya:* "*Asabiya*, derived from *asab* (meaning nerve in Arabic), signifies internal cohesion, often brought about by unity of blood or faith. In a state setting, unity is brought about through the use of force; but in an *asabiya* setting, it arises voluntarily through the sharing of moral bonds: blood, descent, marriage, ethnic origin, tribal affinity, faith or through some or all of these mixed together. According to Ibn Khaldun, the *asabiya* structure reaches its zenith when it blends with religion leading to conquest, as happened at the dawn of Islam" (Khuri, 2006: 52).

arrangements, and secondly, a predominant civil society approach based on inter-religious dialogue (Majed, 2020: 540). Although the former considers that the fragmented groups of the

society should be separated and the latter that they should be brought together, they are both founded on the belief that people are segmented into clear-cut groups, on the basis of ascriptive traits: their sectarian, religious, tribal or ethnic identities.

The classification of a country as consociational, communitarian, plural, or by any other class, is very reductive and simplistic. Culturalist arguments reify differences among societies, thus producing work often divorced from the complexities and the material fluidity of existing realities. It often leads to "fixing" or stabilizing a political system, often glossing over profound and ongoing change or instability (Joseph, 2011: 151).

Adding on Khuri's definition of sects, Majed (2020) puts the emphasis on the complex practice of classification and categorization of and by others, rather than a mere matter of shared culture or blood relations (Majed, 2020: 541). Moreover, two levels are of particular interest here when tackling sectarianism; both its social and political relevance. While the former suggests that people notice and condition their everyday life based on religious or sectarian distinctions, the latter is linked to political mobilization and economic distribution, especially when they operate along religious or sectarian lines. The distinction between the two is of high importance. Sectarianism is about the politicization of sectarian affiliations and loyalties, and tightly linked to the interests of the State apparatus and its elites (Amel, 1986). Thus, the phenomenon is independent from religiosity and religious practices; religious and confessional affiliations are a thing while sectarianism is another (Bishara, 2018: 54). The core aspect of sectarianism is its intrinsic link to the politicization of these identities and practices. It is a concrete practice based on the politicization of religious identities (Makdisi, 2008; Majed, 2020).

Political sectarianism is a societal phenomenon rather than an individual political choice (Bishara, 2018: 54). Although it is posited that sectarianism is a cultural choice before the individual, sectarianism has evolved, spread, and become one of the parameters of a group to which individuals belong, thus making sectarianism mixed with the religious or confessional affiliation of an individual. It becomes easier for sectarians to claim that sectarianism is harmonious with one's membership in the group, and the distinction between the religious affiliation and the non-membership becomes shallower.

In the consociational prescriptions, four main institutional arrangements (McCulloch, 2014), or pillars, exist to promote stability in plural or deeply divided societies. These four pillars consist of a grand coalition, mutual veto mechanisms, proportionality, and segmental autonomy (Lijphart, 1977). Practically, this four-edged formula has different meanings in different contexts (Salloukh, 2020: 101). A grand coalition suggests that any variation of a cross-community executive gathering political elites representatives along ethnic, religious or sectarian lines, whether of the grand coalition, concurrent executive, or plurality executive types. As per the mutual veto mechanism, whether such a mechanism is specified or not, it exists and can leverage on decisions that may affect the political balance of power or infringe on the cultural identity of the different ethnic or sectarian groups. With regards to proportional representation, it is suggested that some form of proportionality in the distribution of public offices and resources shall be followed. Concerning the segmental autonomy, a territorial or non-territorial community self-governance particularly on matters pertaining to cultural identity and family law (Salloukh, 2020: 101).

Grand coalition governments	➔ Cross-group representation of the different segments in the government
Mutual veto mechanisms	➔ Right to any segment to bloc decisions that could affect power-balance or its identity
Proportional representation	➔ Proportionality in the offices' distribution and preference for PR electoral laws
Segmental autonomy	➔ Self-governance in issues pertaining to cultural identity, as in personal status or family

Table 4. The four key institutional arrangements of consociational regimes (Lijphart, 1977; McCulloch, 2014: 503; Salloukh, 2020: 101).

As already said, the main argument of the thesis is showing how political elites are behind the setting of a cleavage, rather than considering a cleavage as present *per se*. That is why we refer to sectarianism as a process (Makdisi, 2008), as an action made consciously by the ones who have

access to resources. In this same spirit of argumentation, we consider cleavages as the product and the result of different historical phenomena.

When referring to, it is noteworthy to keep in mind that consociational literature tend to overlook class dimensions (Halawi, 2020: 128). Mainstream literature around consociational theory and power-sharing is centered on whether the system succeeds in resolving sectarian or ethnic conflicts, and prevents a return to the conflictual situation. However, such an approach takes for granted class and socioeconomic inequalities and considers them as a natural phenomenon; especially in the Global South (Halawi, 2020: 129), since light is shed only on the stability of the political system. One of the main consociational assumptions relies on the role played by the elites, and inter-elite – or summit – diplomacy. *"Necessity for elite accommodation through consociational institutions and "summit diplomacy" rests upon the contention that the cleavages that these procedures are meant to bridge and regulate are so deep and intense that the absence of such an arrangement would result, at worst, in civil war"* (Kieve, 1981: 332).

In this same reasoning, the aforementioned debate ignores the coercion and the violence required by the consociational setting – through its instruments – to prevent any emergence of revolutionary class politics and protects the privileges and benefits of the already established sectarian and business elites (Halawi, 2020: 129). Otherwise, if room was to be given for any class or socioeconomic issues, the spinal cord upon which stands the consociational model would no longer make sense, since the class cleavage would be put forward, instead of the vertical segmental cleavages hovering over identities. Hence, the aforementioned debate tends towards a normalization of the persistence and the increase in class inequalities. Consequently, the debate and the political imagination are both narrowed down to the mere objective of the stability of the State, regardless of the authoritarianism of sectarian elites (Dodge, 2012; Halawi, 2020). In this respect, Toby Dodge (2012) coins the concept of sectarian authoritarianism where any potential threat to the sectarian establishment is voluntarily silenced in order for it to sustain itself. With such a behavior, it is implied that ruling elites act and behave consciously and voluntarily in order to set the lines of cleavages (Halawi, 2020).

Consociational approaches often – if not always – lack a plurality of answers and stand on shallow grounds when justifying their legitimacy. As Kieve (1981) puts it in a very accurate way, the conditions of democratic stability are seriously flawed (Kieve, 1981: 313), and the "pillars" upon

which the consociational arrangements stand resemble more "pillars of sand" than clear and solid bases. Concerning the social components of the State, consociationalists mainly put the emphasis on their psychological, attitudinal and ascriptive factors, which has drawn attention away from the more fundamental structural relationships between division and stability (Kieve, 1981: 313). Class regulations is far more important in explaining political stability than the presence of democratic values, beliefs, attitudes and norms (Kieve, 1981: 313-314). Moreover, one cannot neglect that religious pillars are themselves characterized by class heterogeneity (Kieve, 1981: 316). Decisive socio-political differences between the religious blocs are abstracted by treating them mostly as subnational communities defined by religious and doctrinal interests (Kieve, 1981: 319). Getting a view "from the inside" of a confessional community would allow one to discover the reality that makes what they are: groups where class differences exist, inside polarization too, as well as internal strife (Salam, 2021: 31). Hence, one should avoid looking at sects as mere monolithic blocs constituted by homogeneous dynamics.

Consociationalism as defined by Lijphart (1977) stands on a very clear logic: the primordial diagnosis of conflicts gives the need and the legitimacy for a prescription of segregation alongside the reinforcement of the pillars of the plural (segmented, communally separated) society and rule by the elite cartel (Dixon, 2020: 118). Moreover, the built trade-off is about either "consociational democracy or no (worthwhile) democracy at all" (O'Leary, 2005: 9). It is noteworthy here to mention the simplistic and reductive view of the factors behind the eruption of a conflict: a multitude of factors trigger conflicts, such as economic and political ones, rather than identity-based ones (Fearon and Laitin, 2003; Fearon, 2004). When putting ascriptive traits forward for the explanation of conflicts' eruption and social disorder, Majed (2020) warns about three main traps around which consociational theory revolves. The first trap consists of depicting sectarianism as an ancient, rigid and enduring phenomenon. If this were the case, the theoretical frame lacks in explaining the shifts in the salience of the different identities over time and space. The second trap is considering sects as homogeneous categories, as if they are made up of self-contained and culturally, politically and socially homogenous entities. Indeed, a methodological fallacy exists in such a framing. If one is considering for instance the Shias and the Sunnis, who/what is here the object of study? Is it the political parties, the elites, the workers, society as a whole? (Majed, 2020: 544). This fallacy reveals a conceptual weakness in the sense that sects cannot form the explanatory

variable when studying sectarianism; otherwise problems of both endogeneity and tautology arise. Finally, the third trap consists in viewing sects as catalysts for violence, and reference is always related to sectarianism/ethnicity and violence, although the former is seldom behind any type of conflict whatsoever (Fearon, 2004; Elcheroth and Reicher, 2017). Here, light must be shed on a particular distinction between "everyday identity talk" and "identity politics" (Brubaker, 2004: 32). Both exist, are real, and are important phenomena; however adopting categorized ethnic or sectarian identities as units of analysis in approaching a setting risks, as already mentioned, endogeneity, and is not helpful in order to deconstruct the underlying mechanisms shaping sectarian salience (Majed, 2020: 547). A dynamic relationship lies between identity, politics and economics. Processes such as modernization for instance contribute to explaining long and slow change in ethnic or sectarian salience, whereas more "prompt" and "faster" mechanisms such as violence or patronage can make sense of quicker and more frequent changes (Chandra, 2012: 20).

Consociationalism revolves around two forms; a liberal form where are rewarded "*whatever salient political identities emerge in democratic elections, be them based on ethnic identities, religious identities, subgroup or transgroup identities*" (Salloukh, 2020: 101), and a corporate form where the accommodation relies on the ascriptive traits of the segments of a plural society, and these same traits are then institutionalized through predetermined quotas – which is the case in Lebanon. Lijphart argues that a consociation cannot be imposed against one of the segments, especially if it is the majority. Actually, the paradigm would be better adapted if argued that the consociation must not be enforced on the people by the profiting elites, rather than a segment over the other, in a top-versus-bottom framework rather than a two-segment (or multi-segment) framework.

Halawi's input (2020) sustains the argument by depicting the consociational power-sharing in Lebanon as a cartel of sectarian leaders and businessmen who monopolized both the State and economic privileges. Hence, this complex intertwinement of "*institutional, clientelist and discursive practices manipulate and reproduce sectarian identities to uphold class interests*" (Halawi, 2020: 132).

Consociations seem to be developing "ossified properties" rendering them resistant to any reform (Nagle, 2020: 138). What is described as a transformative and changer design appears to be more and more rigid. For instance, the Taef Agreement of 1989 in Lebanon stipulated the

deconfessionalization of Lebanese society, but sectarianism seems more and more entrenched (Nagle, 2020: 138). In addition to that, most consociations in post-wars settings were accompanied with, or were bound up by, neoliberal economic policies. The State's withdrawal as the principal provider and producer of public goods and resources shows the expropriation of formal channels by political parties and others (Nagle, 2020: 139). Political elites nibble the State's apparatus for their own economic benefit. Here, there is a conscious action of maintaining the weak State for the smooth functioning of clientelist channels – owned by the political elites themselves – which leads to a client-patron dynamic.

To recall, consociationalism adopts a primordialist view of identity, comprising foundations that are essentialist and reductive. This leads to a conservative realism about the margin of maneuver allowing to transform "deeply divided societies" (Dixon, 2012: 99). As mentioned, Ussama Makdisi (2000, 2008) defines sectarianism as a **process** and not an event or an object fixed in time. He depicts the process as one through which a kind of religious identity is politicized as part of an obvious struggle of power, thus contradicting the primordialist view of fixed and rigid identity boundaries. Sectarianization is "*an active process shaped by political actors operating within specific contexts, pursuing political goals that involve the mobilization of popular sentiments around particular identity markers*" – here religious identities (Hashemi and Postel, 2017). Joseph (2011: 157) adds to this approach and sustains the aforementioned arguments by defining sectarianism as constructed and constantly changing, and as ephemeral.

It is then logical to consider identities from a constructivist standpoint, as in somehow immutable while not forcibly leading to conflict, and as the product of manipulation through political means. A constructivist approach can provide a framework in which a more realistic understanding of dynamics is possible because it is more complex and nuanced (Dixon, 2012: 99).

3.5. On clientelism, patrons, and political elites

Albeit extensive research and literature articles that suggested the intrinsic links between development, modernization, and clientelism, positing that the latter tends to disappear with the rise of the former, the trend shifted towards acknowledging the perennity of clientelism and its dynamics in today's societies, be them highly developed, or less developed (Hamzeh, 2001;

Roniger, 2004; Hopkin, 2006; Muno, 2010; Hicken, 2011; Ticku and Venkatesh, 2020). It is clearer that clientelism tends to mold itself in the institutional and societal changes occurring in countries, regardless of their level of development.

Hamzeh (2001: 172) argues that clientelist patrons in Lebanon serve both individuals from both their in-group and from their out-group, regardless of their sectarian affiliation. In addition to that, he argues that the power of political parties, the main clientelist forces, serve as the basis for the formation of a new kind of identity, a sense of belonging to an imagined community (Hamzeh, 2001: 173).

Lebanese institutions, after independence, have been highly influenced by clientelism – an informal welfare institution (Cammett, 2015: S77). Also, provision of welfare by sectarian parties contributed to the construction and consolidation of social inequalities along religious lines. Here, the very act of providing services may help reinforce sectarian cleavages by establishing who is included and who is excluded from social safety nets (Cammett, 2015: S85). Finally, the core idea remains that the profound idea behind clientelist transactions serve a profound community-building function. Moreover, clientelism is fostered by the concentration of control over economic activities in the hands of patrons. In the Lebanese case, clientelism is deeply entrenched in the consociational system (Deets, 2018), making consociationalism and clientelism almost two interchangeable terms.

What is of particular interest with regards to our research question is the grand coalition of political elites, particularly in its elite diplomacy and elite consociational arrangements (Salloukh, 2020: 103). The account of consociationalism holds certain issues. The main focus on elites, and their behavior, suggests two things. First, it induces that the totality of the group represented by the elite is incapable to act, and second, the logic suggests that the same totality is subject to the behavior of its elite. Consequently, elites' actions must be in adequacy with the aspirations of the group they represent (Tsebelis, 1990: 8). When in a consociational setting, political elites play a pivotal role. The effective role of consociations is unlikely to succeed when there is a shortage of will on the side of the communal elites to reach across other communities or segments of the society (Iyer, 2007: 128). Elite cooperation is described as the focal point upon which stands effective consociational systems. Accommodation fostered by political elites seems to be the one welding

segmental structures of society into one consociational, consensus-based framework (Ake, 1967: 112-113).

When talking about setting lines of cleavages, we shed light on the possession and access of resources, in order to be able to set the so-called cleavage line. Here clientelism plays a paramount role with respect to gaining access to material and immaterial goods, and (re)distribution of private and public resources in everyday life (Ayubi, 1995). We acknowledge the mobile and flexible nature of identities, since we assume that they are forged, emerge as a consequence of the conscious efforts of political elites, and are manipulated through political means (Penn, 2008: 957). The notion and concept of clientelism seems to be associated with developing countries and settings, where the lack of development leaves room for the eruption and proliferation of "tribal" behaviors and loyalties. However, many studies emphasize on the "perpetuity" of clientelism even in "mature" democracies and its systemic persistence, contrary to widespread beliefs (Roniger, 2004: 353). As Nicholas van de Walle (2007) states: *"clientelism exists in all polities. The form it takes, its extent, and its political functions vary enormously, however, across time and place"* (Walle, 2007: 50). Based on the *"take there, give here"* motto (Graham, 1990: 353), clientelism is a form of direct exchange between citizens and holders of political authority (Hopkin, 2006: 5). People in power provide selective access to goods and opportunities and place themselves on their supporters in positions from which they can divert resources and services in their favor. The partners of the people in power, the clients are expected to return their benefactor's help, politically and otherwise, by working for them at elections time or boosting their patron's prestige and reputation (Roniger, 2004: 354). When in the political realm, clientelism is associated with the particularistic use of public resources within the electoral arena. Providing public goods here entails votes and support in exchange of jobs and other benefits (Roniger, 2004: 354). When talking about setting a cleavage whatsoever, it is worth mentioning how identity politics is profoundly intertwined with the provision of public goods in representative democracies for instance. Political parties have an incentive to exploit identity fault lines to serve their own political interest (Ticku and Venkatesh, 2020: 2).

Although there is no generally accepted definition of clientelism, many efforts have sketched what the concept entails (Hopkin, 2006; Muno, 2010; Hicken, 2011). Clientelism, patronage and patrimonialism are considered as an informal institution (Muno, 2010: 1). Regardless of the

different spheres, traditions and regional affiliations these different concepts come from, no differences lie in their substance (Muno, 2010: 7). They suggest notions of "unwritten rules that are socially shared, communicated, and enforced outside of officially sanctioned channels". Key elements such as dyadic relationships, contingency, hierarchy, iteration, asymmetrical, and reciprocal appear as the main parameters of the phenomena. The concept involves complex – often pyramidal – networks of patron brokerage selectively reaching different strata, sectors and groups. The object of the exchange is of particular relevance. What is being exchanged is votes from the client in favor of a candidate or a party in exchange of goods of varying degrees of excludability. Three types of goods are at play here: public goods, club goods, and private goods. The first type, public goods, such as competent management of the economy or an effective foreign policy, provides diffuse benefits and is therefore ineffective as a reward for a client's guarantee of support. The second type, club goods, such as fiscal or regulatory advantages for particular industrial sectors, or public investments for specific territories, are collective goods but of a narrower scope than the classic public good, as described above. As per the third type, private goods, provides selective benefits at the individual level, and are ideal for generating clientelist exchange, *"in that the client is left in no doubt that his or her support is repaid in a direct and concrete fashion"* (Hopkin, 2005 : 6).

Concerning Lebanon, it is noted that *"unlike international Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs), which are a relatively new actor in world politics and have received extensive attention in research on development, sectarian parties emerge out of a long historical tradition of religious charity in the Middle East. However, they are not mere reincarnations of the religious institutions that supplied services under Ottoman or colonial rule"* (Fawaz 1994 in Cammett, 2015: S77). These sectarian parties developed ways to adapt and ensure their sustainability in modern nation-states of the Middle East, or they emerged from new political contexts. In a consociational setting, the access of sectarian elites to state resources is entrenched, making the latter distributed by the elites, and only them (and their surroundings).

Social welfare becomes a terrain of political contestation. Ethnic and religious organizations instrumentalize service provision as a means of creating support, making welfare an integral component of sectarian politics (Cammett and Issar, 2010: 381). It is also noteworthy that sectarian

parties deliver to both in-group and out-group members, depending on the objective they seek to fulfill. That is consolidated by the fact that the political actors in question aspire to hold national political power, driving them to show that they are capable of representing all communities (Cammett and Issar, 2010: 387).

3.6. Clientelism and consociationalism

"The hegemonic nature of the sectarian balance is what guarantees the possibility for the state to perform its class function as a bourgeois state" (Amel, 1986: 336).

The dominant gaze adopted in the Lebanese political structure is based on confession and religion rather than colonialism and class (Safieddine, 2021: 48). It insists on finding historical roots to contemporary social and political issues. For instance, there is a constant need of relying on the historical roots – as in tradition or primordial roots – of sectarianism beyond the existing colonial social formation. Such an approach stems from the definition of the sectarian as religious, albeit their un-interchangeable definitions. Sectarianism is a political system and a political infrastructure directly linked to the structure of the State in its present economic reality (Amel, 1986: 236-239). The Lebanese consociational political system is a consecration of *"the peaceful coexistence of already existing political communities, the sects, which were bound by a political arrangement enforced by the state"* (Safieddine, 2021: 49). However, sects are merely the political relation of class dependency tying classes, or parts of these classes, to the dominant classes, in a relation of sectarian political representation (Amel, 1986: 259-260). Thus, sects are not stand-alone or autonomous entities, but rather they become what they are, sects, by the State. The relationship molding the formation of sects lies in the institutional relationship between the State and the sects; as in sectarian political representation in state institutions (Safieddine, 2021:49).

Power-sharing arrangements between sects are presented as the glue keeping sects together and keeping the national political community stitched together. However, clientelist dynamics have a quiet central role in this dimension. As described, clientelism implies both a dyadic relationship and reciprocal relation between the patron and his client (by dyadic, we mean that there are two parties in the transaction, even though there can be brokers from the patron's side, the relationship

remains dyadic). Linking it to consociationalism, the patron is the elite of a segment, and the client is the group.
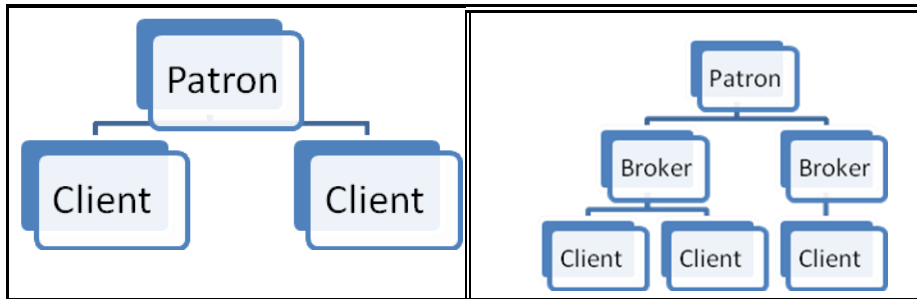
The patron can be present at several levels, from a municipality level to the top of a state's apparatus. That does not change however the substance of their operation of distributing resources, be them material or immaterial to clients.

The brokers' role can be a client's when it is for him to receive the "allocations" (subsidies) from the higher patron, before re-engaging in the patron's role and distributing the resources to clients which are in the bottom of the hierarchy. Then, "*at the core of every clientelistic pyramid, there is always a dyadic relationship between patron and client*" (Muno, 2010: 6).

What is reciprocal in the clientelist relation, is not the mutual distribution of material goods from the patron's side to the client, and from the client's side to the patron. Indeed, when a client is in a position of receiving material or immaterial resources (be them palpable goods, to bills, help in court, or public offices (Muno, 2010: 8)) from a patron, which suggests that the client is incapable of obtaining that resource by himself, or at least through formal channels. Thus, the reciprocal dimension of clientelism lies in the client's role in contributing to the durability and the continuity of the patron's position and role in resources' allocations. Such contributions are highly present in elections time for instance, where the client "pays" the credit to his patron by assuring his election. Indeed, the reciprocal dynamic in these clientelist relations create a difficult-to-break informal and enduring institution, working in parallel of formal institutions.

However, the most difficult task in studying clientelist dynamics lies in grasping or measuring it. Muno (2010: 14-16) points to the three main attempts in the matter: ethnography, proxies, and surveys. However, since the three are not used throughout this study, and we adopt more broad

drawings and explanations, we shall elaborate the relationship between consociationalism and clientelism.

Concerning the four consociational dimensions, the grand coalition is of paramount importance concerning clientelism and the patron-client relation. In fact, when business and economic elites and political elites intersect, the power-sharing landscape becomes blurry. Indeed, the introduction of monopolies and market logics in the power-sharing dimensions shifts the governance model towards a clientelist one. Political elites and economic elites are thus hardly distinguishable, if not the same (Halawi, 2020; Salloukh, 2020).

On the dyadic dimension, the patron-client relationship shifts towards an elite-segment one. Since the segments' articulations in the consociational framing depicts the former as monolithic, then all the segments would – theoretically – be a client to its representing elite. Those who reject this form of governance find themselves either out of the clientelist channel, as in they do not benefit from the elites' distribution of resources, except for non-excludable goods.

As per the reciprocity dimension, the constituents of the segments are, as argued, fueling the elites' role and sustaining their presence through voting, as a means of paying credit. Here again, the "outsiders" to this pattern either do not vote at all or vote for someone else – which is hardly ever the case.

But since that is the pattern on the whole national scale, other options are inexistent, making it the rule. Thus, all dynamics linked to elections and democratic institutions are hijacked by that informal process.

4. Methodology:

4.1.   Brief introductory explanations

"While comparative politics today would seem to privilege rational choice approaches, quantitative data, large-n comparative frameworks, and formal modeling, Middle East regional studies have been characterized by single-case studies, interpretive methods, "soft" data, and an emphasis on history and culture. Perhaps this is just in the nature of the regional studies enterprise, but there is no reason to be apologetic about them." (Hudson, 2001: 803).

Since the research question consists in analyzing and putting forward **how** – through which multitude of factors – does the political regime shape and nurture sectarianism, we leaned towards a softer methodology. Since the research question does not involve any quantification or measurement whatsoever, choosing a quantitative frame of working would have been somehow inadequate. Moreover, since we aim at viewing the phenomenon of sectarianism in the most encompassing way possible, and the determined variables of study are themselves hard-to-quantify – hard-to-measure concepts – and are not explicitly observable or measurable, a quantitative design of research would have been inappropriate to conducting the research (Pham, 2018: 3). In fact, a quantitative design would have implied the refinement of the rigid hypothesis into clear-cut concepts, then dimensions, and finally indicators that would serve as measuring tools to either confirm or infirm the same hypothesis. Instead, we opted for a qualitative design aiming to apprehend the *"how"* of the phenomenon.

As the following paragraphs will explain, our methodological stand stems from the historical qualitative tradition, involving analysis of secondary literature in smooth and soft variabilization and hypothesization. As we have already mentioned in paragraphs above, our object of study, sectarianism, is not unknown or unidentified. Rather, we already know that it exists, and takes many forms and shapes (if it was to be personified). Thus, we do not operate with an analysis aiming at proving the existence of sectarianism – since its "existence" is already acknowledged. What we will look for is the dynamics and the multifactorial setting in which sectarianism becomes salient, and becomes the dominant state of being.

4.2. Why not a more "classical" qualitative approach?

"Comparative politics theorizing as subfield of political science has not offered much toward a better apprehension of the Middle East, and on the other hand, the region's political science is depicted by comparative politics generalists as atheoretical; as if the discipline and the Middle East are two completely distinctive bodies, and are hardly reconcilable and compatible"

(Hudson, 2001: 801).

Our choice of the methodological approach is not anodyne. Having chosen a somewhat "unorthodox" and "unconventional" methodological approach in a disciplinary research has its reasons. Regardless of the significance of the selected approach – that will be elaborated more in detail in the following paragraphs – to the topic of study, other more conventional approaches could have been adopted, and would have been equally significant. Among these other traditions, archival work and interviews would have been of particular relevance to the topic. In accordance with our research question, doing archival work implies a field trip and a fieldwork in the official government archives and analyzing official documentation relevant to the subject – a step that would have considerably contributed to the study. Although an important amount of archives is nowadays digitized and available online, we preferred to avoid any archival work whatsoever. Indeed, going through archives would have implied a thorough selection of documents of relevance to the topic, thus a considerable amount of time that was not given in light of current circumstances. In addition to that, relying on a historical and qualitative *modus operandi* with no archives allowed us to keep the broad in picture in the frame, with no specific documents selections. On the other hand, interviews would have implied meeting and interviewing political elites and leaders of Lebanon since we defined our question by putting them, or at least the structures they belong to and behave in as the main explanatory factor inducing sectarianism. However, given the current economic and political situation in Lebanon and the general discontent and anger towards elites and their representatives, exacerbated by the global context of the COVID-19 pandemic, access to them is severely restricted and it is now almost impossible to obtain bilateral meetings with them. In addition to that, efforts to measure clientelistic consociationalism would have also been a brake to the research. The three ways of grasping clientelism described by Muno (2010) point to ethnography, proxy variables, and surveys (Muno, 2010: 14-16). Ethnography was not doable for the thesis due to the many reasons we pointed out above. As per proxy variables, two issues arose.

Firstly, we do not aim at generalizing and comparing any trend whatsoever. Clientelism's main character is its informality, making it hardly observable, thus hardly graspable with numbers. Efforts of using substitute variables hold problems of validity, in the sense that would only hold a dimension of the phenomenon that is fixed in a certain time, and would not get the whole dynamic. Secondly, our choice of relying on broader and less variablized methods leads us to a way of analyzing that encompasses the phenomenon rather than sticking to its performance in a particular time. Finally, surveys undergo the same limitations as ethnographic fieldwork.

4.3. On the historical-qualitative approach

Historical qualitative analysis employs, as its name says, qualitative instead of quantitative tools and the use historical and continuous interpretations of phenomena (Thies, 2002: 352). Such a methodological approach is not meant to be a newcomer to the study of political science, rather it is a long-standing tradition in the field (Thies, 2002). This methodology relies on producing large-scale outcomes. The focus is put on large-scale causal factors including broad political and economic structures in addition to complex organizational-institutional arrangements (Thelen and Mahoney, 2015: 5). Although historical methods have been widely adopted in social sciences and more precisely in political science as a preparatory method providing evidence for subsequent "secondary methods", these methods can contribute in "doing" political science, not just in providing descriptive dynamics (Sager and Rosser, 2015: 1-3). As Sager and Rosser (2015) put it, *"before the rise of the behaviorist approach in the first half of the 20th century, the human sciences, and especially history, already provided a constitutive epistemological ground for the study of politics"* (Sager and Rosser, 2015: 1).

The aim here is to seize the phenomenon, the process as a whole in the quest for explanations of causal chains and eventual nomothetic insights. The purpose of the task is twofold; it emphasizes complexity over simplicity – starting from the premise that *"so much depends upon so much else"* (Sager and Rosser, 2015: 4) – and stresses over the need to circumscribe the research due to feasibility issues. Such a task implies the simultaneous consideration and analysis of intertwined dynamics, operating both in a wide realm of knowledge and a wide framework of facts, and the realization of the linkages at stake in the narrower quadrant (Gaddis, 2002: 55).

The notion of contextualization is crucial. The connections that are to be established between the interfering events, ideas, institutions and processes around the subject of research influence and determine the characterization of the problem. In terms of sources of study, historical qualitative approach abounds with evidence, in the sense that proofs and evidence is almost inexhaustible, while the sources are perforce limited by their availability. The sources' availability performs a natural selective process. In the case of secondary sources, the same "natural selective process" applies, but a step prior to the research, since the primary sources have already been treated for the production of the secondary one. Moreover, the use of primary or secondary sources is equally decisive (Sager and Rosser, 2015). Synthetizing secondary sources as works of other authors must be accompanied with a critical perspective, and that towards the research question and the hypotheses (Sager and Rosser, 2015: 6).

Social sciences research based on historical methods stretches its advantages from within-case complexity. As explained above, methods deriving the qualitative and historical approaches in social sciences are hardly able to come up with nomothetic explanations since the insight is particular to a certain delimited and specified case (Lange, 2013).

5. Analysis

Basing our reasoning on the above framework, we rely on the insights and the findings of the authors and the articles we exposed in order to draw exploratory explanations at a *"meso"* level. Broadly, the pattern gives a clear explanation of the factors upon which the "deeply divided societies" paradigm relies. A multitude of reasons fuel the narrative that Lebanese society is indeed "deeply divided". At first glance, that might be true, if looking from afar regardless of the power dynamics at stake. Societal segments do seem bellicose when the consociational arrangement slips. However, as shown in the literature review and the theoretical stand, it seems that such a conclusion tends to overlook many aspects which are crucial for an encompassing apprehension of the factors fueling the "deeply divided paradigm".

Relatively to cleavages, ascriptive traits and religious-based aspects are put to the forefront. Although conscious about the multidirectional nature of cleavages (Labaki, 1988), it is of core importance to understand the implications of the primacy of ascriptive cleavages in the corporate consociational setting.

Indeed, since identities are not rigid, but on the contrary are fluid and ever-changing, it is the effort towards their politicization that pushes them to the forefront of the landscape. This politicization operates in many ways and shapes. In the case of Lebanon, clientelism plays the main role in the process. For identities to be an object of effective politicization, they must be put on a cleavage line capable of dividing society. Indeed, the formation of a political cleavage lies on the necessary but not sufficient condition that is the existence of social divisions. In fact, a fertile ground must exist for a benefiter to derive gains. However, the mere presence of the social divisions cannot form the only path to attain the objective. Divisions in society exist in many forms, and they cannot be the only reason behind "social instability" as prescribed by the paradigm of study. For the latter to be sustained and maintained, clientelism serves as a means of politicization.

Acknowledging that religious affiliation, in our case, is an ascriptive trait, its politicization shifts it to an attitudinal one (Rae and Taylor, 1970). It is through patronage that the shift occurs. Giving selective access to welfare and security via informal channels hijacks the formation of a horizontal belonging in favor of a vertical one. As Hamzeh (2001) describes it, it is an operation forging a sense of belonging to an imagined community, far from what it really entails. That goes in pair with demystifying the "deeply divided societies" paradigm. In fact, the paradigm has as a starting

point the end of the above explained process. It overlooks many dimensions that are not to be neglected and stands on the shallow grounds of politicized and imagined identities. Going through the whole process allows one to clearly grasp what is as stake, far from reductive and simplistic diagnoses.

The Lebanese constitution formally states in its 22nd article that there will be only one Chamber of Deputies elected on a national and non-confessional basis. That chamber will go in pair with a Senate that will represent all religious communities, and its authority will be limited to major national issues. In parallel, the customary rule that is the National Pact of 1943, contributed to consecrate at the top level of the State confessional representation of the three main "components" of Lebanese society. Plus, the presence of segmental autonomy to a huge extent, with each confessional group having its own code, freezes the dynamic and the fluidity of the group by inscribing their "presence" and "identity" into the positive law. It is noteworthy to mention that what the 22nd article of the constitution states has never been applied since its formal introduction with the Constitution Law of the 21st of September 1990 (The Lebanese Constitution, 1997: 229). Moreover, article 24 of the Lebanese constitution writes *"Until such time as the Chamber enacts an electoral law on a non-confessional basis the distribution of seats shall be according to the following principles:*

> *(1) Equal representation between Christians and Muslims.*
> *(2) Proportional representation among the confessional groups within each of the two religious communities*
> *(3) Proportional representation among geographic regions"* (The Lebanese Constitution, 1997: 230).

Regardless of the proportional representation of the geographic zones, the two other points (1) and (2) stem from a blurry base. Since article 22 mentions the non-confessional basis of the elections, what role does article 24 play in this logic? The two articles seem quite contradictory, in the sense that the latter clearly hampers any effort of surpassing and outdoing confessionalism on a formal and institutional level. In addition to that, both the equal representation between Christians and Muslims, and the proportional representation of the confessional groups consecrate the sectarian logic, but at a lower level than that of the National Pact. They operate on a parliamentary level,

while the Pact operates on the level of the presidency, the premiership and the parliament's speaker.

Moreover, the gap between the *de jure* and the *de facto* dimensions, as in "the Chamber enacts an electoral law on a non-confessional basis", and the unwillingness of the same Chamber of enacting such a law demonstrates the intersection between all segments and their elites on a point of concordance. It is this point of concordance that contributes to shifting the reality from a segment-elite to segments-elites dyadic relationship.

1926 Constitution	National Pact (1943)	Segmental autonomy	Deeper sectarian attribution of public office (Salloukh, 2019)
1943 Constitution			
1989 Constitution			

Table 5. Approximate figure of formal representations of confessionalism.

Since the corporate consociational view relies on the ascriptive and rigid nature of cleavages, the constitution, as well as the National Pact of 1943 go in pair with its prescriptions. In that sense, consociational arrangements will be elaborated in a fashion considering that the identity cleavage in the society is deeply rooted (McCulloch, 2014). In addition to that, the four key pillars of consociationalism (as in grand coalition, mutual veto, segmental autonomy and proportional representation) naturally fit in the cleavages' configuration. The grand coalition of elites serves particularly as a ground of consensus for elites, together with the other dimensions serving more informal channels for elite perennity. As long as elites are profiting, no shifts from the corporate dimension towards a more liberal one – or any political change whatsoever – shall be done. Moreover, the corporate confessional structure that has been operating in Lebanon since 1943 has been unable to enforce any reform of any kind to ensure the public good and the longevity of a healthy political framework , but it puts all efforts to circumvent any endeavor of going forward. Thus, the corporatism of the Lebanese political structure is slowly dying, and is incapable – or

unwilling most probably – of stopping its freefall (Dixon, 2020; Halawi, 2020; Nagle, 2020). This results in a surviving cartel in an ossified and dying political structure.

The spinal cord upon which the segmental elites rely is clientelist channels, through which these same elites ensure the perennity and the continuity of sectarianism. Although always present since 1943 (Cammett and Issar, 2010; Cammett, 2015; Hamzeh, 2001), and stretching its presence from Ottoman era feudal structures and tax-collection dynamics, clientelism was remodeled after the 1975-1989 war. Indeed, the rise of the militia economy took over the State-led formal economy. Hamzeh (2001) extends the sectarian clientelistic relationship to the mid-19th century, where the dyadic patron-client relationship shifted from the personal network to the sectarian one (Hamzeh, 2001: 168).

Traditional patrons clientelism	➔ All four share the same basis: mainly confessional.
Party-directed clientelism	
Militia clientelism	➔ They differ in their clientelist relationship and networks.
Islamist clientelism	

Table 6. Four types of clientelism in Lebanon (Hamzeh, 2001).

The four types of clientelist relationships operate in a parallel fashion, each to a certain extent. The first type, *"Zu'ama"* clientelism, has its network deeply anchored in the State's institutions and administration. Surely, the relationship is based on services and goods provided to the client, in return of political allegiance.

With the birth of the Lebanese State and the processes of expanding modern opportunities and modernization, party-directed clientelism gained ground (Hamzeh, 2001: 173). It is in this direction that the political parties served two functions: a means of bargaining over resource allocation, and a basis forming a new identity, a new belonging to an imagined community. Here, two dynamics related to party clientelism "clashed". On the one hand were the parties who constituted a sort of continuity with the former type of clientelism, strictly based on a confessional basis. On the other hand, another trend emerged with leftist parties, which tried to act outside clientelist channels. The double trend of party clientelism resulted in no shift from vertical forms of participation to horizontal ones. Indeed, leftist parties could not bring forward horizontal networks of participation to the needed extent to undermine the vertical *routine*, which failed to move the dynamic to the public arena, thus slowly failing. In this sense, vertical forms of

participation prevailed, and the shift towards horizontal ones did not occur. Since the former is fueled and sustained by personal and confessional reciprocal obligations, the model gained perennity with the fail of the shift towards horizontal networks.

With civil strife devouring the State and its institutions in 1975, militia clientelism gained ground. Although many under the control of traditional patrons (the Phalange Party of the Gemayel, the Tigers of Chamoun, the Progressive Socialist Party militia of Jumblat), others like the Lebanese Forces, Amal (*Afwaj al Muqawamah al Lubnaniyya)* or Hezbollah are the product of war logic. The latter gained their legitimacy and their support from sectarian bases (Hamzeh, 2001: 174; Cammett and Issar, 2010; Cammett, 2015). Fifteen years of militia-driven logic resulted in separated regions, each with its political, social and economic structure. It is worth noting that what contributed substantially to the longevity of this type of clientelism is regional allegiances – broader than the mere national framework of operation – that contributed materially and financially to the actions of numerous militias. With the 1989 Taef Agreement and the formal end of the civil war, militias returned their weapons – with the exception of Hezbollah – but integrated the political arena while maintaining the same logic of work. Neoliberal post-war policies contributed to the undermining of the State's formal channels by trendy corrupt practices where resources were still allocated on a communal basis rather than on a citizen-based logic. This dynamic not only perpetuated clientelist channels, but reinforced them with their formal presence in the State's institutions formally (Baumann, 2016).

Finally, Islamic clientelism stretches its legitimacy from the patron and the client shared faith in primordial frameworks (Hamzeh, 2001). It is with no doubt that Islamist clientelism was way more effective and capable than any other form of clientelism in creating a more solid and robust sense of belonging to the same community. Both the State's formal channels and the other informal channels of clientelism were bypassed with the provision of social welfare services, education, health care and housing for instance.

With the constitutional text stating that confessionalism shall only be a temporary stage of Lebanese political life, we see the role played by clientelism in this transition. Indeed, it is now clear that the protagonists of the clientelist arena are almost the same as the ones of the political arena. This suggests that the line separating the two realms is almost non-existent. The absence of will and volition in transitioning from political confessionalism to a non-confessional structure

(article 24 of the Lebanese constitution) is mirrored in the unwillingness of forging universal policies that encompass all citizens and residents of Lebanon regardless of their client obligations towards a patron. The corporate consociational dimension reflected in the Pact and the Constitution fuel the clientelist dynamics, and clientelism fuels and nurtures the corporate consociational structure as well, thus making it even more difficult to modify. Inter-elite cooperation evolved and became an elite-cartel, where interests were similar, and threatened by all segments, thus blurring the "elite-segment" relationship.
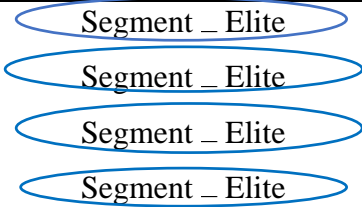
From	To
Segment _ Elite	
Segment _ Elite	Segments | Elites
Segment _ Elite	
Segment _ Elite	

Table 7. Segment-Elite relationship.

Traboulsi (1990) insists on the role of militias and the civil war in bringing back the pre-war status quo in the post-war period. In that sense, he describes the post-war environment as the same as the pre-war environment, in a harsher way. Lebanon passed from a liberal to a neoliberal economy, with religious identities being more crystallized. Civil war performed a drastic demographic and psychic surgery in the body of society in order that it complies with the old regime. So instead of changing a regime for the better representation of the people, the same regime changed the people to better accommodate the regime. In Traboulsi's (1990: 10) words, *"Lebanon has been bombed back into the pre-war state of undrilled economic rivalry and confessional feuding"*. The oligarchical reasoning of the Lebanese State is already paved due to the links among militias and their belonging to a common share of political and economic practices. Here again, Traboulsi (1990: 10-11) depicts the state of things as follows, *"[i]n a word, the armed confessions are infernal machines for killing their co-religionists in order to enrich a multi-confessional cartel of warlords and profiteers that constitute the new war bourgeoisie"*.

Ultimately, consociationalism, together with clientelism, has proven that it is a factor contributing to the salience of confessionalism. Indeed, hypothesizing otherwise would put us on a misleading track; since we are putting forward factors and mechanisms that occurred, suggesting hypothetical

ones would not be helpful. As explained, the phenomenon we aim at explaining is already known. Thus, the exercise consisted in analyzing it in a continuous fashion, rather than in a discrete one, while keeping in mind the subtleties that arise. Clearly, sectarianism can be described as the product of the intersection of the political, economic and strategic interests. It is movable and can be placed and replaced in accordance with interests at stake in the different contexts. In fact, narratives suggesting a dichotomy between Christians and Muslims in Lebanon at the eve of the independence shifted to a Sunni-Shi'i one during the 1980's (with the Islamic Revolution in Iran) until now. Even though Saudi Arabia did not change as Iran did in the twentieth century, its opposition was "found relevant" with Iran when needed.

As per Lebanon, the Christian "faction" slowly disappeared from the narrative mainly because of the political, economic and strategic circumstances and context. Its resurgence is as probable as its disappearance.

The idea here is enriching the analytical frame when approaching confessional groups. For example, replacing the Christians with Shi'as – or any other group – is not due to hazard, but on the contrary the former were no longer serving an interest at the moment. In fact, understanding the nuances and apprehending the complexities contribute to undermining the monolithic view suggested in the example above. Sticking to the "deeply divided societies" framework of approaching societies reinforces, not surprisingly, the monolithic nature of groups since the paradigm itself stands on such grounds.

All in all, the above described framework shows how our paradigm of study constitutes a fertile ground for a consequent debate between "integrative accommodation" and "voluntary apartheid" (Lijphart, 1971: 11). Indeed, the fault-line between the two is, as shown, very blurry. As Lijphart puts it, "*good social fences may make good political neighbors, a kind of voluntary apartheid policy may be the most appropriate solution for a divided society*" (Lijphart, 1971: 11). Consociationalism is often presented as an optimal solution for accommodating plural conflicts. The reason behind such a depiction lies in the simplistic consociational framework for analyzing conflicts is one-dimensional; all conflicts are essentially primitive and deeply-rooted (Dixon, 2020: 118).

6. Conclusion

The corporate consociational dimension of Lebanese confessionalism shows how sectarianism can be a ground of convergence of interests of segmental elites. Indeed, segmental elites and clientelist protagonists are almost two interchangeable actors while describing Lebanon.

After having introduced the motivations behind this work, we started by clarifying the history of Lebanon from the 19th century up to today. This allowed us to have an overview of how the dynamics at stake operate in different temporalities and in different contexts. We then elaborated the concepts of cleavages and sectarianism, especially how the latter is nowadays an expression of the former. After describing consociationalism, its four pillars, its origins, and its link to cleavages, we focused specifically on the "deeply divided societies" paradigm. Indeed, consociationalism is intrinsically linked to the presence of strong ethnic/religious/linguistic cleavages in a society. In our case, Lebanon, it is the religious cleavage which forms the basis for the consociational arrangement. However, the task throughout this thesis was to reconsider the aforementioned relationship existing between consociationalism and cleavages. The role of clientelism was put forward in the argument as a pivotal factor in the argument.

Our argument stems from both the expression of a certain harmony and unity in the Lebanese society in the last October 2019 protests, as well as a certain scholarly consensus around the question. First, cleavages do exist everywhere and in many forms and shapes, and second, it is the political regime that fixes the line of cleavage between groups, and not the other way around.

Coining societies as "deeply divided" while acknowledging the fluid and ever-changing nature of identities made us reconsider the whole paradigm. In addition to that, the "deep divisiveness" implies a multitude of blurry notions that do not seem robust in setting a clear-cut definition or threshold for what are deeply divided societies.

Throughout the thesis we develop a multitude of factors which fuel the sectarian salience in Lebanon – a representation of "deeply divided societies" – which we used to reverse the paradigm. We did so by coining key elements, stretching from legal aspects to material ones that are underlying to the sectarian phenomenon and its rise. Then, the crucial aspect of the argument was showing the role that clientelism plays in shaping sectarianism in general, and more specifically in the case of Lebanon. That implied showing linkages between clientelism and the corporate

model of consociationalism present in Lebanon, in addition to the trends of clientelism that exist since centuries, and their contemporary expressions.

The whole exercise was done following a "back and forth" dynamic. What is meant is that no strict temporal sequences were selected and analyzed individually. What was done consisted in extracting broad factors and mechanisms that contribute to the longevity of the sectarian salience in Lebanese society. Through a historical-qualitative method, we could do so, far from strict operationalization, variablization and measurements.

As explained in the methodology chapter, many barriers hampered fieldwork data collection. Indeed, archival work was made more difficult due to travel restrictions and mobility reduction during the past year and a half. Moreover, our research question defined quite precisely the explanatory actors, the political elites of Lebanon. Consequently, any endeavor of inquiring with them was impossible in light of both the restrictions in place, and the situation and the crisis in Lebanon. Access to the political figures in Lebanon requires a long-term effort coupled to a huge formal and informal networking that was not easy to accomplish in light of the current situation. We opted for a historical qualitative framework of study. As argued, the choice stretches from the fact that both the topic and the research question are not quantifiable, nor suggest a quantitative mode of operating. We relied on secondary literature due to the lack of access to primary sources. Doing so, although not as "accurate" as primary sources would have been, served the research and allowed us to answer our research question while identifying the patterns present in the literature around the topic. The obstacles faced formed a brake to a complete empirical work. However, secondary material allowed us to dig as far as possible in order to answer our question, even though only at a "*meso*" conceptual level.

As stated in the first lines of the thesis, the research done here is an alternative *exploratory* roadmap to the study of the so-called "deeply divided societies". In fact, the exercise consisted in underlying primordial aspects that contribute in undermining both the conceptual and the empirical pillars upon which the paradigm stands. Reversing both components – although the empirical side was not explored as much the conceptual side in this thesis – consolidates a more sane narrative towards the so-called "deeply divided societies", and more precisely Lebanon.

Depicting a society as deeply divided because of the salience religious identities at a certain moment hides and overlooks a multitude of factors that actually need to be studied for the better apprehension of the phenomenon. The clientelist dimensions invites us to stretch the cogitation to the broader debate around representation and/or redistribution. Indeed, more exhaustive researches looking at levels of wealth redistribution, the welfare state's performance and agency vis-à-vis of identity-related claims would contribute to the broader conundrum at stake. Since clientelism plays an important role in the salience of identity markers, one could ask whether the redistribution through the formal channels rather than informal ones would lead to the same phenomenon. Although we acknowledge in the above paragraphs the adaptive nature of clientelism, looking at eventual balances between formal and informal institutions could be very helpful in assessing their role, and the role of redistribution more broadly.

Building on both the conceptual and empirical weaknesses of the "deeply divided societies" paradigm contributes in building a less flawed narrative towards analyzing and reading societies presented as conflictual, when in fact identities are victims of instrumentalization serving specific interests. The effort fits directly in building approaches that are far from simplistic and reductive representations of societies.

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