DEBATING LEBANON'S POWER-SHARING MODEL: AN OPPORTUNITY OR AN IMPASSE FOR DEMOCRATIZATION STUDIES IN THE MIDDLE EAST?

By Tamirace Fakhoury

In spite of its small size, Lebanon is a divided state that is home to eighteen different ethno-religious groups.[1] Its political system operates through a power-sharing arrangement organized along state-recognized sectarian lines. The arrangement purports to guarantee political representation and group autonomy in the realms of personal status, education, and cultural affairs to the major Christian and Muslim constituent communities. Two pacts underlie the provisions that regulate Lebanon's multi-sectarian balance of power. The unwritten 1943 National Pact allowed for the creation of a grand coalition government whereby a Maronite Christian would assume the presidency, a Sunni Muslim would be prime minister, and a Shiʻi Muslim would hold the post of speaker of parliament. Communities were to be proportionally represented in the cabinet, and a six-to-five Christian-Muslim ratio was adopted for the legislature. The Taʼif Accords, which ended Lebanon's fifteen-year civil war (1975–90), put the National Pact into writing, while altering some of the power-sharing arrangements that had been previously established.[2]

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In democracy studies, debate over Lebanon's political model has never been a straightforward affair. Discussion of the country's "sectarian system of politics"[3] is characterized by a dialectic whereby scholars herald the arrangement as a "democratic miracle" that carries the seeds of its own destruction. Social scientists have long sought to determine whether the democratic design of Lebanon's political system is suitable for such a divided society or whether it is instead a recipe for instability. The resulting debate has confined the dominant scholarly work on Lebanese politics to a set of binary conclusions assessing the merits and demerits of the "sectarian system." This narrow focus tends to unfairly exclude the Lebanese case from broader debates about democratization.[4]

Scholars' use of the consociational model as an explanatory framework for Lebanon's political system has contributed to the entrenchment of the identified binaries in democracy studies, as the system has come to be framed within a power-sharing paradigm that borrows heavily from consociational theory. There remains an incongruity between the consociational model as a normative paradigm and its embodiment as political practice in the Lebanese case.[5] On one hand, consociational theory is too contested to disentangle what would be critical approaches to Lebanon's political system from what are polarized arguments of a normative nature. On the other, consociational theory fails to capture Lebanon's political realities.

This article, therefore, argues for a shift in perspective, extricating democratization research on Lebanon from the grip of the consociational approach and its attendant binary conclusions. Suggestions for future work consist of approaches that conceptualize power sharing as a transformative process rather than as a final state. The article also recommends integrating scholarship on the production of sectarianism in Lebanon within the consociational literature on Lebanon's political system.

Problematizing Lebanon's Power-Sharing Model

While power sharing is a broad term that scholars understand as referring to the range of methods designed to manage conflicts in divided societies,[6] Lebanon's power-sharing method is specifically associated with the consociational democracy typology.[7] Within the broad spectrum of studies of power sharing, consociational democracy is understood as one specific

method of establishing political rule in religiously and/or ethnically divided societies. Commonly called "power-sharing democracy,"[8] and at times subsumed within the larger field of "consociationalism,"[9] consociational democracy is the practice of sharing and dividing power among sizable groups. It organizes political relationships according to constitutional provisions, institutionalized representation, proportionality, and group autonomy. Proponents of the theory argue that this method—which depends to a great extent on political leaders' abilities to placate tensions—has two aims. The first is to provide mechanisms for defusing conflicts; the second is to guarantee democratic arrangements.

The Lebanese method for organizing political interactions has led to a proliferation of terminology among consociational theorists, comparativists, and social scientists specializing in the study of Lebanon. The terms power sharing, consociational democracy, and consociationalism[10] are used interchangeably in consociational literature to categorize the Lebanese situation. Moreover, alternative expressions such as "political pluralism," "political confessionalism," or "political sectarianism"[11] offer scholars whose primary research focuses on Lebanon heuristic tools with which to describe how the consociational method has been reappropriated in the Lebanese case.

The terminological abundance stems from the polemical conflation of sectarianism,[12] as a process of sociocultural segmentation, with Lebanon's political system. According to one dominant perspective, Lebanese sectarian communities are the "boundary markers" in Lebanon's "social stratification"[13] as well as the building blocks structuring political relations. This school of thought frames the communities not only as religious denominations but also as political actors in the domestic and international arenas.[14] A contrasting instrumentalist approach argues that sectarianism—as a collective phenomenon—cannot exist beyond the sociopolitical practices that reproduce it.[15]

While consociational success stories are rare, the perversely resilient Lebanese example[16] continues to feed current research on consociationalism.[17] One reason for the prominence of the Lebanese case is that it is one of the cases that grounded Arend Lijphart's theory of consociational democracy (Lijphart would go on to be one of the foremost theorists in this field).[18] Two other important reasons explain scholars' fascination with Lebanon's political system in democracy studies.

First, the political formula undergirding the Republic of Lebanon ever since the National Pact of 1943 has survived many multilayered crises and, despite a destructive fifteen-year war, was revived by the Ta'if Accords that officially ended that conflict. These two agreements are the basis for the Lebanese understanding of what has been called a "pacted democracy," a conception of democracy based on an inter-communal consensus to safeguard coexistence through arrangements that share power among religious groups.

A second prominent question is whether Lebanon's political system— which officially acknowledges and attempts to manage religious diversity— may have shielded the country from the specter of authoritarianism that gripped other parts of the Arab world before the 2011 uprisings.[19] Indeed, prior to the Arab uprisings, which have reframed lines of inquiry on democratization in the region, most democracy studies on the Middle East tackled the Lebanese model from two different perspectives. On the one hand, political scientists discussed Lebanon as a case of exceptionalism uncharacteristic of the region.[20] Of the numerous works in comparative political analysis tackling democratization of authoritarian regimes in the Arab world, few have analyzed Lebanon for the simple reason that the country offered little insight into Arab authoritarianism. On the other hand, some social scientists cite Lebanon as a case that refutes the assumption that democracy is a Western construct incompatible with regional political dynamics.[21] Others further raised the question of whether Lebanon's political pluralism holds valuable lessons for understanding governance in the Middle East.[22]

Binary Debates on Lebanon's Power-Sharing Democracy: A Constructive or Destructive Formula?

Lebanon's political system has inspired a variety of approaches grappling with its sectarian-based nature. A number of these interpretative frameworks are particularly worth noting.[23] They provide the backdrop to understanding binary categorization patterns around Lebanon's political system.

A vast amount of scholarship in democracy studies relies on understanding Lebanon's sectarian practices and political arrangements through the lens of consociational democracy theory. Consociationalist scholars have integrated Lebanon's pre- and post-war political developments into international comparative research on consociational democracy. The country's

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political developments have also inspired internationally oriented analyses problematizing the applicability of the model to various segmented societies.[24] Whereas Lebanon's pre-war political system inspires scholarly admiration on the part of consociational theorists, the current system receives poor marks. In post-war studies, social scientists still use the consociational paradigm as the main analytical benchmark for understanding Lebanon's political system. These studies, however, approach the Lebanese system as one that denatures the democratic typology spelled out by consociationalists and place emphasis instead on diagnosing the post-Ta'if political order's subversion of the country's transition.[25] A number of these works draw attention to the disintegrative impact of political sectarianism and to dysfunctional power-sharing institutions.[26]

Drawing upon various approaches that diverge from consociational democracy theory, and from the field of contemporary democracy studies altogether, additional lines of inquiry situate Lebanon's power-sharing dynamics within a distinct historical-cultural context.[27] Input from these fields helps illuminate the role played by sectarianism in shaping Lebanon's political system. Some scholars ask questions drawn from various debates in the disciplines of history, anthropology, and sociology, seeking to analyze the origins and development of the Lebanese system. This literature tends to view the emergence of the present configuration as the political expression of sectarian identities and poses questions regarding the extent to which it is anchored in complex historical trends of accommodation and conflict.[28] Fawwaz Traboulsi, for example, frames Lebanese communities as "politicized religious sects" and as "historical products, rather than ahistorical essences rooted in religious differences or as mere entities."[29]

One strand of the literature anchored in the historical-cultural perspective foregrounds the impact of colonial legacies on the formation of Lebanon's system of sectarian representation in the 1940s. Discussions remain inconclusive, however.[30] One camp calls for a strengthened focus on the extent to which the Ottoman *millet* system, the 1861 Règlement Organique, and the French-brokered Greater Lebanon have in different ways enshrined the power-sharing practices that persisted after Lebanon's independence.[31] Another camp is wary of establishing a causal link between externally induced state building and the development of the Lebanese model. In this view, the survival of Lebanon's "pacted democracy" fits into

an accommodationist perspective,[32] according to which the former is thought to be the reflection of Lebanese communities' pragmatic calculations, and their realization of the dangers associated with unregulated sectarianism.

Debates revolve around a binary inasmuch as recourse to consociationalism in Lebanon has proved to be an effective mode of managing sectarian differences. These debates can be organized into several polarized arguments. First, contention centers on whether or not power sharing along sectarian lines is well suited to the specific context of Lebanese society. Second, sharp disagreement persists as to whether consociationalism should be seen as the source or the solution to Lebanon's internal conflicts. Finally, while some scholars view power sharing as the best democratic option for a divided Lebanese society, others continue to emphasize the model's deficiencies.

To paint a full picture of these binaries in democracy studies, one needs to tackle their representation in the literature on sectarianism. Sectarianism is the nexus of the relationship between democracy and power sharing in the Lebanese method. Furthermore, as I illustrate below, the consociational literature on Lebanon's power-sharing model reproduces some of the polarized arguments in the literature on sectarianism.

Depicted as "a problem in the sense that it is an issue that must be defended or argued against,"[33] sectarianism fuels dichotomous perspectives.[34] In general, one framework portrays sectarianism as the inherent cause of Lebanon's divisions and associates it with disintegration and conflict.[35]Another body of literature deconstructs the arguments that problematize sectarianism as "a native malignancy or a foreign conspiracy, as a tribal phenomenon and an impediment to modernization (or as all of them together)."[36] Rather, it interprets sectarianism as a constructed phenomenon and highlights its complex functions along with the manifold factors that ensured its perpetuation.[37] This literature portrays sectarianism as the cement for Lebanon's religious boundary markers,[38] one that does not necessarily negate or antedate the nation. In this view, scholars depict the Lebanese nation as an "association of communities"[39] rather than as a unitary bloc. Moreover, some social scientists caution that it is not the phenomenon of sectarianism per se that foments divisions but the fact that the state incorporates sectarianism as an instrument of power.[40]

As far as the recourse to consociational democracy as a method for managing sectarianism is concerned, a number of polarized arguments are

worth noting. Here, the debate focuses not only on the consociational aspect of Lebanon's political system, but also on what is seen as the democratic quality of Lebanon's consociationalism. Whereas a number of social scientists portray Lebanese consociationalism as a source for stagnation and a recipe for conflict,[41] others consider it as a political engineering method that—in spite of various setbacks—has allowed Lebanon to manage its fragmentation.[42] Another body of work regards power sharing as a double-edged sword that has brought about both peace and conflict.[43]

Scholars use the outbreak of the Lebanese Civil War in 1975 as the main yardstick with which to assess the power-sharing system. The battles on Lebanese soil played out within mutually reinforcing domestic and regional confrontations. Intercommunal strife took place alongside military involvement of external powers such as Syria, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), and Israel.

Lacking straightforward explanations for the war's origins, scholars have vociferously debated the primary factors that led to its eruption. A recurrent discussion is whether or not the consociational system hastened the 1975 war. According to one body of work, the Lebanese consociational design entrenches sectarian divisions, making it more likely for sectarianism to become violent. From this point of view, the arrangement's quota-based provisions not only make it unresponsive to socio-demographic transitions but also exacerbate the disgruntlement of communities. Some social scientists indeed argue that the rigid design of the political system became a major catalyst for the 1975–90 war.[44]

Others divert attention from the flaws of Lebanon's consociationalism. Instead, they underline its suitability for Lebanon and highlight the system's resilience. They maintain that Lebanon remains prone to conflict not because of power sharing along sectarian lines, but rather because of the political system's vulnerability to penetration by regional and international actors. Rejecting the thesis that the power-sharing system was the primary cause of the 1975 war, a number of social scientists argue that external dynamics (such as the Arab-Israeli conflict, the Palestinian presence in Lebanese territory, and recurrent external intervention) played overriding roles in testing the limits of the system.[45]

In the wake of the Lebanese civil war, contentious debates focus on the conditions for sustaining domestic peace and power sharing. One such

dispute is whether or not Lebanon's power-sharing arrangements require an external arbitrator in order to succeed. The issue of Syria's role in the 1989 Ta'if Accords is a case in point. There is consensus that the Ta'if Accords would not have seen the light of day without the international acknowledgement of Syria's role as Lebanon's protector. Further, scholars agree that Syrian political brokerage and military presence on Lebanese soil affected the treaty's implementation to a large extent. Yet while some link the enforcement of the Ta'if Accords and the ensuing period of peace to Syria's role as a foreign arbiter,[46] others view the derailment of effective domestic power sharing through the lens of Syria's hegemonic grip.[47]

A major debate—flowing naturally from the above-mentioned strands of work on Lebanese consociationalism—focuses on the role of endogenous or exogenous dynamics in explaining Lebanon's instability. Broadly speaking, the critics of Lebanon's sectarian model take a domestic (and therefore inward-oriented) approach.[48] They link Lebanon's instability to low levels of national cohesiveness and to a political system that exacerbates differences. Conversely, social scientists who perceive consociationalism as a useful vehicle for managing sectarian divisions shift the focus to Lebanon's interactions with the regional and international systems.[49] This strand of literature emphasizes the extent to which Lebanon's entrapment in a turbulent setting, on the one hand, and its position as a middle ground in foreign conflicts on the other, destabilize the various domestic power-sharing arrangements.

Another area of disagreement revolves around the democratic quality of Lebanon's consociational model, and the country's capacity to democratize further. The paradoxical interface between sectarianism and democracy takes on paramount importance in this regard. One important subset of the literature highlights the ways in which sectarianism subverts democratic norms and institutions.[50] Another approach instead problematizes the interface between sectarianism and democracy in a less dramatic way.[51] This particular school of thought rejects the comparativist approach that emphasizes the flaws of Lebanon's system as seen through the lens of the Western-based democratic model. Rather, it conceptualizes Lebanon's consociationalism as a mode of democratic crafting adapted to Lebanon's "plural political culture" and historical trajectory.[52] In this view, sectarianism is an organizational framework for a democratic typology structured along religious lines. In yet another perspective, featured in newer literature,

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the survival of Lebanon's "pacted democracy" after the civil war and the "Syrian-brokered peace" has spurred the hypothesis that sectarianism and democratization are not mutually exclusive. The survival of democratic discourses and institutions despite recurrent phases of inter-sectarian fighting and critical turning points provides a rationale for such an argument.[53]

These binary perspectives on Lebanon's political system generate various hurdles for analysis. Indeed, they obscure the effects of power sharing on the dynamics of conflict and democracy. Relying on the above-mentioned sets of literature makes it hard to determine whether the Lebanese power-sharing method, while admittedly sharpening sectarian cleavages, makes external and internal conflicts mutually reinforcing. Demonstrating that Lebanon's location in a conflict-laden region accounts for dysfunctional power sharing remains equally difficult. From a normative perspective, the divide over Lebanon's power-sharing democracy construes the latter as a phenomenon that can indisputably be interpreted in two contradictory ways. Furthermore, the binary logic reifying Lebanon's sectarian political system as a problem that is hard to escape undermines the attempt to generate a framework in democracy studies for its improvement. Although there is a widely acknowledged need for further research on remedying Lebanon's flawed consociationalism, one notes a lack of coherent academic discourses in this direction.

How Does Scholarly Engagement with Consociational Theory Fuel Binary Perspectives?

Consociational Democracy Theory as a Subject of Dissension in Democracy Studies

In their efforts to test the limitations of Lebanon's political system and to determine whether sectarianism is compatible with democratic development, democracy studies on Lebanon tend to overemphasize consociational democracy theory. That is to say, a number of scholars set out to analyze the extent to which the Lebanese model fits the classical consociational democracy paradigm.[54] Here as well, academic discussions reveal significant divisions over the consociational model.[55]

Proponents of consociationalism defend power-sharing democracy as the most realistic democratic option for divided societies. Conversely,

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critics of the theory claim that the model is not democratic enough as it is based on elites' capacity to harness sociopolitical divisions. Consequently, consociationalism makes political boundaries rigid, thereby ensuring ethno-national divides. Critics also consider the model to be too "impressionistic" to inspire appropriate policy prescriptions. They argue that there is a mismatch between the normative and empirical derivatives of consociational democracy. Because consociational theory is considered by political scientists to be an empirically grounded normative theory, analysts and practitioners often use it to inform policymaking. Yet the theoretical and the policy prescription dimensions of the model are seldom identical, for an actual consociation can never meet the ambitious criteria spelled out by consociationalist theoreticians.

As far as the Lebanese case is concerned, consociational theory has not delivered on some aspects that have proven to be of paramount importance in framing the Lebanese system's dilemmas. Specifically, the problematic issues involve the consolidation of power sharing after its initiation, the relationship between power sharing and democratization, and the method for remedying a rigid and unstable consociational model.

Except for some limited attempts by consociationalist scholars, the literature does not elaborate on the conditions that help consolidate power-sharing systems or that are important to system survival. Few works distinguish between conditions for initiating and conditions for consolidating consociations.[56] While some scholars argue that elite accommodation is sufficient to maintain a power-sharing democracy, others emphasize structural determinants such as demographics, aspects of segmentation, and the type and acuity of cleavages. The necessary conditions for the consolidation of power-sharing democracies hence remain ambiguous. Further, the literature on power sharing particularly ignores the relationship between the democratic and consociational components in a political system and how these components affect each other. As the consociational model has overtly relied on "the analysis of reforms in already democratic societies," it has not foreseen conceptual tools for tackling the "democracy-promoting aspects of power sharing."[57]

In addition to these limitations, consociational theory pays little attention to whether, and if so how, rigid consociations threatened by political stalemate and internal hostilities can evolve into more cohesive forms of

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power sharing. Instead, the theory focuses on how communal elites avoid conflicts by safeguarding segmentation. Yet preserving segmentation is clearly not sufficient to ease tensions as it freezes issues of contention and empowers the elites over their constituencies.

Because consociational theory stands as the most widely discussed explanatory framework for Lebanese politics in democracy studies, debates over its deficiencies end up filtering into arguments about the value of Lebanon's consociationalism. As major disagreement prevails over the consociational model in general, attempts to adapt it to the Lebanese case confront scholars with a dilemma when it comes to identifying the merits and risks inherent to Lebanon's political system, a dilemma that consociational theory itself cannot resolve.

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The Incongruence Between Consociational Theory
and the Lebanese Case

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Given the controversies at the heart of consociational theory, it is not surprising that the latter fails to capture Lebanon's "consociational prescription"[58] on the one hand, and Lebanon's post-1990 political realities, on the other. Lebanon's prescription for consociationalism (that is, its embeddedness in Lebanon's foundational texts) rests on a contradiction. The provisions in the Lebanese constitution and in the negotiation settlements prescribe sectarian power sharing as a governance mode while stating its transitory character.

The ambiguous stance toward power sharing on the basis of sectarianism can be traced back to the establishment of Lebanon as a nation-state, specifically to Article 95 of the 1926 constitution. Article 95 ascribes a transitory quality to political sectarianism. At the same time, the article implicitly legitimizes the arrangement's long-lasting character by making its abolition an open-ended question. In turn, the 1989 Ta'if Accords restored power sharing while restating non-sectarianism as a long-term goal but without providing a road map to this end. By prescribing power sharing as a temporary solution for managing sectarian divisions, the above provisions question the validity of consociationalism as a permanent project for the Lebanese nation. Ironically, by reiterating its temporary character decades after the inception of the Lebanese state, Ta'if rendered political sectarianism's "transitory" nature more permanent than ever.

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This tension between establishing and abolishing political sectarianism is present at a textual level and takes living form through political discourse. A review of policy debates in Lebanon reveals the presence of longstanding disagreements over the process and objectives of desectarianization. Areas of dispute include both the nature of the political project to replace the present power-sharing formula and the extent to which phasing out political sectarianism would endanger Lebanon's minorities. Contention also hinges on the right timing for political change. Social scientists and policymakers disagree over what should be done: preserving the system as is (the least costly option), introducing partial and gradual desectarianization at government levels, or implementing radical secularization.[59] Consociational theory barely tackles system transition. As such, it fails to provide an adequate framework for addressing the tension in Lebanon's consociational prescription. Put differently, how does one bridge the gap between the pragmatic "short-term" utility of political sectarianism and the stated intent to phase it out over the longer term?

Whereas the prescription for power sharing along sectarian lines is supposed to be transitional at the textual level, reality runs counter to this intention. In the post-war period, political sectarianism, understood as "the whole of political culture of Lebanon,"[60] has become a deep-seated phenomenon that cannot be easily eradicated. At the same time, even though Lebanon's consociational arrangements survived the violent civil war, post-war political sectarianism deviates from the consociational democracy model.

Power-sharing mechanisms have neither guaranteed democratic governance nor satisfied different groups. The implementation of the Ta'if Accords hinged on a "stark non-implementation of its consociational variables."[61] Syria's hegemonic grip on Lebanese politics until 2005, for example, thwarted Lebanon's power-sharing provisions. Moreover, the distorted implementation of the post-war political pact has impeded the emergence of "a culture of accommodation" deemed crucial to sustaining peace and democracy.[62]

Demographic shifts notwithstanding,[63] social scientists have begun to characterize sectarianism through the lens of conflict rather than merely describing communal differences as boundary markers.[64] Both Sunni-Shi'i polarization and Christian feelings of marginalization serve as threats to a genuine inter-sectarian culture of accommodation. As the costs of sharing

power have not resulted in the expected political gains, communal groups have had less incentive to trust one another and have shown increasing dissatisfaction with prevailing political arrangements.[65] In recent years, for instance, issues of contention have divided Lebanese sectarian communities rather than fostering a feeling of shared plight.[66]

An adversarial elite culture greatly contributes to these dynamics of intercommunal tension. The aftermath of Lebanon's "independence intifada"[67] is a case in point. In the wake of the 2005 popular demonstrations, differences over core domestic and foreign policy issues have deepened divisions among the leaders of Lebanon's larger communities. In turn, these divisions have crystallized into two competing national projects whose divergences are exacerbated by clashing external alliances. Generally speaking, the 14 March alliance advocates the vision of a Lebanon emancipated from Syria and Hizballah's tutelage. Conversely, the 8 March alliance has called for closer strategic ties with Syria and has been adamant about the preservation of Hizballah's military arsenal, portrayed as an indispensable shield against the Israeli threat. The two coalitions capitalize upon sectarianism as a divisive tool so as to consolidate their power on the domestic and regional scenes.[68]

The figure below shows the most significant obstacles thwarting the rise and consolidation of a consociational democracy model in post-war Lebanon.

Factors obstructing consociational democracy in post-war Lebanon

The dividing effect of threats	The lack of careful alignment	Changing communal realities	Lack of arbitration mechanisms to deal with gridlock
Domestic and external threats are not shared by all communities and political groupings, and easily polarize people along sectarian lines.	Communal elites seek external support to reinforce their power and are divided over Lebanon's foreign alignments. Their divisions invite regional intervention.	Demographic shifts, post-war emigration flows, a weak culture of accommodation, and distrust of power-sharing institutions pose a threat to static and quota-related political arrangements.	The lack of institutionalized arbitration mechanisms makes negotiation over loaded political issues contingent on consensus or on an external mediator who can provide arbitration mechanisms.

Although consociationalism once served as a useful paradigm for explaining the way sectarian politics function, it fails in this metamorphosed context to capture Lebanon's post-war dynamics. The altered political sociology of the country casts doubt on the model's applicability to today's Lebanon and throws even greater doubt on its usefulness in providing a model for democratic development. Moreover, given the inconsistent debates over the requisites that help consociations to succeed and democratize, the theory is of little use in remedying Lebanon's political sectarianism and providing a dynamic model for its transition. Therefore, it becomes neces-sary to postulate new models for democratization that may prove adaptable to explain Lebanon's political system.

New Approaches for Lebanon's Political Model?

The issue of political change in Lebanon has cut across the boundaries of political, public, and academic debates, yielding little consensus in either practice or theory on its feasibility or on its potential design choices. In practice, even though Lebanese communities' identification with power-sharing coalitions and arrangements has waned,[69] desectarianizing Lebanon is still perceived as a minefield.[70] In the post-Ta'if era, some policymakers might agree that sectarian power sharing in Lebanon is to be revised or abolished, but many contend that this is currently unachievable. Oft-cited reasons include Lebanon's several domestic and regional conundrums: the country's policy agenda is thought to be so overburdened with unresolved political and economic issues that desectarianization seems unrealistic from a national perspective. Ever since the 2005 Syrian troop withdrawal, people in political and public discursive spaces have debated abolishing sectarian power sharing.[71] Nonetheless, the Lebanese public has broadly viewed any concrete proposals to launch policy discussions as politicized schemes by some factions determined to dominate others. In theory, then, most scholars would agree that "a majoritarian system would be more problematic than power-sharing arrangements in a country as divided as Lebanon."[72] Yet most scholars would also agree that Lebanon's power-sharing arrange-ments as they are today contain the seeds of their own destruction.[73] This twofold realization is rooted in an impasse: the sectarian mode of power sharing in Lebanon has fared badly, yet changing the system would open up a Pandora's Box.

If we wish to avoid this impasse, we need to experiment with new approaches. Little attention, for example, has been given to analyzing whether Lebanon's sectarian power sharing has transformative potential and if so, what concrete steps can be taken to initiate a gradual shift away from political sectarianism. Alternative designs that could foster cross-national incentives for cooperation have been taken into consideration only superficially. Scant research has been dedicated to examining alternative institutional models that could help move Lebanon from political sectarianism toward democratic development.

In the recent scholarship on conflict regulation, one particular field of research examines the dilemmas and prospects of power sharing in divided societies emerging from wars. This strand of literature builds on consociational democracy theory. Yet unlike the latter, it perceives power sharing as a malleable component in a democracy. It views power sharing as a transformative and flexible process. In this particular literature, there seems to be agreement that consociational arrangements can be beneficial after there have been serious internal conflicts, but that it is best when they are used as temporary solutions leading the way to more societal cohesion.[74]

By seeking to integrate scholarly discourses on power sharing with research on democratization and peace consolidation, this literature tackles inherent contradictions that impede the shift from power sharing as a "short-term necessity" to "long-term democratic consolidation."[75] It particularly addresses the following concerns: how power-sharing institutions can consolidate after the initiation phase, how tension between power sharing and democratization can be bridged, and how static and quota-bound provisions in power sharing may eventually vanish thanks to incentives for cooperation across communal divides.

The above ideas provide conceptual frameworks for addressing whether and how the supposedly transitional yet de facto permanent mode of Lebanon's sectarian power sharing can be altered. In addition, they help explore whether Lebanon's power-sharing arrangement is inevitably detrimental to democratic development. Building on existing research on the Lebanese power-sharing model, further studies could elaborate on how Lebanon's options for power sharing are not necessarily confined to the present rigid design.[76] They could also describe political choices in which sectarian groups are taken into account but are no longer the main building

blocks of Lebanon's political life. Of particular importance to this debate is the question of how to foster incentives at institutional and non-institutional levels for cooperation across sectarian lines so as to ensure that coexistence is not so destabilized by issues of contention and external interference. As a result of sustaining cross-national interests, power sharing based on the articulation of sectarian markers may become superfluous.

Another approach consists of the integration of existing discourses on sectarianism in Lebanon and its consociational system, which have thus far remained separate. The aim is to explore whether, and if so how, schools of thought on "debating sectarianism" in Lebanon could inform research on its political governance while disengaging it from binary arguments. Some scholarly currents on Lebanese sectarianism do not mix their conceptual analysis with the exercise of deconstructing sectarianism.[77] They suggest bypassing the questions of whether the Lebanese are sectarian or not and whether sectarianism is to be advocated or discouraged. Rather, they seek to debate the various conditions that forge communal interaction patterns.

I suggest extending this shift in perspective to research on Lebanon's power-sharing political system. It is not by deconstructing whether the consociational democracy model is suitable or not that we can imagine what a non-sectarian Lebanese democracy might look like. That is to say, testing the limitations of the theory in the Lebanese case does not by itself offer an alternative pathway for Lebanon. Instead, studying Lebanon's power-sharing democracy as a shifting and transformative process, affected by the changing dynamic of sectarianism, can offer valuable insights into democratic theorists' work on refining the power-sharing model.

A few analytical frameworks are worth highlighting. Studies on the production of sectarianism in Lebanon have mapped out in a dynamic perspective not only the conflict lines but also the links that enhance our understanding of the phenomenon. The findings of such studies show that sectarianism is a sociopolitical construct fashioned by changing cross-communal interactions, historical circumstances, and political perceptions. Concurrently, they suggest that a plurality of socioeconomic and political variables shapes divisions across communal lines. For instance, some analyses target how elite strategies have heightened tensions at times while assuaging them at others.[78] Others point out the extent to which Lebanese communities' "perceived" and "existential" fears exacerbate the impact

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of external conflicts on Lebanese soil.[79] Works have further highlighted a variety of cooperative links that mitigate the divisive effects of sectarian cleavages. These links not only refer to a trans-societal web of sociocultural and economic ties but also to cross-sectarian political alliances at critical junctures.[80] The 2006 political alliance between the Shiʿi party Hizballah and the Free Patriotic Movement established by Maronite leader Michel Aoun is one such example.

An inquiry into explanatory variables such as "the nature of social order, the character of the cleavages, the nature of integration, and the history of change"[81] helps identify the factors that heighten or—alternatively—moderate the salience of sectarianism. Such an inquiry constitutes an empirical guide to crafting policies and institutions that can generate conditions for "integrative power sharing."

The Lebanese Case, Democratization Studies in the Middle East, and Why Lebanon Matters

On one level, as scholars and politicians explore Lebanon's potential for political change, prospects for democratic peace in the republic will hopefully improve. At the same time, the Lebanese case also informs recent debates on democratization in the region.

Until recently, mainstream democracy studies perceived the Middle East as especially resistant to liberalization. Against this backdrop, power sharing as a quick democratic formula has gained ground. As part of the international community's engagement in external state building and democracy development, policymakers have advocated power-sharing mechanisms as post-authoritarian options in divided societies of the Middle East.[82] While Iraq is the most striking—albeit controversial—case, power-sharing mechanisms have also been developed in post-war Afghanistan. Some scholars have endorsed these arrangements as institutional models capable of initiating a democratic transition.[83] A counter-wave of scholarly debate has, however, questioned the externally mediated introduction of power sharing as a pathway for democracy building, as well as the conditions under which such frameworks have so far been implemented.[84] Given the lack of empirical evidence that supports these policy assumptions, social scientists have been increasingly reluctant to prescribe power sharing as a good solution.

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In the context of these debates, Lebanon has become a controversial benchmark case for power-sharing replication, since it is used both to understand and inspire such models and to show their limitations. Indeed, Lebanon's legacy may hold some lessons for countries considering power-sharing models, especially with regard to its pitfalls. In addition, against the background of the growing Shi'i-Sunni divide since the 1980s and emerging sectarian hostilities in the region, Lebanon's power-sharing politics may have something to teach us as to the management of such tensions.

Furthermore, research on remedying the adverse effects of political sectarianism in Lebanon may provide some insight into key concerns stemming from the current transformations in the Arab world. The Lebanese case is a particularly useful reference point for those who seek to craft democratic options in response to the collapse of authoritarian regimes in the region. An adequate consideration of these options requires rethinking the link and compatibility between sectarian belonging and citizenship in democratic societies. Indeed, sectarian hostilities in transitioning Arab states whose religious heterogeneity had previously been checked by autocracies have sparked controversy as to how to address political tensions reinterpreted under the guise of religious conflict. Of particular importance is how to devise accommodation policies in liberal constitutional governments, taking into account sizable sectarian groups while promoting full citizenship rights and national integration.

There is, in conclusion, a specific lack of normative and empirical models available for crafting democratic institutions in states where religious differences have become entrenched as markers of political conflict in the Middle East. This gap has developed despite the fact that the comparative study of power-sharing models has proven to be of practical relevance to discerning which political frameworks placate sectarian conflicts while consolidating democracy.[85]

As many states in the Middle East are built upon a heterogeneous mix of ethno-religious groups, any debate on democratic transition must address the fragmented composition of these states. Against this backdrop, theorists and practitioners face the challenge of imagining the region beyond the ethno-sectarian model.[86]

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ENDNOTES

Author's Note: This article was first drafted during the author's Jean Monnet Postdoctoral Fellowship at the European University Institute in Florence. It was subsequently developed during the author's first year at the Lebanese American University in Beirut.

1   Lebanon's major Muslim constituent groups consist of the Shi'i, Sunni, and Druze communities. The Christians are mainly Maronites, Greek Orthodox, Greek Catholics, Armenian Orthodox, Armenian Catholics, and Protestants. Officially recognized minorities are 'Alawites, Isma'ilis, Assyrians, Chaldeans, Copts, Roman Catholics, Syriac Catholics, Syriac Orthodox, and Jews. Key political offices are divided among Lebanon's largest communities (the Maronites, the Sunnis, and the Shi'a).

2   The updated formula of power sharing, the Ta'if Agreement, signed in 1989 in Saudi Arabia, is considered to be the conflict-regulating treaty. Ta'if modified the pre-war model, stipulating parity between Muslims and Christians in the parliament. It also circumscribed the Maronite president's prerogatives while empowering the Council of Ministers as a platform encompassing various sectarian and political affiliations.

3   Eugene Rogan coined this expression to describe the Lebanese political system. Eugene Rogan, *The Arabs: A History* (New York: Basic Books, 2009), 456.

4   Max Weiss alludes to the binary logic characterizing the historiography of sectarianism in Lebanon in that approaches to the latter have ranged from "defenses" to "condemnations." See Max Weiss, "The Historiography of Sectarianism in Lebanon," *History Compass* 7, no.1 (2009), 141–54. This article contributes to Weiss's discussion by studying how and why debating the Lebanese political system in democracy studies has also been confined to a polarized set of arguments. It further focuses on demonstrating why the debates on Lebanon's political system have not had any significant impact on refining the model.

5   Research on power-sharing democracies is strongly policy-oriented. Power-sharing systems have not only been conceptualized by scholars but also engineered by policymakers. Debating how research can better serve the consolidation of such systems lies in studying the normative, empirical, and prescriptive dimensions of power-sharing frameworks. See Brendan O'Leary, "Debating Consociational Politics: Normative and Explanatory Arguments," in *From Power Sharing to Democracy: Post-Conflict Institutions in Ethnically Divided Societies*, ed. Sid Noel (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2005), 3–43, 18. In the Lebanese case, it is important to assess how, if at all, the debates on consociational theory inform and guide consociational politics in practice.

6   Power-sharing methods comprise various constitutional and institutional designs aiming at sustaining peace and guaranteeing democratic arrangements. For a conceptual framing of power sharing and its derivatives, see Anna K Jarstad, "Power Sharing: Former Enemies in Joint Government," in *From War to Democracy: Dilemmas of Peacebuilding*, eds. Anne K. Jarstand and Timothy D. Sisk (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 105–33, 108–9.

7   For an account of the consociational method approximating the Lebanese model, see John McGarry and Brendan O'Leary, "Introduction: The Macro-Political Regulation of Ethnic Conflict," in *The Politics of Ethnic Conflict Regulation: Case Studies of Protracted Ethnic Conflicts*, eds. John McGarry and Brendan O'Leary (London, New York: Routledge, 1993), 1–40, 35.

8   See Arend Lijphart, "Definitions, Evidence, and Policy: A Response to Matthijs Bogaards' Critique," *Journal of Theoretical Politics* 12, no. 4 (2000), 425–31, 427.

9   See Adrian Guelke, *Politics in Deeply Divided Societies* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2012), 114–5.

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10   These terms are used interchangeably in this article.

11   Whereas political pluralism describes the management and preservation of religious diversity through specific policies and institutions, the expressions of political sectarianism and political confessionalism, both used in national and international scholarship on Lebanon, have come to denote Lebanon's political culture and system.

12   This article adopts John D. Brewer's definition of sectarianism as "the determination of actions, attitudes, and practices by beliefs about religious difference, which results in their being invoked as the boundary marker to represent social stratification and conflict." John D. Brewer, "Sectarianism and Racism, and their Parallels and Differences," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 15, no. 3 (1992), 358–9. It is noteworthy that sectarianism and confessionalism are used interchangeably in the scholarship on Lebanon. One main reason is that the Arabic language does not make a distinction between the two terms. See Weiss, "The Historiography," 153. Both terms have come to depict the way in which religious denominations in Lebanon identify themselves, on the one hand, and relate to each other, on the other. One might argue that developing nuanced definitions of both terms helps avoid conceptual stretching and overlapping, yet this conceptual differentiation is more useful in studies dealing with sectarian differences in Lebanon.

13   This expression is borrowed from John D. Brewer's definition of sectarianism. See Brewer, "Sectarianism," 359.

14   Aida Kanafani Zahar, *Le Liban: La guerre et la mémoire* (Rennes, France: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2011).

15   Max Weiss, *In the Shadow of Sectarianism: Law, Shi'ism, and the Making of Modern Lebanon* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010), 15.

16   Marie-Joelle Zahar, "Power Sharing in Lebanon: Foreign Protectors, Domestic Peace, and Democratic Failure," in *Sustainable Peace: Power and Democracy after Civil Wars*, eds. Philip G. Roader and Donald Rothchild (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2005), 219–40, 240.

17   See, for instance, O'Leary, "Debating Consociational Politics." Frequent reference is made to the Lebanese case when explaining the consociational democracy model.

18   See Arend Lijphart, *Democracy in Plural Societies: A Comparative Exploration* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977).

19   Ghassan Tueni, "Democracy in Lebanon: Anatomy of a Crisis," *Beirut Review* 6 (1993), 42–52. See also Imad Salamey, *The Government and Politics of Lebanon* (New York: Routledge, 2014).

20   Certain political scientists have perceived Lebanon as the only Arab state to have maintained some kind of democratic arrangement over long periods of time. For example, see Larry Diamond, "Why Are There No Arab Democracies?" *Journal of Democracy* 21, no. 1 (2010), 93–104, 93; Rosita Di Peri, "Il modello della democrazia consociativa e la sua applicazione al caso libanese," *Rivista Italiana di scienza politica* 2 (2010), 219–50; Samuel Huntington, "Democracy's Third Wave," *Journal of Democracy* 2, no. 2 (1991), 12–34. For an account of Lebanese political exceptionalism, see Daniel Brumberg, "Islamists and the Politics of Consensus," *Journal of Democracy* 13, no.3 (2002), 109–15.

21   See Hussain Abdul-Hussain, "A Quest for Democracy in a World of Realism: The Cases of Lebanon and Iran," *Mediterranean Politics* 14, no. 3 (2009), 407–12, 407. Although one might argue that Lebanon's political system is affected by the French mandate, it is rather the resilience of the Lebanese model that has stimulated a plethora of literature.

22   See Richard Hrair Dekmejian, "Consociational Democracy in Crisis: The Case of Lebanon," *Comparative Politics* 10, no. 2 (1978), 251–66, 252; Lucia Volk, *Memorials and Martyrs in Modern Lebanon* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010), 23.

23   I do not profess to have carried out an exhaustive survey of literature written on Lebanon nor do I claim to have assessed arguments advanced by individual authors. Rather, I have identified recurrent debates that appear in the scholarship.

24   See Michael Kerr, *Imposing Power-Sharing: Conflict and Coexistence in Northern Ireland and Lebanon* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2005); Gerhard Lehmbruch, "A Non-Competitive Pattern of Conflict Management in Liberal Democracies: The Case of Switzerland, Austria, and Lebanon," in *Consociational Democracy: Political Accommodation in Segmented Societies*, ed. Kenneth McRae (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1974), 90-7; Lijphart, *Democracy in Plural Societies*; David Smock and Audrey Smock, *The Politics of Pluralism: A Comparative Study of Lebanon and Ghana* (New York: Elsevier, 1975).

25   See Tamirace Fakhoury, *Power Sharing and Democracy in Stormy Weather: The Lebanese Case* (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag for Social Sciences, 2009); Joseph G. Jabbra and Nancy W. Jabbra, "Consociational Democracy in Lebanon: A Flawed System of Governance," *Perspectives on Global Development and Technology* 17, no. 2 (2001), 71-89; Salamey, *The Government and Politics*.

26   See, for example, Farid El Khazen, "The Postwar Political Process: Authoritarianism by Diffusion," in *Lebanon in Limbo: Postwar Society and State in an Uncertain Regional Environment*, eds. Theodor Hanf and Nawaf Salam (Baden-Baden: Nomos-Verlag Gesellschaft, 2003), 53-74; Michael Hudson, "Lebanon After Ta'if: Another Reform Opportunity Lost," *Arab Studies Quarterly* 21, no. 1 (1999), 27-40; Judith Palmer Harik, "Democracy (Again) Derailed: Lebanon's Ta'if Paradox," in *Political Liberalization and Democratization in the Arab World*, eds. Rex Brynen, Baghat Korany, and Paul Noble (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1998), 127-55; Elizabeth Picard, "Les habits neufs du communautarisme libanais," *Cultures & Conflits* 15-16 (1994), 49-70.

27   See Philip Hitti, *Lebanon in History: From the Earliest Times to the Present* (London: Macmillan, 1957); Kamal Salibi, *A House of Many Mansions: The History of Lebanon Reconsidered* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988); Fawwaz Traboulsi, *A History of Modern Lebanon* (London: Pluto Press, 2007).

28   See, for instance, Latif Abul Husn, *The Lebanese Conflict: Looking Inward* (Boulder: Rienner, 1998); Carole Dagher, *Bring Down the Walls: Lebanon's Postwar Challenge* (New York: St Martin's Press, 2000); Samir Khalaf, *Civil and Uncivil Violence in Lebanon: A History of the Internationalization of Communal Conflict* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002).

29   Traboulsi, *A History of Modern Lebanon*, viii.

30   For further insight on these inconclusive debates, see Maurus Reinkowski, "Ottoman 'Multiculturalism': The Example of the Confessional System in Lebanon" (Lecture, Orient Institute of the Deutsche Morgenlandische Gesellschaft, Istanbul, 17 February 1997), http://www.freidok.uni-freiburg.de/volltexte/4403/pdf/Reinkowski_Ottoman_Multiculturalism.pdf, 1-24, 11-15.

31   Following the Druze-Maronite conflicts in nineteenth-century Lebanon (1840-1860), the Règlement Organique (1864-1914) under Ottoman rule transformed Mount Lebanon into an autonomous province and stipulated provisions for distributing power among religious communities. Non-Muslim communities were conferred juridical and religious autonomy. Under the French mandate and after the adoption of the 1926 constitution, which changed "Greater Lebanon" into the Republic of Lebanon, proportionality and segmental autonomy regulated the distribution of power and offices.

32   The term accommodationist is to be understood in this context as the communal groups' decision to compromise with contending views so as to preserve coexistence.

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33 See Weiss, "The Historiography," 142.

34 For an account of these polarized discussions, see Ussama Makdisi, "Reconstructing the Nation-State: The Modernity of Sectarianism in Lebanon," *Middle East Report* 200 (1996), 23–30; Weiss, "The Historiography."

35 See, for instance, Samir Khalaf, *Lebanon's Predicament* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987); N. Kliot, "The Collapse of the Lebanese State," *Middle Eastern Studies* 23, no. 1 (1987), 54–74; Enver Koury, *The Crisis in the Lebanese System: Confessionalism and Chaos* (Washington, DC: American Enterprise Institute, 1976).

36 Quoted in Maurus Reinkowski's review of Ussama Makdisi's book *The Culture of Sectarianism: Community, History, and Violence in Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Lebanon* in *die Welt des Islams*, New Series 41, no. 2 (2001), 261–3, 262.

37 See Ussama Makdisi, *The Culture of Sectarianism: Community, History, and Violence in Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Lebanon* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000).

38 See Kamal Yusuf al-Hajj, *Falsafat al-Mithaq al-Watani* (Beirut: 1961); Michel Chiha, *Politique Intérieure* (Beirut: Editions du Trident, 1964).

39 Theodor Hanf, "The Political Secularization Issue in Lebanon," *The Annual Review of the Social Sciences of Religion* 5 (1981), 225–53, 232.

40 See, for example, Victor Ayoub, "Resolution of Conflict in a Lebanese Village," in *Politics in Lebanon*, ed. Leonard Binder (New York: John Wiley, 1966), 107–26.

41 See Michael Hudson, "The Lebanese Crisis: The Limits of Consociational Democracy," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 5, no. 3–4 (1976), 109–22.

42 See Smock and Smock, *The Politics of Pluralism*.

43 See Zahar, "Power Sharing."

44 See, for instance, Donald Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict* (Berkeley: University California Press, 1985), 588.

45 See, for instance, Farid El Khazen, *The Breakdown of the State in Lebanon, 1967-1976* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2000); Habib C. Malik, *Between Damascus and Jerusalem: Lebanon and Middle East Peace* (Washington, DC: Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 1997). In *The Breakdown of the State*, El Khazen suggests that it was Lebanon's liberal system in a context of authoritarian regimes that made it susceptible to interference from external powers (388).

46 Leonard Wantchekon, "Credible Power-Sharing Arrangements: Theory with Evidence from South Africa and Lebanon," *Constitutional Political Economy* 11, no. 4 (2000), 339–53; Zahar, "Power Sharing," 235.

47 Joseph Maila, "The Ta'if Accord: An Evaluation," in *Peace for Lebanon? From War to Reconstruction*, ed. Deirdre Collings (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1994), 31–44 ; Samir Kassir, "Dix ans après, comment ne pas réconcilier une société divisée?" *Monde Arabe Maghreb Machrek* 169 (2000), 6–22.

48 See Michael Hudson, *The Precarious Republic: Political Modernization in Lebanon* (New York: Random House, 1968); Jabbra and Jabbra, "Consociational Democracy."

49 See Illiya Harik, "Voting Participation and Political Integration in Lebanon, 1943-1974," *Middle Eastern Studies* 16, no.1 (1980), 27–48, 44–7; Brenda Seaver, "The Regional Sources of Power-Sharing Failure: The Case of Lebanon," *Political Science Quarterly* 115, no. 2 (2000), 247–71.

50 For an account of how sectarianism and sectarian practices subvert democracy, see David Gilmour, *Lebanon: The Fractured Country* (Oxford: Robertson, 1983); Sami Ofeish, "Lebanon's Second Republic: Secular Talk, Sectarian Application," *Arab Studies Quarterly* 21, no. 1 (1999), 97–116; Bassel Salloukh, "Democracy in Lebanon: The Primacy of the

Sectarian System," in *The Struggle for Democracy in the Middle East*, eds. Nathan Brown and Emad El-Din Shahin (London: Routledge, 2010), 134–50.

51   For a more positive reading of the interface between sectarianism and Lebanon's democratic pathway, see Chiha, *Politique Intérieure*; Ralph Crow, "Parliament in the Lebanese Political System," in *Legislatures in Developmental Perspective*, eds. Allan Kornberg and Lloyd D. Musolf (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1970), 273–302; Antoine Messara, *Théorie générale du système Politique Libanais* (Paris: Cariscript, 1994); Elie Salem, "Lebanon's Political Maze," *Middle East Journal* 33, no. 4 (1979), 444–63.

52   See El Khazen, *The Breakdown of the Lebanese State*, 389.

53   For further reading on the survivability of Lebanon's "pacted" democracy, see Abdo Baaklini, Guilain Denoeux, and Robert Springborg, "Lebanon," in *Legislative Politics in the Arab World: The Resurgence of Democratic Institutions*, eds. Abdo Baaklini, Guilain Denoeux, and Robert Springborg (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1999), 79–109; Dagher, *Bring Down the Walls*; Patricia Velde Pederson, "The Meaning of Democracy: A Lebanese Adolescent Perspective," in *Globalization, Democratization, and Radicalization in the Arab World*, eds. Jane Harrigan and Hamed el-Said (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 127–44.

54   In "Consociational Democracy in Crisis," Dekmejian argues that while it is questionable to draw on a Western paradigm to explain Lebanon's specificities, the consociational model still "offers a number of theoretically powerful concepts which may help discern new, salient dimensions of Lebanese democracy" (252). In the absence of alternative theoretical frameworks adapted to Lebanon's system development, more recent analyses of Lebanon's political system still take Lijphart's consociationalism as a normative yardstick while suggesting its limitations. See Di Peri, "Il modello della democrazia consociativa"; Michael Hudson, "From Consociationalism to the Public Sphere: Recent Evidence from Lebanon," in *Ethnic Conflict and International Politics in the Middle East*, ed. Leonard Binder (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1999), 92–109; Imad Salamey, "Failing Consociationalism in Lebanon and Integrative Options," *International Journal of Peace Studies* 14, no. 2 (2009), 83–105.

55   For an account of the flaws that undermine the consociational theory, see Sue M. Halpern, "The Disorderly Universe of Consociational Democracy," *West European Politics* 9, no. 2 (1986), 181–97. See also O'Leary, "Debating Consociational Politics" in which the normative and empirical axes of contention undermining the consociational theory are explained.

56   There are several notable exceptions. See, for example, Adriano Pappalardo, "The Conditions for Consociational Democracy: A Logical and Empirical Critique," *European Journal of Political Research* 9, no. 4 (1981), 365–90.

57   Jarstad, "Power Sharing," 123.

58   I draw on the notion of "consociational prescription" from O'Leary, "Debating Consociational Politics," 4. In this context, the expression refers to the way power sharing, as a mode of governance, is framed in Lebanon's foundational texts and policymaking practices. The latter emphasize power sharing along sectarian lines as a means of guaranteeing political representation and religious diversity while stressing the need to phase it out in the future.

59   For a summary of scholarly debates, see Raghid El Solh, "Religious Identity and Citizenship: An Overview of Perspectives," in *Peace for Lebanon*, 231–40. For further insight on discursive divergences in policy debates, see Reinkowski, "Constitutional Patriotism in Lebanon," *New Perspectives on Turkey* 16 (1997), 63–85, 75–9.

60   See Reinkowski, "Ottoman 'Multiculturalism,'" 6.

61   Kerr, *Imposing Power-Sharing*, 24.

62   Also defined as a culture of bargaining, a culture of accommodation entails the "willingness
      to resolve conflict through an iterative process of political exchange and reciprocity." See
      Donald Rothchild and Philip G. Roader, "Power Sharing as an Impediment to Peace and
      Democracy," in *Sustainable Peace,* 29–50, 43.
63   Lebanon's political sociology has undergone major shifts since the formation of the modern
      state. The demographic balance between Christians and Muslims that laid the foundations
      for Lebanon's National Pact in 1943 is widely agreed to be outdated. Although no official
      census has been carried out since 1932, various statistical sources show that while the
      Muslim community, and particularly the Shi'i group, has grown rapidly, the former Maronite
      majority has fallen sharply. See, for example, Salloukh, "Democracy in Lebanon," 136. In the
      aftermath of the 1975 civil war, despite the power-sharing readjustments introduced by the
      Ta'if agreements, political and civil service appointments are allocated in accordance with
      policies reflecting compromise rather than a strict observance of changing demographics.
64   See Picard, "Les habits neufs."
65   For reports and polls on patterns of inter-sectarian polarization and dissatisfaction with
      political arrangements, see International Crisis Group, "Lebanon at a Tripwire," *Middle East
      Briefing* (Beirut and Brussels, 2006); International Peace Institute, "General Announcements:
      16 December 2010, Iran, Lebanon, Israelis and Palestinians: New IPI Opinion Polls," http://
      ipinst.org/news/general-announcement/209-iran-lebanon-israelis-and-palestinians-new-
      ipi-opinion-polls.html.
66   Critical junctures such as the 2005 Syrian withdrawal, the 2006 Hizballah-Israeli war, and
      Syria's crackdown on its uprising since 2011 have elicited contradictory perceptions within
      Lebanese communities and have polarized politicians.
67   In the wake of Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri's assassination in February 2005, demonstra-
      tions encompassing almost all Lebanese communities and calling for the withdrawal of
      Syrian troops and for the revival of Lebanon's democratic institutions swept the country.
      Expressions such as the "Independence Intifada" and the "Cedar Revolution" have been
      coined to describe the 2005 protests.
68   Both coalitions represent multi-sectarian constellations of actors and parties. At the outset,
      the 14 March alliance represented the Future Current Party, the Progressive Socialist Party,
      and several anti-Syrian Christian parties and platforms such as the Lebanese Forces and the
      Kata'ib. Its cohesiveness has, however, been undermined by bickering and internal disputes.
      Led by Hizballah, the 8 March alliance, which represents the Free Patriotic Movement and
      several Sunni, Shi'i and Christian factions, has so far demonstrated greater resilience.
69   See, for instance, Mona el-Bacha, "Démocratie et culture politique libanaise, "*Confluences
      Méditerranée* 70, no. 3 (2009), 71–8.
70   The main argument is that abolishing power-sharing provisions might lead to a situation in
      which sectarian majorities would not honor their commitments to democratic governance.
      For an analysis of the current clashing discourses at the heart of political change in Lebanon
      and how abruptly undoing sectarian institutions exacerbates communal fears and endangers
      the Lebanese modern state, see Maya Mikdashi, "What is Political Sectarianism?" *Jadaliyya,*
      25 March 2011, http://www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/1008/what-is-political-sectarianism.
71   In the context of the 2011 Arab uprisings, anti-sectarian demonstrations were organized
      with the aim of toppling Lebanon's sectarian system. In spite of the upsurge of civil activism
      pressing for a non-sectarian democracy, there is skepticism as to whether Lebanese decision-
      makers will comply, given their vested interest in the current system. For an analysis of this
      "spasm of activism" aimed at doing away with political sectarianism, see Mikdashi, "What
      is Political Sectarianism?"

72 Seaver, "The Regional Sources," 25.

73 Nawaf Kabbara, "Critique of the Lebanese Theory of Consociationalism," in *Reconstruire Beyrouth: Les paris sur le possible* (Lyon: Maison de l'Orient, 1991), 345–60; Zahar, "Power Sharing."

74 See Anna Jarstad, "The Perils of War-to-Democracy Transitions, Dilemmas of War-to-Democracy Transitions: Theories and Concepts," in *From War to Democracy*, 17–36; Benjamin Reilly, *Democracy in Divided Societies: Electoral Engineering for Conflict Management* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Timothy Sisk, "Power Sharing After Civil Wars: Matching Problems to Solutions," in *Contemporary Peace Making: Conflict, Violence and Peace Process*, eds. John Darby and Roger Mac Ginty (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 139–50.

75 Rothchild and Roader, "Power Sharing as an Impediment," 49.

76 Future research might draw on more flexible concepts of power sharing, such as Sisk's "integrative power sharing" outlined in his article "Power Sharing After Civil Wars" or Salamey's "integrative consociationalism" outlined in "Failing Consociationalism in Lebanon." Unlike the consociational democracy typology, "integrative power sharing" does not frame consociationalism as an end in itself but perceives consociational arrangements as a point of departure that could with time obliterate sectarianism and give rise to increasing national cohesiveness.

77 For a critique of this framework of discussion, see Volk, *Memorials and Martyrs*, 22–4.

78 For a reading on Lebanese leaders' conflict-regulating behavior, see Dagher, *Bring Down The Walls*; Eric Nordlinger, *Conflict Regulation in Divided Societies* (Cambridge: Center for International Affairs, Harvard University, 1972), 26.

79 See Mona Yacoubian, "The Crisis in Syria: What Are the Stakes for Its Neighbors," *Middle East Policy* 20, no. 3 (2013), 4–7.

80 Many works draw attention to cooperative ties across sectarian boundaries in Lebanon. See, for example, Eric Davis, "A Sectarian Middle East?" *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 40 (2008), 555–8, 557; Marius Deeb, "Lebanon: Prospects for National Reconciliation in the Mid-1980s," *Middle East Journal* 38, no. 2 (1984), 267–83, 283; Aïda Kanafani-Zahar, "Pluralisme Relationnel entre chrétiens et musulmans au Liban: L'émergence d'un espace de "laïcité" relative," *Archives des sciences sociales des religions*, no. 109 (2000), 118–47.

81 Suad Joseph, "Sectarianism as Imagined Sociological Concept and as Imagined Social Formation," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 40 (2008), 553–4, 553.

82 For an account of the international community's tendency to prescribe power sharing as a standard procedure for collapsing authoritarian systems in the broader Middle East or for post-conflict societies in East Europe, see Roader and Rothchild, "Dilemmas of State-Building in Divided Societies," in *Sustainable Peace*, 1–26, 5.

83 See Richard Hrair Dekmejian, "One Nation, Loosely United," *New York Times*, 18 December 2001; Arend Lijphart, "Constitutional Design for Divided Societies," *Journal of Democracy* 15, no. 2 (2004), 96–109; John McGarry and Brendan O'Leary, "Iraq's Constitution of 2005: Liberal Consociation as Political Prescription," *International Journal of Constitutional Law* 5, no. 4 (2007), 670–98.

84 Power-sharing frameworks in Iraq and Afghanistan have encountered various problems in both their inception and consolidation phases. In their inception phase, power-sharing provisions implemented under military rule were met with much internal resistance. With regard to their consolidation, the two cases have so far yielded mixed results. Critiques stress that these arrangements preserve sectarian lines. They also rely on external arbitrators to function properly.

85   For a framing of power-sharing options that are not necessarily confined to consociation-alism and their practical relevance to policy and institutional engineering, see Roader and Rothchild, eds., *Sustainable Peace.*

86   See Davis, "A Sectarian Middle East?" 557.

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