FRAGMENTATION OF LEBANESE MARONITES
AFTER 1975

ROWAYHEB
FACTORS BEHIND THE FRAGMENTATION OF THE LEBANESE MARONITES AFTER THE 1975 CIVIL WAR

by
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AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

Marwan George Rowayheb, for Master of Arts
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Title: Factors Behind the Fragmentation of the Lebanese Maronites after the 1975 Civil War.

This thesis will make an important contribution to the ready political literature on the situation of the Maronites in Lebanon. Since the Maronites are a key group in the Lebanese political equation, no understanding of the country's political dilemma today can be realized without perceiving the problems of this Christian group and its likely future evolution.

Today, the Maronite community is politically marginalized and seriously divided. What explains their present problems? This thesis asserts that with the outbreak of the civil war, the pressures made upon the Maronites started to increase producing reactions that had negative effects on their cohesiveness. I studied political fragmentation within the Maronite community in the light of the following general research questions: First, to what extent does a threatening situation increase leadership problems? Second, does quest for foreign assistance increase the gap between the group leaders? Third, to what extent would divergences of opinion about the meaning and outcomes of defeat contribute to loss of cohesion?
In my study I examined three main factors leading to Maronite fragmentation through the theory of Lewis Coser and Georg Simmel. These factors are: 1. Leadership problems; 2. Foreign connection; 3. Defeat.
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To my parents,
Leila and George
CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Maronite Christians are of primary importance among the religious groups forming the sociopolitical equation in Lebanon today. Their presence in Lebanon dates back centuries, allowing them to participate in the major historical events witnessed by the Middle East. Because they were persecuted by both Orthodox Christians and Muslims historically, they sought refuge in Lebanon. However, their aspirations towards their own homeland were not to materialize until the collapse of the Ottoman Empire at the end of World War I.

The National Pact of 1943 divided political power among the three dominant sects in Lebanon: Maronites, Sunnites and Shiites. However, the Maronites, with the presidency and other key positions in their hands, controlled the Lebanese political system until the 1975 civil war. From the country’s independence in 1943 until 1975, the Maronites monopolized political power in Lebanon, their high level of cohesion contributing to their authority.

The Maronites, who were cohesive in their approach to their national power, were still divided on a number of local and regional issues. However, these divisions did not pose a threat to their supremacy in the political establishment of the country. In one way or another, they handled these issues because they had an obsessive fear of losing power. Today, on the other hand, the Maronite
community is politically marginalized and seriously divided. Which factors explain their present problems?

**Literature Review**

Apart from a few studies on the Maronite's militancy in 1979, the major research on the Maronites can be categorized as either historical or journalistic. Matti Moosa suggests that there is a dearth of religious and historical literature on this group prior to the seventeenth century, when the Maronites became more interested in the history of their community with the development of group consciousness. The Maronites were always anxious about their history, using their own interpretation of historical events to support their political ambitions and overall position in Lebanon.

In a parallel vein, much of today's literature on the Maronites, descriptive and journalistic in nature, is produced for mass consumption. Joseph Abou Khalil's book on the Maronites, *Les Maronites dans la Guerre au Liban: Recit Autobiographique*, Jonathan Randal's *Going all the Way*, are examples of materials that deal with the Maronites during the civil war descriptively, the former being little more than propaganda, and while the latter being strongly biased. As these books illustrate, empirical and systematic analysis is conspicuously lacking.

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In the general literature which dealing with the causes and effects of the civil war, the Maronites are not covered methodically. However, Elaine C. Hagopian's “Maronite Hegemony to Maronite Militancy: the Creation and disintegration of Lebanon,” and Marie Christine Aulas’ “The Socio-ideological Development of the Maronite Community: The Emergence of the Phalange and the Lebanese Forces,” are exceptions to this general rule which prove to be helpful in describing the Maronites' rise to power and the factors leading to their militancy in the 1970s. Yet these studies nevertheless do not elaborate on the final results of the Maronite struggle in the civil war.

In attempting an analysis of Maronites' behavior in the civil war, it is worthwhile to look at minority studies for theoretical help, two works of which are especially useful. These are R. D. McLaurit's edited work The Political Role of Minority Groups in the Middle East and Mordechai Nissan's Minorities in the Middle East: A History of Struggle and Self-Expression. Each of these works devotes a chapter to the Maronites and analyzes their position in the civil war in the light of theories related to minority behavior, but without revealing the main reasons behind the events that led to the Maronites to occupy a new position in the Lebanese formula.

No one can deny that the Maronite community is the most researched religious group in Lebanon. But, scholarly contributions on the Maronites do not address the research questions that will be posed in this thesis. This thesis asserts that the outbreak of the civil war increased the pressures upon the
Maronites, resulting in political fragmentation. It poses the following research questions as to why this may be the case in the Maronite community after 1975: First, to what extent does a threatening situation increase leadership problems? Second, does the quest for foreign assistance increase the gap between the group leaders? Third, to what extent would divergences of opinion about the meaning and outcomes of defeat contribute to loss of cohesion?

Theory

The literature on group dynamics and conflicts is also useful to this study since it is dedicated to increasing understanding of the nature of groups, their development and disintegration, and their relations to threat and conflict. Georg Simmel’s theory on the relationship between threat and cohesion may account for Maronite behavior prior to the outbreak of the civil war. Simmel asserts that conflict with an outside group reinforces group maintenance. Lewis Coser, another sociologist, adds that conflict assists in establishing or reestablishing unity and cohesion among the members of the same group when faced with outside threats and antagonistic feelings or behavior. Thus, one can

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4 Ibid., p. 151.
assert that real conflict of interest or real threat from outside groups originates in
group perception of that threat, inducing in group hostility to the source of threat.
Consequently, group consciousness and group solidarity in facing outside danger
grow.\textsuperscript{5} This theory appears to explain Maronite cohesion from the era of
independence till the outbreak of the civil war in 1975.

However, the threat to the Maronite community did not diminish over the
years; on the contrary, many today argue that it intensified although according to
Simmel and Coser, cohesion should have been maintained or even increased.
Why is it then that the Maronites have become internally fragmented. How did
this condition come about?

One answer may lie in leadership problems. A high stress situation leads to
authoritarian leadership that seeks to control and unify the group, a move towards
centralization which may create strong tension between the different parties
forming the original group.\textsuperscript{6} In adopting to the new conditions reflecting the
change in the status quo, each sub-group will identify different sources of
problems, will classify a number of solutions to those problems and will describe
the appropriate measures to achieve the previously decided solutions.\textsuperscript{7} Each

\textsuperscript{5}Ibid., p. 151.

\textsuperscript{6}Lester Coch and R. P. French, Jr., “Overcoming Resistance to Change,” in

\textsuperscript{7}Ibid., p. 355.
party will thus vie to impose its goals and strategies as the only feasible alternative to secure the group’s dominance and victory. The more important the goal to be achieved or the function to be served, the greater the pressure on the sub-groups, since the leaders of such groups will believe that such uniformity will in fact lead to the survival of the group.\(^8\)

The need for group unity mentioned above may lead to "conflict escalation" among its members.\(^9\) According to Dean G. Pruitt and Jeffrey Z. Rubin, “This can occur because one or more parties have high aspirations or because integrative alternatives seem to be short in supply. When such a conflict exists, it will seem especially severe to the extent that one’s and the other’s perceived aspirations are rigid and immutable.”\(^10\) To conclude, the resultant power struggle can cause a partial or total breakdown of group cohesion.

Another factor of importance in the Maronites’ fragmentation may be their foreign connections, although Mordechai Nissan suggests that external intervention on the side of a community may contribute to the strengthening of such a group.\(^11\) This foreign assistance can inject new aspiration, self-confidence

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\(^8\) Ibid., p. 144.


\(^10\) Ibid.

and a national dream for collective struggle, an influence exhibited by the Maronites from early times. Maronite foreign connections have played a role in making possible their rise to power, enabling Maronite leaders to consolidate their positions and deter any threat to their political dominance in Lebanon.

If Nissan is right, why then have foreign connections created difficulties for the Maronites? First, religious conflicts last a long time and create suitable conditions for foreign intervention. Second, in the initial stage of group conflict, there is often a number of different factions struggling to establish themselves as “legitimate representatives” of the group. These conflicts encourage the sub-groups to seek foreign assistance to establish their dominance, reinforcing existing cleavages within the communal leadership.

As for the intervening powers, many motives explain their “meddling” among which are hegemonic ambitions, such as concern about regional stability, and ethnic sympathy for oppressed groups. Motivated by both altruistic and self-

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12 Ibid.


14 Ibid.

15 Ibid.
interested goals, external forces may not be adverse to playing off one group
against another.¹⁵

Finally, the defeat of their parent group in a longer conflict increases the gaps
between the different groups and may lead to fragmentation. The structural
change model may explain such a phenomenon. According to this model, while
victory through group effort tends to arouse group cohesiveness, defeat
undermines it, referring to the ability of group members to accept their new
position in the modified political system of the country and the changes in the
communities surrounding the party.¹⁷

Drawing on the above discussions, it is thought that the following factors
contributed to Maronite's loss of cohesion. These factors are likely to be:
leadership problems, foreign connection and defeat. The problem of leadership
and foreign connection will be examined in each chapter, and the question of
defeat will be introduced toward the end of the thesis.

This thesis will be divided into the following chapters. Chapter two
discusses the historical background of the Maronites and clarifies the basic
factors that led to the Maronite rise to power. Chapter three presents the
Maronites' experiences from independence until the outbreak of the civil war in
1975 are presented.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 197.
¹⁷Coser, pp. 87-110.
The next three chapters deal with the research questions which concern the factors -- leadership problems, foreign connection and defeat -- believed to be involved for Maronite fragmentation after 1975. Each chapter deals with a particular series of events in Maronite history as follows: Chapter four exhibits Bashir Gemayel's rise to power and analyze his strategy towards the other leaders of his community and his foreign connections. Chapter five asks whether the unity established by Bashir Gemayel continued and how his brother Amin responded to internal and to external pressures. Chapter six deals with the effect of General Michel Aoun's appointment as interim Prime Minister on Maronite's unity and considers how the foreign policies of the contending Maronite factions further contributed to Maronite dissension. Finally, the last chapter suggests future prospects of the Maronite community in postwar Lebanon.
CHAPTER II
HISTORY OF THE MARONITES

Who are the Maronites and how did their historical experience influence their former and present position in Lebanon? In this chapter, the historical background of the Maronites increases understanding of their behavior in the civil war of 1975 and of the factors that created their loss of cohesion. The first part of this chapter deals briefly with the Maronites' early experiences particularly with their cultural heritage and group identity, while the second part deals with the main factors that led to their rise to power.

The Origin of the Maronites.

The Lebanese Maronites are Christians who made their way to Lebanon from northern Syria, initially ascribing to the Roman Catholic faith that emerged in the sixth and seventh centuries AD. 18 However, their early history is somewhat obscure. 19 Even the name Maronite has posed a serious debate between


19 See Matti Moosa for more information.
Maronite and non-Maronite researchers. The Maronites themselves believed in two Marouns as sources of their name, one an early fifth-century ascetic and saint, and the other a late-seventh-century monk surnamed Yuhann Maroun who became their first patriarch. They further claim that the Maronites were initially called Mardaites but abandoned this name in the seventh century in favor of the name Maronites. Others claim that the name Maronite was derived from a Syriac term meaning "Our Lord Jesus Christ." Still others insist that their name was acquired from a monastery named after the fifth century Maroun.

The Maronites have historically claimed that their church is the "Church of Antioch" and that they adhere to the faith of Chalcedonian orthodoxy that posits two natures for Christ, one divine and the other human. Supported by Byzantium and Rome, this orthodoxy condemned any deviation from the doctrine of the two natures. However, the major historical contributions on the history of the Maronites had rejected the claim that the Maronites followed the orthodox Christian faith of Rome. As with the Copts and the Jacobites, the Maronites believed in the "one nature" faith referred to as Monophysite. Moosa, asserts that "By faith, liturgy, rite, religious book, and heritage, the Maronites were of Syrian


Ibid.

Ibid.
Orthodox (Jacobite) origin until the very end of the 16th century when they became ultramontane followers of the Roman Catholic church.  

Fleeing the persecution of the Muslims, the Jacobites and the Byzantine, the Maronites retreated to the Mountains of Lebanon in the seventh century. The Maronites claim that this persecution resulted in their allegiance to the church of Rome as a matter of protection. Their commitment to that Church apparently stimulated a "masculine feeling" that "they were an exclusive community; in fact, the only community whose identity is tied to Lebanon." Very early, the Maronites became aware of the importance of an external support in protecting their interests. In this respect, they made early contact with the Crusaders, whom they assisted as co-religionists against Muslim attacks.

The Druze-Maronite Relationship

The Ottomans rule began in 1516 in the Middle East. In order to regulate the relationship between the Ottoman state and the diverse non-Muslim groups it governed, the Ottomans developed a system that offered considerable autonomy, but not any political rights and equality for those religious communities not adhering to the Sunnite Muslim faith. In that regard, the Maronites were recognized as an autonomous community as far as their internal affairs were concerned according to a royal decree issued by Sultan Sulayman the

21Ibid., p. 1.
22Ibid., p. 280.
Magnificent in 1527. At that time, the Maronites were not viewed as significant enough to justify direct attention from the central government in Istanbul. Ottoman control was barely visible in Mount Lebanon where the Maronites and Druzes resided and where there was no direct Ottoman authority prior to the nineteenth century.

Like the Maronites, the Druzes were a persecuted community that found refuge in the Mountains of what is called today Lebanon. The Druzes by origin were “a near-mystic offshoot of Ismaili Shiism”, which first appeared in Cairo in AD 1017. Resisting the authority of mainstream Shiites, the Druzes inhabited different geographical areas in the region, settling in Mount Lebanon east of Beirut, in the Matn, and in the Shuf, areas which became known as the Druze Mountain. The Druze za‘amās of the Ghab district, called the Bahurs, allied themselves with the Mamluks becoming cavalry officers in their army and assisting them until the end of their rule, while earning titles and land as rewards. The Druzes’ position was further more strengthened when the Ottoman Turks conquered Mount-Lebanon. In the early sixteenth century the Druze lords backed the Ottomans who could subdue the region. In return, the Ottomans appointed one of the Druze lords - Fakher al Din al Maani - as “Prince of Mount Lebanon”. From that time on, the “Princedom” was under Druze hegemony, and the Maronites lived and worked in relative obscurity.

25 Ibid., pp. 280-281.
26 Cobban, p. 20.
This passive role did not hurt the Maronites, however for Fakher Al Din’s role was of great importance to them. The Mamluk Emir favored the Maronites and encouraged them to settle in Mount-Lebanon. In fact, the Maronites at that time settled in three main areas: the Shuf, the mountains of North Lebanon and Kirsan. As will become evident, the Maronites in each of these areas developed their own perspective with regard to the sociopolitical evolution of what is today known as Lebanon.

The Maronites residing the Shuf and Kirsan differed greatly from those residing in the isolated Bshari area in the North of Lebanon. The former were more open to the other communities living in Mount Lebanon in this way increasing the community’s interests, authority and influence. Free from Feudal connections operant in the North and benefitting from their social, economic and political status in the Emirate the Maronites of the Shuf and Kirsan came to represent the community’s ethos. Furthermore, Kirsan would become, in the following decades, the heartland of the Maronite community, which the Maronites of the North resented.

Under Fakher Al Din, the Maronites enjoyed many privileges since he saw in them an ally to boost his power against his enemies from within the Druze community. They were encouraged to practice their faith without any restriction. The production of silk, which he introduced to Mount-Lebanon, relied on, Maronite labor. In addition, he encouraged the conscription of a large number of
Maronites in his army and used others as advisors.\textsuperscript{27} His political ambitions made him to rely on them as a connection with Tuscany, Rome and France.

The unity of the Maronites was re-established when the Maani emir moved against the Maronites of the North, ending their dominance and appointing the Maronite Khasen family as the rulers of that area, Bshari north of Lebanon and the coastal city of Jbeil. With the defeat of the Northern faction, the Maronite Church came to play an unprecedented role in the politics of the Emirate.

The rise of the Church to this important position made its religious role inseparable from the political affairs of the community. Its independence created serious conflicts between the clergy and the traditional ruling class in the Maronite community, especially because the reorganization of the Church made it favor the grass roots, which saw, in the Church institutions an instrument to articulate and advance the new interests of the Maronite community.\textsuperscript{28}

In fact, Maronite Church leaders encouraged political consciousness, emphasizing the cohesiveness of the group with its particular socio-political and religious characteristics. With this approach, they advocated the concept of Lebanon as an "extension of Maronite identity".\textsuperscript{29} The Maronites thus claimed

\textsuperscript{27}Moosa, p. 281.

\textsuperscript{28}Ibid., p. 126.

\textsuperscript{29}Ibid., p. 282.
that Fakher al-Din was actually the founder of the Lebanese state since he was able to control the whole area of what is today referred to as Lebanon.\textsuperscript{30}

Shihabi rule in Mount Lebanon also contributed to the Maronite rise to power. As with the Sunni emirs, the Maronites enjoyed a unique position in the Emirate of Mount Lebanon. Newcomers to the Shuf and members of the Sunni faith, the Shihabi emirs had no choice but to ally themselves with the Maronites whose numbers in the Shuf area were increasing compared to the Druze.\textsuperscript{31} The Maronites’ foreign affiliation had also made the Shihabis favor a close connection with the Maronites. According to Moosa, “Through France, the Shihabi amirs realized the importance of the Maronite rule and power, and they and the Maronites became united in a common interest.”\textsuperscript{32}

The turning point in Maronite history came in 1754 when Emir Ali al-Shihabi joined the Maronite faith. This Emir was followed by a majority of Shihabis and their relatives, the Abi Lamie princes. However, it was not until Bashir II (1788-1840) that the final shape of Mount Lebanon as a Christian homeland materialized.\textsuperscript{33} Bashir II expanded his area of influence, by 1821, to include the


\textsuperscript{31}Salibi, A House of Many, p. 67.

\textsuperscript{32}Moosa, p. 283.

"original Maronite homeland of Jabal Lubnan".\textsuperscript{34} For the first time in their history, the Maronites fell under a single rule, and they started to look at the Shihabi emirs as synonymous with Maronitism.\textsuperscript{35} As a result, they became attached to Lebanon as their national homeland and considered themselves an exclusive community distinguished from other inhabitants.\textsuperscript{36}

Bashir II’s policy towards the Druze also served to strengthen of the position of the Maronites in Mount Lebanon. From the beginning of his rule, Bashir II tried to consolidated his power over his challengers from within his family. Next, he weakened his opponents in the Druze community by fastering hostilities between them and by applying harsh measures against the community’s leading figures. Thus, with their leaders weakened, the Druzes could not challenge the Maronites, who then had an unchecked position in the area.

Another important event strengthened of the Maronites in Mount Lebanon was the Egyptian occupation of Mount-Lebanon (1831-40) one which benefited the Maronite community and allowed it to prosper. Not only did the policies of Ibrahim Pasha advocate equal rights for Christians, but they also permitted the Maronites alone to retain their arms, and employed them in the administration

\textsuperscript{34} Salibi, \textit{A House of Many}, p. 67.

\textsuperscript{35} Moosa, p. 264.

\textsuperscript{36} Ibid.
taking harsh measures against the Druzes; these measures greatly served the Christian community.\(^{37}\)

The Druzes suffered under the injustice inflicted by Bashir II and Ibrahim Pasha as they saw their power, authority and privileges in Mount-Lebanon dwindle. The Imarah that they considered as their own creation was becoming a Maronite domain. However, with the downfall of the Egyptian rule and of its ally Bashir II prompted the Druzes to attempt to reestablish their dominance over the Imarah. Tension between the Maronite and Druze communities increased and the situation deteriorated until 1860, when a conflict erupted between them.

The Maronites could not defend themselves against the Druzes who massacred hundreds of them. For the first time the French intervened militarily to protect the Maronites from the Druzes. On April 3rd, 1860, about 6,800 French soldiers arrived, their mission was to establish order and implement the agreement between the European powers and the Ottoman Empire that was referred to as the Reglement Organique. Under this new order, Mount-Lebanon was granted autonomous rule administered by a Christian governor, assisted by a local administrative council. Although this new setting did not fulfill the Maronites' hopes and plans for their national homeland, it was an important step in that direction. Moreover, the crisis of 1860 was to influence Maronites' future behavior towards the Druze and the other communities forming the social structure of Mount Lebanon and Greater Lebanon. They became dramatically

aware of their vulnerability in what they considered a hostile environment. To protect themselves, they sought a homeland under the tutelage of their ally France.

The French Mandate

The Maronites' relationship with France is worthy of some attention. Although it can be traced to the time of the Crusaders, French and Lebanese historians believe that France's desire for a Catholic protectorate in the Levant was rooted in the Capitulation of 1535.\(^{38}\) This Capitulation, drawn by the Ottoman Empire, gave France the right to intervene in favor of the Catholic subjects of the empire.\(^{39}\) The French connection in Lebanon became even more explicit in 1649, when Louis XIV responded to the Maronite Patriarch's plea by granting his patronage to the Maronite Church and community.\(^{40}\) From then on, western influence created a feeling of uniqueness in the Maronite community. The Maronites became attracted to the Western lifestyle and identified with French cultural behaviors that influenced their relationship with the Muslims of the area.

\(^{38}\) Zamir, p. 16.


\(^{40}\) Zamir, p. 16.
Under French protection, French educational, commercial and religious institutions were founded in Lebanon. Missionaries established numerous schools, hospitals, orphanages and asylums that further linked the Maronites and the French. The social and economic stature of the Maronites grew as compared to the weakness of other communities in Mount Lebanon. In effect, the Maronites relationship with France became the vehicle for the former’s upward social and political mobility. Certain Maronite families even started to play the role of intermediaries between France and the different groups in Lebanon. Tae al-Khazens, for instance, became closely aligned with France and were appointed as French vice-councils of Mount-Lebanon.

French influence in the area did not reach its peak until the collapse of the Ottoman Empire in World War I. Securing a mandate over Syria gave France a stronger position to impose its schemes for the region of which Mount-Lebanon was a part. Without France, the Maronites would have failed to secure hegemony in the emerging Republic of Lebanon.

From the first day of the Mandate, French policy had favored the Maronites. They held the largest share of public posts throughout the Mandate and their

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regions always received the largest portion of government expenditures for development projects. 43

After a series of discussions between Patriarch Huvaiik and the French authorities, Greater Lebanon was proclaimed on 31 August 1920, the best way to safeguard French interests in the area. To insure the viability of Lebanon, the French decided to have it include Tripoli, Saida and the Bekaa valley, which happened to be Muslim populated areas. The Maronites, thus, faced the challenge of establishing a working relationship with the different communities - Druzes, Sunnites, Shiites, and Greek Orthodox - that along with the Maronites made up the population of the new state. Many Muslims and Christians, though, favored attachment to the Syrian entity rather than an independent status.

Conclusion

Over the course of centuries, the Maronites developed from a weak, alienated, unorganized tribal system into a well-defined, well-structured and cohesive community whose dream of a national homeland was finally realized. Certainly, the presence of the church as a highly organized institution enhanced Maronite solidarity and cohesiveness. The international and regional setting also helped. Alliance with the French allowed the Maronites to enjoy privileges that other communities in the area lacked. The social, political and educational benefits they received from the French reinforced their confidence in their search for an

43Petran, p. 31.
independent country. Thus, the creation of Greater Lebanon in 1920 marked the continuity of a process which seems to have had its roots in the Imarah. On a more contemporary note, one can ask to what extent the emergence of the Lebanese republic in 1943 affected Maronite goals, power and cohesion.
Chapter III

THE MARONITES AND INDEPENDENT LEBANON

From Lebanon’s independence up to the outbreak of the civil war in 1975, the Maronites retained their supremacy in Lebanon. The status quo prevailing among the different communities in the country was a major reason for their continued dominance. When new conditions emerged in the socio-political setting of the country, the Maronites perceived the change as a threat to their position, authority and influence. The chapter identifies various Maronite factions and analyzes the factors that brought about a change in the Lebanese balance of power. It further probes Maronite reactions to the threat of civil war.

The Emergence of Maronite Leadership

Sponsored by the French, Michel Chiha, a wealthy Roman Catholic banker, drafted a constitution for Lebanon in 1926, which represented acceptance of the political realities of a country formed of different independent religious communities. Chiha’s understanding of Lebanon’s religious representation mirrored an ideological process that had started to develop in the Maronite community in the first half of the 20th century. The champion of that outlook was Yusif Sawda, who advocated an independent Lebanon organically dependent
on the existence of the Maronite community. 44 According to Sawda, the national aspirations of the Lebanese people emerged from the ancient Phoenician city-states of the Lebanese coast which reflected a different heritage from that of the Arabs and other surrounding communities. 45 Moreover, he saw in Lebanon a model for the co-existence of different religious communities. 46 However, Sawda insisted on the dominance of the Maronites in independent Lebanon due to their distinct and specific cultural and economic role there. 47

From the end of the 1920’s until the declaration of independence the two political approaches polarizing the Maronite community were Michel Edde’s National Bloc and Beshara al-Khoury’s Constitutional Bloc. Edde represented the traditional Maronite view that Lebanon, in order to survive, must retain a Maronite majority on the borders of designating Mount-Lebanon previously, a majority which could be secured with the assistance of France. He opposed any cooperation with Lebanese Muslim communities, considering them as a basic threat to Maronite hegemony. In opposing any link to the Arabs, Edde stressed the danger such an influence would pose to the distinct Maronite Lebanese entity.


45 Ibid.

46 Ibid.

47 Ibid.
On the other hand, al-Khoury’s views represented a new trend in the Maronite circle with the creation of Greater Lebanon. Al-Khoury called for an expanded Mount-Lebanon and for cooperation with the Muslim communities. He emphasized that the Lebanese state had to be on good terms with the Arab world in order to survive, but without diminishing its relationship with the West. This line of thinking was favorable to the Muslim community, particularly to the Sunnites. In the coming years, came to represent the views of the dominant Maronite political current. Ede’s vision of Maronite supremacy, on the other hand, became dormant, only re-awakening with the outbreak of the civil war in 1975.

The founding of the Phalange (Kataeb) as a youth organization in 1936 was of considerable importance to contemporary Maronite history. Established by Pierre Gemayel and transformed into a political party in 1943, the Phalange’s main objective was the independence of Lebanon from the French Mandate. The Kataeb saw Lebanon as a final homeland for the Muslims and Christians alike but under Maronite supremacy.

Gemayel’s party remained impartial and balanced view regarding the Maronite debate between al-Khoury and Ede on the future of Lebanon. Gemayel renounced both al-Khoury’s belief in the need for close cooperation with the Muslim community and Ede’s total reliance on the French. He sought,

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48 Cobban, p. 69.
instead, to build a party with a Lebanese character rather than with a French or Pan Arabist orientation.

While the role of the Kataeb remained marginal in the political affairs of the country during the first years of independence, its popularity grew, originating in the Batroun and Keserwan of Mount Lebanon and increasing as it won the support of a newly urbanized Maronite base in and near the capital Beirut. Its stand against the traditional leaders of the Maronite community in particular and those of Lebanon in general coupled with its organization and the leadership of Gemayel attracted large numbers of Maronites moving from the mountains to the capital.

Leadership Trends from Independence to the Civil War of 1975

With the weakening of France in World War II, the Maronite dream of independence started to come true. Under British pressure, Lebanon’s independence was proclaimed on November 26th, 1941, though not with full French support. However, France’s wavering on its promise backfired since it convinced Maronites and other Lebanese that they had to cooperate to overcome French resistance.

In a move to consolidate the functions of the Lebanese state, al- Khoury and al-Solh announced their “understanding” of 1943.\textsuperscript{49} This “understanding” became known as the National Pact -- a verbal sectarian formula for

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{49} Hanf, p. 72.
\end{footnotesize}
government in the new state. The National Pact represented a drastic change in Maronite thinking. The two leaders responsible for the Pact knew that a certain level of compromise among the different political communities would have to be reached in order to preserve their achievement of 1920 and to promote the independence of Lebanon. In return for Muslim rejection of unification with Syria or with the Arab World, the Maronites acknowledged the Arab character of Lebanon and did not press for close cooperation with the West.

The Pact met with problems over the inclusion of Muslim areas in the new state. Both the Muslim leadership and the Muslim masses favored their attachment to Syria and opposed their incorporation into a country to be ruled by Christians. They had no historical identification with the Lebanese entity, and exhibited no loyalty to the newly established state. However, the Pact made their participation possible by ensuring their role in Lebanon's governance.

The National Pact specified the division of powers among the three main sects of Lebanon by acknowledging that: the president would be a Maronite, the Prime Minister a Sunni, and the head of the legislative body a Shiite. The Maronite community regarded the Pact as a prerequisite for maintaining the status quo, thus preserving Maronite dominance over the machinery of the state. Any move towards its modification seemed a threat to their authority, power and dominance in the Lebanese power equation.
In addition to securing the highest position in the Lebanese political system, the Maronites ensured key posts for themselves based on a 1932 census that showed them to be the largest group in Lebanon. The Muslim community, in turn, rejected the results of the 1932 census and called for another census on grounds that they made up the largest community. On the other hand, fearing that the Muslims might prove to be more numerous because of their increasing birth rate, the Maronites would not agree to a new census.

Despite misgivings on many sides, Beshara al-Khoury began his term as the first President with the popular support of much of the Christian and Muslim communities. As foreign and domestic policies were in accordance with the National Pact of 1943, they pleased both Christians and Muslims.

Nevertheless, the first sign of disapproval with al-Khoury’s regime, came from the Syrian Popular Party, now the Syrian Socialist National Party (SSNP), which mounted an unsuccessful coup in Lebanon 1946. The SSNP regarded the Lebanese state as the child of colonial rule which had divided the region into the fictitious states of Iraq, Syria, Palestine and Cyprus. The SSNP called for the unification of all those states into one nation — Syria.

Al-Khoury did not fare better on the home front. His favoring nepotism, the growing corruption of his administration and his success in amending the constitution to secure his own reelection, rallied a strong and powerful coalition of Christians and Muslims against him.\(^{50}\) This coalition included the Kataeb, the

Muslim Najjada party, the SSNP, the Druze Progressive Socialist Party (PSP) and the National Bloc of Michel Edde, headed now by his two sons Raymond and Pierre, and the two leaders from the same district of Mount Lebanon, Kamal Jumblat, a powerful Druze clan leader and Camille Chamoun, a Maronite leader from Deir al Qamar, brought al-Khoury’s regime down in 1951.  

Chamoun succeeded al-Khoury in 1952. Once elected, he followed a pro-Arab stand with a pro-British flavor. However, events in the regional and international arenas led Chamoun to modify his domestic position and his foreign policy to balance the forces resulting from the drastic changes. Since the rise of Nasserism in Egypt mobilized the dormant Lebanese Sunni consciousness against the confessional structure of their political system, Chamoun adhered to a pro-Western policy that according to the Sunnites and many Christians alike violated the spirit of the National Pact.  

Chamoun’s domestic policies factor also increased the vulnerability of his regime. In order to secure a second term for himself, he maneuvered the parliamentary election of 1957 to secure him an easy victory. All Christian and Muslim candidates from the opposition lost in those elections. Druze Kamal

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53 Ibid.
Jumblat, former Premier Abdallah Yafi, Sunni Saeb Salam and Shiite Ahmad al Asaad considered themselves the victims of Chamoun's manipulation of the elections.

On the Maronite front, Chamoun mobilized a number of leaders who disapproved of his internal and external policies against him. His opposition to election of the two powerful Zgharta clan leaders from North Lebanon, Rene Mouawad and Suleiman Frangieh, prompted them to commit themselves to the anti-Chamounist alliance. Furthermore, Patriarch Mousshe, a supporter of al-Khoury, disagreed with of Chamoun's anti-Arab stand and joined the belligerent politicians against him.\(^54\)

In early May 1958, a limited civil war broke out after the assassination of a pro-opposition Maronite journalist. On Chamoun's side stood two groups, the SSNP and the Kataeb. The SSNP saw any victory of the anti-Chamounists as a victory for Arabism, communism and sectarianism which the ideology of their party totally condemned. As for the Kataeb, while rejecting Chamoun's total drift from the Arabs and his attempt at a second term in office, supported the President since it considered itself the sole protector of the state.

By the end of Chamoun's presidency the Kataeb had embraced the characteristics of a constitutional party while retaining its paramilitary apparatus. Gemayel had been able to transform his youth organization into a well-structured and well-organized political institution that was able to win its first parliamentary

\(^54\) Salibi, History of, pp. 197-198.
seats in the elections of 1951. The Kataeb became known for their support of the Lebanese state and the National Pact of 1943.

In July 1958, General Shihab was elected president, but Chamoun was allowed to retain his post until the end of his mandate in September 1958. The neutral role played by Shihab, chief of staff, during the crisis of 1958 made him the only viable candidate able to succeed Chamoun. Shihab’s coming to the presidency affected a change in the status quo, rendering it into an obsolete formula in the future years. Shihab came to office with unchallenged popularity, but this time not from his own community, but from the Muslim sectors since his neutral position in the 1958 crisis had won him the trust of the Sunnites, the Shiites and the Druze. He realized that certain change in the political and economic systems of the country were needed to meet the demands of the different communities.

To create a strong modern state, Shihab began to change the state machinery. By strengthening the state and giving unchallenged powers to Military Intelligence - the Deuxieme Bureau - Shihab’s rule soon angered the traditional block of feudal zu‘ama, both Muslim and Christian. Perhaps not surprisingly, the main opposition came from the Maronites. His rapprochement with Nasser, his economic and social policies, and finally his moves to increase Muslim participation in government were all perceived by Maronite leaders -- Chamoun, Edde, Frangieh and the Maronite Patriarch Meouchi -- as a threat to their community’s influence in Lebanon. They gave the status quo priority and
considered any deviance from the formula of 1943 as unacceptable. To them, Shihab became an authoritarian ruler who could inflict great damage on Maronite interests.

Edde’s honeymoon with Shihab was soon over. He became an aggressive opponent of a system that he described as “undemocratic Shihabist militarism”. After the death of his father Emile, Raymond undertook the leadership of the National Bloc, abandoning his father’s anti-Arab hostility and challenging the Kataeb’s influence in the community in the 1950s. The paramilitary organization of the Kataeb had increased his distrust of the Gemayels and their ambitions in Lebanon.

Chamoun first opposed to Shihab when the general refused to comply with Chamoun’s orders to move the army against the opposition forces in 1958. Shihab’s rapprochement with and his support for Jumblat during the election of 1960 had worried Chamoun, Jumblat’s opponent in the Shuf District of Mount Lebanon. Frangieh, another victim of Shihab’s election policies, was similarly unhappy with the regime’s rapprochement with Rene Muawad, his political competitor in the north. On the other hand, Patriarch Meoushi, a harsh opponent of the previous Chamoun presidency and a supporter of Shihab in the presidential election of 1958, eventually drifted away from the new president, who always disregarded the Patriarch’s and the Church’s interests and authority.

The Kataeb remained the major Maronite group supporting Shihab. According to Marius Deeb, "The Phalangists acquired the reputation of consistent loyalty to the regime and to the Lebanese political system, because of their alliance to Shihab and their almost uninterrupted representation in all cabinets during Shihab's presidency between 1958 and 1964." Shihab's social and economic policies allowed the Kataeb to undermine the power of the traditional Christian leaders that the party always opposed. During Shihab's term, the Kataeb became "an integral part of the political establishment." Shihab favored the Kataeb as his principal Maronite ally to provide his regime with a Maronite spirit and to check the expansion of Chamoun's popularity in the Maronite community. However, the Kataeb's support of president Shihab was not without a price since the popularity they had acquired in 1958 began to diminish in the Christian sector of the society.

During Shihab's term, the Maronite community witnessed the emergence of its second political party founded by Chamoun himself. In the years that followed his term as President, Chamoun created a popular base for himself among the Maronites. In order to organize his political disciples, he formed the Liberal Nationalist Party (LNP). Although this Party included Shiites and Sunnites, but, the majority of its members were Maronites with different

51 Ibid., p. 23.
geographic social and economic backgrounds. Even though Chamoun’s Party lacked the organization of the Kataeb, it emerged during Shihab’s time as the “unrivaled representative of the Christian ethos in Lebanon”.

In September 1964, Shihab engineered the election of one of his followers, Charles Helou. Ironically, Helou’s regime marked the decline of Shihabism due to a drastic change in the internal and external environment of the country. Internally, Helou proved to be a weak president who failed to carry out his policies along the same strong lines as Fuad Shihab. Externally, the Arab-Israeli conflict had taken on a new dimension. The defeat of the Arabs in the Arab-Israeli war of 1967 intensified the conflict and engaged Lebanon in the Palestinian question. The creation of the Palestine Liberation Organization, sponsored by the Arab League in 1965 to organize the Palestinians in their struggle with Israel, was to have disastrous consequences for Lebanon, which hosted a large number of Palestinian refugees.

The Maronites felt threatened by the Palestinian mobilization in Lebanon since the majority of Palestinians were Muslim. The Maronites then started to consolidate their position to face new circumstances that threatened to upset the status quo as well as to galvanize Muslim groups militarily. They also perceived the weakened Helou regime and the forces behind it as a threat to their existence. Thus, the three Maronite pillars in the community -- Chamoun, Gemayel and Eddé -- forgot their differences and entered into a coalition - the Triple Alliance -

58 Sahabi, Crossroads, p. 4.
to curb Palestinian activities in Lebanon and plan for the presidential elections of 1970 in which they sought a total defeat for Shihab’s nominee.

The first clashes between the Lebanese authorities and the Palestinian militias in Lebanon set off alarms in the Maronite community, especially when the result of these collisions resulted in the Cairo Agreement of 1969 which gave the Palestinians a legitimate right to use Lebanese territory to fight Israel. The legitimization of the presence of Palestinian militias and the failure of the Lebanese Army to curb their activities made the Maronites depend on themselves to deter the threat of the Palestinian presence and influence. Both, the Kossab and the National Liberal Party mobilized their followers and strengthened their military capabilities.

The presidential election of 1970 saw the demise of Shihabism. Suleiman Frangieh defeated Elias Sarkis, a pro-Shihab candidate, by only one vote. Sarkis lost the election because of the behavior of Helou and the Deuxieme Bureau had drawn the criticism of both Muslims and Christians. Frangieh, being a member of a central block that included Saeb Salam, a prominent Sunnite za‘in, and Kamal al-Asaad, a Shiite feudal lord, became president with the strong hope that he could reconcile between the Palestinians and their allies on one side and the Christians on the other.

Unfortunately, the tension between the Maronites and the Palestinians increased. The infiltration of the Palestinians into Lebanon after their defeat in Jordan in 1973, the failure of the Cairo Agreement to reconcile Lebanon’s
sovereignty and the Palestinian armed struggle and the increase of Israeli raids on the Palestinian groups in Lebanon all fanned the fire. More organized, well-armed and the objects of Muslim support, the Palestinians demonstrated the importance of group unity and reconciliation of community’s differences for the Maronites. Furthermore, at the beginning of the 1970s, Chamoun and Gemayel began to take appropriate measures to defend their community’s interest by importing large quantities of arms and establishing military training camps for their followers. President Frangieh, on the other hand, entrusted his son Tony with the mobilization organization, and of his followers from Zagharta to fight in the ranks of the Marada Brigade.

The crisis between the contending groups reached the point of no return in 1975 when members of the Kataeb reacted aggressively to an attempt to assassinate their leader, Pierre Gemayel. In retaliation, they killed a group of Palestinians passing in a bus through the Christian suburb of Ain al-Romaineh.

The beginning of the civil war which raged in 1975 and 1976 may have revived the Maronites’ memory of the tragic crises of 1840 and 1860, for they once again were to regard the conflict as a fight for their existence as a community.

The first year of the civil war was a disappointment to the Christians. The Palestinians and their Muslim allies isolated the Christian dominated areas and looked for a total defeat of Maronite militias. Trying to save the situation, Frangieh and his Prime Minister Rashid Karami with the sponsorship of the Syrian Baathist regime of Hafez al-Assad, announced in February 1975 the
Constitutional Document which reinterpreted the National Pact of 1943. The Document confirmed the traditional distribution of the three highest posts on a sectarian basis. It also called for the equal division of parliamentary seats between Muslims and Christians. The Muslims, however, were convinced that the previous division of power in Lebanon was obsolete, since they now considered themselves the majority. Their demand for political equality marked a new dimension in the conflict, one which became a basic objective for the Muslim community.

In general, the Maronites did not give a clear cut answer to Frangieh's document. Gemayel and Chamoun refused to discuss reforms under the threat of a radical Muslim offensive. Jumblat and his leftist coalition rejected it on the basis that it fell short of their reform programs. Thus, the document's aims could not be achieved.

The disintegration of the situation, intensified by the failure of the army to control the factions, made the coalition of Ikedde, Karami and Salam demand the resignation of Frangieh. As for Jumblat's progressive program which called for reforms in the political system to guarantee equal participation for the different communities on a secular basis, it severely threatened the Maronite power base and required the political and military unification of the complete community. Since the power of the Lebanese State had been undermined, the Lebanese Front was founded to protect the Maronites. The Lebanese Front included all the various factions of the community, represented by Pierre Gemayel; Camille
Chamoun; Suleiman Frangieh; Charbel Kassis, head of the Maronite clergy; Shaker Abou Suleiman, President of the Maronite League; and Etienne Saker, president of a purely Maronite party, the Guardians of the Cedars.

During 1975 and 1976, the Maronites faced several crises. The division of the Lebanese Army into Christian and Muslim factions, followed by Muslim Brigadier Aziz al Ahdab's abortive coup to oust Frangieh, increased Maronites' reliance on their own militias to defend their position in the civil war. However, convinced that they were unable to stop the combined Druze, PLO and Muslim left-wing offensive on the Christian areas, the Maronites chose a quick rapprochement with Syria. A limited Syrian military intervention, put an end to the leftist offensive, and the Maronite regions were saved from total defeat by a cease fire.

On May 9, 1976, Elias Sarkis, a technocrat with a weak popular base, succeeded Frangieh. Using Syrian support, he tried desperately to find a solution to Lebanon's contending groups but the situation in Lebanon did not improve. His failure to find a formula for peace encouraged the Arab League to launch its own initiative a month later. The League decided to send a symbolic Arab Force to put an end to the fighting.

The Maronites' fear of losing their power in Lebanon, strengthened their internal unity and external alliances. Afraid of Syria's ambitions in Lebanon, the Maronites sought an Israeli connection. Furthermore, the Lebanese Front was aware that the status quo had been altered by the civil war. Maronites
believed that preserving their status, required a radical change in the Lebanese political map. At its January 23, 1977 meeting, the Front suggested that a federal system be established for Lebanon to replace the 1943 formula. The Front, however, refused to participate in negotiations for reforming the political system of Lebanon unless the military threat to the Christians was removed and Palestinians were evacuated.

Parallel to this, a radical change in Maronite political thinking found expression in a new style of leadership who objectively was saving the Christian community from total defeat. The champion of this new approach was Bashir Gemayel, the son of Pierre Gemayel. After serving as a Vice-President of the Kataeb, Bashir Gemayel became the leader of the Achrufieh branch, replacing William Hawi, killed in the fighting. From then on, he played a leading role in the affairs of the Maronite community, as will be seen in the next chapter.

Conclusion

The growing involvement of the Palestinians in the internal affairs of Lebanon threatened Maronite domination. The Palestinians were supported by the Muslims, who had long felt the injustice of the Lebanese political formula, in a country where they had probably become the majority.

The threat this alliance posed to Maronite hegemony had an important effect on the community. While no one could deny that a certain level of political fragmentation was present among the Maronites, they presented a united front.
When the expected armed conflict erupted in 1975, the Lebanese Maronites entered the battlefield as a cohesive group under the leadership of the Lebanese Front.
CHAPTER IV
A UNIFIED COMMUNITY UNDER ARMS

The aim of this chapter is to investigate Bashir Gemayel’s journey to the presidency and his ability to consolidate and unify the diverse forces within the Maronite community. The research question that is going to be dealt with in this chapter is the one on foreign connection and asks to what extent does a quest for foreign assistance increase the gap between the group leaders.

This is accomplished by analyzing Bashir’s rise to power from the mid 1970s until his assassination in 1982. Bashir Gemayel’s relationship with the Lebanese Front, President Elias Sarkis, Syria and Israel will be covered as well as his strategies, objectives and his outlook to the overall setting of Lebanon.

Bashir’s Relationship with Israel

Bashir Gemayel’s goal was to create a centralized military command in the Christian areas. To achieve it, Maronite community was in desperate need of a foreign link that would supply it with arms and thus increase its military capabilities. He moved towards Israel, rejecting the Lebanese Front’s new relationship with Syria.

Even though the Lebanese Front called for Syrian help, its members were polarized. At the first pole were Suleiman Frangieh and Pierre Gemayel, who
saw in the Syrian intervention an acceptable move to block the PLO and the leftist offensive against the Christian areas. Frangieh had no difficulty in agreeing that the Maronites should have a close relationship with the Arab states. Similarly, Gemayel supported a rapprochement with the Arab world and also believed that the Syrian initiative was a positive way to defend the Lebanese state from a radical leftist takeover.

Chamoun and Bashir Gemayel, on the other hand, were against Syrian intervention. They questioned Syria’s aims in Lebanon, seeing its intervention as a major threat to Maronite influence. They argued that the Syrians would incite Sunni leaders and masses, who had always maintained close ties with them, i.e. from the time of the Mandate and even after independence, increasing further the Sunni’s resentment towards the Christians. Nevertheless, pressured by Pierre Gemayel, Chamoun put aside his anti-Syrian attitude and complied with the Lebanese Front position.

Restrained by his father, Pierre Gemayel, from confrontation with the Syrian army, Bashir still shared the attitude of the majority of the Christians towards Syria. He saw the Syrian intervention as a pretext formulated by Assad’s authoritarian regime to control and/or to topple the Lebanese democratic system. Nevertheless, he was in no position to obstruct Syrian intervention in Lebanon.

Israel could have emerged as an ally to the Maronites, but Bashir Gemayel’s contacts with Israel, reflecting a Maronite-Jewish connection that dated back to the French Mandate, were still limited and informal. The Maronites were
perceived by different Zionist leaders as allies in a hostile environment because of their strong belief in a non-Arab identity.

The strongest promoters of that policy were retired Prime Minister David Ben Gurion and Chief of Staff General Moshe Dayan. Ben Gurion and Dayan who advocated a close Israeli-Maronite relationship in the mid-1950s, called on the Israeli government to intervene in the war and establish a Christian, non-Arab state. The Israeli government at that time rejected the plan, regarding Lebanon as a unified country on its way to becoming an integral part of the Arab world.

The Maronites limited their contacts with the Israelis to low level clandestine contacts from the end of the 1950s, for they wanted the the Lebanese state to work. They did not want their interest in being a member of the Arab world compromised by links with the Jewish State, which might antagonize their Muslim compatriots and various Arab states.

The crisis of 1958 had a strong effect on the internal situation in Lebanon vis-à-vis Israel. The limited civil strife prompted President Chamoun to contact the Jewish Government, but its help to Chamoun did not exceed a small quantity of ammunition. Still, in return, President Chamoun contacted the Israeli authorities secretly in order to sign an Israeli-Lebanese treaty that guaranteed

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Lebanon's present borders and protected it from a Syrian attack or a Muslim take-over. \(^{61}\) However, the election of his successor, Fouad Shihaib, in 1958 marked the end of his brief flirtation with Israel.

From the 1960s until the mid-1970s, Israel's position relative to Lebanon was determined by the dynamics of the Arab-Israeli conflict and the role played by Lebanon in that conflict. \(^{62}\) Initially, the Israelis were not seriously concerned with the Lebanese threat but with Egypt and Syria instead; however, the increased involvement of the Palestinians in Lebanese affairs magnified Israel's discomfort.

Beginning in the 1970s, the Palestinians waged their war of liberation against Israel from Lebanese soil. Yet Israel's policy towards the Palestinian presence in Lebanon was limited to military raids against Palestinian targets. Moreover, after the war of 1973, Israel became preoccupied with its peace process with Egypt, producing the signing of the Sinai II Agreement in 1975. Thus, Lebanon then was not a priority on the Israeli agenda, and the outbreak of the civil war in 1975 did not detract the Israelis from a rapprochement with Egypt.

In the first months of the civil war, Camille Chamoun and then Bashir Gemayel, believed that Israel, alone could tilt the balance of power in the Maronites' favor. However, their first contacts with the Jewish state were rebuffed. Israelis were not willing to enter into a full-fledged alliance with the

\(^{61}\) Ibid.

\(^{62}\) Evron, p. 25.
Maronite factions. Its interest lay in southern Lebanon, where it was able to attract Major Sa‘ad Haddad, a deserter from the Lebanese Army who, with the Israel’s help, created a buffer zone between the PLO and the Israeli border.

In response, Bashir Gemayel was forced to consolidate his authority by organizing, structuring and strengthening the Lebanese Forces, which came into existence in 1976 as a coalition of the Maronite paramilitary groups of the Kataeb, NLP, Guardians of the Cedars and the Tanzim in order to coordinate military operations between those groups. During the first year of the war, the Lebanese Forces remained a loose coalition which lacked a well-defined structure and organization. However, when the Syrian presence imposed a relative peace in Lebanon in November, 1976, Bashir Gemayel shaped the Lebanese Forces as a military unit independently the authority of his father, the Kataeb and the Maronite political establishment.

Thus, the Lebanese Forces emerged as an instrument for the upward mobility of a young generation that had developed its own ideas about how Lebanon should be. Bashir Gemayel’s troops were drawn from two different regions with a sizable group recruited from Beirut’s working class and another from the remote villages of Mount Lebanon.

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64 Randal, p. 118.
Bashir’s Confrontation With Syria

Throughout 1976, the Syrians continued their efforts to impose control in Lebanon while maintaining the status quo. In June, Syria won Arab support for the presence of its army in Lebanon when the Arab Foreign Ministers convened in Cairo decided to send an inter-Arab force to Lebanon. Although these units included Sudanese, Saudi and Libyan troops, their actual impact remained marginal.\textsuperscript{61} The forces was primarily Syrian giving Syria the lion’s share in its control over Lebanon.

However, the Syrian-Lebanese Front rapprochement faced difficulties in the coming years. The Syrians attempted to dominate the different Lebanese groups, Muslim and Christian alike. Syrian policy did not enable one group or another to dominate, a policy which soon troubled the Lebanese Front.\textsuperscript{65} The Lebanese Front had hoped that the Syrian presence would crush the PLO-Muslim coalition and secure the Maronite position. Unfortunately, the Front’s aspirations were to be disappointed.

Regional events greatly affected the Maronites’ relationship with Syria. After the failure of the American effort to revive the Geneva Peace Process, Egyptian President Sadat decided on an independent initiative that led to Egypt’s rapprochement with Israel and to a breakdown in Syrian-Egyptian relations.\textsuperscript{67}

\textsuperscript{61} Evron, p. 52.

\textsuperscript{65} Ibid., p. 66.

\textsuperscript{67} Ibid., p. 67.
Isolated, Syria saw rapprochement with the PLO as to balance the Egyptian move. The Syrians refused the Maronites' insistence on disarming the PLO, and revived their contacts with the Palestinians. It is thus that the Maronites came to see the Syrian presence as a threat that could endanger their position in the country.

The tension between the Lebanese Front's and Syria pushed Bashir Gemayel to confront the Maronite factions calling for a rapprochement with Syria. President Sarkis who with Syrian support had taken on the role of broker between the Lebanese Front and Syria, was his first clash.

The Front and President Sarkis conflicted on three main issues: the Lebanese political system, the Palestinians in Lebanon and Lebanese relationship with Syria. In January 1977, the Front announced three basic resolutions for the Lebanese crisis: a federal system for Lebanon, the departure of the Palestinians and the withdrawal of Syrian troops. The three resolutions represented a challenge to Sarkis's authority. A supporter of the National Pact of 1943, President Sarkis could not abandon the political system that he had been elected to protect. On the other hand, he was not strong enough to confront the Syrians or the Palestinians and he used moderation in negotiating the role of the PLO and Syria with the Assad regime.


69 Ibid., pp. 95-96.
To Bashir Gemayel, President Sarkis as a puppet in the hands of the Syrian regime, and the weakness of the army and the Lebanese state apparatus were the main reasons for the Christian community’s inability to defeat the Palestinians. Bashir Gemayel went on to condemn Sarkis’s relationship with Syria and preparing for a showdown with the Syrian regime and its Christian allies and sympathizers.

Bashir Gemayel encouraged Israel to increase its military assistance to his forces and succeeded in establishing a regular, formal relationship with Israeli officers. Also, Menechem Begin’s rise to power in the spring of 1977 was to increase Israel’s cooperation with Bashir Gemayel since Begin was inclined to consider the dilemma of the Lebanese Christians as an “extension of Israel’s own dilemma.” He also made it clear that he considered the Christians of Lebanon as threatened by a Middle Eastern version of the Holocaust and that it was the duty of Israel to protect them. Thus, Israel’s assistance to the Bashir’s Lebanese Forces was increased and the Israeli government warned continuously that it would not allow a Christian defeat in Lebanon.

In March 1978, Israel invaded South Lebanon in response to Palestinians attacks on its northern borders. However, Israel’s main objective was the

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72 Cern, p. 139.
creation of a security belt with the collaboration of Major Saad Haddad’s forces. The invasion and the Israeli’s success at establishing a security zone revealed the Syrian Army’s reluctance to confront Israel militarily. In return, Bashir Gemayel saw the invasion as a stimulus to wage his war against the Syrian presence. Less than a month later, the Christian militias clashed with Syrian troops of the eastern parts of the country.

**Bashir Gemayel’s Drive to Consolidate his Authority**

The Lebanese Front’s rapprochement with Israel increased the tension between Bashir Gemayel and Frangieh since the latter believed that Lebanon could not antagonize the Syrian regime. Frangieh’s relationship with Assad had improved prior to the civil war, and that cooperation had upset Bashir. On May 23, 1978, Frangieh announced his decision to break with the Lebanese Front. A series of clashes between Frangieh’s forces under the leadership of his son, Tony Frangieh, and Bashir Gemayel’s forces ensued.

Bashir Gemayel opposed the Frangiehs because he wanted to eliminate the Maronite leaders seeking a Syrian or Arab solution to the Lebanese crisis, he also strove to bring the whole Maronite community under his leadership. He had always expressed his dissatisfaction with the traditional feudal leaders of his community, whom he believed were the basis of Maronite weakness in Lebanon.

Frangieh, for his part, decided to end the Kataeb and Lebanese Forces’ infiltration into the North of Lebanon, and, more precisely, into the Frangieh
stronghold of Zgharta. To him, the presence of Gemayel’s forces in his region presented a threat to the authority that his family considered their undisputed right. As a reaction to the assassination of a Kataeb leader in the north and Frangieh’s refusal to have his body buried in the area, Bashir Gemayel ordered his men to move against Frangieh’s summer resort in Ehden where Tony Frangieh, his wife and his daughters together with many other pro-Frangieh supporters were murdered. The attackers missed Tony’s son, Suleiman, who happened to be with his grandfather; later on Frangieh’s grandson would take over the leadership of the Maronite community in the North of Lebanon.

The Ehden affair marked the first real loss of cohesion in the Maronite community. It was the first military confrontation between two dominant Maronite factions, and it had a tremendous effect on Maronite unity. Frangieh decided to end the Phalangese’ and the Lebanese Forces’ presence in the North and with the help of Syrian troops, he succeeded in bringing the North under his control. This occurrence strengthened the Syrian-Frangieh alliance and enabled Syria to weaken the Front’s argument that the civil war was between Christians and Muslims, with the Syrians sitting with the leftist Muslim camp.

The Ehden affair reduced the areas under the Front’s authority to less than a tenth, inhabited by less than half the Christian population. In other words, it divided the Christian sector of Lebanon into two spheres of influence. Frangieh, a tribal leader and a sworn enemy of the Gemayel family, was vowed to avenge

73 Randal, p. 121.
his son’s death by killing his assassin, a tribal tradition. That condition was only one acceptable to him for setting his differences with the Lebanese Front.

On the other hand, Bashir saw the consolidation of his authority in what had become known as the “liberated areas or Eastern sector” as the only alternative to his loss of foothold in the North. However, his power in this sector was still challenged by the presence of the Syrians in Achafrich, Chamoun’s militia, and Sarkis’ authority. In July 1978, Bashir waged the battle to liberate Achafrich from the control of Syrian troops. His failure to achieve the Lebanese Front’s objectives there forced him to increase his pressure on the Israeli government to come to his rescue. Fortunately for him, future events on the regional scene strengthened the Christian front against the Syrians.

On September 17, 1978, Egypt and Israel signed the Camp David Accord that was to stop Egypt from participation in facets of the Arab-Israeli conflict and that strengthened Israel’s position vis-a-vis Syria. Since it was convinced that a Syrian victory in Lebanon would threaten its security and even its newly signed peace treaty, Israel increased its military aid to Bashir Gemayel and promised him that it would intervene if the Syrians used their air force against his militias.

As for President Sarkis, Syria’s harsh behavior against the Christian areas negatively weakened his alliance with Damascus. Unable to end the fighting through mediation and by limiting Syrian authority in Lebanon, Sarkis held a conference that brought Syria, Lebanon and the Arab states participating in the Arab deterrent force together to solve the Lebanese crisis. Even though the
resolutions adopted were favorable to the Syrian position, extending its mandate there for another six months, the conference did secure Syrian withdrawal from Achrafieh and other Christian areas.

The withdrawal of the Syrian army from Achrafieh, convinced Bashir Gemayel even more that in order to consolidate his authority he must unify the different Maronite political factions and militias. However, his plans for unification were challenged by Chamoun’s forces and Sarkis’ state machinery.

Unlike Frangieh, the Chamoun faction did not oppose Bashir Gemayel’s alliance with Israel. On the contrary, Chamoun had cooperated with Israeli earlier, and he had supported Bashir Gemayel’s appeals to the Israeli government. Rather Bashir Gemayel’s conflict with Chamoun resulted from a power struggle between the two factions, each bent on increasing its sphere of influence in the Christian enclave. On July 6 1980, Bashir Gemayel launched his attack against the NLP forces in Jbeil, Metn districts and Eastern Beirut. The successful operation lasted only one day.

The clashes of July 6th again reflected a loss of cohesion in the Maronite community, one which the community addressed. The members of the Lebanese Front limited the consequences of Bashir’s move and protected the relations between the Chamouns and the Gemayels, avoiding what had happened with the Frangiehs. Camille Chamoun, a realist, was in no position to oppose Bashir Gemayel’s rise to power and thus accepted Bashir’s supremacy. His
support for Bashir Gemayel allowed him to continue as President of the
Lebanese Front.

In control of the NLP and the army, Bashir Gemayel forced the remaining
militias in Eastern Beirut to join the Lebanese Forces or disband. 
Under pressure, the Guardians of the Cedars and the Tanzim militias joined the
Lebanese Forces. Bashir also would not tolerate the Armenian militias’
neutrality. He attacked the Armenian quarters, obliging its militia - the Tachnaq
- to disband. Thus, Bashir did to consolidate his power by centralizing the
military capabilities of the Maronite community under his command, aware that
the more the threat on the Maronites increased, the more the need for
unification was felt. The question remains as to whether he had really unified
his community?

Bashir’s Political Drive

In the following years, Bashir Gemayel embarked on a political quest that
enabled him to increase and strengthen his power in the Christian community,
and in Lebanon as well. First he consolidated his “Maronite mini-state” as a
power base. The vacuum created by the weakness of the Lebanese state
encouraged him to create alternative structures that could meet the demands on
any modern state. He then converted his militia into a regular organized army

24 Pertan, p. 256.
under his personal command, and he established a civil administration that covered all the needs of the community in the Eastern sector. According to Petran, "Gemayel's state could already boast its own army, police forces, and judicial, fiscal and tax systems, along with a few ministries."

The unification of power in the Eastern enclave had strengthened the Maronite position in the Lebanese civil war. In a document published in December 1980 under the title *The Lebanon We Want to Build*, the Front called for the creation of a smaller Lebanon. The Front argued that the formula of 1943 was no longer functional and demanded, on behalf of the Christians, that they keep their special status in the country regardless of demographic realities. In the document, they produced, the Front that the only solution to the Lebanese problem was the creation of a federal or confederal system that preserved a single unified Lebanon. The document also called on the Arab and Western countries to ensure Lebanese independence and to end the Syrian and Palestinian presence.

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75 Ibid., p. 255.
76 Ibid.
78 Ibid., p. 114.
The increasing power and confidence of the Lebanese Front, the weakness and isolation of the Assad regime and the growing Israeli-Maronite cooperation pushed Bashir Gemayel toward a showdown with Syria, with which he hoped to compel the international community to find a solution to the Lebanese problem. In order to extend his military and political presence in other Christian areas, Bashir took an adventurous step at the beginning of 1981, enhancing his influence in Zahle in the Bekaa valley.

Bashir Gemayel’s attempts to connect Zahle to the Christian area under his control threatened Syria since his move would alter the status quo in Lebanon and threaten Syria’s position in the area most critical to its interest. Thus, Syria reacted rapidly to the infiltration by the Lebanese Forces.

The Syrian offensive against Zahle exceeded the “red line” when the Syrian troops used the air force against the Maronite militias in Mount Sanin. Israel, in turn, regarded the Syrian move as a major threat to the prevailing status quo since the presence of Syrian troops on Sanin endangered the Maronite’s territorial base. Israel, finally, ordered its air force to attack the Syrian helicopters operating in the Zahle region.

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81 Ibid.
82 Rabizovich, p. 115.
83 Ibid.
However, the Israeli reaction to the Zahle crisis fell short of what Bashir Gemayel had expected, both because Israeli officials were indifferent to the Zahle crisis and because the coming Israeli elections in 1981 limited all actions. The deputy Minister of Defense, Mordechai Tzipori, suspected that the Maronites' intention was to draw the Israeli government into the Lebanese crisis. On the other hand, although Begin insisted that Israel should not abandon its Maronite allies, he also held that Israel should not be drawn into war on behalf of the Maronites.

Israel's Invasion of Lebanon

The Israeli invasion of Lebanon which began on June 6, 1982, had three goals: to destroy the PLO presence in Lebanon, to defeat the Syrian army and cause it to withdraw from Lebanon, and to sign a peace treaty with Lebanon. Ultimately, it led to the election of Bashir Gemayel as President of the Lebanese Republic.

Bashir Gemayel's relationship with Israel during the invasion faced serious setbacks. The first sign of disagreement was in his decision not to involve the Lebanese Forces in the invasion. While he was aware that the majority of the Muslims wanted the Palestinians and the Syrians out of Lebanon, he knew that they would not tolerate the participation of the Lebanese Forces in an Israeli invasion.
war. Bashir Gemayel was certain that Lebanon could not be ruled against the
will of half of its people and that he could be a strong president only if he
respected the beliefs and feelings of the Muslims.

In addition, Bashir Gemayel had to accept his father’s position on the
invasion. Pierre Gemayel did approve of the invasion, but only on condition that
the Lebanese Forces would not participate. Pierre Gemayel believed that the link
of the Lebanese Forces with Syria and the Arab world had to be maintained.
Moreover, although the Lebanese Front supported the Israeli move to expel Syria
from Lebanon, it still endorsed a degree friendly cooperation with the Assad
regime. According to Yair Evron, a specialist in Middle Eastern politics, “This
amicable policy seems to have stemmed from a realistic assessment of Syria’s
power and influence within Lebanon and possibly from the notion that it was
desirable to balance the growing Israeli power in their country.”

When the plan of the invasion was formulated, the US Government did not
accept the Israeli move into Lebanon. According to the Americans, the Israeli
invasion could endanger the withdrawal from Sinai and thus jeopardize the Camp
David Accord. The Reagan administration opposed the Israeli intention to forge

88 Hanf, p. 258.
87 Ibid.
88 Evron, pp. 150-151.
89 Ibid., pp. 151.
a radical change in Lebanon, which might endanger the US peace initiative in the Middle East.  

The United States joined the camp of Bashir Gemayel’s supporter late after he had proved to be capable of dominating over the unstable Lebanese state.  

However, the US administration saw the idea of an authoritarian Maronite central government that relied on Israeli support as a threat to the achievement of a durable solution in Lebanon and called on Bashir Gemayel to keep it secret while seeking to broaden the base of his following in Lebanon and in the region. By May 1982 however, the position of the Reagan administration had shifted to the Israeli plan. The US had come to believe that bringing a comprehensive solution to the Lebanese crisis could open an avenue in the Arab-Israeli peace process under its sponsorship.

The Israeli invasion, evacuated the PLO from Beirut and diminished the Syrian role in the country. On August 14, 1982, Bashir Gemayel was elected President of the Lebanese Republic with Israeli support but without major problems with Israel, for the decrease of PLO and Syrian influence in Lebanon,

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90 Rabinovich, p. 125.
91 Randal, p. 213.
92 Rabinovich, p. 144.
93 Ibid., p. 125.
rapprochement between the Lebanese Front leadership and the Sunni community emerged.\textsuperscript{94}

Once elected President, Bashir Gemayel became less tolerant of the Israeli officials who insisted that he pay his dues by signing a peace treaty with Israel. However, Bashir reasoned that any treaty between Lebanon and Israel was to be negotiated after the formation of a Lebanese government representing all the communities forming the body politic of the country, and thus he refused to abide by Israel’s demand. In order to balance the Israeli involvement in Lebanese affairs, Bashir considered closer relations with the US, Saudi Arabia and other Arab countries.

After the PLO was evacuated, the Reagan administration announced its peace plan for the Middle East, giving to the latent divergence of American and Israeli approaches on the Lebanese crisis and on the Middle East conflict.\textsuperscript{95} The US explicitly opposed Israel’s plans for Lebanon and encouraged Bashir Gemayel to continue his resistance to Israeli pressure to sign a separate peace treaty. However, on August 1982, Bashir Gemayel was assassinated.

\textbf{Conclusion}

By using force, negotiation and charismatic appeal, Bashir Gemayel succeeded in bringing the major Maronite groups under his leadership. However, his

\textsuperscript{94} Evron, p. 150.

\textsuperscript{95} Rabinovich, p. 146.
cooperation with Israel caused him problems with the Frangiehs and planted the seeds for future loss of unity. Although he tried to keep his relationship with Israel informal and secret, Bashir was not able to resist Israel's pressure on his government to sign a full peace treaty and a wartime alliance became an obstacle to his presidency. Recognizing that he would not be able to govern without Muslim support that he needed to balance his Israeli involvement, Bashir Gemayel drew closer to the US and to some conservative Arab states.

Bashir also demonstrated to the Lebanese that the days of old Lebanon with its traditional socio-political structure were over by insisting on being elected by the Lebanese parliament. Once elected, he looked forward to the traditional cooperation between Christians and Muslims in running the Lebanese state.

The rise of Bashir marked a new development in the Maronite community for he was able to overshadow its traditional political foundation. By establishing an autonomous organization -- the Lebanese Forces -- he created for himself an independent source of power, one that rivaled the traditional Maronite political establishment. After Bashir's assassination, the new radical leaders of the Lebanese Forces, with different conceptions of the Lebanese state and the community's overall setting, would continued its attempt to try to marginalize the old guarantors.

Thus, Bashir Gemayel thought that the best strategy to defend the position of his community was to unify its military potential and establish a strong foreign connection. But to what extent would this policy continue after his assassination?
on September 14, 1982, and what problems would the new leader or leaders face as they tried to assert control over the Maronite community? This question would be answered in the next chapter.
CHAPTER V

THE ONSET OF MARONITE FRAGMENTATION:

INTERNAL CONFLICT AND EXTERNAL PRESSURES

Given the circumstances that the Maronite community faced after Bashir Gemayel’s death, this chapter would try to answer the following research questions. First, were the contending Maronite groups able to form a united front under threat? Second, to what extent were they able to deal with the US, the Israel and Syrian pressures on their position?

To answer these two research questions stated above, President Amin Gemayel’s relationship with the different Maronite factions as well as with other Lebanese groups is investigated and his relationship with Israel and Syria is explored.

Amin Gemayel’s Drive to Consolidate his Position

In this section I will try to answer the research question that deals the Maronite foreign policy and its effect on their cohesion. The question is: to what extent were the Maronites able to deal with the US, the Israel and Syria pressures on their position?
After the assassination of Bashir, the Israeli army occupied West Beirut, in defiance of the agreement mediated by Philip Habib, US envoy, by which the Israeli government declared that it would not enter Beirut while securing the evacuation of the PLO from the city. On the other hand, the Lebanese Forces reacted fiercely to the assassination of its leader, entering the Palestinian camps of Sabra and Shatila, located in West Beirut, and massacring thousands of Palestinians on September 17, 1982. According to the Israeli commanders, a number of Palestinian commandos had remained in the camps. 96 Since the Israelis were not willing to risk the consequences of having their own men carry out the operation, they found no difficulty in persuading the commanders, of the Lebanese Forces to do it for them. 97

The Massacres revealed the fragmentation of the Maronite front on the crucial matters related to the overall setting of the community and the country. Within the Lebanese Forces, there were factions that blamed Israel for outmaneuvering them, but that only played a marginal role in influencing the decision making within the organization. The loss of Bashir had convinced many members of the Lebanese Forces that the organization had to follow a set strategy. Its leaders expressed their commitment to the total withdrawal of the Syrians and Palestinians from the country.

96 Hanf, p. 268.
97 Ibid.
 Worried that the massacre might endanger the election of the party’s candidate, Amin Gemayel, to succeed his brother Bashir, the Kataeb insisted on denying responsibility for the massacre.98 Publicly, the Kataeb leaders cleared the Lebanese Forces from any guilt, but future events revealed their dissatisfaction with the Lebanese Forces’ behavior.

On the 21th of September 1982, Amin Gemayel, defeated Camil Chamoun’s bid for the presidency and was unanimously elected was elected President by the Lebanese Parliament. Amin Gemayel’s election was the result of a national and international consensus absent from the election of his brother. Neither the Sunnite nor the Shiite communities represented by ex-Premier Minister Saeb Salama and the actual speaker of the house, Kamel al-Assaad, respectively had any objection to his candidacy.99 Muslim leaders felt that Amin was capable of a diplomatic style of leadership that was impossible for Bashir. Furthermore, Amin’s refusal to cooperate with Israel and his many pro-Arab stands made him appear capable of engineering Israel’s withdrawal from Lebanese territory.100

The Lebanese Christian community looked at Amin as the only leader who could bring an end to the prevailing crisis. Virtually all Maronite factions declared their willingness to cooperate with him, even “his brother’s arch-

98 Randal, p. 278.
99 Ibid.
100 Ibid.
enemies,” the Frangichs. While the Lebanese Forces had shown some reservations about Amin’s nomination and election, even they did declare their support for him when he assured them after his assurances that he would follow the same political line that Bashir had intended to pursue.

Emerging events soon threatened Amin’s authority and influence. Disagreement on Amin’s policy to ensure the withdrawal of foreign troops from Lebanon, came from all sides: Israel, the Lebanese Forces and Syria. Surrounded, Gemayel decided to rely on American assistance to end the Lebanese conflict. He was convinced that Washington was now prepared to play the role of Lebanon’s new protector and that the American administration felt that the Lebanese question had to be settled before a solution to the Palestinian problem could be found.

Amin Gemayel’s reliance on the US upset Israel since the latter hoped that Gemayel would negotiate a full peace treaty with it. His unwillingness to sacrifice his relations with the Arab world for a peace treaty similar to Camp David, led to the deterioration of the Maronite-Israel relationship.

With Israeli, Jordanian and Syrian disapproval of the US peace initiative, Reagan increased his efforts to achieve a peace treaty between Lebanon and

101 Ibid.
102 Ibid., p. 271.
103 Ibid.
104 Ibid., p. 272.
Israel. To Reagan only Lebanon could to compensate for the failure of the Reagan plan. On May 17, 1983, negotiations between Lebanon and Israel under the auspices of the US, ended with an agreement between the two countries.

The Maronites and the Syrian Comeback

Syria, by strengthened by an increase of military and diplomatic cooperation with the USSR, found itself in a better position to obstruct any agreement between Israel and Lebanon. Under the auspices of Damascus the “National Salvation Front,” comprising the major Lebanese groups opposed to any agreement with Israel, was formed on July 23rd, 1983. The Front consisted of Salmieman Frangieh, Walid Jumblat, Nabih Berri and Rashid Karami. With the participation of Syria, the Front moved militarily and diplomatically, against the areas controlled by Gemayel, the Kataeb and the Lebanese Forces hoping to annul the agreement with Israel and implement the “Syrian option,” to be discussed in the next section.

Even though the Lebanese parliament did adopt the treaty with Israel, Amin withheld his signature as conditions changed. The US failure at pressuring Syria to withdraw its troops from the country increased Gemayel’s suspicion about the “American Option”.

Israel, in turn, reacted to President Gemayel’s delay against the treaty by abruptly withdrawing its troops from the Shuf mountains without previous coordination with the Lebanese government.

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Prior to the Israel invasion, the Lebanese Forces and the Kataeb had no presence in the Shouf and the Druze militias ruled the area. In reaction to the assassination of Kamal Jumblat in 1976 many Christians were murdered by the Druze and a large number was displaced. Still, from 1976 until 1982, many Christians had continued to reside in the Shuf and live peacefully with the Druzes. The Israeli occupation of the Shuf, encouraged the Lebanese Forces to expand their influence to the area, with the backing of some Christians who had fled in 1976.

At that time, Bashir Gemayel, wanted to win the support of the Druze community, ordered his men to retreat. Immediately after his death, however, the Lebanese Forces attempted to take control of the Shuf. President Amin Gemayel, with the support of the Kataeb party and Chamoun, condemned the move of the Lebanese Forces’ move and argued that they should abide by Bashir Gemayel’s decision.

With the Israeli withdrawal from the Shuf, fighting erupted there between the Druzes and the Lebanese Forces. The Shouf war inflicted great damage on the Maronite political and military front. Since the Druzes felt that their very existence was threatened by the Shuf war, they reacted aggressively to the Lebanese Forces’ attempt to control the mountains, winning in their effort, the support of both Syria and Israel both of which had maintained close contacts with the Druzes, regarding them as valuable allies. In 1983, Israel wanted to use

106 Hanf, p. 276.
the Druzes to pressure the Lebanese government to sign the peace agreement, while Syria saw at them as the best opponents of the Maronites and the governmental forces combined, the defeat of which would render the peace agreement ineffective.107

In order to stop the massive offensive of the Lebanese left, sponsored by Syria against the Christian enclave, Amin Gemayel had no choice but to accept Saudi Arabia’s mediation. He, therefore, called for the first National Reconciliation Conference in Geneva. This step marked the President’s drift from the American orbit and the beginning of his rapprochement with the Assad regime.

The National Reconciliation Conference was held between 31 October and 8 November 1983. Amin presided at the Conference, with Camille Chamoun and Pierre Gemayel representing the Lebanese Front and Sulieman Frangieh, Walid Jumblatt, Nabih Berri and Rashid Karami representing the opposition. Syria and Saudi Arabia participated as mediators. The main topics discussed at the conference were the identity of Lebanon and its relationship to the Arab world, the 17th of May Agreement, the withdrawal of all foreign troops from the country and political reforms.108

Under the threat of losing their influence in Lebanon, Maronite leaders attempted to unify their position relative to the Muslims attempt to reform the

107 Ibid., p. 278.

Lebanese political system. An arch enemy of the Gemayels and their Christian allies, Frangieh refused to accept any compromise on the Maronite position in the Lebanese political equation. He declared that his opposition to Gemayel resulted from the latter's foreign and domestic policies and had nothing to do with the powers entrusted to him by the Constitution or the National Covenant.

Chamoun and Gemayel were on the defensive. To them, withdrawal of all foreign troops - Syrian, Palestinian and Israeli -- was an essential step in the search for a solution to the Lebanese crisis. They agreed on a close relationship with Syria, but without it threatening the sovereignty, independence and integrity of Lebanon. They insisted on renegotiating rather than terminating the May 17th Agreement since canceling it would antagonize Israel. Frangieh, on the other hand, attacked the agreement with Israel and called for the abrogation of the treaty. Again he advocated a pro-Syrian stand and called upon all other factions to join him.

Unfortunately, the conference failed to achieve any progress in solving the Lebanese crisis. The main reason behind this failure was the Maronite leaders' rejection of political reforms. Nevertheless, the conference achieved agreement on the Arab nature of Lebanon. It was also agreed that President Gemayel

\[109 \text{ Ibid., pp. 259-260.}
\[110 \text{ Hanf, p. 287.} \]
should be charged with renegotiating the May 17th Agreement with American support.\textsuperscript{111}

However, Gemayel’s insistence on renegotiating the treaty instead of canceling it led Syria and its allies to plan an offensive against the Lebanese army’s positions in the mountains and West Beirut. On February 3, 1984, after calling on President Gemayel to resign, the Shi'ite and Druze militias began a major offensive against the army in Beirut and Soak al Gharb in the Mountains. After three days of fierce fighting, West Beirut fell into the hands of the anti-Gemayel militias.\textsuperscript{112} Gemayel was then convinced that he had no choice but to abrogate the revised treaty with Israel, formulated on 29 February 1984.

Pressured by Syria, President Gemayel called for a Second Reconciliation Conference, which was held in Lausanne Switzerland between the 12th and 18th of March 1984. The leaders present at the conference were the same ones present at the previous conference and their positions on the various issues were the same. The results of the conference were again disappointing, for no major solution to the Lebanese crisis was achieved.

Although the Syrian-sponsored peace ended military confrontations between the Eastern and Western sectors of the country for a time, conflict within the Christian areas began to intensify over the disagreement between the President and the Lebanese Forces on the President Gemayel’s recent tilt towards Syria.

\textsuperscript{111}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{112}Ibid., p. 289.
Amin Gemayel's Conflict with the Lebanese Forces

In this part of the thesis I will try to answer the research question that relates threat to unity and the ability of the Maronites to correlate between the two. The question is the following: were the contending Maronite groups able to form a united front under threat?

The Lebanese Forces' conflict with Gemayel remained limited during his first year in office by the following factors. First, the Lebanese Forces' leadership was preoccupied with the appropriate measures to compensate the loss of Bashir Gemayel. Second, their plan to expand their sphere of influence into the Shuf reduced the possibility of confrontation with Gemayel since that area was outside his influence. Third, Pierre Gemayel was able, in many instances, to bridge the gap between his son Amin and the newly emerged leadership of the Lebanese Forces.

In the first months after the Lausane conference, President Gemayel was able to outmaneuver the Lebanese Forces with the support of the Kataeb. The Kataeb were alarmed at the growing political and military role of the Lebanese Forces and held the Forces responsible for their defeat in the Shuf. President Gemayel also received the moral support of the Vatican and of Father Boulos Naaman, President of the powerful Maronite Order of Monks.

113 Ibid., p. 297.
114 Ibid.
After the death of Pierre Gemayel, Elie Karam, a close relative of the Gemayels, assumed the leadership of the Kataeb, marking the continuance of the family’s dominance over the Party. In October 1984, Gemayel was able to secure the appointment of his nephew, Fouad Abi Nader, as the commander of the Lebanese Forces. It began to look as if he was well on his way to consolidating his control over the Maronite community.

In a move to reorganize the army and protect its unity, President Gemayel appointed Michel Aoun as the new Commander of the Lebanese Army on July 23, 1984, a move frowned upon by the Lebanese Forces. The tension between the Lebanese Forces and Aoun dated back to Bashir Gemayel’s era, when Aoun was a low-ranking officer. Both men had agreed that the Syrian and Palestinian presence in Lebanon should be eliminated and in 1979, they met secretly to coordinate between the Lebanese Forces and the Lebanese army.

On other issues, though, Aoun had his own views, which differed from Bashir’s. Aoun believed that in order for Lebanon to have a strong government and a stable political system, Christian politicians should allow a more capable and representative leadership to emerge, political parties should aggregate and articulate interests according to the needs of the population, and the Lebanese army should be independent of the political establishment.120

115 Sarkis Naoum, Michel Aoun: Houlih aou Wahoum (Beirut, 1992), p. 34.
116 Ibid., pp. 21-22.
However, Aoun had always rejected Bashir’s drive to undermine the Lebanese state and he refused to accept any formula other than the National Pact of 1943 as the basis of the Lebanese political system. In 1980, the tension between the two men reached its peak when Aoun was appointed Commander of Mount-Lebanon; there, he started to organize and mobilize his men against the Lebanese Forces and its presence in the region.\textsuperscript{117} Thus, the relationship between the two men remained tense. Aoun’s appointment severely alienated a major player in the Christian political game, the Lebanese Forces.

The Lebanese Forces looked askance at the foreign and domestic policies of the President and refused to disarm when requested. They refused to remove a check point at Barbara, north of the Christian controlled area where militiamen, from the North, who had left their homes after the Ehden incident of 1978, levied taxes on travelers and merchandise entering the Eastern enclave. These men were led by Samir Jaejae, a major participant in the massacre of the Frangiehs and Commander of the Lebanese Forces abortive Shuf operation.

From a poor rural background, Jaejae considered the Christians’ traditional political leadership a major obstacle to the establishment of his goal: “the security of the Christian people” in a federal system.\textsuperscript{118} On March 12, 1985, Jaejae and two other members of the Lebanese Forces, Karim Pakradousi and Elie Hourbelka, launched a military campaign -- the Intifada -- against the

\textsuperscript{117} Ibid., p., 30.

\textsuperscript{118} Hanf, p. 301.
Kataeb and the President and his supporters within the Lebanese Forces. Like Jaejae, Houbeika was a warlord from the peripheral areas of Zahle in the Beq'a valley.\textsuperscript{119} He was trained in Israel and had strong connections with Israeli officials. On the other hand, Karim Pakradouni, a member of the Kataeb party previous advisor to President Elias Sarkis and now advisor to the Lebanese Forces, earned a reputation as the political mind of the Maronite \textit{Intifada}. In contrast to his two colleagues, he was not a militia leader but had made his name through his political profession. The internal rebellion of the three came as a reaction to President Gemayel's drive to neutralize the Lebanese Forces. The rebels rejected the right of the president or of the Kataeb party to speak on the behalf of the Christian people.\textsuperscript{120}

The Maronite \textit{Intifada} was uniformly rejected. President Gemayel considered the rebellion as a move to undermine his authority and obstruct his rapprochement with Syria, while Kataeb leaders believed it as a move which would weaken the Party and take over its position and influence within the Maronite community. For his part, Dany Chamoun considered the \textit{Intifada} a threat to peace in Lebanon and to Christian unity.\textsuperscript{121} Finally, Frangieh

\textsuperscript{119} Ibid., p. 307.

\textsuperscript{120} Ibid., p. 300.

\textsuperscript{121} Joseph Khouyr Taouk, \textit{Al-Intifada} (Bishareh: Maktab al-Taousik, 1982), p. 70.
disapproved of the Intifada considering it an Israeli plot to obstruct Syria's efforts to find a solution to the Lebanese crisis.  

The rebellious Lebanese Forces, first attempted to strengthen their control of Damour, Iklim al Kharoub and South Sidon, from which the Christian community had been displaced during the first years of the civil war. Seeking to avoid a recurrence of the Shuf events of 1983, the government ordered the Lebanese Forces to retreat and negotiated an agreement with Druze leader Walid Jumblat and Nasserist militias in Sidon to send a mainly Muslim battalion of the Lebanese Army into the region.  

However, an offensive by Muslim militias finally obliged the Lebanese to withdraw their troops from the region; and the Christian population was scattered, either to eastern Beirut or to the security zone under the control of Christian Major Saad Haddad. In consequence, relations between the Government and the Kataeb on the one hand and the Lebanese Forces on the other became even more strained. The former held the Lebanese Forces responsible for unleashing another disaster that lead to another "mass exodus of Christians".  

Yet watching the rising authority of Hafez, Jaejac and President Gemayel, they found themselves facing the same threat. On May 9, 1985, a rebellion led by

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122 Taouk, 102.
123 Hanf, p. 301.
124 Ibid., p. 302.
Elie Houbeika took place within the Lebanese Forces. Houbeika was able to secure his election to the post of Commander of the Lebanese Forces after producing evidence that Jaajae, with Pakradouni’s mediation, had signed a written declaration with the state. In this declaration, Jaajae purportedly recognized that the legal institutions of the state, agree to hand over ports and militia’s checkpoints to the government and accepted President Gemayel’s rapprochement with Syria.\textsuperscript{126} The command council thus decided that Jaajae should remain Chief of Staff only handling military matters while leaving the political command to the newly elected Commander, Houbeika.\textsuperscript{125} Jaajae abided by the council’s decision and awaited the right time to topple Houbeika.

The new Commander of the Lebanese Forces, Houbeika, proposed a rapprochement with Syria that would foster Lebanese national reconciliation, making his new commitment to the Syrian option was a turning point in the history of the Lebanese Forces. In a step to dissipate non-Arab influences in Lebanon, he severed all links with Israel, and in July, 1985, he shut down the Lebanese Forces’ liaison office in Jerusalem.\textsuperscript{127} Convinced that President Gemayel could not implement the Syrian-proposed peace, Assad then invited the leaders of the three most powerful militias -- Jumblatt, Berri and Houbeika -- to meet in Damascus at the end of September and discuss a comprehensive peace

\textsuperscript{125} Abou Khalil, p. 353.

\textsuperscript{126} Hanf, p. 306.

\textsuperscript{127} Hirro, p. 117.
agreement for Lebanon. After long and difficult negotiations, the three militia men agreed on the features of a new Lebanese Constitution. Their agreement became known as the Triple Agreement or Damascus Accord and in no time led to a military and political crisis in the Eastern Christian sector of the country.

In reaction, most of the Maronite factions refused political reform that curtailed their influence in the country. For instance, they refused to secularize the political system and to reduce the power of the Maronite President. The Kataeb considered Houbicka a threat to the Christian position in the country and declared the agreement as evidence of a Christian defeat. President Gemayel rejected the agreement and demanded a broad-based participation in any negotiations to reform the political system of the country.

The army command, in its majority Maronite also rejected the agreement, showing no desire to be “rehabilitated” by Syrian officers and thus expressing its willingness to resist any attempt in that direction. Similarly, Chameau, Frangieh and the Church also spoke out against the agreement. However,

129 Ibid., p. 309.
130 Hirro, p. 309.
131 Hanf, p. 309.
132 Hanf, p. 119.
under Syrian pressure and after meeting Assad, Frangieh ultimately changed his position to a tacit acceptance of the accord.  

Opposed by the major forces within the eastern sector, Houbeiaka took strict measures to pressure President Gemayel, the Kataeb and the Lebanese Forces to accept the agreement. He moved military units loyal to him within the Lebanese Forces against those which followed the President and the Kataeb. He also imposed a strict blockade against the main branch of the Kataeb in Soufi and banned the Kataeb’s official newspaper, “al Aamal”. 

As was to be expected Gemayel, Jaejae and the Kataeb entered into an alliance to obstruct Houbeiaka’s move to impose the agreement. On January 14, 1985, they moved their forces against Houbeiaka’s men, after fierce fighting, Houbeiaka was defeated and obliged to leave the Eastern areas. The Damascus Accord lost its essential Maronite element. 

As a result of Houbeiaka’s departure, Jaejae became the sole Commander of the Lebanese Forces, and the Syrian plan faced a stalemate until the end of Gemayel’s term in 1998. However, Syria continued to pressure its Lebanese allies to isolate Gemayel. Cabinet meetings were suspended and in addition to Berri and Jumblatt, moderate Sunni politicians such as Karami and Sibh joined

133 Abou Khalil, p. 382.
134 Abou Khalil, p. 378.
135 Hirro, p. 121.
a boycott of sorts against the Presidency. In addition, Syrian troops and their allies reactivated the different military fronts separating the Eastern sector from the other parts of the country.

The Coming Presidential Elections and Maronite’s Confusion

On June 1st 1987, the Maronite community lost another of its prominent leaders, former President Chamoun. His death had opened an avenue for the emerging leadership to dominate. Now that Houbeika had been removed from the power equation in the Christian areas, the struggle for leadership was limited to President Amin Gemayel and the Kataeb on the one hand and the Lebanese Forces under the leadership of Samir Jaajae on the other.

In order to increase his influence in the Christian community, Jaajae organized, structured and institutionalized the Lebanese Forces. He also tried to continue the work Bashir Gemayel had begun, providing the components of a self-sufficient, modern Christian state, with its own army, administration and well-defined population.

On the other hand, reactingivate his rapprochement with Syria, President Gemayel announced his willingness to discuss political reforms under Syrian sponsorship. In January, negotiations on the Lebanese-Syrian relationship and on political reforms in Lebanon began in Damascus between Lebanese and

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136 Hanf, p. 310.

Syrian officials, but again, the refusal of the Maronites to consider serious steps towards achieving reform ended the negotiations.

Syria was then convinced Prime Minister Karami to resign, along with Berri and Jumblatt, to resign and to call for the President’s resignation. At the request of Muslim leaders, a request that President Gemayel considered unconstitutional, Syrian troops then entered West Beirut. The request was ostensibly made to contain a struggle between the Shiite militia -- Amal - and the Druze PSP militia for the control of West Beirut. Syria’s entrance alarmed the majority of Maronites for obvious reasons.

As the presidential elections of 1998 were drawing near, it became clear that the Syrian government had a strong hand in Lebanon. During an Arab League meeting in Algeria in June 1988, President Gemayel met Syrian President Assad; the two Presidents decided that Gemayel would produce a number of names from which Assad would choose Lebanon’s next president. Hoping to impose as ally as the next president, Gemayel and Jvaej coordinated their efforts to impose a president they endorsed. Gemayel, further, refused to send the list agreed upon directly to Syrian officials, relying instead on US mediation, which upset the Syrian government. Damascus reacted by announcing its

138 Elie Salem, At Khayarat, p. 446.
139 Ibid.
140 Pakradouni, Min Harab, p. 11.
support for Frangieh’s candidacy, even though he made no reference to reform.\(^{141}\)

The Lebanese Forces blamed President Gemayel for his slowness in sending the list, observing also that the list sent differed from the one which they had negotiated with him and which the US ambassador had refused to convey without the support of the Lebanese Forces.\(^ {142}\) However, when the list was renegotiated by the two parties, it included four names – Manuel Youness, Rene Mouawad, Pierre Helou and Michel Eddie: Syria rejected it and insisted on Frangieh.

Syria’s insistence on Frangieh led to an understanding between President Gemayel, Jaejae and General Aoun, the Army Commander, by which they would prevent the parliamentary session of August 18, 1988 to elect a new president. As there was no quorum, the Syrian strategy failed and rivals of Syria in Lebanon began to regard Article 62 of the Constitution which gives the government executive power if the presidency is vacant as the best solution. For Muslims, the Hoss Cabinet would be regarded as the only constitutional government.\(^ {143}\) The Christians considered the Hoss government resigned and it was necessary for a Maronite to form a temporary government which would prepare the parliament to elect a president.

\(^{141}\) Hanf, p. 568.

\(^{142}\) Pakradouni, *Min Harab*, p. 15.

\(^{143}\) Hanf, p. 569.
The formation of a transitory government was not the final decision. On September 15, Richard Murphy, an American envoy, negotiated a solution to the crisis with Syria. Syria agreed to stop emphasizing reforms, and, in return, Deputy Mikhael al Daher would be elected president. The reaction of Christian leaders to the US deal was unanimous unified. Church leaders, the army commanders, the Christian deputies, Gemayel and Jaaje -- all rejected Daher's candidacy and demanded free elections without outside interference.

To save the situation, President Gemayel visited Damascus to negotiate a solution with President Assad. Gemayel hoped to persuade Assad to accept the extension of his (Gemayel's) mandate for another two years if they were unable to reach a solution on the next president. Worried that the president would achieve an understanding with the Syrians which might undermined their position, Jaaje and Aoun met and decided to undercut any chance of a deal between the two presidents. However, Gemayel was unable to change Assad's position on the elections, and returned to Lebanon convinced that Daher would be the best choice. In Bekrki, the deputies awaiting his return, rejected the election of Daher.

144 Ibid.
145 Ibid., p. 570.
146 Elie Salem, p. 505.
147 Hanf, p. 571.
Under an ultimatum from Aoun and Jumblatt, Gemayel dissolved the Hoss government that he had intended to expand. The community's struggles and the pressures from neighboring states had all reduced the power of the presidency. Unable to persuade the Muslim establishment to participate in a government headed by a Maronite, President Gemayel appointed General Aoun Prime Minister with six other officers representing the major religious sects of the country as cabinet members.

Conclusion

The election of Amin Gemayel to succeed his brother Bashir, seemed to have gave the Maronites the chance to reassert the success they achieved as a result of the Israel invasion of 1982. With the defeat of the Syrian troops and the withdrawal of the PLO from Lebanon, President Gemayel began his term as a strong President who had the support of his community and the ability to unite the country under his authority.

However, domestic, regional and international events led to the deterioration of this unity. The tension between President Gemayel and the Lebanese Forces on the one hand and the mobilization of the Muslim camp under Syrian support on the other, decreased Gemayel's influence over his community as well as over the country. Syria's comeback, Israel's disengagement of its Maronite allies and

148 Hanf, p. 570
America's failure to impose a final solution to the Lebanese crisis left Gemayel incapable of influencing coming events.

The increase of the Syrian-Muslim threat between 1982 and 1988 increased, created deep internal conflicts between the Maronite factions, leading many times to fierce military confrontations. No possibility of unity arose by which those disparate groups could counter the dangers they perceived.

The situation was exacerbated by another phenomenal development within the community: the decline of traditional leadership. The deaths of Pierre Gemayel and Camille Chamoun opened the Maronite political arena to new leaders such as Aoun and Jarejae who did not owe their influence within their communities to family ties. Thus, the old socio-political structure was being swept away with no permanent replacement.

The drive to centralize Maronite military and political power, begun by Bashir Gemayel, resulted in a fierce inter-community struggle that seriously undermined the Maronite community's position within the Lebanese equation. While trying to manipulate their foreign allies, the Maronites, in turn, were brought under the influence of those who had intervened in the Lebanese civil war for their own interests. Thus, instead of contributing to the consolidation of their position through external connections, their policy was a major cause of their fragmentation. As has been seen, the rise of Syrian influence during Gemayel's period, was welcomed by two Maronite leaders, Frangieh and
Houbieka. Neither of these men, however, could be considered a spokesman for the mainstream Maronite community.

In such unfavorable conditions, the Maronites started another era of their political history. Thus, to what amplitude did the appointment of General Michel Aoun affect Maronite unity?
CHAPTER VI

DISUNITY, DESTRUCTION AND DEFEAT

In this chapter, I will try to answer the following research questions. First, did the Maronites contain their internal divisions under threat situation? Second, did they limit the effect of foreign interference on their position in the country? Third, in which way did the result of the recent civil war affect Maronite unity and position in the country?

My plan to answer these three questions is by pinpointing the basic issues around which the two leaders, Michel Aoun and Samir Jaejue, as well as other prominent Maronite figures disagreed and I will reveal the effect of foreign connection on their ability to bring the community under their own command.

Aoun’s Appointment and Maronite Disillusionment

In this section of the chapter, I will handle the research question dealing with foreign interference and its effect on the group unity. Did the Maronites limit the effect of foreign interference on their position in the country?

The appointment of Aoun was not welcomed by many Lebanese and members of the international community which threatened the status quo in Lebanon but the strongest opposition came from General Aoun’s own

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community since his appointment further divided the Maronites.  

Jaejae, for one, hoped to be included in a transitional government and saw Aoun’s appointment and the formation of military government as an obstacle to the Lebanese Forces’ influence in the Eastern sector.

At the root of Jaejae’s negative attitude towards Aoun, however, was a major ideological dispute between the two parties. Aoun believed that he represented the state, while Jaejae believed that he represented the “Christian people.”

While Aoun’s main objective was to restore a centralized Lebanese political system, Jaejae called for a federal system in which the Christians would have a certain amount of autonomy. The Church leaders and Maronite Deputies, for another, were also united in their concern about the future of the Maronites under Aoun’s leadership. They supported Gemayel’s decision only an attempt to avoid squabbles.

Similarly, the Muslim political establishment was disappointed in Aoun’s appointment. In fact, Muslim leaders considered Aoun’s appointment as unconstitutional since they held that the Hoss Government was the only one entitled to be termed executive. In consequence, the three ministers chosen by Aoun to represent the Muslim groups resigned from his military government.


\[150\] Hanf, p. 598.
depriving the Aoun government of its inter-confessional character. In any case, the Muslim community considered it as a Christian government with Christian aims.

The US and Syria were also disappointed in Aoun’s appointment. The US had no intention of backing a military rule in Lebanon, and its tense relationship with Aoun in previous years made them fear that Aoun would provoke a crisis in the country and the region, one that the US was trying to avoid. For its part, Iraq saw Aoun’s appointment as an opportunity with which Syria’s plan for Lebanon might be disturbed.

Finally, Syria saw Aoun’s rise to power as preventing the election of a pro-Syrian candidate and interpreting it from the point of view of leftist militias, many of which were Syria’s clients. That is why, when Sulieman Frangieh announced his candidacy in 1988, Syria supported him.

**Aoun and the Arab initiatives**

Jaejac reacted to Aoun’s appointment by asking over President’s Gemayel militia, which had controlled the Matn region for years, on the 4th of October 1988. Aoun did not oppose Jaejac’s move. Since Aoun and Gemayel had always been on bad terms and the General knew that Amin Gemayel’s decision appointing him was based only on a desire to weaken the Lebanese Forces.

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Looking for a solution to the crisis in Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, with US support, launched a mediation effort to elect a new president. This initiative called for the Christian deputies to meet in Bkerki and, with the approval of Patriarch Sfeir, to choose five Maronite candidates from which Syria would select one.

Reacting to this prospect, Aoun included Jaejae in his government and attempted to incorporate the Lebanese Forces within the Lebanese army. But Jaejae refused both offers, specifying that other members of the Lebanese Forces be included in the government too and refusing to merge his forces with Aoun’s army. When the Saudi initiative failed, Aoun dropped his initiative and became more concerned than ever to challenge the Lebanese Forces’ influence in the Eastern enclave.152

In January 1989, General Aoun, Prime Minister Hoss and Speaker of the House, Huseini, were invited to a meeting of the Arab League in Tunis to work out a complete solution to the presidential impasse, to unify the Lebanese state machinery, and to find a final solution to the actual crisis. Aoun saw in the invitation an opportunity to impose himself as the head of the legitimate Lebanese Government, the only presidential candidate able to restore peace and order in Lebanon.

The Christian sector prepared for the meeting and coordinated between different political factions. The Lebanese Front, headed by the Kataeb’s new

152 Naoum, p. 67.
president George Saadeh, Samir Jaejae, Dany Chamoun and other influential Maronite figures submitted a list of demands for General Aoun to propose at the conference.133

Even though the conference failed to find a solution to the Lebanese crisis, it had a great impact on coming events. Encouraged by his achievements at the conference and with what he believed was built Arab support for his plans, Aoun initiated a process which would consolidate his authority over the Christian heartland. The reasons behind Aoun’s success were mainly the victory of Iraq in the Gulf War and the successful comeback of Arafat and the PLO to the Arab scene.154 Iraq and the PLO saw Aoun as a valuable ally to use against the Syrian presence in Lebanon.

Aoun’s Attempt to Consolidate his Powers

On his return from the meeting in Tunis, Aoun immediately took action to consolidate his power. In February 1989, he moved units of the Lebanese Army against Jaejae’s forces in different parts of the Christian enclave. Better equipped, organized and trained, Aoun’s troops defeated the Lebanese Forces in a few days. However, domestic and international pressure primarily from the Maronite Patriarch and a group of Christian leaders, made Aoun end a campaign that could have led to the complete defeat of the Christian militia. Convinced

133 Ibid., p. 69.
154 Naoum, p. 71.
that his move had achieved its aim, Aoun agreed to a cease fire after the militia had returned Beirut Harbor’s Fifth Basin to the army.

Aoun’s campaign against the Lebanese Forces increased his popularity with the different religious groups in the country. Ironically, the principal support for Aoun against the militia came from the Christians themselves. After Bashir Gemayel’s death, the population in the Christian areas suffered from the Lebanese Forces’ arbitrary methods of dominance and control. The high taxes imposed on them by the Lebanese Forces and the Forces departure from Bashir’s line of thinking and behavior also alienated them.155

Unable to convince Syria and the Lebanese Muslim leadership to support his candidacy for the presidency, Aoun called upon all the militias loyal to Syria to close their unofficial ports and hand them over to the Lebanese government. He even declared a war of liberation against the Syrian presence in Lebanon. The General was convinced that the Arab support of the Arabs after the Tunis conference and the support of the French, he could impose a solution for the Lebanese crisis.

The Lebanese Forces were not intent liberating Lebanon, Jaejae had always insisted that the Muslims had to liberate themselves; but Jaejae did consider Aoun’s war as a huge threat to the achievement of Christian autonomy. Jaejae also saw no point in challenging a far superior Syria.156 On the other hand, when

156 Hanf, p. 598.
Syria increased pressure on the Christian enclave, the Lebanese Forces fought with the army, but without a formal, or public announcement from Jaejae.\textsuperscript{157}

The traditional Maronite political leadership, the Kataeb and the Church, rejected the General's strategy to liberate the country, representing a conservative style of leadership which had always called for a peaceful settlement to the Lebanese civil war. Naturally, the Frangiehs, traditionally close to the Syrians, disapproved of Aoun's initiatives. Since they perceived Aoun's military as a threat to their own influence and goals, they met in Bkerki in June 1989 and called for a cease fire, declaring that Lebanon must be liberated by negotiation rather than force and requesting that Syria and Aoun to establish order in the regions they each controlled.

Aoun's war of liberation provoked two opposing bodies of opinion within the Christian community. The one which included the Lebanese youth mainly rejected any return to the status quo and thought regarded Aoun's prospect of success to be high. The other view, held by the Maronite political establishment, believed that the status quo would preserve Maronite influence and found the probable heavy losses of a war of liberation unacceptable.

The Arab League's first move to end Aoun's war of liberation was a conference held in Casablanca on May 23, 1989. This conference showed that the Arab countries were not prepared to accept Syria's increased influence and

\textsuperscript{157} Ibid.
exclusive involvement in Lebanon. As a result, a committee of three representatives, Saudi Arabia, Algeria and Morocco – the Troika -- was formed to follow the Lebanese crisis and find a solution for.

The Making of the Taif Accord: A Maronite Disaster

The Troika’s first move was to issue an ultimatum to Iraq to stop supplying Aoun and the Lebanese Forces with arms, while ordering Syria to observe a cease fire. It also authorized the Deputy Secretary General of the League, the Algerian Lakhdar Brahimi, to work out a solution between the different parties of the conflict. Brahimi declared that the objective of his mission was not only to lift the blockade on the Christian enclave, but to liberate Lebanon from all foreign troops.

After a long process of negotiation by Brahimi and the parties engaged in the conflict, the Troika announced its failure to find a satisfactory compromise for the crisis in Lebanon. Its report revealed basic points of disagreement between Syria and the Troika on the question of Lebanese Sovereignty and the future of Syrian-Lebanese relations. This report was interpreted as a victory for Aoun since it moved the Lebanese problem from purely Syrian hands to those of the Arab community.

198 Ibid., p. 578.
199 Ibid., p. 579.
200 Ibid.
Unfortunately for General Aoun, these promising signs did not last long. Syria reacted fiercely to the Troika’s report by increasing its military offensive against the areas not under its command. Assad realized that Syrian defeat at the hands of a small Lebanese faction might incite a large portion of his own populace. Also at stake were his control and influence in Lebanon, assets in the inevitable Middle East peace process. Further more, the Syrian President was aware that to the US his country was the main player in Lebanese affairs. His desire to get on with the peace process, made the U.S. administration more flexible with him concerning the war in Lebanon. In other words, the Maronites had lost since Assad was able to mobilize the international and regional communities to his side.

The Troika thus had to resume its work, taking Syria’s interests into prime consideration. On September 13th 1988, it announced a new proposal calling for the Lebanese parliament to meet in Taif, Saudi Arabia, to discuss political reforms and to draw up a document of national reconciliation. It also called for the creation of a security committee formed of Lebanese parties to observe the cease fire. Syria, and all the other parties involved in Lebanon, including Aoun, announced their acceptance of the proposal.

Aoun’s acceptance revealed his inability to engineer Syrian withdrawal from the country. However, he considered that his achievement lay in Arabizing the Lebanese conflict. Furthermore, Aoun believed that he would be able to influence the Lebanese Christian deputies in discussing the political reforms to
re applied in Lebanon. His demands can be summarized as follows: the withdrawal of Syrian troops from Lebanon should take supremacy over the issue of political reforms and political reforms should not touch the power of the executive. All the Christian factions agreed on these points. Ironically Aoun’s thoughts did reflect Christian demands, but he was not accepted as a player by Christian leaders.

After two weeks of negotiations in Taif, the deputies came up with a reconciliation document that became known as the Taif Accord. This Accord represented a general agreement between the majority of the Lebanese factions and marked the end of Maronite dominance over the Lebanese political system by stipulating constitutional reforms giving Muslim groups an increased share in ruling the country.

The Maronite leadership was divided into three groups on the terms of the agreement. The first group comprised the Maronite deputies who were present in Taif and had accepted the agreement, albeit with some reservations. Their position was caused by several factors. For instance, this agreement was negotiated in a crisis resulting from Aoun’s war of liberation and had strong

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101 Naoum, p. 94.

102 The main issues dealt with in the Taif are: First, shifting executive power from the president to the Council of Ministers; second, strengthening the council of Ministers; third, strengthening the post of speaker of Parliament; fourth, equality of representation between the Christians and Muslims in the Parliament; fifth, increased level of administrative decentralization; sixth, abolishing of confessionalism; seventh, scaling down Syrian presence in Lebanon.
Arab and international support. There was, thus, little room for the Maronite deputies to maneuver. They realized that the regional and international balance of power was not in their favor and considered the continuance of Aoun’s war a major threat to the security of the Christian enclave. Thus, with the removal of Aoun in mind and with the support of the Patriarch, they accepted Taif, since, by its application, a new president would be elected and Aoun’s function ended.

The Maronite deputies’ acceptance of the Taif Accord could not be obtained without the consent of the Kataeb Party’s Secretary General, George Saadeh. For his part, Saadeh had always kept Aoun and Jaecie informed of what was happening during the conference. When he realized that Aoun’s demands could not be achieved, he shifted towards accepting the Accord. However, he remained unwilling to accept without receiving a green light from Jaecie. When Jaecie gave his tacit approval, Saadeh backed the agreement and was nicknamed “the Godfather of the Taif Accord”.

The second group included Samir Jaecie, Dany Chamoun, Karim Pakradowani, and all members of the Lebanese Front. During the Front’s first meeting on Taif, Pakradowani invited Front members to support Saadeh. Jaecie nominated Chamoun as the Front’s candidate for president, which Chamoun accepted. Later on, however, Chamoun changed his mind about the Taif Accord when he found out that his chances of being elected had vanished.


164 Naoum, p. 99.
The third group included Maronite leaders who rejected the Taif Agreement, such as General Aoun, Amin Gemayel and Raymond Edde. These men refused to discuss political reforms before the withdrawal of all foreign troops from the country. They adamantly rejected any compromise sponsored by Syria that would weaken the Maronite position in the country. Maronite unity, therefore, remained as elusive as ever.

The Post-Taif Christian Leadership and the Downfall of Aoun

In this part, I will look for answers to the research question that relates threat situation to the drive of leaders to unify their community. The question is: did the Maronites contained their internal divisions under a threat situation?

As decided in the Taif Accord, the deputies met at the Kulayyat Airport in North Lebanon for the presidential elections. They elected Rene Mouawad as Lebanon’s new President. Not a party member and coming from the northern Christian community traditionally favorable to Syrian influence, Mouawad easily won the support of the community’s leaders with his appeal to Lebanese nationalism and his support of Bashir Gemayel in the 1982 election.

Jaejac attempted to convince Aoun to accept Mouawad’s election and to allow him to reside in Baabda.\textsuperscript{105} He argued that by not allowing Mouawad to come to the Eastern enclave, the new President would be even more under the

\textsuperscript{105} Ibid., p. 103.
influence of Syria and its allies.166 Jæjue felt that if Mouawad was in Baabda with an army commanded by Aoun and with a strengthened Lebanese Forces, the Christians could weaken the Syrian initiative to control Lebanon.167 However, Aoun would not accept any authority that he considered illegitimate.

Prior to Mouawad’s election, Aoun had issued a decree dissolving the Lebanese Parliament and had called on his supporters to express their refusal of the elections by demonstrating in front of the Baabda Palace. On the evening Mouawad was elected, demonstrators loyal to Aoun gathered in Bkerki and forced the Patriarch to kiss a picture of Aoun. In consequence, the Patriarch left Bkerki for the North, leaving Aoun without a religious presence in his region. These events pushed the Patriarch closer to an understanding with the Christians who backed the Taif Accord.

Mouawad’s moderation in response to the Lebanese crisis increased his popularity within Maronite areas and even in Aoun circles. Yet his refusal to eliminate Aoun affected his relationship with Damascus negatively. On November 22nd, 1989 while celebrating Lebanon’s forty-sixth year of Independence, he was assassinated.

Deputy Elias Hourawi from Zahle in the Bekaa valley and also without party affiliation, was elected to succeed Mouawad. A realist, Hourawi recognized that the best way to increase security and ensure the stability of his regime was to

166 Ibid.

167 Ibid.
come to some settlement with Syria. Coming from the Bekaa under Syrian control since 1976, and lacking traditional Maronite political affiliations, he was amenable to Syrian influence. He knew that the game was in Syrian hands and that no solution could be achieved unless it met the expectations of the Syrian plan for Lebanon.

Hourawi decided to deal with Aoun quickly, even if he had to use military action, including the help of the Syrian Army to dislodge him. Having dismissed Aoun as the Commander-in-Chief, the president gave him a forty-eight hour ultimatum to leave the presidential palace or face the use of force.

Here again, the key players in the Lebanese game - the Maronite Patriarch, Maronite leaders, the US, the USSR, the Vatican, and Syria - objected to the use of force against Aoun. Israel too warned Syria not to move against the Christian enclave. Still, the downfall of Aoun's influence came about in a different way.

On February 2, 1990, conflict between the Lebanese Forces and Aoun's troops erupted in the Eastern enclave. The causes of this conflict were diverse, but the major one was related to the power struggle for leadership of the Maronite community. Aware that the fighting between them was inevitable, Ja'afar prepared himself politically and militarily for such an occurrence.

Politically, he received the approval of the Taif group, Syria and the US for his move against the General. Militarily, his well-organized, well-trained and well-equipped militia, which had been assisted by Iraq and Israel, had been on the alert for some time.
Aoun’s frustrating war with the Lebanese Forces led to his loss over control of half of the Eastern enclave. His failure also increased his political isolation. His army was tired and depressed; many of his officers and soldiers were either killed or had joined the Lebanese army troops serving under Hourawi’s command.

The Syrians did not move against Aoun, because they wanted the war between the two Christian factions to weaken the Eastern enclave, strengthening Assad’s control. Assad did not want a total victory for the Lebanese Forces and allowed Pro-Syrian militias to give Aoun limited assistance ensuring his survival but not his victory. Furthermore, Assad conceived that Aoun’s departure from Baabda would allow Hourawi to move to the presidential palace where he could work with less Syrian influence. Time was needed to ensure appropriate conditions for Hourawi’s residence. These conditions included not only the Aoun’s defeat and the weakening of the Lebanese Forces, but also Syria’s own entrance into the Baabda region.

The Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and the US response to it greatly affected the Lebanese crisis. For sending Syrian troops to defend Saudi Arabia from any Iraqi threat, Assad received a green light to enter the Eastern enclave and remove General Aoun from Baabda. Syrian troops, leftist militias and Lebanese army troops loyal to Hourawi moved against Aoun’s troops on October 13th, 1989. However, Aoun escaped to the French embassy and then to France where he
received political asylum but was constrained to house arrest for a period of five years.

Aoun’s defeat was followed by another Christian loss. On October 21st, Dany Chamoun and his family were murdered. Chamoun was an important supporter of Aoun who opposed the Lebanese Forces, the Haurawi government and the Syrian presence in Lebanon. This event would lead, in the future, to the downfall of Jaejac, who was accused of masterminding the operation.

Aoun’s failure to mobilize Arab support during the first days of his liberation war had cost him dearly. His inability to understand the complexity of politics in Lebanon, with their regional and international dynamics, decreased his chances of success. Also, his radical style of leadership drew opposition towards his policies at a time when moderate leadership was needed to ensure peace and order in Lebanon.

The Election of 1992: The Maronites Marginalized

In this section I will introduce the question of defeat and its effect on the Maronites. The concerned research question is: in which way did the result of the civil war affect Maronite unity and position in the country?

With the removal of Aoun, the Haurawi government consolidated its power over the Lebanese territories. With success after success, a national government headed by Rashid Karami’s brother, Omar, was formed. This cabinet, the largest in the history of Lebanon, included all Lebanese parties and factions
except for Arsan and Houzballah. However, the imbalance in the government was clear enough to instigate Christian protest. The composition of the government included only three strongly anti-Syrian ministers, those of the Kataeb and the Lebanese Forces. Jaejae thought that the Christians were underrepresented and called for the formation of a smaller government in which Christians would be better represented. Thus, disappointed with the governmental imbalance, Jaejae resigned and Saade boycotted the cabinet meetings.

The government continued to pursue its policies without any modification, signing a treaty of brotherhood with Syria—a treaty that organized and legalized every aspect of Syro-Lebanese relations, from economic to social to security matters. Following that, the Lebanese government, with the help of the Syrian army, disarmed the PLO, freeing Beirut from the militias and disarming them. It was now in a position to hold the first Lebanese elections since 1974.

The Lebanese political establishment was divided over the planned election. Even though a number of Muslim factions did not want the elections held, the strongest opposition came from the Maronites. The Maronite political establishment generally rejected the elections although a number of Maronites looked forward to participating. The Maronites who participated were divided into two groups. First, there were the traditional leaders who had participated in the Taif talks and were considered allies of Syria. These were the Frangiehs, the Mouwads and the Hoarawis. Second, there were the newly emerged leaders who saw the elections as their passport to a promising political career.
The opposition rejected the elections outright. On this side lay the major dominant Maronite factions, the Lebanese Forces, the Church, the Aoun movement and the Kataeb. These factions represented public opinion in the Eastern enclave. They could not agree to the election due to the unfavorable conditions surrounding it, such as the presence of foreign troops which might have undue influence, the absence of Maronite opposition leaders -- such as Gemayel and Eddie -- and the inability of displaced Christians to return to their homes to cast their votes. However, the most important reason for their stand was the election law drawn up by the government to ensure the victory of its supporters.

Despite these similarities in position, each Maronite faction looked at the elections from its own perspective. Jaejae, who had been promised a dominant role in the new Lebanese political system as a reward for challenging Aoun, was disappointed in what he received from the Taif and refused an unbalanced participation for his faction in the National Unity Government. He was also aware that his clash with Aoun had lost him a great deal of popularity in the Maronite community. In order to regain his popularity, Jaejae and his Lebanese Forces refused to participate in the elections.

The Church, along with Jaejae, had advocated a pro Taif stand despite the weakening of the president's power, but the Patriarch naturally resisted any

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108 Ibid., p., 22.
109 Ibid.
marginalization of the community’s influence and saw that the parliamentary election might have this result. 170 Thus, he called on all Maronites not to participate in the election whether by competing as candidates or by voting.

Even though the Kataeb were dissatisfied with the implementation of the Taif Accord, their position on the election was not clear at first. The Kataeb conceived the election to be a means of renewing the political establishment in Lebanon and bringing into the system more representative, but community opposition forced them to decline participation. 171 Furthermore, Amin Gemayel at the time had persuaded many loyal to the pro-Gemayel faction within the Kataeb to pressure their leaders to boycott the elections.

On the other hand, there were the factions or groups which simply had rejected everything to do with Taif. These groups included the Aoun movement and Chamoun’s party. The two refused to accept Taif Accord as a solution to the Lebanese problem which undermined their community’s long-held influence in the country.

The electoral winners were mainly the pro-governmental candidates who had received Syria’s blessing -- among them young Suleiman Frangieh, the grandson of the former President. With these elections, a whole century of Maronite dominance had ended. The Maronite president not only had to share power with

170 Ibid., pp. 22-23.
171 Ibid., p. 23.
the cabinet, but because of the boycott, mainstream leaders had been replaced by people more willing to cooperate with the Syrian regime.

**Conclusion**

The rise of a new radical Maronite leadership -- Michel Aoun and Samir Jaejae lead to an increase in Maronite fragmentation. Aoun by his charisma and Jaejae by his ideology attracted the Maronite youth. Unfortunately, they could not reconcile their differences and their rivalry increased within the Maronite community. Instead of trying to find common ground to create a strong position, they entered into a power struggle.

In addition, this chapter had revealed that Syrian influence had increased in the Lebanese affairs and had definitely lead to the widening of the gap between the different Maronite factions. Thus, a the rapprochement between some Maronite leaders deepened as a strategy by those figures to strengthen the presidency vis a vis the Prime Minister and the Speaker of the House, eventhough according to the Taif Accord, the leadership was to be collegial and the President lost his former influence. This rapprochement was rejected by a significant number of leader that was not able to conceal to a total surrender to the Syrian will.

As we have shown the power struggle within the Maronite and Syrian influence had lead to the defeat of the Maronites in the civil war and that had definitely increased the confusion within the Maronite community and widened
the gap between the different factions and groups. It divided the Maronites into two broad groups. The first group represented leaders who approved of the Taif Accord and looked for alternate strategies to compensate their loss of power in the Lebanese political establishment. This group mainly included President Hourawi and the Frangiels.

The second group considered defeat as temporary and held out for better circumstances, such as a change in the balance of power that might favor their cause. This group included Aoun, Dany Chamoun’s brother Dory, the Lebanese Forces and the Church. Aoun and Chamoun considered the Taif Accord as the main reason for the community’s defeat and they called for its cancellation and for a general referendum that would allow the people of Lebanon to decide their own future. The Lebanese Forces continued to push for a federal system as the only means of solving the Lebanese confessional problem. The Church rejected the marginalization of the community’s position and demanded a just application of the Taif Accord.
CHAPTER VII
CONCLUSION

Prior to the outbreak of the Lebanese civil war, the Maronites behaved cohesively where issues of national power were concerned. However, as this thesis has shown, the outbreak of the civil war, the new pressures were imposed on the Maronites producing reactions that impaired their cohesiveness and led to their fragmentation. The factors responsible for their loss of cohesion were leadership problems, foreign connections and loss of the struggle to maintain political power.

This chapter presents on the effects of these factors mentioned above on Maronite fragmentation, and then discusses the implications of the loss of cohesion on the future political prospects of the Maronite community.

**Leadership Problems**

Georg Simmel’s theory explaining the relationship between threat and cohesion presents a possible explanation of the Maronites’ behavior during the civil war. This theory affirms that conflict with outside groups performs
maintenance functions.\textsuperscript{171} That is, conflict assists in establishing cohesion among members of the same group when they are faced with a threat.\textsuperscript{173} As we have seen, though the Maronites’ level of cohesion decreased when they faced the threat of grave insecurity and defeat by their enemies, although a certain level of cohesion was maintained during Bashir Gemayel’s era. This thesis also shown that loss of cohesion is this highly stressful situation was primarily due to leadership problems. Authoritarian leadership style were chosen by Bashir Gemayel, Samir Jaejæ and Michel Aoun as these men sought to control and unify their community. Each attempted to impose his own goals and strategies as the one by which the Maronite dominance could be retained and victory won.

Bashir Gemayel was the only one of the three leaders capable of unifying a large portion of the Maronite’s military and political potential under his command. Many domestic factors contributed to his success, among them: his personality, the weakening of the traditional leadership and the threat imposed by the Palestinian presence in Lebanon. However, after his assassination, the Maronites faced a leadership vacuum that some of their members tried to fill.

Elie Hobeika was the first to fail in achieving this goal. His pro-Syrian stand rallied the Maronite establishment against him, as a result, he was defeated by Jaejæ. As was seen earlier, the rise of Jaejæ and Aoun deepened the

\textsuperscript{172} Coser, p. 39.

\textsuperscript{173} Ibid.
Maronite fragmentation. Aoun’s ambitions to be elected as President and to liberate the country from foreign occupation led to confrontations with the Maronite traditional block and the Lebanese Forces. The Taif Accord, however, which Aoun and several other leaders rejected, spelled the end of the Maronite legal dominance of the Lebanese system and brought about pressure to end all hostilities. In this atmosphere, Aoun and Jaafar, on opposite sides of the Taif issue, fought a bloody battle for community leadership.

As Lebanon’s Second Republic began, the Maronites remained highly divided: the opposing forces - Michel Aoun, Amin Gemayel, Raymond Eddé - were outside the country, while the opposition leaders that remained in Lebanon were marginalized. The Kataeb remained outside the circle of control defined by Taif, and Jaafar was imprisoned for ordering Dany Chamoun’s assassination. Only one participant endured. The Church’s succeeded in regaining its influence in the community.

Foreign Connection

The Maronite leadership struggle was fueled by foreign connections. Yet Mordechai Nissan insists that external intervention on the side of a community may contribute to the strengthening of such a group. For instance, Bashir Gemayel’s relationship with Israel had assisted him in being elected president. However, once elected, he soon discovered that his connection with Israel

\[174\] Mordechai, p. 13-14.
would be an obstacle to his governing of Lebanon. Thus, he drew closer to the Arab countries and the United States.

Furthermore, foreign assistance complicated the leadership’s struggle after Bashir Gemayel’s death. The motives of the intervening powers -- Syria and Israel -- and the power struggle within the Maronite community were two reasons that created difficulties within the community. Jaa’ja’ was able to retain good connections with Israel to the end. Yet after 1982, Israel ceded to Syria’s influence in Lebanon. Thus, an alternative had to be found and it was Iraq.

However, the greatest irony occurred in Jaa’ja’s cooperation with Syria to defeat his arch rival Aoun. Jaa’ja’, who had played a dominant role in defeating the Syrian-sponsored peace in 1984, -- the Triple Agreement -- in 1990 turned toward the Syrians to end Aoun’s presence in Baabda. The fact is that all prominent Maronite leaders flirted of one time or another with the Syrians except for Bashir Gemayel. Prior to his appointment by Amin Gemayel, even Aoun tried to establish strong links with Syria.

With the application of the Taif Accord, Maronite influence came to depend on a close relationship with Syria. This brought pro-Syrian leaders from areas peripheral to the Maronite heartland and from non-political families behind them to power. This situation precluded the rise of any popular leader and kept the opposition out of the political picture.
Defeat

According to the structural changes model, victory through group struggle tends to arouse group cohesiveness while defeat undermines it and weakens group bonds. The defeat of the Maronites in the Lebanese civil war was to increase the gap between the various groups and led to their fragmentation.

The presence of the PLO followed by Syrian assistance aided the Muslim groups to oppose Maronite hegemony. With the assistance of Syria and other international bodies, the Taif Accord institutionalized their political demands, including a weakening of Maronite power. Syria’s help also aided the Muslim opposition to defeat Aoun, the last obstacle to peace.

The Maronites remained divided on the terms of the Taif Accord which actually legalized their loss of power. Those who refused the 1992 elections found themselves politically sidelined, while Maronites willing to accept the new regime and Syria’s role in Lebanon were seated in the Parliament, the Cabinet and the Presidency. There was, then, one more division -- the “ins” as opposed to the “outs” -- who remained outside the country, in jail or marginalized. Calls for the unification of the opposition by one or another of the leaders went unheeded since it was well known that they had no cards left to play with at this point.

125 Coscr, pp. 87-110.
Future Prospects

Given the Maronites’ fragmentation and loss of power, the following prospects seem plausible.

1. Continuance of the Church leadership’s central role as in the past, when political leadership was weak and the Church played a leading role in community representation. In this respect, the Patriarch is now playing a dominant role in expressing Maronite socio-political aspirations and will probably continue to do so for some time to come.

2. A fragmented and weak secular leadership will continue to be powerless to direct events in the Maronite community. Leaders who are outside the country will remain where they are at least until the peace process has run its course. But even later, if Maronite politics are allowed to take their course, a united front will be difficult to achieve because of the depth of present divisions and the old scores left to settle.

   Syria is likely to ratify peripheral players who have organizational links or mass following for the Presidency for quite some time to come. Should a strong leader appear on the scene, the Syrians will either have to control him or manipulate the rifts already present in the community.

3. The decline of the Maronite traditional leaders will continue during the next decade. The traditional leadership of the Maronites was damaged by the events of the Lebanese civil war. Unable to handle emerging responsibilities,
those leaders lost ground to the new leaders within the community. Thus, who actually has a chance of assuming a leadership role among the Maronites?

Aoun, even though popular, can not succeed until Syria’s presence and influence in Lebanon decline. Samir jaacae is in jail, banished. Raymond Edde is in self-exile and too old to assume actual responsibilities. Suleiman Frangieh, even though still a powerful ally of Syria, has lost his cabinet post. His influence over the Maronites of the North and his relationship with the Assad regime will never reach the intensity of his grandfather’s President Frangieh. With the death of Dany Chamoun, the Chamouns lost a great deal of influence in the Lebanese political arena. Dory, who took over the leadership, will not in any way reach the popularity of his brother. Finally, the Gemayels are in no better position; Amin Gemayel is outside the country and unable yet to regain his family influence over the Kataeb.

4. A Maronite elite molded in Syria will characterize the politics of the community. The coming decade will witness continued cooperation between some Maronite leaders and Syrian officials. These leaders will probably feel that good relations with Syria balance the loss of their community’s formal influence and give them a chance to promote their own interests. Since it is unlikely that Israel or any other country will try to stir the Lebanese pot by backing Maronite factions, it appears that the traditional leaders and warlords alike must either pull the Syrian line or remain in the political wilderness.
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