

ALMA MATER STUDIORUM
Università di Bologna

SCHOOL OF ARTS, HUMANITIES, AND CULTURAL HERITAGE

Laurea Magistrale
In
International Cooperation on Human Rights and Intercultural Heritage

**SECTARIANISM'S INFLUENCE ON POLITICAL AND SOCIAL
TURMOILS IN LEBANON SINCE THE FRENCH MANDATE: A
PATH BETWEEN TRAGEDY AND HOPE**

Dissertation in: History of Euro-Mediterranean Political Systems since
1945

Supervising Professor

Michele Marchi

Presented by:

Orgül Ilgın Duran

Co-supervising Professor

Annalisa Furia

Unique session Academic year
2022-2023

Acknowledgment

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor, Professor Michele Marchi for his precious guidance and recommendations throughout my dissertation process.

I dedicate this dissertation to my beloved family, especially to my beautiful mother, Selçuk, and her loving memory. Your charming smile captured in our family photos served as a great source of motivation to embark on each day in this challenging dissertation process. My dear mother, thank you for teaching me so much even with your absence in the World. "I feel you in the wind, you guide me constantly."

I would like to thank my dear father, Engin, for encouraging me and being by my side in every decision I make. You are the reason behind every accomplishment I have achieved in my life. The best thing that can happen to a child is to have a resilient and loving father like you. There are no words to express my gratitude to you. Thank you from the bottom of my heart, babacığım.

In addition, I would like to thank my brother, my best friend, Orkun. I can not even imagine what my life would be like without you. Throughout a period of my life from being a little girl to being a young woman, I felt your tremendous support and your unconditional love. I must admit that I am delighted with the fact that we left behind the challenging days when you tried to teach me mathematics, and the days when you give feedback on my dissertation came. Thank you a million times for everything my brother, my teacher, and my best friend.

My beloved sister, Tuğçe, you always bridge the gaps from kilometers away with one phone call whenever I feel anxious. I would not have dared to move to another country and embark on a new chapter without your precious support. The joy of our home, thank you. I am beyond grateful to have a loving sister like you.

My adorable and mischievous cat, Yoda, you can not imagine the immense happiness you give me when you sleep next to my warm laptop while I am studying. Thank you for making my long study nights bearable, Yodişko.

Also, I would like to state that I am eternally grateful to my chosen family, Ezgi, İnci, and İrem. Ezgi, since the day we met in Mülkiye, you are making me feel like the happiest child in the playground even in the darkest days of my life through your wonderful sprightliness. Thank you for everything, Ezgittino. İnci, thank you for your "let's not exaggerate, we will handle it somehow " speeches in every crisis I have had and for always being the cheerful motivation source of

“appartamentino 57/2”. I tend to exaggerate, but we have always managed to handle things thanks to your unconditional love and support. İrem, thank you for being both an annoying little sibling and, at times, a supportive big sister who has helped me navigate through all the challenges. You made that tiny room into a boundless universe to me. I consider myself the luckiest person to have a roommate like you. You girls are the sole source of joy and meaning in this adventure from Ankara to Ravenna and your existence in my life journey is like the warmest breeze on a cold summer night. I am beyond grateful that we spent the best and the worst days of our lives together. I thank you from the bottom of my heart. Where you lead, I will follow you throughout my life.

Furthermore, I extend my gratitude to my dear friends Erdi and Diğdem for their precious support during this dissertation period and for being lifelong companions who guide me.

I am deeply grateful to my beloved companions Batu, Elif, Ezgi, Dilara, Füsün, İlhan, Melek, and Uğur whose presence fills me with strength, continues to inspire me, and makes me feel all the beauty of life.

Lastly, I would like to thank my dearest, Mülkiye, where I spent the best days of my life.

ABSTRACT

Lebanon is the least populated country in the Levant (Al Mashriq); nevertheless, it is the most religiously diverse country in the region due to being home to eighteen sects. The French mandate took control over Lebanon with the approval of the League of Nations after the First World War. As a consequence of the 1926 Constitution, which was formulated under the influence of the French mandate's administration, a political sectarianist system was established in Lebanon. Following the independence in 1943, sectarianism assumed a prepotent role in the political and social turmoils of the country. This dissertation aims to investigate the consequences of sectarianism through a critical lens by chronologically examining the significant events in Lebanon from a historical perspective. Furthermore, the dissertation will shed light on the reasons behind the anti-sectarian attitude that has widespread repercussions in present-day's Lebanese society by pointing out the continuousness of sectarian conflicts even after the fifteen years of bloody civil war.

Key Words: Sectarianism, Political Turmoils, Social Turmoils, Lebanon, French Mandate

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Abbreviations (in alphabetical order)

EP	European Parliament
FPM	Free Patriotic Movement
FTO	Foreign Terrorist Organization
LNМ	Lebanese National Movement
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PLO	Palestine Liberation Organization
PM	Prime Minister
STL	The Special Tribunal for Lebanon
UN	The United Nations
UNHCR	The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
USA	The United States of America

Chapter I: Introduction

“She [Beirut] is the wine from the spirit of the people; from its sweat [of the people], she is bread and jasmine. So how did its taste become the taste of fire and smoke? ” (Fairuz)

The lyrics of the song named "Li Beirut", released during the Lebanese Civil War, continue to reflect the sorrow of the Lebanese people over the political, social, and economic situation of their beloved country. Taking a closer look at the modern history of the Lebanese Republic, it becomes conspicuous that the country had to struggle with political and social turmoils in a repetitive manner. Consequently, Lebanese people have witnessed many conflicts and wars since independence day until the present. Throughout history, many political actors, from the Phoenicians to the Ottoman Empire, have established dominance in the Lebanese lands. Various people of different religions, sects, races, and ethnicities have lived together in Lebanon for centuries. The purpose of this thesis is to shed light on the causes and consequences of escalating sectarian conflicts since the French mandate period in Lebanon by examining important historical events.

According to the state reports, eighteen sects live together in Lebanon, which is the least populated country in the Levant region. The imposition of a sectarian understanding in a Lebanese society that has various denominations undoubtedly caused damage to social peace and egalitarianism. Adopting the Constitution of 1926 in Greater Lebanon under the influence of the French mandate and the fact that the Lebanese political actors did not abandon the sectarianist understanding after the French mandate period constitutes one of the main starting points of Lebanon's political and social problems. It is crucial to take an account that sectarianism is a concept that causes conflicts in many countries, especially in the Middle East region. In this dissertation, political and social conflicts are centered rather than theology-based debates in the area.

The notion of sectarianism is a highly debatable due to its lack of agreed-upon definition. Political sectarianism is the primary concept centered in this thesis. It is essential to point out that Lebanon's ongoing political, social, and economic conflicts demonstrate that political and social stability has not been achieved since independence. It is a necessity to fight against many problems, such as corruption, mismanagement, inequality among individuals, and a lack of solid institutions to achieve the aim of becoming a resilient state. However, this dissertation targets to critically examine the conflicts caused and triggered by the understanding of sectarianism from a historical perspective. Recognizing that there is a range of political, economic, and social reforms that need to be

implemented to establish social peace in Lebanon, the main target point of this thesis is to determine the direct and indirect effects of sectarianism, the legacy of the French mandate rule, in Lebanon. In this context, starting from the Ottoman Empire, the origins of sectarianism will be explored, and it will be discussed the extent of divisionist understanding inherited by the French mandate. Additionally, this dissertation will highlight the significant events in the history of the Lebanese Republic for the purpose of pointing out how the abandonment of the sectarian understanding after independence caused political and social crises. Finally, the dissertation will address why political sectarianism must be abolished in Lebanon and a democratic, egalitarian, and secular new order should be established by referring to the wide range of anti-sectarian understanding in the 2019 protests.

1.1. Structure of the Dissertation

In the second chapter of the thesis, titled "The Key to Understanding Today's Conflicts: A Brief Look at Lebanese History from the 16th Century", firstly, the origins of sectarianism in Lebanon will be discussed. Although it is possible to trace the origins of sectarianism to much earlier periods, the Ottoman Empire period will be considered as the starting point, where the roots of sectarianism in politics, economy, and society can be investigated more objectively and accurately. The Ottoman administration system will be argued to point out how the Ottoman Empire's domination, which lasted for nearly four centuries, affected Lebanon, especially administratively, politically, and socially. In this context, the timar system, iltizam system, and millet system will be discussed in detail, and the link between the millet system and the origins of sectarianism will be shed light on. Afterwards, the power struggle between Britain and France in the region after the Ottoman Empire lost its dominance in Lebanon will be pointed out. Lastly, the period of the French mandate, which left the understanding of sectarianism in Lebanon as a "legacy", will be analyzed.

The third chapter, "Lebanon after the Independence", focuses on the French mandate period and the 1990 period when the Lebanese Civil War ended. The first part of this chapter will delve into the 1926 constitution, which was created during the French mandate period. After examining the 1926 constitution, in which the sectarian understanding was fully legalized for the first time, Lebanon's independence process and conflicts based on religion and sect in this process will be analyzed. Thereafter, the National Pact, which proves that the sectarianist approach that settled in Lebanon with the 1926 constitution continued in the post-independence period, will be examined.

It is highly significant to scrutinize the National Pact to understand how political sectarianism has been shaped in Lebanon. Subsequently, the chapter will detailly analyze the Lebanese Civil War, which is characterized by sectarian conflict. It is essential to focus on the civil war to understand the causes of many political and social crises that the country has to struggle with even today and to see how devastating effects sectarianism has. Moreover, it will help to comprehend the extent of the religious and sectarianist conflicts either in the past or the present.

The fourth and final chapter, "The New Era After the Civil War: A Fragile Peace Between the Government and the Society", will cover the process from the 1989 Taif Agreement that ended the Lebanese Civil War to the present. In this chapter, the political reforms made to heal the wounds of the civil war after 1990 will be discussed, and it will be argued whether these reforms concluded the political and social conflicts in Lebanon. Additionally, by pointing out the internal and external issues that Lebanon has grappled with after the Lebanese Civil War, it will be analyzed the extent of the problems by aiming to provide a comprehensive understanding of the problems' origins and the consequences. Furthermore, Hezbollah's position in Lebanon after the 1992 elections and post-war Syria and Israel problems will be discussed.

To understand the impacts of sectarianism in the country and elucidate the reciprocal relationship between the political and social conflicts and the concept of sectarianism, the critical happenings during the post-2000 period will be scrutinized. Moreover, the results of the elections held after the Lebanese Civil War will be highlighted to investigate the extent of the sectarianist attitudes of political parties and political figures while making decisions. Finally,

the 2019 protests that emerged with the demands for the solution of economic, political, and social problems will be examined, and the reasons behind the anti-sectarianism emphasis in the protests will be underlined.

1.2.Aims of the Dissertation and the Research Questions

The primary purpose of this dissertation is to investigate the causes and consequences of repetitively burgeoning sectarian conflicts in the independent Lebanese Republic established after the French mandate government by centering the historical events. In this context, the origins of sectarianism will be highlighted. It is aimed to discuss the role of sectarianism in political and social turmoils in Lebanon rather than analyzing the notion of sectarianism's definition or extent. Examining how sectarianism hinders Lebanon from establishing political and social stability in the country is one of the research questions addressed in this dissertation.

Furthermore, the dissertation will focus on the questions of how sectarianist conflicts escalated and what internal and external problems they caused in the country. It is one of the main objectives to investigate the destructive effect of sectarianism by highlighting the important political and social events in the process, starting from the period after the 1926 constitution to the present. In this context, the place of anti-sectarian understanding in Lebanese society, which is one of the necessary conditions for Lebanon to be a resilient state, will be discussed. How the concept of sectarianism, inherited by the French mandate administration, led to divisions in society and politics is another research question that this dissertation targets to find an accurate interpretation.

1.3.Limitations

The scope of the thesis is limited to examining the role of the notion of sectarianism, which was left as a legacy to Lebanon by the French mandate, in the political and social crises in Lebanon. In this study, it is tried to discuss where the origins of sectarianism are based and what the results caused in the period from the sixteenth century when the Ottoman Empire occupied the Lebanese lands to the present day. The sectarianist conflicts that took place in the pre-Ottoman Empire period are beyond the scope of this thesis. Within this context, the objective of this thesis is to point out the role of sectarianism in Lebanon by including the critical political and social events since the period of the French mandate. This dissertation's primary focus is the link between sectarianism and the political and social turmoil in the Lebanese Republic. In addition, data searches and research are limited to resources in English and Turkish. As a consequence, it was not possible to conduct a much wider scope of the literature search. Due to the fact that sectarianism remains a contemporary issue, it has been tried to avoid definitive interpretations, considering that the margin of error in the interpretations of the recent past and the present is major.

1.4.Methodology of the Dissertation

This dissertation examines the various events, findings, and the agreements' text from a historical perspective with a critical approach to investigate the effective role of the sectarianist understanding left to the country by the French mandate administration, which gained control over the Lebanese lands after the Ottoman Empire's domination. It is aimed to make a historical analysis by scanning various sources to understand the contexts of the processes experienced, especially in the post-independence period. In this framework, various newspaper news, magazines, books, and visual sources have been investigated in detail. For the purpose of analyzing the subject from an

objective point of view, the studies of scholars with different views were examined, and various perspectives were included under the scope of the thesis. Moreover, in order to underline the direct or indirect impact of sectarianism in the events that took place in Lebanon's recent history, through an objective and critical point of view, it is aimed to make a chronological historical analysis. In addition, historical events have been tried to be interpreted by considering a cause-effect relationship.

In this thesis, which embodies the characteristics of a qualitative study, a range of constitutions, treaties, contract texts, reports, and declarations were analyzed. The reports published by different NGOs and departments of different countries have been scrutinized in detail to be able to address the issue from a critical perspective. Besides, in order to understand the place of anti-sectarian understanding in Lebanese society, the perspectives of various young Lebanese people on the concept of sectarianism and political/social conflict discussions were taken. However, the interviews have not been included due to the limits of the research methods of the dissertation. The main objective of the interviews with the young generation of Lebanon is to understand in detail what kind of political, social, and economic reform demands individuals have during and after the 2019 protests and to conduct analyses within this scope. The research method of this thesis is to conduct a historical analysis with a critical point of view through a literature review.

1.5.Literature Reviews

This dissertation, titled " Unveiling the French Mandate's Legacy in the Republic of Lebanon: Analyzing the Detrimental Influence of Sectarianism in Political and Social Turmoils", aims to discuss the origins and effects of sectarianism in Lebanon and its critical existence in the future of Lebanon. A literature review was conducted in order to understand how the French mandate administration's establishment of political sectarianism in Lebanon escalated the conflicts in the country. Various sources, both written and online, have been examined with the aim of conducting research from a critical point of view and a historical perspective.

Based on the literature review conducted within the scope of this thesis, it has been determined that there are several pieces of research by many scholars on the impact of sectarianism in Lebanon. Furthermore, there are many studies in the literature on the origins of sectarianism, which is one of the main research questions of this thesis. The idea that the political, social, and economic conflicts in Lebanon stem from the French mandate and the political sectarianist system that settled in the country is an argument supported by many scholars. However, it is crucial to discuss the argument of the political, social, and economic conflicts in Lebanon stemming from the French mandate and the

political sectarianist system that settled in the country, together with the fact that the sectarianist understanding sprouted before the French mandate for conducting the objective research. The perspectives of Jamal R. Nassar and Fawwaz Traboulsi on the origins of sectarianism are notable in the literature.

Jamal R. Nassar argues in his article titled "Sectarian Political Cultures: The Case of Lebanon" that the political reforms made after the Taif Agreement is the principal impediment to establishing peace in the country. (Nassar, 1995) Nassar's perspective is valuable because it helps explain why the country is still politically unstable. Although Jamal R. Nassar has a significant perspective on the notion of sectarian culture in Lebanon, it would not be inaccurate to highlight that his interpretation of the subject of sectarianism's origins is incomplete because Nassar focuses solely on the millet system while arguing the origins of the sectarianism in the Ottoman period. Considering that the Ottoman administrative system had the greatest influence on the origins of sectarianism through the millet system, it is crucial to highlight the timar system and the iltizam system to have a more accurate interpretation of the link between the Ottoman Empire's administrative system and the sectarianism's origins. Therefore, referring to Fawwaz Traboulsi's discussion of the consequences of Ottoman domination in Mount Lebanon in his book titled "A History of Modern Lebanon" is appropriate. Traboulsi states that the fact that Christians and Jews were barred from military service and some administrative duties during the Ottoman period was a factor that affected the occupations of people of different religions and sects and even the regions they chose to live in. (Traboulsi, 2007) In this context, Traboulsi's interpretation that political and social conflicts occur; moreover, they turn into sectarian conflicts over time can be regarded as a paramount point of view in the literature about the origins of sectarianism in Lebanon. The first chapter of this dissertation investigates the origins of sectarianism in Lebanon, and in the light of this framework, it is mentioned that the origins associate not only with the Ottoman millet system and the political sectarianism left as a "legacy" by the French mandate administration to Lebanon but also the roots of sectarianism can be associated to timar system and iltizam system.

Traboulsi examines the impacts of Ottoman domination in Lebanon in five stages. Despite the fact that Traboulsi's study is a pioneering work of research, studies that examine the relationship between the timar system, iltizam system, and millet system from a broad perspective are limited in the literature. With this study, it is widely accepted that the political sectarianism left by the French mandate administration is the main problem in Lebanon, and it is pointed out that sectarianism sprouted with the timar system, iltizam system, and millet system in the Ottoman period.

In line with the fundamental focus of the thesis, which is to detailly investigate the effect of sectarianism on political and social turmoils in Lebanon, critical events in the history of the country are chronologically highlighted. It is aimed to discuss the effects of historical events and sectarianism by establishing a cause-effect relationship. While the effect of sectarianism on political turmoils can be seen more clearly in conducting a historical examination, the divisionist understanding created by sectarianism in society requires more detailed research. For this purpose, while scrutinizing the Lebanese Civil War, which is the culmination point of political and social conflicts in Lebanon, it has been underlined that individuals of different sects made decisions and choices in line with the sectarian understanding, even after the war. The study titled "Sectarianism and Counter-Sectarianism in Lebanon," by Mansoor Moaddel, Jean Kors, and Johan Gärde, poses questions to individuals through indicators related to religious fundamentalism, national identity, the form of government, gender equality, social individualism, and provides answers to questions from people of different sects. It is a report that helps to understand the divisive attitudes between sects. (Moaddel, Kors, & Gärde, 2012) One of the most important conclusions reached in the report is that sectarianism and foreign intervention tend to support each other. As stated in the report, the relationship of Shiites with Iran and Syria causes the Shiites in Lebanon to act more collectively and reinforces sectarian tendencies. The subject matter is discussed through the role of Hezbollah during and after the civil war in the third and fourth chapters of the thesis.

In addition, it is essential to mention that Veysel Ayhan and Özlem Tür's book titled "Lebanon War, Peace, Resistance and Relations with Türkiye " argues the primary reasons behind Hezbollah's crises with the Lebanese government in the post-civil war. According to Ayhan and Tür, Hezbollah's cooperation with Syria and Iran is the inciting factor of the sectarianist-based crisis between the government and Hezbollah. (Ayhan and Tür, 2009) The conclusion reached in the reports of Moaddel, Kors, and Gärde and the sectarian, discriminatory attitude underlined by Ayhan and Tür mutually support each other's assertions. They are significant sources in the literature that helps to gain a broad perspective of the issue of sectarianism in Lebanon.

In the last part of the dissertation, the results of sectarianism in the period after 2000 are analyzed. Within this context, by examining the main reasons for the protests in 2019, it is tried to clarify why the anti-sectarian demands have received wide repercussions. Although there are many articles about the 2019 protests, it has been determined that there are gaps in the interpretation of events with a broad perspective in the sources examined. Moreover, it is pointed out that the most fundamental and beneficial solution for Lebanon to become a democratic, politically, and socially

stable country is to completely abolish sectarianism by touching on the political, social, and economic crisis experienced from a critical point of view.

Chapter II : The Key to Understanding Today's Conflicts: A Brief Look at Lebanese History from the 16th Century

2.1. Intermediate Introduction

In this chapter, Lebanon's history will be shed light on to better understand the root of the political, economic, and social crises in present-day Lebanon. Throughout history, the territory of modern-day Lebanon has been occupied by several political powers, from the Phoenicians to France. Some of these political powers left certain administrative, political, and social "legacies" in the region. By reason of the fact that the country still struggles as a consequence of social and political divisions, it will not be appropriate to discuss Lebanon's political impasse without scrutinizing the historical reasons. As will be highlighted in the following chapter, Lebanon has always been a home of disparate religions, sects, races, and ethnicities.

Although there were certain crises and certain wars between sects, religions, and ethnicities in the region before the Middle Ages, the political fragility, violence, and hostility we witnessed in Lebanon in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries are incomparable. This chapter aims to discuss how historical facts play a role in the aggressively escalating conflicts of the present day.

2.2. The Homeland of Cedrus Libani at a Glance

Traces of the first known written literature in history, the Epic of Gilgamesh, were found in Anatolia and the region of ancient Mesopotamia. When the various parts found by the excavations in the region are viewed, it is possible to understand the importance of human beings dedicated to the cedar forest from this epic, which is more than two thousand years old. The majestic cedar trees, which are frequently encountered in the holy books, are easily found today in any beautiful landscape photograph taken in the Eastern Mediterranean. Cedar (*Cedrus libani*), which has existed in all its glory in the region where it has been grown for centuries, represents eternal life, incorruptibility, and strength and has become the symbol of Lebanon.

Lebanon, with a magnificent cedar in the middle of its flag, is located on the eastern side of the Mediterranean Sea and is the least populated country in the region of the Levant (al-Mashriq). Contrary to being known for its history, rich cuisine, excellent music, and unique culture, unfortunately, Lebanon has a place in the world's memory with its civil war and political conflicts. In one of the most crucial lands of human history, where people of different religions, races, and ethnicities have lived together for ages, Lebanese people have been exposed to poverty, violence, and

anguish for many years. The country was ruled by various political powers for decades and decisively gained its independency in 1943.

According to the Lebanese state's report, Lebanon comprises eighteen religious sects. When Lebanon's estimated population of 6,825,445 people is considered, it would not be an inappropriate approach to highlight the arduousness of maintaining the political and social balance in Lebanon in consideration of the existence of eighteen utterly different religious sects. From the Phoenicians, the first known settlers of Lebanon, to France, the last hegemon political actor before independence, many different political powers have existed in Lebanese lands throughout history. The change of the ruling power in the region from time to time and the dominance of the administrations with different religions and different races in the region constitute the basis of today's diversity. By way of explanation, the aforementioned religious sects' components are the indigenous people of Lebanon regarding their bonds with history.

Regrettably, the independency was not enough to ease tension among the communities. Essentially, the bitter conflict in Lebanon occurred during the Lebanese Civil War (1975- 1990), nearly thirty years after independence. Today, Lebanon still faces the consequences of the damages caused to society by the civil war economically, politically, and socially. The war that began in 1975 was not the first civil war between sects and religions in Lebanon. There were conflicts between Maronites and Druze in the region, which was under the rule of the Ottoman Empire at that time. The 1860 Mount Lebanon Civil War ended when the Ottoman Empire's fifteen thousand soldiers under the command of Fuad Pasha entered the region, and France intervened in the civil war as a force against the Ottoman Empire. (Ayhan and Tür, 2009) Religion and sectarian conflicts in the 20th and 21st centuries have a historical origin. Political and administrative "legacies" left by different hegemonic powers escalated into complex problems. Thus, one of the most tragic civil wars in the history of humanity happened in the country. In favour of fully understanding the political impasse of Lebanon, the foremost thing to do is to examine the historical roots of the problems. For this purpose, in the following titles, the historical process that started with the occupation of Lebanon by the Ottoman Empire and by France will be examined.

2.3. The Ottoman Empire's Administrative System and Its Reflects on Lebanon

In order to have a comprehensive understanding of Lebanon's political, social, and economic situation during and after the Ottoman Empire period, it is necessary to scrutinize the administrative system of the Ottoman Empire. The political, administrative, and social structure of the Ottoman

Empire penetrated all the conquered lands by itself. Undoubtedly, Lebanon was not a country left out of this verity. In addition to this point of view, the impacts of the political and administrative structure of the empire continue. Recognizing that the French mandate has more effective results on present-day Lebanon, it should be noted that; To state that the effect of Ottoman domination on the region has entirely disappeared today would not only be a controversial point of view but a wrong statement.

The Ottoman Empire, which was first established as a beylik (principality) in the Marmara region of Anatolia in 1299, was officially demolished with the "abolition of the sultanate" decree of the Turkish Grand National Assembly dated 1 November 1922. (Oran, 2009) Although the Ottoman administration system has some common characteristics with European feudalism, it bears more similarities with the iqta system in the Orient. Contrary to the tradition in the old Turkish states, the rulers in the Ottoman Empire were called "padişah" (padishah, sultan), not "khan" or "kağan". In the Ottoman Empire, which was ruled by a monarchy for seven centuries, the padishah was only responsible to Allah and her laws. The padishah, who will give an account only to Allah, is at the top of the administrative class, and all the components of the state are under his command.

After the invasion of Egypt by Sultan Selim I in the Ottoman Empire, which was governed by Shariah laws, the Ottoman sultans also had the title of "caliph". The caliphate, which is very important for the Islamic world, has an importance both politically and spiritually for Sunni Muslims. The word caliph, which is an Arabic word, means the person who, after the Prophet Muhammad, is responsible for the imamate of the Muslims and the guardian of the sharia, as the deputy of Muhammad in Turkish. (Türk Dil Kurumu, n.d.) The authority of the padishah, who is the caliph of the entire Islamic world and the monarch of the Ottoman state, was limited to a certain extent by both Turkish state administration traditions and Islamic rules. Considering the political position of the sultan, who is the head of the hierarchy, the ultimate source of power, and the decision maker, it would not be inappropriate to discuss whether the Ottoman administration system is compatible with the concept of patrimonialism. On the contrary, it will contribute to the formation of a realistic and wide source of information about both the concept and the administrative system of the Ottoman Empire. Patrimonialism is a form of political domination in which tradition is highly important, and the person who rules the state is the absolute ruler. The relationship between the ruler and tradition is steady. In patrimonialism, the ruler has a very high authority, and all political, hierarchical, economic, and social powers belong to this absolute ruler. Max Weber defines the notion of patrimonialism and deals with the concept with various examples in his work named *Economy and Society*.

“The primary external support of patrimonial power is provided by slaves (who are often branded), coloni and conscripted subjects, but also by mercenary bodyguards and armies (patrimonial troops); the latter practice is designed to maximize the solidarity of interest between master and staff. By controlling these instruments the ruler can broaden the range of his arbitrary power and put himself in a position to grant grace and favors at the expense of the traditional limitations of patriarchal and gerontocratic structures. Where domination is primarily traditional, even though it is exercised by virtue of the ruler's personal autonomy, it will be called patrimonial authority; where it indeed operates primarily on the basis of discretion, it will be called sultanism. The transition is definitely continuous. Both forms of domination are distinguished from elementary patriarchalism by the presence of a personal staff.” (Weber, 1978. pp. 232.)

When the case of the Ottoman is examined, it is possible to observe the transition mentioned by Max Weber. During the six centuries of reign, there were occasional differences in the form of governance, and some examples can be found in the history of the empire, quite close to the abovementioned transition. Nonetheless, interpreting the Ottoman administrative system with Karen Barkey's "The bureaucratization of patrimonial authority" theory will provide us with a more accurate perspective. Nonetheless, the bureaucratization process did not take place in a short time, as Barkey stated. Barkey disagrees with the claim of Halil İnalcık, who is a pioneer in the field of history with his studies on the Ottoman Empire, that the Ottoman Empire was a bureaucratic state. According to Barkey, it is possible to talk about a complete bureaucracy since the reign of Suleiman the Magnificent in the 16th century. In addition to all these, it is possible to support the existence of the transition mentioned by Weber with the following words of Karen Barkey:

“ It is not until the reign of Süleyman in the sixteenth century that the kalemîye and the government as a whole may properly be called a bureaucracy. As the Ottoman armies pushed west into Hungary and Austria and south and east to the Indian Ocean, the influx of new territories brought about increases in the bureaucracy's size, influence, and degrees of specialization and professionalization. So while the origins of the Ottoman bureaucracy lay in the patrimonial house of the sultan and while its general contours reflect this fact, the administration developed characteristics of an impersonal, predictable and rationalized organization as it expanded.” (Barkey, 2016, p. 107)

The conclusion to be drawn from all this should be: The Ottoman Empire has undergone many political, social, economic, and administrative changes over the centuries. As a consequence, the changes in the administrative system in the Ottoman Empire, whose bureaucratic and patrimonial features came to the fore, deeply affected not only the center but also the conquered places. In order to fully understand the situation of the regions under the Ottoman rule and the Ottoman Empire's administration, it is essential to point out the timar system, the iltizam system, and the millet system.

The timar system (timar sistemi), which enabled an empire to spread over three continents and become a hegemonic power in the world, later led to the collapse of the Empire due to the deterioration and inoperability of the system, creating the "sick man of Europe," is the core of the Ottoman economy and administration. Compendiously, timar is a system for collecting taxes and training soldiers. In the timar system, which can be seen as the state allocating land from some conquered agricultural lands to the sipahi in return for certain services rendered to the state, the timariots (timar rulers) have certain duties. (Kılıç, 2021) Apart from wartime, timariots are responsible for maintaining order in the region where their timar is located, collecting taxes, and training soldiers for the army. During the war, the timar spahis, who participated in the war following their main duty, played a crucial role for many years in the conquered lands. Timar holders were not only chosen from people of Turkish descent, or there was no obligation to be Muslim. As Halil İnalcık stated, there were two conditions for non-Muslims, who were not of Turkish descent, to be a timariot.

“ For a Christian to be eligible to hold a timar we find here two clearly expressed qualifications: firstly, he must be of military origin, and secondly, he must have proved himself loyal to the Sultan.” (Inalcik, 1954, p. 114)

The timar system, which is a militaristic, administrative, and economic system, existed in the period from the 14th century to the Tanzimât Fermânı (Imperial Edict of Reorganization) in 1839. The process that started with the Ottoman Empire's inability to follow the technological developments in the West led to the Ottoman's inability to maintain its former power and the timar system becoming inoperable. For this and many other reasons, the timar system was abolished. After the abolition of the timar system, the iltizam system was completely implemented. The main reason for the iltizam system, which started to be seen in the 16th century, is tax collection. Contrarily to the timar system, it has no militaristic dimension. According to the iltizam system, those who buy the lands auctioned by the Ottomans are responsible for collecting taxes. While collecting some of the tax they collected

for themselves, they had to give the other part to the Ottoman state. The implementation of the iltizam system in places where the timar system was adopted damaged the timar system over time, and eventually, the timar system was completely abolished. The great transformation of the Ottoman Empire was not only an administrative and economic change. The empire was also undergoing legal, social, and political change. These changes, which were made to stop the bad course and were actually made quite late, could not prevent the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. After the Tanzimat Fermanı, Islahat Fermanı (the Edict of Reform) was declared on February 18, 1856. In the period until the Islahat Fermanı, there was a system called the millet system.

The millet system is an administrative system that considers the distinction between religion and sect; language or ethnicity does not matter. In this system, the people were separated on the basis of religion and sect, and this distinction had an important role in the rules of law until the last period of the Ottoman Empire. Compendiously, religion and sects were the only and the main cause of inequality between people, apart from the inequality between men and women. Since they had different religions, non-Muslims also paid special taxes in addition to others. The taxes paid by non-Muslims ensured that the security of life and property was protected and not violated by the Ottoman Empire. Ultimately, this system came to an end for various reasons in the last periods of the Ottoman Empire.

“The nineteenth-century Tanzimat reforms proclaimed the equality of all Ottoman subjects regardless of religion, guaranteeing the life and property of all subjects, a move that was intended to modernize citizenship while also putting an end to the long-standing practices of western Great Powers in interfering on behalf of Christian minorities in the Ottoman Empire. By 1869 Ottoman law recognized all non-Muslims as citizens of the empire. This created an inherent contradiction with the millet system that recognized non-Muslims as separate, unequal but protected categories.” (Barkey and Gavrilis, 2016, p. 27)

Criticisms and the intense pressures on Ottoman Empire's millet system did not come only from outside. There were intense pressures and reform demands from many different groups inside the Ottoman Empire. The reforms that started with the Tanzimat Fermanı could not bring the empire back to its glorious days. The political, social, economic, and legal conditions in Lebanon, under Ottoman rule for a long time, were affected by various systems mentioned in this title.

2.4. Lebanon Under the Rule of the Ottoman Empire

In spite of he remained on the throne for a short period of eight years, Selim I (Selim the Grim), the ninth sultan of the Ottoman Empire, is one of the sultans who expanded the Ottoman lands the most. The main reason why he is such an important person in history is the Egypt Campaign, in which he achieved great success. Selim I is commemorated with great longing and affection by the Sunni conservative Turks, who feel a deep spiritual bond with the Ottoman Empire. He is a very controversial historical figure, especially due to sect-based debates. It is not unusual for Selim's name to be mentioned in any sectarian debate, even in 21st-century Turkey.

Selim I, who conquered the regions where Shiite Islam was quite strong, became the most important name of the Islamic world after this great Egypt Campaign and became the first Ottoman caliph. The Ottoman victories against the Mamluks and Safavids, which they saw as threats, were crucial for the Ottomans economically, militarily, strategically, and religiously. The annexation of Egypt and Syria in 1516 enabled the Ottomans to have critical trade routes and strategically important coasts in the Mediterranean.

Mount Lebanon was Syrian territory at the time the Ottomans occupied Egypt and Syria, so the Ottoman Empire ruled Lebanon as Syrian territory, and Mount Lebanon remained under Ottoman rule for four centuries. Mount Lebanon was a region where people from many different religions, sects, races, and ethnicities lived together even before the Ottoman Empire. The Ottoman Empire implemented its own administrative, economic, social, military, and legal changes over the years in this region, which was under its dominion for four hundred years. For this reason, it is possible to see the traces of the Ottoman reforms in Lebanon.

It may be a convenient starting point to discuss the situation of different religions and sects in Lebanon under Ottoman rule. As stated in the previous heading, the Ottoman Empire abandoned the understanding of the millet system after the Edict of Reform. With the abandonment of the millet system understanding, it was stated that all citizens in the Ottoman Empire, regardless of whether they were Muslim or non-Muslim, had equal rights. Considering the diversity in Mount Lebanon, we can realize that this is a substantial adjustment that affects all dynamics. Although the understanding of "egalitarianism" could not save the empire from collapse, it deeply affected the lives of people in the Ottoman Empire in the 19th century. For instance, during the millet system, when a Muslim was to be on trial, he was judged according to the rules of Islamic law, while non-Muslims were to be on trial according to the restrictions of their religion. This was also a political implementation for Lebanon under Ottoman rule. After the Edict of Reform, everyone, whether Muslim or non-Muslim, was granted various rights and opportunities, such as the right to education, job opportunities, equal

taxation, and keeping their mother tongue alive to preserve their culture. In Kanun-i Esasi (The Constitution of 1876), the first and last Ottoman constitution, it was guaranteed that everyone's rights would be protected by the law.

As a matter of fact, there was no linguistic or religious coercion against minorities in the Ottoman Empire from the establishment. Considering the empire's counterparts in Europe, it would not be inaccurate to highlight that the Ottoman Empire was a much more tolerant empire towards minorities. The observations of the Druze emir Fakhr al-Din, who visited Europe in the 18th century, mentioned by Kamal S. Salibi in his book *A House of Many Mansions*, support this argument.

" The Druze emir greatly admired what he saw in Italy, including the liberty enjoyed by women; but he was disturbed by two aspects upon which he could not help making negative comments. First, he discovered that European hospitality was as limited by hard and fast rules as the European government. After the grandiose reception with which he was first met, which included a great ball in the Palazzo Vecchio in Florence, he was left to live on a fixed stipend which barely met his needs. Second, he was baffled by the religious intolerance he found in Europe. In the Ottoman Empire, as in earlier Islamic empires, Christians and Jews were expected to observe certain social restrictions specified by Islamic law. Otherwise, they were not normally molested in the public practice of their religions." (Salibi, 1988, p.159)

Indubitably, it is not appropriate to state that there was complete freedom of belief. However, every individual was free to worship regardless of the religion they professed. It is crucial to accentuate that there was intense pressure against minorities occasionally, and they faced major economic difficulties, most especially based on taxes. On the occasion of Kanun-i Esasi, the Ottoman Empire tried to eliminate the legal, administrative, economic, social, and religious injustices suffered by minorities and to ensure equality and peace in society.

Nevertheless, this aim was never achieved. The situation of different sects and different religions in Lebanon under the auspices of the Ottoman Empire can be defined precisely by this failure. The social balance that the Ottomans tried to re-establish with the discourse of "equality" by leaving the millet system aside was a long overdue action. Considering the fact that people of many different religions, sects, and races lived together in Mount Lebanon, it can be claimed that the order established by the Ottomans, especially within the framework of the millet system, deepened the crisis of sectarian discrimination. Although the biggest cause of the sectarianism crisis in today's

Lebanon is the period of French colonialism, it is unrealistic to deny the great damage done to Lebanese society by the administrative, legal, and social system of the Ottoman Empire, which has a system that ensures the continuity of othering. However, it should be noted that it would not be appropriate to argue that the sectarian crisis we understand today is exactly the same as what happened during the Ottoman period.

The millet system constructed a rigid hierarchical order in society by its very nature. It created a very sharp two-tier hierarchical relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims. Even though Christians and Jews, described as the People of the Book, had a certain freedom of belief, essentially, they were "others" in the society due to the millet system. As a consequence of this system, unlike Muslims, they were obliged to pay a tax called *cizye* (*jizya*) and were exempt from military service. The fact that they did not join the military and paid more taxes affected many different economic, social, and political dynamics. Even their occupations were shaped by the framework drawn by this millet system.

Examining Fawwaz Traboulsi's work in his book *A History of Modern Lebanon*, in which he itemized the conflicts created by Ottoman domination on Mount Lebanon, is crucial in terms of gaining a broad perspective in order to approach the subject objectively. Starting his itemization with the millet system, Traboulsi successfully analyzed the impact of Ottoman domination on Mount Lebanon in five stages. Traboulsi broadened the scope of his analysis by pointing out the social division of labour, one of the major divisions the millet system has built.

“Generally barred from the military/ administrative functions, Christians and Jews tended to specialize in commerce, finance, and handicrafts. In Mount Lebanon, this uneven social location expressed itself in a Druze community dominated mainly by the tribal-warrior function and a Christian community dominated mainly by commoners, with a large peasant base. This imbalance would be largely responsible for transforming social and political conflicts into sectarian conflicts.” (Traboulsi, 2007, p.4)

Indeed, Traboulsi's point of view is a very appropriate and accurate approach to scrutinizing this topic in every aspect. The most critical point of the Ottoman Empire in the sectarian crisis came to the fore in this aspect of the millet system. Another point that Traboulsi draws attention to is the effect of the *iltizam* system in Mount Lebanon, which emerged in the last period of the *timar* system and became more widespread after the abolition of the *timar* system. Although it does not have a

military aspect, it is not a correct interpretation to describe the tax farming system as a simple tax collection system. It is possible to see the positive or negative effects of the tax farming system not only in the lands occupied by the Ottoman Empire but also in the center with many examples. The fact that it was abolished after the 1839 Tanzimat Fermanı (Imperial Edict of Reorganization) is an indication that the system became inoperable in the Ottoman Empire.

“İltizam was a system of government where dignitaries, whether warlords, aristocratic chiefs or notables, were invested with governmental authority by an overlord who joyed over them the prerogative of appointment and dismissal. It should be clear from this that iltizam was not merely a tax farming system; for though this was one of its major characteristics, it was still a method of government and the multazim had powers to execute the law and to keep peace and order. The iltizam system in general was prevalent in plains and most of Anatolia.” (Harik, 1965, p.405)

In line with what Harik stated, Traboulsi pointed out that the tax farming system created competition between the high-placed people in Istanbul and the regional walis and the political/economic positions of tax farmers in the region. Additionally, by comparing local rulers and central authorities, Traboulsi not only underlined the rebellions that the Ottomans encountered in Mount Lebanon but also contributed unavoidably to a critical discussion of "the main reasons for the collapse of the Ottoman Empire" with this analysis. While the Ottoman tax farming system enabled the influential people/families in the region to become more prosperous, it also led to the impoverishment of other segments of the society. The system has created its own enemy with its own hands. Based on the author's analysis, it can be argued that due to the Ottoman millet system and the iltizam system, social, economic, political, and religious divisions in Lebanese society became an even bigger problem. The system created both wealth-poverty and superior-subordinate relations, especially with local rulers, and as the central power was not as strong as it used to be in the regions it ruled, it created rebels from both local rulers and those with increasing poverty. Undoubtedly, the insurgents in the area had great support from Europe against to Ottoman Empire. For this reason, the Ottomans had to deal with both the rebels in the region and the European powers. The Druze-Maroonite massacre of 1860 was a milestone for all political, economic, social, and administrative balances. Described by some scholars as the first civil war, this blood bath in 1860 was a devastating circumstance that profoundly affected the Ottoman dominance in the region, the internal and external balances of Mount Lebanon, and the presence of European powers in the region.

There had been many conflicts in the region before the massacre in 1860. The disputes between the Druze families, the conflicts between the Maronites and the Druze, and the political crises between some local authorities and the Ottoman Empire were the main reasons for what happened in 1860. Although different reasons can be counted, it would not be wrong to state that the common point of these crises is the disagreement about who will dominate the region. As will be observed in many articles, books, and research that will be examined on the subject, it is a general opinion that the Ottoman Empire was late in intervening in the inter-sectarian conflicts that took place before 1860. The same criticisms against the Ottoman Empire are made for the massacre of 1860. As Veysel Ayhan and Özlem Tür stated in their book "Lebanon War, Peace, Resistance and Relations with Turkey," when the Ottoman Empire realized that sectarian conflicts had increased and Europeans would intervene in the region, the Shihab family was dismissed as a precautionary measure and Lebanon's autonomy ended. Although the Ottoman Empire tried to rule the region directly from 1842, the conflict between the sects did not finish (on the contrary, the conflict intensified), nor could order be established in the region.

“Meanwhile, after 1841, the former territory of the Shihab iltizam was reorganized into two self-governing divisions called kaymakamates - literally, lieutenancies. The territory of the former muaamala of Tripoli was extended southwards to include Kisrawan, the Matn, and a small strip of the Gharb, and placed under a Maronitelieutenant-governor, or kaymakam, to become the Kaymakamate of the Maronites, renamed after 1845 the Kaymakamate of the Christians.” (Salibi, 1988, p.69)

The division of Lebanon into north and south, the establishment of the Maronites in the north and the Druze in the south, was the result of the pressure of the Ottoman Empire by the Western powers. After this date, there was no possibility for the Ottomans to establish the "order" they wanted in the region. The battle for control in Mount Lebanon, in which the Ottoman Empire, Western powers, Maronites, and Druze were included, unfortunately, caused the massacre in 1860. The conflict between the Maronites and the Druze escalated, and thousands of people were brutally murdered. It can be highlighted that the Ottoman and France were directly involved in the case of the 1860 Mount Lebanon Massacre, and the British navy was also involved in the incident by settling in the ports in the region. Against the Ottoman Empire, it cooperated with the Maronite Church of France, which directly intervened in the region with claims such as ensuring the security of the Christians in Mount Lebanon and establishing peace in the region. The 1860 events, which resulted

in the involvement of Western powers and Ottoman forces, became a leading building block in the sharing of the Middle East lands by the Western powers during the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the sectarianism crisis in the region for decades. Although there is an era that we can call the peaceful period in Mount Lebanon after 1860, it would not be amiss to argue that the massacre is the basis of the present-day crises in Lebanon. Herein, it is worthwhile to point out Ussama Makdisi's criticism of the strategy followed by the Ottoman Empire in the events of 1860 and in the period after in order to gain a detailed perspective.

“By not dwelling on an obviously divisive history, the Ottomans adopted a strategy of peace-making that foreshadowed later Lebanese government attempts to deal with the legacy of the 1975 Civil War.⁴⁹ However, the Ottoman presumption of having uprooted all traces of the events of 1860 by virtue of having decreed it succeeded only in covering up a furious war of narration that was being waged on the margins of Ottoman order.” (Makdisi, 2002, p. 610)

2.5. The Strife of Sharing the Lands of the Middle East After the Collapse of the Ottoman Empire

The Treaty of Karlowitz (1699), in which the Ottoman Empire lost most of its lands in the West, is accepted as the beginning of the decline period in Ottoman history. After the great defeat of the Ottoman Empire in the Ottoman-Russian War of 1792, the period of the Ottoman Empire's collapse started. The loss of the Balkan lands and the Middle East lands, the nationalist revolts among minorities against the empire, and the economic problems were one of the main reasons for the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. Concurrently, the process leading to the collapse of the Ottoman Empire caused the issue of territorial division, particularly in the Middle East, which created political and diplomatic challenging strife for Western powers. The independence movements of the locals, the collapse of the enormous empires, and the colonial interventions of the Western powers to the lands that were miles away led to the end of an old era in World History and they started the age of unprecedented blood bath for all humankind.

When Lebanon was under Ottoman rule, it was ruled by three different systems, experiencing the emirate period until 1842, the dual kaymakamate period until the massacre in 1860, and finally, the mutasarriffiya period until 1920. (Dulkadir and Özüçetin, 2022) After its defeat in the World War I, the Ottoman Empire lost its dominance in Lebanon, as in many other regions. The Ottoman Empire officially came to an end with the abolition of the sultanate on November 1, 1922, with the decision

taken by the Turkish Grand National Assembly after the victory of the War of Independence, which started in 1919 under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. The remaining parts of the lands in the Middle East, which were once under the rule of the Ottoman Empire, were shared between France and Britain after World War I. It is very convenient to scrutinize the book named "A Line in the Sand" by James Barr in order to understand how Western powers share the lands of the middle easts after the empire era in the region. James Barr focuses on the period between World War I and Britain's withdrawal from Palestine in 1948 to highlight France's and Britain's role in shaping the region.

Almost all of the answers to the question of why there are so many conflicts in the Middle East are actually due to the rumbling of dividing the lands of the Middle East between the two powers. Unfortunately, the policies implemented by the League of Nations later triggered these conflicts. By reason, the countries gained their independence in a much longer period than the mentioned period. As it is discussed in the previous chapters, there is no doubt that the foundations of some conflicts were laid during the Ottoman Empire. The line pointed out by James Barr is a disgraceful historical reality that we still struggle with the results in the Middle East, which has exterminated all the dynamics of the region.

After the empire, the peoples of the region, unfortunately, were exploited politically, economically, and socially by the mandate governments, and their rights were usurped in their lands where they should have gained their independence and lived freely. After World War I, Britain and France decided how to share the lands of the Middle East with a line they drew on the map. This drawn red line ultimately left the Lebanese with big problems that they could not solve, dragged them into a civil war in which brothers and sisters killed each other, violated all rights of the Palestinians, leaving them stateless, and led to the impoverishment of the region by exploiting the oil in the region, particularly Iraqi oil. The line, drawn without considering any religious, ethnic, or social distinctions, ignited the ethnic and religious conflicts in Lebanon and Syria. It is one of the main reasons for even the fact of migration that the world is experiencing today. It would be far from an objective approach to consider any conflict in the Middle East today apart from this reality.

By virtue of the line, the problems of poverty and sectarian conflicts, which are constantly increasing and aggressively becoming more insoluble, are at the forefront of the crises that the Middle East is experiencing today. It would be useful to analyze the grand economic crisis that led to the sectarianism problem in Lebanon and even to the statement of Lebanese Deputy Prime Minister Saadeh al-Shami in 2020 that "The state has gone bankrupt as did the Banque du Liban" within this framework. It is essential to deal with all aspects of what happened in history in Lebanon and other countries in the region, to take lessons from them, and to focus on the solution in this way. In order

to overthrow this fragile, inoperative "order" established with Sykes-Picot, the first thing to do is to firmly resolve the problems of poverty and religious-ethnic crisis.

“Ensuring diversified economic development remains the key to preventing future conflicts. Improved management of resources, natural as well as human, and the development of more transparent and legitimate, if not democratic, regimes provide the most efficient means toward preventing new conflicts in the Middle East as in other developing regions.” (Sørli, Gleditsch and Strand, 2005, p. 160)

Principally, it would be an appropriate starting point to examine the Sykes-Picot Agreement, which is at the root of all this political and economic catastrophe. A secret agreement, later named The Sykes-Picot Agreement, was signed between Britain and France on May 16, 1916, two years before the end of the First World War. By way of explanation, while the Ottoman Empire had not yet disintegrated, the lands will be occupied by Britain and France were determined on the map. They shared the lands of the Middle East where the Ottomans had lost their dominance; additionally, the lands in Anatolia were shared between the two powers. As a result of this agreement, France and England promised Russia to dominate a part of Anatolia.

“The eastern portion of France's blue zone was given to Russia. In addition, Russia was to receive Turkish territory to the northeast of the French zone. France, in turn, was "compensated." The blue zone was expanded northward, at Turkey's expense, to Sivas.” (Tanenbaum, 2023, p. 13)

According to the articles of the Sykes-Picot agreement, it was decided that Iraq, Jordan, and Palestine would be controlled by Britain, Lebanon, and Syria by France, and Istanbul, the Turkish Straits, and Eastern Anatolia by Russia. After the 1918 Brest-Litovsk Agreement, Russia withdrew from the First World War and had to leave Anatolian lands. During the Turkish War of Independence, great struggles were fought not to hand over the Turkish Straits and Istanbul to any other country; ultimately, total independence was declared in these lands. Regretfully, it took much more time for Lebanon to gain its independence. Lebanon, which declared its independence in 1943, was governed by the French mandate between 1923-1946, as agreed on the Sykes-Picot articles. The statements in the Sykes-Picot Agreement that Britain and France will "protect" and "recognize" the Arab countries seem to be two very contradictory equations with what happened in Lebanon. It would be a great

disrespect to any person who has even a little knowledge of world political history to defend the idea that, contrary to the colonial period, the mandate government was created for the Arab peoples to gain their independence. The ghost of colonialist understanding still haunts the streets of Beirut today.

2.6.The French Mandatory Period in the Region

After the Ottoman Empire lost its dominance in Mount Lebanon, a solid domination war broke out in the region. Apart from the contentious negotiations between England and France, people with various religious and ethnic identities, especially the Maronites and Druze living in the region, had disparate plans for the new era. It is impossible not to refer to this period when discussing the sectarian conflict in Lebanon. France carried out various missionary activities, particularly since the middle of the 19th century, and established close relations with the Maronite Church. France was in cooperation with some of the Maronites before the mandate government era. The patriarch of the Maronites, Elias Peter Hoyek, was the symbolic name for the relationship between France and the Maronites. Elias Peter Hoyek (the patriarch), argued that the origin of the Maronites was based on the Phoenicians and he tried to establish a Maronite state in these lands. Hoyek, who is an ally of the French, shared his plan for the Lebanese lands with the world public opinion at the Paris Peace Conference.

“ The Maronites, however, were insistent in their demands. Their secular and clerical leaders had pressed for them during the war years among the Allied powers, not excluding the United States. After the war, the same leaders, headed by the Maronite patriarch Elias Hoyek in person, pursued this course at the Paris Peace Conference; and in the end, the French yielded. “
(Salibi, 1988, p. 26)

There were quite different points of view on the new order to be established among the Muslims and the Maronites. The vast majority of Muslims were against the French mandate, and they defended the opinion of unification with Syria. Aside from the Maronites who supported the French mandate, there were also Maronites who had a different way of thinking. In his book "A History of Modern Lebanon," Fawwaz Traboulsi stated that among the Maronites, four groups with different opinions stand out: The Arab federalists, The Syrian federalists, the protectionists, and The Lebanese independentists. (Traboulsi, 2012) Despite all the struggle of the Muslims and the opposing views among the Maronites, who had the densest population in Lebanon at that time, Greater Lebanon, whose capital was determined as Beirut, was established on September 1, 1920. The French flag with

a Cedar tree in the middle became the flag of Greater Lebanon. The establishment of Greater Lebanon in 1920 created a grand wave of anti-French mandates. The rebellion wave, which started particularly in the south, regrettably turned into conflicts between Muslims and Christians, and many people lost their lives. A wave of hatred has developed among Muslims due to the Maronites' support for the mandate rule. Thus the French were able to take the opposition forces under control in a short time by sending soldiers to the rebellion areas.

France wanted to integrate every person in the region into the system that it would determine in terms of administrative, legal, social, and economic aspects, just as it did in colonial times. For this reason, it is possible to find traces of traditional French colonialism in Lebanon. Within this framework, France prepared a constitution for Lebanon in 1926. The 1926 constitution is the pedestal milestone of the sectarianism debate in Lebanon. By means of the constitution, France left a great political, social, and administrative crisis bomb on Lebanon. The 1926 Constitution led to the increasing sectarian division in Lebanon. This discriminatory order established by the 1926 constitution has affected all the dynamics in society and has sown seeds of discord among the individuals in society. The understanding of the 1926 constitution is at the root of all the crises, suffering, and wars experienced after independence. The French mandate has not only left Lebanon with a sectarianist, divisive constitution. By creating some monopolies in Lebanon, which it also exploited economically during the Mandate rule, France further enriched the bourgeoisie it supported, while on the other hand, it made the poor poorer. The economic, political, social, and cultural legacy left by the French mandate administration is the main reason why things could not be settled in Lebanon. When all this is taken into account, it can be observed how much the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs official Robert de Caix's claim regarding the French mandate, "a gradual civic education and political emancipation work," overlaps with reality. Apart from the legal, political, economic, and social conditions discussed above, the fact that France promised independence to Lebanon in 1936 and did not keep its promise proves that this claim does not correspond to the facts. It is sufficient to examine any political, economic, administrative, and social decision taken by the mandate administration of twenty-three years in order to refute the claims such as bringing peace, protection, and political emancipation. Just as all the conditions were suitable for France to establish dominance in the region after the Ottoman Empire, all conditions were suitable for France to leave the region this time. The Second World War had begun, and France had to fight a formidable enemy. Nazi Germany had occupied France, and there was no unity of power in France. In addition to the crises they experienced during the Second World War, Britain and France had other problems to solve. The "independence" declared by the League of Nations was becoming an arduous issue, and it had not yet been resolved.

The region's anti-mandate government movements were getting more and more raging. The time had come for the independence of Lebanon, and finally, on November 22, 1943, independence was declared in Lebanon. It took 1946 for the French mandate administration to completely withdraw from Lebanese territory, but Lebanon still pays the price for the "legacy" left by the mandate administration.

2.7. Intermediate Conclusion

For the sake of understanding the causes of the political, economic, and social crisis in present-day Lebanon, it was tried to be discussed the main historical reasons for today's crisis, starting from the Ottoman Empire period. Primarily, Ottoman Empire's administration system was examined. Together with mentioning the internal problems of the Ottoman Empire, the reforms, the changes, and their reflections experienced by Lebanon throughout four centuries were highlighted. Additionally, what sort of administrative, political, and economic order was created in the lands dominated by the Ottomans, by focusing on the millet system, the timar system, and the iltizam system was stated in the chapter. After the First World War, the strife for dominance in the region after the Ottomans' loss was noted, and it was argued how the region was given to the French mandate administration. There are two reasons behind the crises in Lebanon. One is sectarianism and the other is poverty. In this chapter, the economic problems are briefly mentioned, and the fundamental purpose is to find an answer to how sectarianism, the legacy of the French mandate administration, which is the main cause of the crisis in Lebanon, emerged and how the sectarianism crisis grows day by day, in the light of historical events.

This chapter aimed to discuss from the scope of the history of Lebanon how sectarianism, as a legacy of French mandate administration, emerged and how the crisis of sectarianism aggressively enlarged. It highlights that the already existing inter-sectarian tension in the region has turned into a conflict that has become almost impossible to resolve due to the order established during the mandate rule. The 1926 constitution created by France and how it divided the Lebanese society into pieces will be discussed in detail in the following chapters. It was tried to analyze that the causes of present-day Lebanon have been laid for a very long time. The issues did not emerge suddenly after independence, on the contrary, Lebanon was the unfortunate heir of a sectarian legacy while gaining independence.

Chapter III: Lebanon After the Independence

3.1. Intermediate Introduction

Firstly, Lebanon's struggle for independence under the French mandate will be discussed in this chapter. The 1926 constitution, which was created with the consent of the mandate administration, and later the National Pact of 1943, which can be defined as the declaration of reconciliation between sects in Lebanon, will be examined in all its aspects. In order to understand the sectarianist understanding created in Lebanon, the "problematic" articles in the constitution and the National Pact will be discussed.

Afterwards, what the demographic structure was like before the Lebanese Civil War will be scrutinized. In addition, it will be tried to make brainstorm about how demographic-based debates are related to sectarian debates. The political and social problems before 1975 will be mentioned and the environment in which the civil war emerged will be pointed out. Finally, the Lebanese Civil War period will be discussed in detail. Undoubtedly, it is essential to discuss the civil war in detail to reveal the solution to the main problems in today's Lebanon.

3.2. Lebanon's Independence Process and the Creation of the Constitution

After the Ottoman Empire lost its dominance in the region, the constitution of Lebanon, which was under the French mandate, was adopted by the Lebanese Representative Council on May 23, 1926. The 1926 constitution is a milestone for Lebanon. Examining the articles of this constitution, which has had a profound effect on the entire political history of Lebanon, will be a crucial act to understand the political and social crises that followed.

In the first article of the 1926 Constitution, the independency of Greater Lebanon was highlighted. As stated in the constitution, Greater Lebanon is an independent state, and Lebanese territory is indivisible. Considering that it was still under the mandate administration when this constitution was adopted, the importance of the emphasis on independence in Article 1 is better understood. Along with the significance of highlighting the notion of independency, the understanding of sectarianism, which was officially emphasized for the first time, is one of the most crucial parts of this constitution. It is important to point out that in the 1926 constitution, the freedom of belief and the equality of the sects were underlined several times.

This constitution, which was created during the French mandate, is the main cause of many conflicts in Lebanon. It cannot be denied that the sectarian legacy left by the French mandate government is the most responsible for the political, economic, administrative, and social problems that Lebanon is experiencing today. However, it would not be an appropriate approach to state that the only reason the country is a fragile state and social peace and tranquillity could not be fully established is a constitution based on sectarian discrimination. It should be noted that the 1926 Constitution states that all denominations are recognized by the state and that all denominations are equal. In addition, freedom of belief was underlined. It contained very important items for the establishment of social peace.

However, it will be sufficient to examine the articles of the 1926 Constitution in order to understand how it made it impossible to achieve social peace despite these articles and how it sowed the seeds of hatred among the sects. The 1926 Constitution has been the last point of all alienation policies in the society from the first day of the country to the present day. The pre-amendment of Article 95 and Article 96 are two very sufficient articles to provide a basic framework on what and how the sectarian approach in the constitution is.

“Article 95: As a provisional measure and according to Article one of the Charter of the Mandate and for the sake of justice and amity the sects shall be equitably represented in public employment and in the composition of the Ministry, provided such measures will not harm the general welfare of the state.

Article 96: According to Articles 22 and 95, the seats of the Senate shall be distributed among the sects as follows: 5 Maronites; 3 Sunnis; 3 Shi’ia; 3 Orthodox; 1 Catholic; 1 Druze; 1 minorities.” (The Lebanese Constitution 1995)

In particular, Article 96 stirred up sectarian division in society. The discourse of equality of all denominations was frequently emphasized by the French mandate administration, but basically, an unending "othering" policy paved the way for the deterioration of the peace in the society rather than establishing equality among the sects. Despite having a small population, the inclusion of sectarian-based representation in the constitution in a country where 18 different sects live together has been the main starting point of diverse crises rather than ensuring equality between sects and religions.

In addition, the most critical debate of this period was about independence. As stated in the 1926 constitution, the independency of Lebanon was the main goal. However, the goal of independence was not a right that the French mandate government would easily hand over to Lebanon. As every Lebanese citizen knows without a doubt, independence can only be won and it requires to struggle for it. The declarations of independence given by the French mandate administration and the League of Nations were not very convincing to the Lebanese, as the demand for full independence as soon as possible was frequently voiced both in the streets of Lebanon and in the parliament. However, different segments of the society had different proposals for how Lebanon's independence would be and what path to follow after independence. As mentioned earlier in the first chapter, although a large part of these segments belonging to different religions and different sects demanded independence, some segments advocated the continuation of the French mandate administration, and some segments defended the need to unite with Syria and Muslim unity. Many different political solution proposals were causing political and social crises in the pre-independence period. In all these independence discussions, the most basic issue on which a large part of the society agreed was that Lebanon should gain its independence. Considering this political climate, 1936 was a very contentious year for Lebanon. In 1936, which we can define as one of the turning points in Lebanese history, many developments and crises were experienced.

One of the most important events of 1936 is the presidential election. In the 1936 elections held in Lebanon, Émile Eddé won the elections by defeating Bechara El Khoury. Edde later started the tradition of sectarian rule and appointed Khayreddin al-Ahdab, a Sunni Muslim, as prime minister. (Ayhan and Tür, 2009) Additionally, another important incident in 1936 was the agreement signed between France and Lebanon.

“The Treaty of Friendship and Alliance between France and Lebanon, signed on 13 November 1936, was approved unanimously by the Lebanese Chamber of Deputies. France recognised Lebanon as an independent state and undertook to help its admission to the League of Nations. In return, Lebanon guaranteed French capital and interests, and the continuation of the monetary parity between the two countries, and vowed to remain an ally of France in the event of war.” (Traboulsi, 2023, p. 101)

On the other hand, significant events were taking place in global politics. Therefore, it would not be an appropriate point of view to consider Lebanon's independence movement separately from

world history. On the grounds that the whole struggle for independence has been directly affected by the events in world history and has been shaped together with these historical facts. Arab nationalist independence movements carried out by a very large group in the Middle East and North Africa also reinforced the independence movement in Lebanon. For this reason, the struggles for independence against France and England in Syria, Egypt, and the Palestinian territories are substantial. In addition, the Second World War, which started with Germany's invasion of Poland on September 1, 1939, changed all existing political dynamics and destroyed the balance of power. As in the territorial division between Britain and France at the beginning of the twentieth century in the Middle East, these two hegemonic powers entered into a kind of political warfare in order not to lose the lands they held in the region during the Second World War. Besides all the brutal consequences of the war, World War II also meant many different crises for Britain and France that had to be managed nationally and internationally. Especially for France, things had come to a pretty pass. After the Nazi occupation of France, the Vichy government was established, and it took over the mandate in Lebanon. The Vichy government, under the leadership of Philippe Pétain, was the official government of France between 1940 and 1944. (Sander, 2000) The Vichy government was ruled by Nazi Germany. In occupied France, the Vichy government supported the Holocaust, handing over refugees to the Nazis. Alongside this German-backed government in France was a political movement against both the German occupation and the Vichy government. The Free France Movement, led by De Gaulle, aimed to end the occupation of France and overthrow the Vichy government. For this reason, the Free France Movement formed a new government based in London and directed all the resistance from there. Along with the Normandy Landing, France was liberated from German occupation, and ultimately the Vichy government was ended. In addition to these internal issues, France had a problem that needed to be resolved: What would be the fate of the lands under the French mandate, and what kind of solution would be followed for the Arab nationalist independence struggle in these lands? While France was trying to solve its internal problems in the Second World War, a great independence resistance had started in the Middle East and North African lands, and the people did not intend to end the resistance before they regained their total independence instantaneously. Considering that Arab nationalism has been on the rise, especially since the last periods of the Ottoman Empire and the independence promises made by the League of Nations are remembered, it will not be difficult to understand how challenging the situation has become for France and Britain. Under all these conditions, due to the nature of politics, each country has made certain political moves to protect its benefits. Unsurprisingly, Britain did not hesitate to oppose France for its political interests. Britain supported the independence movements of some nations to protect its interests in the region against France.

“After the Vichy French surrendered a month later, the British government entrusted the government of Lebanon and Syria to the Free French. When that move caused Arab anger British officials decided that the best way to divert attention away from Palestine was to help both Syria and Lebanon gain their independence at French expense. With significant British assistance the Lebanese did so in 1943. The French found out that the British were plotting with the Syrians to the same end the following year.” (Barr, 2011, p. 3)

At a time when internal and external factors were so complex and challenging, Lebanon declared its independence on November 22, 1943, albeit belatedly, as stated in the first article of the 1926 constitution. As Betty S. Anderson states in her book “A History of Modern Middle East, Rulers Rebels and Rogues,” although independence was declared in 1943, it would take a few years for France to leave Lebanese territory.

“In July 1941, British and Free French forces marched from North Africa and liberated Syria and Lebanon from Vichy control. The new French officials held elections in both countries in summer and fall of 1943 but refused to withdraw the bulk of the troops stationed there. As a result, true independence came to Syria and Lebanon only in August 1946, when the final French troops withdrew under British pressure.” (Anderson, 2016, p.221)

A presidential election was held in Lebanon on November 22, 1943, about two months before the declaration of independence. The first round of these elections, which was held in August 1943, resulted in the great victory of Bechara El Khoury and the Constitutional Bloc in the second round in September. The 1943 election is very significant in Lebanese history, as it has certain aspects that will describe the "destiny" of the newly formed country. Bechara El Khoury commissioned Riyad al-Sulh, the first prime minister of independent Lebanon, to form a government representing the six major sects. "The Chamber itself based on the formula of six Christians to five Muslims was composed of 55'..." (Farnki, 2023) It was aimed to establish a relatively political balance between religious and ethnic groups. After the 1943 elections, Christians and Muslims reached a common consensus and argued that all segments of society should come together for Lebanon's independence. Within the framework of this reconciliation policy, both the society and the politicians took certain steps, and finally, the National Pact (al Mithaq al-Watani) was formed in this context.

The National Pact declared that Lebanon was a fully independent state. By virtue of the National Pact, Muslims gave up their desire for united Syria and Lebanon; Christians, on the other hand, have promised not to cooperate with the West. Muslims and Christians have agreed on the total independence of the country. In addition, it has been decided that the president will always be a Maronite Catholic, the prime minister will always be a Sunni Muslim, and the speaker of the parliament will always be a Shiite Muslim. In the National Pact, it was determined that the representation of Christians and Muslims in the parliament, the ratio would be 6:5. Additionally, sectarian, discriminatory conditions were set within certain bureaucratic duties. Moreover, it was aimed to provide a political and cultural balance between sects and religions, and a solution was tried to be found on how and how an independent Lebanon would be governed. It was formed in order to protect the interests of the country and not to damage the integrity of the country. Although it had many successful aspects, the Lebanese National Pact could not get rid of its sectarian separatism policy and became a consensus under the influence of the sectarian policy left by the French mandate administration. Even though it gained its independence, the "spirit" of the former mandate government could not be purged from Lebanese political life. On the contrary, it was placed at the center of the National Pact, considering it as a solution. The acceptance of the sectarian separatist form of government by all sects in Lebanon, unfortunately, formed the basis of the social conflict and political crisis that will continue in the Lebanese lands until today. One of the most important reasons for the Lebanese Civil War that started in 1975 was this sectarian, discriminatory policy. Contrary to its aims, the National Pact failed to ensure that the integrity of the country was not compromised.

3.3. The Demographic Structure of Lebanon Before the Civil War and the Place of Demography in Sectarianist Discussions

The demographic structure of Lebanon before 1975 greatly affected the political life of Lebanon. Under favour of the National Pact of 1943, since the sectarian understanding spread to all levels of the state, the population distribution genuinely affected the lives of people of different sects politically, socially, administratively, and legally. The reason why the Christians, whose population is thought to be more dense, have a 6:5 advantage in the assembly is based on demographics. Since the demographic structure forms the basis of the regulations in political life, the census in Lebanon and obtaining the data of the population distribution was seen as a big issue, especially in the period from 1950 to 1975. Unfortunately, it was not possible to scientifically conduct the census in Lebanon without manipulation, especially in the pre-1975 period. In addition to the censuses that could not be realized, the censuses that were carried out were also manipulated, and a healthy result could not be

obtained. Due to the accuracy of the data from the censuses being doubtful, the population data was largely distrusted by the Lebanese people. This insecurity paved the way for polarization in society. Hence, one of the most important factors of sectarianism and polarization in Lebanon is the demographic debate.

It would not be an irrational idea to argue that demography-based sectarian problems became such a big issue with the announcement of the results of the census. Rania Maktabi's article called "The Lebanese Census of 1932 Revisited. Who Are the Lebanese ?" is a helpful resource for understanding Lebanon's demographical situation. As she shared in her article, table 1 points out that according to the general population distribution table in 1932, the Christian population was more than the Muslim population. (Maktabi, 1999)

Table 1: Summary of the results of the 1932 census

RESIDENTS	
Sunni	178,100
Shi'i	155,035
Druze	53,334
Maronite	227,800
Greek Catholic	46,709
Greek Orthodox	77,312
Protestant	6,869
Armenian Orthodox	26,102
Armenian Catholic	5,890
Syriac Orthodox	2,723
Syriac Catholic	2,803
Jews	3,588
Chaldean Orthodox	190
Chaldean Catholic	548
Miscellaneous	6,393
TOTAL	793,396

Source: "The Lebanese Census of 1932 Revisited. Who Are the Lebanese ? " by Rania Maktabi

As can be seen from Table 1, the largest segment of the Christian population in 1932 was the Maronites, followed by Greek Orthodox and Greek Catholics, respectively. The Sunnis constituted the largest part of the Muslim population. Shiites and Druze come after Sunnis. Although there is not much difference between Sunni and Shiite populations, there is a difference of about one hundred thousand people between Shiites and Druze. According to the 1932 census, the Lebanese population consists of 793,426 people. In order to understand the period before 1975, it is important to consider the 1932 data. Although, according to the data published by the state, the Christian population was the community with the highest population in 1932, after 1932 the Muslim population exceeded the Christian population. Since Muslims believed that their population was larger, they demanded a new census. The Maronites, on the other hand, prevented the census from being carried out so that Muslims could not claim more rights in the political arena, and they also manipulated the censuses.

“Because of the fears of the Lebanese Christians that they lose the slight majority they have held in the political structure of the state, they have taken several means to maintain the status quo. Since the 1932 census, no other census has been taken and all the statistics relating to the state are simply estimates. “ (Soffer, 1986, p. 198)

The basis of all this confrontation for population distribution stems from the fact that Lebanon did not abandon the sectarianist approach created by the French mandate. The political reform demands of Muslims, the conflicts between the two religions, and between the sects have increased the demography-based debates. It is a mistake to ignore these debates as the polarization between the sects before the civil war gradually deepened. In 1943, with the National Pact, discussions with current politics were tried to be ended, and it was aimed to achieve reconciliation between religion and sects. Unfortunately, the inability to solve the problems mentioned in the previous sections has made civil war inevitable in a country like Lebanon.

3.4. The Most Agonizing Period of Lebanon's History: Lebanon Civil War 1975-1990

The atmosphere of reconciliation during the National Pact of 1943 did not last long. Until the civil war in 1975, certain political ruptures were experienced in society. For this reason, unfortunately, it is not possible to talk about a completely lasting social peace. In addition to religious and sectarian conflicts, tensions have arisen due to various political conflicts, even among people of

the same sect. Although the hot conflicts did not last long, Lebanese society is divided. The dialogue aiming at reconciliation between Muslims and Christians has decreased compared to the past, and the movement of mutually marginalizing one another has started. In addition to the crises between different sects, large families known in Lebanon began to quarrel among themselves, and rivalries emerged between families. Before and during the civil war, the rivalry between these large families continued. In Muslim groups, sometimes there was a competition between families due to differences of opinion, but there was no armed conflict or inter-family assassinations as in Maronite families.

Although the reasons for the drift into the civil war occurred long before 1975, the last straw was the attack on a passenger bus going to the Tel el-Za'tar refugee camp by the supporters of Gemayel, the leader of the Falangists, in front of the Church of Saint Maron on April 13, 1975. (Ayhan and Tür, 2009) As a result of this attack, 27 refugees, including women and children, lost their lives. Until this date, certain conflicts have occurred, and people have lost their lives. However, the loss of civilian lives in this attack had a wide-ranging effect on Lebanon, thus starting the Lebanese civil war. Everyone who was armed or civilian after April 13 1975, felt close to a certain front and identified the other side as the enemy. The attack in front of the Saint Maron Church is accepted by many historians as the beginning of the Lebanese Civil War. As a matter of fact, the civil war was not considered a Christian-Muslim war until 1978. Since the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1978, the Lebanese Civil War has turned into a Christian and Muslim war. Nevertheless, it should be noted that from 1975 until the end of the war in 1990, there were a considerable number of people on the opposite front. The fact that the course of the war after 1978 was divided into two fronts did not change this situation.

Although the bus attack on April 13 1975, is accepted as the start date of the civil war, by all means, the crisis started long before this date. Contrary to the general belief, sectarian conflicts did not arise solely for reasons based on religion. The severity of sectarian conflicts has increased for many different reasons, including economic, political, and social. In February 1975, the granting of fishing rights in Sidon to a company owned by the leader of the Maronites, Shemun, gathered the Shiite and Sunni demonstrators in Lebanon on the same front. They faced the intervention of the Lebanese army as Sunni and Shiite demonstrators protested the fishing rights granted to Proteine. This army intervention caused the Palestinians to take the side of the Sunni and Shiite demonstrators. The protests in question not only enabled Palestinians to act together with other Muslims but also increased the violence of the conflicts irreversibly. As eighteen protesters lost their lives in the clashes, the army withdrew from the region by order of the then prime minister Sulh. The Maronites supported the Lebanese army, but the Sunnis and Shiites were protesting the army. According to the

Maronite leader, Shamun, the Palestinians had to be expelled from the country and demanded an immediate referendum for their removal. The murder of the Shiite politician Maruf Saad, who supported the Palestinians on March 6, 1975, is one of the main reasons why April 13 was the last straw.

As in the parliament, sectarian policy prevailed in many bureaucratic positions, and it was necessary to belong to a certain sect in order to be appointed to some positions. The army was also shaped by the influence of this sectarian policy. Senior command posts were not evenly distributed between Christians and Muslims. The Muslims argued that Christians were brought to higher positions in the army and demanded comprehensive reform. The demand for reform was not limited to the military. However, the Maronites were against this reform demand. The reform demands were also carried to the parliament, and the Prime Minister supported the reform demands. Prime Minister Riad al-Sulh was forced to resign after eleven ministers withdrew from the government. Kamal Jumblatt, the leader of the Druze, offered the reform demands of the Muslims with fourteen articles. The most important of these articles was that the Falangist militia groups should be disbanded immediately, the rights of the Palestinians should be protected, and Lebanon should be fully accepted as an Arab state. The reform demands put forward by Jumblatt were rejected by the majority of Lebanese politicians and were not implemented. After Sulh's resignation, the first military government in Lebanese history was formed. Rashid Karami, who first resigned and was reassigned due to the protests, tried to establish a government acceptable to both Muslims and Christians, but it was not immediately possible to form a government. In this period when the government could not be established, even only in May 1975, a hundred people lost their lives, and the conflicts between the parties intensified. Every corner of beautiful Beirut, whose streets were full of music, was now moaning with the sound of gunfire, and the city had turned into a field of massive conflict. In order to end the conflicts and restore order, the government was re-established, and the Maronite leader Chamoun was appointed as the Minister of Internal Affairs. Unfortunately, contrary to expectations, the establishment of the government did not end the conflicts. From the beginning of the civil war until July 1975, hundreds of people died. The war was not only limited to Tripoli and Zgarta but also spread to all the streets of Beirut.

It would not be inaccurate to determine the first year of the civil war as the year of division into militia organizations. In 1975, the Shiites and Sunnis, who formed the two Islamic religious sects, decided to put aside the conflicts and disagreements among themselves and act together. They thought that only in this way would "victory" be achieved against the Maronites, whom they saw as their common enemy. In addition, the Palestinians in Lebanon were convinced that they should take part

in the Muslim front that would be formed, and they sided with the Shiites and Sunnis in order to protect their rights and interests.

As with Muslims, sectarian differences among Christians did not come to the fore. The main determinant on the side of the Christians is the long-known, powerful, and political families in Lebanon fighting among themselves to gain leadership. These long-standing struggles between families for the power struggle were set aside during the civil war period, and families acted for the same purpose.

Examining how militia groups formed during the civil war that lasted until 1990 will help us understand how and why the war lasted so long and why so many people lost their lives. Militia groupings and crewing up have increased the intensity of the camps and conflicts. Until 1975, Shiites, Sunnis, Palestinians, Druze, and other persons of the Islamic sect did not fight as a single side, even though they were in cooperation with each other. Druze leader Kamal Jumblatt stated that the foremost priority was the unification of Muslims. In 1975, Kamal Jumblatt founded the Lebanese National Movement (LNM) so that all dissident Muslims could act together. The Lebanese National Movement, led by Kamal Jumblatt was a very powerful organization. By reason of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), which has been fighting for Palestine for many years, supported the LNM. The support of approximately eight thousand trained PLO militants to the LNM made the Muslims a tenacious union for the hot conflict. . (Ayhan and Tür, 2009)

The PLO militants were not only fighting, they were educating militants in a sense of military tactics for the LNM front. They taught Muslims all the combat knowledge they had ever experienced, from using weapons to guerrilla warfare tactics. The Palestine Liberation Organization is an organization established in 1964 to carry out the liberation struggle of the Palestinian people. (Ahmad, 1975) The first leader of this organization, which was established for the Palestinians' struggle for freedom and independence, was Ahmad Shukeiri. Yasser Arafat, who took the lead after Shukeiri, is the most prominent figure in the Palestinian struggle. With the great independence struggle that started after the occupation of the Palestinian lands by Israel, there has been a large migration from the Palestinian lands to other countries. In addition, the center of the armed struggle was established outside the Palestinian territories. Lebanon has become a very important country for Palestinians. Lebanon has become the most important of the PLO's main headquarters in a sense, as it has opened its doors to many Palestinian refugees.

“Since the loss of Palestine in 1948, it was only in Lebanon that an integrated Palestinian state and society in diaspora emerged in the decade between 1972 and 1982. It was only during that period that all layers of Palestinian society coalesced to form a more or less integrated whole. All components of Palestinian society were linked together in an interdependent structural continuity: a popular leadership in direct contact with a diversified power base representing all segments of Palestinian society; a large refugee population ("camp dwellers") from whose ranks could be recruited the bulk of the PLO's fighting force; a resourceful civilian population bringing together the political elite, the intellectuals, and the business community; and finally a whole network of political, financial and social institutions located in a freewheeling and cosmopolitan city like Beirut.” (El Khazen, 1987, p. 41)

Therefore, it is not surprising that the Palestinians sided with the Muslims and that the LNM became a powerful organization with the support of the Palestinians. Along with the Muslim front, the Christians also became united. The Lebanese Front, an organization of approximately sixty thousand people, enabled Christians to gather under a single organization.

1975 and 1976 were very successful years for LNM forces. In the last period of 1975, LNM forces had succeeded in capturing many fronts in Lebanon. One of the most important of these fronts was Zahle. The Christians living in the city of Zahle were in the majority, and the taking of this city by the Muslims caused a great demoralization on the Lebanese Front. (Ayhan and Tür, 2009) In addition, the city of Zahle was of great strategic importance. The LNM's capture of the city of Zahle made the public agree that LNM would be the winner of the war. Moreover, the strategically important victory of the LNM was not limited to Zahle. The capture of Jiyeh and Saadiyat, the region of the Maronite leader Shemun, by the LNM in 1976 was a major devastation for the Lebanese Front, both psychologically and strategically. Forasmuch as the leader, Chamoun was able to escape from the LNM forces by helicopter at the last moment. During this period, the LNM captured almost all Maronite settlements. Junieh, defined as the capital of the Maronites, was easily besieged by the LNM forces. For this reason, the opinion that the winner of the war in 1975-1976 will be the LNM is dominant. These successive victories gave LNM self-confidence, and the members were overwhelmed by the euphoria of victory.

The last target of the LNM and its leader Kamal Jumblatt was to capture Bikfaya. Under the influence of victory, Kamal Jumblatt was certain that LNM would be successful. Overconfidently, he invited the Lebanese to breakfast for the last week of March. Until the LNM's call to Bikfaya, Syria had supported the Muslims in Lebanon both materially and morally. The reason Syria wanted Bikfaya

not to be captured by LNM forces was to protect its interests in Lebanon. Syrian President Hafez al-Assad admonished Kamal Jumblatt and his supporters not to attack Bikfaya. Assad explained the reason for this admonishment with the thesis that foreign powers would not allow the Christians to be defeated. Assad's ultimate goal was for Syria not to leave Lebanese territory. Hafez Assad, who thought that if the LNM captured Bikfaya, Syria would have to withdraw from Lebanon, accused the LNM of dividing Lebanon after Jumblatt did not change his mind persistently about Bikfaya. As a result of Jumblatt's insistence on Bikfaya, Syria stopped its militaristic aid to the LNM. The LNM was no longer supported by Syria and had to fight alone against Christians. In contrast, the Maronites were supported by Israel, some European countries, and the United States of America. The political balance had changed in favour of the Maronites. Under the leadership of Hafez Assad, Syria changed its foreign policy and started to support the Lebanese Front in Lebanon. Assad was able to convince Phalangists of the Lebanese Front that he was considering the survival of Lebanon, and he was able to get Syria to bring troops into Lebanon. Along with the changing foreign policy of Syria, all the dynamics had changed in the Lebanese Civil War. Syria was now supporting the Maronites and was fighting against the Muslims. Fighting against the Palestinian and Druze militias, the Syrian forces were seizing the conflict zones that the Maronites could not win. The biggest blow to the Muslim front came when the Maronites attacked Tel al-Za'tar, the largest Palestinian headquarters. This attack forced the Muslims to surrender. The LNM lost its strength at the beginning of the war, and its courage was crushed. The morning breakfast that Jumblatt mentioned was now just a tale. LNM militants lost their power, and the organization flew to pieces. Ultimately, the Muslims had to surrender. After this surrender, the relations between Hafez Assad and the Maronites progressed further. This change in relations was also reflected in their success in military operations. The Riyadh Agreement was signed in the last period of 1976, with the mediation of Saudi Arabia, after the headquarters of the LNM were transferred to the Lebanese Front one by one. (Ayhan and Tür, 2009) Along with the Riyadh Agreement signed between Christians and Muslims on October 17-18, 1976, Syria's military control of Lebanon was grounded. The Riyadh Agreement was a ceasefire agreement signed between Syria and the PLO. The PLO returned to South Lebanon again, according to the articles of this agreement, and began to prepare for counter-actions to fight Israel. In the 1976- 1982 period, Lebanon was divided into many religious groups with their militias. The murder of Kamal Jumblatt in 1977 caused the Muslims to lose their power. The assassination of LNM leader Jumblatt meant that the Muslim militias would never regain the forces they had in 1975.

Jumblatt, who managed to gather all Muslims in a single organization at the beginning of the civil war, could no longer greatly affect the unity of the Muslims. Unlike in 1975, sectarian

differences re-emerged among Muslims. Muslims split into many different subgroups: Sunnis, Shiites, Palestinians, and Syrians. The Muslim unity, which was one of the biggest reasons for the LNM's strength, was destroyed after the murder of Jumblatt. Besides, there was no complete "unity" for Christians. The Lebanese Front had failed to unite the militia forces. In the first period of 1980, there were certain crises among Christians. The tension that started between the Phalangists and the Tigers Militia turned into an armed conflict. As a result of the inclusion of Israel, the Gemayel family, namely the Phalangists, emerged victorious from the conflict between these two families. Israel launched an operation against Lebanon in 1978. However, Israel could not achieve the desired success in Lebanon due to the problems in Israel's domestic policy, some strategic mistakes, and external pressures. The failure of Israel's operation in Lebanon further confused the domestic politics in Israel; sparked new controversy.

Israel had to clash with the PLO on Lebanese territory. The Palestinians, on the other hand, thought that Israel, which came to occupy the Lebanese lands, must first be defeated in order for their struggle to come to a successful conclusion, and they acted within this framework. For Israel, they stated that it is essential to be successful in Lebanon in order to gain power and "victory" in both domestic and foreign policy. To understand why the Lebanon issue is important to Israel, it is necessary to examine Israeli domestic policy before 1978. Likud Party, the centre-right party, which claims that the current government is the cause of all the failures of the Israeli state in foreign policy, won the 1977 elections with its promises about Lebanon. For the Likud Party, which won the elections, the failure in 1978 was unacceptable for this reason. Therefore, the new government has prepared a new operation plan. Israeli Prime Minister Begin and Israeli Defense Minister Sharon created a plan with three main objectives, and within the framework of this plan, they invaded Lebanon in 1982. In this operation, which was led with the support of the Maronites, West Beirut was bombarded by air, land, and sea during the summer months of 1982. Through these bombings, the civil war has become brutal and relentless in a way that has never been seen since 1975. Many civilians lost their lives in these bombings. As hundreds of civilians lost their lives due to this brutal plan of Sharon and Begin, anti-war voices began to rise from the world's public opinion. France and the USA intervened in the situation, and after this intervention, the operability of Israel's plan was destroyed. In addition, the USA and France ensured that the PLO militants left the city. It has been committed by these two countries that the security of all civilians will be ensured in order to remove the militants from the city.

The PLO, relying on this commitment of France and the USA, completely evacuated the city on September 1, 1982. Sharon and Begin broke the agreement with the USA and France after Bashir

Gemayel, who was supported by Israel, was killed two weeks after he became the president of Lebanon in this period, just as things were thought to be progressing positively. Due to the breach of the agreement, Israel occupied West Beirut again. With the reoccupation of West Beirut, the Israel Defense Forces and Phalangists entered Palestinian refugee camps. On September 16-18, 1982, the Israeli Defense Forces and Phalangists committed a massive massacre in the refugee camps in Sabra and Shatila. Hundreds of women and children lost their lives in this massacre, in which civilians in refugee camps were targeted. The Sabra and Shatila massacres were met with a great reaction both by the world's public opinion and by the majority of the Israeli people. By reason of the request of the Israeli people to investigate the events, the Kahan Commission was established, and Israel was found responsible for this massacre. Also, due to the public backlash, Israeli Prime Minister Begin had to resign. As a result of all this, Israeli forces decided to leave Lebanon in 1983, but they did not leave Lebanon completely. Israel withdrew completely from Lebanese territory in 2000.

After Israel decided to withdraw from Lebanese territory in 1983, the civil war in Lebanon did not end soon. After 1983, conflicts between religions continued, as well as conflicts between sects. The conflicts of the Shiites with the Sunnis or the Druze with the Shiites are proof that the civil war is still going on. In addition, there were conflicts between different groups among the Maronites.

Political reform debates are one of the main reasons why the conflicts lasted so long in Lebanon. The civil war continued for fifteen years, as the political reform debates, which were the causes of the civil war, were not resolved even in the last period of the civil war. Undoubtedly, it was not easy to create a political order that would please everyone in a country where many different sects, religions, and ethnicities live together. However, causing such a social crisis is not an easy event to explain. In addition, it should be noted that the brutal period of civil war that would last for fifteen years was not only due to the lack of a smooth political reform process. The demand for political reform was something that Muslims demanded, as it was before the civil war. Muslims stated that the National Pact should be rewritten from the beginning and that the Lebanese constitution needed certain reforms. The Maronites, on the other hand, stated that they would never accept such a reform demand. Instead of such a political reform, they argued that Lebanon should be divided into two regions, Muslim and Christian. Frankly, while Muslims demanded a new and equal order, Christians wanted to preserve their privileges in the former order and were based on tradition. For this reason, it seemed almost impossible to achieve a complete reconciliation between the two sides. Although the Taif Agreement, signed in Taif, Saudi Arabia, in 1989, did not fully meet the Muslims' demand for equality, it was able to heal some of the political grievances of the Muslims.

The Taif Agreement acknowledged the change in population structure that had taken place over the years. According to this agreement, the powers of the Maronite president would be reduced in favour of the Muslim prime minister, the 6:5 ratio determined by the National Pact would be abolished, and equal representation of both sides in the parliament would be ensured. (Cleveland, 2004) In addition, the Taif Agreement was an agreement that accepted Syria's military presence in Lebanon, as Hafez Assad aimed during the civil war. The relevant article of the agreement caused certain crises in Lebanon's internal affairs after the 1989 process. Lebanon's liberation from Syria was a challenging process and took place long after the Taif Agreement. Like Muslims, some Christians were not satisfied with the acceptance of Syria's existence through an agreement. Additionally, the political reform arrangements that were made were not well received by the Christian majority. The Taif Agreement process, which made it possible to think that the war in Lebanon was now over, failed to end the crises. This process can be described as fuel to the flames of crises in the war environment.

Syria's political presence in Lebanon has always been a controversial issue during and after the Lebanese Civil War. Syria's withdrawal from Lebanese territory is a very important issue in the establishment of the post-war order and for Lebanon to become a completely independent state after the war. While some segments of the society in Lebanon thought that the political presence of Syria would bring peace to Lebanon, some segments stated that Syria was an occupying state and wanted to consolidate its political presence by interfering in Lebanon's domestic politics in order to get a share in the post-war order. As predicted, Syria's involvement in Lebanon's internal politics has become the most important issue in Lebanon after the war. Therefore, the Taif Agreement is a very substantial agreement.

After the 1989 Taif Agreement, the majority of Maronites accepted Syria's domination, but Maronite General Michel Aoun argued that Syria had invaded Lebanon. After Amin Gemayel's presidency ended in September 1988, Gemayel appointed Maronite General Michel Aoun as prime minister. Aoun pursued anti-Syrian policies and aimed to end the occupation of Syria. The anti-Syrian propaganda launched by Aoun was turned into a military campaign, and Aoun launched a two-year insurgency. This two-year period was the bloodiest period of the Lebanese Civil War. Michel Aoun, not only the supporters of Syria and the Syrian army, fought. The majority of the Maronite militias took the Front against Aoun, who had to fight with the supporters of Syria. As a result of the attacks of the Maronites and Syria, Aoun lost power. The rebellion initiated by Aoun in October 1990 ended. Michel Aoun, who escaped being killed by taking refuge in the French Embassy, caused the death of more than a thousand civilians during the two-year rebellion and therefore lost many of his supporters during the rebellion.

This whole bloody period, this brutal war that lasted for fifteen years, officially came to an end with the ratification of the Taif Agreement in the civilian Lebanese parliament on November 4, 1989. Many people lost their lives in the civil war, which is still a great wound for Lebanese today, and many people could not even reach the funerals of their loved ones. This bloody process in Lebanon has also been the main reason for the migration of a large part of the Lebanese population to other countries. Unfortunately, it has not been easy to heal the wounds of the Lebanese people. Beautiful Beirut, which should be remembered for the beautiful songs of Fairuz, has been echoed by the sounds of guns and bombs for fifteen years. With the end of the civil war, a new era has begun in Lebanon.

3.5. Intermediate Conclusion

In the third chapter of the thesis, titled "Lebanon after the Independence", the process from the French mandate period to 1990, when the Lebanese civil war ended, was examined. The reasons that dragged Lebanon into civil war are discussed in this chapter in order to point out how inaccurate it is politically and socially to continue the sectarianist approach, which is a legacy of Lebanon from the French mandate, by the Lebanese. Starting from the 1926 constitution, it has been tried to explain how this polarization atmosphere spread to every level of the state.

Although a social reconciliation was aimed at the 1943 National Pact, it could not achieve its goal because it failed to provide full equality between people of different religions and sects in Lebanese society. The sectarian approach to representation and assignment in parliament and most of the bureaucratic duties, adopted in 1926 and 1943, created an environment of endless conflict in the country. Political, social, and economic inequality has been created over and over again, and these created inequalities have inevitably increased polarization in society. The main reason for trying to discuss the Lebanese Civil War in as much detail as possible in this section is; is to comprehend the events that shape the conflicts between families, religions, sects, and different ethnic origins and how these events strengthen the idea of the "other" in some parts of the Lebanese people even today. This chapter aims to examine the historical dimension of how social and political crises are shaped. In addition, it has been tried to point out that the polarization in Lebanon is not only due to sectarian reasons but that foreign interventions also caused this crisis in Lebanon to a great extent. Examining the Lebanese Civil War, which ended with the Taif Agreement of 1989, showed the deep gap between religions and sects in all its dimensions.

Chapter IV: The New Era After the Civil War: A Fragile Peace Between the Government and the Society

4.1. Intermediate Introduction

During the Post-1990 era, establishing social peace and building a democratic resilient state under the scope of the new political reforms were among the most crucial aims of the Lebanese State. In the first part of this chapter, the focus will be on the role of the Taif Agreement and the 1992 Presidential Elections in order to analyze their impacts on the post-civil war era. Subsequently, it will shed light on the accomplishments and ineffectualness of the political reforms, and the significant events and political and social crises will be mentioned. This chapter aims to underline the political sectarianism's devastation to Lebanese society, individuals, Lebanese democracy, and the State. In addition, it will be tried to delve into the political challenges after 2010 with a specific emphasis on the significant impact of the 17 October Revolution. The anti-sectarianist protesters' points of view and their demands for a new order and a new constitution will be highlighted.

4.2. The Post-Civil War Period in Lebanon

After fifteen years of harrowing civil war, efforts were made to establish the order again. The aim was to ensure that the events of the civil war would never be repeated. With this intention in place, the determination of social peace was one of the most important goals after the civil war. Certainly, following the era of the civil war, wherein sectarian divisions, certain political factions, and religious affiliations played a pivotal role, establishing social peace emerged as an incredibly arduous objective, overshadowing even economic or political aspirations. By reason of hatred had permeated every segment of society to such an extent that there existed a different definition of an enemy for each individual, societal polarization had escalated. Upon closer examination of the provisions outlined in the 1989 Taif Agreement, it becomes evident what kind of post-civil war order was intended to be established. In the Taif Agreement, the rule of representation in the parliament in the National Pact was changed with a ratio of 6:5 and it was decided that Muslims and Christians would be represented equally in the parliament. In addition, assignments based on sect-based discrimination in the bureaucracy and the military were put to an end, and the assignment authority was completely transferred to the parliament. When scrutinizing the Taif Agreement, it becomes evident that the paramount emphasis lies on constitutional institutions, national independence, and equality.

When delving into these articles, it becomes apparent that a unanimous agreement exists regarding the necessity to eradicate sectarian discrimination, which fuels turmoil and instability within both the state and society. The provisions outlined under the "Political Reforms" section of the Taif Agreement, ratified by the Lebanese Parliament on November 4, 1989, can serve as compelling evidence of the collective consensus regarding political sectarianism. The sub-heading "Abolition of Sectarianism" under the title of "Political Reforms" in the Taif Agreement indicates the envisioned political order aiming to eradicate sectarian divisions. "Abolishing political sectarianism is a fundamental national objective. To achieve it, it is required that efforts be made in accordance with a phased plan." (The Taif Agreement, 1989) The same article also outlines the actions that need to be taken within the framework of the aforementioned phased plan. From these articles, it is evident that the process of establishing social peace was initiated by prioritizing equality among individuals.

"The following shall be done in the interim period: a. Abolish the sectarian representation base and rely on capability and specialization in public jobs, the judiciary, the military, security, public, and joint institutions, and in the independent agencies in accordance with the dictates of national accord, excluding the top-level jobs and equivalent jobs which shall be shared equally by Christians and Muslims without allocating any particular job to any sect. b. Abolish the mention of sect and denomination on the identity card." (The Taif Agreement 1989)

The aforementioned articles in the Taif Agreement could not ensure a complete end to political sectarianism in Lebanon. Undoubtedly, the contribution of the political reforms made with this treaty to the establishing of social peace is very important. Undeniably, the political reforms introduced through this treaty have played a crucial role in fostering social peace. Nevertheless, after thirty-three years since the civil war, attaining social justice, cultivating peace within society, and achieving equality among individuals remain unfulfilled objectives in present-day Lebanon. Since the inception of Lebanese state, regrettably, the discriminatory sectarian mindset inherited from the French mandate administration has not been fully relinquished. Undeniably, the pervasive nature of this sectarian understanding, extending its influence over both society and the state, is not the sole factor contributing to Lebanon's complex and enduring problems. Nonetheless, it is widely recognized that this discriminatory notion of sectarianism stands as a primary catalyst for the crises experienced in the country. The Taif Agreement shows that there is a common public opinion on why and how the problems in Lebanon are experienced. Nevertheless, even in the Taif Agreement, which emphasized the need for political reforms, the provision stating that the president, prime minister, and speaker of

parliament should be from different sectarian backgrounds was not abolished. This very decision alone serves as evidence that discriminatory sectarianism will not be eradicated entirely, and this mindset has yet to be abolished. Due to all these reasons, conducting a detailed examination of the Taif Agreement is of paramount importance in order to comprehend the political and social challenges encountered during the post-civil war period.

The Lebanese elections held on October 22, 1992, were a significant milestone in the reconstruction process following the Taif Agreement. In this election, the distribution in the parliament was determined according to the articles in the Taif Agreement. In the 1992 elections, Elias Hrawi, a Maronite, was elected as president. An essential aspect of these elections was the implementation of power-sharing arrangements outlined in the 1989 Agreement. The 1989 Agreement aimed to secure political stability in Lebanon by granting greater authority to the parliament. Therefore, the significance of the parliament was underscored, emphasizing its crucial role in the governance and stability of the country. The Taif Agreement, designed to mend the devastation caused by the civil war, and the 1992 elections hold immense value. Regrettably, neither of these factors could effectively bring about political stability or social peace. Karam Karam's article sheds light on one of the key reasons contributing to this failure.

“Post-Taif governance is not based on the expression of the will of the majority but on consensus between political elites representing major ‘communities’ and partisan formations. This is why consensus democracy has prioritized managing successive crises over realizing reforms. Electoral reform was only tackled from a perspective of inter-confessional balance and interest. Decentralization was discussed at best incompletely, and in reality, during the post-war period, no draft laws on decentralization have been adopted, even though the drafts were more likely to maintain a de-concentrated than a decentralized form of power. Meanwhile, the constitutional commitment to the abolition of confessionalism has been entirely marginalized.” (Karam K., 2012, p. 38)

Considering Karam's viewpoint, it can be stated that although the main problem of this crisis was understood to a large extent in 1989 and 1992, the reconstruction process in Lebanon largely remained confined to policymaking. As the reforms were restricted primarily to the politics and the political elite, who represent a small portion of the population and come from privileged backgrounds, the desired objectives could not be fully realized. The ineffectiveness of these reforms in permeating

society and bringing about meaningful change played a crucial role in failing to solve the political, economic, and social problems encountered during the post-civil war period.

In addition to these factors, the outcomes of the 1992 elections have been a significant and contentious aspect of post-civil war Lebanon's political landscape. The results of the elections have sparked controversy due to the involvement and subsequent political success of Hezbollah, further complicating the landscape of Lebanese politics. Hezbollah was established in South Lebanon in 1982, and it emerged during the civil war to liberate Lebanese territory from Israeli occupation. However, it is worth noting that different scholars attribute the year of establishment to 1984. In the 1992 elections, Hezbollah became the political party that secured the highest number of seats, winning a total of eight seats.

The presence of Hezbollah in the Lebanese parliament has caused discussions domestically and internationally. Some parties underlined that Hezbollah is a terrorist organization and opposed its entry into the parliament, while others supported Hezbollah's participation in the Lebanese parliament. Hezbollah, which means the "Party of Allah", is a Shiite Islamic organization. Hezbollah, which was established in 1982 with the support of Iran, not only remained an actor in the civil war in Lebanon but also pointed out that it aimed to help the poor people in Lebanon, established many hospitals and schools, and provided financial aid to some of the people. Precisely for this reason, it gained several numbers of supporters in a very short time. Today, Hezbollah is defined as a terrorist group by many countries. For instance, the US Congressional Research Service, whose embassy was bombed by Hezbollah during the civil war, defines Hezbollah as the Iran-backed Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO). While there are debates surrounding the extent of Iran's backing of Hezbollah, it is an undeniable fact that Iran provides support to Hezbollah.

“These crises have shaped the political dynamics of Islamic activism in Lebanon, which received further reinforcement from the victory of the Muslim cause in Iran. Equally important, the formation of Hizbullah was clearly tied to the Israeli invasion of southern Lebanon in June 1982, and the introduction of the Multi-National Forces (MNF). Further, the dispatch of 1,500 Iranian Revolutionary Guards to the Syrian-controlled Biqa region in the summer of 1982, under the pretext of fighting Israel, brought Iran into Lebanon. It was then that Hizbullah was secretly formed under the sponsorship of Iran. The Syrian-Iranian agreement on stationing the Iranian Revolutionary Guards contributed to consolidating the emergence of Hizbullah, which further enhanced its power in Lebanon.” (Hamzeh, 1993, p. 322)

In addition to Hezbollah's successful result in the 1992 elections and taking its place in the Lebanese parliament, its position after the civil war is another issue that is constantly discussed. Furthermore, the position of Hezbollah following the civil war is another subject that has been consistently debated. Following the conclusion of the civil war, Hezbollah not only achieved success in the 1992 elections but also solidified its presence in the country. This has augmented ongoing discussions regarding the role and influence of Hezbollah in Lebanon. The fact that Hezbollah did not disarm following the conclusion of the civil war has been a highly controversial issue in Lebanon.

“When Lebanon's 15-year civil war (1975-1990) finally drew to an end, Hezbollah was the only wartime armed actor allowed to hold on to its weapons arsenal. All other militias were required to lay down their arms and transform into civil political actors. This special status was justified by reference to the continuing Israeli occupation of a "security zone" in South Lebanon.” (Dingel, 2013, p. 71)

In 1991, the militia groups were called to lay down their arms. Thus, almost every organization, party, and gang that had been a party to armed conflicts during the civil war had to lay down their arms. However, the refusal of Hezbollah to disarm has sparked significant controversy. It is concluded that there is a perception that conflicts will occur again after the civil war and that the reassignment of peace between religions/sects is not an aim that is convinced by all parties. Undoubtedly, it cannot be expected that the "enemy" perception of all parties will disappear as soon as the civil war is over.

Nevertheless, it is crucial to acknowledge that militia groups, gangs, and terrorist organizations, through their decisions to maintain a state of preparedness for potential future conflicts, directly or indirectly hinder the establishment of lasting peace in Lebanon. In order to wait for the order tried to be established with political reforms to spread to the whole society, the wounds of the civil war must first be healed, and the starting point is that all armed groups must lay down their arms. One of the many reasons why the conflicts in Lebanon intensified in a short time after 1990 is that armament has not been completely abandoned.

4.2.1. The Political Crises After the Civil War

During the post-civil war period, Lebanon had two major external problems to solve, apart from its internal issues: the existence of Israel and Syria in Lebanese lands. By courtesy of the Taif

Agreement, Syria did not leave Lebanese territory after the Lebanese Civil War. Syria, which provided military and material aid to the Muslims at the very beginning of the civil war, later fought against the Muslims together with the Christians. Due to Hafez Assad's strategy in the civil war, Syria managed not to leave the Lebanese lands when the war was over. The presence of Syria on Lebanese territory, even after the war, has caused controversy in Lebanon. Despite all these discussions, the political elites preferred to cooperate with Syria. Moreover, Syria's dominance over Lebanon has increased with many agreements, such as the "Treaty of Brotherhood, Cooperation, and Coordination", signed between Lebanon and Syria in 1991. (Ayhan and Tür, 2009) It is essential to point out Syria's relationship with Hezbollah while discussing Syria's existence in Lebanon after Taif Agreement. In addition, it should be taken into account that both sides have Shiite sects. A collaboration emerged between Syria and Hezbollah; therefore, Syria supported Hezbollah militarily and financially. Both sides fought against Israel on the ground of religious-based conflicts and Syria's strategic plan of being the only "hegemon" power in the Lebanese territory. Within the framework of this strategic plan, Syria supported Hezbollah and aimed to drive Israel out of Lebanese territory.

Although Israel declared that it would leave Lebanese territory in the last period of the civil war, it did not leave the country immediately after the war. In the post-civil war period, Israel suffered great losses because of Hezbollah's and Syria's attacks. As can be understood from this fact, the 1989 Taif Agreement did not end the conflicts in Lebanon. In the early years of the post-civil war period, there were many conflicts between Hezbollah and Israel. The Israeli government was under pressure from the Israeli people to withdraw from Lebanon. Many civilians lost their lives during the conflicts between Hezbollah and Israel. Ultimately, Israel withdrew from Lebanese territory in May 2000. The fact that the majority of the Lebanese people support Hezbollah in these conflicts between Israel and Hezbollah highlights a very crucial political and social demand. Although they had fought against each other for fifteen years, after the civil war, the majority of Muslims and Christians supported Hezbollah against Israel's presence in Lebanon. It would not be inappropriate to infer that the most fundamental aim, according to the Lebanese people, is the independence of Lebanon. Considering the fact that Lebanon was under the domination of the Ottoman Empire for nearly four hundred years and ruled by French mandate for forty-three years after the Ottoman rule, one can argue that this is one of the main reasons behind the people's arduous obstinacy for total independence.

After Israel's withdrawal from Lebanese territory in 2000, another challenging period began between Lebanon and Israel. The conflicts between Hezbollah and Israel have not ended. Israel has not withdrawn from Sheeba Farms, although it has declared that it will withdraw totally from Lebanese territory. Hence, the problem of Sheeba Farms emerged, which led to the increase of the

crisis between the two sides. One of the most important reasons for the Sheeba Farms crisis is that the region is identified by Israel as Syrian territory, while Lebanon defends that the region belongs to its lands. Asfer Kaufman's views will make an effective contribution to the examination of the main reason for the opposition here.

“As in so many other post-colonial settings, the roots of this conflict lie in the clumsy manner in which France dealt with national boundaries in the area. France never bothered to demarcate the border between Syria and Lebanon, but it did draw maps.

...The maps placed the Shebaa farms within Syria, while, for all practical matters, the owners and residents of the farms considered themselves to be Lebanese citizens. They conducted their administrative affairs in Lebanon, paid taxes to Beirut, and held Lebanese identity cards.”
(Kaufman, 2006)

Within the framework of these discussions, Hezbollah stated that if they did not withdraw from Sheeba Farms, Israel would face the consequences of its decision. After Israel's decision not to withdraw from Sheeba Farms, which it occupied during the 1967 Six-Day War, on the grounds that the area was Syrian territory, the attacks between Israel and Hezbollah continued reciprocally. The Sheeba Farms problem, which has not reached a final solution even today, has been a significant milestone in the political crises of the Lebanese state with both Israel and Hezbollah after 2000. Thus, a period began in which Iran and Syria were external factors, and Lebanon appealed to resolve the problem in the international arena.

Besides the Sheeba Farms crisis, another problem Lebanon needed to resolve was the Syrian presence on Lebanese lands. The struggle for Israel to leave the Lebanese lands has led to the indignation of the anti-Syrian struggle with each passing day. Aoun, who had to leave Lebanon after the suppression of the rebellion that lasted for two years after 1989, was also supporting the anti-Syrian demonstrations in 2000. Anti-Syrian protesters, mostly Maronites and Aoun supporters, were protesting in all parts of Lebanon on the grounds that Syria was interfering in Lebanon's internal affairs. The Maronite Church also gave great support to these protests. As argued in Ayhan and Tür's book, the Maronite Church ended its support for the protesters due to Assad's conciliatory stance that he would not interfere in Lebanon's elections, but this did not last long. (Ayhan and Tür, 2009) When it became clear that Syria would be directly involved in the elections, the Maronite Church started to give even greater support to the anti-Syria protests. With taking note of the differential attitudes of

different sects and religions in Lebanon to this independency debate, it will be understood that the psychological effect of the civil war period still continues in a sense and how sectarianism is a factor in the decision-making mechanism of the society. The majority of the anti-Syrian protestors were Maronites. Additionally, under the leadership of Walid Jumblatt, the Druze also gave great support to these protests. On the other hand, these protests did not receive much support from Sunnis and Shiites. Considering that Hafez Assad stopped helping the Muslims and supported the Christians during the civil war, this can be seen as a huge contrast. However, what is essential to keep in mind is the fact that the political and social balances in Lebanon can change in a very short time.

Another turning point in the Syria-Lebanon crisis is the involvement of the United Nations. Syria's direct support to Lebanese President Lahoud and the extension of his government for three more years increased the pressure on Syria internationally. Under all these conditions, Resolution 1559 was declared by the United Nations Security Council in 2004. This decision of the UN is crucial for Lebanon not only for the fight against Syria but also for the fight against Hezbollah's vicious politicization.

“ ... 1. Reaffirms its call for the strict respect of the sovereignty, territorial integrity, unity, and political independence of Lebanon under the sole and exclusive authority of the Government of Lebanon throughout Lebanon; 2. Calls upon all remaining foreign forces to withdraw from Lebanon; 3. Calls for the disbanding and disarmament of all Lebanese and non-Lebanese militias; 4. Supports the extension of the control of the Government of Lebanon over all Lebanese territory; 5. Declares its support for a free and fair electoral process in Lebanon's upcoming presidential election conducted according to Lebanese constitutional rules devised without foreign interference or influence; 6. Calls upon all parties concerned to cooperate fully and urgently with the Security Council for the full implementation of this and all relevant resolutions concerning the restoration of the territorial integrity, full sovereignty, and political independence of Lebanon; 7. Requests that the Secretary-General report to the Security Council within thirty days on the implementation by the parties of this resolution and decides to remain actively seized of the matter.” (United Nations Security Council Resolution 1559, 2004)

However, Resolution 1559 failed to end Syrian dominance in Lebanon entirely. After this decision in 2004, a significant event changed the political balance in Lebanon. PM Rafiq Hariri visited Damascus to discuss Syria's dominance with Assad in Lebanon. In spite of Hariri's restrained approach, Assad's statements were in lack of political politeness. During the meeting, Assad behaved

as if he was the only decision-maker. Assad's discourteous attitude resulted in the majority of Muslims' support for the anti-Syria protests.

The assassination by Syria against Rafiq Hariri, who pursued a moderate policy with the aim of not dragging his country into chaos again, was the last straw. The assassination of Hariri, who served as prime minister for two terms, caused quite a reaction in Lebanon. Regardless of religion or sect, almost everyone in the society supported the idea that Syria should withdraw from Lebanese territory immediately. The igniter of the Cedar Revolution was, therefore, the assassination. The massive protests that started in February continued until April 27, 2005, when Syria withdrew its troops. Syria's withdrawal of its forces in 2005 did not end the discussions that Syria was involved in illegal intelligence activities in order to interfere in Lebanon's internal affairs.

Apart from Syria's withdrawal from Lebanon, another reason why 2005 was an important year is the 2005 elections. The influence of the Cedar Revolution undoubtedly spread to the elections held in May and June 2005. Summarily, the elections were held between two major parties. The parties were also politically supported by foreign powers. The March 14 Alliance was supported by the United States of America, and March 8 Alliance was supported by Syria and Iran. March 14 Alliance consists of Future Movement, Progressive Socialist Party, Lebanese Forces, Qornet Shehwan Gathering, and Tripoli Bloc. In addition, the March 8 Alliance consists of the Free Patriotic Movement, Amal Movement, Hezbollah, Popular Bloc, Armenian Revolutionary Federation, Murr Bloc, and Syrian Social Nationalist Party. The 2005 elections resulted in the victory of the Alliance on March 14.

“ The ensuing elections resulted in the victory of anti-Syrian political groups, among them the Future Movement which was lead by the assassinated former prime minister's son, Saad Hariri. For the first time in three decades, the Lebanese were able to cast their votes in an election which was free of foreign intervention, but perhaps not fair because of the controversial election law which demarcated the electoral districts in such a way that Christian representatives were often elected by Muslim voters.” (Kurtuluş, 2009, p.199)

From Kurtuluş's point of view, one can come to the conclusion that how fair the 2005 elections were was a controversial issue. In order to properly analyze the 2005 elections, which were held under the influence of the endless political crises after the civil war that ended in 1990, it would be useful to examine the European Parliament's report on the May and June 2005 elections. The EP's

report on the Lebanese Elections is a report that reveals the conditions under which the elections were held. In the report, essential and various issues such as how elections are held during a political crisis in the country, important events that stand out in specific constituencies, and how fair the election was. Examining the report in detail helps to understand what awaits Lebanon, especially politically and socially, after the 2005 elections. While the report draws attention to the need for new political reforms and reforms in the electoral system, the notions of democracy and equality are frequently emphasized. Two articles in the conclusion part of the report are of great importance.

“ ... is convinced that, respecting the wish of the Lebanese people, in the spirit of the Taef Agreement, a new political system should allow parties and coalitions to base themselves upon common political interests and not only confessionalist or religious grounds;

... deplores the fact that in many cases, when candidates have been previously selected, elections took place without real contest or open and transparent competition; considers this undermines the electoral process, shows its adequacy and decreases the democratic value of the process.”
(Gonzalez, 2005)

Although the 2005 elections had controversial aspects, it was seen as a starting point that would start a new era in Lebanon by both the Lebanese people and the world public opinion. Regrettably, the expectation for the restoration of a peaceful social and political environment has failed. Subsequent to the 2005 elections, the political crises in Lebanon persisted, failing to reach a resolution. After the election, many assassinations happened in Lebanon. Additionally, the winner of the elections, Saad Hariri, called on Hezbollah to disarm, thus creating tension between Hezbollah and the Lebanese government.

Another crisis that must be mentioned in the post-civil war era is Hezbollah and the Israel War in 2006. This problem which was rooted in the civil war period, has not been resolved since 2000 when Israel withdrew its soldiers from Lebanese territory. At this point, it should be underlined that while Hezbollah, which struggled for Israel's withdrawal from Lebanese territory before 2000, was supported by a large majority in Lebanon, there was a Hezbollah demanded by the Lebanese Prime Minister to lay down its arms in 2005.

While the Lebanese government's efforts to disarm Hezbollah were continuing, Israel was attacking Gaza. Unsurprisingly, Hezbollah has launched a counter-attack in response to the Israeli attacks. When Hezbollah started to fight for Gaza, Israel did not hesitate to attack Lebanese territory. Thus, the Hezbollah-Israel War, also known as the 2006 Lebanon War, began. Many people lost their

lives in the conflict between Hezbollah and Israel. The most cruel attack during the war was Israel's attack on Cana. Anti-war demonstrations increased in many countries of the world when it was understood that Israeli forces attacked civilian settlements and killed many Lebanese civilians. Due to this international pressure, the war ended in August 2006. The biggest political impact of the war on Lebanon is Hezbollah's re-gaining supporters and political empowerment. The war, which officially ended with the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1071, further exacerbated the existing political crises in Lebanon.

It would not be inappropriate to underline that the political reforms which were created after Taif Agreement could not fully establish political stability in Lebanon, which has had to deal with constant political, military, social, and economic crises since 1990. It is an undeniable fact that many political crises have been experienced in the period from Lebanon's Civil War until 2006, and these crises have been increased by religious or sectarianist conflicts. While examining the political and social crises in Lebanon, it is not a mistake to argue that the decision-making mechanisms of the actors are shaped by the sectarian and religious-based discriminatory way of thinking as much as they are shaped by their own political, economic, and military interests. Certainly, it would be inaccurate to state that sectarianism is at the root of all these crises. However, what is intended to underline is that sectarianism has been added to almost every political crisis that has taken place since the establishment of the country.

4.3. The Sects and The Sectarianism in Lebanon

As mentioned in the first chapter of this dissertation, The Republic of Lebanon states that there are eighteen sects in Lebanon. The eighteen sects recognized by the state are Greek Orthodox, Alawis, Greek Catholics, Druzes, Evangelicals, Judaism, Roman Catholics, Nestorians Assyrians, Copts, Chaldeans, Armenian Catholics, Armenian Orthodox, Syriac Orthodox, Syriac Catholics, Maronites, Ismaili Shiites, Sunnis, Shiites. The most significant part of the population of Lebanon consists of Muslims and Christians. According to the "Labour Force and Household Living Conditions Survey 2018- 2019" report published by the International Labor Organization, European Union, and Central Administration of Statistics in 2020, the residents in Lebanon are approximately 4.8 million people. As pointed out in the same report, eighty per cent of the population are Lebanese citizens.

Article 3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UNHR) states that "everyone has the right to life, liberty and the security of person." The population of refugees who fled the war and settled in Lebanon to protect their right to life, which is the most important of the fundamental human rights, consists of a substantial number. The majority of refugees in Lebanon are Syrians who immigrated to Lebanon after the civil war and Palestinians, many of whom became stateless after

Israel invaded their country. The refugee population in question is quite a large number for a small country like Lebanon, with a small population where many sects live together. Undoubtedly, the dense refugee population also affects the demographic structure of Lebanon. As the main goal is to have a discussion about sectarianism in Lebanon, it is crucial to point out that the vast majority of refugees are Muslims. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) states that the refugee population in Lebanon exceeds 1.5 million. Moreover, UNHCR highlights the risk of social instability in Lebanon due to the high population of refugees.

“The presence of such a large refugee population in a small country facing an economic crisis, high unemployment, pressure on infrastructure, and environmental challenges increasingly risks affecting inter-community relations and social stability.” (‘UNHCR Lebanon Operational Fact Sheet, 2020)

It is not surprising that the high number of refugees is a debatable subject for a country whose political and social stability has been highly controversial since its establishment and which has gone through a bloody civil war caused by sectarianist & religious conflict that lasted fifteen years. However, when discussing social and political stability and sectarianism in Lebanon, it would not be equitable and appropriate to start the discussion by first discussing the dense population of immigrants in the country. At this juncture, the only issue that needs to be underlined here is that the high immigrant population can affect the demographic structure in Lebanon, and it is a reality that will shape the current sectarianism debate in the country.

Since the 1926 Constitution, although the representation of Muslims and Christians in the parliament was equalized with the political reforms made after the Lebanese Civil War, sectarianism has maintained both political and social inequality and has played a major role in the failure of social stability, political equilibrium, and social peace in the country.

In Lebanon, where the demographic structure has spread to all political instruments, the last census by the state was made in 1932. In the 1932 census, it was determined that the Christian population was more than the Muslim population. The census in Lebanon has been a controversial issue since the country's establishment. A certain segment of society believed that the census report published by the state was dubious. The fact that the legislative, executive, and judicial organs are shaped by the influence of a sectarian approach is the main reason for the debates about which religion or sect is more prevalent in the population. The fact that the census has not been carried out by the

state since 1932 is undoubtedly the result of a certain ideological attitude. Although the representations of Muslims and Christians in the parliament were equalized after the Taif Agreement, the population will not be an insignificant debate as long as sectarianism is not erased from the state and society.

Although official censuses have not been conducted by the state for nearly ninety years, census records are published in Lebanon by many independent companies. In the Lebanon 2021 International Religious Freedom Report published by the United States Department of State, data on religious groups in Lebanon were shared based on the report published by one of these independent companies.

“However, Statistics Lebanon, an independent firm, estimates 64.9 percent of the citizen population is Muslim (32 percent Sunni, 31.3 percent Shia, and 1.6 percent Alawites and Ismailis combined). Statistics Lebanon further estimates 32 percent of the population is Christian. Maronite Catholics are the largest Christian group (with 52.5 percent of the Christian population), followed by Greek Orthodox (25 percent of the Christian population). Other Christian groups include Greek Catholics (Melkites), Armenian Orthodox, Armenian Catholics, Syriac Orthodox, Syriac Catholics, Assyrians, Chaldean Catholics, Copts, Protestants (including Presbyterians, Baptists, and Seventh-day Adventists), Roman (Latin) Catholics, and members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Church of Jesus Christ).” (Lebanon 2021 International Religious Freedom Report, 2021)

When the data shared in the report is compared with the data of the 1932 Census, it is observed that the Muslim population has increased considerably. This observation reveals not only a demographic change but also a change in social and political balances. In addition, society's distrust of institutions is a reasonable political attitude.

The issue of insecurity in society is a critical issue that needs to be discussed with its causes and consequences beyond the demographic debates. Undoubtedly, the only solution to the insecurity in society is the reformation of the political order from top to bottom. Taking into account the political, economic, and social crises in Lebanon since 1990, one can argue that the problems still need to be resolved with the political reforms approved by the parliament. In a country where the trust relationship between society and the state has been widely damaged by bad governance, lack of equality, and sectarianist political attitudes, one of the starting points of solving the problems is rebuilding the trust of society in the state. The fact that the decisions taken by state institutions have

not gained the trust of society is one of the primary obstacles to rebuilding peace and ceasing the crises. Moreover, it is one of the reasons why Lebanon has fallen short of achieving its initial objective of becoming a resilient state. Lebanon is one of the countries defined under the heading "institutional and social fragility" in the "FY23 List of Fragile and Conflict-affected Situations" by the World Bank. (World Bank, 2022) There are many indicators that the World Bank uses for the definition of a fragile state. It is helpful to understand the World Bank's report "Historical Overview: The World Bank Group's Classification of Fragile and Conflict-Affected Situations" to learn how the definition of the Fragile state is determined.

“Fragile situations are defined as those: (i) With one or more of the following situations: (a) the weakest institutional and policy environment, based on a revised, harmonized CPIA1 for IDA countries (for which CPIA scores are disclosed)² that is below 3.0; or (b) the presence of a UN Department of Peace Operation (DPO), as this reflects a decision by the international community that a significant investment is needed to maintain peace and stability; or (c) flight across borders of 2,000 or more per 100,000 population, who are internationally regarded as refugees in need of international protection,³ as this signals a major political or security crisis; (ii) And that are not in medium- or high-intensity conflict, as such countries have moved beyond “fragility.” (World Bank, 2022)

In addition, examining the indicators in the study titled "Fragile State Index Methodology and Cast Framework" by The Fund for Peace, a research organization established in the USA in 1957, is a helpful study in explaining why Lebanon is on the World Bank's list of fragile states. The Fund for Peace stated that some of the indicators that are determinant in the definition of a fragile state are group grievance, human rights and law, demographic pressures, state legitimacy, uneven development, economic decline, and poverty. Political and economic challenges have been the primary factors contributing to Lebanon's classification as a fragile state. Discrimination and inequality lie at the root of many political problems in Lebanon. It is political sectarianism that constantly produces inequality.

The definition of the concept of sectarianism is a controversial issue. Fanar Hadad underlines the lack of a specific definition of the notion of sectarianism in the article "'Sectarianism' and Its Discontents in the Study of the Middle East." In the subtitle called "The Many Faces of Sectarianism", he points out that there are different types of sectarianism ", such as social sectarianism and violent sectarianism and so forth." (Haddad, 2017) Taking into account the process that started in Lebanon

with the 1926 Constitution during the French mandate era, one can point out that there are mostly two types of sectarianism in the Lebanese case: political sectarianism and social sectarianism. Considering both types of definitions, the roots of sectarianism date back to the Ottoman Empire's occupation of Lebanese lands. As argued in the first chapter of the dissertation, the administrative systems of the Ottoman Empire were the starting point of the idea of otherization. It will not be an inappropriate argument to highlight that the Millet system damaged the idea of equality among individuals in exactly the same way as sectarianism. The French mandate administration, on the other hand, caused the social polarization to deepen economically, socially, politically, and culturally. Furthermore, the constitution imposed by the French mandate made sectarianism permanent and left a legacy of wicked problems in the country. From the independence of the country to the present day, the sectarianist attitude has always continued as a decisive political and social element. In addition to the crises created by the sectarian-religious conflicts in the Lebanese Civil War, the continuation of sectarianism is a decisive factor that individuals experience its practices in their daily lives as well. The concept of sectarianism is a reality that spreads aggressively to all segments of the state and society. What is trying to underline here is that it is not a practice of inequality caused by laws. The fact that is wanted to be pointed out is that the shadow of sectarianism is encountered in every decision that affects an individual's life deeply, from the job he will enter to the person he will marry. Additionally, sectarianism is one of the main reasons why good governance, political stability, and a solid democracy could not be established in the country. The majority of Lebanese people believe that the sect-based political system is the cause of economic, political, and social problems. The 17 October Revolution movement was shaped by society's insistence that political sectarianism, the root cause of crises, should be destroyed. Especially the insistence of the young population that sectarianism should be abolished is an attitude that will determine Lebanon's present and future.

4.4. The Uphill Battle of Lebanon in Promoting Political Stability and Resolving Crises

In order to gain an understanding of why the protests emerged in 2019 and were supported by the majority of the young generation, it is essential to scrutinize the critical developments in Lebanon after the end of the Hezbollah and Israel War in 2006. The most critical event in Lebanon after the 2006 war was the 2009 General Elections. The 2009 election are a milestone in Lebanese politics. The 2005 elections, the last election held before the 2009 elections, were held during a major political and social crisis. The country held elections in a political environment where the assassination of Rafiq Hariri was experienced and then the protesters started the 2005 Cedar Revolution and eventually Syria withdrew from Lebanon. After the election, political stability was tried to be ensured

in the country and the government was tried to be structured. Unfortunately, the political aims were not achieved in the period from the 2005 elections to the 2009 elections, on the contrary, the government crisis deepened aggressively.

After the 2006 Israel-Hezbollah War, tensions between the Lebanese government and Hezbollah increased. The attacks of Hezbollah without informing the government were highly criticized by the March 14 Alliance government. Saad Hariri argued that Hezbollah should be disarmed and he pointed out that the support of Hezbollah by Iran and Syria is the interference of foreign powers in Lebanon's internal affairs. This tension between Hezbollah and the March 14 Alliance has led to a political crisis. Emile Lahud's resignation from the presidency in 2007 created a government crisis in Lebanon. Although the presidential crisis was resolved when Michel Suleiman became president as a result of the joint decision of Hezbollah and the government, the fact that some of Hezbollah's political demands were not accepted caused the political crisis to last longer. Unsurprisingly, the crisis reflected on society and Sunni-Shiite tensions led to street movements. Regrettably, the tension in the street went beyond the democratic protests. The conflicts in which both sides were armed, brought to the agenda that the tension between sects would cause 1975 to occur again. Street clashes and this political crisis ended with the Doha Agreement, in which Turkey and Qatar mediated. In Veysel Ayhan and Özlem Tür's book titled "Lebanese War, Peace, Resistance and Relations with Turkey," the Doha Agreement is an agreement in which Hezbollah's demands are largely imposed on the government. The main reason for this imposition is the lack of a decent military force that can stop Hezbollah. One of the most critical points of the agreement is the decision to make certain changes in the 2009 elections.

“II. A Government of national unity will be formed with 30 ministers to be allocated as follows: 16 to the majority, 11 to the opposition, and three to the President. All parties pledge by virtue of this Agreement not to resign or obstruct the work of the Government.

III. In accordance with the electoral law of 1960, the district (qada') will be adopted as the electoral constituency in Lebanon, and the two districts of Marj `Uyun-Hasbayya will remain a single electoral constituency, as will Baalbek-Hirmil and Western Bekaa-Rashayya.” (Doha Agreement, 2008)

Undoubtedly, the political environment before the 2009 elections affected the election results. The fact that Hezbollah forced the government to accept many of its political demands with the Doha

Agreement created a great expectation that the opposition would win in the elections. Contrary to all these expectations, the winner of the 2009 elections was not the opposition, but the March 14 Alliance. The significance of the 2009 elections goes beyond changes in the electoral system. The 2009 elections led to competition between the sects and caused the de-confessionalization discussions to increase. Also, the polls provoked the idea that sectarianism should be abolished. In the "Final Report on The Lebanese Parliamentary Election" published by the National Democratic Institute, it was pointed out that de-confessionalism should be one of the main goals for Lebanon.

“ Consistent with the Lebanese Constitution, which calls for a transitional plan to abolish political confessionalism, Lebanese officials and civil society alike should begin the process of moving away from a pure confessional system towards a system that places less power in the hands of sectarian elites. As stipulated in Article 95 of the Constitution, the President of the Republic should form a National Committee including the Prime Minister, Speaker of Parliament, experts, and leaders of civil society to study the means of abolishing confessionalism, and propose and implement a transitional plan.” (National Democratic Institute, 2009)

Although the 2009 elections had a milestone in Lebanese politics as it started de-confessionalism debates intensely, it could not end the political and social crises in Lebanon. Three years after the elections, a cabinet crisis emerged in Lebanon. The cabinet crisis of 2011 caused protesters to be seen again on the streets of Lebanon. Hezbollah played a decisive role in the cabinet crisis in Lebanon in 2011.

After the assassination of Rafiq Hariri in 2005, upon the request of the Lebanese state, the United Nations-backed Special Tribunal for Lebanon (STL) was established to investigate the assassination. In 2011, The Special Tribunal for Lebanon pointed to Hezbollah's connection to the assassination and sentenced three Hezbollahists, Messrs Ayyash, Merhi, and Oneissi, to life imprisonment. In the crisis that emerged during the trial, Hezbollah stated that it had no connection with the assassination and withdrew all its ministers from the government as a political move. This political move created a major cabinet crisis in Lebanon and caused political instability. It would not be an erroneous thesis to state that Hezbollah was one of the biggest actors that caused the political crises in Lebanon after 1990. The political and strategic practices of Hezbollah and its allies caused a crisis not only in Lebanese internal affairs but also in foreign affairs. Undoubtedly, Hezbollah's strategic plans established with a sectarian perspective are the shared aspect of many of the political

crises created. After the 2011 cabinet crisis, Hezbollah took part in the conflicts in Syria in order to fight against the Sunnis and help the Shiite leader Bashar al-Assad in the civil war that started in Syria. Hezbollah's active role in the civil war in Syria has not garnered criticism in the international arena but also in Lebanon by many people. The reason for this reaction is directly related to the sectarianism that was officially bequeathed to Lebanon in 1926 by the French mandate government.

As one can extrapolate, in every crisis experienced in the country, a network of relations with sectarian conflict is encountered. Due to the political and social crises experienced after the 2009 elections, the elections expected to be held in 2013 were postponed. Additionally, the elections of 2014 and 2017 were postponed by virtue of the same reasons. Finally, elections were held in Lebanon in 2018. Law No 44, which made many changes in the Lebanese electoral system a year before the 2018 elections, was approved by the parliament. With this new election law, proportional representation and quota rules were introduced. The 2018 elections were held within the framework of these rules. Within the scope of Law No.44, electoral districts were also regulated.

In addition, in order to increase the representation of women in the parliament, it was decided that at least one candidate from each electoral district should be a female candidate; thereby, a gender quota was set. The winner of the 2018 elections was the Amal-Hezbollah alliance. The Amal-Hezbollah alliance won 45 seats in parliament, while the FPM and its allies gained 29, and Future Movement and its allies 20 seats. The 2018 general election, which was the first election held after the new election law, was a very critical election because Hezbollah got stronger in the parliament. Additionally, the fact that there was a lot of discussion among the sects about the electoral districts and the low participation in the elections caused the criticism about the 2018 elections to increase. The National Democratic Institute's "Lebanon 2018 Parliamentary Elections Final Report" is a very useful resource for covering all aspects of the 2018 elections.

“The new electoral law is viewed by most political parties and electoral reform advocacy groups as a compromise that enabled these elections to take place after multiple postponements, but a problematic solution that contains errors, loopholes, and provisions that could not be fully implemented for these elections. It has reduced the number of votes needed to win a seat, which has the potential to increase the inclusiveness and competitiveness of the electoral process, and created space for newcomers both inside political parties and on lists composed of independent candidates. However, the size of constituencies remains unequal, creating significant differences across districts in the number of votes needed to secure a seat, and violating key election principles and international standards and commitments.” (The National Democratic Institute, 2019)

The election law in 2017, in which some of the political reforms made for the purpose of becoming a democratic, developed, resilient state during the period from independence to the present were revised, has not been a development that will enable to achieve of either political, economic, nor social goals in Lebanon.

After the 2018 elections, Lebanon has had to deal with a deeper economic crisis with each passing day. A multitude of factors, including corruption, the lack of political stability, the failure to foster social harmony, equality, and trust between the state and its citizens due to the persistence of sectarian divisions, have contributed to the perpetually worsening crisis in Lebanon.

Moreover, a major economic crisis also took over the country, which was the final blow. The process that started with the 2019 Lebanese Liquidity Crisis continued with Lebanon's declaration of bankruptcy. High inflation, high public debt, bad governance, and political instability are among the main causes of the 2019 crisis. The Lebanese people, who have been struggling with unemployment, high inflation, inequality and sectarianism for a long time, started street demonstrations in 2019 with the hope of ending all these crises.

During the period of the intense political, social, and economic predicament in Lebanon, the crises became unceasing due to the outbreak of a global economic crisis as a consequence of the globally spread of the COVID-19 and the explosion in the port in the centre of Beirut in 2020. The Beirut Port Explosion has devastated not only the country economically but politically. Furthermore, it has led to an understanding of the extent of corruption and mismanagement, which are among the main problems in Lebanon. Considering that the explosion area is within walking distance of homes, workplaces, hospitals, and schools, authorities' permission to keep the deadly chemical, ammonium nitrate, in the centre is an irresponsible decision. It shows that there were no safety precautions taken by the authorities. Thus, it has aroused great justified anger in society against the government and the experts. As it was highlighted by the research carried out after the explosion, tons of ammonium nitrate were kept in a warehouse in the port of Beirut before the explosion. One can argue that the Beirut port and the construction industry became the centres of corruption over the years. By virtue of no security measures were taken by the authorities for the warehouse where tons of ammonium nitrate was kept, and it was scrutinized that all of the inspections made by the state were incomplete. The report on the Beirut explosion by a non-governmental organization called "Human Rights Watch" is a crucial source for a detailed analysis of the explosion crisis. Several suggestions were made by Human Rights Watch for solving the problems caused by the explosion in Lebanon. In the report,

recommendations were made to the Lebanese government and parliament, the judicial investigator, Lebanon's International Partners and Donors, the United States of America and the French governments, the UN Human Rights Council, and the Special Procedures Mechanisms of the UN Human Rights Council. Whether or not the recommendations submitted to the Lebanese government and parliament are taken into account will be a decisive factor for Lebanon's near future. Although it is difficult to repair the destruction caused by the Beirut explosion economically, politically, socially, and psychologically, it definitely needs to be accomplished. Two articles are particularly important in the recommendations section of the report to the government.

“ Provide adequate, effective, and prompt reparation, including appropriate compensation for any economically assessable damage, in accordance with international standards to all victims and affected residents for the harms suffered through an objective, clear, accessible, and transparent mechanism, that does not discriminate on any grounds, including socioeconomic status, gender, disability, nationality, residency status, sexual orientation, gender expression, and marital status;

Appoint the members of the Anti-Corruption Commission in accordance with the 2020 Anti-Corruption Law, to investigate allegations of corruption in the public sector, refer cases to the judiciary, and oversee the enforcement and compliance of all anti-corruption laws, including the Access to Information law, Whistleblowing law, and the Financial Disclosure and Punishment of Illicit Enrichment law.” (Human Rights Watch, 2021)

As a consequence of the explosion, massive protests gained momentum and spread to the country. The protests that started in 2019 were intensifying with each passing day and the authorities were not able to stem the tide of the rage of the people. Thus, Prime Minister Hassan Diab and the government had to resign on 10 August 2020. After August 10, Lebanon was alone with the explosion problem and intense protests that needed to be solved immediately in an environment of a great political, economic, and social crisis. The resignation of the government failed to ease the tension across the country.

4.5. “Killun Yaani Killun”: The Strive for Change

During the protests that started on October 17, 2019, protesters occupied the streets of Lebanon in a very short time. The surrounding area of the Mohammad Al-Amin Mosque, also known

as the Blue Mosque, in Downtown Beirut has been the heart of the protests. These protests, which spread from Beirut to the whole country, have many diverse motives, and these are not problems that have emerged in a short time. Since the country was founded, the failure to establish social peace, and the increase in corruption, poverty, and injustice day by day, eventually brought a large part of the society to the streets due to the desire for change. In these protests that started in 2019, the young generation of protesters is quite high in number. While one of the main reasons why young people are more in protests is unemployment, another is the demand for system change.

One of the common demands of people who took to the streets due to economic and political problems is the complete removal of the government. Protesters in Lebanon encompassed diverse sects, religions, and age groups. It is observed that social peace, which has been tried to be established through political tools, is built spontaneously in public squares where there are no politicians. The demonstrators, regardless of which sect or religion they belonged to, showed Lebanese politicians that the road map to be followed was in front of their eyes. Activists underline that the discriminatory sectarian policies that have been going on for years are the biggest enemies of the Lebanese state and people and declare that they resist injustices.

The main target of the protests is the destruction of the corrupt system from top to bottom and the establishment of a democratic, peaceful, and equitable new system together with an anti-sectarian new constitution. During the 2019 protests, the slogan that resonated the most in the streets of Lebanon was "killun yaani killun." Through this slogan means, "all of them means all of them," the protesters shouted that all officials should resign. A vast majority of the people believe that all politicians, regardless of religion, sect, or ideology, are the main reason for the political, economic, and social crisis in Lebanon and that each of them has become rich by stealing from the poor people under the favour of the bribery network.

The Beirut port explosion in 2020 and the Covid-19 pandemic have led to an escalation of protests. The primary determinants for the long duration of the protests that started in 2019 are the failure to fulfil the demands of the people, the increasing political turmoil, and police violence against the protesters. The authorities' decision of the violence against the people by the state, instead of focusing on the solution to the crisis, caused the continuity of the protests.

It is a bitter truth in Lebanese political history that the administrators never fully understood what the problem was; thus, rational solutions were not implemented. The fact that sectarianism, which has not been resolved by political actors for nearly a century, is a concept that creates a constant crisis was finally revealed when a large part of the society occupied the streets.

The younger generation, who grew up with the awareness that many of their loved ones had to leave Lebanon for economic and political reasons, focused on a few basic demands in order to ensure that no individual encountered these challenges again. One of the primary demands of the young generation is that economic conditions should improve immediately by the reason of the fact that the youth are the most affected by the unemployment issue. Also, the aspirations of the abolition of sectarianism and the creation of a new constitution ignited the youth to resist.

According to most of the protesters, sectarianism is the key determinant for the political turmoils experienced. Sectarianism in Lebanon is not just a matter of political inequality. It even affects the individuals' personal life; it plays a significant role even in people's selection of the person they will marry. The reality is that parents who do not consent to their children marrying a person belonging to a different religion or denomination are not limited to a few conservative families. The sectarian understanding has completely spread to the state and society over the years. The majority of the new generation, who grew up more open-minded than the parents who grew up in the polarization environment of the civil war, has an understanding of anti-sectarianism. By reason of it has been experienced through bitter events how sectarianism causes political, social, economic, and individual problems. When the interviews with the protesters in Lebanon by media organizations such as BBC News, CNN, and Al Jazeera are examined, it will be observed that the discourses are based on anti-sectarianism, democracy, and economic and political stability.

"You can not differentiate between a Shia Muslim or a Sunni Muslim or a Christian or a Durzi. We are all here Lebanese people and this is what makes us stronger in this revolution. If it were not like this we would have fallen apart. But because our demands are the same, we are all hungry and want our rights, this unites us" (BBC News, 2020)

It has been noted that the protests, characterized by fervent calls for anti-sectarianism and equality, persisted beyond the government's resignation. The protesters insisted on demanding a "new democratic, equitable system." Claiming that the only way to save the Lebanese state, which declared bankruptcy in 2022, is to establish an egalitarian system by the poor masses is a critical demand that needs to be scrutinized. Considering that the people are going through hard times under economic conditions, the insistence on a fair and egalitarian system as much as the economic demands show how severe the political and economic turmoil in the country is. In order to attain its core objective of becoming a resilient state, Lebanon necessitates a multitude of reforms.

Nonetheless, paramount among these is the imperative to establish a foundation of equality and foster a robust relationship of trust between the state and society. The sole path to achieve this is to completely abolish all aspects of the legacy of sectarianism left to the country by the French mandate in 1926.

4.6. Intermediate Conclusion

The initial section of this chapter delves into the political and social repercussions of the political reforms implemented after the Lebanese Civil War to heal the wounds of the war. It has been observed that the political changes brought by the Taif Agreement and the 1992 elections were not sufficient to resolve the crisis in Lebanon, on the contrary, Lebanon was dragged into an even bigger crisis. Syria's existence in the Lebanese lands after the war, Hezbollah's political victory in the 1992 elections, Israel's occupation of Lebanese lands, and Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri's assassination turned into an enormous, difficult predicament that affected Lebanon's domestic and foreign policy. One can argue that the aforementioned issues are proof that things in Lebanon did not go as expected in the post-civil war period. The main purpose of this chapter is to draw attention to the political and social crises experienced after the civil war, and the role of sectarianism in every political, social, and economic crisis, directly or indirectly. In particular, the reason for trying to point out that the relations between Lebanon and Syria in the post-war period and Hezbollah's position in Lebanese politics in detail is to show that sectarianism is a detrimental problem that affects not only domestic politics but also foreign policy.

In the following sections, the elections held in Lebanon are examined and the reports published by various organizations about the elections are included. The main objective of scrutinizing the elections is to explore the underlying cause for the lack of political stability, despite the implementation of various political reforms and the system's dysfunction. The last part of the chapter focuses on the 17 October Revolution. While examining the reasons for the 2019 protests, it has been tried to address why especially the younger generation is anti-sectarian and the basic demands of the protesters.

Chapter V. Conclusion

The main purpose of this dissertation is to analyze the effect of sectarianism on Lebanon's political and social turmoils, which was left as a legacy to Lebanon by the French mandate administration. In order to understand in detail the effects of the sectarian understanding being dominant in the region after Lebanon gained its independence, the political and social crises experienced in Lebanon are scrutinized. Additionally, this dissertation aims to shed light on that sectarianism has a crucial role in many political, social, administrative, and economic crises experienced until the present day. The enduring consequences of the French mandate remain a major challenge to Lebanon's ability to establish itself as a resilient nation and to build social peace in the country.

This dissertation aims to focus on the reasons behind the impasses in Lebanon and highlight the critical political and social cases in Lebanon's history. By examining momentous events starting from the declaration of independence in 1943, it becomes noticeable that the political and social crises in Lebanon have been locked in an everlasting cycle due to a few fundamental factors. Additionally, this thesis points out that the understanding of sectarianism, which is one of the most important causes of endless crises, should be abandoned both politically and socially. Considering Lebanese history, especially after the twentieth century, one can argue that almost every political and social crisis can be associated with sectarian and religious conflicts. Lebanon needs to prioritize the complete abolition of sectarianism to achieve political and social stability. Moreover, it is one of the most essential decisions to be taken in order to establish social peace and equality in Lebanon. It is essential to state that Lebanon has to make radical changes in its political, social, economic, and administrative system in the light of a new, resilient formula contrary to the political reforms made after 1990.

“The Lebanese government has been busy rebuilding a devastated country. But simply to rebuild the old system is unlikely to lead to permanent peace in the state. After all, the old system was the major cause of Lebanon's civil war.” (Nassar, 1995 , p.264.)

In accordance with the purpose of the thesis, crucial historical events are mentioned chronologically to examine the origins of sectarianism and to analyze the political and social turmoils of Lebanon. In this framework, the thesis consists of three main titles. The second title of the thesis, named "The Key to Understanding Today's Conflicts: A Brief Look at Lebanese History from the 16th Century", the period between the sixteenth century when the Ottoman Empire occupied the

Lebanese lands until the French mandate took over the dominance of the nineteenth century was scrutinized. The third title, "Lebanon After the Independence", focuses on the period starting from the French mandate rule until the bloody civil war that ended in 1990. In the fourth title, "The New Era After the Civil War: A Fragile Peace Between the Government and the Society", critical events from the post-civil War period to the present are examined. While the origins of sectarianism in Lebanon can be traced back much earlier, choosing the sixteenth century as the starting point for the analysis of the sectarian understanding focused on in the thesis was deemed a more appropriate choice.

The second chapter of the thesis begins with the period when the Ottoman Empire occupied the Lebanese lands. Considering that sectarianism was left as a detrimental legacy by the French mandate, one can argue that it is a reasonable criticism to state that it would be irrelevant to start to analyze sectarianism's origins since the Ottoman Empire's domination of Lebanon. However, the starting point of the analysis should be the sixteenth century to find an objective and accurate answer to the question of where the origins of sectarianism lie in Lebanon, which is one of the most crucial aims to be achieved in this dissertation.

As stated in the first chapter, the understanding of sectarianism, which is at the root of the problems Lebanon is experiencing today, is a legacy of the French mandate administration, but it is not an accurate argument that the foundations of sectarianism in Lebanon were laid entirely by the French mandate. During the Ottoman Empire's domination in Lebanon, which lasted for nearly four centuries, many administrative, political, economic, and social reforms were made. Undoubtedly, the Ottoman administrative system and the reforms which are shaped by this framework had a profound effect on Lebanon politically, administratively, socially, and economically.

The second chapter aims to underline how the origins of sectarianism in the region emerged by examining the administrative system of the Ottoman Empire profoundly. In this context, the timar system, iltizam system, and millet system were discussed.

The timar system, which the Ottomans established with the purpose of training soldiers, collecting taxes, and maintaining order in the occupied lands, was the essential system applied in the first period of the occupation of Lebanon. Following the decline of the timar system, the iltizam system began to be implemented. Timar and iltizam systems were examined in detail to understand the social and economic division created by the Ottoman administrative system in Lebanon. The division created in society is discussed in the light of the perspective of Fawwaz Traboulsi in "A History of Lebanon". By referring to the administrative system of the Ottoman Empire, Traboulsi

pointed out that a certain imbalance was created among individuals in the society, and this imbalance was at the root of sectarian conflicts. (Traboulsi, 2007) Including this perspective of Traboulsi in a discussion about the origins of sectarianism in Lebanon is highly significant. However, when discussing the link between the period of Ottoman Empire domination and sectarianism, the primary focus should be on the millet system, which is the core of the administrative system of the Ottoman Empire. The millet system in the Ottoman Empire did not discriminate between ethnic groups. Besides, the millet system created a distinction between religions and sects. In the second chapter, it is mentioned how the millet system, which creates a distinction in the society between Muslims and non-Muslims, constructs a hierarchical order in the society and how it is related to sectarian understanding.

Considering all these parameters, it would not be inaccurate to argue that the first seeds of sectarianism in Lebanon were sown during the Ottoman period. In the last part of the second chapter, it is discussed how the Lebanese lands came under French mandate rule after the Ottoman Empire's loss of Lebanese lands. Furthermore, the period of French mandate rule in Lebanon was shed light on.

The third chapter of the dissertation, titled "Lebanon After the Independence", centered on the period between the French mandate period and the conclusion of the Lebanese Civil War in 1990. Subsequently, a comprehensive scrutiny of the Lebanese Civil War, which is characterized by the escalation of sectarian conflicts, was presented. It is tried to delve into a detailed exploration of all its aspects. The main objective of this chapter is to underline how the sectarianist understanding left as a legacy by the French mandate administration has not been abandoned by Lebanese political actors after the independence and how this decision to maintain the sectarianist approach led to the emergence of political and social conflicts in the country. The 1926 constitution, established under the French mandate, is a crucial milestone by virtue of it is the official adoption of the sectarianist understanding in Lebanon. When the 1926 constitution is examined, it is observed that the seats in the Senate are distributed within the framework of a sectarianist discriminatory perspective. According to the denominations, quotas were observed in the seats in the Senate. By this means, the discriminatory understanding between sects has officially taken its place in Lebanon. Taking into account the close relationship between the French mandate administration and the Maronite Church, and the concessions that the mandate administration obtained even after the independence period, it will be cognizable how the legacy of sectarianism was left in Lebanon like a ticking time bomb, ready to explode. In the third chapter, it is mentioned that people of different religions and sects have different perspectives even during the independence process of Lebanon and that this sectarian

understanding creates polarization in terms of religions and sects even in the determination of the country's destiny. Lebanon, which gained its independence in 1943, decided not to abandon the sectarian understanding in the 1926 constitution. When the National Pact of 1943 is examined, it is understood how the future of the country was shaped with this sectarianist understanding from the mandate period. According to the National Pact, in which Muslims and Christians reached a common consensus, it was decided that the president should be a Maronite Catholic, the prime minister a Sunni Muslim, and the speaker of the parliament a Shiite Muslim. Additionally, by pointing out the demographic structure of Lebanon, the representation of Christians and Muslims in the parliament was decided in a ratio of 6:5 in favor of Christians. The National Pact, which was formed within the framework of the goals of becoming an independent, democratic resilient state, is a consensus that failed to achieve its aims due to the fact that the sectarian understanding was not abandoned and even the sectarianist division was deepened further.

From my point of view, the sectarianist approach which has been reinforced by the National Pact has been the primary cause of the political and social turmoils in Lebanon. Moreover, it remains a haunting reality that cast a shadow over the country. Most of the political crises in Lebanon have been shaped within this framework. The rapid and easy escalation of crises can be attributed to the pervasive spread of discriminatory sectarianism to every segment of the state and society. In this context, the Lebanese Civil War, one of the bloodiest events in recent history, has been tried to be examined in detail in the third chapter. The civil war, which did not start as a sectarian crisis at first, turned into a war between religions and sects in an astonishingly brief period.

To the extent that the sectarianist approaches upheld by the parties involved in the civil war deeply affected not only Lebanon's internal relations but also significantly impacted its external relations. Considering the positions of Syria, Israel, the Palestine Liberation Organization, and Hezbollah in the civil war, it is observed how sectarian and religious conflicts have dragged Lebanon into crises. Left as a permanent and detrimental legacy to Lebanon through the 1926 constitution, sectarianism has turned all components of society against each other thirty years after the establishment of the country. In the third chapter, the main aim of examining the Lebanese Civil War in detail is to scrutiny the state of the sectarianist division in Lebanon. The role of sectarianism in the occurrence of civil war in 1975 is undeniable. Moreover, sectarianism impeded the attainment of the establishment peaceful, democratic, resilient state during the post-civil war period.

The fourth and final chapter, "The New Era After the Civil War: A Fragile Peace Between the Government and the Society", covers the period after the Lebanese Civil War, which ended with the 1989 Taif Agreement. In the last part of the third chapter and the first part of the fourth chapter, the

1989 Taif Agreement and 1992 Lebanese Elections were examined in detail. The main reason for focusing on the Taif Agreement and the 1992 elections is that the basic frameworks of the order demanded to be re-established in Lebanon after fifteen years of civil war were shaped by these two events. The Taif Agreement is a crucial agreement that shapes the trajectory of Lebanon's post-civil war era. When the agreement is examined it becomes apparent that Lebanese political actors admit the strong correlation between sectarianism and the political and social turmoils. In this context, it was decided to abolish the rule of representation in a 6:5 ratio in the parliament under the title of "abolition of sectarianism" in the Taif Agreement. According to this decision, Muslims and Christians will be represented in equal numbers in the parliament. However, the rule that the president, prime minister, and the speaker of the parliament must be of different denominations has not been abolished. It should be clearly stated that although the sectarian understanding inherited by the French mandate with the Taif Agreement was accepted as the main cause of almost all crises, sectarianism was not completely eliminated in 1989 either.

In order to the complete elimination of sectarianism in Lebanon, instead of focusing only on abolishing political sectarianism through political reforms, it would be appropriate to eradicate it from society and the country in all its aspects. In line with the aims set by the French mandate in 1926, sectarianism actually spread to every part of the country and society. Therefore, solely making changes in the parliament is insufficient to ensure the establishment of social peace. Considering that the individuals who have been unemployed for many years due to sectarian differences or who have been fighting against their childhood friends because of the polarization created by the understanding of sectarianism; it will not be inaccurate to state that the only way to establish the equality demanded by Lebanese people is to completely eradicate sectarianism from both the country and society. The aforementioned understanding lies at the source of many problems such as the inability to resolve the crises experienced after the civil war, the inability to achieve political and social stability in the country, and the economic crisis. Undoubtedly, it is not accurate to state that sectarianism is the only reason for the economic, social, administrative, and political problems that Lebanon is experiencing today. The principal purpose of this dissertation is to investigate the detrimental impacts of sectarianism on Lebanon without denying the existence of various problems such as corruption and mismanagement.

In the last chapter of this dissertation, it is discussed that significant internal and external factors such as Hezbollah's victory in the 1992 elections, and the presence of Syria and Israel in Lebanese lands in the post-civil war era substantiate that it is a challenging endeavor to establish the desired order in Lebanon after 1990. The fourth chapter focused on how Lebanon has had to deal

with major problems internally and externally by centering on its political conflicts with Hezbollah, Syria, and Israel. Especially in order to highlight how effective the notion of sectarianism is after the civil war, the position of Hezbollah in Lebanon in the post-1992 period has been examined. Considering these circumstances, Hezbollah's actions with the Syrian state, its participation in the Syrian Civil War, and its political conflicts with the Lebanese government have been investigated. For the purpose of having an accurate explanation to the question of why the social and political turmoils could not be concluded in Lebanon, the elections held in the country, especially after 2000, and the political reforms implemented were examined. As pointed out in the fourth chapter, the country has regrettably failed to make significant progress politically, socially, or economically despite numerous elections and reform efforts. In the last part, the protests of 17 October 2019, in which the people, who were crushed under heavy economic conditions, forced to migrate due to unemployment, and complaining about the inability to establish social peace due to the sectarianist understanding, seized the streets of Beirut and then all of Lebanon were discussed. Although the main focus of the protests was mostly economic problems, the demand for abolishing sectarianism received major support during the protests. The widespread protests showed that the majority of Lebanese people demand change in the country. Particularly the young generation provided significant support to the protests because they recognize sectarianism as the main problem that led to the emergence of political and social conflicts. Anti-sectarianism has become a common sight among these popular masses. Taking into account all these parameters, in order for Lebanon to become a resilient state, the anti-sectarian attitude should be the predominant mindset, and political and social reforms should be implemented accordingly.

This dissertation, which consists of three main titles, tries to shed light on the problems caused by the sectarianist understanding which is left by the French mandate period in the Lebanese Republic by mentioning the important developments chronologically from a historical perspective. In this context, the origins of sectarianism have been researched, and how sectarian understanding has escalated political and social crises has been discussed. For attaining objective and accurate information the perspectives of various authors are included. Additionally, the texts of the agreements made in the past and the related reports published were examined. It has been tried to incorporate a wide range of sources to include as many different points of view as possible. Although there are a wide variety of sources on the Lebanese Civil War, it can be stated that there are limited resources in English and Turkish, based on the political and social crises experienced by Lebanon, especially in the post-2010 period. The fact that Arabic sources could not be examined has led to a more limited

search for sources in the dissertation. One of the most justified criticisms that can be directed to this dissertation is the use of limited resources when examining the post-2010 period.

As discussed particularly in the last two chapters of the thesis, various economic, social, and political reforms need to be done in order for Lebanon to be politically and socially stable, for peace to prevail in society, and to ensure the full functionality of democracy. According to my viewpoint, as long as the reforms to be made are not shaped by an anti-sectarian approach, it will remain challenging to bring an end to the political and social turmoil in Lebanon.

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