MAURUS REINKOWSKI

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I. Introduction

In August and September 1990 the Lebanese parliament constitutionalized the agreement of Taif (wathîqat al-wifâq al-waṭanî).¹ It had been hammered out in October 1989 by those Lebanese parliamentarians who had remained from the last elections in 1972. In October 1990 Syrian forces attacked the Presidential Palace in Baabda in the outskirts of Beirut and overwhelmed the last defense lines of those parts of the Lebanese army that had clung faithfully to its commander, the general-major Michel Aoun, who had – with some legitimacy – asserted to be the acting Prime Minister. The „uncivil war“ that had started in 1975 came to an end and the „Second Republic of Lebanon“ was born.

In an article on the future of the nation-state, the British sociologist Ralf Dahrendorf praises the „heterogeneous nation-state“ as one of the great achievements of modern civilization and expresses his conviction that the nation-state will not only have a future, but should have a future. The heterogeneous nation-state as a civic nation must create constitutional and democratic institutions if it wants to live in peace, whereas the homogeneous nation-state can do it. For the time being, the nation-state alone can guarantee the existence of the constitutional state and democracy (R. Dahrendorf 1994, p. 751-758). At first, anyone analyzing the question of national identity in Lebanon is impressed by Dahrendorf’s thesis as it promises to be astoundingly applicable to the Lebanese case. But if one reflects a little further doubts begin to emerge. It is given that Lebanon is heterogeneous. It is also given that Lebanon is a state. But is Lebanon a „nation“? Is it even a „nation-state“? Given the case we should come to the conclusion that Lebanon is not a nation-state, that it is just a state, what happens to Dahrendorf’s postulation? Must Lebanon, for it is certainly something heterogeneous, nevertheless create and maintain constitutional and democratic institutions if it wants to live in peace or is it as a non-nation-state exempt from this task?

The original idea of this study was to clarify how the different confessions in Lebanon link themselves to the „construction of a Lebanese national identity“ after Taif. The Maronites in particular tend to distrust the new compromise, which reflects

¹ Arab terms or names known to the reader by current citation in Western newspapers (e.g. „Jumblatt“, „Hrawi“) are left as such. Arab authors publishing in Western languages are cited in the Latinized version (e.g. Ghassan Salamé, Joseph Maila). All other names and terms have been transcribed.
the changed demographic and political circumstances, and reflects the new political constellation in which they are, partially on their own will, marginalized. The question then would be whether the alienation of the Maronites in the political realm (e.g., the boycott of parliamentary elections of 1992, and to a lesser extent those of 1996) would be translated into the intellectual discourse. Christians of Lebanon and Syria were amongst the main instigators of classical secular Arab nationalism. Would it be the Lebanese Sunnites who become the main designers of a new Lebanese nationalism? Would the alienation of the Christians be reflected in their abstention from the new discourse about national identity?

In the process of the research, however, it became evident that it is rather pointless to discuss the façade and furniture of a house if one does not know whether the house exists at all. Is there indeed a "House of Many Mansions" as Kamal Salibi entitled his book on Lebanese history and historiography in 1988? Of course, there are many mansions in Lebanon, but are they all in one house? And even if they are all in one house, can we call that house "Lebanese national identity"?

This study puts forward the thesis that — expressed in its most simple form — a feeling of belonging to Lebanon and to the Lebanese people exists among a great part of the Lebanese. It is evident that this feeling can be disputed, its main antagonist being the attachment to a confessional group. It is also argued that the feeling that makes Lebanese stick to their identity as Lebanese is something greater than patriotism in the sense of mere loyalty to the state. In this study, therefore, it is argued that the case of Lebanon shows that national identity can arise and grow from a history of common (or at least: simultaneous) existence, statehood, suffering and failure. According to this hypothesis, national identity is not necessarily the result of a nationalist ideology.

This thesis is based on three arguments. The first and most obvious argues along the lines that national identity in Lebanon is the result of a history of a common state and common institutions.

Secondly, it is argued that even during civil war, when the Lebanese suffered "simultaneously, but not together" (S. Frangie 1991, p. 97), national identity was not lost but in fact struck even deeper roots. The "Lebanonization" of Lebanon, i.e. the polarization, ethnification, ghettoisation, confessionalisation and cantonization of the country (S. Khalaf 1993, p. 34) is not the whole story of Lebanon during the civil war.

Israeli forces attacked Hizbollah positions (or positions it presumed to be such) in April 1996 and applied a policy of chaos inflicted on the Lebanese civilian population, in order to put pressure on the Lebanese government and its Syrian overlord. The attempt was generally deemed to have failed. But many agreed afterwards that the Lebanese as a consequence "have rediscovered themselves as a nation, a sense they had lost in the tribal bloodletting" of the civil war. Lebanon’s finance minister, Fuad Siniora, is reported to have said: "There hasn’t been a time in the modern history of Lebanon when the people were so united as they are today" (W. Pfaff 1996, p. 11). It is argued here, however, that this experience of being bound together is not entirely new and cannot be explained by this brief experience in April 1996. It finds its roots in the experience of the common state and the common civil war.

The third argument maintains that one of the factors giving way to national identity in Lebanon was and is the stalemate of competing nationalisms and ideologies. Before the war there existed a "no-win situation": a "national pact" was forged between the different opponents as none of them could enforce "his" (in Lebanese
politics there are no women in positions of power) nationalism or „his“ vision of Lebanon – or of a Lebanon to be replaced by smaller or greater units. Since the war the stalemate has turned into a „burn-out-stalemate“. This stalemate does not cause homogeneous responses: some will resort to the confines of their confessions; some will be deeply frustrated and leave the country (as is particularly the case with Maronites); some politicians continue the tradition of practising anti-confessionalist rhetoric while pursuing a staunchly confessionalist policy, but some will seek a way out of the stalemate. But none of them will, as it was the case before and during the war, appeal to his „nationalism“, a nationalism which was in all but very few cases deeply entrenched in one's own confession but which pretended to encompass a large part of Lebanon's population.

The second chapter will discuss the question of nationalism and national identity, particularly with reference to the work of Walker Connor and Anthony Smith. It will be tried to show that their influential interpretations of nationalism and national identity, elaborated as they are, fail to grasp the complexities of ethnic and national identities in Lebanon. The third chapter of this article will treat in a short sketch the historical background and will look with more detail at the period of the Second Republic. Chapter 4 will deal with the question of nationalisms in the First Republic. Chapter 5 will discuss the question of national identity in Lebanon, particularly since 1990.

Some comments about the sources used in this article: Besides monographs and articles from various collective works, newspapers and journals representing most of the various political attitudes, two journals were consulted more intensively. The first of these two is Al-Mustaqbal al-`arabî/The Arab Future, edited by Markaz dirâsât al-waḥda al-`arabîyya/Centre for Arab Unity Studies in Beirut. This institution, presided over by the Iraqi Khairaddin Ḥasîb, is – as its name indicates – of a decidedly pan-Arabist stance. Yet, it devotes some of its space to the question of Lebanon and particularly the question of nationalism and national identity in Lebanon. It is said to have a very high circulation (around 20,000) and is therefore influential and widely read in the Arab world. The institute publishes besides the journal a great amount of collective works most of which are proceedings of conferences organized by the institute. Some of these are devoted to Lebanon. The second journal is Aurâq al-ḥiwâr/Dialogue Papers, edited by Al-Mu`tamar ad-dâ`im li-l-ḥiwâr al-lubnânî/The Permanent Council for Lebanese Dialogue. It is a joint Christian-Muslim venture and its editors are in some cases official representatives of the different confessions, such as Sa`ûd Maulâ (Shiite) or Muḥammad as-Sammâk (Sunni). The council and its journal are said to be close to the political line of Rafiq al-Hariri, the present Prime Minister, they represent a kind of „tame opposition“ and so adopt a „constructive“ position in Lebanese politics. The publications of the Centre for Arab Unity Studies and the Permanent Council for Lebanese Dialogue are not devoted to the political ambitions of a particular confessional group in Lebanon. Yet, the verdict that Aziz al-Azmeh gave on al-mustaqbal al-`arabî and the Centre for Arab Unity Studies might be valid for both of them – that they include „almost exclusively that section of the Arab intelligentsia which reads a fairly uniform body of theoretico-political

2 One example may suffice: Nabih Berri, Speaker of the Parliament and leader of the Shiite Amal, confirmed his practice to appoint Shites to positions within in his range as long as the confessionalist system had a firm hold on Lebanon and Maronites, Sunnites etc. complied with the system. Berri justifies his practice with the hypocritical argument that he wants to illustrate by his confessionalist policy the dangers of confessionalist. See an-Nahâr, 28 February 1995, p. 3.
publications“ and therefore tend to influence only each other (A. Azmeh, 1995, S. 113).

2. Nationalism and national identity

Most historians and sociologists in the Western world did not deal with the phenomenon of nationalism and national identity in the decades immediately following World War II since they saw in it a pathological condition of uncompleted modernity, or at least a necessary, though unpleasant stage on the way to the modern constitutional state. However, in the last fifteen years or so nationalism has not only become an object deemed worthy of scientific research, but it has regained the positive status of a unifying bond, a main condition for civil rights (T. Judt 1994, pp. 1049, 1060), as we have seen for example in Dahrendorf’s thesis presented at the beginning of the article.

One of the political scientists who never tired of stressing the importance of nationalism as a distinctive feature of modern societies was the geographer Walker Connor. His collected articles in this field, dating back to 1966, were brought together and published 1994 as „Ethnonationalism. The Quest for Understanding“. Connor chose the term „ethnonationalism“ in order to stress the meaning of nationalism in its „pristine sense“ – as identification with and loyalty to a „group of people who believe they are ancestrally related“ (W. Connor 1994, p. XI).

In the article „Nation-Building or Nation-Destroying“, published 1972, Connor attacks the theory of nation-building, expounded amongst others by Gabriel Almond, Karl W. Deutsch and Lucian Pye (p. 57). He stresses their ignorance and neglect of the question of ethnic identity since they treat it „superficially as merely one of a number of minor impediments to effective state-integration“ and regard it „as a somewhat unimportant and ephemeral nuisance that will unquestionably give way to a common identity uniting all inhabitants of the state“ (p. 29). Connor showed that out of a total of 132 contemporary states (at that time) only 12 could be described as essentially homogeneous whereas in 39 cases the largest group failed to account for even half of the state’s population (p. 29). Therefore, he rightly rebuked the theory of nation-building as being generally „conducive to dangerously underestimating the magnetism and the staying power of ethnic identity“ (p. 41). In the article „Ethnonationalism“, published fifteen years later, Connor could state with satisfaction that „few indeed are the scholars who can claim either to have anticipated this global upsurge in ethnonationalism or to have recognized its early manifestations“ (p. 68).

Connor proposes three main explanations for why most social scientists failed to understand the phenomenon of nationalism. First, the confusing use of the key terms nationalism and patriotism, the latter being defined merely as loyalty to the state. When loyalty to the state is wrongly interpreted as nationalism, then the real nationalism(s) will be wrongly identified in form of substitutes such as regionalism, parochialism, primordialism (pp. XI, 69, 91-113). Secondly, the unquestioned acceptance of the assumption that greater contacts among groups will lead to greater awareness of what groups have in common, rather of what makes them distinct – this error being in particular a result of the application of conventional scholarly approaches to the Third World (p. 69 f.). Thirdly, and this is the most important point, the inability of most social scientists to understand why nationalism holds such high emotional appeal:
"It is this group-notion of kinship and uniqueness that is the essence of the nation, and tangible characteristics such as religion and language are significant to the nation only to the degree to which they contribute to this notion or sense of the group's self-identity and uniqueness" (p. 104).

Connor sees himself in line with a small core of influential scholars who also conceive an ethnonational group as a kinship group and as an "extended family" (p. 74), amongst them Joshua Fishman, Donald Horowitz, Charles Keyes, Pierre van den Berghe, and Anthony Smith.

Up to this point it is not difficult to follow Connor's line of argument. Yet, he tends to overemphasize the importance of his approach. Whenever a nationalist movement comes to the fore, Connor can argue that the movement's emotional force is supplied by its group-notion of kinship. Everything else can be dismissed as a "pre-national stage" or mere "loyalty towards the state". Although Connor interprets nationalism as a political force that emerged very recently (18/19th century), he rejects the thesis that modernity has brought about nationalism. According to Connor, economic factors can act only as a catalyst and exacerbator of nationalist feelings and tensions. The concomitant rise of nationalism and the Industrial Revolution is thus purely coincidental (p. 153-160)! Connor's position comes close to a sort of cognitive fatalism when he says that national feelings "can be analyzed but not explained rationally" (p. 204, similar p. 113).

Anthony Smith, who teaches political science at the London School of Economics, has also devoted himself to the question of nationalism for several decades. Smith has earned particular merits in systematizing the field of nationalism. He shares with Connor the idea that nations derive their emotional force by conceiving themselves as "very large families", but Smith is more balanced in his judgements and more convincing in his arguments. Smith goes quite a long way with - what he calls - the "modernists" (such as Ernest Gellner) whom he defines as those who believe that nationalism is an essentially recent construct and an inherent product of specifically modern conditions of capitalism (A. Smith 1995, p. 29). But the modernists fail to "grasp the continuing relevance and power of pre-modern ethnic ties and sentiments in providing a firm base for the nation-to-be" (A. Smith 1995, p. 40). Central to Smith's explanation of the force of nationalism and the persistency of nations is the concept of an "ethnic core" or an "ethnic substratum" that draws its force from a collective cultural identity (A. Smith 1991, p. 25). In most West European countries strong states could be built thanks to the presence of such core ethnicities. Conditions for successful nation-building outside Europe are, however, in most cases far less propitious:

"The attempt by dominant ethnies - and nations - to use the modern state to incorporate other ethnic communities in the manner of West European state-making and nation-forming processes provoked often determined opposition from many demotic ethnies, which the fragile new state could barely contain, let alone subdue. The record to date does not lend support to the view that such territorial 'creations' possess the resources and stability, let alone the ability, to furnish acceptable political cultures that transcend ethnicity or to gain legitimacy for the political domination and culture of the predominant ethnic community" (p. 114).

The validity of Connor's and Smith's approach for the Lebanese case is evident. We will discuss later, however, to what extent they can explain the whole of the political reality in Lebanon. Yet, one has to state immediately that their theories hold no mo-
nopoly over the explanation of nationalism’s emotional force. Liah Greenfeld, for example, showed that the term „nation“ stems from the original meaning of „elite“. The concept of elite was gradually transferred to the whole of the people and „every member of the ‘people’ thus interpreted partakes in its superior, elite quality, and it is in consequence that a stratified national population is perceived as essentially homogeneous“ (L. Greenfeld 1992, p. 7).

Many political scientists do not see any difference between nationalism and national identity. This seems hardly acceptable and Philip Schlesinger rightly criticizes this concept of nationalism as being too general and woolly „to do justice to the range of variation of collective sentiments within the confines of the nation-state“ (P. Schlesinger 1991, p. 168). More accurate theoreticians of nationalism make a distinction – such as Anthony Smith who defines national identity as a „collective cultural phenomenon“ and then continues: „A national identity is fundamentally multidimensional; it can never be reduced to a single element, even by particular factions of nationalists, nor can it be easily or swiftly induced in a population by artificial means“ (A. Smith 1991, p. 14). It is essential to the argument of this study to make a distinction between nationalism and national identity. National identity in this study is understood as a sentiment considerably more inert and vague than nationalism since it lacks some of the latent components of nationalism: its doctrinal contents, the existence of intellectual leaders; its capability to mobilize the population, the aggressive extroversion in order to unify within the community. It is argued that national identity may be the outcome of nationalism, but that it may also be not. Obviously, there cannot be nationalism without nationalists, but there may be a national identity without nationalists.

In this study it will be argued that Connor’s concept of „ethnonationalism“ is too rigid in its dichotomization between the „real“ nationalism and the „fake“ nationalisms that are merely loyalty to the state, ethnic group consciousness, pre-nationalism and so forth. The study will try to show that the case of Lebanon provides an example how intricate the genesis of national identity can be.

National sentiments can come partially into existence via the structure of the state. One may concede that this may not be the case with Lebanon as it has always been a country with a particularly weak state. The theory of nation-building in the sense of a mechanistic conception of „constructing a national identity“, in the same way that engineers would build a dam in order to develop the economy of a Third World state, is certainly to be dismissed as a futile approach. But why should not national sentiments be subjected to the rule of the normative Kraft des Faktischen? Why should not identification with common institutions or common ways of life create a feeling that one belongs to an extended kind of family?

In the case of Lebanon we will distinguish between (a) the diverse „ethnonationalisms“ of the confessional groups, (b) „national identity“ as a kind of general mass sentiment and historical memory and (c) „intellectual patriotism“ as a deliberate striving to strengthen the cohesion of one’s own nation.

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3 Smith’s definitions are convincing and are followed here. Smith defines nationalism as an „ideological movement for the attainment and maintenance of autonomy, unity and identity on behalf of a population deemed by some of its members to constitute a ‘nation’“, A. Smith 1995, 149 f. The term „nation“ is understood here in the standard, Western sense as implying a „historic territory, legal-political community, legal-political equality of members, and common civic culture and ideology“, A. Smith 1991, p. 11.
The "First Republic" in Lebanon was founded in November 1941 when France, the acting mandate power, declared Lebanese independence. Lebanon as a state had already come into existence on 1 September 1920 when "Greater Lebanon" (Grand Liban) was proclaimed by the French mandate power. Greater Lebanon was carved out from the French mandate area that encompassed present-day Syria and Lebanon (and a small part of present-day Turkey). The core of Greater Lebanon was Mount Lebanon (Mont Liban), that mountain range which stretches parallel to the Mediterranean coastal line and falls apart into separate, often quite inaccessible areas (such as the Shuf, Aley, Metn, Ksrawan, Djbeil). It was inhabited mainly by the tribally organized Maronites and Druzes – by the Maronites in all parts, by the Druzes in the southern and middle regions. Mount Lebanon had already in the 19th century been an area "with inherent attributes making of it a unique social rather than political phenomenon in Syria and the broader Arab world" (K. Salibi 1988, p. 164). This was not the case with Greater Lebanon as the areas added to Mount Lebanon were of very diverse cultural orientation and ethnic composition. The main additions were a large number of urbanized Sunnites, located on the coastal strip, and Shiites, living in the Jabal Amil (Southern Lebanon) and the Bekaa valley.

The national pact of 1943, forged between the leaders of the Maronites (Bishâra Khûrî) and the Sunnites (Riyâḍ ʾas-Šulh), the two politically and economically leading communities, represented the cornerstone of independent Lebanon. This unwritten pact consists of a number of mutual renouncements and guaranties. Whereas the Christians renounced their quest for protection from the Western powers, the Muslims renounced a possible absorption into Syria or an (still to be realized) Arab union. Lebanon was defined as a "country with an Arab face and Arab language", yet with a "special character". The pact also reconfirmed the principle of political confessionalism and consociationalist democracy in Lebanon. A short word has to said about "consociationalism". The term of "proportional democracy" was coined by Gerhard Lehmburgh to describe historically grown mechanisms of accommodating political conflicts, as for example in Switzerland. Arend Lijphart adopted this theory and named it – borrowing on Johannes Althusius' consociatio (community of common destiny, cooperative) – consociationalism, and applied it to societies which are "divided by segmental cleavages and which follow concern lines of objective social differentiation" (A. Lijphart 1977, p. 3). Consociationalism is based on a "syncretistic nationalism" that seeks to institutionalize the communities and to organize their coexistence (T. Hanf 1993, p. 29, fn. 50; see also N. Kabbara 1991, p. 345).

The thirty years following 1943 represented the "golden decades" of Lebanon. The country was at this time an economic success story. The Sunni, Druze, and to a lesser extent the Shiites, political elites were politically and economically well integrated into the Lebanese state. Large parts of the population, particularly the Shiites, however, continued to be socially, economically and politically marginalized. Attempts were sporadically made to create greater social equality, particularly by a technocratic revolution from above under president Fuʾād Shehâb (1964-1970). Nevertheless, stark social and economic inequalities remained and were one of the factors in the outbreak of civil war in 1975. One of the points most heatedly discussed during and after the war was the question of what or/and who triggered the war. There are two opposite schools of explanation. One holds that the civil war was triggered by external factors, such as the Palestinian presence or the Israeli and, re-
respectively, Syrian struggle for domination of Lebanon. The other school of interpretation asserts that the fragility of the communitarian pattern of politics, the ensuing consociationalist model and social imbalance were responsible for the outbreak and the permanence of the war. Most people, however, would agree that the break of the war was due to a conjunction of interrelated factors (I. Sâbâ 1990, p. 89, Bishâra Marhaj in CAUS 1991, p. 78). There is a wide consensus that the end — or at least this particular date of the end — of the war owes more to external reasons. Lebanon served no longer as the „substitute state“ for the Palestinian national movement, it was no longer a candidate for a proxy war between the allies of the United States and those of the Soviet Union. Within a short time the old configuration of the Middle East conflict had changed.

Was it an irony of history that the deliberations of the Lebanese parliamentarians in October 1989 took place at the city of at-Tâ‘if in Saudi Arabia? The place-name at-Tâ‘if is based on the same root as the Arab word for „confession, denomination“ (tâ‘ ifa) (from which is derived tâ‘ iyya, „confessionalism“). The Taif agreement and the preamble to the constitution of 1990 take a rather ambiguous stance on the question of confessionalism: they express an avowed commitment to a gradual and careful deconfessionalization of the political system in Lebanon, but none the less they continue with the old 1943 consociationalist model and do not touch its foundations (I. Sâbâ 1990, p. 98; Najjâh Wâkkîm p. 45-48, Hûsain al-Quwwatî, p. 52, Taufîq Hindî, p. 66, Hûsain Kan‘ân, p. 82 f., all in CAUS 1991; G. Salamé 1994b, p. 105). Nevertheless, Taif is rightly seen as a watershed in the history of Lebanon, its first and foremost merit being of course to have brought the war to an end.

Taif was not a revolutionary nor such a surprising step since the two elements that constitute Taif had already been present and were bound to appear a long time before. Most political figures, including Maronites, had accepted as early as 1976 constitutional changes (particularly the abolishment of the Maronites’ constitutional predominance) and supported a modified version of the 1943 pact (M.-J. and M.K. Deeb 1991, pp. 83-86). The other main element of Taif, the acclaim of Syria’s „privileged relations“ (‘alâqat mumayyaza) with Lebanon, had become inevitable since Syria had won the upper hand in 1983. The militia agreement of Damascus in December 1985 showed that Syrian tutelage had become unavoidable (J. Maila 1989).

What are the main features of Taif? The constitutional supremacy of the Maronites, which was in place until the end of the civil war, was finally and formally abolished. It is laid down that the powers of the Sunni Prime Minister, the ministers’ cabinet and the parliament with its Shii speaker are enhanced and those of the Maronite President of the State reduced. The ratio between Christians and Muslims in parliament is now on an equal footing. The fundamental compromise — the idea of coexistence in Lebanon — has been preserved and this time (contrary to 1943) formulated explicitly and added as a preamble to the new constitution. Lebanon is „Arab in character and identity“, but at the same time „once and for all a sovereign, free and independent fatherland for all its citizens“. The second part of the sentence in particular is meant to reassure the Christian population against potential pan-Arab or Greater-Syrian aspirations (V. Perthes 1994, pp. 19 ff.). The flaws of Taif were pinpointed immediately afterwards and became clearly visible in the following years. Probably the most important is the phenomenon of the „troika“, i.e. the „common rule“ of the state by the State President, the Prime Minister and the Speaker of Parliament which is institutionally and politically untenable (J. Maila 1991, p. 65) and an example of distorted consociationalism.
The first years after Taif were characterized by a post-Taif-consensus that was shared by the new and old Sunni, Druze and Shii political establishment and by parts of the Christian elite. This consensus said that Taif was, despite all its flaws and negative implications, a first and positive step on a way that should be pursued (contributions in CAUS 1991 and CAUS 1992). In the years following Taif the formula „there is no victor and no defeated“ (lā ghālib wa-lā-maghlab) was often stressed, as it was already after the short civil war of 1958. This conciliatory expression should assure people that no one would be marginalized as a result of the new power constellation. But hardly anybody will believe sincerely these soothing words. They certainly do not reflect the facts. There are, indeed, winners after the long civil war. The main winner of the war is Syria as Lebanon is now under its tutelage. As we have said, in the Taif agreements Syria enforced upon the Lebanese parliamentarians the confirmation of „privileged relations“ between Syria and Lebanon. Profiting from the political slipstream created by the Second Gulf War, Syria even increased its leverage on Lebanon. It could edge out the tripartite Arab committee (Saudi Arabia, Morocco and Algeria, installed by a conference of the Arab League in Casablanca, May 1989), that had initiated the Taif process, and impose its particular interpretation of the new Lebanese Republic. Also winner are the Shiites, since they have, at least on the political level, achieved greater visibility and enlarged participation compared to their marginalized position in the pre-war period. To a lesser extent it is correct to say that the Muslim side as a whole has emerged from the war as a winner. The Maronites in particular are the losers of the war.

If one compares Lebanon’s present situation on the political, social and economic plane with that of 1975, prospects do not seem very promising. The war has led to increased cantonisation. Already in the first years of the war confessionally heterogeneous islands were „cleansed“. The Shiites had to bear the main burden of the war as they had to seek shelter from the clashes between Israel and the Palestinians in the 1970’s and early 1980’s. From 1983 on this fight was replaced by that between the Hizbollah and the Israeli forces with its ally, the South Lebanese Army. The Shiites fled mainly to West Beirut. Whereas in 1970 only 10 % of the Shiites were living in Beirut, the percentage had risen to more than 50 % by 1985 (H. Khashan 1992, p. 126). Apart from the Shiites, it was the Maronites who suffered most from expulsion and migration. Before the war the Maronites had lived practically all over the Lebanon, their core area being in Mount Lebanon. Today the Maronites’ area is concentrated on the northern part of Mount Lebanon. The Christians, estimated to be today about 35 %-40 % of the Lebanese population, live now on some 17 % of Lebanese soil. Roughly one million of the Lebanese population emigrated during the war. More than war casualties it was the huge wave of emigration which led to the fall in the Lebanese population from 3.2 million in 1974 to some 2.9 million in 1990. It recovered to 3.2 million in 1992 owing to the return of many Lebanese from exile (MENA 1995, p. 656).

The raison d’être of Lebanon’s existence as a state which serves as a business and financial center of the Arab world was lost during wartime and has not yet been restored. Nor will it be easily restored as the general economic situation has changed profoundly. Lebanon is no longer the only place in the Middle East where capital is safe since there are many outlets inside and outside of the Arab world and since many Arab states now boast a liberal market economy.

The destruction wrought by the civil war was not restricted to physical damage. Samir Khalaf sees the danger of a regression in Lebanese society hostile to coexist-
ence and describes the birth of a rapacious and ruthless attitude that is "exacerbated by the pathos of a ravenous post-war mentality" and also generates "a pervasive mood of lethargy, indifference, weariness which borders, at times, on collective amnesia" (S. Khalaf, 1993, pp. 39 and 42).

It is not only the immediate and direct results of the war that herald bleak prospects for Lebanon. The tutelage of Syria over Lebanon is nearly unlimited, all the more so as it has been accepted by the widest range of Lebanese politicians, sometimes to a degree of subservience which even annoys the Syrians (J. Maila 1991, p. 67). Lebanese politicians can present their policy as virtually sacrosanct when they have attained the Syrians' placet. The policy of the present Prime Minister, Rafiq al-Hariri, aims at restoring the old economic function of Lebanon - a project which might misinterpret the real necessities and capabilities of present-day Lebanon. His "Saudi bedouin way of thinking" (Sinā' Abū Shaqrā) strives to revive Lebanese economy by the implementation of grandiose schemes (as the project of restoring Beirut's business center) and neglects almost completely the deplorable economic situation of a large part of Lebanon's population.

The democratic and parlamentarian tradition of Lebanon, one of its proud achievements, was severely strained in the wheelings and dealings of the parliamentary elections of 1992 and 1996 and the two-year prolongation of the term of office of the State President, Elias Hrawi, which would have otherwise ended in December 1995. One of the main tenets of Taif and the constitution, the politics of an attenuated and slow deconfessionalization, has not been taken up at all. Considering the very limited extent of Taif implementation many intellectuals would therefore agree with the judgement of Sinā' Abū Shaqrā that "Taif is dead" (Interview, Beirut, 2 April 1996).

4. Nationalisms in Lebanon

Lebanon is shaped by the variety of its confessional groups, but only six of them are of major importance, three of them Muslim (the respective percentage given in brackets): Shii (27 %), Sunni (21 %) and Druze (4 %) and three of them Christian: Maronite (25 %), Greek Orthodox and Greek Catholic (combined 19 %) (Estimated figures given for 1987 by T. Hanf 1993, p. 441).

What made and still makes ethnic groups in Lebanon is confession (tāʾīfa) - and, in the case of the Druze and Maronites, a marked tribalism (K. Salibi 1988, pp. 41, 55, 90, 91, 113, 165 ff., 217). Whereas tribal organization has largely eroded in the Maronite community during the civil war, political mobilization in the Druze community is still effected along tribal lines. The assertion that there does not exist any "distinctive ethno-cultural personalities" (A. Beydoun 1994, p. 26) in Lebanon is therefore exaggerated. In their classical definition of ethnicity, Glazer and Moynihan maintain that "forms of identification based on social realities as different as religion, language, and national origin all have something in common, such that a new term is coined to refer to all of them - ethnicity. What they have in common is that they

4 Amongst the remaining confessional groups the Armenian community is the largest and the only one of political and demographic significance. Because of its particular language and historical experience, however, the Armenian community was always anxious not to get involved into Lebanese politics. The arrêté number 60 of 1936 officially accepted 17 communities. Eleven of these are Christian: Maronite, Greek Orthodox, Greek Catholic, Armenian Orthodox, Armenian Catholic, Syrian Orthodox, Syrian Catholic, Assyro Chaldean (Nestorian), Chaldean, Latin, Protestant. Five are Muslim: Sunnite, Shi'ite (Ja'ferite), Druze, Alawite, Ismailite. The seventeenth community is the Jewish. See A. Messarra 1994, p. 26.
have all become effective foci for group mobilization for concrete political ends“ (N. Glazer, D. Moynihan 1975, p. 18). If we stick to this definition, then at least the Sunnites, Druzes, Shiites and Maronites form ethnic groups in Lebanon – and it was not by sheer coincidence that they formulated their own nationalisms and were the main protagonists in the civil war.

Before the civil war there existed no Lebanese nationalism. Of course, there were many nationalisms, but they were only nationalisms in Lebanon, as they did not conceive of the state of Lebanon as their point of reference. Of course, there was something called „Lebanese nationalism“ – but this was a nationalism propagated almost exclusively by the Maronite community. It was more or less a kind of domi-nationalism, an ideology conceived to the benefit of their tribal particularism and aimed at maintaining their political preponderance. For example, during the 1930’s Maronite ideologists invented the theory of Phoenicianism that was to provide the Maronite ruling establishment with a historical justification for the existence of a Greater Lebanon. According to this theory the Phoenician culture of antiquity had been preserved by the Phoenicians retreating to the mountain ranges and was resurrected in the new state of Lebanon. To comply with reality, there were, besides Maronite „domi-nationalism“, Christian intellectuals who formulated „benevolent“ and „integrative“ nationalisms. Particularly noteworthy is here Michel Chiha’s (a Chaldean-Christian banker, died 1954) functionalist conception of Lebanon’s raison d’être as a „merchant republic“, advocating complete social liberty and laissez faire economics. Contrary to traditional Maronite ideology, Chiha did not see in the mountains the core of Lebanon, but defended the conception that Lebanon consists of the combination of littoral and mountain (A. Beydoun 1984, pp. 130 ff.). He was thus one of the founders of a school of a syncretistic and convivialistic Lebanese nationalism (T. Hanf 1993, p. 70), i.e. what we have tried to signify as „intellectual patriotism“.

The Druzes, Shiites, Greek Orthodox and the Catholic Orthodox in Lebanon understood very well the nature of pan-Arabism and were not particularly eager to fall under Sunni domination, cloaked under the rhetoric of pan-Arab unity and might therefore have willingly complied with the concept of a Greater Lebanon. Yet, as the Lebanese state and particularly all ideologies which justified its existence were – rightly or wrongly – identified with Maronite aspirations of hegemony these communities took a reserved stance. Salibi explains the failure of Lebanese nationalism thus:

„Had the concept of Lebanese nationality, as advanced by the Maronites, been a truly civic one, rationally and realistically interpreted within the broader context of Arabism, its chances of success as the basis of a Lebanese state acceptable to all its peoples would have been good“ (K. Salibi 1988, p. 53).

Other nationalisms in Lebanon advocated the dissolution of the state of Lebanon and the fusion with a greater Arab entity (which had not been yet created). One of them was the idea of a Greater Syrian nation, conceived by Antoun Saadé (d. 1949) and propagated by the Parti Social National Syrien (PSNS), which wanted to unite the state territories of Syria, Jordan, Palestine, Lebanon and Cyprus as one „Syrian nation“.

5 Lack of space obliges me to skip over these nationalisms very cursorily. A detailed look into the diverse nationalisms can be obtained from A. Beydoun 1984 and Kamal Salibi 1988.
The largest following, however, rallied around the idea of a pan-Arab unity. Its main supporters were to be found among the Sunni population of Lebanon. A pan-Arab nationalism would have united primarily the whole of the Sunnite Arab world. Arab nationalism in its nationalist-secularist form was a particularly ambitious project. No other nationalism dared to embrace a region so heterogeneous and so large. The breakdown of Arab nationalism set in with the collapse of the Egyptian-Syrian union in 1961 and found its Waterloo with the military defeat in the war against Israel in 1967. Arab nationalism represents one of the „most remarkable instances of the rapid birth, rise, and decline of any modern nationalism“ (M. Kramer 1993, p. 172).

A further nationalism should be mentioned — Jacobine nationalism. It was propagated amongst others by one of the members of the traditional political elite — the leader of the Druze community, Kamal Jumblatt (assassinated in 1977). Jumblatt aimed at a secular republic without privileges or quotas for communities. Underlying this political stance was Jumblatt's consideration that as the head of a numerically small community he could only hope to attain a greater share of power in a secular state (T. Hanf 1993, pp. 127, 135-140, 188 f.). He found, however, many sympathizers, e.g. among the members of the Greek Orthodox community, who — fully aware that a state of their own was out of question — supported the Western model of a secular nation-state (A. Beydoun 1984, p. 581). At the beginning of the war a so-called „National Movement“ was formed under the leadership of Kamal Jumblatt’s Progressive Socialist Party which allied with the Palestinian movement in Lebanon.

In the context of the decline of Arab nationalism and the general radicalisation of Lebanese politics since the middle of the 1970's political Islam came to the fore. Not all of the proponents of political Islam in Lebanon aimed at the foundation of an Islamic state. It was meant more to show the Christians the „tools of torture“ of Islamic law and an Islamic state to make them accept Arabism as a „common denominator“ (A. Beydoun 1984, p. 322 f.). Shii Muslim fundamentalism, embodied by the Hizbullah militia, found and will continue to find political support in its fight against Israeli occupation of parts of South Lebanon (as has been shown as recently as April 1996). A non-Shii Muslim, however, will find nothing in the ideology of Hizbollah itself that would make him a devoted follower.

In the light of these facts, Theodor Hanf's interpretation of the Lebanese nationalisms as codes of the political emotions and interests of the various confessional communities seems very convincing: The Lebanon of the First Republic based on the mutual deterrence of conflicting strategies and competing ideologies (T. Hanf 1993, pp. 112, 133 f., 139 f., 364).

To sum up, no nationalism could rally the support of a majority due to Lebanon's complex confessional composition. We will turn now to the situation as it developed after 1990.

5. National identity in Lebanon

Hilal Khashan, a sociologist of Christian background teaching at the American University of Beirut, published in 1992 a book with the title „Inside the Lebanese Confessional Mind“. Khashan comes to the pessimistic conclusion „that it would be in-judicious to refer to the Lebanese as a people. Instead, it will be demonstrated that the inhabitants of this country are merely a plurality of peoples – or so it seems – having little, or nothing, in common to warrant the establishment and maintenance of a viable state“. He continues to say: „There is lack of consensus on fundamentals
such as on constitution, a popular national pact, a political order for the country, and
above all, on the national identity of Lebanon“ (H. Khashan 1992, pp. 1 and 3). Kha-
shan’s study is based on an empirical enquiry into Lebanese university students’ po-
litical attitudes in the period from October 1988 to February 1989. Khashan summar-
izes the results of his study with the statement that „the level of political
mobilization is alarmingly low, the degree of their democratic orientation is insuffi-
cient to permit modern political practices, and their high propensity for particularism
dismisses the concept of a civic society“ (idem, p. 167). Correct and telling as these
results are, Khashan in his study does not attempt to step outside of the world of con-
fessional criteria. All students were questioned by representatives of their own con-
fessional group so that in the situation of the interview the atmosphere of a homoge-
neous mini-confessional group was generated. All questions in the questionnaire ran
along confessional criteria. It is hardly conceivable that by such an approach other
results could have been achieved.

Curiously, an empirical study carried out by a German political scientist, Theodor
Hanf, in the period 1981-1987 produced contrary results. Drawing on far wider em-
pirical research than Khashan, Hanf states that „in 1987, even after twelve years of
war the great majority of the Lebanese believed, that given the chance, their com-
munities would coexist“ and comes to the conclusion that „majority acceptance of
democracy and consociation are not isolated political opinions. They are rooted in a
political culture of coexistence and compromise that has survived the long years of

Both authors, Khashan and Hanf, are certainly forcing the evidence, but there
must be more behind it: confessional and „Lebanon-bound“ political attachments
seem to coexist and are responsive to different kinds of stimuli. The observations of
Hanf have been confirmed by two outstanding Lebanese historians, Ahmed Beydoun
and Kamal Salibi. Both have written influential books on the interpretation of Leba-
nese history by Lebanese historians and what can be derived from this analysis in
understanding Lebanese political identity.

Ahmad Beydoun states in his voluminous work „Identité confessionelle et temps
social chez les historiens libanais contemporains“ of 1984 the gradual development of a
national identity amongst historians of different confessional backgrounds and main-
tains that the Lebanese state has become the point of reference where the different his-
torians and „histories“ of Lebanon converge (A. Beydoun 1984, p. 11, also pp. 63, 248,
320, 578, 584). Kamal Salibi says in the opening paragraph to his „A House of Many
Mansions“: „There is a noticeable consensus among all but the more committed ex-
tremists today that all are Lebanese, sharing the same national identity, regardsles of
other, secondary, group affiliations and loyalties“ (K. Salibi 1988, p. 3, also p. 222).

In the following chapters we will turn now to the question of what might be the
constitutive elements of such a Lebanese national identity.

5.1 Democracy in Lebanon: A national pact

The importance of a genuinely democratic political system is often stressed as the
basic means to avoid the outbreak of ethnic strife and warfare in ethnically heteroge-
neous or generally unstable political units. Former Yugoslavia represents the exam-
ple of an undemocratic and intrinsically oppressive system „where any striving for
greater national autonomy was bound to absorb like blotting-paper all the bitter polit-
cal dissatisfaction which was flowing through the whole system“ (N. Malcolm 1994,
Milovan Djilas, one of the elder dissidents in former Yugoslavia, links the break-up of Yugoslavia with Tito's fundamental mistake not to have introduced democratic procedures into the system (M. Ignatieff 1993, p. 37).

But in Lebanon civil war broke out despite the existence of a basically democratic system. Why was this so? The following may be cited as possible internal factors (besides the external factors which shall not be discussed here): The lack of the accountability of the political protagonists, the lack of equal opportunities in the economy, society and politics, the lack of a well-established concept of citizenship and the lack of a safety valve to avoid the escalation of political crisis (I. Sâbâ 1990, p. 90; T. Hanf 1993, p. 178; S. Hoss 1993, p. 24).

Many put the blame on the consociationalist system of proportional representation and say that it has failed the test of applicability in Lebanon. Opponents of the consociationalist model maintain that it fostered the stiffness of the political system and failed to neutralize chauvinistic elements. But the main danger is that the consociationalist model confessiona lizes even conflicts that are in themselves originally not confessional at all (V. Perthes 1994, p. 132). Consociational democracy prevented democratic practices within the confessional groups and neglected the potential plurality and flexibility of the Lebanese society. Political power was monopolized by the numerically large confessions and eight of the minor ones were totally excluded from political participation. Taif is in this regard a reedition of the 1943 agreement and accordingly, argues Nawaf Kabbara, „neither consociationalism nor the Taif agreement are enough to avoid another war and another conflict in fifteen years time“ (N. Kabbara 1991, p. 360).

Proponents of the consociationalist model, such as the dogmatic Antoine Messarra, argue that it was misapplication that carried such pernicious effects. Messarra sees the consociationalist model deeply embedded in Lebanese society with roots in the Ottoman political system (A. Messarra 1994, p. 21). According to Messarra it is impossible to speak of a failure of the consociational model since the Lebanese are condemned to consociationalism, be it a savage or a rational one. Messarra sees consociationalism as an unavoidable choice for Lebanon as it provides a way out of two stalemates: the first being the no-win situation between the conceptions of a secular state and an Arab-Islamic umma, the second stalemate being that no winner comes to the fore and that dissolution is also impossible (A. Messarra 1986, p. 140).

Theories have been developed to show how „pacts“ can provide a way out of stalemates. Pact theories explaining the transformation to democracy in non-democratic environments have been formulated by Dankwart Rustow and Adam Przeworski. Both writers describe the transformation to democracy as the result of political calculation by protagonists who expect greater benefit from this move. In the beginning the „compromise is substantive in the sense that groups enter into it as the most promising framework for the realization of their interests“ (A. Przeworski 1988, p. 70). Whereas Rustow stresses the necessity of national unity, that the protagonists „must have no doubt or mental reservations as to which political community they belong“ (D. Rustow 1970, p. 350), Przeworski emphasizes the necessity of institutions „that would make it unlikely that the competitive political process would result in outcomes highly adverse to anyone’s interests“ (A. Przeworski 1988, p. 66). Ghassan Salamé explains the paradox of a „democracy without democrats“ as the attempt by protagonists, who are not attached to democracy in principle, to find a way to avoid civil war or institutional chaos: „Democrats may not exist at all, or they may not exist in great numbers. Yet, democracy can still be sought as an instrument
of civil peace and hopefully, gradually, inadvertently, produce its own defenders” (G. Salamé 1994a, p. 3).

It seems therefore that this particular type of consociationalist democracy derives not only from the historical heritage of Lebanon but to a greater extent from the experience of a stalemate by the political protagonists. The Maronite political elite had well understood that it could not ensure the viability of the new state without including the minor political protagonists and the representatives of the social spheres and finding a power-sharing formula (G. Salamé 1994b, p. 86, 97). The constitution of 1926 had laid down in article 95 that the confessional proporz model should only be applied „transitorily“ until another model could be found. But never during the whole of the First Republic the consociationalist model was replaced by another type of democratic model since two opposing (and rather hypocritical) political options blocked each other. All confessions argued that they had never wanted a confessional state and that they waited for this provisory and unpleasant state of affairs to end as soon as possible in order to progress on the way to a modern state (A. Beydoun 1984, p. 334 f.). The Muslims asked for a „political deconfessionalization“. This would have – in their conception – included only the realm of politics, without any attempt to secularize the whole of the society. Underlying this was the attempt to break Maronite superiority. The Maronites on the other hand would accept political deconfessionalization only if it were framed within an all-encompassing secularization – being well aware that this was not acceptable to the Muslims (K. Salibi 1988, p. 196).

The national pacts of 1943 and of 1989 also fit in a more general theory of pact-building. Taif has been explained as a „ripe moment“, i.e. the discovery (under certain given circumstances) of a formula which shows the way out of a political or military stalemate (W. Zartman 1991; for its application to Lebanon see M.J. and M.K. Deeb 1991; M.-J. Calic and V. Perthes 1995, p. 151 f.). Jean Leca defines a pact in the following way: „At the core of a pact lies a negotiated compromise under which actors agree to forgo or underutilize their capacity to harm each others’ corporate autonomies or vital interests.“ For such a pact to succeed there must exist to a certain extent stable conditions and stable expectations: „That amounts to saying that a political pact is the precondition of a political pact“ (J. Leca 1994, pp. 49, 51). Post-Taif rhetoric directly reflected this pact, e.g. in this quotation from Selim Hoss: „The most important thing about the agreement of Taif is that it is an agreement“ (S. Hoss 1993, p. 29, also in an-Nahâr 9 April 1993, p. 14).

The character of a consociationalist pact seems deeply entrenched in Lebanese politics. Since Taif the call for a „Lebanese-Lebanese Taif“ has been voiced to introduce the era of a „Third Republic“ (Selim Hoss, p. 70, Munih aš-Šulh, p. 80, Jihâd az-Zain, p. 90 f., all in CAUS 1992). This call asked for the realization of all those political reforms that were not seriously handled – as the deconfessionalization of Lebanese politics (Jûzif Mughaisal, p. 31, Ḥusain al-Quwwatî, p. 53, Rashîd al-Qâdî, p. 69 ff., Maḥmûd Suwaid, p. 72, all in CAUS 1991; Sinâ' Abû Shaqrâ, p. 96 in CAUS 1992, M. Shamsâdîn 1996). However, the deconfessionalization of the Lebanese politics is again conceived within the frame of consociationalism since such a step cannot be realized without having obtained the consent of all confessionalist groups and without being cast into the mould of a pact.
5.2 Lebanese national identity – a national pact?

Theodor Hanf characterizes wartime Lebanon as a period of the decline of a state and the rise of nation. Ahmad Beydoun and Kamal Salibi see the rise of national identity being caused by the history of a common state. In the light of the previous paragraph it would appear that there is another factor in the formation of national identity in Lebanon: the same mechanism that we have analyzed in the establishment of democracy in Lebanon might apply to the question of national identity in Lebanon. All nationalisms in Lebanon have failed: pan-Syrianism, pan-Arabism, and confessional nationalisms such as Maronite dominationalism, Druze „leftist“ nationalism, Shii „Islamic nationalism“. In the Lebanon after the war no confession seems to be able to usurp the privileged position that the Maronites had when Lebanon was founded (G. Salamé 1994b, p. 105). Before the war there was a stalemate of competing nationalisms, all of them struggling to achieve a hegemonic position. Most of these nationalisms have eroded to a great extent and none of them has any chance of achieving superiority. These nationalisms all have been severely damaged by the scepticism of the Lebanese population which understands that these ideologies have led them nowhere.

What is now the meaning of Taif in the context of this experience? One might presume that its underlying meaning is not any longer that of negation (of the respective ideologies) but confirmation of the common existence and the common failure of the respective ideologies. Before the war convivialistic theories tried to transcend confessionalism, as did Michel Chiha’s merchant republic which was based on an economic success story. The feeling of unity and belonging together after the war seems to be based on the experience of a simultaneous (if not common) failure and suffering in the war (similarly argues M. Shamsaddín 1995b, p. 2).

Besides the downfall of nationalist ideologies in Lebanon the post-Taif period differs in another regard from the First Republic. In the First Republic it was the Muslims who felt themselves alienated from the Lebanese state, whereas the Christians, particularly the Maronites, identified themselves with it. Now, after the civil war, the Maronites in particular feel themselves excluded from participation in power and regard with distrust the new Lebanon and its „privileged relationship“ with Syria.

Jawad Boulos, a Maronite historian of the First Republic, conceived the thirteen centuries of „Islamic rule over Lebanon“ as an exile of Lebanon awaiting the return of itself (A. Beydoun 1984, p. 300). The Maronite Walid Phares, professor of political science at Florida International University and president of the exile organisation World Lebanese Organization, sees Lebanon once again having gone into an inner exile as the tidal stream of history moves against the Maronites. In his book „Lebanese Christian Nationalism: The Rise and Fall of an Ethnic Resistance“ (1995) Walid Phares compares the Maronites’ position to that of other „minorities“ in the surrounding „Arab-Islamic sea“ such as the Assyrians, Kurds, Copts, Christians in South Sudan and the Israelis. The title of his book refers to the supposition that „historically, the Lebanese Nation was the product of the Lebanese Christian resistance in Mount Lebanon“ and that „Lebanese Christian resistance [serves] as a label for the collective efforts of this Middle Eastern ethnicity to preserve its ethnicity“ (W. Phares 1995, pp. 5, 82). Phares uses the term „Lebanon“ to denote a timelessly valid and deeply Christian cultural land which has exhibited since the seventh cen-
tury a particular Christian-Lebanese identity. Phares' basic argument is that since the Maronite elite has played its cards badly – the pact of 1943 being a major blunder since it undermined Maronite hegemony and put up a bi-national state – the only other solution would have been to split the „bi-national“ (Muslim vs. Christian) state into a federal state.

The marginalized Shiites of the First Republic were torn between the desire to keep within their own community and the wish to be part of the state (A. Beydoun 1984, p. 119). The Maronites of the Second Republic, however, do not have at their disposal comparable ideological options, such as Shiites, or the Muslims generally, had in the First Republic in form of the „pan-Arab“ option, „Islamic“ option or the „national Lebanese“ option. „Ethno-centered“ Maronite political thinkers have no option other than total rejection and resignation, i.e. emigration, as in the case of Phares.

But the Maronites’ alienation is not all-pervasive. In their public rhetoric there seems to be even a widespread willingness to engage in „dialogue“. Such a pro-dialogue stance can be found in the patriotic Aurâq al- hiwâr/Dialogue Papers. In a working paper written in late 1995 the Permanent Council sees a historical current of Christian legitimacy (ash-shar’îya at-tarîkhiya al-masîhiya) which aims at coexistence with the Muslims. Individual contributing authors also stress the necessity to integrate the Christians into the process of political decision-making. Samir Frangîé criticizes the unjust equation of the Christians’ present political stance with that of the intransigent Christian elite before the war (S. Frangîé 1996a). According to the Shii writer Muhammad Ḥusain Shamsaddîn, the Christian political class has come to accept the legitimacy of the Second Republic’s state institutions in the course of the last two or three years. Unfortunately this change of mind would not be duly appreciated by the government which is dominated by Muslims (M. Shamsaddîn 1995a).

A draft version of a joint document by the Permanent Council exposes its view of the Lebanese. They are bound together in their experience of a common state and their common will to coexistence. Lebanon is not a historical coincidence, but neither is it an entity for eternity that would represent an obligation in itself. Democracy and Lebanese wataniya (best translated as „patriotism“) are based on the pluri-confessional structure of Lebanon:

„The wataniya is in the reality of Lebanon not the contrary of confessional plurality, and it can not be a complete substitute for confessional and other affiliations. Perhaps, the best description of wataniya lubnaniya might be that it is attachment in the common life and engagement for the formula of reciprocity and partnership, and the willingness to protect these ideas from inner and outer dangers. We can say that its is necessary to ‘Lebanonize’ the confessions, in the meaning that the wataniya lubnaniya enters as a fundamental element and an existential choice into the culture and thought of every confession“ (PCLD 1995a; very similar formulations in S. al-Maulâ 1995a and M. Shamsaddîn 1995b, p. 2).

Undoubtedly, this journal reflects a highly normative approach – as Lebanese politics should be. But this approach and the nomenclature of national unity (waṭīda

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watanîya) can be found elsewhere too (e.g. in S. Abû Shaqrâ, p. 65, R. Qâdî, p. 70, both in CAUS 1991).

One legitimate interpretation of these patriotic positions would be that the political protagonists have understood the necessity to extract themselves from the „burn-out-situation“ of the diverse ethnonationalisms. And furthermore it would be appropriate to assume that such an intellectual patriotism does not only try to foster national identity, but that it is also a reflection of this national identity.

But on the other hand one does not need be especially malicious to interpret this rhetoric as mere ideology – to the benefit of Syria. One might find herein a quite satisfactory explanation for the acclaim of a Lebanese national identity and for Syria’s obvious support of this concept. Syria will be keen to influence and control Lebanese political discourse in two ways: firstly, in the affirmation of Syria’s presence, and secondly, in the affirmation of its presence by all Lebanese political protagonists. An ideology of Lebanese national coexistence plus Lebanese-Syrian brotherhood would be presently to the best of Syrian interests. Indeed, if there is today an hegemonic ideology in Lebanon it is the unconditional acknowledgement of Syria’s role and tutelage in Lebanon and the presence of around 35,000 Syrian soldiers in Lebanon, besides an estimated 500,000 Syrian guest-workers (affirmations might be found in I. Sâbâ 1990, p. 98, J. az-Zain 1991, p. 22; Jûzîf Mughaizal p. 30, Rashîd al-Qâdî, p. 71, both in CAUS 1991; S. Frangîé 1995a, M. as-Sammâk 1995). The essential difference between „Israeli occupation“ (ihtilâl isrâ’îlî) and „Syrian presence“ (wujûd sûrî) is stressed (S. Frangîé 1995b); the relationship between Syria and Lebanon is compared to that between the states of the European community (S. al-Maulâ 1995b). Or as Husain al-Quwwatî, general director of the dâr al-fatwâ in Beirut, puts it: „There is no national unity in Lebanon without privileged relations with Syria“ (Husain al-Quwwatî in CAUS 1991, p. 53). Yet, this affirmation of Syria’s role in Lebanon still does not negate the existence of a Lebanese nation. More self-denying positions can be found in the complete affirmation of Syrian tutelage by Christian politicians, most obviously represented in the person of the acting President of State himself, Elias Hrawi. Hrawi wrote in the visitors’ book at the Heroes’ cemetery in Damascus that „we are one nation in two independent states“ (cited in J. Maila 1991, p. 37). Such a frivolous glossing over Syrian tutelage might be termed as a sort of Syrian dominationalism in Lebanon.

In the light of this state of affairs, Syrian presence seems to be a real obstacle to a further development of the Lebanese state and nation (J. Maila 1991, passim; G. Salamé 1994b, p. 105). Syria’s commitment to democracy is, to say the least, dubious. But more importantly it is not bound to the particular phenomenon of a permanent pact which shaped and is still shaping Lebanese politics. Even the endless protrcation of the Lebanese civil war has been ascribed to Syria. According to this interpretation Syria wanted to avoid an end to the war until the „ripe moment“ for its ultimate goal of complete tutelage had come (M.-J. and M.K. Deeb 1991, p. 92).

5.3 National cohesion

According to Ghassan Salamé, the Second Republic of Lebanon has lost its foundation myths (as the merchant republic or a Phoenicia resurrected) and „the consociative raison d’être at the heart of Taif must find another claim to legitimacy for the entity which has survived the attrition of its founding clan“ (G. Salamé 1994b, p. 105). Ahmad Beydoun sees the basis for the intercommunitarian conflicts in Leba-
non in such a short period of an „expérience commune“. For the future he sees the
danger that there will be a lack of symbols to help form a national identity (A. Bey-
doun 1994, p. 27).

But there are nevertheless elements to build on: For Nawaf Kabbara there exists a
Lebanese „liberality“, transgressing confessional identity, that could be the possible
focus of a new national identity (N. Kabbara 1991, pp. 345-360). The innate linkage
between Lebanon’s liberal and democratic political order on the one hand and the
existence of the Lebanese state and peace on the other hand is often stressed (R.
Qâdî, p. 70, A. Saïf, p. 74 f., both in CAUS 1991; PCLD 1995a). National identity in
Lebanon is enhanced by its parlamentarian tradition, its institutions of civil society
and its academic plurality. These elements should — according to the German politi-
cal scientist Volker Perthes — be sustained by the realization of the image that many
citizens in other Arab states still have of Lebanon: the particular intellectual role of
Lebanon in the Arab world as the only democratic state; a state with a civic tradition;
an example of tolerance and consensus-finding (V. Perthes 1994, 145 f.).

This particular destiny of Lebanon is interpreted as the duty to realize its hetero-
geneity and build a national state on it (S. al-Maulû 1995a; M. Samsadîn 1995a; M.
Wahba 1995; PCLD 1995a). Samir Frangî is so far to see in the disastrous expe-
rience that Lebanon underwent in the civil war a particular mission to teach the
world better (S. Frangî 1996b). The Shii dignitary Sa’ûd al-Maulû sees in the Leba-
non the only state in the world that is based on heterogeneity, but has also created
national loyalty and a unified state. He deduces from this singular experience the
„belief in the meaning of Lebanon and in its important role in the region and the

National identity in Lebanon is certainly not an élán vital or a historical necessity
that will sweep away all obstacles. One can find a kind of consensus, yet, steps will
be necessary to foster political stability and national cohesion in Lebanon. Confes-
sionalism is a main feature of Lebanon’s political structure and it can not and should
not be abolished overnight. But a process of slow deconfessionalization — or at least
moderated confessionalism — is necessary. Among these elements should be the es-
tablishment of political parties that „cut across confessional and regional lines“ (K.
iman 1994, p. 86) and the creation of great electoral constituencies or even of only
one in the whole of Lebanon (A. Messaרar 1986, p. 118; Jûzîf Mughaižal, p. 28,
Rashîd Jamâlı, p. 60, Ma’hûd Qabbânî, p. 61, all CAUS 1991; S. Hoss 1993, p. 31).
Other elements would be the deconfessionalization of university education, and, if
possible, of primary and secondary schools (H. Khashan 1992, p. 171; S. Hoss 1993,
p. 31; J. Mughaižal 1991, p. 28). Further steps would be a balanced and a fairer eco-
nomic and social development which is condition for a real democratic society (S.
Hoss 1993, p. 28; S. al-Maulû 1995a; M. Shamsadîn 1996) and the fostering of the
concept of a Lebanese citizenship (S. Hoss 1993, p. 31).

6. Conclusion

We want to return once again to Connor’s „ethnonationalism“ and Smith’s thesis of
an „ethnic core“ that were presented in the second chapter. Applied to the case of
Lebanon, Connor’s theory of nationalism would attribute viability only to the
„nationalisms“ of the various religious communities. According to Smith, the only
viable „ethnic core“ in the First Republic would have been the Maronites who how-
ever failed completely to build around their core a national state. With the downfall of the Maronites the cohesive forces that bind Lebanon together should have also vanished.

Contrary to these theories the thrust of the argument presented in this article is simply that there exists something which may be called „Lebanese national identity“ and that Connor and Smith might find some difficulties in explaining its resilience. Historical experience has shown that there exists a Lebanese „national cohesion“. Despite the precarious ethnic and confessional composition of Lebanon and its „Lebanonization“ in the civil war the state did not fall apart. Lebanese national identity seems to have been one of the cohesive factors which allowed the state to survive. One has to come to Connor’s and Smith’s defense against the reproach that they are „primordialists“. Yet, their insistence that only an ethnic group whose history and collective memory goes back to pre-modern times will create a viable national identity must be refuted as „primordialistic“.

The other part of our argument is that this national cohesion would be wrongly described as „Lebanese nationalism“. „Nationalism“ does not seem to fit well as the nationalisms in Lebanon were to some extent codes of political emotions and competing ideologies propagated by Lebanon’s ethnic groups. „Patriotism“ in the sense of loyalty towards the state does not fit well either in the case of Lebanon where the state has been traditionally weak and monopolized by certain confessional groups. But besides the various confessional nationalisms there has also existed and exists a patriotism which attempts to transgress the confines of the confessionalist structure and that we prefer to call „intellectual patriotism“.

But we must be careful not to simplify the facts or force evidence for the sake of the argument. It is not argued here that the Lebanese national identity we have tried to describe is more „genuine“ or „morally better“ than the diverse Lebanese nationalisms. It would be foolhardy to characterize the various nationalisms in Lebanon such as „Arab nationalism“ or „political Islam“ merely as tools in the hands of „ethnic entrepreneurs“. None of this touches, however, our main argument which says that national identity in Lebanon has come into existence through a complex process — the common experience of a state, the simultaneous experience of war and the failure of competing ideologies and nationalisms. National identity may have been influenced by the diverse ethnonationalisms or Lebanese intellectual patriotism, but it has certainly not been created exclusively by either of these ideologies.

The new Lebanese patriotism, the syncretistic nationalism of the Second Republic, will be to a limited extent an expression of Lebanese national identity, but the degree of uncertainty to what extent publications such as the Dialogue Papers reflect only — be they opportunistic or not — political calculations is high. It should make us suspicious that in Lebanon national unity is stressed again and again as in a rosary prayer. Dankwart Rustow is right when he says that „any vocal consensus about national unity, in fact, should make us wary“ (D. Rustow 1970, p. 351). National unity in Lebanon is not taken for granted and it is heavily disputed.

One main factor of uncertainty is Syria. If one comes back to the question, posed in the introduction, whether the Maronites in the Second Republic would participate in the discourse regarding national identity one might conclude: The thing that alienates Christians, particularly Maronites, from political life in Lebanon is, besides the
loss of political power, Syrian tutelage. As we have seen, there are Christians participating in the affirmation of the concept of a Lebanese plural nation. Such participation is obviously linked to a payment in return: The doctrine of Lebanese national coexistence goes together with the acknowledgement of Lebanese-Syrian brotherhood. As it was said already in chapter (5.2), it well be to the best of Syrian interests that its tutelage is concealed behind a façade of self-determined Lebanese national unity.

Putting aside these bleak political prospects one should not forget the fact that Lebanon itself is still a „precarious republic“ (as Michael Hudson called his book, written in 1968). It would be grossly mistaken to believe that political stability in Lebanon is founded on the fragile Lebanese national identity. Lebanon’s fate will depend on the general political situation in the Middle East and the capability of Lebanese politicians to forge a „confessional-social pact“ in Lebanon.

It has to be kept in mind that national identity in Lebanon cannot claim the same place as it does in England, France or Italy. Firstly, in Lebanon the link between the individual and the state is much weaker and is mediated by the confessional community. Secondly, Lebanese national identity is sandwiched between the attachment to the substratum of the confessional group and the attachment to the superstratum of Arabness (‘uraba), Islam or Europe (the Christian attachment to Europe, however, being nowadays insignificant). Therefore one can hardly agree with Hanf’s statement that „the majority of Lebanese have little difficulty in reconciling communal identity and national identity. People think of themselves as Maronite or Sunni or Shi’i, and, at the same time, as Lebanese, much as the Welsh or the Scots see themselves as Welsh or Scots as well as British“ (T. Hanf 1993, p. 641).

Confessional identity, national identity and superstrata ideologies are the three pillars that span the fragile net of collective identity in Lebanon. Lebanese national identity cannot claim to absorb exclusively the emotional attachment of the Lebanese. Perhaps, Lebanese national identity is nothing else than the consciousness of such a complex emotional structure and the affirmation of it.

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