# The Impact of Political Alliances on Voter Prejudice in Post Conflict Countries

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## Dedication

This is dedicated to Jennifer for her unconditional love, support and advice, to Elias for being curious, caring and a joy and to my parents for always showing me the good in people and encouraging me to ask questions.

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# Abstract

THE IMPACT OF POLITICAL ALLIANCES ON VOTER PREJUDICE IN POST-CONFLICT COUNTRIES

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Scholars of conflict resolution have studied ways to reduce prejudice in society for years, believing that prejudice leads to or increases the likelihood of conflict. The primary focus has been on schools, universities and communities. More limited research has been conducted on the contribution of political party alliances on reducing prejudice in post-conflict societies, divided along ethnic, linguistic, racial, religious or tribal lines. While alliances are often perceived as a way to overcome divisions between political forces and coalesce around common goals and interests, it is not clear if citizens living in deeply divided societies experience a change in their level of prejudice when the party they support enters into an alliance with a party that represents another group with which they may have been previously in conflict. Furthermore, it is unclear how lasting these changes in perceptions are, especially if political alliances change.

The conflict resolution literature offers techniques and approaches to overcome prejudice based on the study of interpersonal, group and community conflict. Ideas on how to overcome inter-state conflicts are also explored and discussed by scholars at length.

The research is guided by a framework that suggests political party alliances have an impact on party supporters in deeply rooted conflicts. The framework further suggests that until a formal alliance occurs, the views and perceptions among party supporters remain vulnerable and lacking in strength. Such an alliance enhances the effectiveness of conflict resolution interventions conducted at micro or meso levels.

The research focuses on national-level politics and intra-state conflict. It looks closely at the alliance between two Lebanese political parties: the Lebanese Forces headed by Dr. Samir Geagea, a party that receives its support from the predominantly Christian Maronites (Eastern rite Catholics) and the Future Movement, a party that draws its support predominantly from the Sunni Muslim community headed by Saad Hariri, the son of assassinated former Prime Minister Rafic Hariri.

For the last several decades, and in large part due to Lebanon's 1975-1990 war, members of these communities have been on opposite sides of the Lebanese and regional conflicts. Following the assassination of Prime Minister Rafic Hariri and the pull-out of the Syrian troops from Lebanon, and after nearly three decades of military occupation,

the country held parliamentary elections for the first time without a foreign military presence in June 2005. The Future Movement and the Lebanese Forces struck an alliance and formed the governing coalition with other political parties and individuals.

The present research is based on a desk review, a survey of 136 individuals from both groups, in Beirut and its suburbs, and 20 in-depth interviews. The research points to several findings, namely that: a) political alliances across religious lines help lessen prejudice among voters supporting the alliance; b) voter prejudices are primarily caused by fear; c) voters who support political alliances become less prejudiced towards the *other* and can, in some cases, even open up to members of other groups that are outside the alliance; and d) situational and contextual factors can change party followers' attitudes and perceptions soon after an alliance dissolves, despite improved relations during the alliance.

What is clear from this research is that different approaches and techniques used to reduce prejudice are part of the way political party alliances function. These approaches and techniques include: Equal Status Contact, Superordinate Goal, Knowledge/Education, External Event/Common Fate/Common-Enemy, and Normative and Structural changes. The research findings support the framework. This has important implications for the conflict resolution field regarding the impact of macro level conflict-reducing mechanisms, such as political alliances. The research ultimately suggests that without a formal macro level agreement, gains made at the micro level

remain significantly vulnerable to contextual and situational changes as well as to leadership interests.

It is hoped that the insights presented in this dissertation can be of use to political scientists and conflict resolution practitioners as they advise on ways to overcome divisions and rebuild deeply divided societies.

# Chapter 1: Introduction

Can political alliances contribute to reducing prejudice among party followers in countries with deeply rooted conflicts? This is the question that this dissertation attempts to answer. It is a question of great interest to political scientists and political development experts. My interest in this research topic stems from years of working in the field of democratic development in often troubled countries such as Afghanistan, Algeria, Democratic Republic of Congo, Guyana, Georgia, Iraq, Lebanon, Nigeria, Nepal, Northern Ireland, Pakistan, Sierra Leone and Yemen.

During these years, increased emphasis has been placed by some development and political experts and practitioners on the need to encourage the creation of political party alliances to reduce political tension in countries with deep social and political fractures. Building political alliances can, according to these experts and practitioners, reduce potential political violence and prejudice and moderate political leaders' positions. They also believe that political alliances can help heal divisions left by ethnic, linguistic, racial, religious and tribal violence, especially in countries where a functioning state is largely absent in protecting people and checking the power of overly-ambitious politicians.

Such beliefs have resulted in a push by international organizations and foreign governments to have post-conflict countries adopt electoral systems that encourage political parties to build such coalitions. Different electoral systems have been designed and tailored to achieve this goal (Kadima & Nordlund, 2008). Despite this focus, there is little research that shows what impact such alliances have on voters' perceptions, stereotypes, prejudices and actions in the short- and long-term.

Over the last few decades, sociologists and psychologists have studied ways to overcome prejudice among individuals, groups and states.[1] Less research exists on the role of political party alliances and their impact on political party followers' views and prejudices in countries with deeply rooted conflicts. While experts may argue about the most adequate electoral system for post-conflict countries, there is no doubt that systems that encourage coalition building in deeply divided societies force people, who may have experienced years of inter-communal violence and hate, to enter in contact or at least share common objectives and interests in the political arena. Such alliances may also push voters to recognize each other's role in governing their country. What has been harder to assess, however, is the impact such encounters and political coalitions have on changing voter perceptions of the *other*, whether or not this change has an overall positive impact on individuals, and what other key factors influence voters' opinions during and after a coalition.

[1] See Allport 1954, McCarty 2002, Sherif 1958, Smith 1992, Turner & Singleton1978, and Tajfel 1979 among others.

Since the 1920s, research on human behavior and cognition has demonstrated that individuals' perceptions and views can be influenced to modify stereotypes and prejudices they hold of others with whom they are in conflict (Allport, 1954; Williams, 1964; Tajfel & Turner 1979; Stephan, W. & Stephan, G. 1996; Jones, 1997). These studies increased in importance after the Second World War as sociologists, psychologists, political scientists and conflict resolution and development experts began to look at ways to reduce intra-state conflict and heal war-torn countries. As a result, significant inroads were made in understanding deeply rooted conflicts and some of the pathologies that lead to them.

Several explanations were offered on how prejudice and discrimination are born and how they evolve. Attempts were also made to develop approaches for how to overcome divisions in society among diverse groups. New ideas were brought forward on how to address inter-state conflicts based on theories that had emerged from scholars during that period. Equal Status Contact (Allport, 1954; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2000; Chirot & Seligman, 2001), Role Reversal (Donohue & Kolt 1992; Gobey 1996; Kingsley, Isenhart & Spangle 2000), Superordinate Goal (Sherif, 1958), Knowledge/Education (Johnson & Johnson, 2000), External Event/Common Fate/Common-Enemy (Sherif et al. 1961), Supranational Identity (Tajfel, 1981; Turner, 1996; Turner et al., 1987), Normative and Structural changes (Turner, J. H., & Singleton, R. J., 1978), and Complexity/Simplicity (Jones, 1997) are the leading approaches identified as effective in

reducing prejudice among individuals, groups and states. Each of these is explained in Chapter 2.

The research for this dissertation builds on the work that has been done to date in the field. Political party alliances are interesting because they can bring voters together, but these voters do not have to be in direct contact with one another. Furthermore, in a political alliance, political leaders can change allegiances overnight depending on personal and group interests, leaving their supporters to grapple with adjusting their perceptions and feelings towards alliance members. Some of the additional questions that emerged over the course of this research include: a) Do existing stereotypes and prejudices among voters change or decrease as a result of political alliances? b) How do members of one political alliance perceive members of an opposing political party outside the alliance? c) If political alliances do affect change in the perception of others, is this change lasting or resilient? d) What remains in terms of perceptual changes among voters once leaders decide to change course and develop different alliances? and e) Finally, do alliances make voters more willing to enter into future alliances with political parties that do not represent their own religious, ethnic or racial group?

Iraq serves as the most recent examples of how heated the debate can develop regarding the need and importance of establishing political alliances to reduce prejudice and violence among different groups. This debate stemmed from the need to heal divisions that existed between the Kurds in the northern part of Iraq, the Sunni

community which had, in many ways, dominated the political life of the country for decades, and the Shi'a majority who were excluded and discriminated against by President Saddam Hussein's regime.[2] In Iraq attempts were made by policy makers in the lead up to the general elections of 2005 to push political parties to enter into cross-confessional electoral negotiations and alliances. The concern of the United States administration was to ensure a more secular government in which Sunni and Kurdish representation in government was assured and to avoid a complete Shi'a take over, which would be perceived as bringing Iraq closer to Iran (Badkhen, 2004).

A similar push to form political alliances developed in Nigeria after years of turmoil. For example, in 1994 a multi-ethnic alliance of politicians and retired officers formed the National Democratic Coalition (NADECO). NADECO eventually lead to the emergence of several political parties in the post-military era such as the People's Democratic Party (PDP) of Nigeria which is an alliance across regional, religious and ethnic lines. This alliance was united for the purpose of getting the military out of politics. There have also been efforts by reformers of the electoral framework to only recognize political parties if they are able to register in 27 of Nigeria's 36 states (C. Fomunyo, personal communication, September 9, 2008.) Efforts to build alliances across religious or ethnic lines have also taken place in a number of other countries or regions such as Guyana, the Ivory Coast, Malawi, Mauritius and Northern Ireland, to name a few.

[2] The Shi'a Muslims in Iraq represent the largest religious group in the country. Saddam Hussein was eager to control any group that could challenge his totalitarian Ba'ath regime. The Shi'a were a greater threat given their number, relationship to Iran and the rise of Shi'a clerics to power following the Iranian revolution in 1979.

This dissertation addresses these issues through a study of two Lebanese political parties that draw their support base from two distinct religious communities. For decades these communities were on different sides of the armed conflict that took place between 1975 and 1990 and which unraveled into a civil war. The two parties are the Lebanese Forces (LF) and the Future Movement (FM). The LF is lead by Dr. Samir Geagea, a predominantly Christian, Maronite (Eastern rite Catholic) party. Saad Harri, son of assassinated Prime Minister Rafic Harari, leads the Future Movement. The FM draws its support predominantly from the Sunni Muslim community.

Lebanon's 1975-1990 war and occupations by Syria and Israel led to deep divisions among Lebanese which continues today. While some of these divisions have existed before the 1943 independence, many were revived and deepened as a result of more recent tensions and conflicts. Lebanon was a country that enjoyed strong economic growth and benefited from a consociational[3] democratic system that allocates a quota of seats in the government to each religious community.

Following the French mandate, Lebanon found itself torn apart by regional conflicts and a political elite that used sectarian divisions as a key means to enhance their power base. As a result, political parties became increasingly representative of

[3] Consociational states tend to be composed of different religious, ethnic or linguistic groups. These states do not have a dominant majority group and tend to assign government seats according to a political formula that draws on the diverse mosaic that makes up the population of the country and is usually unique to that country.

Lebanon's religious communities.[4] Several of these political parties took up arms to defend the interests of their community, forming de-facto militias during the 1975-1990 war. At the time, political parties, with a few exceptions, did little to reach out to citizens from other confessional groups (although sometimes, when their interests converged, they cooperated for a short period). This resulted in increased divisions among the people and led to distrust and prejudice among the different religious communities.

Following the 1989 Taïf accord,[5] which helped bring an end to the civil war, and the pull out of foreign troops in 2005, sectarian-based political parties struck alliances to compete in the June elections held that same year and new coalitions were formed to create a new government. This research looks at one of the political alliances that formed around election time and attempts to understand its ramifications on the views, perceptions and prejudices of voters who supported the alliance. In this regard, Lebanon is not a unique case, as in several post-conflict situations political parties have tried to reach across confessional lines.

The research for this dissertation does not intend to make generalizations about alliances other than those involving political parties that draw their support from distinct religious communities. The research does provide, however, a window into what voters

[4] There are currently 18 recognized religious communities in Lebanon.
[5] The Taef accord was reached between a large number of Lebanese political parties in the city of Taef, Saudi Arabia and is considered by many analysts as the agreement that helped end the Lebanese 1975-1990 war. The agreement redistributed power between the branches of government and mandated the creation of new institutions and the gradual pull out of Syrian troops from Lebanon. Portions of the Taef agreement were integrated into the Lebanese constitution in 1991.

go through as they realize that their political leaders are reaching out to parties that may have been on the other side of the political divide during the conflict. As we learn more about what changes people's views and perceptions about the *other* we learn more about how prejudice is formed and how it can be overcome.

On a personal note, this research helped me expand my understanding of the impact of alliances in post-conflict environments and their effect on individuals and groups. Having grown-up in war torn Lebanon, I came to believe that the reason why the Lebanese could not get along and were in conflict was because they believed in different religions that had governed their lives and interactions for generations. At a time when conflict between religions seems to be convincing an increasing number of people of the irreconcilable nature of religious beliefs, this research and these interviews help to debunk this view and keep the door open for cohabitation between people of different faiths even in those parts of the world that experience the most tense and violent conflicts in "the name of God."

Conflict resolution practitioners and experts are expanding their understanding of deeply rooted conflicts and ways to address and eliminate their causes. This research adds to the body of knowledge that is required to design more effective intervention tools. It also identifies a number of areas for further research that could assist us in better understanding the hurdles that stand in the way to achieving peace in conflict zones.

# Chapter 2: Literature Review

The research and analysis conducted in this dissertation begin with a literature review to better understand how humans create stereotypes and prejudices, and how prejudice develops in societies deeply divided along ethnic, linguistic, racial or religious lines. It then reviews how societies manage these divisions and how political and electoral systems are used to address them. The present research stands at the intersection of several fields in the social sciences and attempts to validate the findings of previous researchers while offering insights into ways conflict resolution experts can use the findings to strengthen analysis of deeply rooted conflicts and potential interventions.

For years conflict resolution scholars have tried to understand what sustains conflicts in deeply divided societies and propose ways they could help citizens, politicians and practitioners address these conflicts. Several theories have been developed as a result, including Burton's *Basic Human Needs* theory (Burton, 1990), Sandole's *Three Pillars* (Sandole & Van der Merwe, 1993), *Social Identity* (Tajfel, 1981), *Social Exchange* (Emerson, 1976) and *Enemy Systems* (Volkan et al., 1990) to name a few.

A body of research also began to emerge at the beginning of the twentieth century attempting to understand the phenomena of prejudice, xenophobia and discrimination. This field of research grew considerably as a result of the atrocities of World War II, and later, the Civil Rights movement, that brought (or forced) considerable changes to race relations in the United States and beyond. Leading theories that emerged from the research were rooted in cultural or cognitive interpretations of the phenomena of stereotyping (Jones, 1986, pp. 279-314).

During the last two decades at the international level, independence movements, intra-state conflicts, democratic transitions and political reforms have all led to a greater focus on the role of electoral processes and political parties. Conflicts triggered by deep internal divisions have grown in number and become a source of concern for international leaders, political scientists, conflict resolution practitioners and development experts. As a result greater attention has been given to how states can design constitutions, electoral frameworks and political party laws that reduce internal divisions that may lead to political violence and conflict.

This research attempts to understand how stereotypes and prejudice develop in societies, and more specifically, religiously divided societies. It looks at what transforms acquired stereotypes into prejudice and discrimination in these contexts. Finally, it attempts to gauge the impact political alliances can have on prejudice and discrimination among supporters of the parties in alliance.

Societies where fear of the *other* and prejudice runs deep tend to experience violent conflicts that often take generations to address. The Swedish based, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) defines a "Deep-Rooted Conflict" as a "Conflict, originating largely within states, which combines two powerful elements: potent identity-based factors, based on differences in race, religion, culture, language and so on, with perceived imbalance in the distribution of economic, political and social resources." The characteristics they attribute to such conflicts are "complex, persistent, and intractable; much less amenable to compromise, negotiation or trade-off; rapidly able to diffuse beyond the boundaries of the particular state." Such conflicts include Afghanistan, Algeria, Burma, Indonesia (East Timor), Israel and Palestine, Iraq, Lebanon, Northern Ireland, Russia (Chechnya), Rwanda, Sri Lanka and Sudan among others (SIPRI, 1997).

In many of these conflicts people harbor feelings of distrust and resentment that cause repeated tensions and violence. These societal divisions are rooted in a perception of the *other* that is competitive, negative and confrontational. Culture, education and political influences contribute greatly to human's negative images of the *other* being passed from one generation to the next. Stereotyping, as will be discussed, is one of the first steps in defining and understanding who is the *other*. A number of factors lead people to transform these stereotypes into prejudice that, in turn, lead them to take actions that are aimed at discriminating and often hurting the *other*.

What follows is a review of literature on stereotyping[6] and prejudice, including definitions of these terms, and an outline of various perspectives of thought on about each concept. It includes research that connects the two concepts. I then describe how social, political and conflict resolution researchers and practitioners have proposed and acted to reduce and overcome prejudice. This is followed by a review of the role of political parties in post-conflict environments and how electoral systems are used to address conflict in deeply divided societies. Finally, a short review is presented of Lebanon's political party landscape as it pertains to this research, with a focus on the Lebanese Forces and the Future Movement. Lebanon is the location of the research project that is outlined in Chapter Three.

### 2.1. Stereotyping and Prejudice: Definitions

The word stereotype finds its roots in two Greek words "*stereos*" meaning "solid" and "*typos*" meaning "a model." (Schneider, 2004, p. 8) The initial meaning for stereotype in English refers to a metal plate used for printing. This meaning explains our modern understanding of stereotyping as consisting of labeling things or fellow humans with the same repetitive and rigid characteristics (Allport, 1979, pp. 20-27). Definitions of stereotyping abound in the scholarly literature, and while scholars interpret the meaning of the word stereotype differently, the definition proposed by sociologist David

[6] Stereotyping is broadly described by scholars from this school of thought as a cognitive mechanism widely used by humans in the process of labeling, differentiating and often discriminating between things and between people. Studying stereotyping and prejudice can better help us understand discrimination and its unfortunate consequences in deeply divided societies.

Schneider seems to capture the essence of most mainstream definitions. That definition is "stereotypes are qualities perceived to be associated with particular groups or categories of people." The definition does not depict stereotypes in a negative light, as do some other definitions reviewed. According to Schneider, the only assumption it makes is the fact that stereotypes are an association between categories and qualities (Schneider, 2004, p. 24).

The word prejudice, on the other hand, comes from the Latin word *praejudicium* which means "a preliminary hearing of presumptions". In English, the meaning of this word tends to have negative connotations despite its positive use in certain contexts. Schneider defines prejudice as "the set of affective reactions we have toward people as a function of their category memberships" (Schneider, 2004, p. 24.). Once individuals develop prejudices, when they interact with the object of their prejudice, the relationship is likely to suffer from this negative perspective. As a result, feelings of prejudice can impact the way we interact with those we are prejudiced towards. People can control their behaviors and not translate them into active discrimination or violent acts, but this sadly is not always the case—as was witnessed in the Lebanese war that took place between 1975 and 1990.

## 2.2 Stereotypes and Prejudice: What is the Link?

The literature on stereotypes and stereotyping is extensive and dates back to the 1920s according to most scholars. As noted earlier, mainstream scholars have opted for an all-encompassing definition that attributes both positive and negative characteristics to stereotypes and stereotyping. These definitions have recognized the importance and the need for humans to use stereotyping in life to make sense of their environment and be able to predict events and persons' behaviors. Stereotyping can also help individuals make quick decisions aimed at their physical survival. Scholars emphasize, however, the often inaccurate and biased nature of stereotypes and the ways they are manipulated in political life (Brewer, 1988, 1996; Devine, 1989; Fiske & Neuberg, 1990; and, Jones, 1997).

During the 1930s, several researchers suggested that stereotypes were the product of culture and that individuals drew on their culture to understand members of other cultural groups (Brewer, 1988, 1996; Devine, 1989; Fiske & Neuberg, 1990; and, Jones, 1997). This changed however with the publication of *The Authoritarian Personality* by Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswik, Levinson and Sanford in 1950. From this point onward, scholars would regard stereotypes as the product of "prejudiced attitudes" and not solely attributable to the culture. The researchers during this time became convinced that stereotypes represented "major pathologies of social cognitions" and were "relatively impervious to empirical disconfirmation." (Schneider, 2004, p. 10).

Gordon Allport's book *The Nature of Prejudice* (1954) introduced the concept of the "prejudiced personality". He discusses the connection between stereotype and prejudice. Allport explains that humans would normally create categories to understand the world and use these categorizations as ways of stereotyping information and processing it. Allport also distinguishes between prejudiced and unprejudiced individuals. Prejudiced individuals stereotype in a rigid way without being critical of their categorizations and generalizations. Meanwhile, non-prejudiced individuals are more careful in how they stereotype and how they use their categorizations, understanding the dangers of blanket generalizations and a lack of critical thinking.

According to Brigham, Druckman, and Schneider, among others, the study of stereotypes was re-energized with the development of the social cognition perspective that began to gain increasing support in the late 1970s and 1980s (Druckman, 1994, pp. 43-68.). This lead to a focus on the process through which stereotyping was learned rather than the simple study of stereotype content, as had been the case until then (Hamilton & Sherman 1994; Stangor & Lang 1994).

### 2.3 Prejudice, Group Belonging and Politics

Researchers have noticed that individuals behave differently in groups than they do when they are by themselves. This has had direct consequences on the study of group behaviors in conflict situations. This section describes how groups impact individuals'

stereotypes and prejudices. This review will help us better understand how political parties, which act like groups, affect individual behavior.

Groups adopt stereotypes through their cultural references, and also develop prejudices in circumstances of high stress and fear such as political unrest or wars (W. Stephan & G. Stephan, 2000). This often leads individuals to follow groups or political parties, that can be compared to groups, with the goal of protecting their interests at any cost. In return, followers are less willing to question their leaders, even if they perceive the leaders to be committing mistakes.

Individuals belonging to groups develop what is commonly known as feelings of "ethnocentrism" by favoring one's group at the expense of other groups. This feeling can often develop into enmity for members of other groups. Anyone who does not belong to the group is perceived as different and a threat. In conflict situations, the *other* is demonized and depicted as the enemy. An elaborate narrative develops, as will be seen later, on how the *other* has historically been bad, violent, different, or less than human.

This dynamic is part of the tensions that exist between political parties representing different religious communities in a post-conflict environment and that is manipulated by political leaders, often for personal gain. This feeling of "ethnocentrism" does not always lead to violence. Research indicates that humans tend naturally to favor

groups they belong to in contrast to groups they do not belong to.[7] The research is not very clear as to what motivates individuals to behave in this manner, however. One group of researchers associates this behavior with the way humans make decisions through stereotyping. Such a group does not necessarily see stereotyping as negative, because they agree that humans have to stereotype in order to simplify the world they live in and be better able to make decisions (McCarty, Yzerbyt, & Spears, 2002).

A second group of researchers is of the belief that feelings of belonging, and of superiority gained by belonging, are important psychological needs, and a feeling of happiness can follow when people belong to a group or organization and use stereotyping as a way to differentiate themselves (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Schaller & Maass, 1989). Another group believes that stereotypes and prejudice are used by dominant groups to maintain the status quo between dominating and dominated groups (Tajfel, 1981). These different interpretations of group behavior give us insight into how political party leaders and their followers may behave in different circumstances.

### 2.4 Ways to Address Stereotyping and Prejudice

Social scientists, psychologists and students of conflict resolution have identified a number of ways to overcome stereotyping and prejudice between individuals and groups. The approaches can be grouped under nine different headings described below:

[7] For a more detailed discussion of prejudice see J. G. Ponterotto, 1991; Ponterotto and P. B. Pedersen, 1993; and F. E. Aboud, 1997.

1- *Equal Status Contact:* Contact theory emerged in the middle of the 20th century as a way to address prejudice. Followers of this theory believe that the lack of information and disinformation through culture, the media and other means lead people to acquire the prejudiced beliefs. Regular contact between individuals is a way to break preconceived notions of the *other* and overcome a lack of knowledge. However, research on Contact Theory showed that only under certain circumstances did contact really help reduce prejudice and not increase it. Allport confirms that "equal status" contact between "majority groups" and "minorities groups" does work especially if reinforced by the laws and rules of a society (Allport, 1954; Rothbart & John, 1985 ).

2- *Role reversal/empathy/understanding:* Role playing and role reversal require introspection and empathy.[8] Conflict resolution techniques that emphasize role play to overcome problems generated by stereotyping and prejudice are concerned with helping the parties in conflict better understand the other party's perspectives. Parties in conflict often associate actions taken by the party with intent to hurt the other, thus reinforcing the feeling of being the object of stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination. Role reversal helps parties acquire a better understanding of what motivates the opposing party while possibly gaining empathy for that party as knowledge of the party's circumstances improve. These

[8] For an interesting discussion of role play and the need and benefit of understanding the opposing perspective see Stone, D., Patton, B. & Heen, S. (1999). *Difficult conversations: How to discuss what matters most.* New York: Viking Penguin.

outcomes are obviously not guaranteed. Nevertheless, feelings of threat to one's identity are often better understood in role play and role reversals (Donohue & Kolt 1992; Gobey 1996; Kingsley, Isenhart & Spangle 2000). This technique is time consuming and at times difficult to implement but is often a good way to bring parties in conflict to understand and respect the other's perspective while restoring some level of humanity to the other party.

3- *Superordinate goal:* According to research conducted by Muzaher Sherif between 1949 and 1954, "When groups in a state of conflict are brought into contact under conditions embodying superordinate goals, which are compelling but cannot be achieved by the efforts of one group alone, they will tend to co-operate toward the common goals." (Sherif, 1958, p. 355). As such, "co-operation between groups, necessitated by a series of situations embodying superordinate goals, will have a cumulative effect in the direction of reducing existing conflict between groups." (Sherif, p. 355) More generally, activities involving superordinate goals have had the effect of reducing friction between groups and negative stereotypes toward the other group.

4- *Knowledge/Education:* According to the research conducted, increasing the level of education among students tends to increase their tolerance for difference (Grace, 1954; Gabennesch, 1972; Hess, 2002; Avery, 2002;). Studies have shown that the more education young people receive, the more likely they are to be

tolerant of diversity. These findings are important in that they also imply that the more citizens are educated the more able they are to cope and comprehend difference while not feeling hostage to stereotypes and preconceived notions of what a problem or conflict might be.

5- *External Event/Common Fate/Common-enemy:* External events that are of a magnitude to require more than one party engaged in a conflict to resolve them tends to force parties in conflict to learn to work together. Such a situation is common when natural disasters happen or a common-enemy emerges. An earthquake or famine, for example, can bring closer together groups or countries that are in conflict or parties that consider each other enemies. In some cases however such external events may have a divisive impact (Sherif et al., 1961). While suppressing prejudice and other forms of hatred and doubt in the other party, such events and enemies do not necessarily allow for a resolution of the issues that may be causing or prolonging the conflict. These are often suppressed and reemerge at a later time. Working side-by-side over a period of time can nevertheless provide an opportunity for learning about the other and possibly building a long term positive relationship between the parties as is shown in other points.

6- *Supranational Identity:* Some social identity theorists and conflict resolution experts have argued that imposing a supranational identity on groups that have

experienced conflict can help the groups overcome their fear of each other and help them reduce stereotyping and prejudice (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) For example the creation of a united Europe has been proposed for centuries – starting with Jean Jacques Rousseau – as a way to overcome the centuries old conflicts among European countries (Smith, 1992).

7- *Normative or Structural Changes:* Relations between parties can change normatively or structurally. Normative changes tend to affect the rules and culture that dominate a group and its relationships with others, while structural changes affect the type of relationship that exists between parties. Such changes can have a profound and lasting impact on how parties perceive each other. Normative changes can help make relations between groups fairer and less confrontational. Such normative changes can also seep into a formerly oppressive culture. Structural changes can help reduce prejudice over time as increased contact resulting from such changes leads to greater knowledge of the other and ultimately greater respect of the other. Changes in economic conditions, for example, can have an important impact on structural relations between people and can change power dynamics between groups in conflict. Normative and structural changes over time can accompany the evolution of ethnic, racial, religious and other types of relations.[9]

[9] For an essay on the subject see Jonathan H. Turner and Royce Singleton, Jr. "A Theory of Ethnic Oppression: Toward a Reintegration of Cultural and Structural Concepts in Ethnic Relations Theory" *Social Forces*, Vol. 56, No. 4. (Jun., 1978), pp. 1001-1018.

8- *Complexity/Simplicity:* The complexity or simplicity of relations between parties can have a significant impact on how they perceive each other and whether or not they demonstrate prejudiced behavior toward one another. Relations between parties can grow more or less complex and information about the other increases or decreases as a result. By highlighting individual traits, emphasizing one's belonging to different groups and showing how different people share common features it becomes easier to break down stereotyping and prejudice. Distant and less complex relations between parties have been seen to help individuals stereotype and engage in prejudiced behavior. More complex relations that require greater interaction and knowledge of the other can help establish greater respect among parties. This school of thought is not without its critics. There is a debate in the literature about the process of learning about the other and establishing more complex relationships. Some argue that a certain predisposition and openness must exist for complex relations to be effective. The involvement of outside persons to clarify and debunk untrue stereotypes by enhancing and enriching communication helps in this case reduce prejudice (Jones, 1997, pp. 297-336).

9- *Peripheral/Central Belief:* Such a concept flows from cognitive psychology and is often discussed in Social Identity Theory. Humans are prejudiced towards others based on what they observe or think they observe in them. Such observations are tested against a set of beliefs/world views that enables parties to determine if

prejudice is necessary. One argument of the World View approach is that the more central a belief to a party the harder it is to change that belief. Thus the prejudices of individuals that fear the *other* because of differences that are very central to their belief system are more difficult to address (Laszlo, Masulli, Artigiani, & Csányi1993; Mallmann & Nudler, 1986). The more peripheral such a belief, the easier it is to overcome. Changing a party's beliefs, if they are central to their self-perception and world vision, is a slow and painstaking process and is often doomed to failure.[10]

After describing possible techniques to reduce prejudice among groups, the next section reviews how political parties and political alliances have been used at times to heal divisions, reduce conflict and stabilize political processes in post-conflict situations.

**2.5 Political Parties and Conflict Resolution**

Political parties play an important role in all democracies. Political scientist Benjamin Reilly describes them as: "essential components of representative democracy." (Reilly & Nordlund, 2008, p. 3) He adds that "[b]y organizing voters, aggregating and articulating interests, crafting policy alternatives and providing the basis for coordinated electoral and legislative activity, well-functioning political parties are central not just to

[10] For an interesting discussion of how prejudice manifests itself differently in the American South vs. the North depending on the issue and its centrality to people's lives in the 1960s see Russell Middleton "Regional Differences in Prejudice." *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 41, No. 1. (Feb., 1976), pp. 94-117.

representative government but also to the process of democratic development in transitional democracies" (Reilly & Nordlund, 2008, p. 3).

There is a growing literature on the role of political parties in conflict and post-conflict countries. This literature looks at a variety of issues including the role constitutional frameworks, election systems and political party laws help address deep divisions that stem from ethnic, linguistic, racial, regional or religious differences among groups in the same country (Bogaards, 2008; Carothers, 2006; Jarstad & Sisk, 2008; Walter, 2002). This literature has emerged in part as a result of the process of state building that has been at the heart of the modern international system. Since the creation of the United Nations, the wave of independence of new states and the collapse of the Soviet Union, international organizations such as the United Nations, the World Bank and numerous international development organizations have focused on assisting states transition to democracy and address inter- and intra-state conflicts. Unfortunately, for many countries state creation has been a process fraught with political tensions and the redrawing of community boundaries and borders triggering public unrest and conflicts, especially in states where this was done without taking existing societal divisions into account or by imposing government systems that favored one group at the expense of another often through a "winner-takes all" electoral system (Kadima 2008, p. 202).

In Rwanda for example the legacy of colonial rule lead to the favoring of the Tutsis at the expense of the Hutus which ultimately led to divisions and grievances that

were not addressed and left people frustrated and ready to take revenge. In Lebanon, the preferred status of Christians and the separation of Mount Lebanon from Syria has been a cause of a continuing conflict. Syria has only agreed to officially recognize Lebanon by opening an embassy in Lebanon on October 14, 2008 (Kimbrell, 2008).

Political systems in new states have evolved differently depending on several factors which include history, culture, economics and regional specificities. This evolution also has varied based on the political ideology adopted which resulted, as Denis Kadima points out, in single-party systems, two-party systems, electoral alliances, party coalitions, power sharing arrangements, and even, in extreme cases, in the banning of political parties all together.

Political systems have been engineered not with the intent to reduce divisions through various means, but often to entrench the privileges of one group. When politicians have been interested in reducing conflict, the biggest challenge has been to find the right mix of changes in the constitutional, election and political systems to ensure stability as well as economic prosperity. Kadima identifies different mechanisms used to reduce the impact of societal divisions, including imposing election thresholds (a minimum of votes needed to gain a seat in parliament), banning ethnic parties (not allowing political parties that only draw on one ethnic, linguistic, racial or religious group to run candidates), instituting a distribution requirement (ensuring that the parties have offices in different geographic regions of a country), requiring parties to be of national

scope (parties must have offices in a minimum number of regions around the country), requiring the collection of signatures (to ensure that parties can collect voter signatures in all parts of the country to be allowed to run for national seats), manipulating a monetary fee payment (raise or lower the fee paid to register in order to eliminate or give access to certain parties such as minorities), creating special seats (reserving certain seats for minorities) and instituting compensatory seats (Kadima, 2008, p. 208).

Despite the good will of many leaders, more often than not political party leaders use electoral alliances and coalitions solely to access power and maintain a dominant position. Alliances become a vehicle to control a coalition of political parties rather than to engage in a true common political vision and project.

Lebanon offers a good example of a society, deeply divided along religious lines, that has seen political alliances across religious lines. Following is a description of political parties in Lebanon with an emphasis on the two parties that are studied in this research, namely the Lebanese Forces and the Future Movement.

### 2.6 Political Parties in Lebanon

Historically, Lebanon's mountains have been a refuge for prosecuted religious minorities. Following centuries of Ottoman rule and years of French mandate, Lebanon was carved out of Syria as a home for the region's Christians and other minorities. Under

French mandate, the Maronite Christians (Eastern Catholics) enjoyed preferential treatment that enhanced their political standing and clout in the country (Harris, 2006, p. 41).

Lebanon's constitution dates back to 1923. When Lebanon got its independence from France in 1943, Lebanese reached an inter-confessional arrangement called the "National Pact" in which they allocated political seats to each confessional group according to a set formula. Accordingly, the president would be a Maronite Christian, the prime minister a Sunni Muslim, and the speaker of the house a Shi'a Muslim. Other confessional groups would be allocated positions in the cabinet and government bureaucracy.

With the birth of Israel, a new dynamic emerged. By 1948 over 450,000 Palestinians had fled the newly created state of Israel and taken refuge in camps all over Lebanon. The arming of the Palestinians, as a result of the Cairo Accords in 1969 and the relocation of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), an armed militia, from Jordan to Lebanon in 1970, intensified the Lebanese internal divide and lead the country into a civil war. Between 1975 and 1990 Lebanon experienced the most deadly war since its independence killing over 145,000 Lebanese and displacing over 900,000 (Khalaf, 2002, pp. 219-221; Labaki, 1993). What started as a regional conflict between Israel and the Palestinians became a civil war among Lebanese and between Lebanon and others.

During this conflict, a majority of Christians found themselves backing political parties that opposed the armed presence in Lebanon of Palestinians – who were largely Sunni Muslim. This is because the arming of Palestinians inside Lebanon was perceived as a threat to Lebanese sovereignty and the historical dominance of Christians in the country's political affairs. In response, right wing political parties increasingly looked to Israel as an ally against the Palestinians (Khalaf, 2002).

The Lebanese Sunni Muslim community, however, was more welcoming of the Palestinians, whom they considered allies in a fight for greater power and recognition inside the Lebanese political system (Makdisi & Sadaka, 2003). Because the majority of Palestinian refugees were Sunni Muslims, most of Lebanon's confessional groups feared being outnumbered by the Sunnis and opposed the naturalization of Palestinian refugees. This refusal exacerbated the tensions between Lebanese and the Palestinians and further fanned the flames of conflict in Lebanon.

In 1989 the Taef agreement was signed in Saudi Arabia to put an end to the armed conflict. It was signed by a majority of Lebanese political factions and the support of Syria, Saudi Arabia, the United States and other international powers. Taef was to begin the gradual process of disarmament of all militias and to start political normalization. Yet the Syrians—who had been invited by the Lebanese Government in 1976—delayed their pull out and implementation of the Taef agreement for geo-strategic reasons and economic interests in controlling Lebanon. Following the assassination of Prime

Minister Rafic Hariri in February 2005, however, large street demonstrations, which were supported by the international community, forced Syrian troops out. Soon after the Syrian forces pull out, general elections were held in May-June 2005 (Harris, 2006, pp. 298-318).

Below is a description of two political parties studied in this research to illustrate the impact political parties have on prejudice when forming inter-confessional alliances.

### 2.7 The Lebanese Forces

Figure 2.1: Lebanese Forces party flag[11]

The Lebanese Forces (LF) were founded in the late 1970s by several "resistance forces"[12] joining together under the leadership of Bashir Gemayel. These included the Al-Tanzeem Party, the Guardians of The Cedars, the National Liberal Party and the

[11] Based on information gathered from the Lebanese Forces Official Website www.lebanese-forces.org
[12] The "resistance forces" perceived the armed presence of Palestinians in Lebanon and their ambitions to gain greater control over the Lebanese Government as a direct threat to their influence and Christians' political power.

Phalanges. Many of these political parties perceived the army's inaction in the face of rising Palestinian attacks on right wing Christian organizations, leaders and civilians as a direct affront to Christian privileges in the country and Lebanese sovereignty.

Bashir Gemayel, son of the founder of the Phalangist party, is credited with organizing the institution of the LF that was, at first, a military force, but later grew to become a political party. Elected president of Lebanon in 1982, following the Israeli incursion into Lebanon, Gemayel was unable to serve his first term as he was assassinated on September 14, 1982. The LF are accused of collaborating with the Israeli army in conducting the Sabra and Shatila Palestinian refugee camps massacres in revenge for the killing of Gemayel (Harris. 2006, pp.174-177). Amin Gemayel, the brother of Bashir Gemayel, was elected president soon after his brother's death.

Following a period of internal turmoil and leadership infighting, Dr. Samir Geagea took the reigns of the LF on January 15, 1986. Geagea undertook the reform of the forces and the establishment of a tax collection system in Lebanon's Christian region as well as created a large network of social and health services. The LF also ran a public transportation network and several media outlets, including a television station, a radio station and a magazine. At its peak, the LF claimed upward of 30,000 fighters. While many in the Christian area enjoyed the services and protection offered by the LF, a majority of Christians remained unhappy with the weakness of the state over which they

had formerly exerted significant control, and the role that the LF played in the war. In recent years, the LF have described their mission as:

> Ensuring a sovereign, free, and secure Lebanon for all its citizens equally; Establishing a system of government whereas the superstructure (the government) is congruent with the infrastructure (the society) resulting in a fair, true and balanced political participation; Promoting a political system built on three basic principles: diversity, freedom to foster development and democracy representative of the diversity that exists in the Lebanese Society; Halting support to any ideology or movement that works directly or indirectly to joining Lebanon to another country; and, adopting a neutral foreign policy to provide for internal security and to allow for freedom to build foreign international relations.[13]

The signing of the Taef accords on October 24, 1989 by a majority of Lebanese political forces was to mark the beginning of the dismantling of all Lebanese militias, their transformation into political parties and the return of the country to a peaceful political life. As a result of this agreement the "Lebanese Forces Party" was created on September 10, 1990. This same year, the country was to witness another bloody episode.

The coming to power of General Michel Aoun in September 1988, following President Amine Gemayel declaring himself incapable of holding new elections, resulted in the general taking the reigns of power and soon after launching a "War of Liberation"

[13] Quoted from the website www.lebanese-forces.org. Retrieved on September 12, 2008.

against Syria which then occupied large parts of the country. This attempt at liberation did not succeed, but mobilized a majority of the Christian population in favor of the general.

Soon after the War of Liberation, a new war broke out pitting the Aounist faction of the Lebanese army against the Lebanese Forces. This fratricidal war ended with the entry of the Syrian troops in 1991 and their control of most Christian areas of Lebanon, which had until then remained free of foreign military presence. The Syrian military forced Aoun into exile and a few years later, in March 1994, disbanded the LF, confiscating its assets and imprisoning Geagea soon thereafter (Khalaf. 2002, pp. 297-303). The Syrian hegemony continued through 2005.

Following the assassination of Prime Minister Rafic Hariri in February 2005, massive demonstrations broke out pushing the Syrian troops out of Lebanon. New parliamentary elections were held in June of that year and the Lebanese Forces and the Future Movement formed an alliance. Soon after, Samir Geagea was released from jail. The LF party has since been rebuilding its political structure and presence around the country while coordinating its policies at the national level with its new political allies, chief among them the Future Movement.

## 2.8 The Future Movement (Party)[14]

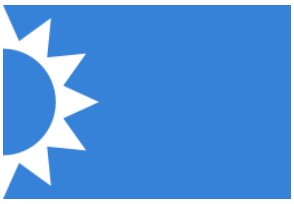

Figure 2.2: Future Movement party flag

The Future Movement owes its origins to Rafic Hariri, a wealthy Lebanese businessman born in Lebanon in 1944, who made his fortune in Saudi Arabia. Hariri began philanthropic work in Lebanon in the late 1970s when he established the Hariri Foundation. The Foundation provides social, health, cultural and children welfare services, but is most well known for its university scholarship program. Over 33,000 students from all communities in Lebanon have benefited from the Foundation's program. The Foundation has also established several schools and universities.

Hariri's first significant project introduced him to Lebanese politics when he initiated a rehabilitation project of Beirut's streets after the 1982 Israeli invasion. In 1984, Hariri was one of the participants at the Lausanne conferences whose goal was to

[14] This section draws on information from the Future Movement official website: www.futuremovement.org and Edited Volume (2006) *Lebanese Political Parties*, Edito International, Beirut, Lebanon, Volume 9.
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foster peace and political reconciliation between Lebanon's diverse confessional groups. Close to the Saudi regime and other regional and international powers, he also played a key role in the Taef negotiations that resulted in a peace agreement between most of Lebanon's political factions. Key provisions of the Taef agreement were incorporated into the Lebanese constitution in 1991.

Between 1992 and 2004 Hariri was Prime Minister for several terms. During his tenure as Prime Minister, Hariri strengthened the Future Movement which began to play an increasing role in the electoral process representing a majority of Sunni Muslims. In February 2005 Hariri was assassinated by a car bomb that targeted his motorcade. The investigation of his murder is still ongoing and an international tribunal was established to adjudicate the case.

During his lifetime, Hariri's business experience and interest enabled him to play a key role in the rebuilding of Lebanon's destroyed infrastructure, especially the airport, the telecommunication sector, and the road system. His most notable achievement, however, was rebuilding of the center of Beirut. While many approve of the rebuilding effort—which resuscitated Beirut after decades of destruction at the hands of different militias and foreign armies—many Lebanese accused Hariri of indebting the country and being involved in corrupt deals which involved the Syrian regime that controlled Lebanon at the time.

The Hariri government resigned in October 2004 following serious disagreements with the new Syrian leadership, headed by Bashar El-Asad, son of the late Hafez El-Asad. This was accompanied by mounting internal pressure to have Syrians leave Lebanon. The death of Hariri was a shock to all Lebanese and brought millions to the streets in an unprecedented civil disobedience movement that demanded the departure of Syrian troops from Lebanon after nearly three decades. This movement found international support, and under pressure from the Lebanese and the international community, Syrian troops left Lebanon.

The Hariri family was asked by the movement supporters, predominantly Sunni Muslims, to fill the political vacuum left by Rafic Hariri. Saad Hariri, his younger son, was designated by the family to lead the movement. In late 2007, the Future Movement officially became a political party. Since its existence, the Movement has been the leading force in the governing coalition. The party remains heavily supported by the Sunni Muslim community of Beirut, Saida, parts of the Beqaa, and to some extent, northern Lebanon.

## 2.9 Conclusion

This chapter reviewed the literature that addresses the theoretical and practical approaches used by researchers and practitioners to address prejudice and divisions in

deeply divided societies. It also provided a historical overview of two important Lebanese parties that allied across confessional lines.

When the history of the two political parties is placed in the context of the literature review, gaps can be identified in assessing the effectiveness of political alliances on prejudice among party followers. While the study of political party alliances is concerned with peaceful transitions or political stability in post conflict environments in many ways this concern remains focused on the electoral process and its impact on alliance building and ultimately conflict mitigation or resolution. More limited research has been done on the question of how party supporters react to political alliances and what elements influence their decision making process and relationship to the *other*.

The research design presented in the chapter three builds on the research that has already been conducted in this area and described earlier and attempts to seek answers to questions posed by previous research on inter-group relations and prejudice. This is done in the context of political parties which often tend to represent diverse groups and interests, and who's interaction are usually geared towards benefitting leaders and/or supporters.

# Chapter 3: Research Methodology

## 3.1 The Research

This research is an example of an enhanced case study, which consists of "viewing the case through the lens of an interpretive framework or particular concepts" (Druckman, 2005: 167). The case is an example of the application of these concepts. The key concepts in this study are the approaches to prejudice reduction at a micro and macro level, and their relationship.

Essential to any dissertation is a research design that allows the researcher to answer the research question posed. In so doing, it enables the researcher to contribute to the field of inquiry. This chapter outlines the research design used, and the challenges faced in formulating it, as the researcher tries to answer the question: Can political alliances contribute to reducing prejudice among party followers in countries with deeply rooted conflicts? The null hypothesis of this research is that alliances between political parties representing different confessional groups in countries with deeply rooted conflicts have no impact on existing prejudice among followers of these parties.

The research conducted to test the validity of this question looks at the response of *supporters* of two political parties in Lebanon representing predominantly different confessional groups who were at odds with each other during the 1975-1990 war. Specifically, what were the responses of the supporters when their leaders entered a political alliance preceding the 2005 legislative elections?

The two parties selected for this study are the Lebanese Forces (LF), lead by Samir Geagea, a predominantly Christian, Maronite (Eastern rite Catholic) party, and the Future Movement (FM), lead by Saad Hariri, son of the late Prime Minister Rafic Hariri. The FM draws its support primarily from the Sunni Muslim community. Historically, the Christian and Sunni, Muslim communities have cohabitated in different parts of Lebanon, but especially in some parts of Beirut. During the 1975-1990 war, however, the majority of individuals belonging to each group found themselves on opposing sides of the armed conflict, both politically and physically.

Following the assassination of Prime Minister Hariri and the pullout of the Syrian troops from Lebanon in 2005, the country organized its first parliamentary election free of foreign military occupation. The Lebanese Forces party and the Future Movement struck an alliance during the campaign period and once elected reached agreement with a governing coalition including the FM to form the government. Cross religious alliances were the product of political realignments inside the country, with ultimately the government coalition taking as its main political stand its position against any Syrian role

in internal Lebanese affairs, while the opposition coalition stood against western interference and in defense of the Syrian-Lebanese relations that had existed until the pull out. Parties that had fought each other politically and otherwise for years were suddenly joined by electoral alliances.

The research conducted over the past three years for this dissertation gauges the impact that the political alliance between the LF and the FM may have had on the way party supporters from the two groups perceive each other. The research begins with a retrospective look at the pre-existing level of prejudice that existed between the two communities before the alliance. It then studies whether or not the alliance has contributed to a change in the perception, stereotypes or prejudices that existed between the two groups prior to the alliance, and finally, it attempts to look at how voters from each group perceive the long term effects of this political alliance.

The research was conducted in close consultation with my doctoral committee and approval for all aspects of the research was granted from the Human Subject Review Bureau (HSRB). Every effort was made to evaluate progress on a regular basis. The research consisted of three complementary components that progressed in a successful linear pattern: a desk review of the literature on the subjects of prejudice, group dynamics, political alliances and political parties in Lebanon, a survey of 136 individuals who support the FM and LF and in-depth interviews of 20 individuals to help better understand the questionnaires and interpret them.

The research design took into account the best outcome possible given the operational constraints that existed. These constraints included the absence of previous research in this area in Lebanon, a volatile political environment (which made the research more complicated, as will be discussed in later sections), and limited resources which resulted in studying only the region of the capital and its suburbs instead of a nation-wide survey. However, more than a third of the Lebanese population lives in and around Beirut and the capital is the center of political activity for the country. These factors are more fully explained below.

### 3.2 A Research Framework

The framework developed for this study is based on two assumptions: a) political alliances contribute to changing perceptions among party supporters and b) political alliances' positive effects on the level of prejudice among supporters is the key element to anchoring party follower's changes in perception. This can change after an alliance has broken up due to various contextual/situational factors. Put differently, improvements of perception between party followers remain very fragile and vulnerable until the political alliance is formalized at the leadership level.

The following figure explains the changes relationships that result from formal political alliances. These occur in a chronological sequence from t – 2 to t + 1. The figure also suggests that conflict resolution interventions, such as problem solving

workshops, can strengthen relationships between a finite number of individuals from both sides of the conflict, such as party supporters or a select group of leaders. However, it is not until macro political agreements are reached that the relationships at the societal level are strengthened or, at least, stabilized.

The first time period (t – 2) is depicted in Figure 3.1. It describes a conflict environment. In that environment there is minimal communication between the parties, their leadership or their followers. Conflict resolution interventions tend to be at either or both the track two and leadership levels (light green dotted line). This work can be done by United Nations' representatives, specialized organizations, academics, or foreign statesmen and women.

The second time period (t – 1) is shown in Figure 3.2. It describes the contextual and/or leadership shift that pushes party supporters to change or improve their perceptions of the *other*. This is indicated by the dotted pink arrows that start moving supporters of Party (A) closer to supporters of Party (B), at least intellectually and emotionally. At this time, conflict resolution interventions can take place both at the leadership (first/second track) and the party level as indicated by the light green circles. Also, leaders' positions start moving towards each other as their interests and those of their communities begin to converge. The red and blue dotted squares that describe the interests of the leaders start to overlap and create a common space that is purple.

The third time period (t) is shown in Figure 3.3. It describes the formal creation of the alliance. At that time there is significant overlap of leadership interests shown by the purple dotted rectangle at the leadership level, but there also seems to be a strengthening and stabilization of the perception shift of party supporters as represented by the dotted purple rectangle around the two parties' basis. At this time conflict resolution interventions can take place both at the leadership and supporters' level.

The fourth time period (t + 1) is depicted in Figure 3.4. It describes a contextual or leadership shift that puts pressure on the alliance and starts weakening it. As leaders' interests start diverging, the purple common area, symbolizing their common interests disappears. Similarly, party supporters' views and perceptions deteriorate and they start growing apart as shown by the pink arrows changing direction. Party A and Party B supporters grow further apart. Non-prejudiced individuals who had built relationships across groups are put under pressure by other party supporters to break these relationships with the *other*. This is symbolized by the stretched dotted purple lines. At t+1 conflict resolution interventions can continue to take place at the leadership and supporters' level but they can become more difficult if tension escalates. These interventions are shown by the dotted light green circles.

Finally, if repeated tensions occur between the groups and their leaders the situation can escalate. As a result, there is a break in relations between leaders and among supporters. This feedback is often what happens in post-conflict countries where deeply

rooted problems have not been addressed in any meaningful way. The parties can over time go back to using violence against each other**.** Thus, there is an important role for conflict resolution interventions in the post-alliance period.

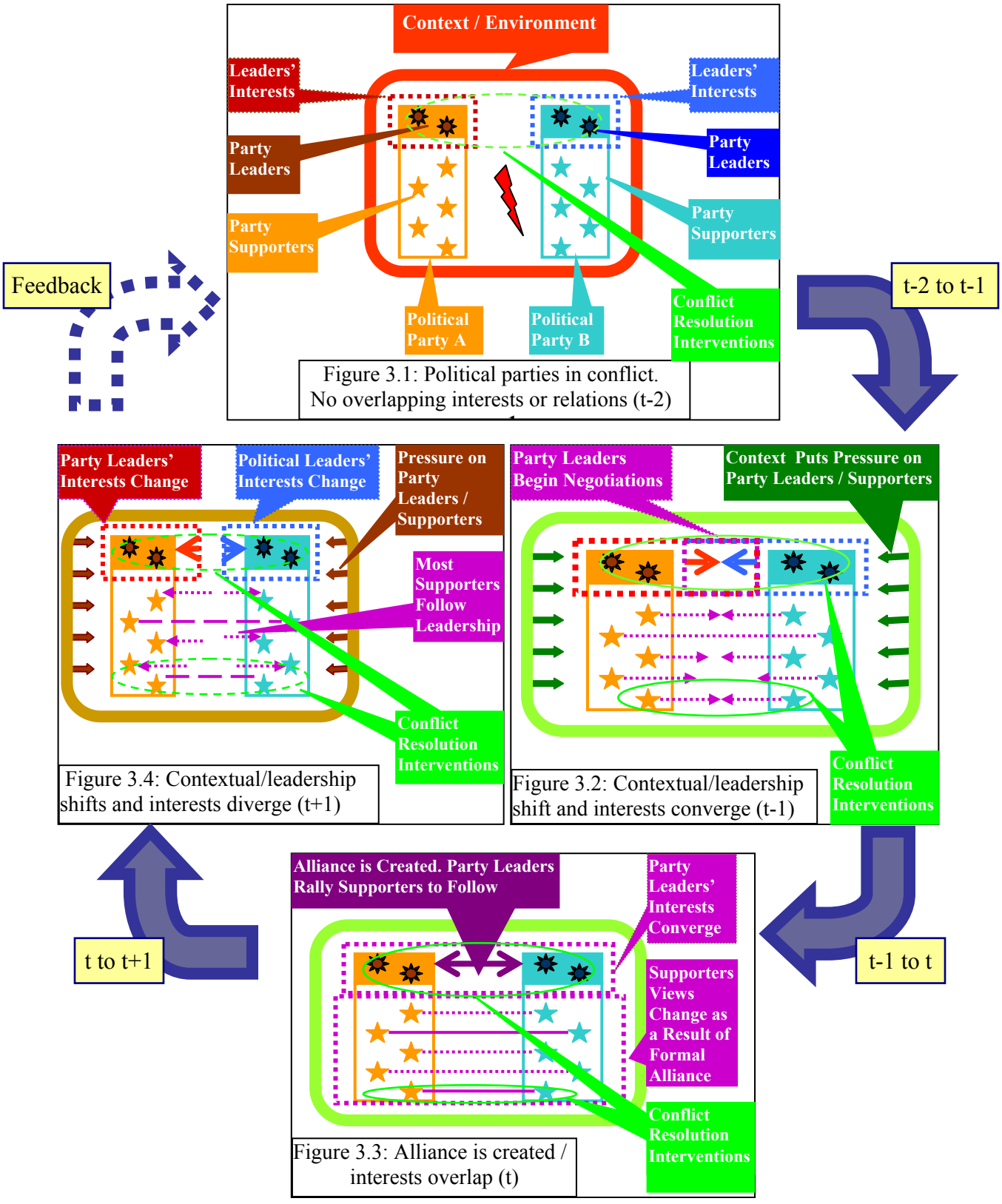


Figure 3.1: Political parties in conflict. No overlapping interests or relations (t-2)

Figure 3.4: Contextual/leadership shifts and interests diverge (t+1)

Figure 3.2: Contextual/leadership shift and interests converge (t-1)

Figure 3.3: Alliance is created / interests overlap (t)

### 3.3 Desk Review

A desk review was conducted to study the existing literature on stereotyping, prejudice, and methods used to date to overcome prejudice in post-conflict countries. Given the breadth of the field and the research question being asked, special attention was given to the techniques used to overcome prejudice and divisions through electoral alliances, coalitions and other means.

The desk review also included a study of the history of political parties in Lebanon, generally, with special attention to the two parties under consideration. A good understanding of the parties' history, positions and policies was essential to understanding their motivations to form the alliance and shape their publics' opinions. Many before would have considered such an alliance impossible. This desk review also looked at the relationship between Christians and Sunnis during the years of the war, focusing primarily on the dynamics between the political parties and their respective communities before the 2005 alliance.

### 3.4 Survey

A survey was administered to 136 Lebanese adults from Beirut and its suburbs - 68 Christians supportive of the Lebanese Forces party and 68 Sunni Muslims supportive of the Future Movement party, with equal number of women and men in each group. The

purpose of the survey was to better understand the impact of political alliances in deeply divided societies on the perceptions and prejudices of voters that support these alliances. The sample chosen can not be considered representative of the two communities nationwide, but draws on an important section of the population from each community. Beirut and its suburbs are home to over a third of Lebanon's population[15] and is the site where the most intense combat occurred during the 1975-1990 war. Beirut is also where most national political activity is concentrated.

The criteria for the areas chosen for the survey were to be predominantly Christian for the Christians and predominantly Sunni for the Sunnis to ensure that the answers reflect the opinion of individuals who have limited daily exposure to the members of the other group reducing the possibility of prejudice reduction through daily contact. As such, the survey targeted clusters of the population; it was not a random nationwide sample.

The areas chosen were of similar economic level, namely, moderate[16]. They were selected after consulting with individuals who had lived in or had a keen knowledge of the makeup of these areas, as well as party members representing these areas and were

[15] According to the Lebanese government's Central Administration of Statistics (CAS) in 2007 the population of Lebanon was estimated 3.75 million people. The last official population census dates back to 1932. Beirut's population represented nearly 10 percent of the total population. Beirut and its suburbs represent over 30 percent of the country's population. Statistical Year Book 2007. Retrieved from http://www.cas.gov.lb/Newsrep_en.asp

[16] Close to 70 percent of Lebanese households earn less then $1000 US per month. Statistical Year Book 2007. Retrieved from http://www.cas.gov.lb/Newsrep_en.asp

willing to share their insights on the make-up of each region. Unfortunately, Lebanon does not produce public census information that is readily available for research purposes. The last official population census dates back to 1932. Since then, political party leaders have been unable to agree on holding a new census to avoid having to reopen discussions regarding the "national pact" reached in 1943 which divides political seats among religious groups based on pre-set formulas.

Interviews were conducted for the Lebanese Forces in Ain el-Remmaneh/Chiyah, Furn el-Shebbak and the Hotel Dieu areas. Interviews for the Future Movement were conducted in the Hamad and Houry neighborhoods in the Tarik El Jdideh area, and the Zarif area. These areas are pointed out in the map of Beirut below.

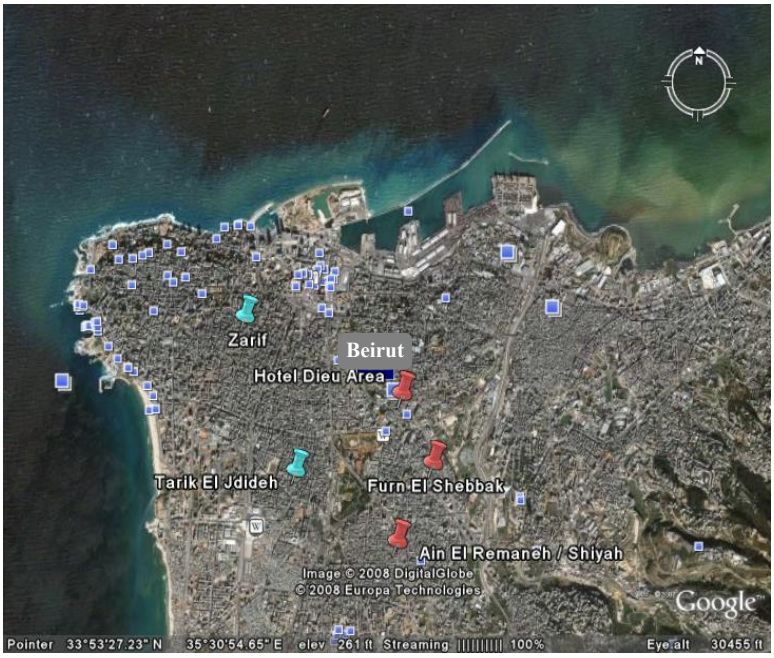


Figure 3.5: Map of Beirut and neighborhoods where the survey was conducted. Blue for FM supporters and red for LF supporters.[17]

### 3.4.1 The Questionnaire

The survey questionnaire was divided into two parts. The first consisted of seven questions and covered the period before the assassination of Prime Minster Hariri in February 2005; the second consisted of 19 questions covering the period after the assassination. The first part aimed to capture the thinking and feelings of people from both groups before the alliance emerged. Given the lack of such data from other sources in the country, this first part of the survey was designed to be used as a baseline

[17] Source Google Earth. October 26, 2008.

assessment for comparison, with the second part of the survey primarily geared towards understanding interviewees' perceptions, stereotypes, and prejudices regarding the political alliance, including the reasons they provide for its existence and its long-term impact.

A draft of the survey was approved for administration by the dissertation committee and the Human Subjects Research Bureau (HSRB) and can be found in Appendix A. The conduct of the survey began in July 2007 and ended in February 2008. Prior to beginning the survey, pre-tests were conducted to test the ability of interviewees to understand the questions and to make sure that the answers provided were adequate to understand how political alliances affect prejudice among voters. A more detailed description of the pre-test process is given below.

### 3.4.2 Pre-Test

In order to ensure that recipients of the survey could understand what was being asked, the English version (Appendix A) was translated into Arabic (Appendix B) and tested with six interviewees, three from each community. Several aspects of the survey were adjusted based on respondents feedback, namely the way certain questions were phrased and the historical context was presented. In addition, certain words were substituted to clarify some of the questions. Two questions were added to the survey as a

result of the pre-test, and certain multiple choice answers were modified to ensure clearer distinctions between respondents' answers.

### 3.4.3 Random Interviewee Selection Process

To create a random selection of interviewees in each area, a selection plan was developed and discussed with the dissertation committee. Given that the city of Beirut consists primarily of apartment buildings, it was agreed that ten interviewees would be chosen from each street from the areas listed above. This process would continue until the researcher obtained the desired number of individuals in each community.

The criteria used in selecting a particular building, floor and apartment to obtain the data included the following. In each block a coin was tossed to decide whether to start on the left or right side of the street. A randomized numbering system was used to decide which building to select in each block.[18] A second toss of the coin determined whether to interview people in that building on even- or odd-numbered floors. Finally, a third toss of the coin determined whether or not to interview people on the left side or right side of the stairway or elevator. This approach proved to be effective and well suited to the type of buildings that exist in the selected areas. However, the initial plan using a random numbering system that allocated a number to apartments in each street

[18] The research randomizer software used can be found at www.randomizer.org and is recognized by leading associations and research communities. A set of randomized numbers was developed for each bloc.

proved impractical due to the variability in accessibility and number of apartments in each building.

### 3.4.4 Data Compilation and Analysis

The statistical software SPSS (originally known as the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) was used to code and analyze the data. A total of 136 surveys were coded and analyzed. Correlation coefficients were calculated for different combinations of questions. Cross tabs were calculated using Chi-Square testing for significant results. Graphs and tables showing the outcomes were also generated as needed. The detailed research results and analysis are presented in Chapter Four.

## 3.5 In-depth Interviews

The survey was followed by a series of 20 in-depth interviews with 10 representatives from each group. Gender balance was respected in these interviews as well. The in-depth interviews consisted of five questions that built on the survey findings and further probed into what triggered the alliance between the two groups, why changes in the levels of prejudice may have occurred and whether or not these changes would survive the alliance. A copy of the English questionnaire can be found in Appendix C and a copy of the Arabic questionnaire can be found in Appendix D.

These interviews, unlike the survey, covered a broader range of individuals with more varied socio-economic backgrounds. The reason for this was an interest in better understanding the answers provided by interviewees during the survey and how they may be perceived or explained by individuals from different sectors of the community. The open-ended nature of the questions allowed participants to expand on their feelings and beliefs while often analyzing how they relate to individuals that do not support the existing coalition.

### 3.6 Research Challenges

Ideally, this research would have been conducted at a national level relying on a statistically representative sample. Given time and resource limitations, the study focused on only two of the more than 10 well recognized political parties that exist in Lebanon,[19] and it was limited to the geographical area of greater Beirut. In an attempt to control for external factors, individuals chosen for the interviews were from similar socio-economic backgrounds and from areas that were predominantly either Christian or Sunni Muslim. It was also important the majority of persons interviewed had limited daily contact with members of the other community.

[19] Lebanon counts several important political parties. The most important political parties tend to draw a support base from one of Lebanon's religious communities, namely: Amal and Hezbollah-Islamic Resistance Party from the Shi'a community; Future Movement from the Sunni Muslim community, Kataeb Party, Lebanese Forces, Free Patriotic Movement, National Liberal Party and Marada Party from the Christian communities, Progressive Socialist Party and Lebanese Democratic Party from the Druze community; the Tashnak Party and the Hunchak parties for the Armenian-Lebanese community; and, the Syrian Socialist Nationalist Party and the Lebanese Communist Party form diverse religious communities.

A challenge to the study was the limited data available on the degree of stereotyping and prejudice that existed between the two communities as it pertains to this study prior to the alliance formed in 2005. As such, the dissertation committee suggested that I include seven questions that would try to glean individual perceptions and prejudices towards those of the other political tendency prior to the parties' alliance. Unfortunately, the lack of a control group in the design of the research did not allow a comparison between individuals who supported the alliance and others from the same political tendency who did not. Given that political parties, especially in Lebanon, have a considerable influence on their voter base, and that party defections have not been a common phenomenon, it would have been difficult to identify individuals in either group that would have opposed the alliance yet continued to support the party.

Given the intermittent political violence in Beirut and around the country, conducting the survey was, at times, a significant challenge. For example, the feelings of insecurity led certain party supporters to be suspicious of the interview exercise. Similarly, fewer women were willing to be individually interviewed by a male interviewer. This situation required the help of a female interviewer at the stage of the survey data collection.

It is difficult to gauge the impact of the tense political environment on the responses of interviewees over a six month period. This is discussed at greater length in

Chapter Four, including thoughts about the overall research process in the midst of violent conflict.

# Chapter 4: Research Findings and Analysis

This chapter presents the data gathered from the research on the impact of political alliances among supporters of two of the main political parties in Lebanon. The data result from surveys of 136 individuals divided by political affiliation, sect and gender. In addition, 20 in-depth interviews were conducted to more fully explain the survey results.

The data and analysis are divided into three sections. The first section presents general demographic information relating to the 136 individuals who completed the surveys. The second section begins with an analysis of the pre-alliance period. All interviewees were asked seven questions relating to the pre-alliance, and to recall how the relationship between the communities and the political parties was prior to the alliance. This analysis is followed by a review of the post-alliance environment as captured by the survey's 19 questions. Then, a comparison of pre- and post-alliance attitudes and perceptions is conducted. The final section of this chapter presents the findings of the 20 in-depth interviews conducted and relates these findings to the survey results and analysis. The information collected is presented separately for each political party. This last section allows us to better understand some of the reasons behind the survey results,

the short term and long term impact of the alliance, and the perspective of interviewees on the sustainability of the alliance's impact.

### 4.1 Section I: General Demographic Data

As stated earlier, the total number of individuals interviewed for the survey was 136. Sixty-eight were interviewed from each community with an equal female to male ratio. The age breakdown among the interviewees is as follows:

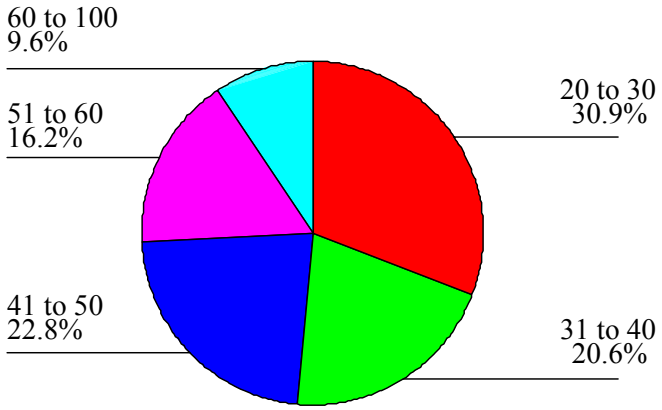


Figure 4.1: Age of interviewees

Interviewees who considered themselves party members represent 38.2 percent of all interviewees (55.9 percent of the LF and 20.6 percent of the FM), while 61.8 percent of interviewees (44.1 percent of the LF and 79.4 percent of the FM) did not classify themselves as party members. Party members are defined for this purpose as card holding party members or individuals who have applied to be a party member. Given that the Future Movement became a political party officially in late 2007, several individuals interviewed explained that they were part of the party and that they had applied to join, but had not been granted an official document that shows their membership yet.

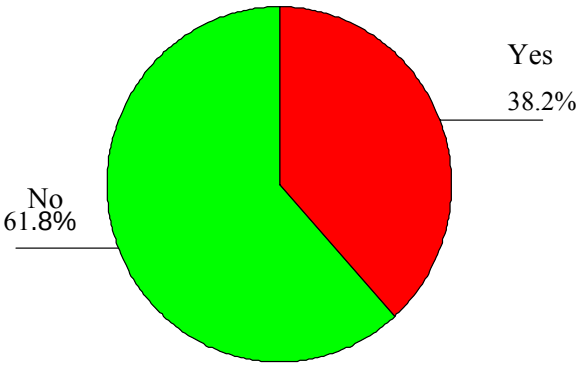


Figure 4.2: Declared party membership (FM & LF)

The difference between the higher number of Lebanese Forces party members interviewed versus the number of FM party members is likely because the LF is a much older political party with a broader membership base than the more recently established FM, which only became a political party in November 2007, as discussed in chapter 3.

Interviewees were selected from areas that are not religiously mixed and from similar socio-economic backgrounds (moderate income), namely middle-class neighborhoods. The neighborhoods were chosen to ensure a similar profile between the two communities as well as to study two communities that were least familiar with the *other*. The following two questions illustrate this point. The first question asks interviewees how many friends they have from the other group/confession.

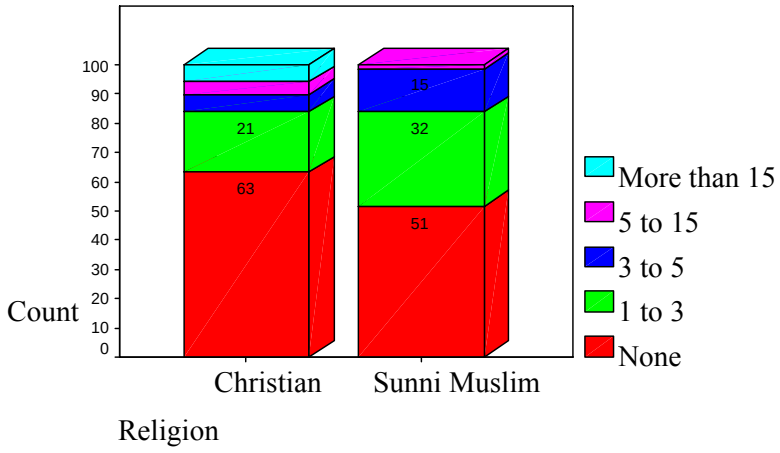


Figure 4.3: How many friends do you currently have from the other group?

This figure shows that a majority of individuals surveyed in both groups have "no" or a limited number of friends from the other group. Over 63 percent of LF and 51 percent of FM supporters claim to have no friends from the other community. Another 21 percent of LF and 32 percent of FM supporters have 1 to 3 friends from the other group. The Christians seem to be slightly more insulated from the Sunnis and generally have fewer friends from the other group than the Sunnis, which will in part explain some of the findings outlined below.

The second question is about the social environment. Interviewees were asked hypothetically if a relative married someone from the other confessional group how the act would be judged by his/her own community.

**Table 4.1: If a relative marries someone from the other confessional group how does your community judge this?**

| | | | If a relative marries someone from the other confessional group, how does your community judge this? | | | | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Not accepted | Accepted but not encouraged | Accepted | Other opinion | |
| Religion | Christian | Count | 40 | 8 | 20 | | 68 |
| | | % of Total | 29.4% | 5.9% | 14.7% | | 50.0% |
| | Muslim Sunni | Count | 37 | 17 | 13 | 1 | 68 |
| | | % of Total | 27.2% | 12.5% | 9.6% | .7% | 50.0% |
| Total | | Count | 77 | 25 | 33 | 1 | 136 |
| | | % of Total | 56.6% | 18.4% | 24.3% | .7% | 100.0% |

As shown in Table 1, 40 percent of LF supporters and 37 percent of FM supporters perceive a mixed religious marriage as unacceptable. Together, this represents a majority of 56.6 percent of all those interviewed. If one adds to this number those who answered "acceptable but not encouraged" this joint percentage rises to 75 percent.

## 4.2 Section II: The Survey

### 4.2.1 The Pre-Alliance Period

The survey questions regarding the pre-alliance period were designed to capture as accurately as possible the feelings of interviewees regarding the relationship that existed between the two groups prior to the political alliance between the LF and FM. Seven questions were asked of each person. The following tables and figures present what interviewees remember the relationship to be like.

In response to the question: *How was the relationship between the LF and FM in the years prior to the alliance?*, the answers of the two groups were quite similar as shown in Table 2. Namely, 68.4 percent (28.7 percent of the LF and 39.7 percent of the FM supporters) felt that the relationship was neither good nor bad, while 25.7 percent of interviewees (19.2 percent of LF and 6.6 percent of FM supporters) felt that the relationship was bad or very bad. Here the LF clearly perceived the relationship more negatively than the FM.

Table 4.2: Religion * The relationship between FM and LF before the alliance

| | | | Before alliance, relation between FM and LF | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Good | Neither good no bad | Bad | Very Bad | Total |
| Religion | Christian | Count | 3 | 39 | 13 | 13 | 68 |
| | | % of Total | 2.2% | 28.7% | 9.6% | 9.6% | 50.0% |
| | Sunni Muslim | Count | 5 | 54 | 4 | 5 | 68 |
| | | % of Total | 3.7% | 39.7% | 2.9% | 3.7% | 50.0% |
| Total | | Count | 8 | 93 | 17 | 18 | 136 |
| | | % of Total | 5.9% | 68.4% | 12.5% | 13.2% | 100.0% |

The greater percentage of negative perceptions on the part of the Christian interviewees can in part be attributed to the Christian community seeing its leadership exiled or jailed during Syrian occupation in the final years of the civil war. In addition, several powers shifted from the Christian president to the Sunni prime ministerial position following the Taef agreement in 1989. This feeling of exclusion was probably combined with a feeling of humiliation at the hands of the Syrian army. When the Syrian army entered the predominantly Christian areas of the country at the end of the civil war, it proceeded to weaken the community that had been largely antagonistic to Syria's presence in the country (Harris, 2006, p. 278).

The relatively large number of interviewees that gave the answer of "neither good nor bad" may be explained by the perception that there was little to no relationship between the leadership of the two parties prior to the alliance. Figures 4.4 and 4.5 illustrate this position. Figure 4.4 reflects the respondents' understanding of the

relationship between Geagea (LF) and Hariri (FM) prior to the alliance. Figure 8 reflects their understanding between Sunnis and Christians.

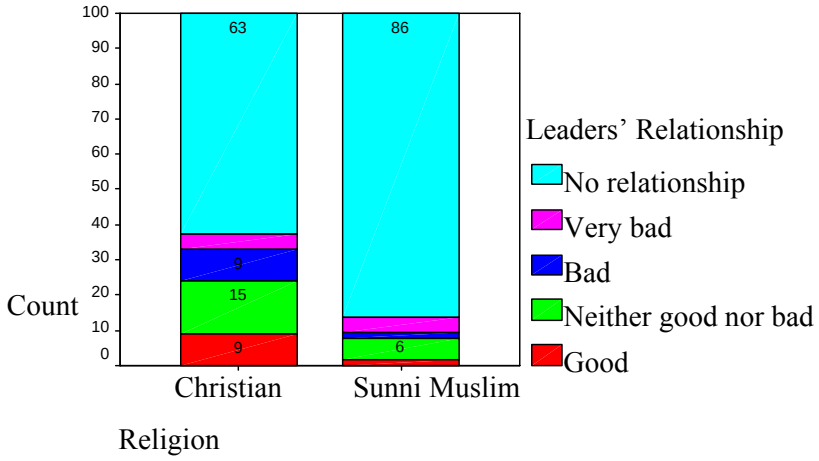


Figure 4.4: Before the alliance what was the relationship between Geagea [LF] and Hariri [FM] like?

Over 63 percent of LF and 86 percent of FM supporters consider that no relationship existed between the party leaders. Figure 4.5 below shows that the relationship between the religious sects themselves, prior to the political alliance, was neither good nor bad.

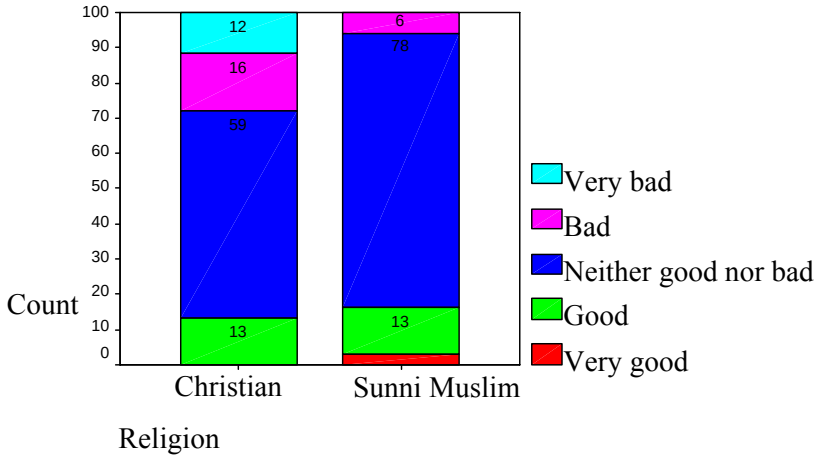


Figure 4.5: Before the alliance how was the relationship between Sunnis and Christians?

Only 13 percent of both Christians and Sunni Muslims supporting the LF and FM, respectively, considered the relationship between the two communities as good. Over 28 percent of Christians considered the relationship as bad or very bad while six percent of Sunni Muslims considered it as bad. It is important to note here that it is difficult to tell if those who answered neither good nor bad did so by conviction or because their opinion is now influenced by the existing political alliance.

The last three survey questions regarding the pre-alliance period attempted to gauge the level of prejudice existing in the two groups. As reflected in Figure 4.6, over 45 percent of the Christians considered their community as being very prejudiced towards

Sunni Muslims, while only 15 percent of the Sunni Muslims considered their community as very prejudiced toward the Christians. What is troubling, however, is that 70 percent of Christians consider that their community is very or somewhat prejudiced towards Sunni Muslims; while 45 percent of Sunni Muslims consider their community as very or somewhat prejudiced towards Christians.

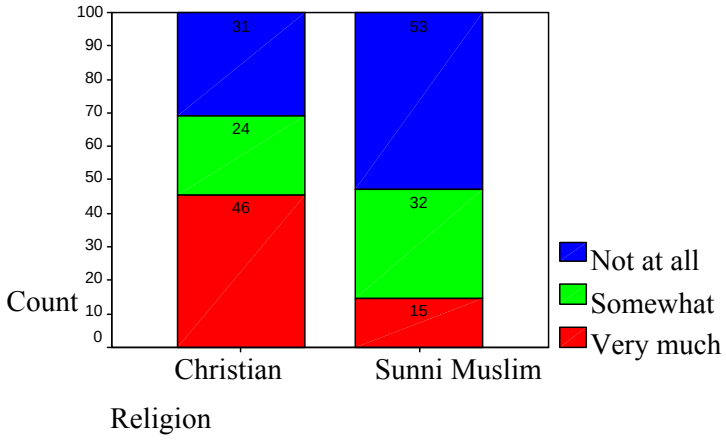


Figure 4.6: Did members of your community have prejudices towards the other community?

The data in Figure 4.7 reveal that, for the most part, each group perceived the other community as not having a good perception of their own; 80 percent of the Christians believe the other community had many or some prejudices towards them while 74 percent of the Sunnis believe the same thing. There is, however, an important

distinction between the Christians and Sunnis when it comes to how they individually perceive the situation. The survey revealed that 56 percent of the Christians versus only 27 percent of the Sunnis considers the other community as having many prejudices.

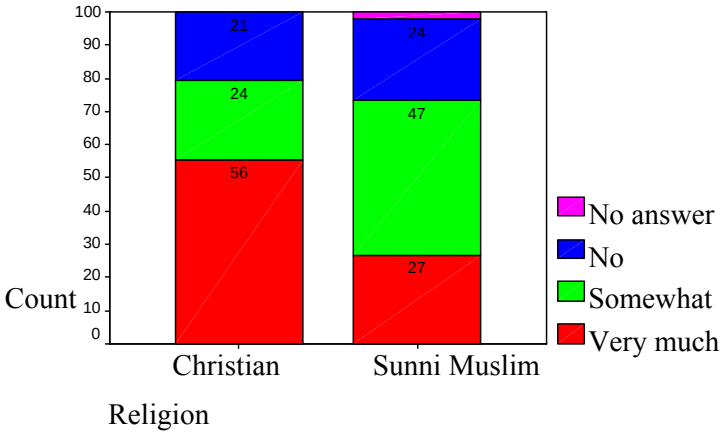


Figure 4.7: Did members of the other community have prejudices towards your community?

Similarly, in Figure 11, 46 percent of the Christians versus seven percent of the Sunnis considered themselves personally as having had strong prejudices towards the other group prior to the alliance. Seventy-six percent of the Sunnis considered themselves as having no prejudices towards the Christian community, while only 32 percent of the Christians declare themselves as having no prejudices towards Sunnis. Over 45 percent of Christians considered themselves as very prejudiced towards the Sunni Muslim community.

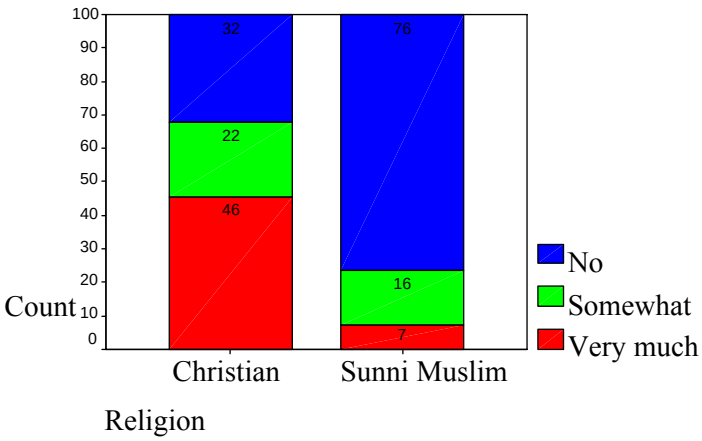


Figure 4.8: Did you have prejudices towards the other community?

These numbers are quite clear regarding the existence of prejudice and/or perceptions of prejudice from the other towards oneself, prior to the political alliance, in addition to the existence of prejudice on the part of some interviewees. The following data and analysis cover the post-alliance period and attempts to identify what has changed in the interviewees' opinions as a result of the political alliance.

### 4.2.2 The Post-Alliance Period

When asked about the impact of the alliance on their opinion of Christian/Sunni relations, both groups acknowledged a significant impact. This key finding alone demonstrates that political alliances do impact voters. Over 85 percent of LF supporters and 53 percent of FM supporters considered the FM/LF alliance as having a positive impact on inter-confessional relations. This impact, however, must be analyzed to gauge how deep and how resilient it is. These aspects are further explored by additional survey questions and through in-depth interviews described in section three of this chapter.

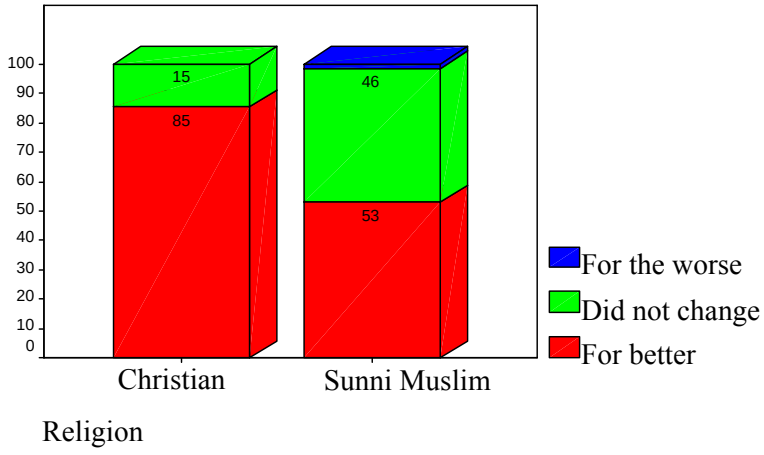


Figure 4.9: [Did the] FM/LF alliance change your opinion of the relationship between Christians and Sunnis?

What is worth noting is that many Sunnis who answered "Did not change," explained that they already enjoyed good relationships with Christians and that the alliance had not improved their relations with members of the other group, since these relationships had already existed and were not bad to begin with. This answer can be further explained by a few factors, including the presence of Sunnis in Beirut for many generations, and their interactions with all communities through schools and other areas of life. Many of the Christians interviewed, by contrast, tended to be from families that moved to Beirut only a generation or two ago. In addition, Christians were on the defensive during the civil war, and have only recently become more open to Sunni Muslims who, for the most part, they considered as too close to the Palestinian resistance movement. The assassination of Prime Minister Rafic Hariri was a turning point in the politics of both the communities. A majority of the Sunni population entered into a direct peaceful confrontation with Syria, joining most Christians who had long ago soured to Syrian influence in Lebanon. Prior to the Hariri assassination, the Sunni leadership had been willing to cooperate with Syria during its occupation of Lebanon.

To understand when the relationship between the Christian and the Sunni communities changed, in the eyes of party supporters, interviewees were given three choices to best describe their perceptions: first, that it had happened in the lead up to the 2005 parliamentary election; second, between the election date and July 2006 (the date of the war between Hezbollah and Israel); or finally, after the July 2006 war. An overwhelming 78.7 percent of all respondents (42.6 percent of LF and 36.1 percent of

FM) answered that the relationship had changed in the days leading up to the election. Nevertheless 17.6 percent of the respondents (10.2 percent of the LF and 7.4 percent of the FM) responded that the change happened between the election and the war of July 2006. This is a clear indication of the power of the alliance making process and how it influenced the way interviewees perceived the transformation of the relationship between Christians and Sunnis.

When asked if they had been interested in learning more about the other group as a result of the alliance, 33.8 percent (17.6 percent of the LF and 16.2 percent of the FM supporters) declared that they were quite interested in learning more, while roughly 30 percent (16.9 percent of the LF and 13.2 percent of the FM supporters) said they were somewhat interested, and approximately 36 percent (15.4 percent of the LF and 20.6 percent of the FM supporters) stated that they had not felt a need to learn more about the other side following the creation of the alliance.

When asked to explain what they tried to do in order to learn about the other group, 92.9 percent (46.9 percent of the LF and an equal percentage of the FM supporters) explained that they tried to deepen their knowledge about the political positions of the other political party. Of those, 22.4 percent were interested in learning about the group's history, 13.3 percent in learning about their religion, and finally, 12.2 percent about their cultural traditions.

As a result of the alliance, 31.6 percent of LF supporters and 29.4 percent of FM supporters declared themselves as more understanding of the other group's needs. Similarly, 67.6 percent of both groups combined became more interested in the speeches of the other party's leaders, confirming the overall increase in political parties supporters' interest in knowing more about the *other*. In fact, 29.4 percent of interviewees (split evenly between the two groups) declared that as a result of the alliance they met new individuals from the other group and made friends with them. Figure B captures the overall impact of the alliance on party supporters regarding prejudice among confessional groups for both parties combined.

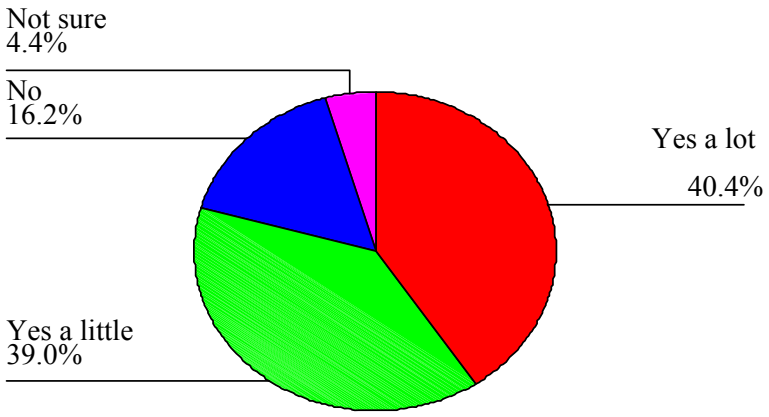


Figure 4.10: Do you think that such alliances [as the one between the LF and FM] reduce prejudice among confessional groups?

In addition to showing that political alliances have an impact on party supporters' perceptions of the other party (or parties) of the alliance, the questionnaire also tried to gauge the sustainability of such an alliance. This is when the picture becomes more complicated. The results show that a higher level of openness towards and interest in the other group is tempered by the fact that interviewees are cautious when it comes to agreeing with the demands of the other group. In the survey, close to 70 percent (split evenly between the two groups) partially agree with the demands of the other group, while 24 percent (split almost evenly between the two groups) agree with all the other party's demands.

Similarly, the interviewees are split on their opinions regarding how resilient the alliance will be. This can be seen in Figure 4.11.

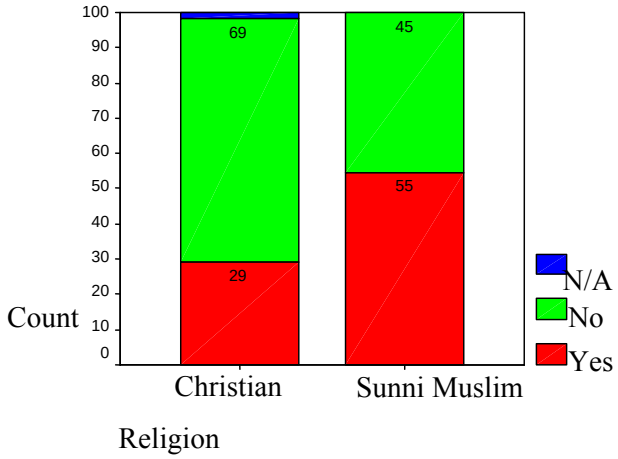


Figure 4.11: Do you think the alliance is temporary?

When asked why the alliance might be long-lasting, the LF supporters tend to answer that the Sunni community finally shares the same attachment to Lebanon that they have always had, making them natural alliance partners in light of other party alliances currently existing in Lebanon.[20] Many LF members considered the Sunni community's alliance with the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO)— prior to and during the civil war—as selling out Lebanon. The willingness to deal with the Syrian presence, which was antagonistic to the Christian population for many years, was another reason

[20] Most likely the LF supporters were referring to the alliance between Hezbollah and the Free Patriotic Movement (lead by former general, Michel Aoun). This alliance between the largest Shiite Muslim party (Hezbollah) and what arguably may be the party with the greatest support among the various Christian communities (the FPM) refutes Lebanese reliance on and alliance with the "West" and instead looks to anchor Lebanon more fully in the Middle East and with Syria and Iran.

for the general antipathy of the Christians to the Sunnis, especially in the political realm. As a result of the assassination of Prime Minister Rafic Hariri, however, the FM joined the movement opposing the Syrian presence in Lebanon and distanced itself from the Palestinian militant presence in Lebanon creating a "rapprochement" with the LF that was welcomed by LF party supporters.

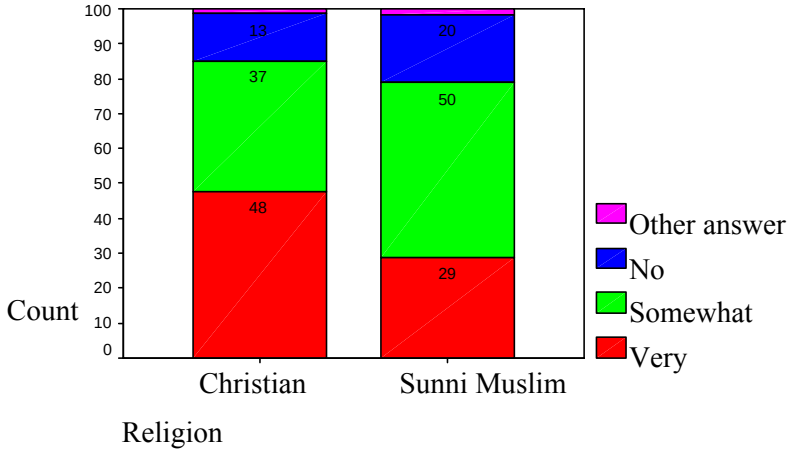


Figure 4.12: Has the alliance made you more supportive of the other group?

As can be seen in the figure 4.12, the Christians seem to have become much more supportive of the FM than have the FM supporters toward the Christians. Forty-eight percent of the Christians claim they have become very supportive of Sunni Muslims compared to only 29 percent of Sunnis who say the alliance has caused them to become

very supportive of the Christians. One of the explanations for why such a difference exists today between the two groups is that the Christian community, and especially the LF supporters, became less trusting of Sunni Muslims during the 1975-1990 war. The alliance helped rebuild the trust. Similarly, LF members and supporters have perceived the Sunni Muslim community as threatening the Christian's dominant position and privileges in the country. The marginalization of the Christian community during the 1990s in the presence of the FM in power is probably another reason why Christians were more likely to be supportive of the other group as a result of the political alliance between LF and FM. In addition, the perception of the Sunnis that they have been put on the defensive by other communities, namely the Shiites, may have led to the conclusion among at least some Christians that the Sunnis now understand what the Christian community has been experiencing.

The positive impact of the alliance is not limited to the political support individuals from one group provide to members of the other group, but also the opinion they form of the *other* as a result of the alliance. This seemingly touches a deeper dimension of the relationship between individuals of both groups. As such, for many FM supporters who already had good relationships with LF supporters or Christians in general, the alliance had less of an impact and did not alter their opinion as much. Nevertheless, among both groups combined, over 62.5 percent claim to have a better opinion of the other, while 36.0 percent claim that they have not witnessed any change or have become more negative about the other. This is shown in figure 4.13, below.

Clearly alliances have an impact on how individuals perceive the *other,* at least during the duration of the alliance.

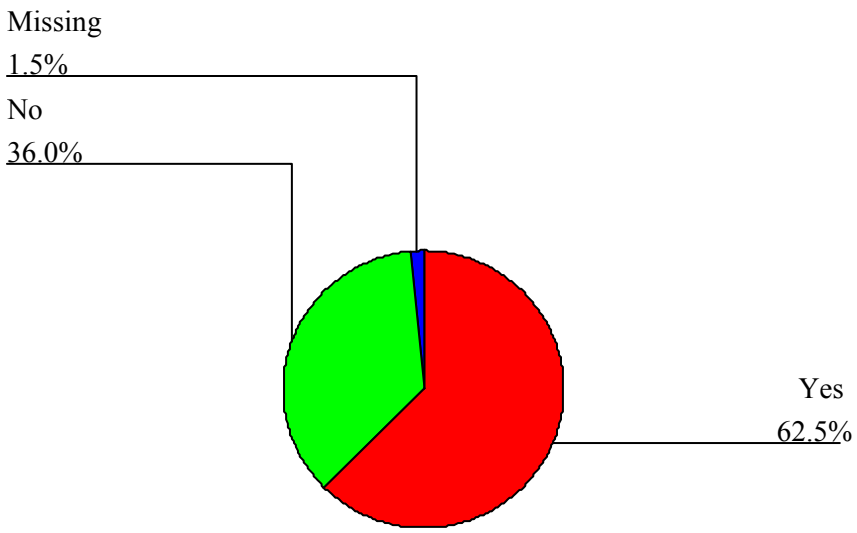


Figure 4.13: As a result of the alliance have you had a better opinion of the other?

On a related note, over 48 percent of LF and 29 percent of the FM supporters saw themselves as having a better opinion of the other group as a result of the alliance.

Turning to the issue of whether or not the relationship will survive the alliance, the answer seems to be predominantly "yes" for the Sunni (77 percent of all FM interviewees), while the Christians seem more divided (47 percent of all LF

interviewees). Figure 4.14 reflects respondents' belief that the change of opinion toward the *other* will last past the life of the alliance.

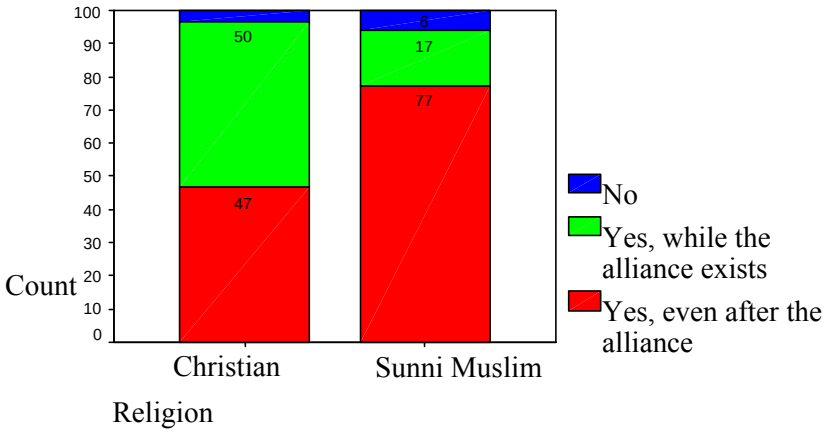


Figure 4.14: Will your opinion of the other religious group be maintained after the alliance?

The survey also shows that a majority of interviewees believe that similar alliances reduce prejudice. Close to 80 percent of all interviewees claimed that such alliances reduce prejudice "a lot" (40.4 percent) or "a little" (39 percent). Table 3 below provides a more detailed breakdown between the two groups. The answer to this question provides strong evidence that interviewees feel affected in their beliefs by the alliance and are even willing to state that similar alliances would have an impact.

**Table 4.3: Do you think that these alliances reduce prejudice among confessional groups'**

| | | | Do you think that such alliance reduces prejudice between confessional groups? | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Yes a lot | Yes a little | No | Not sure | Total |
| Religion | Christian | Count | 37 | 17 | 10 | 4 | 68 |
| | | % of Total | 27.2% | 12.5% | 7.4% | 2.9% | 50.0% |
| | Sunni Muslim | Count | 18 | 36 | 12 | 2 | 68 |
| | | % of Total | 13.2% | 26.5% | 8.8% | 1.5% | 50.0% |
| Total | | Count | 55 | 53 | 22 | 6 | 136 |
| | | % of Total | 40.4% | 39.0% | 16.2% | 4.4% | 100.0% |

Confirming this finding is the fact that most interviewees felt that the alliance would have a positive impact beyond the life of the alliance between the FM and LF. This is captured by Figure 4.15 below, which shows the importance of the impact of the alliance: 57 percent of LF and 39 percent of FM supporters believe that this would be the case.

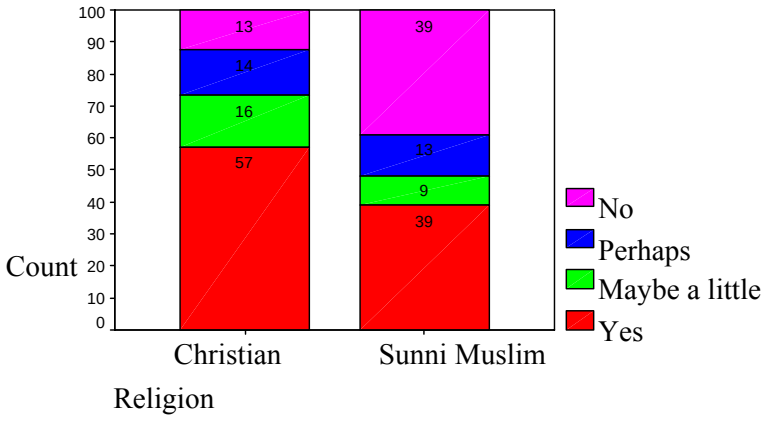


Figure 4.15: Will the alliance have a positive impact [even] after it is over?

Finally, when asked to explain the reasons for the alliance, the results were as follows: 91 percent of respondents (split evenly between the two groups) think it is common interests that brought the political parties and groups together. Another reason offered to the interviewees that had significant support were "a common enemy" (43.4 percent of all respondents, with the LF supporters at 36 percent, and the FM supporters at 7.4 percent). This could be explained by the deep distrust of the Syrians among the Christian population who considered the Sunni community's shift as a new dynamic in the Lebanese Sunni community, and between it and the Syrian regime. FM supporters, while for the most part believing that Syria had a role in the assassination of the Lebanese Prime Minister Rafic Hariri, do not seem to perceive Syria, in general, as an enemy which could explain this difference.

### 4.2.3 Statistical Relationships

To test the statistical significance of the relationships that exist between the questions posed in the survey, Pearson correlations were computed using SPSS for all questions with scaled choices. A number of significant correlations were found. The correlation between pre-alliance question 5 "Before the alliance, did members of your community have prejudices about the other community" and pre-alliance question 6 "Before the alliance, did the members of the other community have prejudices against your community?" was .71 ($p < .01$). A similar correlation existed between pre-alliance question 5 and pre-alliance question 7 "Before the alliance, did you have prejudices

against members of other community." That correlation was also .71 ($p < .01$). A weaker correlation of .35 ($p < .01$) was obtained between pre-alliance question 5 and post-alliance question 1 "Did the alliance between FM and LF change your opinion in the relationship of Sunni Muslims and Christians?" These correlations show that individuals who tended to be more prejudiced during the pre-alliance period described others as more prejudiced and perceived their community as more prejudiced towards others during that time as well.

Another significant correlation existed between pre-alliance question six "Before the alliance did members of your community have prejudices about the other community" and pre-alliance question 7 "Before the alliance, did you have prejudices against members of other community" and was .55 ($p < .01$). This indicates that prejudiced individuals felt that their group had prejudices against the *other* group.

Another correlation of interest was between pre-alliance question 1 "Did the alliance between the FM and the LF change your opinion of Sunni Muslim/Christians?" and post-alliance question 3 "Since the coalition formed, have you been more interested in learning more about the other group?" It is .42 ($p < .05$). This shows that individuals who declared themselves to be positively influenced by the alliance were interested in learning more about the other group. As discussed earlier in this chapter, an interest in the *others'* political views was the overwhelming interest, but also to a lesser extent in the *others'* religious, cultural and other habits.

Finally, another moderately strong correlation was between post-alliance question 17 " Do you trust the leadership of the other group" and post-alliance question 4 "Do you agree with the demands of the other group" This was .47 ($p < .05$). This shows that the more the group trusted the leadership of the other group in the post-alliance period, the more they agreed with their demands.

Chi-square was calculated for question 7 (pre-alliance period) "Before the alliance, did you have prejudices against the members of the other community" and question 11(the post-alliance period) "As a result of the alliance have you had a better opinion of the other confessional group?" The chi-square value is 32.11 ($p < .001$ with 2 df). A contingency coefficient of .44 is a moderately strong relationship between these two variables. This suggest that the more prejudiced someone was before the alliance, the less prejudiced he/she was after the alliance. However, for less prejudiced individuals, the alliance had little impact on attitude toward the *other*. The alliance may merely have reinforced their lack of prejudice. Thus, the political alliance served to improve one group's opinion of the other; put differently, in reducing prejudice towards the *other*. This finding is discussed further below.

**4.4 Section III: In-depth Interviews**

The in-depth interviews were conducted as soon as the survey data were collected and analyzed. The in-depth interviews were geared toward deepening the understanding

of how interviewees perceived the political alliance's effect on their perceptions and views. It also enabled confirmation and explanation of some of the findings.

Ten individuals from each group were chosen for the interviews, with an equal number of men and women from each community. They were all from Beirut and its suburbs, but they did not all belong to the same socio-economic milieu, as was the case for the survey interviewees. The decision to include individuals form different socio-economic backgrounds was to have different insights and explanations for why the two groups surveyed may have answered the questions the way they did.

The five questions posed during the in-depth interviews, building on the survey questionnaire, are found in Appendix (C) in English and in Appendix (D) in Arabic. A decision was made early in the research not to conduct in-depth interviews with individuals that had taken the survey. The main findings from the in-depth interviews are presented below under each question.

**<u>Question 1:</u>** ***Has anything changed in the way you look at someone from the other group since the alliance? If yes, what has changed?***

**The Lebanese Forces**

Among Lebanese Forces supporters, there is almost unanimity that the death of Prime Minister Hariri and the political alliance between the LF and FM improved the relationship between the two communities. Interestingly, however, for most LF supporters, this change was triggered by a Sunni "realization" or political "shift" following the death of Prime Minister Hariri.

LF supporters generally believe that the Sunni Muslim community has finally decided to curtail its alliances with the "outside," including the Palestinians, and have come back to nationalist values that put Lebanon first, something all LF believe they fought for during the 1975-1990 war. As noted later, several FM supporters agree with this analysis. The impact of the death of Prime Minister Hariri on the Sunni community was deep, and triggered a significant shift in the positions of a majority of Sunni Muslims.

A 26 year-old female LF supporter explained that before the political alliance, many in the LF believed that Hariri was "stealing" public funds through post-war reconstruction projects and "not helping" the Christians, "making money" and "not

taking care" of the Christians. The death of Hariri enabled the LF and FM supporters to meet during the anti-Syrian demonstrations, and the LF supporter said that "we started seeing that they are interested, like us, in one Lebanon, and to live with others. Other groups did not have that view".

She went on to say that "I never thought I could talk to someone from the 14th of March alliance[21]. But [I] soon discovered that I could communicate with them and exchange views." This woman was clear about the fact that the alliance was primarily political and that for it to be sustained, the people would have to become closer. She proposed that the political parties belonging to 14th of March bring their political young cadre together for joint programs.

She acknowledged that the alliance had an impact by stating, "I looked at Muslims differently. We had prejudice, now I see them better. … The good was there but I could not see it, the problem was my family. … My opinion changed for the better because I also started seeing as humans those who were not part of the political alliance." She explained the problem as being rooted in fear of the other and added "fear is the problem; Christians are a minority, we are afraid for our future. We are now embracing the *other* for that [reason]."

[21] The March 14 alliance is primarily an Anti-Syrian coalition of political forces that demonstrated together in 2005 for the withdrawal of Syrian troops from Lebanon, demanding the truth about the killing of Prime Minister Rafic Hariri.

Another young female LF supporter in her twenties explained that the alliance meant that "they will not hurt me" or that they will not try to "trick" us since they have similar political views. She further explained that the Christian community had always wanted a Lebanon for all Lebanese and not only one in their image.

A male university student supportive of the LF explained that the Christians had always stood for "Lebanon first" and "political moderation" but that some Christians want to use the fear of demographic imbalance that would result from the naturalization of Palestinians, who are predominantly Sunni Muslim, for political gains. This same young man described how, as a child during the war, he used to go fishing with his father in a religiously mixed, yet predominantly Sunni Muslim area, and that his father used to tell him not to call him by his Christian name out loud. This had "thankfully" changed, explained the young man, since the end of the war, and particularly the political alliance. It is actually now "OK" to do that, he added.

This young man concluded by saying that before the alliance, many saw the Sunni Prime Minister Hariri as someone who did not do enough to stop Christian marginalization at the hands of the Syrians, but after his assassination many saw him as a hero who had tried to liberate Lebanon from Syrian control over the country, for which he paid the ultimate price.[22]

[22] Note that a UN investigation has been underway since the death of Prime Minister Hariri, and while in initial report blame seemed to be pointed at the Syrian secret service and its Lebanese allies in the military and police, future reports were not as clear cut and allowed for different interpretations of who

Also, in response to the first question, a 57 year-old male who played a leadership role in the LF and who explained that he grew up in a neighborhood where a Sunni Muslim family had the keys to their house, explained that he learned about politics during the war, and that 2005 was the first time that Sunni Muslims gave "their highest priority to Lebanon." He did not feel that many things had changed at the personal level, but reaffirmed that the LF had achieved a political victory by rallying FM supporters to its side.

Deep prejudices were revealed during the conversation as he explained that Sunni Muslims were "hypocrites" since they drink outside their homes and that he had several other similar examples from his own dealings with them. He added that the LF party had to do all it could to keep the FM on its side, since the FM represented a moderate Sunni Muslim movement, as compared to other more extreme Sunni movements in the Arab world. This person explained that Shi'a Muslims were overall "softer" in their beliefs, but that having the Sunnis on the LF side was still a big gain.

A 30 year-old LF woman supporter explained that the alliance had had a positive impact because of the common vision that has developed between the two political parties and the groups that support them from each community. She explained that Sunni Muslims in Lebanon were "more open" and "more accepting" of Christians than in other Arab countries. She attributed this to education, lower birth rates, closer historic

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implemented the crime. A final verdict is still to be issued by the international tribunal set up on May 30, 2007 to try the case.

relationships, and experience living side-by-side. She did acknowledge that there had also been violence between the two groups at one point.

A male LF supporter over 40 years old thought that the alliance had had a "very positive" impact on the perception of members of the alliance. He explained that "before, when the Sunni [Muslims] were fighting us they were pro-Palestinian and so were their allies, the People's Socialist Party (PSP),[23] but now they are for Lebanon first and so they are for defending Lebanon, its Christians and its [diverse confessional] make up. We used to believe in that and nothing has changed for us [the LF]." While this man may not have seen any changes among his fellow LF supporters, he has clearly started seeing the *other* in a different way. As he explains, something has changed since the alliance and while this may not have been him, his perception of what happened to the FM supporters has changed.

**The Future Movement**

Like the LF, FM supporters saw the alliance as having a significant impact on the perception and views of others who are part of the alliance, even if many did not support it at first. In response to question one, FM supporters of all ages repeatedly explained that Geagea was considered a criminal and that his party had committed atrocities, but

[23] The PSP is a left leaning secular political party that draws its support today mainly from the Druze community. The Druze are an offshoot of Shi'a Islam.

that he had served an 11-year jail sentence and that he was a new person.[24] Some explained that they still did not like Geagea, however, but that they would work with his party and supporters because of the alliance.

A man in his 40s and a member of the FM movement put it this way: "We have to forget the past or else we can not move forward." Nevertheless, his next statement reflects the raw feelings left by the war: "When he [Geagea] was in jail he should have been killed. …Today he has been excused and it is different; I listen to his speeches." The man added that he changed his view of Geagea and now sees Geagea as also having tried to "protect" his country during the 1975-1990 war. It was somewhat unclear how this man reconciled his earlier statement of wanting to see him killed with that of seeing Geagea as contributing to the protection of the country, but it underscores his belief that they have to "forget the past."

He further explained that when he now sees Geagea on TV, Geagea comes across as "open, modest and honest." He is of the opinion that Geagea realizes that the alliance helped him get out of jail and that in some ways he is returning the favor. The man concluded by explaining that the alliance has helped the LF supporters become more open towards FM supporters and the Sunni Muslim community in general, which is good for him as a member of that community.

[24] Samir Geagea was the only militia leader from the 1975-1990 war to be sentenced to prison during the Syrian rule over Lebanon and to have served 11 years in solitary confinement. He was released after the Syrian withdrawal and the June 2005 general elections in which his wife was elected to a seat of parliament.

A woman in her 30s who supports the FM explained that that the LF "killed based on the religion [affiliation] listed on people's national identity cards," but added that it seemed that Samir Geagea regretted what he had done in the past and that the LF would now "like to see cohabitation with us" as had occurred before the 1975-1990 war.

A male FM supporter in his 30s explained that the alliance had not changed his view about Christians. Interestingly, the alliance shifted his political support from the Aounists (who are in the opposition) to the LF, as a result of the alliance. What this points to is the power of the political party and leadership on party followers. Prior to the political alliance and the return of Aoun and Geagea to the political scene, most Christians felt politically marginalized. As such, Sunni Muslims could pick those they liked to sympathize with in the predominantly Christian political party. After the alliance, however, the political discourse of the leaders shifted. The FM picked the LF as their partner, while later the Aounist (FPM) and Hezbollah joined forces.

**In-depth Interviews Question 1: Analysis**

To summarize, the first in-depth interview question sheds light on several important points that were made by a majority of respondents from both groups.

For the LF, almost all 10 interviewees perceived a clear shift of position by the FM. This is actually acknowledged and confirmed by FM supporters. This shift to a

"Lebanon first" attitude by the Sunni Muslims clearly contributes ultimately to the creation of the alliance. It is a shift that is due to the assassination of the Prime Minister and that is later strengthened through the alliance.

Second, most LF supporters interviewed seemed to emphasize that the alliance is important to maintain because it provides security. The feeling of marginalization that the LF and Christians had suffered from, for over a decade, led many in the LF camp to express the need to consolidate their position in the country. The FM's political shift, and being the largest Sunni Muslim party in Lebanon, provided the prefect partner. Many LF supporters interviewed perceived that as a necessity for their political party, but also for rallying others in the country to their political philosophy/vision of the country.

As for the FM supporters, they do not seem as eager to be in the relationship. That is perhaps due to the fact that they are less insecure and more pragmatic in their calculations. They all expressed the need to forget the bloody past of the LF and their leader Samir Geagea. For some, his prison time was enough to put the past behind them, for a few others they had to accept the LF because of the political alliance and the need to stand up to Syria with the largest number of Lebanese allies.

More generally, however, this question points to the power of organized political parties, in such an environment, to both consolidate relationships across parties when it is

in their interest and to legitimize the relationship by changing the political narrative to justify that shift, even after decades of enmity and conflict.

**<u>Question 2:</u>** ***Have you become more interested in learning about the religious customs, political concerns, history and/or cultural habits of the other group as a result of this alliance? If yes, what did you do?***

**The Lebanese Forces**

The answers to the second question were generally positive and came in different forms. For example, a 42 year-old LF male supporter who fought during the war stated, "We [now] accept them more than they [FM supporters] accept us." He then added, "I now can drive [visit] on a road in their areas and do not worry. That is still not the case in the Hezbollah dominated areas."

A 26 year-old female, on the other hand, explained that as a result of the alliance she had become more interested to learn about the political positions of the other group as well as their religious habits. For example, she wants to know "how they fast." This has contributed to her looking at the members of the group "as people" and she explained that "she was impressed by certain aspects of their religious practices" and as a result she started talking to members of that community and asking questions about their religion.

She further explained that her work changed her because there were individuals from all religious backgrounds. The openness of those from other religious groups towards her made her see that "they were right and I was wrong."[25]

Still, a 57 year-old LF male supporter did not feel that anything had changed culturally or personally. He explained that Sunnis did not like to go to war and that they were "traders" and that none of those he had known had "gone to war, they are not warriors."

A 30 year-old woman explained that she wanted the Christian presence in Lebanon to continue and that this fact had pushed her to analyze the situation and ask questions after the alliance took place. She believes that for the first time, as a result of the alliance, there is a true political discussion and not just confessional politics at play. During the interview, this young women who seemed to have become more interested in learning about the Sunni Muslim community, was clearly not open to all other confessional groups nor political views as she considered the Shi'a Muslims "traitors" and explained that she had reduced her contacts with those she did not agree with politically, including other predominantly Christian-backed political parties within the opposition.

[25] Workplaces were very religiously segregated during the 1975-1990 war a result of the sectarian violence and the destruction of large parts of Beirut where many of these businesses were located.

A young university student explained that she had become much more curious about the other group wanting to learn about the Sunni Muslim religion and Arab history. She also seemed interested in learning about what bothered the Sunni Muslim FM supporters to make sure that they remained her "partner in the country." She acknowledged that the LF Christian cut cross symbol used during the war, shown below in Figure 4.16, was offensive to other Lebanese confessional groups.[26]

Figure 4.16: Lebanese Forces cut cross

She added that the LF leadership had decided not to use this symbol anymore so as not to remind and upset other communities. Interestingly, she explained that some young men continue to wear that cross, but hide it.

[26] According to the Lebanese Forces website www.lebaneseforces.com: "This cross was launched by the Department of Faith in the Lebanese Forces. It was launched on "Resistant Prayer day" at the St-Charbel Church, Annaya, Lebanon on April 19, 1984." The red of the cross is "the sign of martyrdom and glory" and "The sign of their [Christians of the Region] suffering throughout history" and at the base of the cross the diagonal cut "symbolizes the strength of the Lebanese Christians' will and their determination to keep the cross planted in this region of the world."

Regarding the second question, a 40-plus year-old man explained that "during the war we used to curse Sunnis and Communists. Now, after the alliance, we have no more differences [between us], we only have a problem with the Shi'a." He added that LF members had learned the history of Sunnis through their political party ideology training.

It is important to note that Lebanon's history curricula has not been updated since 1971 and that over half Lebanon's students study in private schools for the most part run by religious organizations that do not teach about other religions in Lebanon in any depth nor the modern history of Lebanon. Recent attempts at reforming and unifying the history curricula have failed as a result of political leaders' differences.[27]

**The Future Movement**

Regarding the second question which asks about the individual's interest in learning more about the *other*, the answers were generally also positive, and are reflected by the comments in the interviews. A 40-plus year-old man explained that when there are meetings or press conferences, he listens to the political positions of the LF, adding "If he is my ally I need to know him." This man said that he became more curious to know what holidays are celebrated by the supporters of the other political party. He also shared that he had started visiting regions of the country where he had never been during the war to see how members of the other community lived and to discover the country.

[27] Fattah, (Jan. 10, 2007). Lebanon's history textbooks sidestep its civil war, *International Herald Tribune*, Retrieved October 30, 2008. Http://www.iht.com/articles/2007/01/10/news/beirut.php?page=1

He also began reading papers that are read by supporters of the group, including the social and cultural pages.

A woman in her 30s explained that she was more interested in learning about the other's political positions as a result of the alliance. Through our discussion, it was clear that this woman is someone who maintains relations with members of the Christian community. She added that recently she has begun to have good political discussions with members of that community, to listen to the speeches of the leaders of that community, and to have meetings with members of that community.

Another woman in her 30s explained that people are of two kinds: those that are naturally inclined to learn about the other, and those that are not. This has little to do with education levels, she added. She also stated that the alliance did not increase her interest in learning more about the *other*.

A 55-plus year-old man explained that the LF had moderated its positions and gave as an example the banning of the cut cross that had been their symbol. This person felt that the LF had also come closer to the FM positions. This had increased his interest in following the LF speeches and statements.

A woman in her late 20s explained that she was more inclined to learn about the political positions of the other party as a result of the alliance, and that she relied primarily on television to get her news.

A man in his 30s was also more inclined to learn about the other group as a result of the alliance by keeping up with the political, economic and other news concerning the other political party.

A woman in her 50s who initially was worried about the alliance feels that Geagea has changed politically and has become less combative, making it easier to follow what he has to say. Geagea has become less inflammatory since his alliance with the FM movement according to several interviewees, but what is unclear is if individuals like this woman have become more receptive to Geagea as a result of his change of tone, or because of the existence of an alliance between the LF and FM, or both.

**In-depth Interviews Question 2: Analysis**

The key points that emerge from the second question are the following:

The LF supporters seem to be less fearful of the *other* and of the *other's* religion as a result of the alliance, and 8 out of 10 have stated that they have been willing to be more open towards the Sunni Muslim community and some were more curious about

their history, religion and culture. Three individuals pointed out that even the LF party had moderated its political/religious rhetoric as a result of the alliance with the LF, because of its Sunni Muslim support base. LF leaders seem to be less inclined to use polarizing language they used before the alliance and during the years of war. While the Shi'a community is still singled out as not being for "Lebanon first" due to its military ties to Syria and Iran, the attacks are more political and less religious in nature.

That is less the case for the FM supporters. Because of the 2006 Hezbollah conflict with Israel and the criticism of the Shi'a leaders of the Sunni led government for not involving the army and protecting the south of the country, the politicians' attacks from both camps have had more religious undertones (Sunni/Shi'a). This is further fueled by regional tensions and conflicts between Shi'a and Sunni Muslims in Iraq and other countries in the region and a rising rivalry between Iran and Saudi Arabia for regional dominance.

**Question 3:** ***Would you be more willing to befriend someone from the other community as a result of this alliance? Why or why not?***

**The Lebanese Forces**

Most Lebanese Forces supporters interviewed were clearly more open towards others as a result of the alliance, and their answers to the third question were also

positive. A 42 year-old male stated that he was more willing to invite individuals from the other community over to his house, but that this was also the case before the war, because he grew up in an area where there were many Sunni Muslims and they used to invite them to go to church with them and read parts of the Koran together.

The 26 year-old LF female supporter explained that indeed the political alliance encouraged her to reach out and meet individuals from the other group, adding in her own words "I can now see things from a wider scope."

Similarly, a 30 year-old LF female supporter was more inclined, as a result of the alliance, to have friends from the other group and explained that she was much more comfortable with anyone who belonged to their coalition. A young man and a young woman, both university students, were of the same opinion that the alliance had pushed them to get to meet individuals from the other group.

A 40-plus year old man explained that it was important to have relations with other confessional groups, and that the alliance had opened new possibilities to interact with others.

**The Future Movement**

In response to the third question that asks if FM supporters are more ready to have friends from the other group as a result of the alliance, the answer here, again, was either positive or neutral. A 40-plus year-old male FM supporter explained that he had become more open to meeting members who support the other party. He further explained that this has happened at work. A woman in her 30s started meeting more individuals from the other group after the end of the war, but the alliance encouraged her to go even further and meet members of the Christian community at–large, including Christians who were not supportive of the alliance. This was also the case of a 30 year-old male interviewed.

For several other individuals interviewed whose ages ranged between 29 and 55, the alliance did not increase their interest in making friends with supporters of the other side as they often had good relationships to start with.

**In-depth Interviews Question 3: Analysis**

The points that stand out in the answers of a majority of LF supporters for question three is that almost all interviewees—9 out of 10—explained that the alliance had helped open new horizons and enabled/encouraged some to engage with members of the other community as a result.

As for the FM supporters, while most acknowledged a new level of openness and possibilities to engage members of the other community and travel to their areas of residence, several seemed to already enjoy good relationships or perception of members of the other community and had been willing to engage with members of the Christian community.

The answers to this question indicate a much bigger impact of the alliance on those that were initially more prejudiced then those who were not. This confirms and explains the findings of the survey in this regard.

**Question 4:** ***What have the following dates meant to the relationship between the supporters of LF and Future Movement?***

1. ***The death of PM Rafic Hariri***
2. ***The June 2005 election alliance***
3. ***The demonstrations of November/December 2006***

**The Lebanese Forces**

A 26 year-old female LF supporter explained that through joint political action, young people met each other in the streets during protests and marches. These meetings, in and of themselves, seem according to interviewees to have helped bring down barriers.

For a 30 year-old female LF supporter, the death of Prime Minster Hariri opened the door to discussions between the two groups, but the alliance formation is actually what helped communication between the supporters of the two groups and strengthened it.

For a young university student, the rapprochement started before the death of Prime Minister Hariri, but intensified just after his death. She explained that when protest tents were put up, members of both groups shared the same camping grounds and tents in their dissent against the Syrians.

An over-forty male explained that the death of Hariri was really what opened new horizons, and the groups became much closer with supporters of the FM as a result of the alliance, especially moderates. "They now look at us as we look at them," he concluded. In describing the joint marches following the Israeli war with Hezbollah in 2006, he explained that the coalition was strengthened by the fact that both sides wanted the same thing, namely one Lebanon, peaceful, where the army plays a full role in defending Lebanon and where all militia arms are removed from the streets. Because both parties in the alliance did not have weapons, this helped strengthen the union around a common idea he explained.

**The Future Movement**

For many Sunni Muslims supportive of the FM, the death of Prime Minister Rafic Hariri was the turning point that enabled the "Cedar Revolution."[28] In answering question four regarding the meaning of critical dates that affected them, for most the assassination of the Prime Minister was a watershed moment that enabled all the other changes to happen.

For a woman in her late 20s, the death of Hariri has encouraged greater cooperation between Christians supporting the LF and Sunnis supporting the FM, but it also resulted in dividing the Christian camp. For this woman, the relationship prior to the death of Hariri was a superficial one between Christians and Sunni Muslims. The assassination deepened the relationship between the Christian supporters of the LF and the Sunni supporters of the FM.[29] Despite this, many interviewed felt that the attitude towards Christians as a whole was much more positive.

For a man in his 30s, the assassination of Hariri broke some of the religious prejudices and enabled people to reach out to members of other religious groups. According to this man, the joint marches organized to demand a Syrian troop withdrawal

[28] The joint protests in the center of Beirut that followed the assassination of Prime Minister Rafic Hariri brought together Lebanese from different walks of life and religious backgrounds to oppose the continued Syrian presence in Lebanon and were known as the "Cedar Revolution" or the "independence intifada". The Syrian troops departed the country on April 25, 2007.

[29] The LF does not represent the majority of Christians in Lebanon. The largest Christian coalition in parliament today is led by Aoun's Free Patriotic Movement (FPM.)

contributed a lot, in this respect. This is confirmed by a man and a woman both over 50 years of age who said that the marches had a "very big impact" as they saw Sunnis and Christians walking hand-in-hand for the first time in years. The marches and demonstrations were a common meeting space where party supporters were willing to reach out to one another. The marches in December 2006 in support of the government were considered by most interviewees as helping consolidate the relationship between the LF and FM.

**In-depth Interviews Question 4: Analysis**

It is clear from all interviews, both LF and FM supporters, that the turning point was the assassination of Prime Minister Rafic Hariri. This even seems to have been the catalyst needed to bring all the groups that joined together in the protests and marches that lead to the creation of the March 14$^{th}$ alliance. The impact of this assassination created a common threat and ultimately a superordinate goal for both parties.

As for the FM supporters, the death of their leader led to a political alliance, but most importantly, to braking prejudices that existed towards the Christians in general. While many Christians in the opposition are criticized in the media by the FM leadership and partisans, the discussion remains at a political level.

What is interesting to note is the impact of the other two dates. Almost all of the respondents from both groups said that the election alliance helped seal the relationship that had begun by a mass movement at the leadership level and between party members. This is important because it is only through the formal process of mutual recognition and cooperation in the political sphere that the two camps continue to perceive each other positively. Christians who belong to the Aounist movement and who left the March 14th to be in the opposition are perceived as 'collaborating' again with the Syrian regime at Lebanon's expense. So, the contact at the grassroots level during the marches was not enough to make the relationship gel and change perceptions. It is actually the formal political alliance and later government coalition that did.

**Question 5:** ***Do you think that this political alliance will lead anyone to change their long term attitude towards the other group in a permanent way? If yes, why? If no, why not?***

**The Lebanese Forces**

When asked the fifth question, a 42 year-old LF male explained "I have been more open [as a result of the alliance] and this will continue even if the alliance breaks up. I hope they have the same aspirations." While this statement is in itself an indication of the long-term impact of the alliance, it is clearly checked by how the *other* is likely to act in the future. This response is echoed by others who believe that it would also greatly

depend on what the leadership of each community does, and how the debate is framed between the communities. A few also argued that the impact of the alliance will wane if the alliance changes. The reasons for this seem complex and many feel that much rests on the leadership, and on the ability of the community to feel safe and protected by the state.

A 26 year-old woman LF supporter, in response to this question, explained that she could not determine how the other side would react after the alliance is dissolved. She clearly saw an important role for leaders in steering their supporters one way or the other. A 60-plus year-old man explained that the positive perception will endure even after the alliance breaks up because of the tie that now binds the two groups, a bond that is based on the belief in co-existence and in the sovereignty of Lebanon. A 57 year-old LF supporter explained that peace was needed for "these relations to improve between the people through different types of alliances, joint projects, mixed work areas, etc." According to this man, it is not enough to build alliances. In order for people, and especially the young, to overcome their fear of the *other,* it is important to create opportunities for the youth and the adults to meet in different forums and work towards common goals.

A 30 year-old woman LF supporter explained that more needed to be done to solve national economic problems, to involve youth in politics and make them more knowledgeable, and finally she seemed convinced that unless the *other* rejects

confessional politics, confessionalism is here to stay and that her party would continue to operate along those lines. This may point to the limits of political alliances' impact once they break down. Given how confessional politics have tended to polarize society it would be normal to expect such polarization, after the dissolution of the alliance, to create new rifts among party supporters and potentially to increase tension and violence if political leaders pursued such a course in the absence of institutions that can moderate their discourse and actions.

Still, a young university woman explained that the problem was not religious, but political. This statement is echoed by most of the persons who were part of the in-depth interviews and who explained that the Lebanese do not have a problem with each other, or with each other's religions. They can and have lived peacefully together all around the country. What concerns them is the political class that manipulates them and creates situations where voters have to seek refuge and support from their political leaders, the very leaders that use religious divisions to buttress their power. As such, political divisions are what fuels prejudice and fear of the *other*.

A man in his 30s explained that to get beyond confessional politics after the dissolution of political alliances, a religious federal state or a federal state that respects religious differences and protects religious groups, geographically, must be created. He added that religious diversity was a strength in Lebanon and that we should look for ways

to protect this diversity and not overcome it. Such a structure would guarantee every group a say in governing the country.

A man in his 40s, on the other hand, explained that if after the alliance all Lebanese are treated equally, the alliance may have a long term effect, but if some have weapons and others do not, there would be problems.[30] Again, this point of view emphasizes the fear of the *other* which may have the potential of destroying the relationship between the supporters of the parties in alliance. The man added "I have no problem with the individual unless s/he takes a stand against Lebanon." Finally, this person explained that there was a closer relationship between Sunni and Christians than between Shi'a and Christians, due to a closer history living together in Lebanon. This point, however, is challenged by those Christians who are currently allied with the Shi'a political parties in opposition.

In fact, Christians supporting opposition political parties have developed their own justification of why the Shi'a are closer to the Christians than Sunnis. Their argument tends to rest on the fact that the Sunnis have always wanted to undermine Christian power and control the country at the expense of all other large minorities. In addition, Christian opposition supporters note that the Shi'a tend to have been downtrodden—as have the Christians—for the previous 15 years. Furthermore, Maronite Christians have historically taken over areas left by the Shi'a and both Maronite

[30] This statement is made in part in reference to the arms of militias such as Hezbollah, that are perceived by the governing parties as a constant threat.

Christians and Shi'a share a belief in saints. This narrative is in sharp contrast with the pro-Sunni narrative developed by Christians that support predominantly Sunni Muslim parties in government.

Clearly, who defines what Lebanon is, and what constitutes Lebanon, may differ over time and from leader to leader. Each leader and community shapes its alliances based on its interests and power. The political discourse is modified accordingly. As such, it is clear from the interviews that the alliance will not have a permanent effect on everyone in reducing prejudice if the alliance were to change. Undoubtedly, the alliance will last if the communities convince themselves of the common interests that bind them. If this is not the case however, it is unclear how many people will remain open to the *other* if not politically joined, and how long the effects of the alliance are likely to last. This last point will be discussed further in chapter five.

**The Future Movement**

When asked the fifth question regarding long term views post alliance, a man in his forties stated that the political alliance was not likely to have a long term effect on his views of others who belong to the other religious group after the alliance dissolves. He explained that if he gets hurt by someone from the other group, he would change his opinion of the *other*, and explained that for many Lebanese, "politics transcend religion" and that "individuals are influenced by the position of their leaders." This person seemed

worried about religious schools in the Sunni community that might have negative long-term influence on those who adopt more moderate and open views towards members of other communities. The man concluded by saying that to sustain good relations between communities, Lebanon needed "[religiously] mixed schools."

A woman in her 30s stated that she believed over 60 percent of people want to live together peacefully, but that about 40 percent are very influenced by politics and are willing to follow their leaders at whatever cost. She explained that the majority of Lebanese Sunni Muslims were not willing to forgive the Shi'a community for recent events that happened in Beirut, when Shi'a militia members with the assistance of pro-Syrian parties had entered predominantly Sunni areas and destroyed FM headquarters, as well as intimidated people in predominantly Sunni neighborhoods.[31] This last statement is important considering that during the long period when Hariri was prime minister, Shi'a and Sunni political leaders were much closer to one another, and collaborated in government and with the Syrians to a large extent. This was not the case of key Christian leaders, who were largely marginalized.

For a majority of FM supporters interviewed (of all ages) the impact of the alliance would likely be checked by the changes that happen at the leadership level in their political party. At least three persons interviewed believe the alliance would have a

[31] On May 7, 2008, after months of political tension between the governing coalition and the opposition governing parties, clashes broke out in the streets of Beirut between party supporters on both sides. These clashes were considered as the most violent since the end of the civil war in 1990. Politicians met in Doha, Qatar later that month and reached a peace agreement.

greater impact in the long term on individuals who are open minded and are able to step back from party politics. However, like other individuals interviewed, even this group seemed to say that it would depend on what the other does to them in the post-alliance period, and what position their political party takes.

According to FM supporters, political party leaders' decisions and actions have the potential of limiting the positive impact of political alliances in the long run. According to the interviewees, they revert to their community and (confessional) political party when they feel vulnerable economically, politically or from a security standpoint. Many feel that confessional divisions in Lebanon are here to stay. For some, these divisions have to be recognized and managed; for others they have to be reduced and overcome. There was no clear dominant answer among those interviewed. A male in his 30s explained: "People have grown up following confessional political parties. This is the make up of the country. I am not personally happy about it. There is no mixing—we live in different countries."

For several interviewees, education is the key to healing divisions in Lebanon. However, a couple of them were concerned that the politicians were benefiting from the existing divisions, and would oppose unifying the history curriculum any time soon, or strengthening the government, because it would weaken their own standing.

As a 50-plus year-old woman said (whose son had married only days before the interview) "We are Sunni and my son married a woman who is Shi'a. She is very nice and so is her family. But I became against the marriage. I did not want my son to marry someone who is Shi'a after all they have done to us in May [2008]." She admitted that this had less to do with the woman her son married than it did with the recent political violence. It is clear from these words that despite good relations in government for years, changes of positions by politicians and political mobilization against the *other* for any reason can deepen divisions in a society and lead to combat. Clearly, in this case, politicians were ready for a confrontation that led to the death of nearly a dozen people.

**In-depth Interview Question 5: Analysis**

In analyzing responses to question five, one finds that despite the positive effect of the alliance on attitude change and prejudice, this effect is susceptible to situational and contextual factors. All interviewees were unanimous in stating that much would depend on the leadership of the parties and the political positions they take. Most interviewees said that at the end of the day, party supporters would have to follow the position of their parties and their communities.

When asked why, most explained that contextual and situational factors forced party supporters to be loyal to their groups. These include economic dependence on the

group, the weak state, the confessional nature of the political system and regional conflicts among others.

Fear of the *other* and what the *other* can do to cause pain is on everyone's mind. Interviewees from both groups felt that what guided their answers to question five was their feeling of vulnerability without the help and protection of their community—in the absence of a strong state in a post-conflict environment. Three out of 20 mentioned that the community also provided them a sense of identity that was important to them. The need to protect one's self and one's economic and social rights were important elements during these interviews.

Lastly, almost all interviewees from both groups seem to concur that the way to overcome fear was through a political solution. They wished that the leaders would not use religion to create new divisions that fuel fear and ultimately religious prejudice.

**Conclusion**

This chapter presented the findings of the survey and the in-depth interviews while attempting to discuss some of the factors that may have influenced the answers of the interviewees. The next chapter presents an analysis of these findings and discusses their relevance to the field of conflict analysis and resolution. The chapter also reviews some of the questions that emerged during the research and that require further study.

Given the complexity of the process through which humans learn to stereotype and form prejudices, the findings presented in chapter five are an attempt at building on the exiting research in this area and to contribute to expanding this field. The research is also relevant to development experts and policy makers who are called upon to help countries in post-conflict situations or in transition.

# Chapter 5: Conclusion and Research Implications

## 5.1 Restating the Problem

The research for this dissertation aimed to better understand the impact political alliances have on party supporters' views and attitudes towards each other. More specifically, the research tried to answer the following question: Can political alliances contribute to reducing prejudice among party followers in countries with deeply rooted conflicts? As an example of an enhanced case study (Druckman, 2005, chapter 6), the research was based on the case of two Lebanese political parties that went into alliance following the assassination of Prime Minister Rafic Hariri, and the pull-out of Syrian troops from Lebanon in 2005. Supporters of these parties had been, for the most part, on opposite sides during 1975-1990 war.

This concluding chapter discusses the implications of the research and the research framework to the broader field of conflict resolution, and more specifically, the theoretical study of stereotyping and prejudice and the ways to overcome them. It is hoped that these research findings offer insights into how alliances affect voters' perceptions and attitudes towards *others*, and expand our understanding of how to overcome other types of deeply rooted conflicts. Finally, the research attempts to analyze the theories and approaches regarding decreasing prejudice developed over the past

century by sociologists, psychologists, political scientists and conflict resolution practitioners, and to locate political alliance formation in this theoretical landscape.

The chapter begins with a review of the key findings of the research and the contextual/situational factors[32] that seem to influence the impact of political alliances on voters' perceptions of *others*; it then looks at the relevance of the findings to the field of conflict resolution. The chapter concludes with suggestions for further research.

## 5.2 Key Research Findings

The desk review, survey and in-depth interviews conducted for this research point to four key findings that are discussed in this section. These include: 1) the significant impact of political alliances on the views and perceptions of party supporters; 2) the largest positive impact of the political alliance seems to be on those who hold the strongest prejudices; 3) political alliances tend to impact party supporters in mainly two ways, politically or personally; and, 4) the long-term impact of political alliances is significantly affected by contextual/situational factors. These factors are further discussed below.

The survey and the in-depth interviews demonstrate with little doubt that political alliances in post-conflict environments have an impact on the views and perceptions of

[32] The term "situational factors" has previously been used by others. See for example Williams, J. A (1964) in his description of factors that reduce prejudice.

party supporters. Overall, this impact is positive in that a majority of supporters of the alliance experience some level of change in their perception of the *other* that is favorable to the *other*. These changes in perception lead supporters to become more open to each other, more curious to learn about the *other,* and in many cases more willing to question their own beliefs. The changes in perceptions make the majority of party supporters more interested in the political stands of the other party's leaders in the alliance. For some, this impact is not limited to their perception of the *others* who support the alliance. Alliances can challenge the traditional societal divisions that grow as a result of conflict—be they religious, racial, ethnic, cultural or others. Alliances also tend to open the eyes of party supporters to the similarities that exist between them and the *other* and to individuals who are part of that group, but not necessarily in the political alliance. As outlined in chapter 4, several individuals interviewed explained that they had a better view of the other religious community as a whole as a result of the political alliance.

As individuals decide to engage with the *other* and acquire a better opinion of them, they also tend to moderate their views and the way they talk about the *other*. According to interviewees, this is also true of political leaders who become less combative and increasingly careful about how they speak of the *other*. This shift of behavior is not only positive with regards to those inside the alliance but also to members of the communities represented by the parties who are outside the alliance. Interestingly, it appears that the attacks on those who do not belong to the alliance become more political and less confessional in nature. This can be, perhaps, explained by the fact that

using confessional based attacks on non-alliance members would clash with the multi-religious alliance and alienate supporters of the other party inside the alliance.

Another finding of the research is that individuals who perceive the *other* most negatively, or may have felt most vulnerable during the prior conflict, tend to be more impacted by the positive effects of political alliances. As demonstrated, the LF supporters seem to have been most affected by the political alliance, and show the greatest shift in perspectives as a result. While there may be other reasons for this shift in attitude, it is reasonable to assume that anyone who has a strong negative perspective of the *other* or who felt vulnerable and under attack due to the country's political situation will be significantly impacted by an alliance that restores the relationship with the *other* and significantly increases the party members' general feeling of security.

Interviews with LF supporters indicated that many held strong prejudices about FM supporters and that the alliance helped them overcome some of their fears of the FM *(other)*. Once the alliance was created, many LF supporters interviewed said it was important that the Sunni Muslim community be anchored in their political camp, probably because the LF represent less than 30 percent of the Christian population. Being in an alliance with the FM, which represents the overwhelming share of the Sunni Muslim community in Lebanon, is a source of strength and reassurance that the LF need in peace time, as they transition back to playing a role in the democratic life of the country. This was less the case for FM supporters who, for the most part, believed that

the alliance was one of punctual interest and that the alliance may change with time. Most in-depth interviews pointed to the possible temporary nature of this alliance. While FM supporters were, for the most part, open to the idea of the alliance continuing in the future, most did not seem concerned if it did not.

One of the interesting findings that emerged from the in-depth interviews is the fact that people seemed to be split into two camps. The first camp consists of those who accept political alliances and the *other* for purely political reasons. It is unclear what impact, if any, this has on their perception of the *other* in the short or long run. The second group consists of those that undergo what appears to be a more complex process of internal questioning of their own beliefs, value systems and prejudices and who may change their views as a result of the alliance. According to several interviewees, this process is a very personal one that transcends class, education level or wealth. Some interviewees spoke of a "predisposition" or "family education" that leads one to be more open to the *other*. This finding confirms some of the theoretical writings by Allport and others reviewed for the dissertation. The interviewees also believed that for this group the change in perception that resulted from the political alliance is likely to have a residual effect following the end of the alliance.

Another finding of the research is that political alliances can have a long-term impact on party supporters beyond the duration of the alliance. However, this long-term impact is not as significant as the shift in perception that takes place during the alliance

period. Rather, it is subject to and shaped by contextual/situational factors such as extraordinary events, leadership, confessional politics, the strength of the state, and the stability of the political system. The analysis of the survey results pointed to the existence of a post-alliance long-term effect, but it was only after the in-depth interviews that these contextual/situational factors became clear. These contextual/situational factors enrich our analysis and help us better understand ways to fight prejudice in society and to take advantage of political alliances' impact over the long run.

### 5.2.1 Extraordinary Events: Assassinations/Demonstrations

Extraordinary events seem to have an impact on the way groups relate to each other. Put differently, they can act as turning points. Such events have included in the case of the Lebanese conflict the assassination of Hariri and the mass public demonstrations that were organized through March 14, 2008.

The assassination of Hariri was by all accounts the main turning point in the relationship between the LF and FM. What seemed impossible before the death of Hariri suddenly became within reach, namely unifying several communities to stand together against the Syrian presence in Lebanon. Two communities that had been on opposite sides of the political divide that existed in Lebanon since the early 1970s were suddenly talking to each other and working towards common goals. The assassination of Hariri and several other leaders between 2006 and 2007 brought both groups closer together in

their common search for the truth on the killing of Hariri and the demand that Syria pull its troops out of Lebanon.

While the protest against the Syrian regime had begun by several Christian groups before the assassination of Hariri, according to most interviewees, it was not until Hariri's death that the coalition was expanded to include the majority of the Sunni Muslim and Druze population. This provided strength to the movement and further weakened the Syrians who felt more vulnerable without the cooperation of mainstream leaders such as Hariri or PSP leader Walid Jumblat, who represents a majority of the Druze population.

Similarly, prior to and after the withdrawal of Syrian troops in 2005, Lebanese citizens of all ages and walks-of-life, belonging to different political parties, met regularly in the center of Beirut for mass demonstrations. The main goals of these mass demonstrations (estimated to have included over one million Lebanese—fully one quarter of the population) demanded "the truth" about the assassination of the Prime Minister, the resignation of the pro-Syrian Lebanese government, and the withdrawal of foreign (Syrian) troops from all of Lebanon. This type of mass political mobilization was new to Lebanon – in both size and cross-sect alliances.

According to several interviewees, the joint marches and demonstrations provided a unique opportunity for party supporters from both sides to meet members of the other

community. While political leaders in Lebanon did meet regularly in political forums, and through their work in government institutions, following the end of the war in 1990 (with the exception of Geagea who was in jail and General Aoun, to some extent, because he was in exile in France), at the popular level such contact between party supporters was limited. This is especially true for individuals who did not live in religiously mixed neighborhoods, such as the ones interviewed in this research.

The Joint marches further encouraged the leaders of the respective communities to ride the rising waves of discontent they were witnessing and feel more secure about their positions and attacks on Syria. One could argue that it also facilitated contact between the leaders. Meeting with former sworn enemies was now perceived as a necessity to win the battle against the new common enemy.

These findings confirm a number of methods to reduce prejudice including, the impact of equal status contact as people form different walks of life and religious background come together as equals in these demonstrations. One could even argue that the concept of common enemy and superordinate goals apply too. In this case everyone in the Cedar Revolution was united against Syria and had for goal a sovereign and independent Lebanese state an idea that had been challenged by warlords interested in dividing up the country for years.

In-depth interviews also point to the fact that street marches were not only beneficial to strengthening the relationship between political party supporters, but more generally between the two communities they come from. The marches were replicated by the opposition when they organized their own mass demonstrations.[33] It is unclear what share of the overall impact these marches have had on the strength of the alliance and on changing individual's views of the *other*. It is evident from the in-depth interviews, however, that the marches did have a considerable impact. This could be a helpful lesson learned for those political and policy experts trying to help political parties reduce divisions and prejudice in a given society, except that it is very difficult to mobilize a quarter of any country's population without a cause that moves such large numbers of people to mobilize. The 30 years of Syrian military occupation, and the excesses that ensued, were the catalyst in this case for over half the Lebanese population.

[33] The March 8 and March 14 political alliances were created following the assassination of Prime Minister Rafic Hariri in February 2005. As a result of the assassination of the prime minister, a popular movement including political parties, civic groups and citizens from all regions and walks of life went to the streets to demand an end to nearly three decades of Syrian military presence in Lebanon. What began as a predominantly Christian backed movement made up of General Aoun and LF supporters expanded following the assassination to include a majority of Sunni and Druze Lebanese parties, civic movements and individuals, as well as a limited number of representatives of the Shiia community. Mass street protest, especially in the center of Beirut, went on for a period of several weeks. On March 8, pro-Syrian parties joined forces and organized a mass demonstration to show that a large number of Lebanese continued to support Syria's role and assistance to Lebanon. This mass demonstration was countered by an even larger gathering on March 14 of the anti-Syrian forces that were determined to show the March 8 pro-Syrian supporters and the world opinion that they represented the majority of the country. March 8 was initially composed of Hezbollah, Amal movement, Lebanese Communist Party, Marada Movement and the Syrian Social Nationalist Party. The March 14 Alliance included The Free Patriotic Movement, the LF, the Future Movement, the Kataeb Party, the Progressive Socialist Party, and a number of prominent independent political figures. Following the May-June 2005 parliamentary elections, the March 14 alliance secured 69 of 128 seats in parliament and formed the government. Following the elections the Free Patriotic Movement of General Aoun could not reach agreement with the March 14 on the government make up and left the alliance, joining opposition parties that represent the March 8 alliance.

What is more important perhaps is that common initiatives with unifying goals seem to moderate participants within the unified new group as predicted by the research.

### 5.2.2 Leadership

The research pointed to the important role leaders play in the formation of alliances and in their sustainability, as well as the influence leaders have on changing party followers' attitudes. Most interviewees were clear that leaders had an overwhelming impact on them and on their decisions to either open up to the *other* or not. Prejudices were formed in their opinion as a result of political party leaders' decisions to confront other community leaders and challenge them and the people they represent publicly.

When asked why leaders had such an overwhelming influence on voters' perception and attitudes, several reasons were given. These included leaders' overwhelming economic power, particularly through a patronage system which grants jobs and other economic benefits to their supporters; regular manipulation of information through the media outlets they control; and the political discourse they use vis-à-vis the other parties and leaders. This discourse tends to routinely question the patriotism of other political leaders and of their followers, as well as their effort to protect Lebanon, if and when they disagree with the leader in question. Such discourse deepens divisions

between the party members and, in turn, between the confessional groups that support them.

The findings about the influence of leadership on group behavior and prejudice is well documented as stated in chapter 2 and applies to political parties as well, as seen in this research. The lesson perhaps that ought to be highlighted in the case of post-conflict countries is that leaders maintain disproportionate power as long as the state is weak, people are overly dependent economically on the leaders' largess, and citizens are afraid for their lives and to challenge the established order. In all these cases, it is very easy for leaders to mobilize their party base and lead them in any direction they see fit for their interest or that of the community.

Finally, in each religious community in Lebanon there is a percentage of followers who identify most intimately with their sect and tend to give their unconditional support to any position that can strengthen their community. This often pushes political leaders to take extreme political positions, especially in the absence of moderating forces or institutions that force politicians to respect a certain code of conduct. Ultimately, such positions come at the expense of those who seek moderation and greater constructive engagement with members of other religious groups and political parties.

As described, leadership plays a crucial role in the formation and impact of political alliances. Observation of various post-conflict dynamics demonstrates that this does not seem to be limited to Lebanon. Political leaders often abuse their powers and use their positions to create a charged environment that can facilitate political violence or, at the very least, cement in-group ties. The opposite is true too: political leaders can use their positions and political alliances to help smooth differences between groups by focusing on issues that are not inflammatory, demanding moderation by the removal of provocative symbols and images, or by addressing issues that transcend political divisions and that do not threaten other political parties' values and identities. Finding the right incentive for political leaders to do that is the challenge we face and that policy makers and conflict resolution experts need to study in more depth.

### 5.2.3 Confessional Politics

While a majority of interviewees recognized the effectiveness of confessional-based politics in rallying people from one confessional group around a leader, most were either opposed to it, or wanted it better regulated through state institutions. Interviewees were clearly not comfortable with the current situation in which political leaders played on fear of the *other* to keep control of their political base and in the process sustain prejudice.

Interviewees that supported the FM and/or LF pointed to the problem of religious conflict that exists in Lebanon. They were quick to add that in most cases, politicians use these formal and informal divisions to weaken the state and reinforce their personal control. Interviewees also explained that the Lebanese conflict was primarily political and not religious. They repeatedly emphasized that without the current politicians Lebanese of different religious backgrounds would get along fine.

For many the solution is to recognize the particularities of each religious community and to manage the relationships more pro-actively and constructively so as not to give political leaders an opportunity to use religion for political means. For the majority of the interviewees, however, more needs to be done in schools, through multi-confessional programs and institutions, and through election reform to reduce the impact of confessional politics.

These two visions, namely recognizing and protecting religious particularities, and working to reduce religious intolerance and increasing trust between diverse religious groups, although quite different, are believed by interviewees to sustain a level of tolerance and inter-communal peace that is constantly threatened in Lebanon today.

Several countries around the world have experienced similar conflicts with religious undertones. Interestingly, often warring groups belonging to different religions claim that the reason there is conflict is directly related to the incompatible nature of the

two group's religious beliefs. These discussions have become more common in recent years after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 in New York City and Washington, D.C. One lesson from the study of the Lebanese conflict that might be useful to other conflicts is that policy makers and conflict resolution practitioners should recognize religious differences but not dismiss the political dimension of such conflicts that might be clouded by people's prejudiced outlook of religions other than their own.

### 5.2.4 Weak State

Another important finding about the impact of alliances on voters and the sustainability of such shifts in perception of the *other* stems from the weakness of the Lebanese state. In the opinion of the interviewees, the Lebanese state's weakness is a reason why politicians have so much control over their supporters and are capable of manipulating the religious communities as they do, cultivating prejudice and fear among followers as they see fit. For many, the state does not offer the services and protection that would reduce reliance on political leaders and, as such, any change in perception of the *other* will last as long as the leaders are in agreement to be in alliance, or avoid confrontation with each other. The moment leaders change course, however, their strong control over the community forces its members to change course too, even if the community feels that it is not necessarily in its best interests.

Most interviewees seem to point to "fear" and "vulnerability" as the main reasons for finding refuge in the existing politico-confessional system. These two words were used repeatedly by members of both communities. Several interviewees emphasized that they needed protection at the individual level and that is why they needed to belong to a religious/political group. While some thought belonging to a political/religious group defined them from an identity and cultural standpoint, most considered protection at the individual and communal level as the priority. They wanted their rights to be guaranteed through the legal system and gradually through practice. The lack of trust that resulted from religious killings and years of inter-party fighting has deep roots in people's memory and this has made Lebanese citizens very reluctant to trust someone outside their own "group," however this is defined.

Some interviewees described the political leaders as often working to weaken the state by slowing down or paralyzing its institutions, evading accountability, misusing government resources or using them to the exclusive benefit of their party supporters. Lebanon is not the only country that finds itself with weak government institutions after a long conflict. Most countries that have experienced years of destruction and violence perceive their state institutions as diminished or paralyzed. It is through the process of institution rebuilding and reform, that people can be touched in their daily lives at the local level, that a society becomes more trusting and that deeply rooted fears and divisions are gradually addressed in a post conflict environment.

### 5.2.5 Unstable vs. Stable Political Environment

The impact of political alliances on party supporters may wane because of the unstable political environment that Lebanon has experienced in recent years. According to interviewees, their ability to maintain a good perception of the *other* and a relationship with the *other* depends on whether or not the *other* is perceived as a threat. However, this is, according to interviewees, directly related to the political environment and its stability. Politicians relying on the financial and military support of outside powers are often incapable of shielding themselves from regional crises. As such, regional tensions and conflicts impact Lebanese political leaders beholden to foreign powers. This translates, at times of heightened regional tensions, into a polarization of Lebanese leaders and ultimately their party supporters.

In conclusion, this section has tried to show the limitations of the impact of political alliances over time. While there are no measurements to gauge the impact of "context" or "situational factors" on party supporters following the dissolution of a political alliance, the interviews help us realize the existence of elements that can influence prejudices of party followers in a post-alliance phase and expand our understanding of these factors beyond existing definitions. The findings of the research can help policy makers, development experts and conflict resolution practitioners focus their interventions to address some of the 'situational/contextual factors' discussed and

that contribute to political polarization and the continued existence of prejudice and fear among people.

### 5.3 Relevance to the Field of Conflict Resolution

The findings of this research are significant to the field of conflict resolution because they not only confirm some existing theories, but also provide greater insights into ways of reducing prejudice. The findings support those who believe that political party alliances tend to moderate party supporters, especially when the alliances cross the lines along which the deeply rooted conflict have taken place. Some of the theories and concepts are discussed in light of the research findings below. These include contact theory, superordinate goals, learning about the other, common enemy, normative change and world view. Lastly, the analysis looks at the impact of coalitions on party supporters as it pertains to micro types of conflict resolution intervention techniques used by practitioners.

As demonstrated, political party alliances impact party followers' perceptions in different ways. In some cases, as was the case in Lebanon, the political alliance lead political parties to conduct joint rallies and demonstrations. These activities offered opportunities to individuals from different political camps to overcome some of their fears and prejudices through the pursuit of joint activities with the *other*. This confirms,

as discussed earlier, that contact theory predicts accurately the reduction of prejudice among party followers as a result of increased contact.

Another concept that clearly applies in the case of political alliances is the creation of superordinate goals that bring together parties in the coalition. A majority of interviewees explained that it was "common interests" and wanting a "sovereign country" that moved the political parties to create an alliance. During the interviews it became clear that the parties in the alliance had as a goal to be in government, but they also agreed on common positions regarding the rejection of a continued Syrian presence in Lebanon, for example. Superordinate goals such as this help reduce tension as well as prejudice among party supporters.

An often unintended consequence of political alliances is that it forces the political base of each party in the alliance to learn about the *other*. Invariably interviewees explained that they had not only become more interested in learning about the political positions of the other party supporters, but often also about the other's culture, religion and traditions. As the theory describes and this research reinforced, the increased level of familiarity with the *other* helps one tolerate *others'* views. This process also re-humanizes the *other* and enables both sides to engage in substantive discussions about pending problems, as well as others that might have existed between them in the past.

Another important element that existed in the case of the FM and LF alliance was the "common enemy" that emerged as a result of the assassination of Prime Minister Rafic Hariri. Not only did the assassination have a deep impact on the Sunni Muslim community, it also created a common enemy. The LF supporters had suffered for years at the hands of the Syrian regime. After the assassination of Hariri, and the presence of preliminary evidence pointing to the culpability of the Syrian regime, the LF could finally see the FM leadership share their anger towards the Syrian military presence in Lebanon. This not only encouraged the creation of a political alliance but got both sides to work closely together to confront the Syrian troops peacefully and demand their pull-out from Lebanon.

Another theoretical concept that seems to apply in the analysis of this research is the impact of normative change on relationships and prejudice. One could argue that both sides experienced normative changes including a shift for the FM in their interest to see the sovereignty of the state unchallenged by existing militias in the country, namely Hezbollah, and the LF's decision to join forces in the alliance with political parties that had been seen, in the past, on an opposite side of the conflict. The LF also took steps to encourage members not to use provocative symbols that could offend the *other*. Normative changes in the relationship that were triggered by the assassination of Rafic Hariri among LF and FM supporters allowed party followers to get to know each other more intimately. As a result, many supporters felt that more could be done to improve the long-term relationship between the parties and between their supporters.

Humans form prejudices based on what they observe or think they observe in the *other*. The formation of a world view is directly related to that process. Individuals define who is friendly to them and who is not through their interaction with others and depending on their world view. During war time, one's world view excludes and diminishes the *other*. Party supporters are convinced by their leaders to believe that the *other* holds values incompatible with their own. According to world view theory, the more essential a belief is to one's personal identification, the more difficult it is to change it. Political leaders emphasize religious differences in their discourse to convince their supporters of the incompatible goals and aspirations of the *other* side. Political alliances force political leaders to distance themselves from this language. Nevertheless, what is noticed is a refocus of the political discourse on areas of commonality. There is no effort to erase the fears that individuals have as they pertain to religious differences. So, for example, no effort is made to teach students at school about the *other's* religious beliefs and habits. There is also no effort to analyze history and how religion was used to political ends.

This is clearly in political leaders' personal interests, because at any moment they can tap back into deep-seated fears left by years of conflict and reignite the conflict, if needed. Similarly, no mechanism for a national apology has yet been found in the case of Lebanon. Civil society has successfully attempted to bring religious leaders together but effort by civil society or religious leaders to bring politicians together for an apology has largely been resisted. One could argue that as long as political alliances only show

agreement between the parties on non-central beliefs, citizens will remain vulnerable to manipulations by political leaders and divisions.

A final key finding of the research which is of relevance to the field of conflict analysis and resolution is the anchoring effect of political alliances in the process of changing party followers' perceptions. As discussed in chapter three, the research supports the suggestions made in the framework that political alliances have a positive impact on party follower's views. However, the answers to in-depth interview question four also suggest that for many party supporters the more formal nature of the alliance helped anchor the relationship which was previously fragile and vulnerable. For many who were not ready to see an ally in the *other* party, the political alliance further pushed them into supporting the alliance and its positions.

Conflict resolution practitioners have worked in different countries at the grassroots and second track diplomacy level to try and build bridges between communities and heal the divides that exist as a result of deeply rooted conflicts. What has remained a point of frustration for practitioners, however, is the inability of these 'micro' level activities to yield 'macro' level results, despite their apparent success. This research suggests that despite critical turning points, such as the death of Prime Minister Hariri, it was not until a more formal agreement had been reached between the leaders of the parties that followers became open to the *other* party. This happens often as a result of external events but also, importantly, because leaders' interests converge. It is hoped

that this finding can assist conflict resolution practitioners. They may now realize the importance of first track agreements in supporting grassroots and second track interventions. More should be done to encourage multi-level approaches to conflict resolution. Lastly, one could apply this macro level lesson to micro level interventions and argue that formal agreements are needed to consolidate the gains made during face-to-face conflict resolution exercises.

### 5.4 Areas for Future Research

This final section considers the questions for further research that emerged and that are of relevance to the field of conflict analysis and resolution and worthy of further investigation. The questions listed below are not exhaustive, but highlight some of the most important issues that deserve investigation.

The first research question is the relevance of these findings to other contexts where the conflict is based on ethnic, linguistic, racial or tribal divisions. While it is unclear that political alliances will act in the same way in different environments, other conflicts where such divisions are present indicate that political alliances across the conflict divide can at times reduce tension. Whether this is directly attributable to the alliance or to a phase of the conflict is yet to be determined.

The second research question that needs further investigation is the role age and gender play in the overall findings. Despite balancing gender in the current sample—in both the survey and in-depth interviews—the sample size was too small to draw definitive answers regarding the impact of the political alliance on gender.

A third area that is worth investigating is the impact of lingering negative perceptions that develop in a conflict situation and that often are not addressed by the dynamic of the alliance. While many interviewees acknowledged that the alliance had a positive impact on them and other party supporters, it was not clear how deep this impact was given that many did not seem able to shed the deep seated fears that had developed during years of conflict. For many the alliance was temporary and the *other* could only be trusted as long as the alliance was in effect or did not act against their party's declared positions and interests.

The fourth question is related to the fact that political considerations seem to trump confessional ones among party supporters. The Lebanese conflict is often portrayed as a religious conflict that is decades old—some would argue centuries old—yet a majority of interviewees did not perceive, or no longer perceived it as such. Still, for most individuals involved in this research, the political alliance was imposed from the top-down and did not necessarily reflect their personal convictions initially, although most were willing to defend the alliance once it was created. The supporters of the FM and LF are willing to change political positions if their leaders do so and are willing to

demonize the other if that is the guarantee for them staying part of their group. What is not clear is the most effective way of helping party supporters maintain their openness to the *other*. Put differently, what would give individuals the strength to stand up to their leaders in defense of higher values such as tolerance of the *other*, human rights or the rejection of violence? This question is at the heart of conflict resolution theory. Different schools of thought have looked at this question from different perspectives. While this research offers hints at what can be done, none of these remedies were tested.

The final important question that should be investigated is the lingering negative perspectives that remain with people following a conflict. While supporters of the LF and FM are willing to forgive during the period of the political alliance, how easily will they forget? It is unclear how deep the process of forgiveness is as a result of a political alliance. Measuring post-alliance feelings and attitudes would be important to get at this aspect of political party alliances. Even though the civil war ended over 15 years ago, it has not been forgotten. Recent violence in early 2008 between Lebanon's government and opposition political alliances were, to many Lebanese, a reminder of how easily political parties can slip back into conflict and how vulnerable each party is to manipulation.

## 5.5 Concluding Thoughts

Finally, this research studied the role of political alliances on prejudice among party supporters. Several important findings were made that are of relevance to the theoretical field and to practitioners in development, policy and conflict resolution. The research was not without its challenges, especially in a post-conflict country like Lebanon, but the rewards and the learning experiences supersede the challenges. This research should be useful to other colleagues and researchers in the field of conflict analysis and resolution, and be an addition to the knowledge we are acquiring about human nature and ways to assist in resolving conflict peacefully.

Having grown up in Lebanon during the 1975-1990 war, having been the recipient of "brainwashing" over the years by politicians wanting us to believe that the *other* and her or his religion are "evil," and having religion be named the reason for the conflict in Lebanon, this research helped confirm the many observations I have made from my work in other conflict zones around the world. Religious differences are important and not to be dismissed in any attempt at understanding or resolving conflicts in countries such as Lebanon. Nevertheless, the research demonstrates that people are generally capable and, more importantly, willing to manage those differences if they are not fearful—fear that is instituted by their leaders—into believing that their interests and rights are threatened by the *other* and that only fighting for these rights can secure them.

The desk review and the in-depth interviews show differently that religious differences were not the reason for the conflict in Lebanon, but rather that regional and local political problems and the way politicians manage them were at the heart of the conflict.

Even people who were on opposite sides of the conflict for over 30 years, and some would argue longer, minimized their differences and fears to work together as a result of the alliance. What is perhaps most striking is that the alliance contributed significantly to realizing that what divided them was more political than religious and that many of these problems could be resolved with determination and problem solving.

On a more personal level and to conclude, what is difficult to come to terms with is the sense of loss inflicted on several generations of Lebanese, and the devastation caused to the country. This is in large part due to poor leadership and the citizens' inability or fear to reach across the divide to break the silence imposed by the conflict. Overcoming these two obstacles in any conflict or post-conflict environment requires skilled leadership to provide courage to engage in dialogue and to support an interest in learning about the *other*.

# Appendix A

## Survey

INSTRUCTIONS: Please circle only one answer and add notes if necessary unless indicated otherwise.

READ TO INTERVIEWEE: Prior to 2005 and during the Syrian occupation of Lebanon, the government was made up of pro-Syrian Sunni, Shi'a, Druze and Christian groups. At the time Dr. Samir Geagea was in prison and General Michel Aoun in Exile.

Q1- Back then, in your opinion how was the relationship between the Future Movement and the Lebanese Forces (LF)?

1- Very good
2- Good
3- Neither good nor bad
4- Bad
5- Very bad
6- Comments: [Do not read to interviewee]_____

_____

Q2- Back then, how would you describe the relationship between passed PM Rafic Hariri and Dr. Samir Geagea

1- Very good
2- Good
3- Neither good nor bad
4- Bad
5- Very Bad
6- Inexistent
7- Comments [Do not read to interviewee]_____

_____

Q3- Back then, in your opinion was the relationship between Sunnis and Christians:

1- Very good
2- Good
3- Neither good nor bad
4- Bad
5- Very bad
6- Other: [Do not read to interviewee]_____

Q4- Back then, what was the level of coordination between the LF and the Future Movement?

1- Very good
2- Good
3- Neither good nor bad
4- Bad
5- Very bad
6- Comments [Do not read to interviewee]_____
_____

Q5- Back then did you think that people in your community were prejudiced against folks from the Christian/Sunni Community?

1- very much
2- somewhat
3- Not at all

Q6- Back then, did you consider yourself prejudiced towards Christians/Sunnis?

1- Very much
2- Somewhat
3- Not at all
4- Comments [do not read to interviewee]_____
_____

Q7- Before the alliance did you have prejudices against the members of the other community?

1- Very much
2- Somewhat
3- No
4- Do not know
5- Comments (do not read to interviewee):_____
_____

READ TO INTERVIEWEE: Now let us come back to today.

Q1- Has the political alliance between LF and Future Movement changed your view of Christians/Sunni relations? (circle one)

1- For the better
2- Not changed
3- For the worse

Q2- If the political alliance between LF and Future Movement changed your view of Christians/Sunni relations, when did that start?

1- Before the June 2005 elections
2- Between the June 2005 elections and the July 12 war
3- After the July 12 war

Q3- Since the alliance between LF and Future Movement, have you been interested in learning more about the other political group?

1- Yes, a lot
2- Just a little
3- No, hardly at all

Q4- Regarding the other political group, what have you been interested in learning more about? (Please circle all that apply)

1- Their religion
2- Their political issues
3- Their history
4- Their cultural habits
5- Other: _____

Q5- Has the alliance between LF and the Future Movement made you more sympathetic to the cause of the other party?

1- Yes
2- No

Q6- Have you started paying more attention to the speeches of the leaders of the other party as a result of this alliance?

1- Yes
2- No

Q7- As a result of the alliance and the joint demonstrations in 2005 following the death of Prime Minister Rafic Hariri, have you met and become friends with individuals from the other religious/political group?

1- Yes
2- No
3- I had friends from that group but did not increase the number of persons I know from that group

Q8- Do you agree with the demands of the other side?

1- I do, fully
2- Only partially
3- I don't agree
4- I don't know [Do not read to interviewee] ?
5- Other:_____

Q9- Do you think the alliance is temporary?

1- Yes
2- No

Q10- Have you been more supportive of the LF/Future Movement since the political alliance took place as a result of the elections?

1- Yes: A- very much B- just a little
2- No
3- Don't know [Do not read to interviewee]
4- Other:_____

Q11- Do you think that you have a more positive outlook on Christians/Sunni?

1- Yes
2- No
3- Don't know [Do not read to interviewee]

Q12- Do you think your positive outlook on Christians/Sunni will last beyond the political alliance?

1- Yes, beyond the alliance
2- Yes, as long as the alliance lasts
3- No
4- Don't know [do not read to interviewee]

Q13- Would you say that such political alliances reduce prejudice towards the other group?

1- Yes, quite a bit
2- Yes, just a little
3- No
4- Not sure [Do not read to interviewee]
5- Other:_____

Q14- Would you say you have friends from the other religious group?

1- No
2- (one to three)
3- (three to five)
4- (five to fifteen)
5- More

Q15- If a close member of your family married someone from the other religious group, would the marriage be perceived by your community as?

1- An unacceptable thing
2- Tolerated but not really accepted
3- An acceptable thing
4- Other: _____

Q16- While the alliance lasts, do you trust the leadership of the other party? If yes, how much?

1- Trust them a lot
2- Trust them a little
3- Do not trust them
4- They are like all politicians
5- Do not know [do not ask interviewee]

Q17- Do you trust the leader of Lebanese Forces/Future Movement?

1- Most issues
2- Some issues
3- No issue
4- They are like all politicians
5- Do not know [do not ask interviewee]

Q18- Do you feel that the alliance of the two parties is a good thing? If yes, do you think it will impact the relationship of the two communities past this alliance?

1- Yes
2- Perhaps a little
3- Perhaps
4- No
5- Do not know [Do not ask interviewee]

Q19- Why do you think that these two parties have joined forces? (Circle as many as needed)

1- Common interests
2- Similar party ideologies
3- The religious communities think alike?
4- The leadership respect each other?
5- Coincidence?
6- Common enemy?

Do not know [Do not ask interviewee]

7- Other:_____

**Demographics**

Religion: _____
Sect: _____
Party you regularly vote for:
Member of political party:
Sex (circle one): M F
Age (circle one): 1- 20 to 30
2- 31 to 40
3- 41 to 50
4- 51 to 60
5- 60 and above

## Appendix B

# استبيان المسح

**التعليمات:** الرجاء وضع دائرة حول جواب واحدوأضف الملاحظات عند الحاجة، إلا إذا وردت تعليمات أخرى.

**معلومات ديمغرافية**

**الدين:**
**الطائفة:**
**الحزب الذي تصوّت له عادة:**
**عضو في حزب سياسي:**
**الجنس: (دائرة حول واحد)** **ذكر** **أنثى**
**العمر (دائرة حول واحد)**
**1- 20 إلى 30**
**2- 31 إلى 40**
**3- 41 إلى 50**
**4- 51 إلى 60**
**5- 60 وما فوق**

**الرجاء القراءة للخاضع للمقابلة ما يلي: منذ انتهاء الحرب في1991 لغاية استشهاد الرئيس الحريري في عام 2005 وخلال الاحتلال السوري للبنان، كانت الحكومة تتشكل من المجموعات السنية والشيعية الدرزية والمسيحية الموالية لسوريا. في ذاكالوقت كان الدكتور سمير جعجع فيالسجن والجنرال ميشال عون في المنفى.**

**س 1: في ذاك الحين، برأيك كيف كانت العلاقات بين تيار المستقبل والقوات اللبنانية؟**
1- جيدة جداً
2- جيدة
3- لا جيدة ولا سيئة
4- سيئة
5- سيئة جداً
6- تعليقات: (لا تقرأها للخاضع للمقابلة)_____
_____

**س2: في ذاك الحين، كيف تصف العلاقة بين رئيس الوزراء السابق رفيق الحريري والدكتور سمير جعجع؟**
1- جيدة جداً
2- جيدة

3- لا جيدة ولا سيئة
4- سيئة
5- سيئة جدا
6- غير موجودة
7- تعليقات: (لا تقرأها للخاضع للمقابلة)_____
_____

**س 3 : في ذاك الحين، برأيك هل كانت العلاقة بين السنةوالمسيحيين:**
1- جيدة جداً
2- جيدة
3- لا جيدة ولا سيئة
4- سيئة
5- سيئة جداً
6- تعليقات: (لا تقرأها للخاضع للمقابلة)_____
_____

**س 4: في ذاك الحين، ما كان مستوى التنسيق السياسي بين تيار المستقبل والقوات اللبنانية؟**
موجود:
1- جيدة جداً
2- جيدة
3- لا جيدة ولا سيئة
4- سيئة
5- سيئة جداً
6- غير موجود
7- تعليقات: (لا تقرأها للخاضع للمقابلة)_____
_____

**س 5: في ذاك الحين، هل كا ن لأبناء طائفتك أحكام مسبقة سلبية عن الطائفة الأخرة؟**
1- كثيراً
2- نوعاً ما
3- أبداً

**س 6 في ذاك الحين، هل كا ن لأبناء الطائفة الخرة احكام مسبقة سلبية عن طائفتك؟**
1-نعم كثيراً
2- نوعاً ما
3- لا
4- لا أعرف

**س 7: في ذاك الحين، هل كان لديك أنت أحكام مسبقة سلبية من أبناء الطائفة الأخرة؟**

1- كثيراً
2- نوعاً ما
3- لأ
4- لا أعرف
5- تعليقات (لا تقرأها للخاضع للمقبلة): _____

_____

**<u>إقرا للخاضع للمقابلة:</u>** لنعد الآن إلى وضعنا الحالي.

**س1- هل غيّر التحالف السياسي بين تيار المستقبل والقوات اللبنانية رأيك بالعلاقات بين المسيحين و السنة ؟ (ضع دائرة حول جواب واحد)**

1- للأفضل
2- لم تتغيّر
3- للأسوأ

**س 2 – إذا كان التحالف بين تيار المستقبل والقوات اللبنانية غيّر <u>رأيك</u> بالعلاقات بين المسيحين و السنة ،متى بدا ذلك؟ (أكثر من جواب)**

1- قبل انتخابات حزيران 2005
2- بين انتخابات حزيران 2005 و حرب 12 تموز
3- بعد حرب 12 تموز
4- تعليقات (لا تقرأها للخاضع للمقبلة): _____

_____

**س 3- منذ التحالف بين تيار المستقبل والقوات اللبنانية، هل اهتميت بمعرفة المزيد عن الفريق السياسي الثاني؟**

1- نعم، كثيراً
2- قليلاً فقط
3- لا بالكاد

**س 4- في ما يتعلق بالفريق السياسي الآخر،هل أدى هذا التحالف الى اهتمامك بالتعمق أكثر في ؟ (الرجاء وضع دائرة حول ما ينطبق / أكثر من جواب)**

1- دينه
2- قضاياه السياسية
3- تاريخه
4- عاداته الثقافية
5- مسألة أخرى: _____
6- لأ ما حاولت أتعمق
7- أعطي أمثلة: _____

(الدقة: من خلال ألقرائة أو ألمعاشرة أكثر أو مشاهدة قنوات ألتلفزيون و ألراديو)

**س 5- هل أن التحالف بين تيار المستقبل والقوات اللبنانية جعلك تتفهم أكثر مطالب ألطائفة الآخرة؟ (ضمن أللا طار ألعام للتحالف)**

1- نعم
2- لا

**س6- نتيجة التحالف هل زاد اهتمامك بخطابات قادة الحزب الآخر؟**

1- نعم
2- لا

**س 7- نتيجة التحالف وللمظاهرات المشتركة في العام 2005 بعد وفاة رئيس الوزراء رفيق الحريري، هل التقيت أفراداً من الفريق الطنفي/ السياسي الآخر وارتبطت بصداقة معه؟**

1- نعم
2- لا
3- كانت لدي صداقات من الفريق الاخر لكنني لم أزد من عدد الأشخاص الذين كنت أعرفهم من الفريق الآخر

**س 8- هل توافق على مطالب فريق ألقوات اللبنانية/المستقبل**

1- نعم، كلها
2- جزئياً
3- لا أوافق عليها
4- لا أعرف (لا تقرأ للخاضع للمقابلة) ؟
5- جواب آخر: _____

**س9- هل تظن التحالف مؤقتاً؟**

1 – نعم
2- لا

**س 10- هل أصبحت أكثر دعماً للقوات اللبنانية/ تيار المستقبل منذ أتى التحالف السياسي نتيجة الانتخابات؟**

1- نعم: كثيرا بعض الشيئ
2- لا
3- لا أعرف (لا تقرأ للخاضع للمقابلة) ؟
4- جواب آخر: _____

**س 11- هل تظن أنك تتمتع بنظرة عامة أكثر إيجابية حيال المسيحن / السنة؟**

1- نعم
2- لا
3- لا أعرف (لا تقرأ للخاضع للمقابلة)

**س 12- هل تظن أن نظرتك العامة للمسيحي / السني سوف تستمر ما بعد التحالف؟**

1- نعم ، إلى ما بعد التحالف
2- نعم، طالما أن التحالف قائم
3- لا
4- لا أعرف (لا تقرأ للخاضع للمقابلة)
5- تعليقات:_____

**س 13- هل تعتبر أن هذا النوع من التحالفات السياسية تخفف من الحكم المسبق ألسلبي عن المسحيين/السنة الآخر؟**

1- نعم، بشكل كبير
2- نعم، قليلاً
3- لا
4- لست متأكداً (لا تقرأ للخاضع للمقابلة)
5- جواب آخر: _____

**س 14- هل يمكن القول أن لديك حاليا أصدقاء من الفريق الديني الآخر؟ (أشخاص تلتقي بها خارج نطا ق العمل)**

1- لا
2- (واحد إلى ثلاثة)
3- (ثلاثة إلى خمسة)
4- (خمسة إلى خمسة عشر)
5- أكثر

**س 15- إذا تزوّج قريب لك من شخص من الدين الآخر، هل يعتبر مجتمعك الزواج :**

1- غير مقبول
2- مقبول ولاكن غير محبذً
3- أمر مقبوكل
4- رأي آخر:_____

**س 16- طالما يدوم التحالف هل تثق بقيادة مجموعة القوات اللبنانية/ألمستقبل؟ إذا كان الجواب نعم، إلى أي حد؟**

1- أثق بها كثيراً
2- أثق بها ليلاً
3- لا اثق بها أبداً
4- إنهم كسائر السياسيين
5- لا أعرف (لا تقرأ للخاضع للمقابلة)

**س17 هل تثق بقائد القوات اللبنانية/ألمستقبل ؟**

1- كافة القضايه
2- بعض القضايةً
3-لأً
4- إنهم كسائر السياسيين
5- لا أعرف (لا تقرأ للخاضع للمقابلة)

**س18- هل تشعر ان التحالف بين الحزبين أمر جيد؟ إذا كان الجواب نعم، هل تظن أن هذه المسألة ستترك أثارًا اجابية على العلاقة بين الطائفتين المؤيدة لهاذه اللأحذاب ما بعد التحالف؟**

1- نعم
2- ربما قليلاً
3- ربما
4- لا
5- لا أعرف (لا تقرأ للخاضع للمقابلة)

**س 19- لماذا برأيك تحالف الفريقان؟ (ضع دائرة حول العدد الذي تحتاج إليه من الأجوبة)**

1- المصالح المشتركة
2- إيديولوجيا حزبية مشابهة
3- تشابه في تفكير الطائفتين؟
4- احترام القيادات بعضها لبعض؟
5- المصادفة؟
6- عدو مشترك؟
لا أعرف (لا تقرأ للخاضع للمقابلة
7- جواب آخر:_____-

# Appendix C

## In-Depth Interviews

2- Has anything changed in the way you look at someone from the other group since the alliance? If yes, what has changed?
3- Have you become more interested in learning about the religious customs, political concerns, history and/or cultural habits of the other group as a result of this alliance? If yes, what did you do?
4- Would you be more willing to befriend someone from the other community as a result of this alliance? Why or why not?
5- What have the following dates meant to the relationship between the supporters of LF and Future Movement?
    1. The death of PM Rafic Hariri
    2. The June 2005 election alliance
    3. The demonstrations of November/December 2006

6- Do you think that this political alliance will lead anyone to change their long term attitude towards the other group in a permanent way? If yes, why? If no, why not?

**Demographics**

Religion: _____
Sect: _____
Party you regularly vote for:
Member of political party:
Sex (circle one): M F
Age (circle one): 1- 20 to 30
2- 31 to 40
3- 41 to 50
4- 51 to 60
5- 60 and above

# Appendix D

## استبيان المقابلة المعمّقة

**معلومات ديمغرافية**

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**الدين:**
**الطائفة:**
**الحزب الذي تصوّت له عادة:**
**عضو في حزب سياسي:**
**الجنس: (دائرة حول واحد)** **ذكر** **أنثى**
**العمر (دائرة حول واحد)**
**1- 20 إلى 30**
**2- 31 إلى 40**
**3- 41 إلى 50**
**4- 51 إلى 60**
**5- 60 وما فوق**

1- هل تغيّر شيء في نظرتك لشخص ينتمي الى الفريق الآخر منذ التحالف؟ إذا كان الجواب إيجاباً، ما الذي تغيّر؟
2- هل أصبحت أكثر اهتماماً بمعرفة المزيد عن عادات الفريق الآخر الدينية، واهتمماته السياسية وتاريخه و/أو عاداته الثقافية نتيجة ألتحالف؟ اذا نعم كيف؟ أعطي امثلة عن زيادت الاهتمام
3- هل أنت أكثر استعداداً لتكسب أصدقاء من الطائفة الأخرى نتيجة للتحالف؟اذا نعم أو لا حدد لما؟
4- ما هو أثر التواريخ التالية على للعلاقة بين مناصري تيار المستقبل ومناصري القوات اللبنانية؟
   a. وفاة رئيس الوزراء رفيق الحريري
   b. تحالف انتخابات حزيران 2005
   c. تظاهرات تشرين الثاني (نوفمبر/ كانون الأول (ديسمبر) 2006 الداعمة للحكومة بعد الحرب اللاسرائلية

5- هل تظن أن هذا التحالف السياسي سيؤدي بالناس إلى تغيير سلوكهم تجاه الفريق اللآخر على المدى الطويل بالفريق الآخر، وبطريقة دائمة؟ إذا الجواب إيجابي، لمَ؟ إذا الجواب سلبي، لمَ لا؟

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# Curriculum Vitae

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