Testing Sartori's Theory of Electoral and Party Systems:

A Comparison between Lebanon and Israel

Hassan Krayem and Ghia Osseiran*

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Introduction

The comparison between Israel and Lebanon's electoral and political party systems is interesting for various reasons. Both systems are similar in that they are considered multiparty systems. This first approximation, however, is misleading because the two systems are in fact more different than they are similar. In Israel, political parties have dominated the political process, and the smaller parties have had significant roles, including representation of various ethnic and ideological political views. In Lebanon, on the other hand the role of political parties has been historically weak, and is undermined by the role of traditional and neo-traditional communal forces.

In Israel, a stable electoral system that is based on proportional representation and a single nationwide voting district, is reinforcing the strong role of political parties, thus allowing for different parties, no matter how small, to obtain Knesset representation. In Lebanon, the different electoral laws employing simple plurality and multiple small to medium electoral districts have reinforced the weak role of political parties.

The paper concludes by providing a new theoretical model. It employs the method of 'most different' comparison to explain the two conflicting functions of political parties, namely representation and ability to resolve, not perpetuate, conflict. In Lebanon, the crisis led to further weakening of the internal basis of representation and policy making, resulting in a stalemate and paralysis of governing institutions. In Israel, it led to a stalemate in the peace process and a further strengthening of the extremist internal forces that are predetermining

external policies and thus leading to a deadlock and inability to move forward on the Palestinian-Israeli peace talks.

Sartori's Theory of Parties, Electoral Systems and Political Outcomes

In his book "Parties and Party Systems: A Framework for Analysis," Sartori investigates the relationship between electoral and party systems. While electoral systems affect party systems, party systems can also conversely impact electoral systems, countervailing the effect of the electoral system, through their manipulative effect on voters and their system of channeling candidates.
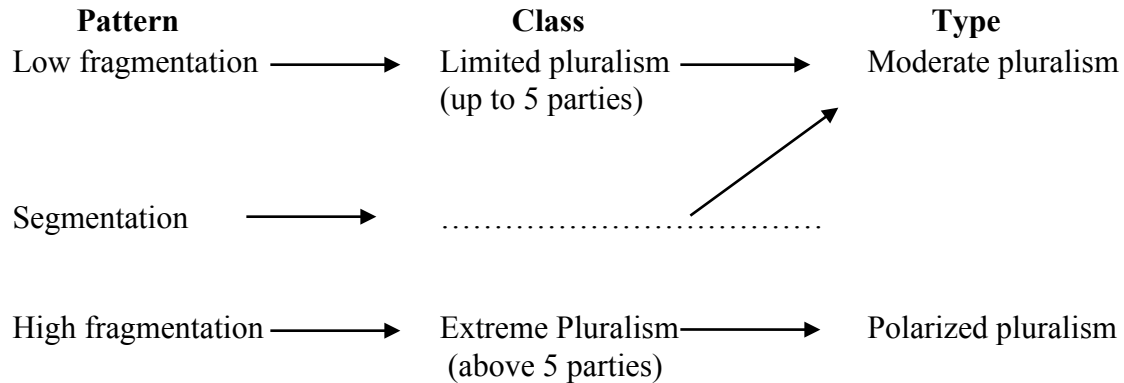
The conventional classification of multiparty systems is based on the numerical criterion. Parties themselves are ranked by coalition and blackmailing potential. Sartori qualifies the numerical criterion by checking it with the ideology variable as a qualitative criterion, indicating both ideological distance and ideological intensity. Political parties can thus be classified through an analysis of the number of relevant parties and the degree of fragmentation prevalent in a polity.

Fragmentation may reflect either a situation of segmentation or a situation of polarization. Segmentation refers to the existence of subsystems that are structurally distinct units, but perform the same functions. In other words, the divisions are essentially attributed to communal cleavages rather than ideological differences. Polarization, on the other hand, is measured by ideological distance, defined as "the overall spread of the ideological spectrum of any given polity.[1]"

Screening these factors, Sartori develops a modified classification (Table 1), which outlines two types of multipartism: moderate and pluralism. Moderate pluralism results in cases of low fragmentation without polarization. Polarized pluralism results in cases of high fragmentation.

Table 1[2]

Patterns, classes, and types of multipartism

Pattern	Class	Type
Low fragmentation ⟶	Limited pluralism ⟶ (up to 5 parties)	Moderate pluralism
Segmentation ⟶	………………………………	
High fragmentation ⟶	Extreme Pluralism ⟶ (above 5 parties)	Polarized pluralism

Sartori argues that electoral Systems have a direct effect on voters, and an indirect effect on political parties and party systems. The plurality voting system of single-member districts or multimember districts constrains and restrains the behavior of voters, limiting their choices to the leading contenders. This system is defined as a strong electoral system because of its manipulative effect on voters. Indirectly, this will also lead to a reductive effect on the number of parties if the same parties are competing nationally.

In the case of Proportional Representation (PR), the larger the district is and the lower the electoral threshold, the stronger the proportionality and the less the restriction on voters and on political party representation. This is labeled relatively pure PR to pure PR and is considered a "feeble" electoral system. Conversely, in the case of impure PR, the smaller the district and the higher the electoral threshold are, the less the proportionality, and the stronger the restriction on voters and on political party representation.

Both, the plurality and the impure PR formulas are considered "strong" electoral systems because of their restraining and constraining effects on voters. The "relatively pure to pure

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PR," on the other hand, is considered a feeble electoral system, since voters are free in their choice of candidate.[3]

The below Table illustrates the combined influences of electoral and party systems, as presented by Sartori:

Table 2

Combined Influences of Party and Electoral Systems[4]

Party System	Electoral System	
	Strong (Plurality and impure PR)	Feeble (Relatively pure and pure PR)
Strong (Structured)	(I) Reductive Effect of Electoral System	(II) Countervailing-Blocking Effect of Party System
Feeble (Unstructured)	(III) Restraining-Reductive Constituency Effect	(IV) No Influence

Cases like Lebanon and Israel cannot be accounted for in the above model and are therefore considered anomalies. Both the outcomes of the model and the categories of electoral and party systems available are inadequate to accurately describe the actual situation in either country. In the case of Lebanon, a feeble party system combined with a strong electoral system would have led to a restraining-reductive constituency effect (outcome iii) or moderate pluralism, which is not the case. In Israel, a strong party system combined with a feeble electoral system would have resulted in a countervailing blocking effect of party systems (outcome ii), leading to 3-5 parties only, which is also inaccurate.

To better illustrate the dynamic interaction between electoral and party systems, this paper will provide a revised version of Sartori's model as illustrated in Table 3. This revised model expands the type of interactions between electoral and party systems, by introducing a third category of mixed "strong-feeble" electoral and party systems. A strong-feeble party system is one that combines modern ideological parties with traditional parties or organizations representing ethnic, religious and other communal interest. A strong-feeble electoral system is a mixed voting system that employs both formulas of plurality and PR and thus combines the impact of both systems on voters.

The resulting tripartite division into strong, feeble, and strong-feeble categories then leads to nine possible outcomes, instead of Sartori's original four. The rationale behind revising the model in this way is to address the limitation of the dichotomous categories of strong and feeble systems as presented by Sartori, [5] which leaves many cases unaccounted for, thereby weakening the model. It is therefore argued here that the added complexity of a third category is necessary to achieve a higher level of generalization and a greater explanatory power.

Table 3

Revised version of Sartori's model: Combined Influence of Party and Electoral Systems[6]

Party System	Electoral Systems		
	Strong	**Strong-feeble**	**Feeble**
Strong Structured Low Fragmentation	(I) Reductive Effect of Electoral System (Two-party system) **Moderate Pluralism**	(II) Moderate Effect of both the electoral & party system leading to multiparty Systems **Moderate Pluralism**	(III) Countervailing-blocking effect of the Party System (3-5 Parties) on the electoral system **Moderate Pluralism**
Strong-feeble Segmented and Polarized	(IV) Moderate Reductive Effect of Electoral system and Constituency **Moderate Pluralism**	(V) Limited Effect of Electoral System and Constituency **Polarized Pluralism**	(VI) Limited-to-Moderate Countervailing-Blocking Effect of Party System **Moderate-to-Polarized Pluralism**
Feeble Unstructured, high fragmentation and/or segmentation	(VII) Restraining-Reductive Constituency Effect **Moderate Pluralism**	(VIII) Moderate Restraining-Reductive Constituency Effect **Moderate-to-Polarized Pluralism**	(IX) No Influence **Atomized**

Under this revised model, the combination leads to nine possible outcomes, as outlined below:

1. Strong electoral systems, when combined with strong party systems, will still have a reductive effect on the number of parties and a tendency to facilitate the emergence and sustenance of a two-party system (outcome I).

2. The mixed strong-feeble electoral system in interaction with a strong party system tends to produce mutual moderate reductive and countervailing effects leading to a multiparty system and moderate pluralism (outcome II).

3. The feeble electoral system when combined with a strong party system leads to the possibility of a two-party system or a multiparty system and moderate pluralism, i.e. 3-5 relevant parties (outcome III).

4. The strong electoral system interacting with a strong-feeble party system tends to produce moderate reductive effects on the number of political parties. It also has a channeling effect on voters, since they tend to vote for their communal leaders, leading to multipartism and moderate pluralism (outcome IV).

5. The interaction of a strong-feeble party system with a strong-feeble mixed electoral system tends to produce limited reductive effect of both systems leading to multipartism on the one hand and possibly extreme or polarized pluralism because of moderate representation of all communal groups (outcome V).

6. The strong-feeble party system interacting with a feeble electoral system leads to a limited-to-moderate countervailing effect of the party system on voters' choices, thus leading to multipartism. The possibility that all groups will get some representation leads to extreme pluralism. Depending on the extent of fragmentation and polarization, the outcome will be either moderate or polarized pluralism (outcome VI).

7. A feeble party system interacting with a strong electoral system tends to produce a restraining-reductive constituency effect on voters' choices, thus leading to multipartism and moderate pluralism (outcome VII).

8. A feeble party system interacting with a strong-feeble electoral system produces only a moderate restraining-reductive constituency effect, thus leading to extreme pluralism. Also depending on the extent of fragmentation and polarization, the outcome will be either moderate or polarized pluralism (outcome VIII).

9. Finally, the interaction between a feeble electoral system and a feeble party system produces no effect, leading to an atomized party system since there is no limit to the number of parties established and no retraining effects on voters' choices (outcome IX).

Table 4

Patterns, Classes and Types of multipartism

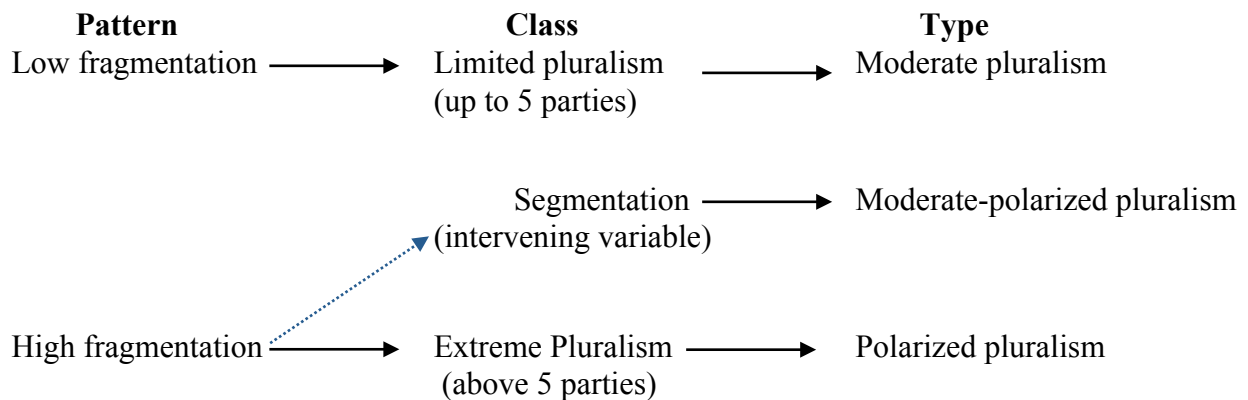| Pattern	Class	Type
Low fragmentation ⟶	Limited pluralism (up to 5 parties) ⟶	Moderate pluralism
	Segmentation (intervening variable) ⟶	Moderate-polarized pluralism
High fragmentation ⟶	Extreme Pluralism (above 5 parties) ⟶	Polarized pluralism

Table 4 exemplifies the possible types of interactions, expanding Sartori's original model (see Table 1). This will lead to wider variety of interactions between qualitative and quantitative party indicators, leading to three types of multipartism: (1) moderate pluralism, (2) polarized pluralism, (3) moderate-polarized pluralism. The reason for adding a third mixed "type" of multipartism is because again, this added complexity may be necessary to accommodate more complex and less clear-cut polities that have alternated between moderate and polarized pluralism at different time periods.

In his original model, Sartori settles the controversy over the numeric party criterion, by checking it for the ideological variable, while disposing of segmentation. If polities are fragmented but not polarized, they will be attributed to the type of ideologically moderate pluralism. On the other hand, if they are fragmented and polarized, then they belong to the ideologically polarized pluralism.

While in Sartori's original model segmentation and polarization are mutually exclusive, in this revised model it is proposed that in reality segmentation may in fact be mixed with polarization, when ideological and traditional (ethnic or sectarian-based) cleavages intertwine and reinforce one another. This leads to a "moderate-polarized pluralism." In such a scenario, fragmentation when adequately managed by the political system will lead to moderate pluralism. When fragmentation becomes too high, on the other hand, the political system breaks into polarized pluralism moving from a centripetal to a centrifugal process of decision-making.

Considering the proposed revision of the original Sartori model illustrated in Table 4, the analysis will now turn to the two interesting cases of Israel and Lebanon. Under the traditional Sartori model, Lebanon and Israel cannot be explained and are thus considered an exception. Under this revised model, however, the two cases are well explained, and thus no longer need be considered baffling and exceptional cases.[7]

The two cases of Israel and Lebanon

Israel has maintained a stable electoral system that is based on proportional representation (PR) and a single nationwide voting district. This system has reinforced the strong role of political parties, thus allowing for different parties, no matter how small; to obtain some Knesset representation provided they meet the minimal threshold (currently 2%). This has allowed

political parties to dominate the political process. Israel therefore has a feeble electoral system of pure PR, and a strong-feeble party system, which combines ideological and ethnic-based parties. This combination of a strong-feeble party system with a feeble electoral system has led to extreme multipartism, and to both moderate and polarized pluralism (see Table 4) at different periods, fitting the characteristics of outcome VI (see Table 3).

In Lebanon the role of political parties has been weak, and largely undermined by the predominant role of traditional and neo-traditional forces. The different electoral laws employing simple plurality and multiple small to medium electoral districts have further reinforced the weak role of political parties. Lebanon, therefore, with its feeble party system rooted in traditional parties and sectarian cleavages and strong-feeble electoral system, which is a combination of a plurality system and a confessional PR system, is closer to outcome VIII (see Table 3), characterized by extreme multipartism, leading to both moderate and polarized pluralism at different periods.

This explains why the two cases, despite the structural differences in their electoral and party systems, today face similar trajectories. The two different political systems are both in crisis due to high fragmentation, leading to a subsequent inability to resolve national conflicts.

The Lebanese Case

Real power in Lebanon rests not in the hands of the state but with confessional groups. The country continues to maintain a confessional system in which political and administrative functions are divided among the major sects in a consociational model. Such a system has historical roots, institutionalized in the National Pact of 1943. This unstable confessional formula has subjected the country to many crises, rendering it vulnerable to changes in the internal and regional balance of power.

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In 1958, Lebanon went through a civil strife that was settled by reaffirming the National Pact.[8] In 1975, however, the pressure on the rigid system was again greater than its ability to adapt leading to the collapse of the state and a raging Civil War, which lasted more than 15 years. The conflict did not end until external pressures dictated internal reconciliation among the Lebanese warring factions through the Tai'f Accord.[9]

The Ta'if Accord introduced thirty-one important constitutional amendments.[10] The reforms based on the same power-sharing formula did not alter fundamentally the sectarian nature of the political system. Instead the Accord merely introduced a more equitable confessional formula based on parity in representation between Christians and Muslims in political and administrative posts. The de facto and de jure system under the Ta'if continued to distribute parliamentary seats and government posts on a confessional basis. It merely introduced a new form of collegial government formed of a confessional "Troika" composed of the three Presidents of the Republic, the Council of Ministers and the Parliament. This impractical arrangement, though presumably a requirement for a consociational model, proved unstable, and failed to provide a sustainable solution.

The Lebanese Electoral System

Self-serving legislators have periodically readjusted electoral laws in Lebanon, rarely allowing for socio-political change, and never reflecting popular aspirations or the emergence of new political forces. As a result, Lebanon has not enjoyed a stable electoral system except for the period of 1960-1972, as illustrated in the table 5 below:

Table 5

The Electoral Systems in Lebanon since Independence [11]

Year	% Voter Turnout (rounded)	Voting Formula	Size of Parliament (Seats)	Number of Electoral Districts	Smallest and Largest District
1943	52%	Absolute Majority and 2 Ballots	55	5	7-17
1947	61%	Absolute Majority and 2 Ballots	55	5	7-17
1951	56%	Qualified Majority of 40 percent and 2 Ballots	77	9	4-14
1953	54%	Simple Pluralist 1 Ballot	44	33	1-2
1957	50%	Simple Pluralist 1 Ballot	66	27	1-6
1960	50%	Simple Pluralist 1 Ballot	99	26	1-8
1964	53%	Simple Pluralist 1 Ballot	99	26	1-8
1968	53%	Simple Pluralist 1 Ballot	99	26	1-8
1972	53%	Simple Pluralist 1 Ballot	99	26	1-8
1992	30%	Simple Pluralist 1 Ballot	128	12	3-28
1996	43%	Simple Pluralist 1 Ballot	128	10	3-28
2000	45%	Simple Pluralist 1 Ballot	128	14	6-17
2005	46%	Simple Pluralist 1 Ballot	128	14	6-17
2009	54%	Simple Pluralist 1 Ballot	128	26	2-10

The lack of stability in electoral laws and legislation is evident in the ten different electoral laws or amendments that have been adopted for the past 14 Parliaments since Independence. At first, Lebanon used a French-style two-ballot system for the elections of 1943, 1947 and

1951. The second ballot was abandoned in 1953, for a simple pluralist formula, which was used for all subsequent elections.

The number of electoral districts was also in a state of constant flux. A medium-to-large district was used for the elections in 1943 and 1947. In 1951 a new electoral law introduced nine medium sized multi-member constituencies of four to fourteen members. Then a close to single member district, with one or two members per constituency, was used for the 1953 elections. In 1957, a small district of one to six members per constituency was used. From 1960 to 1972, the system was based on the small districts of the administrative districts (Kada's), which were 26, and ranged between one to eight deputies per constituency.

In 1992 and 1996 there was another reengineering of multi-member constituencies, with the difference between the smallest and largest constituency ranging from 3 to 28. For 2000 and 2005, the same electoral law was applied, with 14 medium electoral districts. The 26 electoral districts were again reapplied in the 2009 parliamentary elections.

The Lebanese Party System

In Lebanon, as a result, the sectarian element remains the strongest determining factor of party politics. Most parties and political movements are associated with a sect or ethnic group in the case of the Armenians. Consequently, the party system in Lebanon reflects a condition of extreme segmentation. The major parties in Lebanon are in fact not more than ten or fifteen at most, where the secular parties with a national base of representation are few and ineffective, as illustrated below.

In the early 1940s, two Blocs constituting the Constitutional Bloc, led by Beshara al-Khoury, and the rival National Bloc, led by Emile Eddeh competed, introducing the continued trend in the country for polarization between two loose coalition blocs. On the eve of Independence,

President Khoury emerged victorious and became the first post-Independence President of Lebanon from 1943-1952. This trend toward polarization, however persisted, reflecting the sharp political division over internal politics and conflicting regional alliances, while confirming Christian hegemony over political life in the pre-war era. While contenders maintained allies in other communities and regions, their constituency and the center of gravity in the struggle of power remained Mount Lebanon, where the majority of Christians reside.

At the eve of the Civil War in the early 1970s, the country again witnessed a dangerous and complex polarization of forces where the ideology of Arab nationalism reinforced the confessional cleavages. The Lebanese National Movement (LNM) allied with the Palestinian armed forces and had its major base of support among the Muslims. Opposing it, the Lebanese Front (LF), predominantly Christian in constituency and base of support, initially allied with the Syrians, and then the Israelis at a later stage.[12] The LNM was a leftist and nationalist alliance led by Kamal Jumblatt, the leader of the Progressive Socialist Party and leader of the opposition forces. The LF, on the other hand, was a right-wing conservative alliance led by the Phalangist Katai'b Party in defense of the status quo and against Palestinian presence and any political reform to the system.

The post-Tai'f era was characterized by Syrian hegemony over Lebanese politics where the main polarization was between pro-Syrian and anti-Syrian presence in Lebanon. This division reached its peak with the assassination of Prime Minister Rafic Harriri on February 14, 2005. The months subsequent to Hariri's assassination witnessed a series of popular demonstrations and rallies calling for an end to Syrian occupation of Lebanon. Those were led by what came to be known as the "March 14" Camp.

Counter-demonstrations were mobilized by the "March 8" Camp led by Hezbollah. March 14 Camp demanded an end to Syrian hegemony over Lebanese politics and pushed for the implementation of UN Resolution 1559 and the establishment of an international tribunal to investigate Hariri's assassination. March 8 supported Syria and accused the US and Israel of meddling in Lebanon's affairs. The coalition similarly opposed the international tribunal on the grounds it was politicized and partial.

Demonstrations, along with international pressure that had been building for several months, prompted Syria to withdraw its 40,000 troops and security forces that had enabled Damascus to control Lebanon for decades. Syria completed its withdrawal on April 26, 2005.

The March 14 Camp gained a sweeping victory, when the anti-Syrian Hariri bloc led by Saad Hariri captured a total of 72 out of 128 parliamentary seats in the 2005 elections. The opposition was formed from a coalition between Hizbollah, Amal and the Free Patriotic Movement.

Armed confrontations erupted in the streets of Beirut and Mount Lebanon in May 2008, which prompted regional and international actors to intervene once again to exert pressure on Lebanese parties, through the Doha Summit. The Doha Agreement in turn paved the way for the election of President Michel Sleiman in late May 2008.

The 2009 elections re-instated the same polarization of 2005 with the same two blocs competing for elections. The final results produced the same political representation of 2005, where the 14 March Coalition won 71 seats, and the opposition gained 57 out of 128 seats. However, the formation of the government under PM Designate Saad Al Hariri stalled for over five months due to disagreements between the two Camps. This government formed on November 2009, lasted only for less than 14 months as a shift in alliances led to its

resignation on January 2011. A new government led by Najib Mikati was formed on June 2011 only to resign on March 2013. The intensive internal polarization and the erupted civil war in Syria led to the extension of the term of the parliament for 17 months and the postponement of 2013 parliamentary elections until late 2014.

Table 6 illustrates the distribution of deputies into parliamentary blocs and into the Camps of 14 and 8 March in the 2009 parliamentary elections.

Table 6

Lebanon's 2009 Parliament[13]

Bloc	Party affiliation /Leader	Number of Parliamentary seats
March 14 Blocks		
Lebanon First Bloc	Future Movement (Saad Hariri)	30
Phalanges Bloc	Kataeb (Amin Gemayel)	5
Democratic Gathering Bloc	Progressive Socialist Party (Walid Jumblatt)	12
Lebanese Forces Bloc	Lebanese Forces (Samir Jaajaa)	8
Zahle in the Heart Bloc	Zahle based coalition allied with Lebanon First Bloc	3
Tripoli Bloc	Mohamed Safadi	2
Independents small parties	Mostly allied with 14 March	11
March 8 Blocks		
Reform and Change	Free Patriotic Movement (Michel Aoun)	18
Loyalty to the Resistance	Hizbollah (Hassan Nasrallah)	12
Development and Liberation	Amal (Nabih Berri)	13
Zgharta	Marada (Sleiman Franjieh)	4
Armenian	Tashnag Party (Hovig Mekhitarian)	2
Nationalist	Baath Party (Assem Kanso) and Syrian Social National Party (Assaad Hardan)	4
Unity of the Mountain	Lebanese Democratic Party (Talal Arslan)	4
Total	**March 14: 71** **March 8: 57**	**128**

Interaction between the Electoral and Party System in Lebanon

Looking at the results of Lebanese elections since 1943, one can observe several trends:

Trend 1: Confessional PR fails to achieve fair representation

The agreement on parity in the distribution of parliamentary seats according to a sectarian ratio, as per the Tai'f Agreement, has not fully resolved the problem of fair representation. Part of the problem is centered on the gerrymandering of electoral districting. In the post-war era and up to 2000 parliamentary elections inclusive, electoral laws were engineered to gerrymander votes to the advantage of the pro-Syrian group. The other part of the problem, however, lies in the problem of minority representation in extended heterogeneous electoral districts, where the larger community predominantly determines the results.[14] In all cases, the attempts to reconcile between the functions of representation and the establishment of a stable system, namely, one that is based on national identity and moderate politics, have by and large failed through a simple plurality system. The problem of the Lebanese electoral system therefore lies in the voting formula of simple plurality, and the resistance to apply a more democratic formula of PR. The rejection of the PR formula has led to continuation of the "strong-feeble electoral system" that employs both formulas of simple plurality and special PR. This type of confessional PR pre-allocates the 128 parliamentary seats equally between Muslims and Christians in a proportional manner to the size of the confessional communities in their respective regions, as per Article 95 of the Constitution. This electoral system has therefore reproduced and reinforced the feeble party system in Lebanon. On the other end of the spectrum, this rigid system does not allow a secular candidate to run for a secular seat; has merely reinforced and institutionalized segmentation and sectarian cleavages in the country.

Trend 2: Confessional PR entrenches narrow patron-client relationship

The electoral systems in Lebanon have contributed to the marginalization and weakening of modern political parties, as they have encouraged a narrow patron-client relationship between the citizen and the deputy, where the citizen expects the deputy to deliver services in exchange for the former's loyalty and vote. This patron-client trend is evident when comparing average rates of participation in peripheral and rural areas that have been consistently higher in the rural than in the urban centers, confirming the strength of the traditional base of representation.

Trend 3: Party representation in parliament is historically weak

In light of the above, political parties in Lebanon have never been able to organize the fragmented political life. The impotent political role of political parties is attributed to the structure of these parties, which remained highly confessional and heavily dependent on individual traditional or neo-traditional communal leaders.

Table 7 shows the representation of the major parties in Lebanon since 1951, which clearly illustrates that the percentage of party members in parliament remained under 30% from 1950 until 2005, when a new trend emerged with the mobilization and organization of loose quasi—political party structures such as the Free Patriotic Movement and the Future Movement.

Table 7[15]
Political Parties Representation in the Lebanese Parliament 1951-2009

	1951	1953	1957	1960	1964	1968	1972	1992	1996	2000	2005	2009
Total number of party seats	10	10	12	28	22	30	28	37	37	38	49	67
Total number of parliament seats	77	44	66	99	99	99	99	128	128	128	128	128
Percent of parliament seats that are party based	13%	23%	18%	28%	22%	30%	28%	29%	29%	30%	38%	52%

This electoral system further facilitated the institutionalization of a very narrow political representation limited to traditional political families. Until the 1992 elections, for instance, all of Lebanon's deputies, ministers and presidents have come from only 213 families.

The second phase of political parties' development began when the conditions of the War transformed many of them, on both sides of the spectrum into militias, particularly in the aftermath of the 1982 Israeli occupation of Lebanon. The parties' involvement in the civil war led to their subsequent militarization as they fell under the control of military factions and leaders.[16] As a result, political parties lost their democratic representative function, a large gulf developing between them and the public they purported to represent.

The sectarian character increased with the domination of sectarian movements on both sides. External factors further exacerbated sectarian divisions, playing an increasingly greater role in sustaining, complicating, and even managing the protracted Lebanese conflict.

Trend 4: The Post-War sectarian affiliation of the dominant parties' changes

The political party representation in the parliament has changed in terms of sectarian affiliation. In the pre-war period, the Christian political parties were strongly represented, relative to the unorganized and under-represented Muslim political forces. Muslim masses during those years predominantly supported the dominant political currents in the Arab world, especially Nasserism. They were however locally demobilized and therefore, unorganized.

During the postwar period, on the other hand, Islamic parties became highly mobilized, well represented and organized, while Christian parties became unorganized and under-represented in reflection of their disappointment, repression and frustration with the new system under Syrian hegemony. This was particularly evident in the period of 1990-2005.

Therefore while the polarization since Independence was between rivaling Christian-led blocs, the post-war period shifted the balance of power, so that polarization was now between Muslim-led Blocs (example 8 and 14 March). This absence of the Christian leading role was particularly evident in the 2009 elections, where the Christians blocs were in effect divided between two Muslim-led blocs.

Furthermore, an important change was the steady increase in the Shiite political role and parliamentary representation and the emergence of a dominant Sunni role, played by late PM Rafic Hariri since 1992. Both blocs were backed by different regional powers. The Shiites of Lebanon moved from being silent masses to ascending dominant forces, as was represented by the rise of Amal in the 1970s and 1980s and more predominantly Hezbollah since the 1990s. The Hizbollah bloc went from 8 parliamentary seats in 1992 to 13 in 2009, and leading the opposition. The Amal bloc similarly almost tripled its seats from 5 in 1992 to 13 in 2009. Likewise the Sunni side, the Lebanon First Bloc led by Hariri achieved the largest bloc in 2009, his coalition garnering a total of 41 parliamentary seats in 2009 (counting the independents), as per Table 6.

The Israeli Case

Sartori argues that Israel is a sui generis case. He notes that though Israel is a fissured society with a highly fragmented political system, naturally indicating a case of extreme pluralism, Israel is not polarized. In spite of fragmentation, Israel is a moderate semi-polarized or non-polarized polity. Furthermore despite its many parties, Israel still lacks a center pole.

"If Israel is a baffling case, this is because Israel cannot be explained within Israel. The new State results form and is shaped by a fantastically intricate convergence of historical and external cross-pressures," Sartori explains. "And if this is so, there is little point in trying to

bring Israel into one of the patterns that develop in the self-monitoring polities. Israel is very definitely a case by itself to be understood as such.[17]"

It is the argument of this paper that the traditional Sartori model if elaborated along the lines proposed can accommodate Israel so that it no longer is a sui generis case, as outlined in the section below.

Israeli society and political party system is segmented and polarized at the same time. The divisions are multiple and essential ranging from ethnic, ideological, socio-cultural and religious/secular divisions within the Jewish society in Israel. The dilemmas include choosing among being a Jewish State for the Jewish people only or a secular state for all its citizens including non-Jews; choosing between a state with a cultural or a religious identity; between Orthodox Judaism or liberal denominations; between a free economy or a welfare state.

The Israeli Electoral System

Unlike Lebanon, Israel has had a very stable electoral system with very minor amendments since the first election in 1949. Israel's unicameral Knesset is elected through a closed-list system of extreme PR. Political parties or alignments of two or more parties submit lists of candidates, and may form surplus vote agreements, that is combine their lists for the distribution of Knesset seats. Voters cast their ballots for party lists rather than individual candidates. As such voters cannot influence the composition of party candidate lists[18]. Seats won by combinations of lists are apportioned according to the Bader-Ofer method[19].

Israel's extreme PR system poses very few barriers to entry for small parties. The minimum electoral threshold stood at 1 percent since 1949 until it was raised to 1.5 percent in 1992 and to 2 percent in 2004. The entire country serves as one constituency under a single nationwide district. The Israeli system is close to a pure parliamentary system throughout its history.

Israel's Party System

Many refer to Israel as a party state because political parties have dominated Israeli politics even before the establishment of the state itself. An electoral system of proportional representation has reinforced and maintained the development of a pluralistic multiparty system. The combination of a single national constituency with a low minimum vote threshold has reinforced this trend, allowing the election of far more parties than other countries. Israel experienced moderate pluralism under Labor hegemony until 1977, and has been experiencing polarized pluralism since.

Table 8 presents the number of parties and electoral lists represented in the Israeli Knesset

Table 8[20]

Parties and Party List Representation in the Israeli Knesset

Year	Number of lists	Number of parties
1949	12	15
1951	15	15
1955	12	14
1959	12	14
1961	11	12
1965	13	15
1969	13	15
1973	9	14
1977	11	15
1981	10	13
1984	15	21
1988	15	17
1992	10	13
1996	11	12
1999	15	15
2003	13	14
2006	12	15
2009	12	14
2013	12	15
Average	12.27	14.6

It is obvious that their number has always been high averaging about 15 parties and 12 lists. However, the pure PR system in Israel has circumvented the necessity for these different political factions to take reconciliatory initiatives and make the necessary compromises. In this way, the political process in Israel allowed the smaller and more extremist factions to determine the course of action leading toward more fragmentation. As a result, no party in Israel has ever won a majority in an election. Instead several parties are needed to form a coalition, while the average duration of the cabinet does not exceed 1.6 years[21]. Israel suffers from an excessively unstable and fragmented party system.

The trend has been toward greater fragmentation and ideological distance. While Labour dominated the Knesset for almost three decades since the State's founding, unipolar multipartism under Labor hegemonic role gave way to a bipolar multipartism alternating between Labor and Likud-led coalitions[22]. Relative to Labor and Likud, Centrist parties have been virtually absent, until the emergence of Kadima in 2005, outnumbering each of the Likud and Labour parties in the 17th and 18th Knesset. The elections in 2013 for the 19th Knesset produced the Likud alliance with Yisrael Beiteinu, winning 31 seats. Benjamin Netanyahu formed the government after establishing a coalition with the new emerging center of Yesh Atid, Hatnuah and the Jewish Home from the right. This coalition has 68 seats.

Table 9[23]

The development of party representation in the various Israeli elections since 1949

Election year	Non-Zionist	Religious	Right	Left	Center
1949	6	16	14	65	19
1951	10	15	8	60	27
1955	11	17	15	59	18
1959	8	18	17	63	14
1961	9	18	17	59	17
1965	8	17	26	63	6
1969	8	18	26	56	12
1973	7	15	39	55	4
1977	8	17	46	33	16
1981	4	10	51	48	7
1984	6	12	48	50	4
1988	6	18	47	47	2
1992	5	16	43	56	0
1996	9	23	41	43	4
1999	10	27	33	38	12
2003	8	22	47	28	15
2006	10	18	32	24	36
2009	11	19	46	16	28
2013	11	18	43	21	27

Table 10 below explains the classification, which is based on the grouping of Israeli parties under five categories: Left, Right, Center, Religious and Arab and Communist parties.

Table 10

Classification of Israeli Political Parties

Left	Right	Center	Religious	Non-Zionist
Labour	Likud	Kadima	Shas	Hadash
New Movement-Meretz	Yisrael Beiteinu	Shinui	Torah & Shabbat Judaism	National Democratic Assembly (Balad)
Am Ehad	Ichud Leumi	Gil	Habayit Hayehudi	Ra'am Ta'al
Alignment	Moledet	Center Party	United Torah Judaism	Maki
Ratz	Tehiya	The Third Way	Yahudat Hatorah	Kidmah Ufituah
Mapam	Tsomet	Tami	Yisrael B'Aliya	Rakah
Yahad	Gahal	Telem	National Religious Party	Shituf Ve'ahvah
Mapai	Herut	General Zionists	Agudat Yisrael	Arab List for Bedouins & Villagers
Moked	Shlomzion	Progressive Party	Pa'alei Agudat Yisrael	United Arab List
Alignment	Plato Sharon	Independent Liberals	Degel Hatorah	Balad
	Kach	Democratic Movement for Change		
	The Jewish Home	Yesh Atid/ Hatnuah		

Interaction between the Electoral and Party System in Israel

Looking at the results of Israeli elections since 1949, one can observe several trends:

Trend 1: Steady increase in political polarization

One notable trend has been the steady and consistent increase in political polarization. Since 1973, the parties of the center have almost completely disappeared, dropping from 27 seats in 1951 to zero in 1992. Center parties like the Center Party (6 seats in 1999) and the Third Way (4 seats in 1996) vanished almost entirely. [24] It was not until Kadima's creation in 2005, that "Center" dominated the political spectrum for the first time in Israel's history.

The party system in Israel accordingly lacked a center pole (Center has been consistently outnumbered by Right and Left from 1965-2003), and has proven more receptive to polarization. Since 1967, one of the most divisive issues in Israeli politics has been the future of the 1967 occupied territories. While the Left advocated negotiation with the Palestinians

and "land for peace," the Right called for continued Jewish control of conquered lands and expansion of settlements. This intensified the polarization between the Right allied with the religious parties, on the one hand, and the Left and Center with the support of the non-Zionist (communist and Israeli Arab) parties on the other.

Trend 2: Transition toward the Right

At the eve of the 1996 elections, opinion polls fluctuated around the 50 percent mark between those who supported Labor and the land for peace formula and those who opposed it.[25] Furthermore, the 1996 tight direct election of the Prime Minister divided the voters almost equally between the two major blocs (50.4% for Natanyahu and 49.5% for Peres)[26].

It was not until the emergence of Kadima that this deadlock between Right and Left paved the road for the emergence of a Centrist Party, which combines right-wing rhetoric, both unitary and expansionist, with relative acceptance of a possible negotiated settlement and the creation of some form of a Palestinian state.

It can, however, conversely be argued that the 2006 elections merely confirmed this trend toward the right. Kadima was after all formed by Prime Minister Ariel Sharon after he formally left the right-wing Likud party on 21 November 2005, to establish a new party which would grant him the freedom to carry out his policy of unilateral disengagement plan - removing Israeli settlements from Palestinian territory (Gaza Strip) and fixing Israel's borders with a prospective Palestinian state. In 2003 Likud ranked the biggest party in Knesset, obtaining 38 seats alone and dropped to 31 seats with Yisrael Beiteinu in 2013. Table 9 demonstrates the reverse trend from left (1949-1977) to Right (2003-2013).

Trend 3: Increase in ethnic representation

The tendency to vote for ethnic representation has increased and it was evident in the doubling of Arab representation, and the success of right-wing ethnic parties like Yisrael Beiteinu, and ultra-orthodox right-wing parties like Shas, the party that represents Sephardim Jews. Yisrael Beiteinu (Israel is Our Home) has a constituency among the overwhelmingly secular, largely unassimilated and generally hawkish Russian-speaking population winning 11 seats in 2006 and 15 in 2009, and forming an alliance with Likud in 2013 with a combined 31 seats. Shas has likewise maintained over 10 seats in Knesset since 1996, ranking third largest party in Knesset in 1988, 1996, 1999, and 2006. Although Shas continued to have 11 seats for 2009 and 2013 elections, its ranking dropped to the fifth party.

The two dominant Jewish ethnic groups in Israel are the Western Jews (Ashkenazim medieval rabbinical name for Germany) and Eastern Jews (Sephardim, old Hebrew word for Spain). The ethnic issue is multidimensional; cultural, political, and socio-economical. Many attribute changes in the Parties strength to the power shifts to the Sephardim vote since their 1981. This division has continued to produce tensions and realignment of forces in Israel.[27]

Trend 4: Increase in fragmentation and the rising role of small parties

Pure PR system in Israel has circumvented the necessity for these different political factions to take reconciliatory initiatives and make the necessary compromises. In this way, the political process in Israel allowed the smaller and more extremist factions to impact the course of action. This has led to greater segmentation of the Israeli politics as the political map became more diffused than ever before.

With the rise of small parties, the strength of the two major parties subsequently decreased to its lowest point in the history of Knesset elections. Both Likud and Labor total number of seats decreased to 31 members in 2006 and only 40 members in 2009 to rise to 46 in the

current Knesset; an indicator of the weakening if not the end of their dominant positions in the Israeli political process. Labor suffered its worst-ever electoral defeat winning only 13 Knesset seats in 2009 and still low with 15 seats in the current Knesset.

We can conclude from the above that Israel is a highly fragmented society with strong elements of segmentation and polarization. These elements are evident through the fractionalization of party politics, the prominence of ethnic divisions, and the secular-religious divide. It is a system that has experienced moderate pluralism under Labor hegemony until 1977, and has been experiencing polarized pluralism since. The pressure for a peace resolution in the region, especially with the Palestinians, has intensified this polarization in the recent two decades. The disagreement on such issues is polarizing the Israeli society.

Conclusion

As this paper argues, Sartori's typology of political parties though accurate, is not comprehensive. As a result many cases, including Lebanon and Israel are unaccounted for in the model. The model however can be expanded, introducing a third category of electoral and party systems (strong-feeble). By expanding the model on the conceptual level to include this third category, cases, which were previously considered sui generis under the traditional Sartori model, can be accommodated and explained through the model.

The rationale for introducing this third category is because polarization is often not based on pure ideological differences alone, as illustrated in the cases of both Lebanon and Israel. Pure polarization based on ideological distance and intensity alone, as described by Sartori, is an ideal one that does not exist in reality. In reality, divisions in all societies are complex and multiple, blending traditional communal cleavages with modern ideological ones.

In the case of Lebanon, a feeble party system mixed with a strong-feeble electoral system has produced both moderate pluralism and polarized pluralism. In the late 1950s and throughout the 1960s Lebanon experienced relative stability, economic prosperity, and a moderate pluralist system. In the first half of the 1970s and throughout the Civil War period, however, Lebanon experienced polarized pluralism. The Lebanese case therefore shows that a fragmented culture and sub-culture in the absence of a democratic process to manage different factions and ensure representation, can lead, under certain conditions, to severe polarization and even to civil war as was the case in 1975.

Similarly in Israel, ideological differences between Right and Left are intertwined with ultra-orthodox religious-based and ethnic-based groups, which have gradually been expanding their scope of representation in Knesset. Accordingly, Israel's strong-feeble party system is mixed with a feeble electoral system, based on pure PR, which has merely served to increase the number of political parties instead of consolidating and reconciling between the different political factions. Fragmentation when associated with segmentation has again produced moderate and polarized pluralism in different time periods.

In this way, the revised Sartori model explains how two very different electoral and party systems have resulted in similar political outcomes, where both Israel through its "strong-feeble" party system and feeble electoral system, and Lebanon through its "feeble" party system and "strong-feeble" electoral system have led to "moderate-polarized pluralism."

[1]Giovanni Sartori, *Parties and Party Systems: A Framework for Analysis* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1967), pp. 126.

[2]Giovanni Sartori, "The Influence of Electoral Systems: Faulty Laws or Faulty Method." In Bernard Grofman and Arend Lijphart, eds. *Electoral Laws and Their Political Consequences* (New York: Agathon Press: 1986), pp. 127.

[3]Ibid. p. 53-63.

[4]Ibid. p. 63-65.

[5]Ibid. p. 61.

[6]This table is a revised model of Sartori matrix of four combinations.

[7]Sartori avoided the classification of the Israeli system under any specific type and referred to it as a complex and baffling case. See Sartori (1976) pp. 151-155.

[8]Fahim Qubain, *Crisis in Lebanon* (Washington, D.C.: The Middle East Institute, 1961).

[9]Hassan Krayem, "The Lebanese Civil War and the Tai'f Agreement," in Paul Salem, eds., *Conflict Resolution in the Arab World: Selected Essays* (Beirut: American University of Beirut, 1997), pp. 411-35.

[10]Joseph Maila, *The Document of National Understanding: A Commentary* (Oxford: Center for Lebanese Studies, 1992); Augustus Richard Norton, "Lebanon after Tai'f: Is the Civil War Over?" *The Middle East Journal* (Summer 1991), pp. 457-73. To read the Constitutional amendments see, *The Beirut Review*, v.1, No. 1, Spring 1991.

[11] For 1943-1964, see Majed K. Majed, al-*Intikhabat al-Niabiah 1861-1992: al-Qwaneen, wa al-Natai'j*. [Parliamentary Elections 1861-1992: The Laws and The Results] (Beirut: al-Mu'assasa al-Jami'iyya lil Dirasat wa al-Tawzi', 1992); for 1968-1992, Farid el-Khazen, *Lebanon's First Postwar Parliamentary Election, 1992: An Imposed Choice* (Oxford: Center For Lebanese Studies, 1998), pp.22 and 41; for 1996-2009: Information are based on the official results released by the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities: *www.elections.gov.lb*

[12] Walid Khalidi, *Conflict and Violence in Lebanon: Confrontation in the Middle East* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979).

[13] www.naharnet.com

[14] This is mainly a Christian complaint. For further information, see Farid el-Khazen, *Lebanon's First Post-War Parliamentary Election, 1992: An Imposed Choice* (Oxford: Center for Lebanese Studies, 1998), pp. 25-28.

[15] *www.elections.gov.lb/Election-Results*

[16] Three important forces during that period are Amal Movement, Lebanese Forces and Progressive Socialist Party.

[17] Sartori 2005: 137

[18] Party members vote in primaries to rank candidates in electoral lists.

[19] The number of votes won by each qualifying list is divided by an electoral quota, calculated by dividing the total number of votes cast for qualifying lists by 120 (the number of Knesset seats). Any seats that remain unallocated after the application of the electoral quota are distributed among lists or combination of lists according to the largest average method, known in Israel as the Bader-Ofer method, and internationally as the D'Hondt rule.

[20] Source: http://www.knesset.gov.il/

[21] Arend Lijphart, *Patterns of Democracy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), p. 133.

[22] In 1973, a coalition of Herut (followers of Zionist revisionist leader Zev Jabotenski), Israel Liberal Party, which shares Herut belief in 'Greater Israel' and other minor parties established Likud.

[23] Source: www.knesset.gov.il

[24] For further details on the Israeli party system see Tachau, Frank (ed.), 1994, pp. 198-258.

[25] Don Peretz and Gideon Doron, *The Government and Politics of Israel* (Colorado: West View Press, 1997), pp. 270.

[26] Gideon Doron, "Israel: The Nationalist Return to Power," in *Current History* (January 1977).

[27] On ethnic vote, see Elazar, Daniel J. and Sandler, Shmuel (eds.) *Israel at the Polls: 1992* (Boston: The Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, Rowman & Littlefild Publisher, Inc., 1995) Esp. chs. 3-5