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Civil Society and Political Democracy in Lebanon

A Minor Field Study in 2005

Master's thesis within Political Science

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Master's Thesis in Political Science

Title:	**Civil Society and Political Democracy in Lebanon**
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Abstract

Background & Problem   Democracy in the Arab world has received much attention since the Kuwait war in 1991, both in academics and in the public debate. Lebanon in particular has through its history in the 20th century constantly been facing new challenges for its multicultural society of minorities. Conflicts have dominated several periods with a horrible experience of 15 years of civil war between 1975-1990. Religion and confessional belonging have large influence in the political system, giving Lebanon a character of confessional state. How the political system and civil society is related to concept of democracy is the main object of this study.

Purpose   The main purpose of this study is to examine the political structure, civil society and democracy in Lebanon. A literature study is combined with a field study in order to deepen the understanding of the political system, civil society and process of democracy through interviews with actors within civil society, politicians and academics.

Method   The scientific approach and method used in this study has a qualitative character with focus on hermeneutics and more specifically on the hermeneutic circle.

Theoretical Framework This chapter introduces the theoretical tools of the theory and concepts used in the study. Focus is on liberal democracy and deliberative democracy, and briefly on consociational democracy. Clarification of concept of state, civil society and democracy is used for further introduction in the case of Lebanon, which are also a part of this chapter. Primary and secondary sources are brought into light in the case of Lebanon, in which the interviews that are conducted during the field study are firmly a background for analysis.

Analysis & Conclusions In the analysis, the focus is on *understanding the text* (primary and secondary data) in search for fulfilling the purpose and reach for an understanding of civil society and democracy in Lebanon. This chapter deals with the interpretation of the case Lebanon in evaluation of the theoretical framework with discussion on civil society, democracy and political system. Conclusions and reflection upon the study and its results are presented in a final chapter.

Content

Figures

Appendix

1   Introduction

Lebanon, the mountainous Mediterranean country between Syria and Israel, has a history which goes back to 3000 BC and its geographic area has been inhabited for more than 200000 years. The country has throughout history been the residence for numerous peoples and empires which are visible in today's Lebanese society. The Lebanese population is a mixture of ethnic and religious groups. The pluralism in Lebanese society with 18 acknowledged[1] different confessional groups has also created divisions and various sources of identification. The largest division is between Christianity and Islam. The most recent survey made in 1932 indicates that Christians are barely in majority. Since no survey has been made so far until today the subject of whether Christians or Muslims are in majority is sensitive in political manners.[2]

The Lebanese society has a multi-cultural character that is illustrated by Christianity and Islam, West and the Orient, modern and ancient. Moreover, Lebanon is the only country in the Middle East with a significant Christian community (approximately 35%). The confessional groups, none consisting more than one third of the population, regard themselves as minorities and the state is considered as a federation of these minorities.[3] The Christian confessional groups consist of: Maronites, Greek Orthodox, Greek Catholics, Armenian Orthodox, Armenian Catholics, Protestants and further smaller communities i.e. the Syrian Church. Among the Muslim groups we find: Sunni, Shiites, Druze and Alawites.[4] It is also important to keep in mind the large group of Palestinian refugees who live in camps in and around larger cities such as Beirut, Tripoli, Sidon and Tyre, but also in the southern part of Lebanon. The development of confessionals is not only an essential background of Lebanese identification but also of the political system, civil society and democracy. This study deals with the interpretation of democracy and civil society with research conducted through the following framework:

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[1] Länder i Fickformat (2005) p.3, though other numbers such as 17 or 19 different sects may be mentioned in other literatures or sources. Since I have read 18 in most texts, I will assume this number.

[2] Länder i Fickformat (2005) p. 1-3, 10

[3] Harris (1997) p.60-61

[4] Länder i Fickformat (2005)
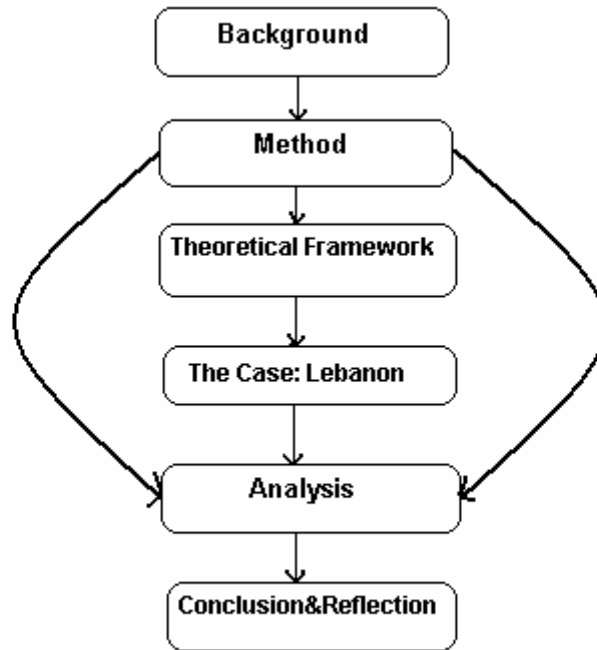
Figure 1: The outline of study

Background initiates a discussion where the aim is to introduce the reader to the chosen subject followed by a problem discussion with delimitations and earlier research in order to clarify a purpose.

Method includes a chapter where the scientific approach and method used in the study will be outlined. The chapter of method is followed by how the method has been applied and information gathered in this study.

Theoretical Framework includes definition of the concept of democracy and its different aspects and the idea of civil society, its development and relation to democratization.

The Case: Lebanon introduces the empirical data – primary and secondary sources in civil society, political system and democracy through a time line.

Analysis is a chapter in which the empirical data will be analyzed in evaluation of the theoretical background in order to reach an understanding through interpretation.

Conclusion contains the final interpretation and result of analysis.

Reflection includes a discussion upon the study and its feature. Criticism towards method will shed light on how the chosen method may have affected the study.

1.1   Background

There are 193 independent sovereign states in the world today.[5] Far more nations exist within these states, however. The UN is created by "member *states*" but the organization is called the United *Nations*. States and nations may seem similar but they differ and the distinction is more than academic. To simplify, 'states' claim governance over a territory and 'sovereignty' within their boundaries. 'Nations' by contrast are a group of people that share common ties such as language, culture, religion and historical identity. Some groups that declare to be nations have a state of their own, like Dutchmen, Egyptians, French and Japanese. Others want or wish a state but do not have one, for example Palestinians, Kurds and Chechnyans.

Since 1975, Lebanon has been recognized by many as an ultimate example of political and social disorganization. The Lebanese Republic is one of the most unusual states in the world. It is an assembly of paradoxes and contradictions. After its independence from France in 1943 it has fought one crisis to another, trying to avoid disaster by the finest margins. One could claim that Lebanon as a polity is ancient, inefficient and divided; it is also liberal, democratic and in general orderly. It is Arab and Western, Christian and Muslim, traditional and modern.[6]

Lebanon, being one of the most complex and divided countries in the Middle East, has for the past three decades been on the edge, and in some moments in the core, of the conflicts surrounding the creation of Israel. Lebanon is a small mountainous country with a population that is a mixture of various Christian sects, Sunni Muslims, Shiite Muslims, Druze and others. Historically it has also experienced several large arrivals of Palestinian refugees, where most of them still have limited legal status.[7]

Lebanon's heterogeneous population consists of both Christians and Muslims living and ruling together. The Lebanese experience illustrates both the surprising possibilities for modernization in a deeply divided political culture and the tensions that such a process forces on the political system. According to Michael C. Hudson, Lebanon is a democracy but also an oligarchy. He argues in his discussion that an analysis of Lebanese politics in search of a theory that will explain the Lebanese situation, one should look away from single-nation models. Strangely enough, the field of international politics offers the classical balance-of-power system that might explain the Lebanese political system better. This observation may seem odd since Lebanon is a state that has full legal sovereignty, international recognition and a modern army, gendarmerie and police force. However, in Lebanon as in the international system, there are several actors present and none of them strong enough to control the entire system.[8]

In terms of Western thinking, political scientists concerned with the development of liberal democracy in new states often argue that the main hindrance is lack of political stability.

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[5] One World – Nations online, the countries of the world,
  http://www.nationsonline.org/oneworld/index.html, 2004-12-03. With the addition of East Timor in 2002. Palestine and Taiwan are not recognized as sovereign states.

[6] Hudson (1968)

[7] BBC news, Country profile: Lebanon,
  http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/country_profiles/791071.stm, 2004-12-08

[8] Hudson (1968)

This instability may be the outcome of a deep-rooted traditional culture that lacks flexibility, education and personality characteristics for such institutions. The causes for political instability may also be the breakdown of the culture through the forces of modernization, which creates exaggerated expectations and general disorder. Or it can be explained by the general low economic level.[9]

Hudson argues that the Lebanese experience seems to support a general view where political stability in society has paved the way for achieving and generating democracy. This appearance may be misleading though. In Lebanon, there is reason to believe, he claims, that democratic institutions have been necessary for political stability, not a result of it. This stability has, in turn, allowed the maintenance of traditional pluralism and also a degree of modernization and economic development.[10]

Fareed Zakaria discusses the aspects of democracy in *The Rise of Illiberal Democracy*[11]. He mainly differentiates between liberal democracy and constitutional liberalism where he claims that to label a country democratic only if it guarantees a complete series of social, political, economic and religious rights does not turn democracy into a descriptive category. To subjectively define democracy as 'a good government' leaves the concept analytically useless. In comparison, constitutional liberalism refers to governmental achievements and goals than about the procedures for choosing government. Constitutional liberalism puts forward that human beings have certain natural rights that governments have to secure, which means limits to its own powers. Zakaria brings up the tension between constitutional liberalism and democracy and emphasizes the difference to be on the scope of governmental authority. More specifically, constitutional liberalism is about the limitation of power while democracy is about its accumulation and use.[12]

In the Lebanese case the construction of institutions have played a major role for the country's maintenance of its stability or even to achieve political stability. Can one say that the governmental role and goal has been to create a functional political system to achieve stability in order to integrate the divided political culture?

Concepts of civil society have experienced a significant renaissance during the 20th century. Not only in the field of political theory, mainly in the context of debates of transformation, democratisation and governance, but the concept of civil society have also reached increasing importance in existing dialogues of 'development'. There is more than one concept of civil society since there is no single agreed upon conception. Regarding the civil society in Lebanon, it reflects its society character of a mixed structure. It is partly divided and partly united.

In the political background in Lebanon, the Taif Accord is of importance. The Lebanese National Assembly met in Taif, Saudi Arabia, in October 1989 to ratify a "National Reconciliation Accord" supported by Syria and Saudi Arabia. The aim of the accord was intended to end the Lebanese civil war that had been going on since 1975, to declare Lebanese authority in South Lebanon, being occupied by Israel by that time and finally to legitimize

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[9] Hudson (1968)

[10] Ibid.

[11] Zakaria (1997)

[12] Ibid.

and continue the Syrian occupation of Lebanon.[13] At its initial point, Lebanon was created as a separate unit to permit for the rights and special culture of the Maronite Christians, who were then a majority in Lebanon. At the time of its independence from France in 1943, Lebanon adopted a constitution that found a balance between the Christian Majority, Sunni Muslim, Shiite Muslim and Druze minorities. Yet, this balance came to shift in favour of the Muslims, where the ties between clans and religious associations were stronger than national commitment and unity. At this point, Lebanon began a long period of violence. In September 1970, the PLO (Palestine Liberation Organization) was expelled from Jordan by Israel and Syria. PLO's entrance in Lebanon widened the existing warfare. In that chaotic time Syria entered Lebanon by force in 1976, implicitly supported by Israel and the USA, with the mission to restore order. The critical situation in Lebanon continued for many years, including an Israeli invasion in 1982. The Taif Agreement in 1989 ended the cycles of violence. However, it failed to put Lebanon on its way of state-building. Problems of post-war Lebanon are still vital and politics is still dominated by narrow-minded concerns and sectarian interests. [14]

Without too much depth into Lebanon's political background, a section which I will return to in detail later in the study, it is interesting to reflect upon how the Lebanese political structure and civil society is related to the concepts of democracy. As Hudson (1968) argues, the country is full of paradoxes and contradictions. Yet it is democratic. The question is in what way Lebanon is democratic?

Lebanon was shaken enormously as a country in the year 2005. The assassination of former Prime Minister Rafic Hariri affected the political atmosphere. Massive street demonstrations brought down the government, forced the departure of disliked security chiefs and raised a wave of euphoria that ran through all the country's sects. Most importantly, the Syrian troops had to complete the UN resolution 1559 and withdraw all its remaining troops from Lebanon by the end of April 2005. The once-dominant Maronite Christian minority which has felt marginalised since the war was touched by this awakening. With the June Parliamentary elections and the UN-investigation report[15] in October 2005 as major indicators in the political life, Lebanon is now facing a crucial time period regarding its independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity and unity, and most importantly in its democratic life.

1.2   Problem discussion

Democracy in the Arab world has received much attention since the Kuwait war in 1991.[16] Both in academics and in public debate, democracy in the Middle East and its relevance and validity are greatly discussed. As I started to prepare this Masters thesis with a general interest in the Middle East and politics as such and having my origin in Iran, I thought that Lebanon is a country of interest to begin with mainly because of its multicultural character.

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[13] The Taif Accords. (1989). MidEast Web Historical Documents. http://www.mideastweb.org/taif.htm . 2004-12-15

[14] Frangieh (2004)

[15] Investigation report on the Rafic Hariri assassination. 'Report of the International Independent Investigation Commission' (2005). http://www.un.org/news/dh/docs/mehlisreport/

[16] Habib (1997)

The 'Lebanese Mosaic' consists of various ethnicities, heterogeneous society and a political system in struggle, to name a few characteristics. Therefore, with a broad interest in democracy and civil society in particular, I believe that Lebanon has a remarkable platform for further interpretation in, on the one hand, democracy in the Middle East, and on the other hand, democracy in relation to civil society in Lebanon.

The concept of democracy may be a broad subject to deal with. Extensive as democracy is, my ambition is not to guide the reader through its spacious aspects, but rather to introduce the theoretical tools for further interpretation, without disappearing in a philosophical darkness. Thus, as a first limitation in this study I have chosen to focus on liberal democracy and deliberative democracy, and briefly consociational democracy, in order to provide insight into the theory and concepts used in the study.

The second limitation is a specific time period. I have chosen the post-war stage after the Taif Agreement in 1989, for my analysis of political system and democracy. A historical description of Lebanon and its political system is necessary for understanding this certain time period. It is also important to note that even though the Middle East faces a crucial transformation period, with Lebanon as a part of this context, this study aims at the internal political relations within Lebanon.

Middle East studies truly provide many and various fields of research within political science, in particular for subjects such as democracy and civil society which are topical issues for the moment. There is a wide range of literature available regarding democracy and civil society in the Middle East. However, a lack of empirical research in civil society in Lebanon exists. In search for a starting point, I have primarily begun with the references in two Master thesis; 'A civil society in need of a state – A relational approach on the state, civil society and the role played by NGOs in the democratization process in Lebanon' (2001) by Shamiram Demir, Gothenburg University and 'The Lebanese Mosaic – a Minor Field Study of Consociational Democracy in Lebanon' (2003) by Jenny Rosén, Lund University. Furthermore, regarding the theories of democracy, the main source of reference is Hans Wiklund (2002) 'Arenas for Democratic Deliberation, Decision-Making in an infrastructure Project in Sweden', whose references have been used in search for those sources used in the theoretical framework.

As for Demir, the thesis focuses on the civil society in Lebanon and its qualitative nature. While as for Rosén, the focus is how to form governance in pluralistic societies, as in the chosen case of Lebanon, in evaluation of consociational democracy. In the effort of understanding the democratization process in Lebanon, an approach to its political structure and civil society is needed. I would emphasize that a view of the political structure and civil society allows us to comprehend the mechanisms, the conflicts, the alliances, and even the civil war in Lebanon. What makes this study any different from those of Demir and Rosén is mainly that Lebanon is currently independent in the search for its sovereignty as a state without Syrian involvement. From the background discussion follows that the political development in the aspect of democracy and democratization is relatively weak, where confessionals have deep roots in the society and political system. What could sustainable democratization possibly be all about in Lebanon? What are the conditions for it to materialize? How can the concept of 'civil society' be used to shed light on these questions of disputable historical relevance? Thus, the central problem in this study is if, and how, the political system can relate to the concept of democracy in the Lebanese context regardless its confessional character.

1.3   Purpose

The main purpose of this study is to examine the political structure, civil society and democracy in Lebanon. A literature study is combined with a field study in order to deepen the understanding of the political system, civil society and process of democracy through interviews with actors within civil society, politicians and academics. The study also aims at the interpretation of the political system with focus on deliberative democracy.

2   Method

Research involves collecting, producing and communicating knowledge about a world that we all share in order to give expression to theories and ideas. The main purpose of research is traditionally a process of creating true and objective knowledge by following a scientific method.[17]

Positivism is a description of a scientific method initiated from natural science.[18] The actual ideas of positivism - shaped by Auguste Comte and John Stuart Mill - faced its flourishing time in the middle of nineteenth century. The concept of positivism and its methods used within natural science are meant to be successfully applicable to all disciplines within science. Positivism experienced its grandeur and dominated during 1930-60 period and generally refers to quantitative methods where the aim of research is to find an objective truth with the use of mathematic models in the interpretation process of data.[19] A quantitative method is suitable in the study of a large population with the aim of the ability to draw statistical conclusions and generalization.

In the field of political science as a discipline, Marsh and Stoker[20] claim that political science is diverse and cosmopolitan. In their attempt to explain the diversity of political science as a discipline, they raise some initial questions:

- Is there one best approach to the study of politics?
- What is covered by the umbrella of the subject matter of politics?
- What is meant by the scientific approach to the study or politics?
- What is the connection between the study of politics and the actual practice of politics?
- Is there a standard method to use when undertaking political science research?

Marsh and Stoker (2002) emphasise that there are many different approaches and ways of undertaking political science. They particularly focus on six options in order to explain the way that politics works in our world.[21] The key argument in their thought is that interactivity between method and approach is important. The variety of approaches enriches political science. Each has a significant value to offer and profit from its interaction with other approaches. To answer the first question, Marsh and Stoker argue that there is no *one* suitable way to illustrate political science. One crucial point is that *interpretation* and *meaning* are principal variables. In comparison to positivism, the tradition of interpretation is much broader where the core is that the interpreter researcher refuses the view that the world exist independently of our knowledge of it. The world is moreover socially or indirectly constructed. In fact, social phenomena do not exist separately of our interpretation of them. It is rather the comprehension of social phenomena which affect results. Hence the complete meaning

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[17] Svenning (2000)

[18] Svenning (2000) p.25-27

[19] Ibid.

[20] Marsh&Stoker (2002) p.3

[21] Marsh&Stoker (2002) p.6-7 referring to Behaviouralism, Rational choice theory, Institutionalism, Feminism, Anti-foundationalism (interpretive theory) and Marxism.

of social phenomena becomes important where interpretations can be understood and established within discourses or traditions. Essentially, the focus is to identify those traditions and establish the interpretations and meanings they attach to social phenomena.

The sociology of knowledge relates with issues that have a prehistory. The term "knowledge" can be interpreted very broadly, since studies in the sociology of knowledge deal with the entire scope of cultural products (ideas, ideologies, juristic and ethical beliefs, philosophy, science, technology.) One may then say that the concept of knowledge and its central discipline is largely concerned with the relationships between knowledge and other existential factors in the society or culture.[22]

In social science, research possesses knowledge about human social interaction. Within social science, there is a clear division between the great mainstream of empirically oriented research and critics of 'empiricism' on various philosophical or theoretical grounds. The critics of empiricism claim, among other things, that language, interpretation and reflection are central within social science.[23] Qualitative method implies that the interpretation process of data is made through dialogue between the researcher and the object of research. In contrast to a quantitative method, a qualitative method focuses on a smaller population in order to create deepness in the research.[24] Criticism towards positivism follows partly from hermeneutics which is used in qualitative studies.[25] Since the purpose of this thesis is to analyze how individuals interpret political structure and democracy, a qualitative method with a hermeneutic approach will be used in study. Another argument is the multi-cultural character of the Lebanese society. In a multi-cultural environment, there are issues that may be difficult to quantify such as social, cultural and political patterns. Qualitative method provides a more comprehensive understanding of issues within social, cultural and political patterns that may be engaged in how the understanding of democracy is formed.

The aim of this chapter is thus to deal with the chosen method and scientific approach applied in the study. The ambition is to describe hermeneutics and its core parts that are essential and important for the character of this study. Alvesson & Sköldberg claim that a researcher can choose to use different parts of the hermeneutic method. It is important to indicate that even though an overview of hermeneutics is required in order to comprehend the approach, still some of its parts will be left out, without suffering the understanding of it. The simple explanation is foremost that those parts are just not applied in this study rather than not being noteworthy. A description of the application of method will follow after this chapter.

2.1   Hermeneutics

Hermeneutics has its roots in the Renaissance in connection to both the Protestant analysis of the Bible and the humanist study of the ancient classics. The point of its departure is the interpretation of texts. A genuine theme in hermeneutics has been that "the meaning of a part can only be understood if it is related to the whole"[26]. Thus parts of the Bible can only

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[22] March & Stoker (2002)

[23] Alvesson & Sköldberg (2000)

[24] Svenning (2000) p.67f

[25] Svenning (2000)

[26] Alvesson & Sköldberg (2000) p.53

be understood if it is connected to the whole Bible. On the contrary, the whole consists of parts; therefore it can only be understood on the basis of parts. Thereby, we face the so-called *hermeneutic circle.*
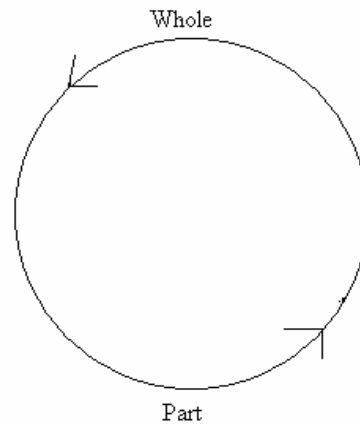
Whole

Part

Figure 2: the hermeneutic circle: original version (Alvesson&Sköldberg 2000:53)

The contradiction between part and whole is solved by hermeneutics by transforming the circle into a spiral; beginning in one point, try cautiously to relate it to the whole, where new light is shed, and then return to the part studied, and so on. Essentially, one starts in, for example, a part of a text, phenomenon, dialogue or action and then investigates further into the matter by alternating between part and whole, which gives an increasingly deeper understanding of both. This is the circle of objectivist hermeneutics.[27]

The aalethic hermeneutics deals with the relation between preunderstanding and understanding. It focuses on the original situation of understanding in search for the revelation of something hidden and hence a deeper understanding. Before starting the actual research, one has a preunderstanding of the subject (whole) dealt with. Through observations and analysis (of part) a road to understanding is created, hence a wider relation to the whole. Preunderstanding in relation to the hermeneutic circle may be seen as its practical side where it deals with problems concerning the dilemmas in order to understand the object while part and whole focus on the actual object. Even though the researcher deals with a problem through a subjective, personal and inductive way, objectivity is a goal to work towards. It is important to be critical towards sources, disregard the own point of view, consider available and non-available information and finally to uphold an open position towards the knowledge and prejudice that may affect the result. By working with preunderstanding-understanding and part-whole the hermeneutic circle faces a new form.[28]

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[27] Ibid.

[28] Ibid. (2000) p.55-58
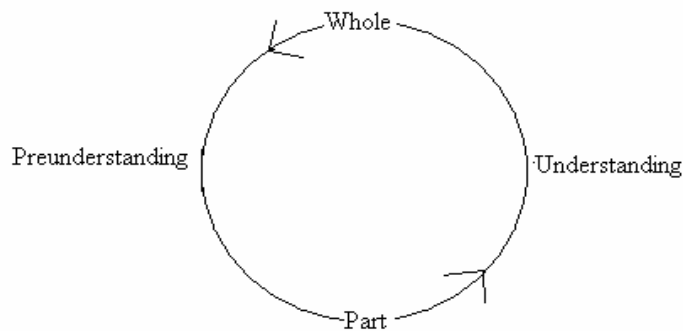
Figure 3: the hermeneutic circle (Alvesson&Sköldberg 2000:57, 66)

As mentioned, there are two main approaches within hermeneutics, namely objectivist and alethic hermeneutics, which have followed a controversial line and have often opposite standpoints.[29] There are not only differences between the approaches; they also have characteristics in common. The principal concern is their emphasis on the importance of *intuition*. It refers to that knowledge is not maintained in the usual, reasoning and rational way. Intuition implies some sort of inner 'gazing' referring to a privileged royal path to true knowledge of the world. It is achieved, not by endless experimenting, but rather as a lightening where complex patterns are enlightened by some sort of mental flashlight. Knowledge in this case is then experienced as obvious. There are two types of intuition.[30]

Intuition in the objectivist hermeneutics puts emphasis on the understanding of underlying meaning, not the explanation of causal connections. On the contrary, alethic hermeneutics focuses on truth as an act of discovery where the division between understanding and explanation are dissolved as a unity rather than separate. In both objectivist and alethic hermeneutics, interpretation and reflection are two main components, which deserve further clarification.

2.1.1 Interpretation and reflection

Interpretation is the main task in hermeneutics. The concept contains both practical and philosophical dimensions. Essentially, interpretation is both a condition and a consequence of understanding. The objects of interpretation are texts (also in other forms than written, for example, interviews are also considered as a text), which means that all empirical references are findings of interpretation. The line of thought for the researcher is to through texts interpret thoughts, meaning, intentions and descriptions. Since interpretation is the core part of research within hermeneutics, a clear awareness of theoretical assumptions is essential. The meaning of *language* and *understanding* in the context are together significant for interpretation. However, hermeneutics does not assure a single

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[29] Alvesson & Sköldberg (2000) p.52f

[30] Ibid. p.52

correct interpretation or necessarily superior interpretations. The ambition is rather to propose a reasonable and moderate alternative, a method to examine how something could be interpreted. The difference between hermeneutics and positivism is important on this notion. Positivism searches for a single explanation, one interpretation, one truth that a colleague regardless of point of origin or societal orientation would agree upon. While as for the participant of hermeneutics is involved in history, language and world, which does not allow him/her to use these instruments to establish one interpretation as the only correct one.[31]

Reflection refers to the researcher as a person in his/her surrounding world. The central meaning in research and its coherence is given by the society as an entity, intellectual and cultural aspects, language and description. Conscious sensory impressions, cultural and political relations appear through reflection which is important factors since they affect and reflect the interpretation.[32]

The interpretation of understanding is also linked to *empathy*, which means that understanding requires for living (thinking, feeling) oneself into the situation of acting (writing, speaking) person. Through imagination one will try to put oneself in the author's or speaker's position, in order to comprehend the meaning of the written or spoken word more specifically. Together with intuition, one can absorb the mental universe of another human being. Complemented with empathy by the interpreter's wider or maybe different stock of knowledge, it may be even possible for the interpreter to understand the authors or speakers better than they understand themselves.

2.1.2   Source criticism

Histography within hermeneutics provides the method of source criticism.[33] Source criticism has its roots in Betti's four canons[34] and deals with a common problem in the interpretation of qualitative material that arises when there are clashing statements and also when statements appear doubtful for any reason. For example when the interviewee is biased[35] or the person is influenced by other people, the time perspective since the reported event has occurred and so on. Source criticism is a hermeneutic method which sets up certain criteria for the evaluation and interpretation of data. Besides being subjected to written texts, an orientation towards oral history has surfaced, which makes the method also relevant for interviewing techniques.[36]

The overall source criticism is involved with the question of distortion of information. Since the researcher observes reality not in a direct way but through some sort of medium, a tripartite relationship reality-source-researcher occurs, where much may take place in the path between reality and researcher. It is this main strategic route that is of interest for source criticism. Alvesson&Sköldberg clarify the conceptual meaning by 'source'; any unit

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[31] Alvesson & Sköldberg (2000) p.53f

[32] Irbid. p.12,13, 53f

[33] Ibid. p. 69f

[34] Ibid. p. 67-68

[35] Ibid. p. 72-73

[36] Ibid. p. 69

that give the researcher knowledge of the past. The event has then left a trace and/or been reproduced in the source. The researcher involves itself with this trace or reflection with the goal of gaining answers to the questions about the past time. The source critic is a knowledge realist who believes in the existence of an underlying reality that is expressed in an unfinished, solid way, in the sources. This reality may very well be complex, vague or conflicting. These aspects are important for the four criticism of source criticism, which are especially appropriate to case studies.[37]

- **Criticism of authenticity** refers to if the observation is genuine or invented.

- **Criticism of bias** is directed towards the researcher and his/her prejudice or pre-judgments in connection to the study field and how these may affect the interpretations.

- **Criticism of distance** relates to the time perspective of the observation; when was it made; when was it recorded and in which situation?

- **Criticism of dependence** refers to *other* stories, that the reporting person has listened to and if they have perhaps influenced the structure or the content of the study and hence the analysis.

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[37] Ibid. p. 70

3 Method application

After the introduction of the hermeneutic method, I would like to present the way I have chosen to work and apply hermeneutics in this study. The core foundation of the study is in the hermeneutic circle, in which the relation between part and whole relate the interpretation of literature and empirical founding, and the alethic hermeneutic circle relating preunderstanding and understanding of the subject. There is a wide range of literature available regarding democracy and civil society in the Middle East. However, there is a lack of empirical research in Lebanese civil society. In search of a starting point, I have primarily begun with the references in two Masters theses. It is important in this context to openly show important steps in the study such as: how data has been collected, the choice of interviews and how they were actually accomplished, how I use hermeneutics in the analysis of data and the question of validity in this study.

3.1 Collecting data

Primary sources of empirical data for this study are interviews. They provide a first-hand collected data of the subject dealt with. *Secondary* sources are the literature available on the concept of civil society, democracy and political system in theory and about Lebanon. These are existing research studies in relevance to this subject. The combination of primary and secondary sources constitutes the theoretical framework and the case Lebanon. Interviews are used as reference only in the case part and as main source in analysis. Furthermore, regarding the theories of democracy, the main source of reference is Hans Wiklund's (2002) 'Arenas for Democratic Deliberation, Decision-Making in an infrastructure Project in Sweden.' Wiklund deals with liberal democracy and deliberative democracy which has been a useful platform for those sources used in the theoretical framework. Literature about modern history and political systems in the Middle East and Lebanon has been important for a general impression and comprehension of the political life in the region. Even though the study is limited to examining the internal political relations in Lebanon, the political environment in Middle East has a great impact in Lebanon's political life.

Within research it is important to be critical towards sources, disregard one's own point of view, consider available and non-available information and finally to uphold an open position towards the knowledge and prejudice that may affect the results. The initial work was introduced according to preunderstanding, which is my general opinion and understanding of Middle East and Lebanon in particular. In search for appropriate literature, I started off by reading earlier Sida MFS Master thesis on Lebanon, presented in the section of problem discussion, which provided a broad list of references in the mission of my readings. Those lead to further readings, and thus provided a deeper understanding in Lebanon. The literature for my theoretical framework has been gathered in combination with Hans Wiklund as main reference and earlier courses taken in political philosophy, at the faculty of Political Science at Jönköping International Business School. Additional source for literature search and research articles have been the Internet. Databases such as Libris, Julia[38] and Google have been used for the following keywords with different combinations; 'democracy', 'civil society', 'Middle East', 'Lebanon', 'history' and 'political system'. Last but not least, the field study in Lebanon provided the possibility for additional literature, even though the main mission was to do interviews.

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[38] 'Julia' is the main database for literature search at Jönköping University Library.

The literature consists mainly of the definition of civil society, theories of democracy in relation to a political system. Many difficult questions have come up along the way such as how to limit the choice of literature. In search for literature, it is important to compare sources in order to find valuable confirmation on theories as well as variety in order to avoid bias. A sense of understanding has grown along the way, because of continuous search of information and the trade-off between part and whole. Consequently, my understanding of Lebanon in general; its history, political system, cultural inheritance, diversity in society, religion, civil society and democracy have all increased and added on to new knowledge. Source criticism is important in this dimension. In collection of data, following the conceptual meaning of 'source' raises the importance of the first criticism of authenticity. As a researcher, I am involved with a goal of gaining answers to my questions. By clearly presenting the choice of literature and data, the criticism of authenticity is always essential. In order to avoid biased data, I have used different types of literature and authors to achieve a greater understanding for the object of my study and thus constantly working with source criticism.

3.2   The interviews

During my time in Lebanon, I conducted 14 interviews[39] with politicians, academics within the field of political science, social or political activists and Civil Society Organisations (CSO). I believe that several categories allow me to grasp a broader perspective of the political life and democracy in Lebanon. My main argument for politicians, academics of political science and CSOs is that they are all involved in politics but in different ways and levels in the political system. Regarding the confessional belonging of interview respondents, I have tried to be as general as possible and include interview respondents with Christian and Muslim background.

Having a qualitative approach with a hermeneutic method in this study, I have used personal and in-depth interviews with a semi-structure character.[40] A standardized questionnaire has been used with four main topical questions and sub-questions within each topic. The semi-structure character of the questionnaire has given space to additional sub-questions that have occurred along the interview in relevance to the topic. Each interview took between 45 minutes to one hour and they were all in English. I preferred to take notes directly on my computer instead of using a tape recorder. I believe that the advantage of taking notes for me personally is an increased focus during the interview. Since taking notes was approved, and even in some cases actually preferred, I had no reason to reconsider using a tape recorder. A brief introduction of the subject was given followed by short summaries of the given answers in order to avoid misinterpretations from both sides.

In the selection of my interview candidates, I started with a look at the list of interviewees made by Demir and Rosén. Since I did not know where to begin, I contacted each person on their lists as an initial point of departure. Some were easier than others to reach, some not at all. Even though the purposes of our studies are different, I believe that it is interesting, but not necessary, regarding a continuity of the study on democracy to interview the same persons. The risk involved in interviewing the same persons is the question of bias. Therefore, my list of interviews consist 'new' respondents and 'old' ones. My final selection

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[39] See Appendix 1 for further details and interview questions.

[40] Svenning (2000) p.81f.

of interview candidates consisted of some from the list of Demir or Rosén and some new candidates who were either referred to by those already contacted or through WCC.[41]

It is important to comment on the sensitivity of the subject of politics. In the selection of interview respondents, there was always a question of being cautious since not all people might prefer to speak about politics. I started by making phone calls in a random order, introducing myself and my topic. In some cases, the person wished to have the questions emailed to them before the interview. However, I rather tried to avoid this pattern since prepared answers may sometimes bias the interview. Within hermeneutics, the underlying meaning of every word and action, such as pause, reflection and spontaneity, are essential for interpretation. In general, no problems occurred in the collection of interview respondents. Nevertheless, since I found myself in a new culture dealing with the delicate issue of politics, I was many times careful. In order to grasp a sense of the political culture, a process of constant observation beside interviews was essential for my understanding of the ongoing political turbulence.

The field study in Lebanon provided much more than the great possibility to do interviews. The time spent in the country also gave me the opportunity to comprehend the political culture, social patterns, norms and values. I believe that a deeper understanding of the society as a whole may grow through awareness of surroundings in society. This is truly important in social science studies in general and in the analysis of civil society and democracy in specific.

3.3   Analysis of data

The aim of analysis is to connect empirical findings to the theoretical framework in order to fulfil the purpose and finally draw conclusions. Knowledge can be interpreted very broadly and deals with entire scope of cultural products. The interpretation of data and its consistency in this study is partly influenced by my understanding of the Lebanese society as an entity, human social interaction as well as my own intellectual and cultural understanding. New and different impressions, cultural and political relations are important factors since they affect and reflect my interpretation. Being in a new cultural and political environment requires an effort of understanding certain set of norms and values in a society. In the analysis of data, I would like to emphasize the importance of empathy within hermeneutic. I have tried as far as possible in my interpretation to emphasize the meaning of language and understanding the context. This means that understanding requires for living oneself into the situation of the acting person – in this case the interview respondent – but also in their surrounding world. In a multi-cultural environment as Lebanon, it is important to consider the differences in culture, the understanding of politics and if it may be affected by confessional belonging. Through observations and analysis, I have tried to understand these factors in relation to a broader perspective but not be affected by them. By constantly working with source criticism, I have tried to deal with common problems that may have occurred.

The criticism of bias is referred to me as the researcher. In analysis of data I have aimed at as far as possible to uphold an open-minded view to the subject in order to avoid dilemmas that may bias my interpretation. Even though I search for knowledge in a subjective way,

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[41] Since I had an office at World Council of Churches, it was easier to establish contact with people within my group of interest.

objectivity in analysis of data has been a constant goal to work towards. To do so, I have intended to keep a distance to my social perspective and values and not allow prejudice to affect interpretation. This may be a difficult task since interpretations are always affected by one's thoughts and values. By working with source criticism, however, I have taken the role of participant as well as observer, trying my best to avoid biased interpretations.

The criticism of distance relates to the time perspective of the observation. Derived from earlier discussion, the subject of democracy has been dominant in the political life in Lebanon for the last years. The country has been in turbulence and faced political instability during 2005. To do a study on democracy in a time when the country goes through political changes such as search for independence without Syrian involvement and creation of order, gives me less 'distance' to the observation but a possibility to follow an ongoing process at close. Nevertheless, in analysis of data I have tried to examine democracy and its process during a longer time and to evaluate the process in its current context.

Criticism of dependence refers to other stories that may have influenced the structure or the content of the study and hence the analysis. Through literature and articles in the subject, a researcher's interpretation may be affected in one way or the other by other stories. I have tried to manage each interview independent from another, and instead in relevance to its own character. My interpretation of each interview relates later to my interpretation of the subject as whole and hence I have tried to constantly work with the hermeneutic circle.

4 Theoretical Framework

4.1 Introduction

Lebanon has an unusual character. Being a complex and divided country with a population that is a mixture of various Christian sects, Sunni Muslims, Shiite Muslims, Druze and others, it is a country in struggle with its internal problems. In terms of Western thinking, political scientists concerned with the development of democracy in states often argue that the main hindrance from democracy is lack of political stability.[42] Instability in this sense may be the outcome of a deeply rooted traditional culture that lacks flexibility, education and characteristics for democratic institutions. The reasons for political instability may also be the breakdown of the culture caused by the forces of modernization that create exaggerated expectations and general disorder. It can also be explained by a general low economic level. Hudson claims that democratic institutions in Lebanon have been necessary for political stability, not a result of it.[43]

A theme in hermeneutics is that 'the meaning of a part can only be understood if it is related to the whole'. In line with the hermeneutic circle, it is important to study a part in order to relate it to the whole, where interpretation is the task of researcher. The political structure in Lebanon in evaluation of the concept of democracy and its definition and understanding by actors within civil society is thus in need of explanation of several parts. It is important to define a concept of civil society, democracy and state in theory in order to later relate these parts to a whole and Lebanon in search for an understanding of each part respectively.

The idea of civil society is a serious subject in discussions about politics in most varied settings, where analysts and theoretical thinkers talk about civil society – its deficiencies, its decline, its promise and possibilities. Such diversity creates a conflict of indeterminacy where many questions occur. What does the idea of civil society mean in different contexts? Does civil society refer to a certain type of social structure, mode of social behaviour or political ideal? What are the circumstances of its prospects and existence? In the attempt of understanding 'civil society' it is important to clarify the idea of the concept.

This chapter will introduce the theoretical tools in order to bring insight into the theory and concepts used in the study. Focus will be on liberal democracy and deliberative democracy, and briefly on consociational democracy,. Ultimately, to clarify a concept of state is important in the concept of civil society and democratization, as they are interrelated.

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[42] Hudson (1968)

[43] Ibid.

4.2   Civil society

The European tradition of thought about 'civil society' reveals at least three different standards such as the Scottish Enlightenment, French Enlightenment and the German tradition of thought from Hegel to Marx.[44] In a period of increasing political hostility and mistrust, a political wish for better civility in social relations is expressed. The idea of civil society has become an ideological thought across the world as '*the* idea of the late twentieth century'. The given 'limits' of politics and increasingly weak process of party politics in the West[45] has incited interest in civil society as a means of revitalization of public life. The concept has a different meaning in the East[46] where aside from political and civil liberties, it indicates private property rights and markets. In the South[47], the character of civil society is identified by private enterprises and organizations, church and denominational associations, self-employed worker's co-operatives and unions and the huge field of NGOs, who have all become to be essential for the creation of social preconditions for more accountable, public and representative forms of political power. Civil society induces a desire to recover for society powers – economic, social, expressive – where it is believed that they have been illegitimately manipulated by states.[48]

In search for a definition of civil society, Graeme Gill (2002) characterizes civil society as a society where there are autonomous groups that combine the views and activities of individuals and which act to support and defend the interests of those people, including against the state. The scholars Cohen and Arato define civil society as a sphere between the economy and the state, where social interaction takes place by and in the intimate sphere and plurality; referring to families, informal groups, sphere of voluntary associations, social movements and the public form of communication, mass media and private enterprises.[49] The modern civil society is constructed through forms of self-constitution and self-mobilisation. It is institutionalised and generalised through laws and civil rights which tend to stabilize the social differentiation. Even though the self-constitution and the institutionalisation dimension of civil society may be independent from each other, both the independent acting and institutionalisation are necessary for the reproduction of civil society in the long term. Furthermore, it is important, according to the scholars, to make a distinction between civil society and political parties, political organisations and political institutions (such as parliamentary associations).[50] In addition, Gellner identifies civil society as a set of diverse non-governmental institutions that are strong enough to respond to the state but also let the state accomplish its role as a peace-keeper and mediator between major interests without dominating and atomizing the rest of society.[51]

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[44] Kaviraj & Khilnani (2001) p.3. Further deepening understanding of history and conception see Cohen & Arato (1995) p.89-115

[45] The West refers to West Europe and North America

[46] The East refers to Eastern European countries

[47] The South refers to Asia, Latin America, Middle East and Africa.

[48] Khilnani (2001) p.11-12

[49] Cohen& Arato(1993) p.10

[50] Ibid. p.10-11

[51] Gellner (1995)

The discussion on civil society among scholars rotates around three dimensions. To begin with, the *organizational* form of civil society where organized institutions between the sphere of family and the state function are seen as a medium between state and citizens. Second, the significance of *civility* within civil society that refers to a social atmosphere distinguished by pluralistic discourse, tolerance and modernisation. Thirdly, the notion of civil society also refers to the existence of a *specific quality in the relation between state and society*. In sum, all three dimensions are equally strengthened and supported.

Order in traditional societies, upheld by collective beliefs, mythical and religious forces, is a foundation in the concept of 'lifeworld' which relates to parts of social life in which action is carried out by common understanding and normative agreement. According to Jürgen Habermas, lifeworld is referred to as an uncomplicated and already existing background for communication which in turn reproduces lifeworld itself. Integration within lifeworld is based on 'normatively ascribed agreement'[52]. Nevertheless, changes of circumstances for social integration and social order are caused by modernisation, which in line with Max Weber, Habermas considers it to be a universal-historical rationalisation process. He refers to 'rationalization of the lifeworld', which is the process of modernisation – a process in which faith in human cause based on science, logic etc. by time replaces beliefs in religion and tradition. This rationalisation raises various changes among them where social and political order no longer can find legitimacy by referring to tradition or religion. Instead, the traditional type of social integration has to find other alternatives, and thus shift from 'normatively ascribed agreement' to 'communicatively achieved understanding'[53].

The 'formal political system' and the 'market economy' are integrated action 'systems' that Habermas refers to as 'subsystems'. In contrast to smaller societies, modern large-scale societies face cultural pluralism and functional complexity where the process of societal rationalisation leads to a separation of functionally integrated action systems. Regarding integration within systems, steering-media has an integrative role of communicatively achieved consensual agreements and also the organizing power of natural language. While organization of action is achieved through the medium of administrative power in the formal political system, media-steered systems achieve coordination of action through external empirical relations. In the subsystem of market economy, the coordination of action is through the medium of money. Habermas relates the formal political system with the lifeworld and its public sphere through taxes for administrative services and political decisions for legitimacy. Furthermore, the interrelation between market economy and lifeworld and its private sphere is through exchanges of labour for wages and goods and services. Consequently, he considers that the modern social order consists of four spheres: the lifeworld and its private and public sphere, and the system and the two subsystems, being the formal political system and the market economy.[54]

In the sphere of society, the model of deliberative politics and procedural democracy makes a distinction between the formal political system and the market economy but also a distinction between the private and the public sphere of the lifeworld.[55] Whereas the formal political system creates and implements political decisions and the market economy

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[52] Wiklund (2002) p.39

[53] Ibid. p.40

[54] Ibid. p.40-41

[55] Ibid. p.48. Wiklund refers to Habermas (1996b) p.359.

faces private interest together with distribution of goods and services, the public sphere is to create normative grounds. As Wiklund quotes the notion of Habermas, "the public sphere can best be described as a network for communicating information and points of view (i.e. opinions expressing affirmative or negative attitudes); the streams of communication are, in the process, filtered and synthesized in such a way that they coalesce into bundles of topically specified *public* opinions"[56]. In short, the function of the public sphere is as mentioned to create normative grounds but also to recognize issues of common concern and create arguments and counter-arguments. It is not to be considered as an institution or as an organization.

The public sphere has the power to affect the principles for decision-making in the formal political system. However, its purpose is not to replace or control the system, both the formal political system and the market economy, but rather through communicative networks, influence the decisions. Hence, manipulative exchange of political decisions for legitimacy in the formal political system can no longer take place. Habermas sees this as a radical self-governance that engages a reallocation of forces. In this democratic vision 'a new balance' is born between the various types of integration forces in modern societies; between the administrative power and money, and solidarity achieved through radical democratic deliberation.[57]

4.3   Democracy

Democracy is a principal political idea in the context of how collective action can be legitimately organised and regulated. In search for legitimacy, a political order has to be approved by its members.[58] The democratic idea gains its legitimizing strength from the assurance of popular self-governance where the normative idea that free and equal individuals, the so called 'people', are to govern issues of common interest. Hence, in order to be democratically legitimate, decision-making on organisation and regulation of collective action rests on the power of the people.[59] This makes democracy and legitimacy interrelated in modern society where democracy functions as a qualification for legitimacy.[60]

The idea of democracy identifies the relationship between the governed and the governors in which governance encloses its legitimating force. In this context, various suggestions have been made regarding the details that are characteristic of this relationship in democratic political systems. Wiklund argues that there are many models of democracy, which articulate contradictory ideals. Essentially, apart from the notion of rule by the people, a unique agreement on the meaning of the idea of democracy does not exist. The Anglo-American or liberal theory, and the French or republican theory are two democratic traditions distinguished by Robert A. Dahl (1956). David Held (1996) identifies no less than

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[56] Habermas (1996b) p.360

[57] Habermas (1996b) , Wiklund (2002) p.49

[58] Wiklund (2002) P.13. Referred to Habermas (1979) p.182-183

[59] Ibid. Referred to Harrison (1996)

[60] Ibid. Referred to Beetham (1991)

seven different models of democracy. [61] Nonetheless, no political system has yet been close to a realisation of the democratic assurance. [62]

Robert A. Dahl, among many scholars, emphasizes the importance of the regular adjustment of the institutional arrangements in democratic governance to constantly changing social and political framework. [63] Institutional transformation outlines the core history of democracy and democratic governance where a first transformation refers to the birth of democracy in ancient Greece in which the direct democratic governance in the organisational design of the city-state was shaped. The second transformation identifies the large-scale, territorial nation-state and its institutions for representative democratic governance. Dahl argues for a possible third transformation such as the development of institutional arrangements as an alternative and balance to the nation-state. He argues that if the democratic assurance of popular self-governance does not wear away, changes in the social and political framework have to be complemented by reform of existing and modernization of new institutional arrangements for democratic governance. [64]

The core conception of social order is, implicitly or explicitly, necessary for a model of democracy. [65] The liberal and the republican tradition together with related models of democracy are based on conceptions of social order that refer to state-centric conceptions of politics and governance. A critique of state-centric conceptions of politics and democratic governance uttered in these traditions is represented by the model of deliberative politics and procedural democracy. It aims at the most essential features of the liberal and republican tradition in order to integrate these into a communicative structure. [66]

4.3.1 Liberal and republican tradition

There are significantly several definitions for democracy. The basic notion of liberal democracy is based on general and free elections, freedom of speech and opinion, and a functional judicial system. [67] According to Dahl governmental relation towards the citizens is important in a democracy, where governmental responsiveness to the interests of its citizens should be vivid. [68] Dahl identifies three dimensions in the context of democracy; wide *competition* among individuals and organized groups; a comprehensive level of *political participation* in the selection of leaders and policies; and a level of *civil* and *political liberties* such as freedom of expression, freedom of press, and freedom to form and join organizations. [69]

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[61] Ibid. Referred to Held (1996), Sabine (1952), Dahl (1956), Elster (1997)

[62] Ibid. Referred to Dahl (1989)

[63] Ibid. p.19 Referred to Dahl (1989)

[64] Wiklund (2002) p.19

[65] Ibid. p.36 Referred to Held (1996) p.7-8; Macpherson (1977)

[66] Ibid. p.36. In the context of deliberative politics and procedural democracy, Wiklund refers to Habermas: (1996b) pp.297-302; (1996a) pp.26-30; (2001) pp.31-90

[67] Sörensen (1993) p.13

[68] Dahl (1982)

[69] Ibid. p.25

A mechanistic conception of social order is the initial foundation expressed in the liberal tradition.[70] Departing from Thomas Hobbes and John Locke , the notion of social order reflects on individuals being free from all social and political agreements but moving on to constituting society and state based on self-interest in order to stay away from the destructive 'state of nature'. To do so, power is focused into one single entity based on an established contract between the governors and the governed. Order is preserved through the force of the sovereign state and a market-structured civil society. In the liberal tradition, a distinction between state and civil society reflects the division between the political and the non-political. The former is connected to the state and its governmental affairs. Yet, the state is authorized to interfere in civil society domain with the basic purpose of protecting those individual rights that are important for market exchange.[71]

An organic conception of social order, in contrast to the liberal notion, is formulated in the republican tradition.[72] Built on Aristotle's notion of social order, it is assumed that individuals are dependent upon social and political agreements; they are initially part of the community. Order is conceived through integrative power of normative agreement. Shared values and traditions are essentials that function as a skeleton in the maintenance of social and political order. The constitutive division is between the state and the household with one single field of collective action, namely the community. Furthermore, the republican tradition sees the state at the centre, functioning as an institutional expression of the community and its value system. In contrast to the liberal tradition, state and society are initially a political community without any distinction.[73]

Even though the liberal and the republican tradition set off from different notions of society, both traditions reflect state-centric conceptions of social order, politics and governance. Politics and governance are visualized as identical with the state in which governmental affairs are related and as a result, democracy is seen as a shape of the state.[74]

In the liberal tradition, democracy is considered mainly as a mechanism for the protection of individual's private interests from the state power. Hence the state power is limited in order to protect private interests. Rotation of power together with other constitutional principles is to force the governors to be receptive to the interests of the governed. According to Dahl, the mechanisms of liberal democracy "are crucial processes for insuring that political leaders will be somewhat responsible to the preferences of ordinary citizens"[75]

As for the republican models of democracy, they usually express a more radical ideal where political theory highlights popular sovereignty or public autonomy. While the liberal tradition stresses the individual as being sovereign, the republican tradition argues that individuals are naturally social in their nature which makes them sovereign as a people. The community, meaning the people, deserves the right of self-governance. Democracy in the re-

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[70] Ibid. p.36

[71] Ibid. p.36-37

[72] Ibid. p.37. For a mechanistic respektively organic conception of social order see Björklund (1989) pp.56-60,61-71

[73] Wiklund (2002). p.37-38

[74] Ibid. p.38

[75] Dahl (1956) p.130.

publican ideal reflects a radical self-organisation of all areas of society such as the civil society, the state machinery and the market economy. Democracy is considered as a mean to return power to the community. Radically expressed, the republican ideal of democracy is oriented against the state.

4.3.2   Consociational democracy

In the works of Arend Lijphart[76], theories about regulation of institutional compromises are emphasized, in which the idea of consociational democracy is introduced. This model has been dominant for governance in plural and multi-ethnic societies. Lijphart views the majority rule of democracy as problematic for plural societies. He deals with the core interpretation of democracy as 'government by the majority of the people'. Plural societies as a society are separated along religious, ideological, linguistic, cultural, ethnic or racial lines which define and create sub-societies. The sub-societies have political parties, interest groups and means of communication of their own.

The main idea of consociational democracy is to deal with the problems of a divided society through power sharing. A system of proportional representation from all the different groups on the national level is a way to unite different groups in society. The elites of different groups are meant to work together in order to solve common problems of the divided society on a national basis, with proportional representation in the government as well as in the political institutions.[77]

An important factor is the minority veto. The consociational democracy does not aim at reducing the ethnic division in society but rather to generate a democracy in which this division may function. Following Lijphart's four criteria, a consociational democracy should (1) be governed by a large coalition cabinet in a parliamentary system (2) the diverse groups must have mutual veto rule (3) have proportional political representation (4) have a large quantity of autonomy for each sector to run its own internal affairs.[78]

4.3.3   Deliberative democracy

The model of deliberative politics and procedural democracy is based on the social theory formulated by Jürgen Habermas.[79] Modern social order signifies a critique of both the liberal and republican tradition of upholding the conceptions of society state centred, and also to identify conceptions of politics and governance equal with the state. Habermas emphasizes an alternative conception of modern society namely 'a decentred society'.[80] His starting point is the assumption that social and political order are not possible to uphold by strategic planning or by force. Instead, social and political order gain legitimacy by members in the group or society.[81] Wiklund points out the critiques in this perspective by

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[76] Lijphart (1977), Lijphart (1984)

[77] Lijphart (1984)

[78] Lijphart (1977) p.25

[79] Wiklund (2002) p38. See Habermas (1984) and (1987)

[80] Habermas (1996)

[81] Wiklund (2002) p.38. Wiklund refers to Habermas, (1975) p.179.

Habermas, where the liberal tradition faces problems since it does not emphasize the essentiality of normative agreement strong enough. The republican tradition, following a more serious line of normative agreements, endures an 'ethical overload'. For that reason, Habermas' attempt in communicative foundation of modern social order leads to his dualistic structure of the idea of modern society as lifeworld and system [82].

The deliberative conception of democratic politics is united with how to see democracy as a tool for democratic organization and guideline of collective action in precise action situations. Understanding the democratic process as a process of social learning through rational argumentation is the main idea of deliberative politics which is itself an effort to develop an alternative notion to democratic politics. The effort lies in the combination of the most attractive attributes of both the liberal and republican tradition in order to integrate those into a communicative structure.[83]

To begin with, Habermas states democratic politics to be public in nature and influential in its purpose[84]. Democratic politics is also seen as a public search for the common interest upheld through discussion, in which political actors are participants and political practice is visualized as a public activity where deliberation and participation are the core factors. The opportunity of agreement lays in the assumptions of communication – which are rather formal than substantive - instead of being assured by an ethnic background consensus.[85]

Deliberative politics does not view politics as an end in itself, and even though politics is viewed as public in nature, private interests may conflict. Importantly, it is the mission of political practice and institutions to determine those conflicts. For that reason, through deliberation on issues the ambition is to agree upon judgments consider how collective action should be arranged and legalized. This, however, engages collective searches for common interests but also to reach balance between conflicting private interests. On the subject of democracy, it is not a mechanism for just and competent aggregation of already politically formed private interests. Nor is democracy regarded as a process of public discussion for community members to discover common interests. Quite the opposite, democracy is viewed as a process of social learning in which the members get informed and exchange the views and interests of others. According to Habermas, democratic deliberation is "as a reflective organized learning process"[86], where the process is about common interests being constructed rather than being discovered. In sum, actors' private interests are converted to consider other actors' views.

Deliberative politics is based on argumentation founded on communicative rationality, in which political outcomes are legitimate as a consequence of logical argumentation in just procedures that identify deliberation as crucial. In an ideal democratic procedure, the core of the deliberative conception of democratic politics is the notion of those political issues that can be determined rationally. Important in Habermas' discussion is that normative validity claims are founded on knowledge which leads to legitimacy that is dependent on ra-

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[82] Ibid. p.39

[83] Ibid. (2002) p.53-54

[84] Habermas (1996) chapters 7 and 8

[85] Ibid, Wiklund (2002) p.56

[86] Habermas (1996) p.321

tionality. Within this background, discourse is introduced as an ideal procedure for democratic organisation and rule of collective action in precise action situations. It is important for actors to share a natural language in order for communication to function. Nevertheless, they also must assume a shared common comprehension of the world as such where objective world of facts, social world of relationships and normative principles and similar subjective worlds of beliefs and needs, in order so find some sort of clear communication. Hence, discourse refers to communication.[87]

Initially, discourse refers to critically consider the validity of a claim to truth of a fact, moral correctness of a normative rule, and genuineness of a belief or need. Instead of manipulation or force, the structure of discourse searches for legitimate communicative process. Three sets of rules are identified and applied to three various levels of argumentation, where 'a reflective form of communicative action' is uttered.[88]

In the first set of rules, for actors to participate in discourse they have to speak the same natural language and according to the same logical and linguistic rules. The second set of rules refers to a shared understanding among communicative actors and their role as listeners. However, in their role of speakers, they must claim what they think to be right normative rules, and genuinely their beliefs and needs while respecting the intention of the validity claims of others. Nonetheless, it is impossible to reach a shared understanding if actors protect obvious false facts, immoral norms, rules and laws. Ultimately, the third set of rules identifies the structure of discourse in the 'forceless force of the better argumentation'[89] and the influence opportunity and exchange through reflective argumentation.[90]

In conclusion, discourse must be 'clean' from coercion and inequality for reflective communication and the outcomes of communicative process to be rational and legitimate. The third set of rules specifically outlines the opportunity for those with the competence to speak and act not to be excluded from discourse; "that everyone is allowed to question or introduce any assertion whatsoever as well as to express his or her needs, beliefs and wants; and that no one is to be prevented by external or internal coercion from exercising these rights."[91]

4.4   State and civil society

Politics and the state have often been defined in terms of each other, which has made it common to view modern political science as a discourse on the state.[92] An early and influential definition of Max Weber provides the state as a 'human community that…claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory' and politics is defined as a 'striving to share power or striving to influence the distribution of power, either among states or among groups within a state'.[93] However, the institutional actualities of the

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[87] Wiklund (2002)p.58-61

[88] Ibid. p.61-62

[89] Ibid. p.62

[90] Ibid.

[91] Ibid. p.63.

[92] Bartelson (2001) p.30

[93] Ibid.

state are more of an empirical concept that should not be puzzled with the abstract idea of the state. The state concept has given political science a baseline identity, autonomy and authority. Yet, as Jens Bartelson argues, concepts should be understood upon their changing position in relation to other concepts.

The modern concept of the state is separated from its medieval and Renaissance pioneers in the terms of rulers and ruled. It is rather seen as an entity independent of both rulers and ruled. According to Skinner, the characteristics of the modern concept of the state is

That the power of the State, not that of the ruler, came to be envisaged as the basis of government. And this in turn enabled the State to be conceptualized in distinctly modern terms – as the sole source of law and legitimate force within its own territory, and as the sole appropriate object of its citizens' allegiances.[94]

Hence, the state is in its modern sense, separated from rulers and ruled makes it both a subject able to act and an object of political action. The state concept has with its historicization[95] been combined with the concept of the nation that connects political authority and political community. In contemporary Western democracies, the state is associated to institutions such as political parties, pressure groups, non-governmental organization (NGOs) and businesses in which through it is connected to the society as a whole.

While definitions of the state may differ in some details, the Weberian definition of the state is provided as such;

"The primary formal characteristics of the modern state are as follows: it possesses an administrative and legal order subject to change by legislation, to which the organized activities of the administrative staff, which are also controlled by regulations, are oriented. This system of order claims binding authority, not only over the member of the state, the citizens, most of whom have obtained membership by birth, but also to a very large extent over all action taking place in the area of its jurisdiction. It is thus a compulsory organization with a territorial basis. Furthermore, the use of force is regarded as legitimate only in so far as it is either permitted by the state or prescribed by it...The claim of the modern state to monopolize the use of force is an essential to it as its character of compulsory jurisdiction and of continuous operation."[96]

In accordance with other scholars[97], Gordon White identifies the importance of the term 'civil society' in the context of the rise of social movements against communist states in Eastern Europe in the late 1970s and early 1980s. As an often functioning romanticized counter-image to the state, the notion of civil society may be about social virtue in confrontation with political vice: the sphere of freedom versus the sphere of coercion, of participation opposed to hierarchy, pluralism versus traditionalism, spontaneity against manipulation, transparency in opposition to corruption. In this view, 'civil society' could be seen as a particular form of the political relationship between state and society with the liberal notion of 'political society'. One should then seek to identify and explain the appearance of the social forces that play a political role in the establishment of relationship between state and

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[94] Skinner (1978) p.x.

[95] Bartelson (2001) p.30ff

[96] Gill (2003) p.2

[97] Cohen& Arato (1993), Hall (1995), Gellner (1995), Graeme (2002)

society. The main idea in this context is that civil society functions as an intermediate associational sphere between state and family consisted by organisations which are separate from the state. Still civil society has and autonomy in relation to the state and is formed on voluntarily basis by society members with the mission to protect or extend their interests and values.[98]

Moreover, in the discussion of civil society in the context of democracy, White argues that it is useful to make an additional distinction between civil society, political society and the state. The state refers to the apparatus of administrative, judicial, legislative and military organizations. Political society refers to a series of institutions and actors which intervene and communicate the relationships between civil society and the state. Two essential characteristics of political society are political parties and political leaders, which are able to strengthen or weaken the democratic or authoritarian potential of a given construction of civil society.

The importance of civil society in the democratization process was even discussed by earlier scholars such as Machiavelli and Tocqueville, who stressed the significance of civil society for democratic values. In this context, Putnam discusses that efficiency and successful democratic institutions depend on the so called social capital within a society which consists of norms, mutual thinking and networks of civil commitment, which all are basis for a strong civil society. Putnam claims that civic associations contribute to the efficiency and stability of democratic government because of internal effects on members and because of external effects on the larger polity.[99]

Fundamentally, the notion of civil society is central to any discussion of democratization because it points at the central issues about the position of social forces in defining, controlling and legitimating state power. The growth of civil society plays a key role in debates regarding development. The role of civil society is important in the reduction of authoritarian governments and in contribution to organize and maintain a democratic polity and also to develop the quality of governance within that polity.[100]

White identifies four ways for this transmission or task. First, aiming at the kind of 'balanced opposition' which is characteristic of recognized democratic regimes, a growing civil society modifies the balance of power between the state and society in favour for the society. This involves an increasing capacity of organized social forces to weaken the ability of states that are authoritarian. Second, it is argued that a strong civil society imposes public morality and performance, and improves the liability of politicians and administrators, which gives it a disciplinary role in relation to the state. The dilemma is, however, which particular sector of organized civil society one refers to[101]. To continue on the third notion, civil society plays a crucial role as a mediator or transmission-belt between state and society in a way that it channels the relationship between individual citizens and the formal political system. An active civil society makes political communication easier between state and society by improvements of the act of democratic policies through transmission of the demands and interests of sectors of the population. This linkage makes civil society an alter-

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[98] White (2004) p.7-10

[99] Putnam (1993)

[100] Ibid. p.12-13

[101] White (2004) p.14

native principle of representation that creates balance in periodic elections and also functions as a mechanism for strengthening democratic accountability. On the contrary, civil society can also act to raise pressures on the state further than what may be tolerable and hence add to a crisis of governance. Last and fourth, civil society can take a constitutive role by reconstructing the regulations of the political game within democratic structures.

In conclusion, within democracy theories the notion of civil society plays an essential role in the transition process of a non-democratic system towards democracy. A civil society that is well established and broadly spread promotes a pluralistic and participating political system.

4.5 Summary

The idea of civil society has almost become an ideology itself as 'the idea of the late twentieth century' where it completes the gap where governmental forces and actions are limited in relation to society. Civil society desires to recover for economic, social and communicative society powers where it is believed that they have been illegitimately manipulated by the state. Civil society is, together with the market and democracy, what White refers to as the 'magic trio'. In line with former remarks, civil society emerges as a sociological complement of the market in the economic sphere and to democracy in the political sphere. However, over the past decade the concept has been reshaped in various ways in order to fit various ideological, intellectual and practical needs. As a result, the concept means different things to different people, even though a 'paradigm' of thoughts and discussions about the developmental implications of civil society exists.[102]

Democracy is a leading political idea in the context of how collective action can be legitimately organised and regulated. In the search for legitimacy, a political order has to be approved by its members. The democratic idea gains its legitimizing strength from the assurance of popular self-governance where the normative idea that free and equal individuals, the so called 'people', are to govern issues of common interest. Hence, in order to be democratically legitimate, decision making on organisation and regulation of collective action rests on the power of the people. This makes democracy and legitimacy interrelated in modern society where democracy functions as a qualification for legitimacy. Democracy identifies the relationship between the governed and the governors in which governance encloses its legitimating force. As we have seen, various suggestions have been made regarding the details that are characteristic of this relationship in democratic political systems.

The models of democracy presented in this chapter refer to legitimacy in modern political life such as rules and regulations, policies and decisions, political participation and competition, civil and political liberties. Fundamental values refer to equality, liberty, moral self-development, private and common interests, social utility, the fulfilment of wants and needs, and efficient decisions. The theory of science in this chapter provides a framework for examination of political system, civil society and democracy in Lebanon. Although it is not an easy task and several difficult questions may arise in the analysis of democracy in Lebanon, an examination of the possible ways in which politics - democratic politics, practices and institutions, civil society – might be transformed to allow citizens more effectively to form and organize their own lives. In the democratic idea, it is important to examine the key features, assumptions and conditions about the nature of the society in which democracy is or might be an existing process. Hence, the following chapter deals with the political system, civil society and political democracy in Lebanon with an evaluation of its political system in the concept of democracy as a shifting balance between descriptive, explanatory and normative statements.

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[102] Ibid. p.6-7

5 The Case: Lebanon

5.1 Introduction

The European-controlled Arab states which became independent around the Second World War followed different political lines. For some this path involved a route from a short period of competitive elections to a number of decades of one-party governance. For others the path had a different character. Countries like Tunisia, Algeria and the former South Yemen missed out on the initial multi-party stage while Jordan, Lebanon and Morocco experienced the single-party stage. Further example is Sudan that followed another distinction which involved three separate passages from multi-party to military government. The Gulf States, which were subject to British influence, were in general unaffected by the same weights and maintained a model of family rule. One exception was Kuwait where an elected assembly was formed, but without formal parties, from 1961-76, 1982-86 and 1992 to present time being.[103]

On the contrary, among three non-Arab states only Israel kept an uninterrupted period of democratic practice, as far as its Jewish citizens were concerned. Furthermore, the Turkish system of competitive elections that was initiated in 1946 was interrupted on three occasions by military interventions of 1960, 1971 and 1980. Finally, for the third non-Arab state Iran, electoral democracy experienced only short moments in the 1940s and a more controlled Islamic version from 1980 and on. [104]

Given this brief history introduction of Arab countries, Owen (2000) claims that there has been a propensity to regard the majority of Middle Eastern population as being unable or unwilling to practice the kind of open, competitive politics which Westerners refer to as necessary for a functional democracy. However, the practice of democracy is not always unproblematic. Regarding Western countries, the process of democracy has been difficult in history. Many European countries have faced periods of wars, revolutions, social conflict or economic collapse. Democracy is emphasized by a complex system of legal, organisational and administrative arrangements if it is suppose to function effectively.[105]

The political history of Lebanon offers the one Arab country which managed to maintain a constant practice of competitive elections for the first thirty years after its independence and also later after fifteen years of troublesome civil war. In this chapter, the history of civil society and its current relevance will be examined together with political system, the Taif Agreement, conflicts, question of identity and most important democracy in Lebanon. Even though the purpose of this study is to examine the political structure and democracy in Lebanon after the Taif Agreement, modern history is still of major relevance for both political life and democracy.

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[103] Owen (2000) p.147

[104] Ibid.

[105] Ibid. p.148

5.2   Civil society

Civil society is currently a very common term in Arab political and developmental dialogues. It has a controversial, but still a generally agreed upon, definition in the international debates. The question is whether civil society is a descriptive or a normative notion and if it should contain such groups as the informal and association based networks, the religiously based organizations or the political parties. Although in the recent years more focused and empirical research studies have been done on Arab Civil Societies, the available literature on the topic is limited and one may notice that there is a lack of and thus a need for further empirical studies on the subject.[106]

Through Middle Eastern history, three forms of civil society organizations have had a substantial autonomy and independence from the state; the clergy (*ulama*), clans and clan alliances (*millats*) and traditional merchants (*bazaaris*).[107] The civil society was basically formed around a political authority, building its legitimacy on a combination of take-over and/or religious sources. The pre-colonial society was characterized as 'family society' (*al-mujtama´ al-ahli*) which was combined with the modern concept of city society (*al-mujtama´al-madani*), linking the public sphere to the state.[108] New social structures were formed during the second half of the 20th century and created an 'upper middle' class and the 'working' class, in which the latter rapidly grew in size. Nonetheless, the two classes failed to be integrated into most Arab societies, mostly because of a gradual alienation caused by the ruling regimes. The lack of integration has impeded development in countries such as Lebanon, Iraq and Jordan South Yemen, in relation between the elite and the public.[109] Balance between the state and civil society is crucial in the journey of democracy. Saad E. Ibrahim (1995) argues that in Western democracies strong states and strong civil societies coexist while in the Middle East the situation is in general weak civil societies and weak states.

According to The Arab Human Development Report 2004[110] Arab authorities currently limit expressions of the civil society in the public sphere. By keeping popular movements and voices of popular sovereignty outside the political sphere, civil society is prevented from becoming sources of pressure. Furthermore, mechanisms for democratic participation do not exist in Arab countries. States forbid or marginalize political parties by supporting traditional social structures such as the clan, tribe or sect. The freedom to form associations is limited in various levels by law. In most Arab countries, associations are actually under surveillance through legislation. In the historical perspective, civil associations are progressive forces with the aim for civil society to appear and form the kind of public sphere required for freedom. Hence, the various restrictions imposed on civil society may leave Arab citizens with only the traditional, restricted options of tribal or clan-based action. This in turn will strengthen the 'clannism' in Arab society.[111]

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[106] Nasr (2005)

[107] Demir (2001) p.14.

[108] Gellner (1995) p.106

[109] Ibrahim (1995) p.36

[110] The Arab Human Development Report 2004 p.87

[111] Ibid.

Advocates of Arab political reform, supported by international organizations and contributor states, wish for steady reform from the society through civil society activity. The main justification of this thought is the belief that Arab societies are not yet adequately ready for democracy. Moreover, the Arab political community is not prepared to presume the liabilities of change. In this view, the Report claims, civil society can through education and culture-building both fill the gap and pave the way for change and democracy. This discourse of reform is supported by the belief that the Arab regimes may be more likely to admit civil activity, since it does not threaten their authority more than direct political activity.[112]

According to the Report, there are those who believe and support the priority of political reform, since they believe that civil society cannot exist without a state that respects a minimum framework of freedoms. Direct pressure should be put on governments in order to make them accept reform. Voluntary reform by regimes, which have come to realize that reform is expected, either under foreign weight or internal shift of the ruling elite, is certainly the most effective way to good governance. But since promises are not kept and only mere formality policies are changed, no true reform is present. For this reason, it may be said that the Arab regimes have developed an exclusive form of 'liberalized autocracy', one that the narrow powers of civil society cannot steadily change when there is a lack of an effective political community.

5.2.1 The Ottoman Empire and the Millet System

To grasp the structure of civil society in Lebanon we need to turn to the roots of confessionals which started to cultivate during the Ottoman Empire with the growth of the 'Millet System'.[113]

The Ottoman Empire – a world empire which existed for more than 400 years until the beginning of 20th century in the Middle East – dominated in shapes of direct and indirect rule in different parts of the empire. The so called Millet System was an outcome of the direct form of rule, which was the most common form enlarged by the ancient Muslim system of 'Wardship'. The term Millet referred to a non-Muslim nation that existed in an already sovereign state but managed its own administrative affairs such as marriage, education, inheritance and religion. Fiscal and crime issues were still regulated under the Ottoman authorities. The system recognized its members by religious belonging instead of territorial structure and by passing the verification of the Sultan; the Millets chose a leader which basically was the leader of its confessional group.[114]

A set of different factors such as religious practices, family matters, personal law and education were regulated under the jurisdiction of the Millet System. Nonetheless, the Islamic domination still forced non-Muslims to pay a special tax since they were not allowed to serve in the military and limited mixed marriages.[115] Yet, the Ottoman Empire's authority was still limited by indirect rule where loyal local leaders were authoritized to fulfil judicial

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[112] Ibid. p.141

[113] Ghadbian (1997) p.23

[114] Hanf (1993) p.53-54

[115] Kymlicka (1998) p.168-169

and fiscal power in a certain territory. These areas were usually isolated and shaped some sort of feudal elite.[116]

The Millet System gave non-Muslims religious freedom and right to self governance. This could be regarded as an alternative to the liberal notion of religious tolerance. The difference lay in individual freedom for liberal tradition while religious freedom was emphasized for the collective group in the Millet System. Religious oppression existed within the confessional groups where for example Sunni Muslims claimed control over other Muslim groups such as Shiites and Druze, however they did not oppress Christians of any confession.[117] Meanwhile, disputes concerned with the territorial area during the 19th century ended up with foreign powers' involvement such as Egypt, Britain, France and Austria who had economical interests and military considerations beside possible religious sympathy with the Christians. This may be the initial root of governance based on confessional representation since foreign involvement lead to changes in forms of rule in different areas and after years of struggle between confessional groups a council made by representatives from Maronite, Sunni, Druze, Greek Orthodox and Greek Catholic groups was formed.[118] France obtained Syrian and Lebanese authorization by the League of Nations and General Gouraud declared 'Greater Lebanon' in 1920.[119]

5.2.2   Civil society in Lebanon

The history of civil society associations in Lebanon goes back to the late 19th century as the Ottoman Empire was exposed to new concepts, new agendas and new forms of political life which influenced the shape of today's civil society both in its sectarian and non-sectarian forms. The appearance of cultural, intellectual, political, professional, family, welfare and youth associations paved the way for regulation and formation of such organizations.

The Lebanese Center for Policy Studies (LCPS) has listed six phases in the development of civil society associations in Lebanon.[120] From its beginning in early 20th century until today, civil society development has been a progress from identity-based associations - religious, tribal and family – to more interest-based NGOs who work with cultural, social, economic and professional issues. While associations during the war period were concerned with the extended social divisions and sectarianism, the postwar period has been focused on protection of civic space against the state.

Lebanon remains one of the few Arab states that have a history of democratic practice. Democratic institutions, together with relatively independent judiciary and a Parliament that is able to both initiate legislation and offer a certain level of supervision to the executive, has been constructed into the country's political framework at its independence in 1943. This picture functioned reasonably well until its democratic practice was interrupted

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[116] Hanf (1993) p. 54-55

[117] Khalaf (1997) p.368

[118] Hanf (1993) p. 58-59

[119] Hanf (1993) p.63-66, Salibi (1988) p.35, Zamir (1997) p.28

[120] LCPS (1997)

by an extended civil war (1975-1990), which tore apart the political and social apparatus and instead created a situation of anarchy in most parts of the country.

Although the civil war was a period of 'pause' in Lebanon's political life, it also paved the way for growth of strong civil society organizations (CSOs). An extensive network of CSOs filled in the gap where the Lebanese government was unable to provide for security or basic needs of its citizens. While political parties have remained weak and intimately linked to rival sectarian groups, the CSOs have rather received wide, multi-sectarian support. They are actively working to advance citizen's interests at the local and national level.

Whereas Lebanon's democratic development is vulnerable and hindered by the unstable regional situation in the Middle East, the influence put up by regional players over Lebanon's domestic and international politics and suspicion among the country's various confessional communities, the appearance of CSOs externally critical of the Syrian influence in the country has been regarded as an hopeful step towards a more open political system. Within civil society the emergence of public debate over media freedoms, electoral law and the confessional system itself has recently surfaced. Consequently, the diverse CSOs in Lebanon do have a crucial role in the re-establishment of a level of authority to its citizens. The effort to increase the government's responsiveness to the needs of citizens, CSOs lead the movement for further democratic reform in Lebanon.[121]

5.3   Political system

The reasons for the relative endurance of the Lebanese system of parliament and parties follows from its important role at the core of the process of confessional representation and inter-confessional political bargaining that was protected in the constitution of 1926 and moreover confirmed by the National Pact between the leaders of the Sunni and Maronite communities in 1943. Over time, the belief that some kind of democracy was a needed mechanism for the integration of different major sects in the Lebanese political life became quite clear. Not only was integration regarded as essential for the political life but also for the regulation of the often unstable relations between various groups.[122]

Party activity was limited and the governed political life was not very well-established regarding rules and compromises. Major problems arose when the political life started to break down under the force of growing economic and social inequality. The presence of the Palestinian militias during the 1970s and the repeated Israeli invasion in southern Lebanon also has a large impact on the Lebanese political life.

However the initial main challenge for Greater Lebanon was to create a sphere for the two large religious groups and several other religious communities to live and function side by side. The European forces were appreciated by the Christians as a security foundation rather than oppression force while the Muslims saw it as a threat. In 1926 the Lebanese constitution, under French supervision, paved the way for the Lebanese republic and its transformation toward a Western parliamentary democracy, even though most power was given to the president. A structure for the electoral system, legislative and executive institutions in addition to the juridical and bureaucratic structure was provided by this new constitution. The confessional political representation followed a ratio of 60% and 40% be-

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[121] National Democratic Institute, http://www.ndi.org/worldwide/mena/lebanon/lebanon.asp

[122] Salibi (1988)

tween Christians and Muslims. The right to legislate on matters of civil status and educational systems, controlled by the state, also followed for the confessional groups.[123]

The new constitution, which gave Lebanon a political framework where the different confessional groups in an already polarized and sectarian society could coexist and follow a national consensus, faced some problems. The interpretation of the constitution differed among the groups. It was seen as an expression of Lebanese independence, sovereignty and resemblance with the West but it was also regarded as an outcome of Christian and French colonialist domination. Yet, some considered the constitution as a unique resolution to the Lebanese pattern of religious and confessional divisions and last but not least some even saw it as a guarantee to their part and dominance in the political system. Among all views, the constitution faced two facts: the implementation of a Western political system based on equality and universal suffrage was one wanted fact, while as a deeply rooted sectarianism in both Lebanese political and social culture was another actual fact that counteracted the former goal.[124]

More precisely, the outcome of the constitution of 1926 and its institutions basically gave power to a limited group of Christian families in the Mount Lebanon and Beirut, Shiites and Sunni feudal landowner families in the coastal cities. Cooperation among this creation of elitism took place only in common interest that strengthened their own positions and increased their wealth. Sectarianism was the main tool in order to keep privileges rather than to protect their community interests. No space was given in this structure for those politicians who aimed to transform the country into a democratic, pluralistic and fair state without any exclusion. An unstable form of politics developed since no real political parties were formed and the government was changed basically once every year.[125]

5.3.1   The National Pact

Still under large French influence, Lebanon started to demand for more independence by the end of 1930s and hence ended up in conflict with France who in 1939 took total control by simply ignoring both the President and the Parliament. This called for the Lebanese opposition to unite, which in 1943 agreed upon the so called National Pact and claimed how the religious communities in Lebanon should share power in order to create balance and confessional solidarity. The foundation of power division was the survey from 1932 which showed that the Christians were in majority and as for the National Pact, the President is a Maronite; the Prime Minister is Sunni and the Speaker of the parliament is Shiite. Other groups were also represented in the government, yet many were also left out. The essential features of the National Pact were to accept independence and to reject both Western protection and a union with Syria or any Arab state. However, still keeping Arab language and features but with a Lebanese character and staying neutral in intra Arab arguments.[126] Some scholars claim that the National Pact was more of a clear recognition of both the historical and communal components of the Lebanese society instead of true

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[123] Hanf (1993) p.66-69, Winslow (1996) p.80, Zamir (1997) p.30

[124] Zamir (1997) p.29

[125] Ghadbian (1997) p.33, Zamir (1997) p.31-32

[126] Hanf (1993) p.70-74, Hourani (1986) p.27-28, Khazen (1991)p.6,59, Zisser (2000) p.58

manifestation of its demographic order referring to the supremacy of Sunni and Maronite elites.[127]

The National Pact with all its purposes paved the way for various interpretations which were indeed controversial. Economic motives rather than confessional, aimed to promote the interest of some parts of the Lebanese society at the expense of others. Another perspective was that what kept the elites warm did not necessarily reflect the concerns and shared priorities of most Lebanese. People were actually unaware of the politics in Beirut, since politics for most of them circulated around local and clan issues. The politician who won their votes was the one who looked out for their communal and local interests. National and foreign policy was not a question of priority for most Lebanese outside Beirut who rather supported the well established local leaders than being involved in any national agenda. In spite of the initial intentions of the National Pact it served some practices where political and economic interests lead to its maintenance.[128]

5.3.2   The Conflicts and Civil War

The character of politics based on the National Pact in Lebanon was shaped by both internal and external forces. The former referred to the Lebanese elite which was a mix of the semi feudal and urban commercial parts. This elite maintained their authority and social position apart from any confessional limitations. The external forces referred to changes and challenges caused by other regimes in the region. Although some short term stability was preserved by the confessional model of democracy, the National Pact faced difficulties in keeping its legitimacy, mostly because of the strong authority focus on the elites.[129] A so called 'merchant republic' figured during the first years after the National Pact which appeared as a forceful form of capitalism and affected both social and political life. No state spending on social welfare, infrastructure nor public sector was made while as minimal tax and tariffs and a strong currency regime were implemented. The economic flourish was of benefit for the Christian elite and some Sunni families. On the other hand, Shiites and most Sunnis faced difficult times with unemployment. The whole situation mainly widened the socio-enomic gap between confessions.[130]

As the Western and Maronite hegemony took a stronger colour, some kind of 'radical Arabism' also grew stronger in the region. This made the Lebanese segregate along confessional fronts, where many Muslims supported Arabism. The intrusion of Arabism in the internal affairs of the country was regarded by President Camille Chamoun[131] (1952-1958) and most Christians as a threat to Lebanon's sovereignty. The tension even escalated when Syria and Egypt formed the United Arab Republic (U.A.R.) in 1958, in which many Shiites and Sunnis wished to be part of while Christians valued the independence of Lebanon. The National Pact was confronted with the emergence of conflicts and because of its lack of in-

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[127] Khazen (1991) p.55-59

[128] Hanf (1993) p.72-74, Khazen (1991) p.6, 39-40, Zisser (2000) p.66-67

[129] Harris (1997) p.137

[130] Ibid. p.138-139

[131] Länder i Fickformat (2005) p.13

stitutional capacities or ideological flexibility, chaos and open conflict became a fact in 1958. However, the situation was balanced because of the UN and US interference.[132]

On the contrary, the years under President Shihab were different from the 'Merchant republic' with a policy of income redistribution, social services and welfare. Still, these reforms were not a solution for the 1958 conflicts which were truly based on sectarian and social problems.[133] The period of 1968-1976 consisted of reforms of the political system, state-building, pro-Arab foreign policies and the dedication to the Palestinian issue. The PLO presence in Lebanon weakened the internal stability, and thus the country's situation in the whole region. A separation between the Sunni elite and the popular movements (most of them being secular leftist such as the PSP, SSNP and the Communist Party[134]) was raised during the 1960s. The Palestinian issue received a strong support by these new movements who saw an opportunity to force the Christians to make constitutional changes.[135]

The political awareness of the rural inhabitants into the political game in 1943-1975 created some problems for the old leaderships of the Christians as well as for the Muslim groups (Maronite and Sunni). The traditional Muslim leaders tried their best for a reconsideration of the National Pact and also focused more on Arab issues and the Palestinians. Another fact was the emergence of social movements during the 1960s that strengthened the already existing class identity among the Lebanese and confronted the dominant confessional and clan identities.[136]

Parliamentary division between the Christians and Muslims grew stronger during the 1970s and thus marginalized the Lebanese state. Together with the increasing number of Palestinian refugees and also the 1973 Arab-Israeli war and the recognition of Arafat by the international community, the Christian-Muslim conflict initiated heavily in 1975. The core of the problem was several issues; the sectarian foundations of the state, the power balances between the confessional groups and the Lebanese-Palestinian relationship.[137] 1975 was the year that the 'civil war' started, including armed battles, great loss of lives and increased segregation among the confessional groups. This year was followed by Syria who entered the country in order to create stability. They occupied Lebanon until April 2005 where the last troops withdrew from Lebanon. Israel got physically involved in the conflict in 1982 which also lead to the involvement of multinational forces, mainly by the United States, to supply security and control. This period of chaos and turbulence faced a bloody end with suicide bombings of the US and French mixes.[138]

The PLO was defeated in 1982-1983 and while they left to Tunis, the armed conflicts continued in Lebanon: Mount Lebanon and Shouf area in 1983, Beirut in 1984 and east Sidon

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[132] Harris (1997) p.143-145, Khazen (1991) p.55-51, Khalaf (1997) p.365

[133] Harris (1997) p.145-150

[134] For the different political parties see Appendix

[135] Harris (1997) p.152-153

[136] Ibid. p.65-66

[137] Ibid. p.158,161

[138] Ibid. p.161-164, 176

in 1985. The Shiites in the south experienced a huge damage by the Israeli invasion and the appearance of a strong sense of Shiite identity was born because of the Iranian revolution in 1979. This made Shiites militarize, with the support of Iran and Syria, and their main organization Amal ('Hope') was formed. Led then by Nebih Berri, Amal is a secular movement which aims at the abolishment of political sectarianism and reformation of the constitution. Hezbollah ('Party of God'), supported by the Iranian regime, also grew during the mid 1980s and hence took part of the Lebanese political conflict.[139]

The question of identity for Lebanon to have an 'Arab' character was already discussed in 1983 by representatives from Maronite, Muslim and Druze militias gathered in Geneva. The armed conflicts went on and in 1984 'National Unity Government' was created under Syrian supervision where intentions were to stabilize the country. The 'Tripartite Agreement' of 1986 called for an equal representation of Christians and Muslims in the parliament and also a reduction of President's power in favour of the Parliament and the Prime minister. These changes were only the first steps of an outsized shift towards the abolishment of sectarian politics.[140]

The political institutions were still left powerless after the Tripartite Agreement. Confessional and ideological belonging did not hold back the militias common interest which was to keep the situation as it was by manipulating sectarian identities. The armed forces all shared resentment towards the traditional elite leaders and they also put the same interests in the growing illegal market. Nevertheless, the 'Golden Days' of the militias ended at the late 1980s since they were challenged by both internal and external forces. [141]

5.3.3 The Taif Agreement

On the cause of the disability of the National Unity Government to solve the violent situation in the country, in 1989 62 of the 99 deputies of the Parliament elected in 1972 met in the city of Taif in Saudi Arabia in order to discuss solutions for national reconciliation. 'The National Accord Document', later known as the 'Taif Agreement' was reached after three weeks of negotiations.[142]

The two most important characteristics of the Taif Agreement within the political system are the confessional balance and the confessional representation. This may be said have changed the unwritten National Pact into a constitutional, officially written document. The change in power division is the major change distribution from 60% and 40% to 50-50% distribution between Christians and Muslims. The number of seats in the National Assembly (Parliament) was also expanded. The Agreement also claimed the President to be Christian Maronite, the Prime Minister a Sunni Muslim and the Speaker of Parliament a Shiite Muslim. Furthermore, a certain number of seats in the Parliament were reserved for each one of the 18 confessional groups. The allocations of the seats in the Parliament were constructed as in figure 4. The power of the President was also reduced; instead the executive

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[139] Harris (1997) p.174,188

[140] Ibid. p.186-200

[141] Ibid. p.204-205

[142] Krayem (1997) p.421

authority was relocated to the Council of Ministers (the Cabinet). Basically, the aim of this change was to redistribute power between Christians and Muslims in a more equal way.[143]

Confessions	Before Taif	After Taif
Maronite	30	34
Greek Orthodox	11	14
Greek Catholic	6	8
Armenian Orthodox	4	5
Armenian Catholic	1	1
Protestant	1	1
Christian minorities	1	1
Total Christians	**54**	**64**
Sunni	20	27
Shiite	19	27
Druze	6	8
Alawite	0	2
Total Muslims	**45**	**64**
TOTAL	**99**	**128**

Figure 4: The Parliament of Lebanon Seat Allocation

The Taif Agreement had a purpose of peace settlement but also left two main issues for the future to deal with: the question of Lebanese sovereignty without Syrian and Israeli involvement and the practical implementations of the abolishment of sectarian politics in the political system. However, since the implementation of the agreement was under the Syrian regulation, their forces remained in the country which gave Syria a broader involvement in Lebanese politics.[144]

The parts of the Taif Agreement distinguished the problems of traditional communal representation and power sharing in the focus of causes for the conflicts. It claimed a gradual

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[143] Krayem (1997) p.424 and WIKIPEDIA; The Free Encyclopedia
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Assembly_of_Lebanon#Electoral_system

[144] Harris (1997) p.279ff, Krayem (1997) p.422-423

elimination of confessionals as the main purpose of the Lebanese society. However, it does not clarify how it should be implemented and what would substitute the confessional system. The Taif Agreement somehow includes those contradictions as in earlier constitutions which also claimed for a combination of the confessional politics together with collective rights in the process of becoming a modern democratic state. Still, the current problematic situation remains unanswered and unsettled.[145]

The Taif Agreement of 1989 brought an end to the civil war. It is regarded as the outcome of the negotiations among confessional groups with the support of external powers. "With a purpose of satisfying most groups and parties, the Taif Agreement was necessary at that time to create stability."[146] Although most notably, it was a temporary agreement and a transition towards something else. The main issue was to move away from political confessionalism and liberate Lebanon from Syrian domination.[147]

It is strongly argued that the Taif Agreement has not been implemented. Instead of identifying the future of the country, it rather paved the way for an even more confessional system. Issues such as the identity of the country, internal and external relations to the surrounding world in its political system towards democratic values have not been discussed. The Taif Agreement managed to consolidate the rule of a party system with the fact of participation and united many elements of enforcement of the legislative system. Yet, one main important issue today is the electoral law that should enable what is considered to be true representation. Elections must be free and competitive. The need for independent electoral commission, campaigns, better voting education and political parties based on agenda and policy alternatives are crucial in a democracy. Nonetheless, the current condition is characterized by different families acting in the field of politics that is considered to be highly corrupted. The Taif Agreement is argued to have failed to transform the political folk line that existed because of its ambiguity and its lack of clear political structure and direction, also leaving out the rights of the large amount of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon.[148]

Along with the ambiguity of the Taif Agreement, implementation guidelines are not clear in how to generate governance at the local and national levels. Hence, a concrete direction in the process of decision making in local and national perspective, and the balance between them, is not set up. Because of the tribe inheritance in Lebanon, family attachment and confessionalism is still very strong. Elections do not make rotation of power possible in a democratic sense. A wider representation and proportional system, with various political parties, is desired and hopefully possible with a new election law. Thus in sum, in the aspect of elections, the Taif Agreement made rotation of power possible in a symbolic way. But the political system still lacks a fair representation. The division of regions is regarded to be a political issue in the context of elections. It is debated that having small regions, instead of the five large regions today, means that every community will choose its represen-

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[145] Krayem (1997) p.424

[146] Salam Nawaf, interview nr. 7

[147] Ibid.

[148] Interview answers to question nr 2. definition and purpose of the Taif Agreement

tatives. This kind of geographic redistribution in political structure of election will induce fair elections in the spirit of democracy.[149]

5.4   Democracy and political system

Democracy may be regarded as a system which contains various elements based on the dual principles, rule of law and rule of the people. It is expressed through a number of institutions, some which ensure and protect human rights through the rule of law and the others ensure the authority of the people through elections. It is where all people have an equal right to believe and act in their country freely and without fear of persecution or oppression and have access to welfare services in a decent way. Furthermore, in a democracy individuals have freedom of thought and speech and separation of legislative, juridical and political forces are fundamental.[150]

In the main perspective, democracy is when the people in a political system influence the formulation and implementation of public policies that affect their lives, which is considered something more than just the freedom of expression. It is also the ability of individuals to influence and the ability to act collectively through mobility, in which civil society is needed and in addition the need of political parties. Civil society is desirable for governmental governance, where political mobilization and political space creates the function of democracy in a divided society. The core lays in compromising and competition in order to reach political mobility. Together with the rule of the people, and in aspects of the rule of majority and protection of the minority, the question of fair representation and accountability becomes crucial.[151]

Democracy in Lebanon may have a different meaning depending on the perspective in its context. Muhammad Sammak argues that "in a plural society with 18 different communities, diverse historical background, culture and languages, democracy is not only about individual rights but also about the rights of its communities. National unity is the number one priority where the national agenda is prior the ideal type of democracy. The Lebanese democracy is an accepted formula among those that wish for the national unity to be significantly sufficient."[152] Competitive political parties do not exist in Lebanon today. Instead, a confessional community together with a confessional political system is rather characterizing the country and its political system. Many argue that the concept of democracy as well as its process is being manipulated through assassinations, unfair electoral law and unclear ideologies among political leaders.[153]

The country suffered 15 years of civil war in 1975-1990 and its aftermath has been an attempt to return to constitutional parliamentary democratic practices. In the post-war period until 2005, Syria has dominated the state and the political system with strong influences. Lebanon today tries to reclaim its sovereignty and independence with an aim to hold its elections and politics in pace without external interference. This struggle is considered hav-

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[149] Ibid.

[150] Definition of democracy among the interview respondents.

[151] Khashan Hilal, Interview nr.4

[152] Sammak Muhammed, Interview nr.9

[153] Interviews; answers upon democracy and political system in Lebanon

ing a long way to go toward democracy. More importantly, the election law is claimed to be shaped in favor for the confessional elites, who do not necessarily represent the variety of the people.[154]

The current situation in Lebanon is characterized by threat to its security and hence to its existence as a functioning safe society. This crucial feature may lead to security loss which will bring deficit in democracy. Nonetheless, a success in this security problem could lead to stability and thus great steps may be taken to develop democracy with major tasks such as a functioning electoral law based on representatives from competitive political parties. In today's picture, some elections are based on quatas (cities) and some are based on the mu-hafasa (region). Hence, depending on the potential number of votes, the political candidate chooses the most suitable election area. There is a wish for the separation of the state from confessions, in which the latter refers to more than only religion, but rather identifies as tribe, cohesion, tradition and the question of identity. Besides the confessional political sys-tem, the appearance of corruption is claimed to be another vital phenomenon in the politi-cal system. [155] The public sector does not provide solid social policies, employment policies, protection, social justice and most importantly safety and legal status of its Palestinian refu-gees. A growing social polarization among people is creating space for both existing and potential conflicts.[156]

As for the political structure, there are no political parties on the local levels such as in vil-lages and cities, in the five regional districts in Lebanon, and at the national level that all follow a common agenda in the spirit of their own political party. "There are no national parties or national leaders that are truly national in the sense of having followers in all re-gions and communities."[157] Paul Salem argues. The structure is rather characterized by dif-ferent families acting in the field of politics at all three levels. Hence, a political system with clarity and limits between local-regional-national does not exist. The political system is rather centralized, as in the Ottoman system, which gives relatively little autonomy to local and regional level. There is a need for legal and administrative framework that together with extended decentralization reform the political system and increases participation among citizens in political life.[158]

5.4.1 Civil society and Democracy

In the attempt to define civil society and its relation to democracy in Lebanon, it is argued for two types of civil society. To begin with, the civic civil society has a secular, non-confessional and liberal character including social movements and Non Governmental Or-ganizations (NGOs). The second type is the civil society referring to associations and insti-tutions that are linked to religious communities. While the civic civil society reaches out to new members continuously, the religious communities do not.[159] There is also the type of

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[154] Ibid.

[155] Interview answers; changes in the political system

[156] Aoun Habbouba, Interview nr.2

[157] Salem Paul, Interview nr. 11

[158] Interview answers; the political system in relation to local-regional-national aspects

[159] Salem Paul, Interview nr. 11

sectoral labour unions constituted of what is left from the traditional middle class after the civil war. Lebanese who have lived abroad for a longer time have experienced democracy in a different way and once back in Lebanon have influence in civil society in relation to its political system.

The civil society today is largely characterized by a wide range of different NGOs in Lebanon. Still, they seem to lack large memberships and have little influence in political life. The main reasons are argued to be a missing link between civil society and its actors and the political system where no public debate occurs in important political issues. In a democracy, a government should not proceed with law making without dialogue with civil society; public life, institutions and organizations. The debate on civil marriage, as an example, was closed by the religious leaders and the civil society did not react strongly and enough to make it a public issue. It is argued that any decision on lawmaking in the parliament should be discussed in civil society circles. Today's public debate on laws is very weak. Nonetheless, it is also the responsibility of the civil society to create a dialogue with the government and the public authorities. The electoral law is currently the first issue being discussed in public, where an Electoral law Committee discusses its features in which many NGOs are involved.[160]

There is a clear criticism towards the lack of linkage between civil society and the political system. This mechanism is however regarded differently among those interviewed. On one hand, the Lebanese society is considered to be relatively open with a cultural environment that is in favor of its citizens to organize. Consequently, there is a whole spectrum of various active organizations aiming for influencing public decisions and thus shaping the political system. Some may have strong or weak organizational structure but in general a professional framework is needed in order to make the strong associations function within the mechanism of civil society and its relation to political system. This is considered to be a dual perspective; where civil society in Lebanon is active with an impact in political life while compared to Western countries; it suffers from a lack of coordination, efficiency and profession. On the other hand, civil society is regarded as a new concept in Lebanon, replacing the work of public sectors, the ministries and the public departments. Civil society, having a biased character and consisting of a large number of NGOs without coordination is substituting what the government cannot perform. In addition, this contributes to citizens being dependent on NGOs and their role. Yet, civil society is considered to be powerful with abilities to change and affect the political system in a long term perspective. The core lies in sharing the same vision of development and democracy.[161]

This type of civil society reflects Lebanon, which is a society with a mixed structure, partly divided and partly united. Salem argues that this segmented society has aspects of homogeneity but also division. "It is a complex society and hence a complex civil society which needs a complex political system in order to handle it"[162], since it is argued that every political system reflects its society. Civil society in Lebanon is a mosaic of 18 different confessions. In conclusion, the definition of civil society in Lebanon is argued to be more complex than any other country in the Middle East because of its sense of pluralism.

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[160] Interview answers: civil society in Lebanon

[161] Ibid.

[162] Salem Paul, Interview nr. 11

Accordingly, civil society, even though some claim it to be a new concept together with democracy, plays a crucial role in the process of democracy. By raising political awareness and creating a sense of belonging to a political community, democracy may be applied. Moreover, plurality of competitive political parties in dialogue with civil society in the political system would increase the democratic value and hence its need of constant application. In the long term, the work of civil society in relation to the democratic process will lead to a future generation that will think differently, cooperate and communicate on non-confessional basis and participate in a political system without corruption. [163]"The importance for Lebanon is a democracy process where political awareness comes along." [164]

5.4.2 Conflict and Identity

The question of conflict in Lebanon is mainly regarded as, first present and second internal and multidimensional, affected by conflicts in the Middle East. One aspect of the conflict is the past Syrian domination and involvement in Lebanese politics and society for several decades. Even though Syrian troops are out of the country, it is argued that Syria and its attempt to still influence in Lebanon collides with the Lebanese effort to gain its sovereignty. This conflict has in particular faced a more violent character during 2005 with several assassinations of individuals in the political life. The external conflicts in the Middle East region are all considered to have an influence on Lebanon because of the question of religious belonging. This goes beyond geographic sense. A Shiite community in one country is affected by conflicts in another country and so on. Still, the issue is not the question of conflict per se, since conflicts exist in every society and may contribute through peaceful manners to development. The main aspect of conflict in Lebanon is the question of identity.[165]

The Lebanese mosaic of 18 different communities and its confessional character pictures its diversity of identities. Even though there is a strong wish for a united Lebanese identity, the reality typifies the division according to one's confessions and religion; Sunni, Shiite, Maronite, Druze and so on. Lebanon is a country with a heterogeneous society in which individuals are rather subjects to their own confessions than citizens feeling one united sense of belonging to a nation.[166] The Lebanese identity in attachment to a Lebanese state is comprehensive compared to the identity of one people belonging to a nation. Consequently, the conflict lays in one state, many peoples, various senses of identities and no sense of belonging to one nation. As part of this mosaic picture, Muslims rather identify themselves with the Arab community whereas Christians recognize their identity with Western communities. In addition, sub-identities exist within Muslim and Christian communities which create a dual identity. A following problem to the conflict of clash of identities is segregation rather than integration. For a stumbling country, Lebanon is not only facing political turbulence but also a division in Lebanese identity. The dimension of be-

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[163] Interview answers: civil society in relation to the process of democracy in Lebanon

[164] Aoun Habbouba, Interview nr.2

[165] Interview answers: sources of conflict

[166] Khashan Hilal, Interview nr.4

longing to a nation is essentially replaced by confessional belonging. Hence, religious identity is still more important than the national identity.[167]

The roots of the problem of identity may be traced to the times of The Ottoman Empire and the introduction of the Millet System, where Muslims were given special status to follow their own civil code matter but not given political autonomy. In the beginning of 20th century the concept of nationalism reached the area from Europe that together with the French creation of Lebanon as a single entity and its minority groups have escalated the question of identity into both a religious and political conflict. A country once designed for Christians with a society of Muslim majority is now facing another era where some optimism is growing. The hope of Lebanon being sovereign and independent may pave the way for a united feeling of belonging to a nation and thus a Lebanese identity.

5.5   Summary

In the discussion of the Lebanese political system and society, it is considered that no other alternative than democracy is as important for the future Lebanon. However, the visualization of the concept may be the same, there are still some differences in how democracy is regarded. The majority of interviewees wish for a 'Lebanese version of democracy' and claim that a democratic formula based on the 'rule of majority' is not appropriate for Lebanon with a pluralistic society character of 18 different communities. It is a society of minorities in need of a structure based on human rights and respect of the other.

Political democracy in Lebanon is in need of a starting point within the society in order to succeed in the national aspect. Democracy is initially about the mentality of citizens and Lebanon has always tried to deal with its diversities. The current and future challenge is how to create political stability, a fair and clear electoral law, uncorrupted political system and separation of the state from confessions in the long term. But most important is for the citizens to be fully aware and educated in the mentality of democracy. In order for the Lebanon to function in a democratic way, the awareness of accepting and respecting other people's differences and opinions is as important as to have the freedom of thought and expression. Hence, the Lebanese society is in need of a common future vision and a clear definition of its foundation for democratic values. The Lebanese political system and its democracy is currently jeopardized. A complete implementation of the Taif Agreement is essential for future democratic aspects, where the core issue lays in the separation of state from confessions.

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[167] Interview answers: the question of identity

6   Analysis

A theme in hermeneutics has been that "the meaning of a part can only be understood if it is related to the whole". In order to follow this method in all parts of the study, I have tried to relate each part to the whole by working with the hermeneutic circle and source criticism. In the analysis, the focus is on *understanding the text* (primary and secondary data) in search for fulfilling the purpose and thus understanding civil society and democracy in Lebanon. This chapter deals with the interpretation of the case Lebanon in evaluation of the theoretical framework with discussion on civil society, democracy and political system.

6.1   The role of civil society in democracy

The notion of civil society is central to any discussion of democratization because it points to the central issues about the position of social forces in defining, controlling and legitimating state power. In debates regarding development, the growth of civil society plays a key role not only by weakening authoritarian governments and contributing to the organizing and maintenance of a democratic polity but also by developing the quality of governance within that polity. The civil society in Lebanon today is largely characterized by a wide range of different NGOs aiming at developing the political awareness on questions such as gender, human rights, social justice, to name a few. Still, they seem to lack large membership and have small influence on political life. The main reasons are argued to be a missing link between civil society and its actors and the political system where no public debate takes place in important political issues. The confessional character of parts of civil society is another fraction. The role of civil society is crucial in the phase of transformation and development of every democratic system. The communication channels are thus essential in the process of democracy. The confessional division has limited tradition in raising public opinion in communication relations with other actors, mostly non-confessional, in civil society.

If we reflect upon Lebanon as a traditional society, order is upheld by collective beliefs, mythical and religious forces, and most importantly by confessional forces. This foundation in the concept of 'lifeworld' relates to parts of social learning where action is performed by common understanding and normative agreements. If we follow the notion of lifeworld, does Lebanese society consist of many lifeworlds? Lebanese society includes Christian and Muslim communities which have further division within themselves, each upholding order according to their own collective beliefs, religious forces and confessional belonging. I would argue that Christian and Muslim communities create their own societies within Lebanese society and thus in the concept of lifeworld also forming 'Christian lifeworld' and 'Muslim lifeworld'. The division in lifeworld changes the circumstances for social integration and social order. A communicatively achieved understanding among 'Christian lifeworld' and 'Muslim lifeworld' would in the long run generate 'one lifeworld', the 'Lebanese lifeworld' and thus increase civil society influence in political life.

As an often functioning romanticized counter-image to the state, the notion of civil society may be about social virtue confronting political vice: the sphere of freedom versus the sphere of coercion, of participation opposed to hierarchy, pluralism versus traditionalism, spontaneity against manipulation, transparency in opposition to corruption. In this view, 'civil society' could be seen as a particular form of the political relationship between state and society with the liberal notion of 'political society'. Regarding these relations and in the sense of democracy in Lebanon, creating a public debate in the process of law making is necessary for civil society; public life, institutions and organizations. The intensity of public

debate may increase participation and transparency, and counteract corruption. It is argued that any decision on lawmaking in the Parliament should be discussed in civil society circles. Today's public debate on laws is very weak. Nonetheless, it is also the responsibility of the civil society to create such dialogue with the government and the public authorities. The question is though where and who is to carry the responsibility of opening such window of dialogue?

When discussing civil society in the context of democracy, the kind of 'balanced opposition' which is characteristic of recognized democratic regimes, a growing civil society modifies the balance of power between the state and society in favour for the society. This involves an increasing capacity of organized social forces to weaken the ability of states that are authoritarian. Lebanon has a fragmented political culture and a sense of pluralism. The Lebanese system is more of an elite cooperation with confessional character. In its relation to civil society, the Lebanese society is considered to be relatively open with a cultural environment that is in favor of its citizens to organize. Consequently, there is a whole spectrum of various active organizations aiming for influencing public decisions and thus the political system. Since some may have strong or weak organizational structure, a professional framework is however needed in order to make the strong associations function within the mechanism of civil society and its relation to political system. This is considered to be a dual perspective; civil society in Lebanon is active with an impact in political life while compared to Western countries; it suffers from coordination, efficiency and profession. The point is though, that civil society in Lebanon is vivid according to their norms, rules and limits. The challenge remains in the creation of communication channels, pointing out specific political issues and shaping coordination on that basis. It is argued that a strong civil society imposes public morality and performance, improving the liability of politicians and administrators, which gives it a disciplinary role in relation to the state. In Lebanon the obstacle lays in the character of civil society and the political system.

Assuming an active civil society in Lebanon makes political communication easier between state and society by improving the act of democratic polities through transmission of the demands and interests of sectors of the population. This linkage makes civil society an alternative principle of representation balancing periodic elections and also functioning as a mechanism for strengthening democratic accountability. On the contrary, civil society can also act to raise pressures on the state further than what may be tolerable and hence add to a crisis of governance. A civil society that is well established and broadly spread promotes a pluralistic and participating political system. Civil society in Lebanon is considered to be powerful with abilities to change and affect the political system in a long term perspective. The core lays in sharing the same vision of development and democracy in Lebanon.

In conclusion, the definition of civil society in Lebanon is argued to be more complex than any other country in the Middle East because of its sense of pluralism. Yet, the work of civil society in relation to the democratic process will hopefully lead to a future generation that will think differently, cooperate and communicate on a non-confessional basis and participate in a political system without corruption. The importance for Lebanon is a democratic process where political awareness comes along. In order for Lebanon to function in a democratic way, the awareness of accepting and respecting other people's differences and opinions is as important as having the freedom of thought and expression. Hence, the Lebanese society is in need of a common future vision and a clear definition of its foundation for democratic values.

6.2   Democracy and the case of Lebanon

The notion of civil society is essential in the theory of democracy as it is a constant process of social learning, according to Habermas. Governmental relation towards the citizens is also important in a democracy, where governmental responsiveness to the interests of its citizens should be vivid. The dimensions in the contexts of democracy are about broad *competition*, *political participation* and a level of *civil* and *political liberties*. As for Lebanon, the main deficit in a democratic context is its electoral law not giving enough fair space to representatives from competitive political parties in its political system. It is rather shaped in favour for the confessional elite, who do not of necessity represent the variety of the people. Instead, a confessional community together with a confessional political system characterizes the country and its political system, which manipulates the concept of democracy rather than producing it. Hence, the question of fair representation and accountability is limited in a democratic context.

Because of its pluralistic society character, civil and political liberties in Lebanon do not only concern individual rights but also the rights of its communities. Civil society is desirable for governmental governance, where political mobilization and political space could produce democracy in a divided society. Compromising as well as competition are central in order to reach political mobility in Lebanon. In the aspect of sovereignty, Lebanon is struggling with more than its independence of being a state without influences from Syria but also deals with its national sovereignty, with a heterogeneous society where it is argued that individuals are rather subjects to their own confessions than citizens feeling one united sense of belonging to a nation. In attachment to the question of identity, it is more comprehensive for the citizens to identify oneself with the Lebanese state than the recognition of one people belonging to one nation, which creates a conflict of one state, many peoples, multiple identities and no sense of attachment to one nation. In addition, sub-identities within Muslim and Christian communities also create a sense of dual identity leading to a clash of identities jeopardizing to create a segregated rather than integrated society. Hence, Lebanon is facing a division in Lebanese identity where the dimension of belonging to a nation is essentially replaced by confessional belonging which makes religious identity still more important than the national identity.

Another issue is the wish for the separation of the state from confessions, which is now in its current political form generating a growing social and political polarization, making space for existing and potential conflicts. Together with the problem of corruption and security threats in the country, this feature may lead to not only security loss but also will bring deficit in democracy. As for the political structure, the public sector does not provide solid welfare policies, just employment policies, social justice and most importantly safety and legal status of its Palestinian refugees in the country. There is a need for a political system with clarity and autonomy where legal and administrative framework together with extended decentralization reform the political system and increases participation among citizens in political life from a local perspective with a national agenda.

In the model of deliberative politics and procedural democracy, the formal political system creates and implements political decisions and the public sphere is to create normative grounds and recognize issues of common concern and make arguments and counterarguments. This would mean for Lebanese public sphere to search for the power to affect the principles for decision-making in the formal political system, without having the purpose to replace or control the system. But rather through communicative networks influence the decision. Therefore, corruption of political decisions for legitimacy in the formal political system can no longer take place. This may be a radical self-governance that engages a real-

location of forces and in a democratic vision creates a 'new balance' between the various types of integration forces in the society. I would emphasize that the Lebanese political system and the structure of power and leadership in the aspect of deliberative politics is a difficulty in many ways. The structure of power is characterized by a Lebanese elite consisting of warlords coming to power after the wars between 1975-1990, the militant, and a political elite with traditional and family background in the political scene. While power is gained in different ways, the way of its exercise is mainly similar. Political positions are maintained through investments, compensation for votes, and governmental and administrative services within the electoral district of the confessional belonging. This 'political feudalism' allocates limited space to the kind of communicative networks to have influence in the political decisions and reallocation of forces. Even though Lebanon has a thriving civil society where political participation is an increasing fact, in the context of democracy the question of competition is to wish for in the creation of a 'new balance'. In the picture of 'political feudalism', corruption is still a big share of the cake.

'Political feudalism' is extended in every aspect of civil life. In the structure of power, fair and honest competitive elections with participation of those outside the Lebanese elite do not exist. Widespread competition among individuals and organized groups, an extensive level of political participation in the selection of political leaders and policies, and a decent level of civil and political liberties are characteristics of democracy. The deliberative conception of democratic politics is united with how to see democracy as a tool for democratic organization and guideline of collective action in specific action situations. As a result for Lebanon, this would mean understanding the democratic process as a process of social learning in which the citizens get informed and exchange the views and interests of others and hence political awareness and dialogue take place on non-confessional basis. This would involve a situation where the political system and political participation would be based on ideology and political awareness. Even though it may be a difficult mission in the elite system of Lebanon, it is a question of how to produce democracy in this system rather than instantly replacing it with something else.

For the Lebanese political system, it is a question of how to transform the political structure in a divided country in order to create a suitable balance 'Accommodation democracy' may be suitable in divided countries, where there is no consensus on the basis of the political system. The aim of this concept would be to set up a structure that would avoid the type of competition that may destroy the political system. The political system should rather agree on a prearranged formula to redistribute its political values to the various confessions in proportion to their relative demographic size, with a clear understanding that each confession will receive a political autonomy. For this reason, each confessional group will have to mobilize and compete within themselves and not with other confessions. Consequently, this will create political mobility, allowing political parties to compete according to their agenda and thus form a political platform for national competition on equal terms, hence initiate a phase of transformation.

In order for democratic politics in Lebanon to be as public in nature and influential in its purpose, it needs to be regarded as a public search for the common interest and uphold through discussion in which political actors are participants and political practices are visualized as a public activity where deliberation and participation are the core factors. The opportunity of agreement lays in the assumptions of communication instead of being assured by an ethnic background consensus. In the ideal procedure for democratic organisation and rule of collective action, it is important for actors to share a natural language in order for communication to function. In Lebanon, the assumption and awareness of a shared com-

mon comprehension of its society and political life, social world of relationships, normative principles and similar subjective of needs have to reach some sort of perception. In conclusion, for citizens or actors to participate in dialogue they have to share a common political vision that is 'clean' from coercion and inequality. Lebanon finds itself in a fragile situation in regard to its democratic perspective and context to function.

6.3   Political system and citizenship

In the process of democratization, Lebanon has through its modern history lacked a sense of national unity before its creation of a state. This picture is current even today but within a different aspect. I believe that there is a conflict in the notion of one state and national unity. Lebanon's intention to create a distinctive political system that reflects its multicultural character and confessional pluralism has led to an institutionalization of the confessional division in society with a sectarian political system. The Taif Agreement brought a balance in the confessional representation but also had the purpose to gradually deconfessionalize the political system. The question is what should substitute the confessional system?

Democratic institutions cannot be enough to self employ a democratic state. 'Democratic' values, norms and education according to the needs of the Lebanese society reached though communicative rationalization needs to be taken into consideration. The notion of one state and national unity has formed a sort of conflict in the question of identity. As I have discussed earlier, the recognition of one people having the sense of belonging to one nation is not present in Lebanon. The sense of citizenship is however now starting to shape a different character than that of confessional belonging. I believe that sub-identities within Muslim and Christian communities are not always or necessary a source of conflict. Being a Lebanese also means being a Muslim or Christian, a woman or a man, young or old, doctor or scientist (or whatever profession one may or may not have). The point is that a person is more that its religion. For the political system, its current confessional character requires confessional identities for its accountability. The confessional belonging however does not have to be the main source of conflict. What Lebanon needs is rather a political system that corresponds to a feeling of citizenship and vice versa. This relation may generate those social responsibilities and political associations that are necessary for the Lebanese state to function. Thus, it is not a question of religious conflict but rather a question of political conflict. The political system in Lebanon is constructed in a way where development and variability of identities, except the confessionals, are limited. The political system has rather polarized the 'Lebanese identity' and thus the society as such.

A democratic citizenship built up on political awareness regarding all individuals having the same rights under the same law without distinction of class, religion or ethnicity would reduce the sense of political insecurity and conflict. Democratic citizenship, referred to all individuals including the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, would then imply the same rights and obligations. In the current structure, rights are given to confessional groups, making individuals rather subjects to their own confessions than citizens feeling national unity. I would emphasize that it is a task for the political system to transform in order to evolve a sense of national identity, not for the replacement of confessional belonging, but that those should be included without having any specific political collision. It may be considered as a paradox, to sustain confessional belonging but not affect national identity. However, a political program of national policy for its citizens does not essentially require cultural homogeneity as a mean for democracy. A complete implementation of the Taif Agreement is essential in the sense where deconfessionalization of politics should be replaced by comple-

tive political parties competing for votes on the basis of ideology and political agenda rather than competing for votes among 'their' communities and according to confessions.

7 Conclusion

The growth of civil society is a key aspect not only by weakening authoritarian governments and contributing to the organizing and maintenance of a democratic polity but also by developing the quality of governance within polity of Lebanon. However, a large civil society does not necessarily mean a strong civil society. In Lebanon, the character of civil society is divided and somehow even complex. There is a separation between civil society organization of confessional nature and those focusing purely on specific political issues. The latter consists mostly of a wide range of Non Governmental Organizations and social movements referred to as the civic civil society which has a secular, non-confessional and liberal character. The former is the civil society referring to associations and institutions that are linked to religious communities. While the civic civil society reaches out to new members continuously, the religious communities do not. The size of an organization and it membership is relevant but not decisive. The hindrance in Lebanon is the lack of well functioning communication channels in order for civil society to increase its influence in political life.

Moreover, the confessional political system is in favor of those confessional associations and institutions, where I believe that communicative forces are already established through confessional belonging and the interest of the group as such that influences the political life. Political issues in specific area concerning the whole society are not essentially a focal line. The role of civil society and its efforts of raising public opinion and creating public debate is regardless parts of its confessional character, crucial in the phase of transformation and development of a democratic system in Lebanon. Even though Lebanon is modern in many aspects, it is still a traditional society where order is upheld by collective beliefs, mythical and religious forces. In this aspect of deliberative democracy, integration of 'lifeworlds', as I have argued earlier, is thus more of a struggle for social integration and social order. For civil society to be as optimally influential, 'Muslim lifeworld' and 'Christian lifeworld' have to integrate and reproduce lifeworld itself not only along confessional lines but also in a spirit of producing a 'Lebanese lifeworld'.

I may be very optimistic in this context, but I believe that the intensity of public debate raised by civil society may increase participation and transparency in the political life and, in the long-run, counteract corruption in the political system. Raising political opinion in Lebanon would not mean neglecting its sense of pluralism but rather to deal with a fragmented political culture in order to create coordination, efficiency and profession in civil society and political life.

Next, in order for Lebanon to experience a winning transition in its efforts of democratization – from the political freedoms to generating democracy – Lebanese people from all political and religious groups have to accept a set of rules and principles and assume related tangible measures that help turn the democratic dream to more of a reality. This means co-operation on the fundamental issue of communal security. An attitude with respect to security should substitute the zero-sum propensity motivating that hindrance of other groups will benefit the own confessional group or party. The domain of security is essential and everyone without exception will eventually suffer from its breakdown. There should be clear separation of the state from confessions in which the Taif Agreement plays an essential role. A complete implementation of the Taif Agreement is necessary for the political system in several features. The current political system and society is in need of a transformation in the sense of democracy on non-confessional basis. Several gradual aspects are crucial in this transformation.

To begin with a new, non-sectarian, electoral law is in need. The June Parliamentary elections in 2005, with significant improvements over former elections throughout the 1990s, remained deeply damaged because of an electoral law retained from the previous period. A new electoral law that is more suitable for a mixed society should be passed by the Parliament. It should rest on the small or medium-sized electoral district in order to reflect more fairly and accurately the community outlook of the Lebanese mosaic. It should allow competition among political parties on non-sectarian foundation.

Secondly, the reduction of social and political polarization. A separation of the state from confession would transform the political structure to form a political system where ideology and political agenda are serving as the basis for civil and political participation as well as governance. In order to transform a political culture, the perceptions and attitudes in society have to transform as well. According to my view, social and political integration are not hindered by the mixed society character in Lebanon. I rather argue that a country of minorities such as Lebanon would through communicative social learning produce more than only democratic institutions but also democratic thinking. The ultimate challenge though is to shift from clan-thinking to society-thinking in order to transform 'political feudalism' into a political system based on competitive political parties and participation in local and national agenda.

Thirdly and lastly, the question of citizenship and the Lebanese state. The struggle of national unity before the creation of an independent Lebanese state is according to my view still present in current picture. I believe that, a difficult task as it may be for any nation to form an autonomous state, in the Lebanese case it is more than the success and maintenance of a political system for the country of minorities. Importantly, I consider that the core of the democratic practice in Lebanon is mainly about the question of citizenship and identity. Lebanon's creation of a political system that reflects its multicultural character and confessional pluralism should initially reflect the Lebanese citizen. I argue that since a sense of a 'Lebanese identity' is not present, the image of one state and national unity goes beyond the feeling of 'my sect', 'my confession', 'my party' and instead it is a question of who is actually Lebanese and who is not. In an attempt to simplify a complex picture, a central part of democracy in Lebanon is about citizenship. The Lebanese society and its political system would then have the identity of citizenship for its accountability without abandoning its multicultural character. In sum, for Lebanon it is a question of political structure, division of state from confessions and generating a Lebanese identity for citizenship for a common future vision and clear definition of its foundation for democratic values.

7.1 Reflection

An important part of hermeneutics is reflection, where the interpretation of the study is reflected upon. At the initial point of this study, I planned for a certain structure. With preliminary readings of Lebanon, its history and political structure, I also tried to grasp a sense of its cultural belonging and the variety within a mixed society. This was done in order to create an understanding of the upcoming journey to Lebanon. However, not only has my preunderstanding reached a deeper understanding, but also another perspective upon Lebanon during my time in the country. In line with hermeneutics, a constant process of search for new knowledge leads to the appearance of additional questions along the way. This has been a continuous process during my time of study, as new perspective and deeper understanding have grown along the journey. Yet, at a certain point I have to set an end to my study, even though not meaning that my search in the journey of knowledge has ended. Still, it is important to reflect upon my results.

It is important to remember that research within social science is about personal participation, which brings an involvement in the process and object of research in the attempt of producing a picture of the existing reality. However, this picture may be based on a set of conscious as well as unconscious choices. I have tried to do my best in describing my choices along the way regarding choices of literature, interviews, and the presentation of the empirical founding. The purpose was to affect the credibility and validity of my study in a positive direction. On the other hand, because of obvious reasons I cannot describe nor defend those unconscious choices made during the work, which has likely influenced the results in the study. If I would have repeated this work, my choices and thus the results would surely have been of a different character. Still, this statement is nothing that I can with certainty comment on.

During my time in Lebanon the country was in turbulence since the time of the assassination of former Prime Minister Rafic Hariri in February 2005 followed by several assassinations and attempts during the year. In a way, it was an invaluable experience to actually be in Lebanon and have the opportunity to see, discuss, and reflect upon the political life at close. As for me personally it in many ways expanded and deepened my view of the political culture in the Lebanese society. Since communication is a significant part of hermeneutics, the possibility to speak to people was of great importance for my general impression and interpretation. Even though I believe that the results of my study may not be a universal and absolute truth, and it is not my intention for it to be since they are simply my understanding, I consider that my stay in Lebanon has been valuable for my interpretation. Maybe my results would have been different if the study had been carried out in another time, if I was fluent in Arabic or if I would have interviewed different persons.

In the article 'Civil society, Democracy, and the Middle East'[168] Ali R. Abootalebi discusses the expression 'civil society' and its use today to indicate how associations, organizations, and groups perform as a barrier between state power and the life of citizens. He argues that in the absence of such associations, the state domination in socio-economic and private affairs intensifies the state's authoritarian tendencies. Modern states have become better organized in using influential and coercive ways to accomplish their goals. In the Middle East on the other hand, oil revenues, expanded militaries, increasing groups of state bureaucrats, technocrats and professionals have increased the capabilities of the state. In this sense, he argues that expectations for the emergence of civil society and democracy in the Middle East – also intensified in the post-Cold War era – must be viewed with carefulness. Particularly the idea that states in the Middle East are weak and societies are strong. I consider that the interest in state-society relations and prospects for civil society in Lebanon are interesting and important in the county's multicultural aspect.

The civil society debate in Lebanon should be involved in focusing on changes in formal governance procedures and substantive change in state-society relations. Abootalebi argues that Islam is seen as a force which may be compatible with modernization process and also with democracy. However, the growth of political parties in the Middle East is not necessarily a political opening. It may be more a consequence of the state's adjustment to demands from religious groups and their allies. In line with the thoughts of Abootalebi, I would argue that political parties in Lebanon are in some extend ineffective. They rather play a formal role serving to legitimate state policies. In questions on the status of civil society in the Middle East, Abootalebi raises some interesting questions that may be of inter-

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[168] Middle East Review of International Affairs. Volume 2, No 3 – September 1998

est for further research on the topic. The question of how independent socio-economic and political groups are in the region and how they measure the level of autonomy? If autonomy implies the attendance of well-organized, institutionalized groups and associations, and if they are able to counterbalance the power of the state? The role of external power forces play in the formation of civil society and democracy? These are interesting questions in the case of Lebanon.

Abootalebi emphasizes that the rise and strength of civil society and democracy requires a certain level of socio-economic development that is balanced. This in turn depends on the state's role and policies in relation to the society. It is possible for societal preconditions for democracy to exist and still authoritarian rule to continue where the state rejects to give in to pressures from society for popular participation. Emphasizing his argument, the position of the state in Lebanon has meant rule of politics by powerful families and elites. On the other hand, the emergence and growth of civil society organizations have been increasing. Even though the Lebanese society may be divided, I believe that the voices of associations are rather strong than weak. Nonetheless, it is crucial that these voices are heard in a political system in order to make state-society relationship a balanced power and democracy possible.

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Appendix 1 - Interview Questions

Q1.

1. How would you define a concept for democracy?
- How does the political system relate to the process of democracy in Lebanon?
- Are there any changes that you would wish for in the political system?
- What outcome and effect would these changes have on the process of democracy?
- How would you define the relation local-regional-national regarding the political system? Could it be different? If so, in what way and why?

Q2.

2. What are the positive and negative effects on the political system after the Taif Agreement?

- How would you define the purpose of the system?
- Do elections make possible a rotation of power in Lebanon? If yes, How?
- How would you define civil society in Lebanon?
- How do you relate civil society in relation to process of democracy in Lebanon?

Q3.

3. What is the ideal type of democracy for Lebanon?
- What conditions are important for democracy in Lebanon?
- Do you think that there is a conflict today in Lebanon? If yes, what is its origin and how does it affect the process of democracy?
- Is there a Lebanese identity? If yes, is it favored to strengthen that identity?

Q4.

4. What is your most important concern regarding the process of democracy and its future in Lebanon?
- What other alternatives would you see for Lebanon?

List of interviews

1. Hicham Jadoun – NGO; Illiteracy Program Field Worker, University of Balamand. 2005-09-26

2. Habbouba Aoun – NGO; Landmine, Activist and Community worker, University of Balamand, Health Promotion. 2005-09-26

3. Dori Chamoun – President of the National Liberal Party (Ahrar). 2005-09-29

4. Hilal Khashan – American University of Beirut, Professor in Political Science. 2005-09-29

5. Rana El-Khatib – NGO; YMCA, Communication officer. 2005-09-30 www.ymca-lb.org.lb

6. Nahla Ghandour – The Ghassan Kanfani Cultural Foundation, Director Pediatric Occupation Therapist. 2005-09-30

7. Nawaf Salam – American University of Beirut, Professor in Political Science. 2005-10-03

8. Sammar Yassir – Consultant to PGS (Palestinian Group Sweden), Independent social development specialist. 2005-10-04

9. Muhammed Sammak – Advisor of Primer Minister Rafiq Hariri and the Mufti of Lebanon. Political analyst at Al-Mustaqbal Newspaper. Secretary General for the Christian-Muslim Committee for Dialogue, Islamic permanent Committee, Executive committee of the Christian-Muslim Arab Group. 2005-10-05

10. Abu Moujahed – Director of Children & Youth Centre – CYC, Shatila. 2005-10-05

11. Paul Salem – Political Analyst and Director of The Fares Foundation. 2005-10-05

12. Michel Nseir – Director of WCC (World Council of Churches) Middle East Desk. 2005-10-07

13. Omar Traboulsi – Project Coordinator, Centre for Research and Training on Development (Gender and Development programs). 2005-10-10 www.crtd.org

14. Salim Nasr – Senior Advisor, Civil Society and Public participation, UNDP. 2005-10-10

Appendix 2 - Major Political Parties

Communist party   Established in 1924 by a group of mainly Armenian activists.

Syrian Nationalist Party SSNP, established 1932 and is considered to be mainly a Greek Orthodox organization.

Katai'b Party   Also called the Phalange Party, established in 1936 by Pierre Gemayel.

National Liberal Party   Established by the former President Camille Chamoun

National Bloc   Established by the former President Emile Eddé in the 1930s.

Amal Movement   Established by the Shiite religious leader Imam Musa Sadr in the 1970s.

Hezbollah   Initiated by Iranian support during the time of Israeli invasion 1982. The most dynamic party within Shiite community.

Progressive Socialist Party PSP, established by the Druze leader Kamal Jumblatt in the beginning of 1950s.

Free National Current   FNC