LEBANESE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY

Civil Society and Lebanon’s Oil and Gas Sector

By

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I dedicate this master’s thesis to my loving parents and sisters who believed in me, and supported me in every single step of my journey.
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Civil Society and Lebanon’s Oil and Gas Sector

Rana Abdul Rahim

ABSTRACT

With the increased emphasis among experts in the field of extractive industries on the role of civil society in the oil and gas sector of Lebanon and with the emergence of a specialized Lebanese civil society, this thesis assesses the role that is being played by civil society in the oil and gas sector of Lebanon. Moreover, the literature review shows the absence of research on the effectiveness of this role. Thus, this thesis aims to find out if civil society is being effective in its role and if it is in compliance with international standards and best practices. In order to achieve this objective, three main areas of assessment are studied. These are the available capabilities within civil society working on Lebanon’s petroleum sector, the readiness and track record of Lebanese authorities to include civil society in the sector, and the international standards and best practices of civil society in extractive industries. This thesis concludes that civil society is playing its role in compliance with international standards and best practices. However, this role is not being effective in all areas of its involvement. It is being effective mainly in raising awareness, monitoring the work of the authorities, and advocating among others. Yet, it shows minimal effectiveness in participating in decision-making. This is due to the minimal will of politicians to include civil society in decision-making and from the limited initiatives made by the authorities to apply a participatory approach in the sector, which is not compliant with international standards and best practices. It is also due to the internal challenges existing within the national specialized civil society itself.

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<td>ANND</td>
<td>Arab NGO Network for Development</td>
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<td>ARPAC</td>
<td>Arab Region Parliamentarians against Corruption</td>
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<td>BP</td>
<td>British Petroleum</td>
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<tr>
<td>CEO</td>
<td>Chief Executive Officer</td>
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<td>CoE</td>
<td>Council of Europe</td>
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<td>CSO</td>
<td>Civil Society Organizations</td>
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<td>CSR</td>
<td>Corporate Social Responsibility</td>
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<td>EastMed</td>
<td>Eastern Mediterranean</td>
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<td>EBI</td>
<td>Energy and Biodiversity Initiative</td>
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<td>EEZ</td>
<td>Exclusive Economic Zone</td>
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<td>EITI</td>
<td>Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative</td>
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<tr>
<td>EITI-MSG</td>
<td>Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative - Multi-Stakeholder Group</td>
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<tr>
<td>ENI</td>
<td>Ente Nazionale Idrocarburi</td>
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<td>ENR</td>
<td>Energy Resources</td>
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<td>EPA</td>
<td>Exploration and Production Agreement</td>
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<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
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<td>GI</td>
<td>Global Initiative</td>
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<td>IBP</td>
<td>International Budget Partnership</td>
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<td>IDRC</td>
<td>International Development Research Center</td>
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<td>IMF</td>
<td>International Monetary Fund</td>
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<td>INGO</td>
<td>International Non-Governmental Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>LADE</td>
<td>Lebanese Association for Democratic Elections</td>
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<td>LCEI</td>
<td>Lebanese Coalition for Good Governance in Extractive Industries</td>
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<td>LCPS</td>
<td>Lebanese Center for Policy Studies</td>
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<tr>
<td>LDN</td>
<td>Lebanese Development Network</td>
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<td>LOGI</td>
<td>Lebanese Oil and Gas Initiative</td>
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<td>LPA</td>
<td>Lebanese Petroleum Administration</td>
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<td>LPS</td>
<td>Lebanese Petroleum Society</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acronym</td>
<td>Full Form</td>
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<td>LTA</td>
<td>Lebanese Transparency Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>MedGO</td>
<td>Mediterranean Gas and Oil</td>
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<td>MENA</td>
<td>Middle East and North Africa</td>
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<td>MESP</td>
<td>Middle East Strategic Perspective</td>
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<td>MOOC</td>
<td>Massive Open Online Course</td>
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<tr>
<td>MoU</td>
<td>Memorandum of Understanding</td>
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<td>MP</td>
<td>Member of the Parliament</td>
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<td>MSG</td>
<td>Multi-Stakeholder Group</td>
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<td>NDU</td>
<td>Notre Dame University</td>
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<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organization</td>
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<td>National Oil Company</td>
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<td>NRGI</td>
<td>Natural Resources Governance Institute</td>
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<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development</td>
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<td>OfD</td>
<td>Oil for Development</td>
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<td>OGP</td>
<td>Open Government Partnership</td>
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<td>OPES</td>
<td>Organization for Petroleum and Energy Sustainability</td>
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<td>OPRL</td>
<td>Offshore Petroleum Resources Law</td>
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<td>PWYP</td>
<td>Publish What You Pay</td>
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<td>SDSN</td>
<td>Sustainable Development Solutions Network</td>
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<tr>
<td>SEA</td>
<td>Strategic Environmental Assessment</td>
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<td>SKeyes</td>
<td>Samir Kassir Eyes</td>
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<tr>
<td>SPE</td>
<td>Society of Petroleum Engineers</td>
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<tr>
<td>SWF</td>
<td>Sovereign Wealth Fund</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNDP</td>
<td>United Nations Development Programme</td>
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<tr>
<td>US</td>
<td>United States</td>
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<tr>
<td>USJ</td>
<td>Université Saint Joseph</td>
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<td>VPSHR</td>
<td>Voluntary Principles for Security and Human Rights</td>
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Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 The Oil and Gas Industry Globally

The oil and gas industry has occupied the agenda of major powers as well as various oil and gas producing countries for decades. The main reason behind this is the amount of revenues coming from this industry, which can be used by countries to build their infrastructure (Centre for the Future State, n.d.), strengthen their economy (Natural Resource Governance Institute [NRGI], 2015), and militarize their army (Al-Mawali, 2015) (Perlo-Freeman & Brauner, 2012). However, this industry also constitutes a hosting environment for bribery and corruption (Kolstad, Søreide, & Williams 2008) (Paltseva, 2013), which many countries and international organizations are fighting (KPMG, 2015) (Leenders, 2016), and for which they are setting guidelines and standards (Publish What You Pay [PWYP] & Revenue Watch Institute, 2006) to prevent such phenomena. In addition, while for many years, the number of oil and gas producing countries was limited to a certain number of leading countries in this industry, the world is witnessing in the last few years a mushrooming of new oil and gas producing countries. It is possible to mention under this category Ghana, Mozambique, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Cyprus, and Israel among others. The majority of these new oil producing countries are developing countries or third world countries that suffer from domestic as well as institutional problems.

Moreover, this mushrooming is happening at a time in history where civil society is playing a prominent role in the politics (World Economic Forum, 2013) of numerous
developing countries (Canadian Council for International Co-Operation, n.d.) (Government Offices of Sweden, MFA Information Service & Department for Development Policy, 2009). For instance, civil society movements in various African countries are becoming the greatest fighters of corruption in their respective countries (Essoungou, 2013). The Arab uprisings in 2011 which were led by civil society organizations and activists are also a great example on the role played by civil society in shaping the politics of a country (Lebanese Center for Policy Studies [LCPS], 2011). Civil society movements for fair elections have played a key role in Russia (Englund & Lally, 2011) and Malaysia (Höller-Fam, 2015), for example, in the year 2011 and 2015 respectively they showed people’s will to make a change in their country’s political system and their disenchantment with the corrupt ruling elites. Other than these national civil society movements, at the international level, campaigns to fight corruption in extractive industries have been launched. The most prominent among them has been the “Publish What You Pay” campaign launched in 2002 (PWYP, n.d.).

Nevertheless, the coincidence of having these new oil and gas countries emerging at a time in history where civil society is playing this great role in politics has allowed civil society in a number of these countries to take part in the management and monitoring of the petroleum sector. For instance, in 2003 in the Republic of Congo, a number of local non-governmental organizations gathered to form a national chapter of the global CSO coalition “Publish What You Pay” (Essoungou, 2013). Their work on and monitoring for corruption in the oil exploitation phase in the country has led to more transparency attempts in the sector by public officials (Essoungou, 2013). In Ghana, a coalition of civil society organizations assembled together to form the Ghana Civil Society Platform on Oil
and Gas with the aim of developing the capacity of civil society in dealing with different issues related to the sector (Zandvliet, 2013). It also aims at ensuring transparency and accountability, and strengthening the coalition’s ability to voice its demands (Zandvliet, 2013).

Just as is the case with these new oil and gas producing countries, Lebanon is dealing for the first time in its history with this industry as a producing country. In addition, Lebanon’s record with corruption (Transparency International Secretariat, 2010) and the weakness of its institutions (Hobeika, 2006) is alarming. For instance, Lebanon ranked 138 of 180 countries on the Corruption Perception Index produced in 2018 by Transparency International (Transparency International, 2018). These facts make it relevant for anyone to raise a number of questions concerning this sector. Is Lebanon showing until now, with this high level of corruption and the weakness of its institutions, a capability to handle such a sector? Is civil society in Lebanon playing a role similar to that in other oil producing country? Is the presence of civil society as a major player in this sector essential to its emergence in a right way? Before moving to the main research question of this thesis, it is important to look at the development of the oil and gas sector in Lebanon throughout the latest years, and at the importance of studying the role of civil society in this industry.

1.2 The Rise of the Oil and Gas Sector in Lebanon

Following the two-dimensional and three-dimensional seismic scans done by foreign oil excavation companies between the years 2000 and 2013, it has been confirmed that Lebanon has offshore reserves of oil and gas (Lebanese Petroleum Administration [LPA], n.d.). As a result of these discoveries, Lebanon made a number of steps to move forward
in the petroleum sector. It initiated the process of delimitating its maritime borders and exclusive economic zone with neighboring countries (Common Space Initiative, 2014), drafted laws and decrees related to the various stages of the sector development such as the Offshore Petroleum Resources Law (OPRL) (LPA, n.d.), organized a number of pre-qualification and licensing rounds for foreign oil companies (LPA, n.d.), and most recently signed two Exploration and Production Agreements (EPAs) for two offshore blocks with three foreign oil companies (Annahar Staff, 2018) (Associated Press, 2017). With the signing of these agreements, drilling is promised to start in 2019 (Annahar Staff, 2018) (Associated Press, 2017). Lebanon also established in the year 2012 the Lebanese Petroleum Administration (LPA), which is an administrative body that manages the sector (LPA, n.d.). Moreover, and as a result of these findings, Lebanese were promised a flourishing economy, an end to their colossal public debt, and an increase in job opportunities. This newly emerging sector has been the subject of numerous debates. Many arguments have emerged and the topic is being addressed from different angles. However, the work of the Lebanese government on the oil and gas sector has not followed a steady and continuous pace. It has faced political and geostrategic obstacles at both, the domestic and the international level. Domestically, the longstanding government deadlock has led to a long delay in passing two important decrees for the exploration of the offshore reserves (Ayat, 2015) (International Law and Policy Institute, 2013); while at the international level, the main challenge has been the Lebanese-Israeli maritime border dispute which has also affected the delimitation of the maritime borders between Lebanon and Cyprus (Middle East Strategic Perspectives [MESP], 2018). Despite these obstacles, conferences and research on the petroleum sector in Lebanon
continued among interested scholars, individuals, and experts in the field. Among the
topics addressed is the role of civil society in the petroleum sector, highlighting its
importance and describing it as a positive role to the development of the sector. However,
there has not been a paper or study that assesses this role in Lebanon. A number of areas
are worth investigating in this regard, including the goals, the roles, and the possible
contribution of civil society in the Lebanese petroleum sector. Other areas include the
rational and motivations behind those that support this role for civil society and the
advantages and consequences of such a role.

1.3 The Importance of Studying the Role of Civil Society in This Field

Globally, civil society is being considered as a main actor in this field. Consequently,
it is important to look at what is its role in Lebanon’s petroleum sector within the existing
Lebanese political context. It is also important to understand the possible ways through
which this role is being expressed. In addition, with the latest developments in this sector,
civil society is rushing to try to take part in decision-making and in monitoring the
petroleum sector of Lebanon. Therefore, it is again important to consider the challenges
that civil society is facing in this sector.

Moreover, throughout the years, public perception on the role of civil society in
Lebanon has been changing among Lebanese (Lebanese Association for Democratic
Elections [LADE], 2015). While for many years there has been a lack of trust or a
minimal trust in civil society organizations, in recent years this opinion has been
changing towards a greater trust of the public in civil society especially in comparison to
the government, parliament, judiciary system, syndicates, and workers unions (LADE,
2014). For instance, a poll conducted by the Lebanese Association for Democratic
Elections (LADE) in the year 2013 showed that the percentage of Lebanese citizens who completely trust the government and the parliament is 4% and 6% respectively, whereas the percentage of those who completely trust civil society organizations is 12% (LADE, 2015). However, a similar poll conducted by LADE in the year 2015 showed that the percentage of Lebanese citizens who completely trust the government and the parliament is 2% and 4% respectively, whereas the percentage of those who completely trust civil society organizations is 23% (LADE, 2015). More precisely, Lebanese citizens are becoming more responsive to the calls of civil society organizations and more conscious of its expertise. This fact appeared at different occasions, most recently with the “YouStink” movement which, although has received some criticism and couldn’t fully reach its stated goals, received the support of a large section of Lebanese who rushed to the streets in the early days of the movement (Sarkis, 2015). This is not to forget the repetitive protests of civil society activists and residents of the Naameh area for the closure of the Naameh landfill in 2015 (The Daily Star, 2015), which led to its permanent closure on the 17th of July (Al Mustaqbal, 2015) (LBCI News, 2015). In addition, the anticorruption campaigns launched by “Badna Nhasseb”, “Sakker el Dekkeneh” and the Lebanese Transparency Association (LTA) played a major role in shedding the light on corruption cases and political interference in areas such as public administrations (Addiyar, 2017), utilities, and the judiciary (National News Agency, 2017). The protests against the parliamentary term extensions in 2013 and 2014 were another example of such mobilization. In 2016 the rise of the “Beirut Madiniati” list, which included non-politician candidates, received a greater number of votes than the one backed by traditional political parties (Diab, 2016) in regions such as Beirut I district (Arja, 2016).
Similarly, the coalition between Ashraf Rifi and civil society in these same municipal elections (Merheb, 2016) dethroned traditional Sunni leaders in Tripoli by winning 18 seats out of 24 (The New Arab, 2016). Moreover, in Baalbek and Hermel, the lists backed by traditional politicians were not able to achieve a complete victory in front of lists backed by civil society (Al Hussainy, 2016). For instance, in Baalbek, the list of civil society received 45% of the votes, and in Hermel it received 39% of the votes (Diab, 2016). Finally yet importantly, in the 2018 parliamentary elections, the “Kulluna Watani” coalition composed by civil society groups was able to win a seat in the Lebanese parliament (Association France Presse, 2018) (Naoufal, 2018), knowing that it was close to win a second seat in the parliament (Association France Presse, 2018). Thus, civil society started proving its ability to play an effective role in shaping Lebanese politics.

Nevertheless, following the emergence of the new oil and gas sector in Lebanon, a specialized civil society in extractive industries has become active in this sector. Therefore, it is worth investigating the capabilities of this civil society to achieve some success in the oil and gas sector as it is the case with other sectors. Section 4.1 of chapter four looks briefly at the history of the emergence of this specialized civil society.

For now, the thesis will move to chapter two where the research question and methodology are explained.
Chapter Two

Research Question and Methodology

2.1 Research Question

This thesis assesses the current performance of civil society in the petroleum sector of Lebanon and offers a comprehensive explanation and analysis of the areas where civil society is succeeding or not in playing its role. It also looks at the challenges civil society is facing in implementing and meeting international standards and best practices, and at the nature of its relation with the government in this sector. Precisely, this thesis aims to answer the following research question: is Lebanese civil society playing an effective role in the oil and gas sector of Lebanon, in compliance with international standards? In order to answer this research question, the study focuses on three main areas of assessment. These are the available capabilities of civil society in the petroleum sector of Lebanon, the readiness and track record of the Lebanese authorities to include civil society in the sector, and the international standards and best practices of civil society in extractive industries. This thesis concludes that civil society is playing its role in compliance with international standards and best practices. However, this role is not being effective in all areas of its involvement. Precisely, it shows minimal effectiveness in participating in decision-making which is due to the minimal will of politicians to include civil society in decision-making and from the limited initiatives made by the authorities to apply a participatory approach in the sector. It is also due to the internal challenges existing within the national specialized civil society itself.
2.2 Research Methodology

This thesis is a case study of the role of civil society active in the oil and gas sector of Lebanon. It assesses the role of civil society by studying international and national civil society organizations (CSOs) who are active in the oil and gas sector of Lebanon, namely: Publish What You Pay (PWYP), Natural Resources Governance Institute (NRGI), Lebanese Oil and Gas Initiative (LOGI), and Organization for Petroleum and Energy Sustainability (OPES). It also looks at two national research and consultancy institutions, the Lebanese Center for Policy Studies (LCPS) and the Middle East Strategic Perspective (MESP), which proved to be greatly engaged in various activities related to the sector along with the above mentioned CSOs.

It is worth noting that while some experts and scholars extend the definition of civil society to include non-governmental organizations, labor unions, faith-based organizations, non-profit service agencies, research institutions, and social media communities, this thesis will mainly focus on civil society organizations which are specialized in the field of extractive industries. Thus, despite the fact that a number of media platforms, social media communities, public relations and communication companies, and a labor union for workers in the oil and gas sector showed interest in Lebanon’s petroleum sector, these groups were not studied by the thesis for the following reasons: 1) the limited activities and contributions of some of them to the petroleum sector of Lebanon; 2) their dependence on the above mentioned national civil society organizations in acquiring expertise and voicing their demands; 3) the absence of connections and co-shared activities between them and the international civil society organizations and donors who are main actors in the field; 4) the absence of co-shared
activities and direct meetings between them and the authorities; and 5) the segregation of
the members and discontinuity of the activities of some of them.

2.2.1 Data Collection

A qualitative approach of data collection is adapted in this research. Primary data
consists of six elite interviews with representatives of each of the following sectors: civil
society organizations representatives working on the oil and gas sector of Lebanon, civil
society organizations representative working on other sectors than oil and gas in
Lebanon, member at the Lebanese Petroleum Administration (LPA), and an expert in the
field at think tanks and consultancy institutions. These interviews were conducted
through a face-to-face conversation. All Institutional Research Bureau certification and
approvals were sought prior to the beginning of the interviews. The names and positions
of the interviewees for this thesis are as follows:

- Civil society organizations representatives working on the oil and gas sector of
  Lebanon: Diana Kaissy who is the executive director of the Lebanese Oil and Gas
  Initiative (LOGI) and was previously a MENA coordinator at the international
  CSO “Publish What You Pay”; Laury Haytayan who is a MENA manager at the
  Natural Resource Governance Institute (NRGI) and was previously the executive
director of Arab Region Parliamentarians Against Corruption (ARPAC); and
  Marwan Abdallah who is a co-founder of the Organization for Petroleum and
  Energy Sustainability (OPES).

- Civil society organization representative working on other sectors than oil and gas
  in Lebanon: Ziad Abdel Samad who is the executive director of the Arab NGO
  Network for Development (ANND).
- Lebanese Petroleum Administration member: Wissam Chbat who is a board member and head of the geology and geophysics department at the Lebanese Petroleum Administration (LPA).

- Expert in the field at a consultancy institution: Mona Sukkarieh who is a co-founder of the local consultancy Middle East Strategic Perspectives (MESP) and a political risk consultant covering the oil and gas sector in Lebanon and Eastern Mediterranean.

The selection of the interviewees was based on two criteria of relevance to the research study: 1) the interviewees’ knowledge and understanding of the capabilities of civil society in the sector, and 2) their direct involvement in co-shared activities and meetings between civil society and the authorities. Thus, the chosen civil society organizations representatives and the chosen expert in the field at a consultancy institution have at least seven to ten years of experience in their field of work and are heads of the organization they belong to, which helps the thesis in acquiring adequate and trustworthy information concerning the available capabilities of civil society and its overall performance in the sector. In addition, they are highly active persons in their respective fields and have come into contact with the authorities at different occasions. This provides the thesis with reliable arguments concerning the relation and possible cooperation between civil society and the authorities in the oil and gas sector of Lebanon. Nevertheless, in order not to be bias, conducting an interview with a member of the Lebanese Petroleum Administration (LPA) was necessary for this thesis. It helps in diversifying the arguments concerning the role and capabilities of civil society in the sector; and explains the authorities’ point of view concerning any possible cooperation
with civil society in the sector. Thus, in this thesis, the information and arguments advanced by the member of the LPA are considered as representing the authorities’ point of view.

Limitations to the conducted interviews are mainly: absence of an interview with a parliament member who worked on laws regulating the role of civil society in the oil and gas sector of Lebanon. This fact makes the opinion of the authorities towards the role of civil society in the sector limited to the opinion of the Lebanese Petroleum Administration member interviewed for this thesis. However, such interview was not conducted due to the limited time available to finish the thesis and the fear that a specific member of the parliament might only reflect the opinion of the political party s/he belongs to, which would need a number of additional interviews to have an inclusive perspective. Next, the number of interviews conducted with civil society organizations representatives. This thesis wished to conduct an interview with one more representative of civil society organizations working on other sectors than the oil and gas sector in order to diversify the opinions; however due to the limited time, these interviews were not conducted. Additionally, the absence of an interview with a representative from a national research institution, such as the Lebanese Center for Policy Studies (LCPS), which did not take place despite repeated attempts at reaching out to their researchers.

Questions used in the interviews were all open-ended questions and were formulated based on two main criteria. The first criterion is the needed information and evidences to complete the research study and reach a reliable conclusion. For instance, after conducting a literature review, the researcher formulated a number of questions that were believed not to have an answer in any article or published document related to the topic
of the research study. Then these questions were further developed to help the research reach a detailed and deeper understanding of the issues at hand. The second criterion is the sector to which the interviewee belongs. For instance, questions were divided into different categories according to what information can be obtained from the interviewee based on the sector to which s/he belongs. However, few of these questions were common to all interviewees, because it was necessary to make a comparison between their answers on a same question in order to reach a non-biased conclusion.

In addition to the primary data, the analysis is guided by secondary data. This secondary data consists of journal articles, newspaper articles, magazines articles, policy briefs, and websites content. Other sources of secondary data are relevant documents and reports published by organizations, agencies, and governments such as the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative, the Lebanese government, the Lebanese Petroleum Administration, and the Transparency International organization. Primary and secondary data are analyzed to make inferences and answer the research question.

2.2.2 Research Indicators

In order to answer the research question, the methodology proposed is broken down into four distinct sections: 1) a mapping of the key actors in the oil and gas industry of Lebanon including national and international civil society organizations; 2) an assessment of the capabilities of civil society in Lebanon to play a role in this sector; 3) an evaluation of the readiness of the Lebanese authorities to include civil society in decision-making; and, 4) an analysis of the level of compliance of Lebanese authorities and civil society with respect to international standards and guidelines.
2.2.2.1 Mapping Key Actors in the Oil and Gas Industry of Lebanon

The research begins with a mapping section that mainly relies on information from the websites of the different key actors studied in this thesis, and from official documents issued by the Lebanese government that state their various missions in the sector. Most of the studied key actors have websites that note their goals, missions and activities, and names of co-founders among others. In addition, official documents issued by different ministries were used to explain the prerogatives of some of the actors in the sector. The mapping aims at helping the reader in identifying the different actors studied in this thesis and understanding their goals, administrative structures, and missions.

2.2.2.2 Assessing the Capabilities of Civil Society in Lebanon’s Petroleum Sector

Following this, the research investigates the available capabilities of civil society in playing a role in the oil and gas sector of Lebanon by mainly relying on the interviews conducted with the selected interviewees mentioned above. The answers of each interviewee are analyzed and compared to the others in order to check for any agreement or disagreement between the interviewees on a certain topic. Information provided by these interviews is necessary as no information is documented on the role of civil society or on its capacities in the petroleum sector of Lebanon. There are no articles or studies that genuinely assess the role of civil society in the oil and gas sector of Lebanon. Thus, the answers of the interviewees constitute primary data for this research and provide further direction for the research. From this analysis, the thesis is able to identify the level of expertise of civil society that is active in the oil and gas sector of Lebanon, and its contributions to the sector. It is also able to identify the lobbying strategy this civil society is adopting and the tools it possesses at the national or international level to have
an impactful role in the sector. Moreover, this section gathers information published on the websites of the studied civil society organizations and the concerned public institutions. It also refers to some journals and newspapers articles.

2.2.2.3 Evaluating the Readiness of Lebanese Authorities to Include Civil Society in Decision-making

The thesis then moves to check for the readiness and track record of the authorities to include civil society in decision-making concerning the oil and gas sector and to adopt a participatory approach. To do this, the thesis studies the statement of the government concerning the inclusion of civil society in the sector and cooperation with it in assuring good governance in this sector. These statements are either extracted from newspaper articles or from news posts available on the websites of civil society organizations. It also assesses the frequency of initiatives launched by civil society and those launched by the authorities to cooperate in the sector. In addition, by referring to the website of the Lebanese Petroleum Administration (LPA) and comparing the initiatives launched by the LPA with those launched by Lebanese politicians, it is able to identify who is more willing to cooperate with civil society; and to determine the incentives for such cooperation. Nevertheless, in order to make the analysis more trustworthy, this section uses the testimony of some of the interviewees on certain initiatives or events that took place between civil society and the authorities, which are not mentioned previously in the press. These testimonies help in strengthening the arguments concerning the readiness of the authorities to apply a participatory approach and the possibility of any future cooperation with civil society in the sector.
2.2.2.4 Analyzing the Level of Compliance with International Standards and Guidelines

Lastly, a desk review of the various international standards and guidelines on the role of civil society is conducted. They are mainly studied in this thesis to assess the level of compliance of both civil society and the Lebanese authorities with them. The recommendations or guidelines on the role of civil society, as explained in each of these international standards and guidelines, are checked for their availability in the case of the oil and gas sector of Lebanon either through the existing national laws or the performance of the various actors in the sector. Other than the level of compliance of the various actors, these guidelines are also studied to check for the expected or recommended level of involvement of civil society in the sector. Thus, a conclusion is reached that shows to what extent civil society is involved in this sector and engaged in decision-making.

2.3 Research Plan

Following this research question and methodology chapter, the research is divided into six chapters. The research begins with a literature review chapter where a desk review of the different articles that tackle the oil and gas sector in Lebanon is done. This chapter is divided into five sections. It shows the areas of focus of these articles and the various advanced opinions concerning the role of civil society in the sector. It also notes the available international standards and guidelines on this role.

The literature review is followed by a chapter that maps civil society and other key players in the sector, such as the concerned public institutions. The first section of this chapter is reserved for the history of the emergence of a specialized civil society in the oil and gas sector of Lebanon. It provides the reader with a better understanding of the nature
and origin of the civil society studied in this thesis, and explains the conditions of its emergence. The following section is a mapping of the key players in the petroleum sector of Lebanon that are considered as subjects of this study. Thus, this section will list the various players which include international specialized civil society organizations, national specialized civil society organizations, national research and consultancy institutions, and concerned public institutions.

Then the thesis moves to the following chapter that studies the first area of assessment which is the capabilities of civil society in the petroleum sector of Lebanon. This will be done by tackling issues such as the various connections of civil society, the activities done by it, the available tools and expertise it has, and the lobbying strategies that it follows.

Next, the thesis moves to the chapter discussing the second area of assessment, which is the readiness and track record of the Lebanese authorities to include civil society in the sector.

Following this, the thesis moves to the chapter discussing and analyzing the third area of assessment for answering the research question. Thus, it will check for international standards on the role of civil society and best practices in the extractive industry.

Last, the concluding chapter draws on the previous chapters to analyze their findings and answer the research question. The chapter looks also at the contribution of this research to the field of international relations and identifies areas for further inquiry.

Now that the research question and methodology followed by this thesis have been outlined, it is possible to move to the literature review.
Chapter Three

Literature Review

For the purpose of understanding what has been written on the topic of oil and gas in Lebanon and on the role of civil society in it, a literature review of the various articles that tackled this topic is conducted. Thus, the five sections of this chapter show the areas of focus of these articles and the various opinions concerning the role of civil society in the sector. This chapter also notes the available international standards and guidelines on this role. Lastly, this literature review helps the thesis author identify gaps in the literature on the topic and formulate a relevant research question.

3.1 The Oil and Gas Sector in Lebanon Addressed from Different Angles

The literature on the topic of oil and gas sector in Lebanon is abundant. This topic has been addressed from a wide variety of angles. Some authors have tackled the maritime borders delimitation process between Lebanon and neighboring countries (Grigoriadis, 2014) (Wahlisch, 2011), mainly the maritime borders dispute between Lebanon and Israel (Ayat, 2015) (Aziz, 2016) (Groisman, 2016). For instance, in his article “Israel-Lebanon Offshore Oil & Gas Dispute – Rules of International Maritime Law,” Martin Wahlisch discusses the legal challenges of this dispute in order to conclude that “Diplomacy remains the best approach to solving the dispute, although an intensified confrontation between the two countries on the matter is possible” (Wahlisch, 2011). Other authors are interested in discussing good governance and sector management (Fattouh & Mahadeva, 2016) (Salamey, 2013). For instance, in his article “Mitigating the
Resource Curse for Extractive Industry: The Case of Lebanon,” Imad Salamey insists on the importance of developing strategies to insure Lebanon’s fair share of revenues, and argues that “…most critical is to institutionalize a hydrocarbon fiscal regime that would deflect domestic feuds and defuse sectarian power struggle. The establishment of a SWF [Sovereign Wealth Fund] is a step in that direction” (Salamey, 2013). In addition, in their article “Managing Oil and Gas Revenues in Lebanon,” Bassam Fattouh and Lavan Mahadeva discuss key features of Lebanon’s economic and institutional environment that may affect the choices of the Lebanese government in managing the oil and gas revenues (Fattouh & Mahadeva, 2016). They conclude that “…rather than aiming to establish a large saving and/or liquidity fund, it is more appropriate for Lebanon, at least initially, to use potential revenues to pay off its large public debt, beginning with the most risky liabilities, namely foreign currency external debt” (Fattouh & Mahadeva, 2016).

Moreover, a number of authors have addressed the environmental consequences of petroleum extraction (Khoury & Alhaj, 2015). For instance, in their article “Strengthening Environmental Governance of the Oil and Gas Sector in Lebanon,” Ricardo Khoury and Dima Alhaj discuss the environmental risks and impacts of the petroleum sector in Lebanon and recommend that “Lebanon review its institutional capacity to regulate the oil and gas sector, legislation be strengthened to cover gaps in environmental regulation of the sector, stakeholder coordination be enhanced to ensure roles and responsibilities are clear, and a clear road map to implement a national oil spill response plan be formulated to address potential environmental crises” (Khoury & Alhaj, 2015).
3.2 A Topic Not Only Addressed in Peer-reviewed Articles

Furthermore, it is worth noting that the oil and gas sector of Lebanon is not only tackled in academic journal articles, but it is also present in professional magazines, booklets, newspapers articles, and reports. It appears in journals such as Oil, Gas & Energy Law Intelligence (Abu-Gosh & Leal-Arcas, 2013), magazines such as the Executive Magazine (Arbid, & Nash, 2014), booklets such as the one issued by the Common Space Initiative (Common Space Initiative, 2014), and Arabic and English local newspapers such as Annahar and The Daily Star (Anderson, 2013). One can also note that the topic has encouraged experts and CSOs to organize conferences (Lebanon’s National Wealth, n.d.) (Haigazian University, n.d.), seminars (The MENA Natural Resource Governance Hub, 2015), roundtable discussions (LCPS, 2014), and workshops (The MENA Natural Resource Governance Hub, 2015) on various related topics. For instance, on the 22nd of October 2014, a conference titled “Unlocking Opportunities” was organized to mark Lebanon Petroleum Day (LCPS, 2014). This is in addition to the different forums organized by the Forum for National Dialogue and Front Page Communication under the umbrella of Lebanon’s National Wealth. Therefore, all of the above highlights how this topic has attracted a great number of scholars and experts.

3.3 A Great Focus on Good Governance of the Sector

A large number of scholars have focused on the issues of good governance, corruption, and transparency. These issues of the newly emerging petroleum sector in Lebanon occupy a large portion of the literature. For instance, in his article “Avoiding the Resource Curse in Lebanon,” Jad Chaaban offers recommendations that could help Lebanon avoid the resource curse of oil and gas (Chaaban, 2016). He argues that “ideally,
the government must direct its spending toward the non-resource tradables sector through subsidizing outputs and/or inputs or investing in physical and human capital to enhance productivity in these sectors;” and adds that “increasing accountability and transparency in public institutions is essential, and this ultimately requires political reforms that increase the commitment and engagement of citizens in the actions of their government, through proper electoral representation” (Chaaban, 2016). Moreover, in her article “Establishing a National Oil Company in Lebanon,” Valérie Marcel studies the possibility of having a national oil company in Lebanon at various stages of the development of the oil and gas sector (Marcel, 2016). Marcel is pessimistic and argues that “… the establishment of an NOC [National Oil Company] presents very real governance risks. While various processes and rules can mitigate these risks, such measures depend on strong political leadership” (Marcel, 2016).

An important remark is that a significant number of articles which address corruption, transparency, and revenues management in this sector mention the positive role that could be played by civil society in this sector. This fact can be partially explained by the lack of trust scholars and experts in the field have toward the Lebanese government, which has always been accused of bad management, lack of transparency, and corruption. This also explains the demands for civil society to take part and play a role in the newly emerging oil and gas sector (LCPS, 2014). As mentioned above, this demand stems from the belief that civil society will have a positive impact on the petroleum sector, and will play a role in assuring transparency and accountability in this sector, and in its management (LCPS, 2014). However, there is no article that discusses this potential role in details, assesses the available capabilities of civil society in playing such a role in the
sector, or studies the challenges that it is facing. This role has been only mentioned or stressed on in conferences (Hervé, 2016) and some of the articles which, as mentioned above, addressed the topic of corruption and transparency in Lebanon’s petroleum sector (LCPS, 2014). Thus, there has been no main study or research conducted on civil society’s role in the sector. However, it is worth noting that, within the context of those articles that emphasized the positive role of civil society in Lebanon’s petroleum sector, three main points of view appear.

3.4 Three Points of View

The first point of view is the one that expects civil society to play a role in monitoring the sector and overseeing the work of the government. For instance, the Middle East Strategic Perspectives noted in their article “Addressing transparency in Lebanon’s oil and gas sector” that civil society is active with initiatives for developing the petroleum sector and is putting efforts to promote transparency (MESP, 2015). In this same article, the interviewee Jeremy Arbid argues that a law on access to information will be useless if “…the media, civil society, or constituency does not know the right questions to ask…” (MESP, 2015). Moreover, in his article “Fighting Corruption to Better Manage Lebanon’s Petroleum Wealth,” Reinoud Leenders notes that the Lebanese civil society has a variety of promising initiatives to raise public awareness and knowledge in the sector (Leenders, 2016). However, he is not totally optimistic about this role and argues that “…given the fractured nature of Lebanese civil society, and the perverse tendency of its demands and proposals to be drowned in an equally broken and dysfunctional political process, it cannot be taken for granted that civil society will exert the effective oversight and scrutiny necessary to prevent Lebanon’s petroleum dreams from turning into a
corruption nightmare” (Leenders, 2016). An opposing argument is raised by the Middle East Strategic Perspectives which argues that “In Lebanon, civil society is robust enough and is expected to be engaged in monitoring the nascent oil and gas sector, for various reasons, transparency and accountability being one of them of course, but so is a share or some kind of a role for those that were left behind” (MESP, 2012). Nevertheless, in his article “Could Oil and Gas Inspire Change in Lebanon?,” Georges Sassine notes the importance of having an initiative such as the Lebanese Oil and Gas Initiative (LOGI) to make change in Lebanon and argues that “If successful, LOGI could play a leading role in creating a system of checks and balances and facilitate coordination across various stakeholders including citizens, civil society, business, government and international organizations” (Sassine, 2015).

The second point of view is the one asking civil society to not limit itself to being a watchdog, but to become able to influence the decision-making process and to draft laws and policies. For instance, in a newspaper article titled “Civil society’s interest in oil and gas growing,” Matt Nash included parts of his interview with some civil society members (Nash, 2014). For example, one of his interviewees argues that civil society, who is mainly focusing on promoting transparency and fighting corruption, should broaden its scope of interest to include “interest in attempting to influence the decision-making process, or the drafting of legal texts, or designing future institutions and how they should work...” (Nash, 2014). This article also showed that civil society is interested in training other members and activists on the ways of approaching the oil and gas sector (Nash, 2014). In addition, the U4 anti-corruption resource center issued a report titled “Transparency and accountability in Lebanon’s emerging petroleum sector” in which
they show trust in the capabilities of civil society and argue that “Civil society can play an important role in improving transparency and accountability. For instance, it can provide expertise and input during decision-making processes, push for disclosure of financial and operational data, monitor spending, hold the government to account and work with the private sector to prevent corruption” (Martini, 2015). In addition, in the year 2014, at the conference “Unlocking Opportunities,” the last panel focused on the topic of good governance and transparency in the oil and gas sector (LCPS, 2014). In this panel, the role of civil society was emphasized. Participants in this panel highlighted some of the steps that should be followed by civil society in order to be able to succeed in its role (LCPS, 2014). They noted that “Civil Society Organizations (CSO) should be at the heart of efforts to prevent the government from having exclusive control over the sector and combating mismanagement and corruption” and that “In order for CSOs to successfully conduct oversight, clear goals must be defined, research must be conducted to ensure a comprehensive understanding of relevant issues, effective partnerships must be fostered, and small victories must be recognized” (LCPS, 2014). However, there has not been an article that follows up with these recommendations or assesses the possibility of implementing them.

The third point of view is the most optimistic. In an indirect way, it asks civil society to take control of the sector and manage it by itself or in partnership with the government. For instance, in the forum on oil and gas organized by Lebanon’s National Wealth in the year 2016 (Hervé, 2016), Fouad Makhzoumi attacked the approach of establishing a democratic country based on a sectarian system and noted that civil society should be encouraged in its efforts to stop the malfunctioning political system and to make changes
regarding the political system of Lebanon in the future (Front Page Communication, 2016). In addition, he asked civil society activists to organize themselves and establish a lobby that could stand in front of the Lebanese politicians and ask them to go home in case they did not follow the program of the civil society and abide by its demands (Front Page Communication, 2016). In addition, when interviewed in the article “Greasy politics in oil and gas,” Makhzoumi showed disenchantment regarding the sectarian political system of Lebanon that was transferred to the oil and gas sector, and argued that “in every country in the world the first thing you do is create an authority which is non-political. You get professionals, civil society members – you get everybody involved. What we have done –they [Lebanese Petroleum Administration] are all professional – but at the end of the day, each represents a sect; the Greek Orthodox, Maronites, Sunnis, Shiites, Druze, and Greek Catholic. The fact that I appointed you as my religious, sectarian group – you better be nice with what I tell you because I will have them kick your ass out” (Arbid, 2015). Moreover, in the conference “Oil and Gas,” Makhzoumi argued that “…they [Lebanese youths] should actively participate in managing the different sectors in Lebanon to secure jobs inside their country” (Front Page Communication, 2016) (Halawi, 2016). Furthermore, when interviewed for the article “To Not Politicize the National Wealth/ Fouad Makhzoumi,” Makhzoumi stated that, in order to have more transparency in the oil and gas sector, civil society should be a partner in the administration of the sector (Al Masdar, 2016). Therefore, it is possible to say that some opinions appeared to encourage civil society to, instead of limiting its activities to monitoring and advocating, go deeper in its role in this sector, thus helping manage it in partnership with the government. These opinions were based on the successful stories of
the civil society in the petroleum sector in other countries, mainly Ghana (Lebanon’s National Wealth, n.d.). For instance, Ghana has been mentioned in conferences that addressed the oil and gas sector in Lebanon. In these conferences, experts hoped that Lebanon follows the path of Ghana which was considered as a good example or a role model (Lebanon’s National Wealth, n.d.). Nevertheless, the role played by the civil society in countries such as Ghana has been extensively addressed by the literature. The majority of these articles emphasized the great role the civil society played in taking the petroleum sector of Ghana out of failure; and the good results of the partnership between the Ghanaian government and civil society in managing oil revenues (Annan & Edu-Afful, 2015) (Debrah & Graham, 2015) (Dovi, 2013) (Zandvliet, 2013). However, others noted that civil society in Ghana was incapable of fully addressing all issues (Annan & Edu-Afful, 2015) (Civil Society Platform on Oil and Gas, 2011) (Evans, 2015).

Now, putting aside the literature review on the case of Ghana, what concerns this thesis is that it is not possible to look at the case of Lebanon within a Ghanaian framework. Each country has its specificities and characteristics. Furthermore, despite all what has been said on the role of civil society, there has never been any article that assesses whether civil society should keep its activities within a limited scope or should broaden them to include managing the petroleum sector in Lebanon either by itself or in collaboration with the government. There are no articles that analyzes which of the three above mentioned arguments fits best the role of civil society in Lebanon, or discusses the quality of civil society performance in Lebanon’s petroleum sector. Most of the articles are limited to just mentioning the positive role that civil society could play in this sector and to drawing hopes based on foreign cases. From here, I believe that there is a necessity
for a study to be conducted on the role being played by civil society in the petroleum sector of Lebanon in order to acquire a clearer view on this topic and to investigate what contributions civil society is making to the sector and how effective its role is.

Furthermore, in order to get an idea on what has been internationally recognized as essential components and factors to a successful role of civil society, a brief literature review on international standards and guidelines was conducted before moving to the main chapters of analysis in this thesis.

3.5 A Literature Review on International Standards and Guidelines

It is possible to say that a number of international organizations have established standards, set guidelines, and launched initiatives on the role of civil society organizations. For instance, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has launched an anti-corruption initiative called “CleanGovBiz” which aims at supporting governments in fighting corruption and engaging with civil society and the private sector (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], n.d.). In one of the questionnaires established by the CleanGovBiz initiative aiming to identify potential impediments to positive and effective role of civil society in fighting corruption and promoting integrity, three key factors were identified: “(i) the existence of a legal framework that enables Civil Society Organizations’ (CSOs) participation without political and legal restrictions (ii) the willingness of the state to engage constructively with the civil society and (iii) the effective engagement of CSOs in the fight against corruption” (CleanGovBiz, 2013). In addition, the United Nations Convention against Corruption, Article 13, notes measures to be taken by State Party to strengthen the participation of non-governmental
organizations, civil society, and community-based organizations in preventing and fighting corruption (United Nations Office On Drugs And Crime, 2004). Moreover, the Transparency & Accountability Initiative published a guide on the best practice in transparency, accountability, and civic engagement across the public sector (Transparency & Accountability Initiative, 2011). The main stated goals which resource-producing countries should have to best practice are: “To establish openness in granting access to natural resources and in the fiscal returns for the state, to make available more detailed information to allow the public to better assess and influence the quality of public natural resource management, to extend transparency and accountability rules to state institutions with important operational responsibilities in resource management, and to allow continuous public monitoring of natural resource development projects around the country” (Transparency & Accountability Initiative, 2011). In addition, the Council of Europe has adopted The Code of Good Practice for Civil Participation in the Decision-Making Process, which divides the involvement of civil society into four stages: information, consultation, dialogue and partnership (OECD, 2011). Furthermore, in the year 2002 the Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative (EITI) was launched to set “a global standard for oil, gas and mining companies to publish the tax and royalty payments they make and for host governments to disclose the revenues they receive” (CleanGovBiz, 2013). This initiative is a form of coalition between governments, international organizations, civil society organizations, and companies (CleanGovBiz, 2013). Last but not least, ACORN International noted recommendations for the engagement of oil companies and NGOs in oil and gas projects (Acorn International, n.d.). In addition to international standards and guidelines, a number of academic articles
and professional reports discussed and reported on international best practice of civil society in a variety of countries regarding transparency, access to information, corruption fighting, participation in decision-making, and management of extractive industries (Bradshaw, 2013) (OECD, 2011) (USAID, 2014).
Chapter Four

Identifying Civil Society Groups and Mapping

Key Actors

Before moving to the mapping section of this chapter, the thesis offers a brief overview on the origin of the emergence of a specialized civil society in the oil and gas sector of Lebanon and of its nature.

4.1 Emergence of a Specialized Civil Society in the Oil and Gas Sector of Lebanon

By the time the seismic scans were being done on the Lebanese offshore between the years 2000 and 2013, which confirmed the presence of oil and gas reserves, there was no presence for a national civil society specialized in the oil and gas industry. However, two main international specialized CSOs were present during the early stages of the emergence of the sector in Lebanon in the early 2012. These are Publish What You Pay (PWYP) and the Natural Resources Governance Institute (NRGI) (Arbid, 2014) (International Law and Policy Institute, 2013). Both of them had regional offices in Beirut (NRGI, n.d.) (PWYP, n.d.). They were addressing and working on extractive industries in the region from their offices in Beirut and other countries in the region. Their work included organizing regional activities and conferences (Arbid, 2014). Starting in the year 2013, they began to gradually address the petroleum sector of Lebanon in their regional conferences and workshops (Arbid, 2014). As such, they invited Lebanese experts and civil society members to participate in their conferences and
events (Arbid, 2014). These activities gave Lebanese civil society exposure to the oil and gas sector, which is an important step especially that this sector is complex and requires previous knowledge and skills. Therefore, it is possible to say that these international organizations were a starting point for the Lebanese civil society to understand the sector and start emerging as specialized organizations in it.

At that time also, two national research and consultancy institutions, the Lebanese Center for Policy Studies (LCPS) and the Middle East Strategic Perspective (MESP), were already present and active in Lebanon. They were among the first to address this sector in Lebanon and be interested in understanding it and working to move it forward. They have also collaborated with foreign partners and experts in the field in order to strengthen their knowledge of the sector (Arbid, 2014) (LCPS, 2014).

In addition to the role played by NRGI and PWYP, the establishment of the Lebanese Petroleum Administration (LPA) in 2012 and the launching of the first pre-qualification round for foreign oil companies in 2013, as well as the economic benefits that Lebanese were promised of, were a turning point in people’s interest in the sector (Martini, 2015). The issue of having a petroleum sector in Lebanon looked more serious to the public (Martini, 2015). As such, the interest and hope in the sector started increasing gradually between the years 2013 and 2015 to result in having the sector on the agenda of various political parties and in having a nucleus of an interested national civil society in it. For instance, in 2014, the Lebanese Oil and Gas Initiative (LOGI) was established as a non-governmental organization concerned about the oil and gas sector (Official Gazette, 2014). In 2015, another national CSO, the Organization for Petroleum and Energy
Sustainability (OPES) began its activities in the sector (Organization for Petroleum and Energy Sustainability [OPES], 2015).

This interest extended to also include the media. As a result, a number of media platforms were established to cover the sector in Lebanon, such as Lebanon Gas and Oil and Lebanon Gas News. In addition to these media platforms, a public relations and communication company, Front Page Communication, was interested in organizing conferences (Hervé, 2014) and university lectures under the umbrella of Lebanon’s National Wealth. Something similar to Lebanon’s National Wealth is the Lebanon International Oil and Gas Summit. Furthermore, a workers union named “The Trade Union of Gas and Exploration Sectors in Lebanon” was established in 2014 by decision number 1/47 of the ministry of labor (Ministry of Labor, Directorate General of the Ministry of Labor, 2014). It is headed by Maroun Khouly and considers itself as a member of the national specialized civil society (Annahar Staff, 2014). However, all these media platforms and interested groups in the oil and gas sector will not be studied in this thesis. The main focus of the thesis, as mentioned in a previous chapter, is on international and national civil society organizations as well as the LCPS and the MESP.

It is possible to say that nowadays a main player in the oil and gas sector of Lebanon is a specialized civil society concerned about the development of this sector in all of its aspects, focusing on topics such as transparency, good governance, revenues allocation, corruption prevention, laws and policies formulation, environmental impact, and socioeconomic returns on Lebanese citizens among others. Members of this civil society are experts in the field, representatives of national and international CSOs, scholars, high-ranking employees in oil and gas companies, journalists, and civil society activists. They
are in majority Lebanese, yet few of them are international civil society activists interested in the case of Lebanon. They are organized and active under the umbrella of the above mentioned national and international organizations. This is in addition to the LCPS and the MESP. Nevertheless, this specialized civil society has varied missions and has done a number of activities related to the development of Lebanon’s petroleum sector, which will be elaborated in a subsequent chapter.

This section provided a brief overview on this specialized civil society with the aim of giving the reader a better understanding of the nature of the civil society that is addressed by the thesis. However, a mapping of its various components is done in the following section of this chapter, section 4.2.

4.2 Mapping Key Actors

For the purpose of simplifying the mapping, the key players studied in this thesis are divided into four categories: international specialized civil society organizations, national specialized civil society organizations, national research and consultancy institutions, and concerned public institutions.

4.2.1 International Specialized Civil Society Organizations

Two prominent international civil society organizations working on the oil and gas sector of Lebanon are studied in this thesis: Natural Resource Governance Institute (NRGI), and Publish What You Pay (PWYP).

Starting with NRGI, it is an international civil society organization established in the year 2013 by combining the Revenue Watch Institute with the Natural Resource Charter (NRGI, n.d.). Although it is a non-Lebanese CSO, it has a regional office in Beirut (NRGI, n.d.). Laury Haytayan, interviewed for this thesis, is the Acting MENA Regional...
Program Manager at the Beirut office (NRGI, n.d.). NRGI has its own prioritization for working in resource-rich countries. This selection of countries is based on the evaluation of the work of NRGI in various countries (NRGI, n.d.) and on an indicator-based tool for scoring countries according to certain criteria (NRGI, 2016). It aims at helping countries in managing their natural resources in a way that benefit the public (NRGI, n.d.). This is done through sharing their expertise with governments, parliaments, private sector, civil society, and media (NRGI, n.d.). They train and provide technical support and assistance for countries to strengthen accountability and transparency (NRGI, n.d.). In addition, NRGI has six regional knowledge hubs that train various actors on analyzing issues related to the extractive industry and on developing advocacy campaigns (NRGI, n.d.). One of these hubs is the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) hub which is based in the Beirut office of NRGI. It also has a number of publications (NRGI, n.d.) including indexes and ratings of countries (NRGI, 2017), a benchmarking framework (NRGI, n.d.), scholars’ articles, and primers (NRGI, 2015). Nevertheless, as mentioned above, it was among the first international CSOs to be engaged in the Lebanese petroleum sector and its presence in Lebanon contributed to the creation of a nucleus of a specialized Lebanese civil society in the sector.

Next, Publish What You Pay (PWYP) was a campaign launched in the year 2002 by six organizations based in London (PWYP, n.d.) (NRGI, 2015). These are OXFAM, Open Society Foundation, Global Witness, CAFOD, Transparency International, and Save the Children (PWYP, n.d.) (NRGI, 2015). In 2016, the Charity Commission in the United Kingdom approved the charity status of PWYP (PWYP, n.d.). Nowadays, PWYP is a global network of civil society organizations (CSOs) that encompasses more than
seven hundred members worldwide (PWYP, n.d.). It addresses the extractive industry in all of its different aspects and topics. At the beginning, it was launched with the aim of calling extractive companies to publish what they pay to the governments (PWYP, n.d.). Thus, it was only addressing revenues transparency. Nowadays, PWYP addresses transparency and accountability throughout the whole process of extraction, which is called the “value chain” (PWYP, n.d.) (NRGI, 2015). It also aims at reducing poverty, promoting sustainable development, and improving the socioeconomic life of citizens in resource-rich countries (PWYP, n.d.) (NRGI, 2015). In order to achieve its goals, PWYP uses four main tools, the Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative (EITI), the Mandatory Disclosures of payments, the Data Extractors Programme, and laws and policies (PWYP, n.d.). In addition, the work of PWYP covers different regions in the world. This is done through its various members which are either coalitions of national non-profit organizations or individual national non-profit organizations in different countries (PWYP, n.d.) (NRGI, 2015). For instance, in Lebanon, the Lebanese Oil and Gas Initiative (LOGI) is a member organization at PWYP which it joined in 2015 (PWYP, n.d.). Moreover, PWYP was also the one who lobbied and advocated for the establishment of the Mandatory Disclosures Rules by countries, which led to the adoption of the US Securities and Exchange Commission Implementing Rules in 2012 and the EU Accounting and Transparency Directives in 2013 (PWYP, n.d.). Furthermore, PWYP promotes training and learning of citizens, supports research, and fosters access to information (PWYP, n.d.). It also has a resource center where case studies, policy briefs, fact-sheets, and various informative documents and videos are available (PWYP, n.d.).
This is in addition to its up-to-date news on the extractive industries worldwide that it posts on its website (PWYP, n.d.).

After identifying these two international CSOs and understanding their interests and goals, it is possible to say that they usually contribute to the extractive industry of various countries by training local civil society and providing assistance to it, by offering the required guidelines and international standards for a good governance conduct, by working with the different stakeholders concerned about the sector in order to fight corruption and advocate for transparency, and by addressing major challenges that extractive industries might face. In addition, these international CSOs monitor extractive industries in various countries either through their local CSO partners or by themselves, and their main goal is to help citizens in benefiting from the revenues of their natural resources.

4.2.2 National Specialized Civil Society Organizations

Moving to the main national specialized CSOs, this thesis will assess the role of the Lebanese Oil and Gas Initiative (LOGI) and of the Organization for Petroleum and Energy Sustainability (OPES).

To begin with, LOGI is a national non-governmental organization registered in the ministry of interior and municipalities on the 26th of August 2014 (Official Gazette, 2014). It is the first Lebanese organization to join the WRI Access Initiative (LOGI, n.d.) and the Publish What You Pay network (PWYP, n.d.). It was founded by Georges Sassine who is a strategy leader at GE Energy, Karen Ayat who is an associate partner and contributor to Natural Gas Europe, and Jeremy Arbid who is a journalist at Executive Magazine (LOGI, n.d.). They were later joined by Amer Mardam-Bey who is
a venture partner at The Unit, and Sibylle Rizk who is the director of Public Policies at Kulluna Irada (LOGI, n.d.). Its executive director is Diana Kaissy who was previously a MENA coordinator at Publish What You Pay (LOGI, n.d.) and who was interviewed for this thesis. Its advisory board comprises a number of experts in the field and high ranking employees at energy companies, such as Simon Ayat, Valerie Marcel, Alan Riley, and Nasser Saidi among others. Recently, the MENA regional coordinator at the PWYP Secretariat, Dr. Pierre Saade, joined this advisory board (LOGI, 2018). LOGI’s team also comprises two project managers and one social media officer (LOGI, n.d.).

According to the stated missions on its website, this organization aims to establish a platform for experts to facilitate the shaping of this extractive industry, to educate policy-makers as well as citizens on the sector, and to influence decision-making and advance policy solutions (LOGI, n.d.). LOGI also aims to play the role of a facilitator between the different stakeholders and to build constructive collaborations while keeping its independence (LOGI, n.d.). Figure 1 shows the three programs that LOGI aims to launch in order to achieve socio-economic development.
Figure 1: The three programs that LOGI aims to launch in order to achieve socio-economic development from oil and gas revenues, as noted in its whitepaper (Lebanese Oil and Gas Initiative, n.d.).

LOGI has a number of publications on its website that illustrate its active contribution to the sector, such as its report on the establishment of a national sovereign wealth fund and its assessment for the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) done by the Lebanese government (LOGI, n.d.). It also publishes on its website documents and information that raise public awareness (LOGI, n.d.). They are provided in an easy-to-understand language, which allows non-expert persons to understand its content (LOGI, n.d.). This is in addition to the info-graphics and animations that illustrate various concepts related to the sector (LOGI, n.d.), as shown in figure 2. Until now, LOGI has done a number of activities and contributions to the sector that will be discussed and assessed in following chapters.
Figure 2: A photo showing info-graphics used by LOGI on its website to simplify to the public the process of fighting corruption in the oil and gas sector (Lebanese Oil and Gas Initiative, n.d.).

Next, the Organization for Petroleum and Energy Sustainability (OPES) is a Lebanese CSO that was launched in 2013 by a group of Lebanese youths interested in having a sustainable and efficient oil and gas sector in Lebanon (OPES, n.d.). One of its co-founders is Marwan Abdallah who was interviewed for this thesis. Abdallah says that the organization was established with the aim of having a specialized youths’
participation in the sector, who can voice their opinions about the different aspects of the sector. He adds that members of the organization come from different fields of expertise. According to him, the organization applied for registration at the ministry of interior and municipalities in 2013, but did not receive a registration number at the ministry until October 2017. This was due to an overlapping of missions between the stated interests and goals of the organization and what is considered as the work of the government, which required the co-founders to amend their stated missions before reapplying for registration (M. Abdallah, personal communication, March 17, 2018). However, until the moment of writing this thesis, the registration documents and the number of registration of the organization are not yet published on its website. This is also true for the names of its co-founders. According to its stated missions on its website, OPES aims to increase awareness among the Lebanese through publications and campaigns, to launch research activities and exchange expertise, and to cooperate with public and private sectors in policy-making (OPES, n.d.). The activities of OPES are not listed on its website, but are published on its Facebook page, which shows that these activities started in 2015 (OPES, 2015).

After identifying these two national CSOs, it is possible to say that they aim to be an oversight body that oversees the management of the sector and to assist the government in policy formulation. This is not to forget their core mission to inform citizens about the multiple and complex issues related to the petroleum sector of Lebanon (Haytayan, 2017). This newly emerging specialized Lebanese civil society believes that it is capable to play a constructive role in the sector and hold decision-makers to account based on the long history of Lebanese civil society in showing strength and active engagement
This belief is also based on the culture of freedom available in Lebanon for NGOs to act (Haytayan, 2017) (International Law and Policy Institute, 2013). Definitely, this civil society believes that it is acting on the behalf of citizens in order to preserve their right in benefiting from their natural resources. As such, the goals that these national CSOs aim to achieve in the sector are to prove themselves as an informed and strong entity that has a role to play at the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI), and to hold decision-makers to account (Haytayan, 2017). As such, the greatest concern of this specialized civil society was the establishment of a coalition, the Lebanese Coalition for Good Governance in Extractive Industries (LCEI), from which representatives will be elected to take a seat at the EITI-MSG. It is worth explaining here that the EITI-MSG is a platform for dialogue and cooperation between civil society, oil companies, and governments. It is something similar to a roundtable discussion where a monitoring of the sector is being done and a yearly report is issued. A further explanation on the EITI-MSG will be done in following chapters. The coalition was formed on the 23rd of March 2018 (Lebanese Coalition for Good Governance in Extractive Industries [LCEI], 2018). It comprises, in addition to four international CSOs, nine national CSOs working on the oil and gas sector as well as on other fields (LCEI, 2018). A further discussion of this coalition is also done in following chapters.

4.2.3 National Research and Consultancy Institutions

The Lebanese Center for Policy Studies (LCPS) is a think tank that analyzes a wide range of topics related to Lebanese politics and socioeconomic conditions, such as the electoral law, garbage crisis, presidential elections, refugees, and agriculture sector among others (LCPS, n.d.) (Martini, 2015). Although it is not a specialized CSO in the
oil and gas sector, it showed a great interest in this sector. For instance, it made the oil and gas sector of Lebanon as one of its research program topics (LCPS, n.d.) (Martini, 2015). In addition, it states on its website that a transparent oil and gas sector is one of its five main advocacy focuses (LCPS, n.d.). It was among the first (Martini, 2015) to organize roundtable discussions on this topic (LCPS, n.d.), to sign a memorandum of understanding with the Lebanese Petroleum Administration (LPA) on sharing and publishing information pertaining to the sector (LPA, n.d.), and to launch, along with NRGI and the Norwegian government, a course on good governance of extractive industries (LCPS, 2016). This is not to forget that it got involved in the sector at its early stages, even before the creation of the national specialized CSOs mentioned above. Moreover, the LCPS has a wide variety of publications on the oil and gas sector of Lebanon. These include policy briefs and policy papers, such as “Avoiding the Resource Curse in Lebanon,” “How Oil Prices Impact Fiscal Regimes,” and “Managing Oil and Gas Revenues in Lebanon” (LCPS, n.d.). Furthermore, a number of its research fellows are experts in the oil and gas sector, who have participated in different conferences on oil and gas in the MENA region and worldwide (LCPS, n.d.). Further details on its activities in the petroleum sector are discussed in following chapters.

Next, the Middle East Strategic Perspectives (MESP) is a consultancy institution established in 2012 (MESP, n.d.). It is co-founded by Fadi Assaf and Mona Sukkarieh (MESP, n.d.). Mona Sukkarieh is a political consultant and was interviewed for this thesis. The MESP works on and provides strategic consultancy in different fields such as security, health, energy, defense, aeronautics, transportation, and telecoms (MESP, n.d.). As part of its interest in the oil and gas sector, it publishes a monthly report on this
topic that offers insights on Lebanese and other Eastern Mediterranean countries (MESP, n.d.). In addition, the MESP specifies a section on its website for the petroleum sector of Lebanon and neighboring countries where a variety of publications are gathered (MESP, n.d.). These include magazines articles, peer-reviewed articles, up-to-date news, info-graphics, and copies of official documents. The MESP made this sector as one of its priorities and worked on it not just through articles publication and events analysis, but also by being involved directly in it through various activities such as launching a mobile phone application on the sector (MESP, 2016), and launching an initiative named “Beirut Energy Club” (MESP, n.d.) among others. Further detail on the work and involvement of the MESP in the sector is noted in following chapters.

4.2.4 Concerned Public Institutions

Public institutions concerned about the oil and gas sector of Lebanon are mainly four: the Ministry of Energy and Water, the Council of Ministers, the Parliament, and the Lebanese Petroleum Administration (LPA).

Definitely, the first and main concerned public institution about the petroleum sector of Lebanon is the Ministry of Energy and Water. However, since no stated responsibility of the ministry on its website has to deal with civil society (Ministry of Energy and Water, n.d.), this thesis will briefly cover the responsibilities of the ministry concerning the sector. For instance, it is the one that enforces the application of all laws and agreements pertaining to the petroleum sector (LPA, n.d.) including the signing of the Exploration and Production Agreement (EPA) (LPA, n.d.). It is also the one responsible for conducting surveys and technical researches (LPA, n.d.), protecting the environment from any petrochemical spills, and taking necessary decisions for supplying the country
with its petroleum needs (Ministry of Energy and Water, n.d.). Nevertheless, other than the petroleum sector, it deals with water, electricity, mines and quarries, and metals (Ministry of Energy and Water, n.d.).

Next, the Council of Ministers is the one responsible for approving the petroleum activities decrees (Martini, 2015), appointing the board of directors of the LPA, and setting the petroleum policy of the state among others (International Law and Policy Institute, 2013) (LPA, n.d.). Most importantly, it is responsible for taking final decision concerning any conflicting opinions and concerning the Exploration and Production Agreements (EPAs) (Leenders, 2016). In addition to the executive authority of the Council of Ministers, the legislative authority is in the hands of the parliament. Thus, it is responsible for approving laws and exercising a constitutional control over the Ministry of Energy and Water and the government (International Law and Policy Institute, 2013).

Lastly, the Lebanese Petroleum Administration (LPA) was established in December 2012 (LPA, n.d.) with the assistance of Norway in building its institutional capacity (International Law and Policy Institute, 2013). As its name says, the LPA is a regulatory, administrative, technical, and advisory body that manages the petroleum sector of Lebanon (International Law and Policy Institute, 2013) (LPA, n.d.), precisely the upstream offshore petroleum sector (Leenders, 2016). It operates under the tutelage and supervision of the Minister of Energy and Water (Leenders, 2016). Although it is an administrative entity by itself, all important decisions concerning the petroleum sector, as mentioned above, are made by the government (Haytayan, 2017) (Leenders, 2016) (International Law and Policy Institute, 2013). It has six different divisions. These are: the strategic planning department, the geology and geophysics department, the economics
and financial department, the technical and engineering department, the legal affairs department, and the quality, health, safety, and environment department (LPA, n.d.). The main goal of the LPA is to create the most possible value out of the sector for the society and the economy, while keeping the environment safe (LPA, n.d.). In addition, the LPA is in charge of managing, designing, planning, and overseeing petroleum sector issues (Haytayan, 2017) (LPA, n.d.). For instance, it prepares technical studies with the aim of informing and supporting processes of decision-making (Martini, 2015). Also, it shapes the decisions of the Minister of Energy and Water by providing technical recommendations and advices (LPA, n.d.) (Martini, 2015). It also supervises, monitors, and plans throughout the whole value chain (LPA, n.d.) (Martini, 2015). Thus, its role appears in all the petroleum extraction phases. Moreover, the LPA declares its commitment to abide to transparency, to follow a participatory approach, and to strengthen and promote good governance of the sector (LPA, n.d.). This declaration is further strengthened by the LPA’s fifth pillar of resource management, which is upholding good governance and transparency (LPA, n.d.). It is the one entitled to communicate with civil society and the various stakeholders. Furthermore, there are a number of ongoing cooperation programs between the LPA on one side and international organizations and governmental bodies on the other side, which aim at continuously building the capacities of the LPA and other national stakeholders (LPA, n.d.). For instance, as part of the cooperation program between the LPA and the European Union (EU), an international consultancy company chosen by the EU is entitled to manage the program and to appoint international consultants that help and support the LPA in its capacity building in different areas (LPA, 2018).
Chapter Five

The Capabilities of Civil Society in the Petroleum Sector of Lebanon

This section examines different factors that allow the thesis to assess the quality of civil society’s performance in the sector, while showing the impact it is having on the sector. It also clarifies what capabilities civil society has in Lebanon’s petroleum sector and how it is strengthening its role in it.

5.1 Expertise of Civil Society

Other than the input of international CSOs, there is an important domestic factor that contributed to the emergence of a specialized civil society in oil and gas of Lebanon. Ironically, this factor was at the same time a setback for the Lebanese government. It is the delay in the development of the sector due to the political deadlocks that are taking place in recent years, which blocked the work of the government as well as the parliament. This delay provided time for civil society to acquire more knowledge on the extractive industry, to engage in some of the early stages of the development of the sector, to participate in various discussions and activities pertaining to the sharing and transfer of information, and consequently to strengthen its position as an expert in the sector.

As a way of building its capacities, civil society organizes workshops and seminars on a regular basis for its members to learn more about the sector and understand various concepts related to it. They also organize roundtable discussions to review, with the
assistance of international experts, official documents issued by the authorities. Abdallah believes that these activities give civil society the capability to technically comment or advance recommendations on documents related to the sector.

Additionally, the international civil society provides training sessions to the national civil society on all new international monitoring tools related to the sector. For instance, nowadays, the international civil society is lobbying for having the disclosures of payments made by oil companies to governments in a machine-readable format and not in a PDF format (D. Kaissy, personal communication, March 7, 2018). Thus, PWYP established the Data Extractors Programme which helps civil society in completing this task (PWYP, n.d.). Consequently, it is training local civil society on how to extract numbers from these documents and analyze them. As part of this training, Kaissy assures that LOGI will be enrolled in the Data Extractors Programme in order to train its members on extracting open data and analyzing them.

In addition, the connection of the national civil society with the international one provides it with examples on the experience of other countries in the sector, so they can learn from good practices as well as from the mistakes of others. Thus, this fact will be benefiting the national civil society in terms of expertise.

Moreover, it is worth noting the personal expertise of persons working with this civil society. For instance, Valerie Marcel, an associate fellow covering energy and environment research at Chatham House, is currently a member at the advisory board of LOGI (Chatham House, n.d.) (LOGI, n.d.). She advises governments on the governance and policy of the petroleum sector (Valérie Marcel, n.d.). Carole Nakhle, the founder and CEO of the consultancy and advisory company “Crystol Energy” in London, is one of the
research fellows at LCPS (Crystol Energy, n.d.) (LCPS, n.d.). She has launched “Access for Women in Energy” which supports the participation of women in the industry worldwide (Crystol Energy, n.d.) (Kuai & Viale, 2018). In March 2018, she joined the board of directors of NRGI (Kuai & Viale, 2018). As part of its work with the LCPS, she lectured in the course “Fundamentals of Oil and Gas Governance” which was launched in Lebanon by LCPS and NRGI to train civil society members (MENA Natural Resource Governance Hub, n.d.). Alan Riley, a member at the advisory board of LOGI (LOGI, n.d.), is a senior fellow at the Atlantic Council’s Global Energy Center in the United States and an associate senior research fellow at the Institute for Statecraft in the United Kingdom (Atlantic Council, n.d.). His field of expertise is energy and competition law, and his contributions to the field spans from writing peer-reviewed articles and newspapers articles to advising governments, corporations, and various institutions and NGOs (Atlantic Council, n.d.). These facts show that Lebanese civil society is connecting and working with experts in the field who are Lebanese among others. Thus, this expertise will be shared and taught to the local organizations. Consequently, they are broadening the circle of personnel of this specialized civil society in Lebanon. Valerie Marcel, Carole Nakhle, and Alan Riley are only three examples among many experts who cooperate with civil society in Lebanon, and who have years of experience in dealing with the sector.

This is also not to forget the expertise of individuals who are at the core of this nascent civil society in Lebanon and who are greatly active on the ground. For instance, Diana Kaissy, as mentioned above, is currently the executive director of LOGI which it joined in July 2017 (L’Orient Le Jour, 2017). Previously, she occupied for about five
years the position of MENA coordinator of PWYP (Arbid, 2014) (L’Orient Le Jour, 2017). As part of its work with PWYP, she visited a number of oil producing countries and cooperated with civil society groups there (D. Kaissy, personal communication, March 7, 2018). She was also among those who helped civil society in Iraq to choose their representatives to the EITI-MSG (D. Kaissy, personal communication, March 7, 2018). Laury Haytayan, by its position as a MENA manager at NRGI, has access to best practices and examples on the extractive industry in the MENA region. Sami Atallah, who is the executive director of the LCPS, has expertise in other Lebanese sectors than the oil and gas and shares this expertise with the other civil society members (LCPS, n.d.). Nevertheless, commenting on the general performance of this specialized civil society in the sector, Sukkarieh says: “it is a vibrant civil society that we have in the oil and gas sector of Lebanon.”

Last but not least, the knowledge that this nascent civil society is acquiring by itself and working on strengthening it is not the only mean to build its capacities. For instance, the LPA is conducting regular seminars and workshops with civil society members (M. Abdallah, personal communication, March 17, 2018) (LPA, n.d.), where knowledge is being shared between the two parties (W. Chbat, personal communication, March 15, 2018). These workshops are part of foreign cooperation programs between the LPA on one side and foreign governments and international organizations on the other side that stress on the role of civil society (W. Chbat, personal communication, March 15, 2018), such as the Norwegian Oil for Development (OfD) program and the EU assistance program (LPA, n.d.). Wissam Chbat, who is a board member and head of the geology and geophysics department at the Lebanese Petroleum Administration (LPA) and who was
interviewed for this thesis, comments: “the LPA helped and contributed to this national civil society in acquiring knowledge and strengthening its expertise.”

Definitely, the oil and gas sector is a complex one with its high level of technicalities, its diversified areas of management, and its multiple actors (Haytayan, 2017). Yet, Lebanese civil society has acquired a good bundle of knowledge on this sector, and the following sub-section will show in what areas of the sector civil society is proving to have the required expertise. However, this is not to say that it has the best worldwide knowledge and expertise in extractive industries. Contrarily, it is still in the process of building its capacities and acquiring knowledge. For instance, this nascent civil society is only around five years old and stems from a society that did not deal before with this industry as a producing country. This is why it is still greatly dependent on the support of the international civil society. According to Sukkarieh, some of the national civil society members still lack the required expertise and professionalism in the sector. She adds: “civil society should limit the segregation of its expertise and experts into different organizations, and increase its human resources.” In addition, she believes that there is also a lack of expertise in dealing with other aspects of the sector than good governance and management. Moreover, Kaissy acknowledges that civil society is still lacking expertise and that it should invest more in having foreign experts brought from the outside to help it. As such, she believes that knowledge hubs are very important for filling this gap. Abdallah agrees that civil society does not yet have a full capacity. However, he adds that the establishment of the Lebanese Coalition for Good Governance in Extractive Industries is a way of regrouping their resources and knowledge, which will
help them in reaching full capacity. Haytayan believes that the Lebanese civil society, in general, is very vibrant. It is rooted, mature, and capable of doing its work.

Nevertheless, according to Chbat, civil society is required to play an effective role in the sector and to work on making this happen while covering several aspects of the sector, such as the environment, the governance, the management, and transparency and corruption among others. He explains that there are three main categories of civil society in the sector, but the LPA is dealing and cooperating with only two of them. The first category that the LPA is cooperating with is civil society that has the will to play an effective role in the sector and has already moved forward in acquiring knowledge in the sector through their connections with foreign experts and NGOs (W. Chbat, personal communication, March 15, 2018). The second category is the one who has the will, but still does not have enough knowledge about the sector and is still in the process of building its capacities (W. Chbat, personal communication, March 15, 2018). However, the third category, which the LPA does not cooperate with, is the one disguised as civil society but who is actually affiliated with some political parties or politicians and is implementing their agenda in the sector (W. Chbat, personal communication, March 15, 2018). He adds that “in order for civil society to strengthen its role in the sector, it should work on its expertise, professionalism, and knowledge about the sector.”

Lastly, in an interview with Ziad Abdel Samad, who is interviewed for this thesis as a representative of civil society working on other sectors than the oil and gas in Lebanon, concerning the expertise of this nascent civil society, he argues that civil society working on the oil and gas sector should not only be knowledgeable about oil and gas and should not only focus on the technical side of the sector. He adds that they should be
knowledgeable about the nature of the authority, the nature of the network of relations existing within the authority, the openness of the different decision-makers, and the interests of the authorities existing within this sector among others. This is because he believes that the capacities of civil society are not truly the thing that allows it to succeed with its demands. It is more about the will of politicians. Consequently, he adds that in certain areas it is difficult for civil society, despite its expertise, to succeed in advocacy and result in reforms or establish good governance in some sectors. Abdel Samad adds that this is also related to the balance of power between civil society and the other components.

5.2 Contributions of Civil Society to the Sector

The following examples and evidence illustrate some of the contributions made by civil society to the sector based on its level of expertise. The first illustrative example is the gap assessment study produced in May 2017 by LOGI, in collaboration with PWYP, on Lebanon’s Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) (LOGI, 2017). It is worth noting here that the SEA was conducted in 2011 by the Ministry of Environment (D. Kaissy, personal communication, March 7, 2018); and was published in 2014 by the LPA after the repetitive demands of civil society to publish it (LOGI, 2017). In order to conduct its assessment for the SEA, LOGI referred to a Slovenian expert, Klemen Strmšnik (LOGI, 2017), who has previously conducted over twenty five Strategic Environmental Assessments (D. Kaissy, personal communication, March 7, 2018). The results of the gap assessment study were included in a report that discusses the flaws existing within the SEA and offers recommendations to improve it in accordance with international standards (LOGI, 2017). Kaissy comments: “the SEA misses a lot of things,
such as public consultation and reference to civil society to take their opinion about it.” Following this, the recommendations were presented to officials (Haytayan, 2017) and a follow-up committee was formed to adopt these recommendations (Kaissy, 2017). The SEA is now being repeated based on the recommendations of LOGI’s report (D. Kaissy, personal communication, March 7, 2018); and on the 2nd of May 2018, civil society was invited to participate in the first public consultation workshop to discuss the updates that were done to the SEA by the authorities (LOGI, 2018). The edited version of the SEA was expected to be issued in June 2018 (D. Kaissy, personal communication, March 7, 2018). However, until the moment of writing this thesis, the reviewed version of the SEA is not yet issued. Abdel Samad explains that social and environmental impact assessments, as well as the establishment of the legislative infrastructure that protects the rights of Lebanese citizens, should be done before signing contracts with foreign investors. He adds: “these should be done with an in-depth analysis, in a way that allows Lebanon to oblige international companies by certain international standards and protects the rights of the state.” Yet, although LOGI’s gap assessment for the SEA was produced in May 2017, meaning before the signing of Lebanon for two contracts with foreign oil companies in February 2018, the reviewed version of the SEA did not come out yet. However, it is possible to say here that the expertise of civil society contributed to the sector by detecting flaws existing within the SEA, which could help Lebanon in correcting these flaws before the drilling process starts. Nevertheless, Abdel Samad advises civil society to continue in doing assessment studies with an in-depth analysis, by taking into consideration different aspects and impacts of the sector on the country and its citizens such as the local content of the agreements signed between the government and
the companies, the national labor law, the protection of local investors, the international laws that protects the rights of foreign investors more than the locals, and the Corporate Social Responsibilities (CSR) among others (Z. Abdel Samad, personal communication, March 14, 2018).

Another example that shows how civil society is investing its expertise in policy formulation is when LOGI reviewed four drafts laws (the Onshore Law, the Directorate for Petroleum Assets, the National Oil Company, the Sovereign Wealth Fund Law), placed its comments and provisions on them, and lobbied for the postponing of their issuance before being amended. For instance, LOGI referred to a Norwegian law firm to review these draft laws and put their remarks on them (LOGI, 2017). The result of this review was a report issued in September 2017, and submitted and discussed with the authorities (D. Kaissy, personal communication, March 7, 2018) (LOGI, 2017). Chbat describes their work on this issue as excellent. He noted that he was stunned by the level of expertise civil society showed in this regard and its improvement in tackling different topics of the sector. He adds: “their comments were truly constructive.” According to Laury Haytayan, this specialized civil society has the required expertise, and necessary capacities and network to provide assistance for the concerned ministries and the LPA in policy formulation.

In addition, LOGI is currently working on producing a handbook that provides guidelines for good governance of the extractive industry, which was supposed to be published in April 2018 (D. Kaissy, personal communication, March 7, 2018) (LOGI, n.d.). This guide does not just provide theoretical principles of good governance, but also
a practical approach to the issue, says Kaissy. For instance, it discusses, at each phase of the decision chain, the good governance principles that need to be applied (LOGI, n.d.).

Moreover, the LPA sought at different occasions the expertise of civil society and its access to international initiatives and guidelines. The best example on this fact is when the LPA contacted NRGI to ask for its assistance concerning the compliance requirements with the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI). For instance, in 2014, when the LPA got an interest in the EITI, it asked NRGI to offer further explanation on this international standard and to prepare a feasibility document to implement it in Lebanon (Haytayan, 2017) (LPA, 2014). Consequently, NRGI conducted the necessary study and sent the feasibility document to the LPA. In November 2014, the LPA organized a conference titled “Lebanon Petroleum Day” during which NRGI explained the results of the feasibility study (Haytayan, 2017) (LPA, 2014). Following this, NRGI facilitated several meetings, in Oslo and in Beirut, between the EITI Secretariat and the LPA members (Haytayan, 2017). Haytayan argues that NRGI does not only provide technical assistance for the national civil society, but also to the government. This technical assistance is provided in areas such as making reforms, establishing laws, and joining the EITI.

In addition, on the 21st of November 2015, OPES organized a conference in collaboration with Friedrich Ebert Stiftung on the prospects of the local economic context of Lebanon’s oil and gas sector (Lebanon Files, 2015) (OPES, n.d.) (OPES, 2015). The conference was attended by a number of experts in the field, academics, and civil society activists, including representatives of the LPA. Other than that, on the 20th of September 2017, a roundtable discussion was organized by OPES in collaboration with PWYP and
Friedrich Ebert Stiftung on the harmonization of petroleum activities with environmental standards and health and safety standards (OPES, 2017). It was attended by a number of environmental CSOs and oil and gas CSOs, where they discussed the strategies placed by the government and the regulations placed by the LPA to address environmental, health, and safety standards.

Furthermore, in addition to the multiple articles and policy briefs published by the LCPS on the oil and gas sector of Lebanon (LCPS, n.d.), it has organized a number of workshops and roundtable discussions with LPA members and civil society members (LCPS, n.d.). For instance, the majority of roundtable discussions took place between the year 2013 and 2014, and addressed different aspects of the sector such as the environmental impact (LCPS, 2013), transparency and good governance (LCPS, 2015), the development of the sector in general (LCPS, 2013), and economic and fiscal terms (LCPS, 2014). In addition, it is worth noting that the LCPS, on the 1st of January 2017, launched a research project to assess the capabilities of Lebanese labor movement in playing a role in the oil and gas sector (LCPS, 2017). The project analyzed Lebanese labor market and advocated for a coalition that can play a more beneficial role in this issue than labor organizations (LCPS, 2017).

Nevertheless, other than the varied and numerous articles it publishes on the sector, the MESP has contributed to the sector in different occasions. First, in 2013, the MESP was the first to publish a report on Israel’s discovery of the Karish field (M. Sukkarieh, personal communication, March 5, 2018), which is located next to the Lebanese-Israeli maritime borders (MESP, 2013). Sukkarieh says that the LPA board members and the consultants of the Minister of Water and Energy at that time, Gebran Bassil, read the
report. Following this, the minister talked in a press conference about the threat this discovery poses on Lebanon’s natural reserves (MESP, 2013). Second, in early 2014, the MESP collaborated with SKeys (Samir Kassir eyes) in a joint work to monitor the local media coverage of the petroleum sector (Samir Kassir eyes & MESP, 2014). This study was conducted over two months and a half (M. Sukkarieh, personal communication, March 5, 2018). It resulted in a report, published in August 2014, which noted recommendations for media persons to follow in order to improve their coverage of the sector (Samir Kassir eyes & MESP, 2014). In 2016, a similar study was conducted and also resulted in a report that assessed any improvement in media coverage and offered recommendations (Samir Kassir eyes & MESP, 2016). Following each of these media coverage evaluations, a training course and workshops were launched with the aim of teaching journalists and media persons on how to improve their coverage of the sector (M. Sukkarieh, personal communication, March 5, 2018). Third, the MESP has also contributed to the sector by cooperating with SKeys in launching a mobile phone application in February 2016, the “LOG & Learn” application (MESP, 2016), which assesses the statements of politicians and of experts related to the oil and gas sector and comments on these statements (M. Sukkarieh, personal communication, March 5, 2018). The application also has a Q&A section.

All these contributions of civil society to the sector show that it is being active in promoting good management of the sector in all of its aspects and in assuring good policy formulation, as well as strengthening transparency and raising awareness. This is not to forget that civil society showed its will to make the sector in Lebanon be in accordance with what is accepted internationally as good standards.
5.3 Financial Capabilities of the National Civil Society and Internal Challenges

Other than the underdeveloped expertise of some of its members, the national civil society faces a number of internal weaknesses. Sukkarieh believes that there are rivalries among its different members, where some of them want to use the oil and gas sector as a platform to play a role in politics. These rivalries have, according to her, negatively affected the formation of the national coalition and the selection of representatives to the EITI-MSG. In addition, these rivalries can be used by politicians to manipulate civil society, which consequently weakens its position as a credible player in the sector.

Moreover, Kaissy argues that civil society is always struggling with its financial resources for mainly three reasons. First, not all civil society organizations are being able to receive funding. Second, funding is being received sometimes for certain types of activities which are not necessary to be done at this level of the development of the sector. Third, sometimes civil society’s different members do not coordinate enough with each other. Thus, it happened previously that different civil society organizations were working separately on a similar project. This constituted a waste of time and of funding. Nevertheless, according to Chbat, at the beginning civil society was self-financed, but nowadays the serious ones and the ones who proved to have acquired expertise and working for the public’s good have received foreign aid and external financing from various sponsors. Actually, civil society has been struggling at the beginning for receiving funds because it was not on the agenda of foreign donors (Arbid, 2014) (International Law and Policy Institute, 2013). Abdallah believes that the establishment
of the national coalition will make external donors be interested in focusing on one essential component, which is the coalition.

Furthermore, the number of personnel of the national civil society is still low. For instance, as this national specialized civil society is nascent and the process of its acquiring for expertise is still going on, the number of individuals engaged with it is still being increased. Thus, the yearly course on the “Fundamentals of Oil and Gas Governance” organized by LCPS and NRGI is a way of recruiting personnel. Persons who attend this course are in majority members at NGOs, journalists, and public sector employees (LCPS, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017). In addition, LOGI provides on its website the option for anyone who would like to join its team either as an expert or as a volunteer (LOGI, n.d.).

Generally speaking, Haytayan believes that civil society’s weakness in the sector should not be considered as a weakness per se as much as it should be considered as a result of having the sector newly emerging in Lebanon. She asks the national civil society to do its best to meet the requirements of the sector, to build its capacities, to gather itself, and to have a clear and unified perception on the sector.

5.4 The Different Connections of Civil Society

5.4.1 At the International and Regional Levels

As explained previously, a Lebanese civil society specialized in extractive industries stems from the interest of international CSOs in Lebanon’s sector. With time, this relationship was strengthened and maintained between them. For instance, lately, the work and contribution of international CSOs to the Lebanese petroleum sector is being done either through or in collaboration with national CSOs. An example of this is the
membership of LOGI in PWYP which makes of it a representative of the latter in Lebanon (PWYP, n.d.). Another example is the collaboration between LCPS and NRGI on establishing a regional knowledge hub, the MENA Natural Resource Governance, which resulted mainly in organizing the yearly course mentioned in previous sub-sections (LCPS, 2015).

Other than these two examples, most recently some international CSOs joined the Lebanese Coalition for Good Governance in Extractive Industries. The international members at the coalition are Publish What You Pay, Natural Resource Governance Institute, Norwegian People’s Aid, and Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (LCEI, 2018). According to Kaissy, these international CSOs did not join the coalition with the aim of reigning over it and controlling the petroleum sector of Lebanon. They joined it to give support to national CSOs and help them in building their capacities from the bottom-up.

Consequently, she adds, these international CSOs will not sit at the EITI-MSG. Haytayan argues that international CSOs usually stay away from voicing any opinion or suggesting any policy concerning the work of the government in the sector. She explains that, despite the capacities and strength that international civil society organizations have, national civil society is the most essential component. It is the one who places its perception on the sector, who talks to the government, and who raises its demands.

In addition, this is not to forget the continuing cooperation between the national and the international civil society at various occasions such as organizing conferences and workshops (LCPS, 2014), funding activities and research studies (Samir Kassir eyes & MESP, 2014) (LOGI, 2017), and communicating with the LPA. Other than PWYP and NRGI, international donors and sponsors include the International Development Research
Center (IDRC) (LCPS, 2014), Norwegian People’s Aid (LOGI, 2017), Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (LOGI, 2017), and the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Samir Kassir eyes & MESP, 2014).

Moreover, the assistance provided by international CSOs to the national ones is varied. According to Kaissy, NRGI provides mainly technical assistance such as building capacities and training on processes of advocacy whereas PWYP teaches the coalition how to cooperate and work with each other and how to form their organizational structure (D. Kaissy, personal communication, March 7, 2018). Other than PWYP and NRGI, the International Budget Partnership (IBP) teaches national civil society how to monitor the budgeting of the sector (D. Kaissy, personal communication, March 7, 2018) (International Budget Partnership, n.d.). Abdallah says that these international CSOs provide to the national civil society two types of assistance. In the first place, they provide technical and professional assistance by bringing foreign speakers to talk about their experience in dealing with specific issues related to the sector and sharing their expertise. Second, along with embassies, they provide funding for certain projects the national civil society asks for.

Haytayan adds that NRGI works with the national civil society in four main areas. These are providing technical assistance, conducting research, building capacities, and training on advocacy. She stresses on conducting research and training on advocacy. For instance, according to her, research is important and necessary to be done prior to any decision to be taken concerning a specific topic. She believes that without conducting research civil society will not be able to advance its opinion and take a stance concerning topics related to the sector. She adds that establishing advocacy strategies is the main role
of civil society because it needs them to make demands from the government or ask for reforms. Then she argues that all these four areas are interrelated and complement each other.

Other than international CSOs, it is worth noting the direct connection of the Lebanese civil society with individual experts and scholars abroad, who are being invited as speakers at conferences (LCPS, 2014, 2017), as lecturers at training sessions (LOGI, 2018), and as researchers in different policy studies (LOGI, 2017). For instance, it was mentioned previously in the thesis how LOGI referred to foreign experts in order to conduct its revision for the four national draft laws and for the SEA. In addition, international and regional experts, among which are Lebanese working abroad, are being invited to train local civil society and to share their expertise with the public at different conferences and workshops.

5.4.2 At the National Level

The most prominent example here is the cooperation between civil society working on oil and gas and civil society working on other topics in Lebanon in establishing the Lebanese Coalition for Good Governance in Extractive Industries (LCEI). According to experts in the field, this coalition should be formed because it aims at building the capacities of its members and at holding the government to account (LCEI, 2018). This coalition includes at the national level, other than LOGI and OPES, the Lebanese Transparency Association (LTA), the Trade Union of Gas and Exploration Sectors in Lebanon, Lebanon Eco Movement, Baity Association, Kulluna Irada, Sakker El Dekkene, and Train-Train (LCEI, 2018). The goal from forming this coalition is to elect from it representatives of the Lebanese civil society to the Multi-stakeholders Group at
the EITI (EITI-MSG), argues Kaissy and Abdallah. Other than electing their representatives to the EITI-MSG, this coalition will open the door for sharing expertise among the various members. Thus, CSOs specialized in advocating transparency and fighting corruption, such as the LTA and Sakker El Dekkene, will provide assistance for the other members of the coalition and for the representatives at the EITI-MSG on issues related to this topic. This could be done by discussing their experience in dealing with the Lebanese authorities and by introducing the nascent oil and gas civil society to the specificities of Lebanese politics. Similarly, LOGI and OPES can share their expertise in the oil and gas sector with the other members, which will increase knowledge on the sector among the various Lebanese civil society members and will strengthen the lobbying capacity of this civil society. Haytayan argues: “this sector is not only about oil and gas per se. It goes beyond them to areas such as transparency, environment, economy, and society. That is why it is important to have in this coalition CSOs working on various topics.” She adds that the coalition will broaden the perception of civil society, as well as of each of the CSOs, on the sector.

Another example on their collaboration at the national level is the support that LOGI received from various national CSOs on its campaign against the passing of the four draft laws discussed in a previous sub-section (LOGI, n.d.). The campaign consisted of a video which ironically criticizes the work of the government and its rush in launching projects and issuing laws before conducting genuine studies on them (LOGI, 2018). As a way of showing support, the video was shared by the Lebanese Development Network (LDN) (Lebanese Development Network, 2018), OPES (OPES, 2018), and Kulluna Irada (Kulluna Irada, 2018) on their respective Facebook pages.
5.5 Raising Awareness and Transferring Information to the Public

Just as is the case with any project or industry brought newly to the country, Lebanese have little knowledge about the petroleum sector which started officially emerging only ten years ago. In addition, this new sector is a complex one by its technicalities and its management (Haytayan, 2017). Thus, in order for the public to understand the different processes of the sector and to acquire knowledge on it, a simplification of the different notions and information should be done. Civil society considers itself as a credible source of information to the public on this topic (Haytayan, 2017). It is simplifying and transferring credible information to the public on the functioning and management of the sector, the impact on the environment, the different actors and their respective roles, the consequences of volatility, and the oil and gas sales agreements among others. For instance, a quick visit to the website of LOGI shows how info-graphics, animation, and short simple sentences are used to explain and simplify complex mechanisms and notions. Kaissy says that the info-graphics and animations do not only aim to educate and inform the public. They aim to have them engaged and interested in the sector because the majority of Lebanese are not interested in the sector, based on their belief that it is destined to corruption and bribery (D. Kaissy, personal communication, March 7, 2018). LOGI’s website also provides a timeline for petroleum activities in Lebanon, mainly, and neighboring countries, generally, since the 1930s till present (LOGI, n.d.). In addition, LOGI produced two animated videos, one discussing the oil and gas sector of Lebanon in general and one discussing the environmental impacts of oil and gas extraction from the sea (LOGI, 2018). Moreover, in March 2018, it published a guide that teaches citizens how to deal with the Access to Information Law.
This guide details the different types of information citizens are allowed to access and explains the different steps citizens have to follow in order to get this information (LOGI, 2018). Other than this guide, after launching its campaign for halting the passing of the four draft laws, LOGI published a report that explains to the public the reasons behind its demand for this postponement (Lebanese Oil and Gas Initiative & Kulluna Irada, n.d.).

Furthermore, this civil society has been active in addressing youths and students at universities. For instance, on the 16th of April 2015, the Rafic Hariri University organized a three days conference titled “Mediterranean Gas and Oil (MedGO)” where PWYP and LOGI explained their respective roles in the sector to academics, extractive industry experts, and students (Kaissy, 2015). Most recently, LOGI visited Notre Dame University (NDU) (LOGI, 2018), Balamand University (LOGI, 2018), and Université Saint Joseph (USJ) (LOGI, 2017) to reach out to students and discuss mainly the legal framework of the petroleum sector in Lebanon and transparency measures. In addition to the university talks, a number of workshops and seminars have been organized by LOGI in different Lebanese cities to train on the EITI and discuss the legal framework of the sector with youths, syndicates’ representatives, political parties’ representatives, and journalists (LOGI, 2017). This is in addition to the different workshops done by LOGI on regular basis for its volunteers, as Kaissy explains. For instance, on a cell phone application, LOGI created a group through which it informs its members, who are in majority youths and interested individuals in the field, about any recent news and about any organized workshop to share thoughts (D. Kaissy, personal communication, March 7, 2018).
Nevertheless, OPES conducted in collaboration with Friedrich Stiftung a campaign to raise awareness on the sector (OPES, 2017). The campaign included street interviews with different Lebanese citizens asking them about their opinion concerning petroleum revenues and the economic benefits that Lebanese citizens will get. The answers were documented in a video that also explains citizens’ rights and role in the sector (OPES, 2017). Last but not least, as Abdallah argues, civil society is currently trying to establish an online data bank that has all information, studies, and official documents about the sector. The fact of having them available online shows that civil society aims at making basic and essential information on the sector publically accessible.

Civil society is not only providing information to the public, but also to other CSOs with the aim of building capacities (M. Abdallah, personal communication, March 17, 2018), recruiting personnel, and spreading knowledge (Haytayan, 2017). As such, in 2014, the LCPS and NRGI launched their partnership on a regional knowledge hub (LCPS, 2016) (MENA Natural Resource Governance Hub, n.d.). This hub resulted in a number of studies related to extractive industries in the MENA region (Haytayan, 2017). In addition, its main goal was organizing the ten-day course mentioned above, the Fundamentals of Oil and Gas Governance, on a yearly basis (MENA Natural Resource Governance Hub, n.d.). In this course, people from different countries in the region were enrolled. Haytayan says: “participants came from Lebanon, Iraq, Tunisia, Libya, Yemen, and Egypt among others.” Those were CSOs members, public sector employees, journalists, and advisors to politicians (Haytayan, 2017). The course shows that civil society working in Lebanon aims at spreading knowledge on natural resources not just in Lebanon, but also in other regional countries. Haytayan adds: “NRGI provided financial
support for the establishment of the course and was the one who designed the content of this course.” The materials of the course are given by experts in the field, mainly Lebanese in nationality, and are organized in a way to facilitate dialogue and networking among the different participants (MENA Natural Resource Governance Hub, n.d.). It is worth noting that Walid Nasr, the current chairman of the LPA and head of the Strategic Planning department, has been a guest lecturer in this course since its first year of establishment (MENA Natural Resource Governance Hub, n.d.) (Samneh, 2016).

Haytayan says that the aim from changing the course into the Arabic language is to make it easier for non-English speaking participants to better understand the content.

Other than this, according to Haytayan, public sector employees were included in the course because the approach of NRGI is that working on one stakeholder is not enough to reach an effective management of the sector and reforms. For instance, she believes that their inclusion in the course is important for three main reasons. The first is to make them knowledgeable about certain aspects of the sector because they are the ones who will be implementing decision, writing notes and draft laws, doing the daily operations, conducting research, and supervising projects among others. Thus, building and improving their capacities is important. The second reason is that they are the ones who will remain in their job while politicians will leave with the end of their mandate. In addition, politicians are not always experts about the topic and have a variety of issues to deal with, so they will be depending on the employees to do the essential tasks. The third reason is that NRGI aims at building institutions, which requires building the capacities of public sector employees. Institutions-building ensures the persistence of expertise within public institutions and reduces the burden of getting experts from abroad to launch
projects and conduct researches. Finally, it is worth noting that at the end of the course, a regional conference is organized where speakers from around the world are invited to explain and discuss technical issues related to different aspects of natural resources in the region (LCPS, 2017).

Other than this course, NRGI in collaboration with the SDG Academy, the World Bank, the Columbia Center on Sustainable Investment, and the United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) has been organizing a free Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) since 2015 titled “Natural Resources for Sustainable Development: The Fundamentals of Oil, Gas and Mining Governance” (NRGI, n.d.) (NRGI, 2016). What is special about this course is that in the year 2018 a full Arabic version of it was launched (SDG Academy, 2018) in order to allow non-English speakers in the MENA region understand the content and be encouraged to join the course to learn more about the topic.

Moreover, the archive of the LCPS is abundant with policy studies and articles discussing the petroleum sector of Lebanon in its different aspects (LCPS, n.d.). They are all accessible to the public on the website of the LCPS. For instance, these publications addressed topics such as the opportunities and challenges of this sector, the establishment of a sovereign wealth fund, and the environmental impact (Haytayan, 2017). A roundtable discussion is organized after some of these publications between experts, CSOs, and the public to discuss the findings (Haytayan, 2017).

Lastly, commenting on civil society’s engagement with the public and on its raising of awareness, Sukkarieh believes that civil society’s engagement with the public is increasing with time. She also argues that, concerning the role of civil society in this
issue, it is enough that it reaches a target audience, which is those interested in the sector and aim to be active and contribute to it. However, according to her, the media is required to play a greater role regarding awareness and transfer of information to the public than civil society. This is because it is capable to reach larger audiences (M. Sukkarieh, personal communication, March 5, 2018). Yet, she adds, the local media is not really monitoring the sector nor explaining its technical complex notions. Actually, the public is still not totally informed about the sector and lacks a lot of awareness on it. Kaissy comments that the public is gradually becoming more aware.

5.6 International Tools: Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) and EU Accounting and Transparency Directives

5.6.1 The Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI)

The Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) is an international initiative that sets global standards on promoting transparency and open management of extractive industries. In chapter seven, the thesis will explain the concept of the EITI and discuss issues related to the signing-up of the Lebanese government to it. For now, this subsection examines, precisely, the role of civil society as an oversight body at the EITI and the rights that will be entitled to it once the process of compliance of Lebanon with the EITI begins.

To begin with, being an actor in the EITI-MSG will give civil society a voice in decision-making. For instance, when dialogue takes place between the different multi-stakeholders, civil society representatives will be able to advance their opinion and suggestions on different matters related to the sector. They will also be able to voice the demands and concerns of citizens to the table of dialogue of the multi-stakeholders
Second, civil society will have a stronger oversight position on the management and governance of the sector (D. Kaissy, personal communication, March 7, 2018). As such, it will be able to secure the rights of citizens, and prevent and report on any misinterpretation of agreements and laws. Third, it can be a moderator between citizens on the one hand and the government and the companies on the other (Haytayan, 2017). Fourth, civil society representatives on the EITI-MSG will acquire a sort of influence in deciding which information should be disclosed to the public and noted in the yearly report (D. Kaissy, personal communication, March 7, 2018) (Haytayan, 2017). Thus, it will be diffusing tension among the different stakeholders by bringing more clarity and transparency into issues (Haytayan, 2017).

However, if civil society wishes to enjoy all these rights at an early stage of the development of the sector in Lebanon, it must not delay anymore the process of selecting its representatives to the EITI-MSG from the national coalition. According to Kaissy, civil society has established its internal electoral system and internal bylaws. One more important issue is that civil society has now to prove that the government is not interfering in its internal election of representatives. This is one of the most important rules that the EITI places (D. Kaissy, personal communication, March 7, 2018).

Yet, despite all what has been said on the EITI and the role of civil society through the EITI-MSG, not all civil society activists are enthusiast about it (Haytayan, 2017). Although they believe it is a positive step, they do not consider it as a sufficient guarantee of transparency (Atallah, 2014, 2017). For instance, globally, there is an agreement among experts that the EITI should not be the only tool used to guarantee transparency and good governance of the sector (Atallah, 2017). Other factors and conditions should
also be available. In addition, there is a fear among some civil society activists that the EITI be used by the government as a cover to pass some politicians’ deals under the table (Haytayan, 2017). For instance, governments might be publishing data regularly and according to the EITI Standard yet this data might contain misleading information. The EU Accounting and Transparency Directives, which will be discussed in the following sub-section, can help civil society in detecting such cases. However, it seems that political will is a very important factor for the success of the EITI implementation. For instance, there should be a political will to apply this participatory initiative and to disclose trustful information (Haytayan, 2017). According to Kaissy, there is also a fear that the government tries to suppress the work of civil society at the EITI-MSG. In order for this not to happen, there should be activation to the role of civil society and the establishment of genuine monitoring mechanisms (D. Kaissy, personal communication, March 7, 2018). Actually, according to Kaissy and Sukkarieh, the EITI is only one tool at the hand of civil society and should not be considered as a definite mean for achieving transparency in the sector. Sukkarieh adds: “the EITI should not be used as an approval on saying that everything is good and in accordance with international standards.”

5.6.2 EU Accounting and Transparency Directives

The EU Accounting and Transparency Directives were adopted by EU Member States in April 2013 (Global Witness, 2013) (PWYP, n.d.). These directives oblige all extractive companies registered in the EU or listed on EU stock market to disclose their payments for governments in details and for each project (Global Witness, 2013). For instance these companies are required to disclose information on payments starting from 100,000 Euros and above, and to follow this requirement whether they were operating in
a European country or elsewhere (Global Witness, 2013). These mandatory disclosures contain detailed information on gains, payments, fees, and royalties for each project (D. Kaissy, personal communication, March 7, 2018). According to Kaissy, ENI and Total, with whom the Lebanese government signed the extraction agreements, do not abide by the regulations of the EITI because their countries of origin did not sign-up to it yet. However, they abide by the regulations of the EU Accounting and Transparency Directives because they are both European oil companies (ENI, n.d.) (Total, n.d.). Thus, in case civil society doubted about any misleading information being released by the Lebanese government on gains and payments, it can refer to the EU Accounting and Transparency Directives to check for its credibility. Kaissy says: “if the Lebanese government did not disclose the right information, civil society can check for its credibility on the websites of foreign oil companies. Civil society is not anymore dependent on the payments disclosure provided by the Lebanese government.” Therefore, the EU Accounting and Transparency Directives constitute another international tool for questioning and monitoring at the hands of civil society.

5.7 National Tools: Laws on Transparency and Access to Information

Other than the international tools, it is relevant to discuss the available national legal tools for civil society. The first tool is the law on access to information. It was issued on the 19th of January 2017 after being placed for eight years on the agenda of the Lebanese parliament (Maharat News, 2017). It gives the right for the media and civil society to have access to the original copy of official documents and information. Consequently, the public can study, review, and discuss the provided information in order to ask for reforms (Maharat News, 2017). However, this law is not proving to be enough for achieving
transparency in the sector and civil society is having difficulties in accessing all information. This is especially true because the law does not mention any provision for accessing information on studies that are being conducted. For instance, civil society is not being able to have information about studies that are being conducted by the LPA or any other official party. According to Abdallah, this is not because the LPA does not want to share this information with civil society. It is because there is no law that obliges it to share it. Thus, the LPA has the right not to share all information with civil society and the public. It is sharing on its website only the information that it believes it can share, Abdallah adds. This issue raises a number of concerns, including the difficulty of repeating any study if flaws were detected within it when the final results are published. Other than the LPA, civil society is still struggling to access information that the Minister of Water and Energy promised to publish but he did not publish yet, such as the report on the bids results (D. Kaissy, personal communication, March 7, 2018). Haytayan hopes that the EITI fills this gap of the legislative framework of the sector.

The second national legal tool is the Strengthening Transparency in the Petroleum Sector Law (LOGI, 2017). It was proposed two years ago as a draft law by MP Joseph Maalouf (D. Kaissy, personal communication, March 7, 2018), and it was ratified on the 24th of September 2018 by the parliament (LOGI, 2018). According to Kaissy and Chbat, many rights will be entitled to civil society under this law, such as the right to criminal claim in case it was suspicious about any case of corruption. Thus, it provides a tool for civil society to hold to account the government or anyone responsible for corruption. This law also obliges the authorities to publish the signed contracts with foreign oil companies and all information related to the beneficial owners of these companies (D. Kaissy,
personal communication, March 7, 2018). Kaissy comments: “civil society will be using this law intensely.” Yet, until writing this thesis, no information is available on the effectiveness of this law due to the fact that it is new.

Other national legal tools include the Whistleblower Protection Law which was passed on the 24th of September 2018 by the parliament (Lebanese Parliament, n.d.) (National News Agency, 2018). Yet, just as is the case with the Strengthening Transparency in the Petroleum Sector Law, an assessment for the effectiveness of this law cannot be done since it is newly passed.

In addition to these laws, civil society is still waiting and lobbying for the issuance of other laws that address corruption, such as the establishment of the higher commission for fighting corruption law, and the Fighting Corruption in Oil and Gas Contracts Law (D. Kaissy, personal communication, March 7, 2018).

Other than the legal tools, according to Kaissy, policy briefs issued by CSOs and reviews done by civil society for the sector’s legal framework are one of the tools used to achieve transparency. This is important for civil society because transparency leads to questioning and, later on, to reform. Moreover, civil society depends and counts on its capacity building, which will allow it to become knowledgeable about how to ask and demand, what to ask for, and where to focus their advocacy battles (D. Kaissy, personal communication, March 7, 2018).

However, civil society believes that despite all the anti-corruption tools that it has, areas of corruption can still exist mainly at the sub-contracting level as, for example, the catering services for oil companies. At this level, it is the duty of civil society to detect these areas of corruption and report them, Kaissy says.
5.8 Lobbying Strategies

The researcher noticed that civil society working on the oil and gas sector of Lebanon has never advocated on the sector or lobbied for its demands by using street pressure despite the fact that it is facing challenges when dealing with the authorities including rejections, delays, and unwillingness to cooperate. When asked about their lobbying strategies, Kaissy and Abdallah explain that civil society working on the oil and gas sector prefers to adopt the negotiations approach. For instance, they prefer to review and assess the established laws and adopted agreements, write a report in which recommendations are placed, and then discuss these recommendations with decision-makers with the aim of reaching a consensus and taking the required actions. This fact stems from the belief that, in previous occasions, civil society went to the streets but was not able to achieve its demands. In addition, it is because having the necessary information and facts at hands is the best weapon for them to face the authorities, so they mainly rely on their knowledge about the sector. Kaissy adds that in case the authorities were not responsive, civil society will launch a campaign and communicate its demands with the public, as a way of exerting pressure on the authorities.

Maybe one of the factors that are helping civil society in its lobbying strategy is the direct and regular contact with the different members of the LPA through the various conferences, workshops, and round table discussions organized by both parties. This is also fostered by the requirements of foreign cooperation programs, mentioned above, for the LPA to engage with civil society in the sector. These activities offer them venues to voice their demands and strengthen their lobbying capacity. However, this thing was not possible if civil society did not have the required expertise in the sector which gives it the
capability to advance demands based on a technical and academic background. For instance, this specialized civil society showed that it is conducting the necessary studies and investigations before voicing its demands. Another factor is the fact that this sector is newly emerging in Lebanon. Thus, it does not have any previously established structures and roots. Consequently, civil society is benefitting in two ways from this fact. First, its expertise is being asked for, especially that it is directly connected to the international actors in this field which results in its advocacy to be heard or at least taken into consideration. Second, civil society is being able to grow in parallel with the development of the sector in Lebanon and be present in its early stages of development.

In order to check whether civil society has been succeeding in reaching its demands through the lobbying strategies it prefers, the following examples illustrate areas where civil society lobbied for its demands and advocated on the sector. The main example worth to be mentioned is the signing-up of the Lebanese government to the EITI. This signing-up was preceded by a lobbying from civil society. It was precisely Diana Kaissy and Laury Haytayan who, between the years 2011 and 2012, introduced the EITI Standard to the LPA and asked for it to be implemented in Lebanon, according to Kaissy. This was part of their work in the international CSOs. For instance, at that time, Kaissy was working with the international secretariat of PWYP (D. Kaissy, personal communication, March 7, 2018) while Haytayan was and is still working with NRGI, which is a member in the PWYP global network (D. Kaissy, personal communication, March 7, 2018). The thing that helped civil society in lobbying for the signing-up to the EITI was the end result of this deal, which constituted a win-win situation for all stakeholders, argues Kaissy. For instance, in order to attract big oil companies to work on
the Lebanese offshore, Lebanon needed to comply with the EITI. This is because foreign oil companies, such as the European companies ENI and Total, care about the implementation of the EITI in the country where they will be working, Kaissy says. She adds: “Now Lebanon is facing a great challenge to show these companies that it is not a corrupt country especially that its corruption index is high. This fact does not encourage oil companies to continue working in Lebanon because they will be questioned in their home countries about their work in a corrupt country.” Thus, it was a win situation for the Lebanese authorities to have the EITI implemented. At the same time, it constituted a win situation for civil society who, as discussed above, will acquire an international tool at its hands for monitoring, questioning, advocating, and participating in decision-making.

However, while civil society has been calling for the implementation of the EITI before the signing of the extraction agreements with foreign oil companies, these agreements have been signed and the EITI is not yet implemented in Lebanon (Arbid, 2014).

In addition, as Kaissy explains, the model contracts to be signed between the Lebanese government and foreign oil companies were published after civil society’s demands for them. This is also true for the signed contracts on blocks 4 and 9, which were published by the LPA on the 27th of March 2018 (Ministry of Energy and Water, 2018) (LPA, n.d.). According to Kaissy, the importance of having these documents and information published is not only to achieve transparency, but also to assess them and conduct reforms, as it was the case with the SEA. Nevertheless, nowadays, civil society aims at having these documents in a machine-readable format (D. Kaissy, personal communication, March 7, 2018).
Furthermore, the SEA, which was conducted by the Ministry of Environment in 2011, was not published until 2013 after civil society asked for it to be published (D. Kaissy, personal communication, March 7, 2018). Once published, civil society reviewed it and wrote a report on it as mentioned above. However, as Kaissy says, civil society did not rush to publish its report on the SEA and make a scandal about the flaws existing within the SEA. Contrarily, this report was sent to the Quality, Health, Safety and Environment Department of the LPA and to the Ministry of Environment for them to have a look at it and discuss it with civil society before being published. The end result of this step was openness of the authorities towards civil society and a review of the SEA by the authorities according to civil society’s recommendations, as explained in a previous sub-section. Kaissy argues: “it was a very successful way of lobbying and it constituted a first step towards building trust between each other.”

However, it was a different case with the four draft laws mentioned previously, which civil society reviewed and asked for them to be updated before being issued. For instance, after reviewing these draft laws, civil society placed its recommendations on them and held two meetings with parliamentarians to explain to them that these draft laws contain gaps which would allow corruption (D. Kaissy, personal communication, March 7, 2018). However, they felt that parliamentarians were not being responsive. Consequently, they placed their recommendations in a letter and sent it to all parliamentarians and to the LPA (D. Kaissy, personal communication, March 7, 2018). According to Kaissy, after three weeks of waiting for a response, they received only two responses from two parliamentarians. As such, they decided to take a different approach. They sent letters to parliamentarians telling them that they will communicate this issue with the public and
explain for it that these laws should not be passed in their current drafts. Thus, LOGI launched a campaign to raise awareness for delaying the passing of these four laws, which consisted of a video that criticizes the work of the authorities in the sector, as mentioned in a previous sub-section. Subsequently, a number of parliamentarians contacted LOGI after this campaign and the draft laws were postponed, according to Kaissy.

According to Abdel Samad, it is all about the balance of power and the nature of the issue at hand. If, for instance, the issue at hand is fighting corruption and the different components in the authority are benefitting from the state of corruption, the creation of a balance of power is necessary for civil society to succeed in its advocacy and lobbying. Otherwise, it will be very hard for it to face the already established network of interests among politicians and to achieve a certain success. Yet, he also explains that different tactics can be used at the same time. For instance, through coordination between different civil society groups, experts from a specific civil society organization might be negotiating laws and policies with the authority while another group is putting pressure in the streets on the authority. Consequently, street pressure will be supporting the ones negotiating the authorities at the table. Abdel Samad prefers that there will be a combination between different methods because he believes that having negotiations at the table do not create a balance of power as street protests do.

5.9 Concerns of the Specialized Civil Society in the Sector

From the stated missions of civil society organizations on their website and from their above explained activities and contributions to the sector, it is possible to notice that the main concern of the specialized civil society is about good governance of the sector.
Under this topic various issues are addressed by this civil society such as fighting corruption in the sector and advocating on transparency, good management and allocation of natural resources revenues, laws and policies formulation, socioeconomic returns on Lebanese citizens, and environmental impact management among others. For instance, a number of examples could be mentioned here such as civil society’s lobbying for joining the EITI, their assessment of the SEA, their published guide on Access to Information Law, and their revision of the four national draft laws among others. It is also possible to mention the lectures that have been organized by civil society at different universities and municipalities which mostly tackled topics related to this same aspect of the sector. For instance, on the 24th of July 2018, LOGI organized a workshop in Sarafand which addressed the topic of environmental impact of the sector and the SEA (LOGI, 2018). Similarly, on the 27th of March 2018, LOGI organized a lecture at the University of Balamand to discuss the legal framework of the sector with students (LOGI, 2018).

Kaissy explains that civil society organizations mainly focuses on the governance aspect of the sector because they believe that socioeconomic benefits are what mainly concerns citizens; thus, these cannot be secured unless within the framework of good governance of the sector. Abdallah adds that by addressing the good governance aspect of the sector civil society covers a majority of issues in the sector. He also explains that civil society does not have a legal framework and enough financing to be covering all aspects of the sector.

Yet, none of civil society’s activities show an interest in the issue of maritime border delimitation with neighboring countries and the maritime Lebanese-Israeli dispute. For instance, although the LCPS addressed issues of maritime border delimitation and dispute
in various articles and policy briefs published by it, there has never been any initiative by civil society to be involved in, for example, mediating the conflict between Lebanon and Israel or discussing ways of solving this dispute with decision-makers.

In addition, the topic of securing job opportunities for Lebanese citizens in the oil and gas sector was recently placed on the agenda of the national civil society working in the oil and gas sector. For instance, LOGI organized lectures at different Lebanese villages and cities to explain to citizens on educational requirements and career opportunities in the oil and gas sector (LOGI, 2018). However, if civil society truly aims at handling this topic, it should start working on it by, for example, placing its own social impact assessment and submitting its recommendations to the authorities. For instance, as Abdel Samad argues social and environmental impact assessments should be done before signing any contract with foreign investors and oil companies in order to prevent any misunderstanding in the future and to protect the rights of Lebanese citizens. Civil society can also study the potential within the local content to fill job positions in the sector knowing that a number of universities in Lebanon have established petroleum engineering programs, such as the Lebanese American University, the Beirut Arab University, the University of Balamand, and Notre Dame University among others.

Nevertheless, it is worth noting that the LCPS, on the 1st of January 2017, launched a research project to assess the capabilities of Lebanese labor movement in playing a role in the oil and gas sector (LCPS, 2017). The project analyzed Lebanese labor market and advocated for a coalition that can play a more beneficial role in this issue than labor organizations (LCPS, 2017). In addition to the research project of the LCPS, the Trade Union of Gas and Exploration Sectors in Lebanon, which is one of the members at the
Lebanese Coalition for Good Governance in Extractive Industries (LCEI) as mentioned previously, has been asking for the rights of Lebanese labor force in the sector since 2014 (Annahar Staff, 2014).
Chapter Six

Readiness and Track Record of Lebanese Authorities to Include Civil Society in the Sector

After analyzing the capabilities of civil society and its performance in the sector, it is relevant now to evaluate the readiness and track record of Lebanese authorities to include civil society in the sector and to adopt a participatory approach. This is especially true because the role of civil society cannot be fully expressed and have an impact on the sector if civil society was not given space to participate in decision-making. However, before moving to this analysis, the thesis looks briefly at some cases where civil society was suspicious of the activities of the authorities in the sector.

6.1 Suspicious Cases of Corruption and Mismanagement

As mentioned in the introduction, Lebanon is the 138th country over 180 countries on the Corruption Perception Index produced in 2018 by Transparency International (Transparency International, 2018). This fact, combined with the large number of articles written on corruption in different Lebanese public institutions and in governance (GAN Business Anti-Corruption, 2016) (Leenders, 2015, 2016) (Nakhoul, 2015) (Martini, 2015) (International Law and Policy Institute, 2013), makes it not surprising that civil society be suspicious of corruption cases in the petroleum sector of Lebanon. For instance, after the formation of a new government in December 2016 (Reuters Staff, 2016) and the passing of the two decrees that were blocked in 2013 (Nash, 2014), some experts doubted the process of passing these decrees on the 4th of January 2017 quickly after the
formation of the new government (Atallah, 2017)(Moubarak, 2017). They thought that not giving enough time for the newly elected ministers to read a two hundred pages document and consequently passing the decrees in one meeting could be a sign of some deals made under the table by politicians (Atallah, 2017) (Moubarak, 2017). They also doubted the reasons that made politicians disagree at the beginning then agree with each other on certain issues and consequently have the decrees passed after years of delay(D. Kaissy, personal communication, March 7, 2018)(M. Abdallah, personal communication, March 17, 2018), linking this to a sign of lack of transparency in decision-making (Atallah, 2017).

In addition, civil society is not satisfied with the documents that are being published on the website of the LPA. Kaissy argues that the LPA is not publishing all documents on its website. For instance, they did not publish the reports that show on which basis the oil companies were accepted in the bidding round and what the offers of the companies were (D. Kaissy, personal communication, March 7, 2018). They also did not identify the beneficial owners of oil companies, which made civil society suspicious about this issue especially that Article 3 of Decree 9882 allows non-operator companies to partner with other oil companies that not necessarily have to meet the prequalification criteria (Leenders, 2015). Abdallah says that the bidding process and the admission of only one consortium raise a number of questions. However, the ministry of energy and water argues that oil companies strongly requested to keep information confidential especially those related to their total capital (Leenders, 2015). Nevertheless, Kaissy argues that although the Minister of Water and Energy promised to make these documents publically available, they are still not published.
Moreover, civil society is disenchanted with the reluctance of the Ministry of Energy and Water and the LPA from publishing the roadmap and a clear national strategy for the development of the sector (Moubarak, 2017). They argue that although the Minister of Energy promised to announce the roadmap, he did not give a timetable for announcing it (Moubarak, 2017).

Furthermore, there is still no answer to civil society’s question on the fate of the 35 million US dollars resulting from the selling of the seismic scans results to oil companies (D. Kaissy, personal communication, March 7, 2018). After doing their investigations on the legal framework and having a workshop with the LPA and some parliamentarians, civil society was able to receive an answer from the LPA that the money is in a bank account in Banque du Liban and that this account is under the name of the minister of water and energy and the director of the Zahrani firm (D. Kaissy, personal communication, March 7, 2018). Kaissy explains that parliamentarians participating in the workshop were surprised by this news, which they did not know about before and did not understand the reason for having them in a bank account under the name of those two persons.

Just as corruption, a number of scholars discussed the weakness of Lebanese public institutions and their lack for technical capacities (International Law and Policy Institute, 2013) (Martini, 2015). For instance, they argue that a major reform for public agencies and institutions is needed in order for them to be able to cope with daily petroleum operations (Leenders, 2015). Kaissy and Abdallah explain that reforms should be at the personnel and the equipment levels. Abdallah says that a great number of public servants are not trained on how to deal with this sector and with new bureaucratic technologies. In
addition, a number of MPs have no updated information on the petroleum sector of Lebanon, such as the number of blocks in the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and the number of pre-qualified companies (Atallah, 2017). Kaissy says that certain public institutions even lack a well-established website that makes information accessible and provides contact information. However, according to my interviewees and to some scholars (Leenders, 2015), the LPA is exempted from these criteria.

6.2 Initiatives to Include Civil Society in the Sector

On its website, the LPA emphasizes on an inclusive and participatory approach in its management of the oil and gas sector as a way of strengthening transparency (LPA, n.d.). As such, they believe that civil society organizations, Lebanese citizens, academia, and the media are main stakeholders in monitoring transparency, promoting awareness, and holding to account decision-makers (LPA, n.d.). For instance, as mentioned in previous sections, the LPA has been participating in different conferences organized by civil society groups and universities, and has been responsive to interviews and questions. In addition, the LPA is perceived by civil society groups and by scholars as being open since its establishment towards civil society (Haytayan, 2017). Experts in the field believe that this inclusive approach is facilitating the interaction and engagement of civil society with LPA’s members, and that it should continue in this way in order to build trust between citizens and the government (Haytayan, 2017).

Furthermore, the cooperation of the LPA with CSOs was not limited to these activities. For instance, as noted in a previous chapter, after civil society’s advocacy for the EITI, the LPA cooperated with it and showed an interest in learning more about the EITI. Chbat says that following the meetings that took place between LPA members and
EITI secretariat, the LPA was able to convince the government to announce its willingness to join the EITI. He stresses on LPA’s contribution to this announcement. Haytayan argues that, at the same time, there were also encouraging voices from civil society asking the government to join the EITI. Demands also came from political parties such as the Kataeb party which considered the EITI as a guarantee for transparency (Haytayan, 2017). Another way of cooperating with civil society is when the LPA submitted a copy of the contracts to be signed with foreign oil companies to NRGI in order to check them and analyze their compliance with the EITI standards.

In addition, the LPA signed a MoU with the LCPS in the early stages of the emergence of the sector to conduct and publish studies related to the sector (L. Haytayan, personal communication, March 7, 2018). According to Haytayan, this MoU was very important for opening the door for regular and continuous meetings between civil society, the LPA, and the government. She considers this as a way of civil society’s participation in the sector. Nevertheless, as Chbat explains, the LPA also cooperated with civil society in its assessment for the SEA and a number of workshops took place between the two parties which resulted in LPA’s launching to the terms of reference.

Other than the cooperation of the LPA with civil society, it is possible to mention an initiative by Prime Minister Saad Hariri to include civil society in decision-making. For instance, on the 21st of December 2017, at the 4th Global Business Summit organized by LIFE and Endeavor Lebanon (Life, n.d.), Prime Minister Saad Hariri committed publically to delay the passing of some newly drafted laws related to the oil and gas sector until they are reviewed by civil society (LOGI, 2017) (National News Agency, 2017). For instance, the President of the board of LOGI, Georges Sassine, argued at the
Summit that there are major flaws in the draft laws and that they should not be passed by the parliament in a rush (LOGI, 2017). He further added that, before being approved, consultation of civil society should be done. As a response on this argument, Hariri agreed on what was said and welcomed the cooperation between civil society organizations and the council of ministers to jointly review the drafted laws (LOGI, 2017). These four laws are: the Onshore Law, the Sovereign Wealth Fund Law, the Directorate for Petroleum Assets, and the National Oil Company (LOGI, 2017). LOGI described this commitment as an “unprecedented move” (LOGI, 2017). Thus, this description shows that the government didn’t take any step before to include civil society in reviewing laws and in decision-making.

Moreover, the public works, transport, energy, and water committee of the parliament invited civil society to participate in two of its sessions to explain their recommendations concerning the four draft laws mentioned above (D. Kaissy, personal communication, March 7, 2018) (M. Abdallah, personal communication, March 17, 2018). However, according to Kaissy, after knowing that civil society has a lot of remarks on these laws, they regretted inviting them and some parliamentarians objected them. She adds: “they received phone calls advising them to avoid dealing with civil society because it will bring them problems.” Haytayan explains that they were suspicious from the presence of civil society with them in the meeting. They were repeatedly asking them to not transfer the content of the discussions to the outside. She adds: “however, we just wanted to explain for them that we aim for constructive discussions and participation, and that we care about the sector.”
Actually, before this statement of Hariri and the limited initiative of the committee, there has never been any initiative from the government or the parliament to include civil society in decision-making concerning the sector. The LPA was the only one showing an interest to cooperate with civil society groups. However, it is worth mentioning here that only two individual initiatives towards civil society took place. One of them is when the Kataeb party, as mentioned above, demanded for joining the EITI. The other one is the cooperation of MP Joseph Maalouf with civil society and the LPA on establishing the Strengthening Transparency in the Petroleum Sector Law.

Sukkarieh believes that the LPA is being cooperative with civil society and is doing better on this issue than other public institutions. However, this cooperation should be improved and be faster. She also believes that being more available than politicians is the reason why LPA is being more cooperative than politicians with civil society. Abdallah agrees with Sukkarieh about this issue. Yet, Sukkarieh adds that this is also dependent on politicians’ will to cooperate with civil society.

Other than the LPA and the Ministry of Energy and Water, Kaissy argues that other ministries did not ever contact or cooperate with civil society. Actually, this thesis was not able to find any other initiative or statement made by the authorities to cooperate with civil society than the ones mentioned above. This shows that such initiatives and statements are still limited. In addition to this fact, all interviewees agree that the cooperation is dependent on the will of politicians. For instance, when the EITI was first introduced to former Prime Minister Tamam Salam, he was not convinced by it and objected it (D. Kaissy, personal communication, March 7, 2018). Later on, when discussed with Prime Minister Saad Hariri, he was convinced by it and the government
declared its will to join the EITI few weeks after its formation in December 2016(D. Kaissy, personal communication, March 7, 2018). The fear of civil society is that these initiatives, precisely the joining of the EITI, remain linked to the will of politicians. This is mainly true because the signing-up to the EITI is voluntary and there are no international obligations on joining it.

Nevertheless, despite the invitation of civil society to participate in a number of workshops organized by the LPA, there is a belief that the participation of civil society should be institutionalized (Atallah, 2017). Haytayan says: “they are conducting projects and drafting laws without the participation of civil society in these issues. Civil society should be included in decision-making while laws are being drafted. This is because drafting laws and then inviting civil society to review it is not a form of participation in decision-making. In addition, at certain occasions, laws could not be amended anymore and the input of civil society will not be taken into consideration.” She adds: “there is no inclusion of civil society in decision-making.” Actually, according to Kaissy, Abdallah, Haytayan, and Chbat, there is no national law that obliges politicians to cooperate with civil society and include it in the decision-making. Abdel Samad also explains that the problem of not having an institutionalized role for civil society, although it is recognized, is a challenge facing civil society working on all sectors in Lebanon. He says that officials’ cooperation with civil society is very subjective, depending on the personality of the individual and his/her openness to civil society. He adds: “this resulted in having a varied degree of openness towards civil society whether it was regarding a certain period of time or it was regarding the concerned public institution and sector.”
As such, the LPA, civil society, and MP Joseph Maalouf cooperated to transform the provisions of the EITI into a national law, which is the Strengthening Transparency in the Petroleum Sector Law. According to Chbat, this law is really important to the role of civil society because it helps it in changing the fact that an involvement for civil society in decision-making remains dependent on politicians’ will. The contribution of the LPA to this law came in the form of making its context precise, not vague, so it won’t be interpreted into different meanings, he adds. This was done by tackling the different implementation steps and addressing their details. In addition, the LPA made sure to include provisions of the EITI pertaining to the role of civil society in this law (W. Chbat, personal communication, March 15, 2018). A final comment for Chbat on this law is: “it constitutes recognition to the role of civil society, empowers this role, enforces civil society’s rights to transparency and questioning, and increases the possibility of having in the future a law that strengthens accountability.”

In addition, there is a demand for more participation of decision-makers in the workshops that are being organized by the LPA in order to give space for communication between them and civil society (Atallah, 2017).

Furthermore, although civil society is putting a lot of effort in tracking any corruption in this sector and in insuring transparency in this sector, the government is not showing a genuine will to be transparent in it. For instance, important documents and reports are not being published by the authorities and final deals and agreements are not being openly discussed with the public. In addition, civil society is not being included in the early stages of the development of policies and of drafting laws. For instance, the majority of laws and regulations pertaining to the oil and gas sector in Lebanon have already been
passed and discussed by decision-makers without referring to civil society. The thesis shows it is always the case that a law be drafted or a policy formulated then, after civil society’s repetitive demands to be included in the process or advance certain recommendations, it will be invited to participate or having its recommendations accepted. Therefore, the Lebanese government appears to be marginalizing civil society when it comes to sensitive issues, while showing a minimal level of cooperation in non-decisive issues. These acts make someone be suspicious about the possibility that the government might be intentionally rushing in passing most of the laws and formulating policies related to the oil and gas sector in Lebanon before officially joining the EITI that secures a seat for civil society in decision-making. The evidences advanced by the thesis also show that while the authorities are showing some openness towards civil society in certain topics, such as reviewing the SEA and attempting to join the EITI, this openness is being limited. In other words, the authorities are showing openness and acceptance to civil society’s demands but are being slow in taking serious actions or making a genuine step to move forwards in their cooperation.

6.3 A Continuing Cooperation?

Kaissy describes the relationship between civil society and the authorities as a “love-hate” relationship. The issue is that there is a lack of trust between them, says Kaissy. For instance, civil society is being perceived by the authorities as politicized. An example on this is when Chbat said: “we [LPA] do not cooperate and work with those groups that consider themselves as civil society while they are actually applying the political agenda of certain parties.” He adds: “the LPA has cooperated with other categories of civil society in several occasions and has been transparent in its cooperation with them.”
the same time civil society does not fully trust the government. This is based on its previous unhappy experience with the government when it comes to cooperation, as Kaissy says.

Yet, according to Chbat, there is no hindrance placed on civil society. For instance, civil society is always questioning and the LPA is always being cooperative with it. However, it still needs to be empowered in order to play its role effectively, through support and legislation. He adds: “the LPA is not bothered to cooperate with civil society. Contrarily, it is happy to receive the comments of civil society and cooperate with it because this will help the LPA in its work on the sector and contribute to its improvement.” Moreover, the LPA is eager to follow the best of the industry’s international standards that comply with the applied national laws (W. Chbat, personal communication, March 15, 2018). Kaissy argues that the lobbying strategy civil society is adopting is a way of showing transparency and openness from the side of civil society. It is also a way for building trust between the different parties and for establishing a framework of cooperation between them (D. Kaissy, personal communication, March 7, 2018).

In addition, the LPA at several occasions discussed in its meeting with foreign aids representatives the role of civil society and its inclusion in the sector, Chbat says. However, according to Kaissy, Sukkarieh, and Haytayan, there is a fear among civil society groups that once these foreign programs end the cooperation of LPA ends too. In addition, Kaissy argues that the LPA is being more cooperative than ministers because it is working under specific foreign programs such as the Norwegian Oil for Development (OfD) program and the EU assistance program which oblige them to organize workshops
and roundtable discussions with civil society. Civil society would like that the cooperation continues even when the foreign cooperation programs end, she adds. In addition to all this, Sukkarieh believes that there is a fear that the authorities are showing a certain level of cooperation with civil society just to not be accused of not being cooperative. This is true because, according to her, the system is being cooperative only in non-sensitive areas of the sector. Abdallah says that being invited by the LPA to seminars and workshops is not enough, and that other measures of cooperating with civil society should be taken.
Chapter Seven

International Standards and Best Practices of Civil Society in Extractive Industries

7.1 International Standards and Guidelines

This section will list the main international standards and guidelines on the role of civil society in fighting corruption in the extractive industry and other sectors, and will discuss their availability in the case of civil society in Lebanon. It will first start with those addressing corruption and transparency in various sectors then will move to discuss the more specific and specialized ones in extractive industries.

7.1.1 The United Nations Convention against Corruption

The United Nations Convention against Corruption is the result of a number of United Nations resolutions and was placed into action in 2003 (UNODC, 2004). It aims to fight corruption in both, the public and the private sector (UNODC, 2004). In April 2009, Lebanon ratified the convention and became a State party to it (UNODC, n.d.). Chapter II, Article 13, which addresses the participation of civil society, argues that State Parties should promote the active participation of non-governmental organizations, civil society, and community-based organizations in preventing and fighting corruption and in raising awareness on its causes, existence, and threats (UNODC, n.d.) (UNODC, 2004). It also notes measures to be taken by state parties to strengthen the active participation of the above mentioned actors (UNODC, 2004). For instance, it asks them to enhance transparency and ensure effective access to information, to promote contributions to
decision-making and undertake educational programs, and to respect and protect freedom of seeking, receiving, publishing and disseminating information about corruption (UNODC, n.d.) (UNODC, 2004).

The convention offers a number of recommendations to state parties including the promotion of the active participation of civil society. Thus, being a state party to the convention, Lebanon is required to promote the active participation of civil society in fighting corruption and in decision-making. However, chapter six of this thesis shows that Lebanese authorities are not being truly willing to include civil society in decision-making and that minimal initiatives have been taken towards this issue, such as the declaration to join the EITI and the establishment of the Strengthening Transparency in the Petroleum Sector Law. Other than the active participation of civil society, Lebanon is required to enhance transparency and ensure effective access to information. On this issue, it is possible to say that Lebanon has made some progress. For instance, as mentioned in a previous chapter, one of the principles of the LPA is to uphold transparency and good governance. Actually, the LPA is working on strengthening transparency in the sector. It has also cooperated with decision-makers in establishing a Strengthening Transparency in the Petroleum Sector Law. Concerning the topic of access to information, the Law on Access to Information was ratified on the 19th of January 2017 (Arbid, 2017) (LOGI, 2018). However, civil society activists believe that it is a challenging law because a number of government offices do not have websites to publish information and because requesting hidden information will not be easy (Arbid, 2017).
7.1.2 Code of Good Practice on Civil Participation in the Decision-making Process

Supported by the Council of Europe (CoE)

Although it is specific to European countries, the Code of Good Practice on Civil Participation in the Decision-Making Process is an important document to learn from, especially that the issue of lack of trust should be resolved in the case of the cooperation between the Lebanese civil society and the authorities. In October 2009, the Conference of INGOs of the Council of Europe (CoE) drafted and adopted the Code of Good Practice on Civil Participation in the Decision-Making Process (Conference of INGOs of the Council of Europe, 2009) which was supported later on by the CoE (Council of Europe, n.d.). One of the major goals from having this code is to strengthen the relationship and foster dialogue between NGOs and the public sector in all of its components (Council of Europe, n.d.). In addition, it aims at defining a set of guidelines, general principles, and tools for the participation of civil society in decision-making and at facilitating this participation at the regional, national, and local level (Council of Europe, n.d.). As such, it requires four principles for a constructive relationship between NGOs and the public sector. These are participation, trust, accountability and transparency, and independence (Conference of INGOs of the Council of Europe, 2009). With the aim of having an enabling environment for this relationship, it requires the presence of political will, the rule of law, favorable legislation, clear and precise procedures, adherence to fundamental democratic principles, shared space for dialogue and cooperation, and long-term support and resources for a sustainable civil society (Council of Europe, n.d.). In addition, it divides the level of participation and involvement of civil society in decision-making into four stages, from the lowest to the highest as follows: 1) information, where civil society
is only provided with information; 2) consultation, where civil society is consulted for its opinion on a specific issue; 3) dialogue (broad dialogue and collaborative dialogue), where civil society and the public sector communicate regularly and develop joint policies and recommendations; and 4) partnership, where civil society and the public sector co-operate closely (Conference of INGOs of the Council of Europe, 2009) (OECD, 2011).

Based on the principles advanced by the Code of Good Practice on Civil Participation in the Decision-Making Process, it is possible to say that there is an absence for a constructive relationship between Lebanese civil society and the authorities due to the lack of trust between them, as it appeared in a previous chapter. This is also due to the absence of an enabling environment for such a relationship given the fact that politicians’ will is not available and a favorable legislation is limited in its effectiveness. Adding to this, the analysis in previous chapters shows that there is also an absence for a genuine participation of civil society in decision-making and of a long-term support to it despite all the steps made by the LPA to fill this gap.

7.1.3 “CleanGovBiz” Initiative by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)

In 2011, the anti-corruption and transparency initiative, “CleanGovBiz,” was launched by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) with the aim of improving cooperation between governments, private sector, and civil society in fighting corruption and strengthening transparency (OECD, n.d.) (OECD, 2011). This initiative also aims at supporting governments, civil society, and business in building integrity and engaging with each other in fighting corruption (OECD, n.d.). It
targets in the first place member countries of the OECD, but it also addresses relevant players all over the world. Lebanon is not a member in this organization (OECD, n.d.). Yet, the OECD is interested in Lebanon and a visit to its website shows that it covers topic on it (OECD, n.d.). A main component of this initiative is a toolkit, the CleanGovBiz Toolkit, which identifies four main broad criteria for fighting corruption (OECD, n.d.) (OECD, 2014). These are healthy governance, effective prevention, robust prosecution and recovery, and sharp detection (OECD, n.d.). Under each of these criteria, multiple domains are identified (OECD, 2014). For instance, the domain of civil society is listed under the criteria of effective prevention (OECD, n.d.). The initiative believes that civil society is the only independent actor positioned to bring to light and investigate cases of corruption, which in most of the cases involve private companies and public officials (OECD, n.d.). In addition, it provides a priority checklist for the government and civil society to assess their respective roles in enabling and strengthening the participation of civil society (OECD, n.d.). Moreover, in 2013, the initiative launched a questionnaire aiming at identifying potential impediments to the positive and effective role of civil society in fighting corruption and promoting integrity (CleanGovBiz, 2013). This questionnaire identifies three key factors that foster effective civil society participation in fighting corruption. The first factor is the absence of legal and political restrictions on an enabling legal framework for the participation of civil society organizations (CSOs). The second is the presence of a will from the state to engage with civil society constructively (CleanGovBiz, 2013). The third is the effective engagement of civil society organizations in fighting corruption (CleanGovBiz, 2013).
A quick assessment for these three key factors in the case of Lebanon shows that an enabling legal framework for the participation of CSOs is available with certain limitations on its effectiveness. Next, concerning the will of the state to engage with civil society, it appears to be absent. Lastly, concerning the effective engagement of civil society in the sector, actually civil society is proving to be greatly active in the sector and in positively contributing to the sector by strengthening its knowledge and providing comments on sound technical basis.

It is also worth mentioning that all Lebanese stakeholders in the petroleum sector can learn from the recommendations of the CleanGovBiz initiative on how to work together and build integrity, which can help them in cooperating and communicating with each other on the EITI-MSG.

7.1.4 Transparency & Accountability Initiative

The Transparency & Accountability Initiative is a group of private foundations and public funders who work on strengthening accountability, transparency, and civic engagement worldwide (Transparency & Accountability Initiative, n.d.). As part of its work on extractive industries, it published in the year 2011 a guide for resource-rich countries to best practice in transparency, accountability, and civic engagement across the public sector (Transparency & Accountability Initiative, 2011). This guide lists five goals that resource-producing countries should have in order to best practice in extractive industries. Each stated goal is followed by a justification, a list of recommendation, and a section of examples from different countries. In addition, these goals are divided into three main categories: initial steps, more substantial steps, and more ambitious steps. The first goal, listed under the “initial steps” category, is “To establish openness in granting
access to natural resources and in the fiscal returns for the state” (Transparency & Accountability Initiative, 2011). In order to achieve this goal, the guide recommends countries to make available, in a public database, all regulations and rules for concessions and licenses of natural resources. It also recommends countries to make the terms of granted concessions for exploitation publically available, and to issue in the public domain detailed and regular reports on revenues related to resources. The second stated goal, listed under the “more substantial steps” category, is “To make available more detailed information to allow the public to better assess and influence the quality of public natural resource management” (Transparency & Accountability Initiative, 2011). In order to achieve this goal, the guide recommends countries to publish studies on economic and environmental impact of all natural resources projects, reports on a regular basis on the contribution of the sector to the budget as well as other allocations, and the transfers of revenues related to natural resources to sub-national governments. The third goal is “To extend transparency and accountability rules to state institutions with important operational responsibilities in resource management” (Transparency & Accountability Initiative, 2011). The recommendations for achieving this goal are the publishing of all data related to the management and holding of the sovereign wealth fund, and of audited state-owned extractive companies accounts based on international standards. It also recommends countries to list on a stock exchange all extractive companies owned by the state, and to ensure free and regular participation of civil society, parliamentarians, and the media in overseeing the sector. The fourth stated goal, listed under the “more ambitious steps” category, is “To allow continuous public monitoring of natural resource development projects around the country” (Transparency
Two recommendations are listed under this goal. The first is to create, for all natural resource concessions, a national public web registry. The second is to create environmental and socioeconomic performance benchmarks, national policy, and a monitoring scheme. Finally, the fifth goal, which is directed to capital-providing countries, is “To have the home regulator of resource companies and/or providers of capital for the natural resource sectors observe and promote high standards of openness” (Transparency & Accountability Initiative, 2011). The guide recommended, in order to achieve this goal, that all companies listed in the jurisdiction to disclose their payments to the governments. It also recommends the application of all transparency requirements of the International Finance Corporation to export credits and to political risk guarantees, and the reporting of all foreign aid funding in detail.

As for the first goal listed in the extractive industries guide, that is “To establish openness in granting access to natural resources and in the fiscal returns for the state,” the ministry of energy and water, as well as the LPA, published on their website the official documents of the contracts signed between the Lebanese government and the foreign oil companies for the extraction. In addition, the LPA has been publishing on its website most of the official documents on laws and regulations related to the sector, and the results of the pre-qualification and licensing rounds (LPA, n.d.) (LPA, 2018). However, as this thesis showed in previous chapters that these documents are not enough to assure transparency and openness in the sector. For instance, civil society is still asking for the criteria based on which these oil companies were accepted in the bids, and for the beneficial owners of these companies. However, concerning the other goals, it is possible
to say that it is early to discuss them at this stage of the development of the sector in Lebanon because they address topics related to advanced stages of the sector.

7.1.5 Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI)

This is the most prominent and a leading initiative in the field of extractive industries, as well as the most pioneering initiative to the role of civil society in this sector. In the year 2002, the Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative (EITI) was launched to set a global standard on promoting transparency and an accountable and open management of oil, gas, mineral, and metal resources (Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative [EITI], n.d.). It is worth noting that PWYP was the one who campaigned and lobbied for the creation of the EITI (PWYP, n.d.).

The main focus of the EITI is on good governance, mainly the publishing by extractive companies of the royalty payments and tax they pay to the governments and the disclosure of host governments for the revenues they receive (CleanGovBiz, 2013). Joining the EITI is voluntary (Haytayan, 2017), thus countries do not have to sign any agreement with the EITI. In 2013, more requirements were added to the EITI Standard to cover not only the disclosure of revenues and payments, but also the whole extraction process from the licensing and contracting phase to the expenditure management phase (Haytayan, 2017). Thus, the EITI became more comprehensive, harder to apply, and more precise (Haytayan, 2017). Nowadays, it divides governance of revenues into five main steps which, according to the EITI Standard, companies and governments are required to disclose information on. These steps are: contracts and licenses, production, revenue collection, revenue allocation, and social and economic spending (EITI, n.d.). They are referred to as the “value chain,” as shown in figure 4 (EITI, n.d.). Moreover, this initiative was the first to create a Multi-
Stakeholder Group (MSG) (Haytayan, 2017). The MSG is a body constituted of three main actors. These are governments’ representatives, companies’ representatives, and civil society’s representatives (EITI, n.d.). They work together to oversee the management of the sector and compliance with transparency.

Figure 3: A photo illustrating the different phases of the value chain of extractive industries according to the EITI Standard (Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative, 2018).

Figure 4: A photo illustrating the EITI multi-stakeholder group (Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative, 2018).
On its provisions on the role of civil society, it is possible to say that this initiative is the most powerful in giving civil society a legitimate and clear role to play (Haytayan, 2017). The EITI sets a protocol on the participation of civil society that gives wide prerogatives to civil society in decision-making and requires governments to establish certain conditions that favor the participation of civil society. For instance, the protocol states that civil society should be effectively, actively, and fully engaged in the process of the EITI (EITI, n.d.). In addition, governments should ensure the absence of obstacles to the participation of civil society, to ensure an enabling environment for the participation of civil society such as the respect of their fundamental rights, and refrain from restricting or narrowing public debate related to EITI implementation. Moreover, it notes the requirement of having all stakeholders able to freely speak on issues related to natural resource governance and transparency, and be engaged substantially in all stages of the EITI process. It also requires having the right to cooperate and communicate with each other, and being able to express their opinion about the EITI without reprisal, coercion, or restraint (EITI, n.d.). Furthermore, the initiative published a guide for civil society activists to learn on the challenges they will face during each phase of the implementation of the EITI (EITI, n.d.) (Goldwyn, 2008).

In the case of Lebanon, on the 25th of January 2017 the government declared its will to join the EITI and to cooperate with civil society (Haytayan, 2017) (LPA, n.d.). Thus, the Minister of Energy and Water, Cesar Abi Khalil, was named as champion of the initiative (Haytayan, 2017). He will be the one overseeing the implementation of the EITI (Haytayan, 2017) (LPA, n.d.). This declaration cheered civil society activists and CSOs working in this sector. They considered it as a successful step for them to participate in
the decision-making and to monitor the sector. This joy can be explained by the rights
secured by the EITI Standards for civil society. Kaissy says: “the EITI is an excellent
transparency and accountability tool because it presupposes that all stakeholders sit
together at the MSG and follow the seven main requirements of the EITI, which mandate
the issuance of a yearly report containing information on all the phases of the decision
chain of the sector.” She adds that during the first years of implementing the EITI,
Lebanon will only be able to follow some of the requirements which are the ones
addressing the first stages of the decision chain. This is because Lebanon did not yet start
extracting oil and gas and did not yet receive any revenues from the extractions.

Following the government’s declaration, the national secretariat of the EITI, which
is the LPA (D. Kaissy, personal communication, March 7, 2018), will call the different
stakeholders to choose their representatives to the EITI-MSG (EITI, n.d.). After choosing
their representatives and after the EITI’s acceptance to these representatives, the national
secretariat will call the different components to hold their first meeting at the MSG table
at the EITI and submit their work plan on issuing reports to the international secretariat in
Oslo (EITI, n.d.). According to Kaissy, the government chose its representatives to the
EITI. The Lebanese civil society, as mentioned in the mapping section, formed its
coalition but did not choose its representatives to the EITI-MSG yet.

7.1.6 Open Government Partnership (OGP)

Launched in 2011 by eight governments, the Open Government Partnership (OGP)
is an initiative to secure governments’ commitment to fighting corruption, promote
transparency, strengthen governance, and empower citizens (Open Government
Partnership [OGP], n.d.). It is similar in concept to the EITI by offering a platform for
civil society representatives and government representatives to engage with each other in an open discussion and to share information (OGP, n.d.). Yet it is not limited to the extractive industry. For instance, the OGP has a multitude of themes that it addresses, such as elections and political finance, health and nutrition, human rights, and judiciary among others (OGP, n.d.). However, the OGP launched the Openness in Natural Resources Working Group which aims to share good practice and lessons learned with its different members (Lintzer, 2015) (OGP, n.d.). It also aims to show that openness in the extractive sector brings benefits to governments and citizens (OGP, n.d.). When a country decides to join the OGP, it should develop and submit its national action plan to the OGP (OGP, n.d.). Until now, 70 countries are participants in the OGP (OGP, n.d.). From the MENA region, Tunisia and Jordan are the only countries who joined it (OGP, n.d.). Yet, there are no evidences or information on Lebanon’s joining the OGP.

7.1.7 Natural Resource Charter by the Natural Resource Governance Institute (NRGI)

In 2014, NRGI published its second edition of the Natural Resource Charter (NRGI, 2014). The charter sets several principles on the best ways to achieve sustainable development from extractive resources (NRGI, n.d.). According to NRGI, the charter does not offer a blueprint or recipe for the institutions and policies that should be built by countries. Instead, it provides the components and tools used by successful countries in this industry (NRGI, n.d.) (NRGI, 2014). The charter is divided into twelve precepts with each addressing a different topic related to the extractive industry (NRGI, n.d.) (NRGI, 2014). For instance, these topics constitute the different phases of the extractive industry decision chain, as shown in figure 5. Most of the precepts of the charter focus, in their discussion of the various topics, on the role and dues of the governments as well as on the
provisioned tasks of oil companies. However, Precept two, which mainly discusses access to information, transparency, and accountability, stresses on the importance of having an informed public and an independent civil society (NRGI, 2014). For instance, it asks governments to disclose the complete set of information related to the entire chain of decisions in order to foster transparency, which is a prerequisite for accountability (NRGI, 2014). It also asks governments to provide machine-readable data in order to facilitate monitoring. Other than that, it requires governments to ensure having an independent civil society that operates without harassment. In addition, the precept notes the effectiveness of having a communication strategy between civil society and the government. The precept also offers further details and explanation for achieving these goals (NRGI, 2014). These facts shows that the role of civil society and the public is essential in monitoring, scrutinizing, holding governments to account, and ensuring a corruption-free management of the sector.

![The Natural Resource Charter Decision Chain](image)

Figure 5: A photo showing the different precepts of the Natural Resource Charter divided according to the different phases of the decision chain (Natural Resource Governance Institute, 2014).
In the case of Lebanon, civil society is asking for the data to be provided in a machine-readable format or what is also known as open data (D. Kaissy, personal communication, March 7, 2018). Thus, in order to foster trust and transparency, the Lebanese government is required to provide these open data to civil society. In addition, as the Lebanese government is asked to protect civil society from any harassment, civil society is required to also keep itself away from politicization. However, at the same time, it is required to build bridges of good communication with the authorities.

Moreover, being one of the main civil society actors in Lebanon, NRGI should take the responsibility of explaining the provisions of the Natural Resource Charter to the different stakeholders. Nevertheless, having the role of civil society mentioned in Precept two and not in the other precepts means that the role of civil society is mainly expected to appear in monitoring, questioning, advocating, and holding to account.

7.1.8 Natural Resource Charter Benchmarking Framework by the Natural Resource Governance Institute (NRGI)

In 2017, a new tool established by NRGI was the Natural Resource Charter Benchmarking Framework, which can be used to benchmark the management of natural resources by a country against international best practices (NRGI, n.d.) (Pitman & Manley, 2016). This tool is complementary to the Natural Resource Charter. It provides a practical way for the different stakeholders to measure the management of natural resources according to the twelve precepts of the Natural Resource Charter (NRGI, n.d.). Thus, it offers a set of questions related to the main topic of each precept against which the assessment of compliance with the noted requirements in the precept is made (NRGI, n.d.) (Pitman & Manley, 2016). For instance, on the topic of precept two, the
benchmarking framework asks questions related to whether there is a critical mass of informed citizens that can hold governments to account, to whether the government is ensuring that there is sufficient transparency in resource management, and to whether governmental oversight bodies are holding officials to account (NRGI, n.d.). In addition to the series of questions, it offers guiding notes to answer these questions (NRGI, n.d.).

Similar to what is the case with the Natural Resource Charter, civil society in Lebanon should be knowledgeable of the benchmarking framework, which will help it in playing its role. Also here, the NRGI office in Beirut can introduce and train the Lebanese civil society on this benchmarking framework.

7.1.9 Various Initiatives, Guidelines, and Reports on the Extractive Industry

In addition to the above mentioned international standards and guidelines that addressed the role of civil society in fighting corruption and advocating for transparency in either the extractive industry or other sectors, a number of international initiatives addressed other topics related to the extractive industry. For instance, Acorn International, a consultancy institution, issued a report that explains ways for the engagement of NGOs with oil companies in large oil and gas projects (Acorn International, n.d.) (Buchman, 2012). It offers recommendations for building a mutually beneficial relationship between them (Acorn International, n.d.) (Buchman, 2012). This report is based on Acorn’s experience in working with oil companies and NGOs (Acorn International, 2011). In addition, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) established the Due Diligence Guidance for Meaningful Stakeholder Engagement in the Extractive Sector as a practical application in the extractive sector for the provisions of the Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises
(OECD, 2016). It aims for a good business conduct in the sector and mainly addresses the engagement of multinational enterprises with various stakeholders and communities (OECD, 2016). Moreover, the UNDP Strategy for Supporting Sustainable and Equitable Management of the Extractive Sector for Human Development is a strategy for the UNDP to help developing countries in designing and implementing policies for harnessing their natural resources and assuring a sustainable development (United Nations Development Programme [UNDP], 2012). This strategy was suggested based on the demands of a large number of countries to receive the support of the UNDP in dealing with natural resources risks (UNDP, 2012). In line with this strategy, the UNDP is currently helping over 50 countries in maximizing their social and economic benefits as well as implementing environmental safeguards (UNDP, n.d.). Nevertheless, a number of initiatives address the environmental impact of extractive industries, such as the Energy and Biodiversity Initiative (EBI) and the Global Initiative (GI) among others (International Petroleum Industry Environmental Conservation Association, 2006). Last but not least, the Voluntary Principles for Security and Human Rights (VPSHR) is a set of principles addressing human rights and security concerns in the extractive industry (International Petroleum Industry Environmental Conservation Association, 2006) (Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights, n.d.). It enables NGOs, governments, and companies to work together in addressing these concerns (Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights, n.d.).

7.2 Lessons from International Standards and Guidelines

The first important thing to conclude from the international standards and guidelines listed above is that both civil society and the public sector are responsible for
strengthening the role of civil society in the sector. On one side, civil society is expected to investigate cases of corruption, to advocate on transparency and good governance, to be an independent entity, and to inform and educate the public. It is also required to effectively and actively engage in the sector, to keep on building its capacities and improving them, to participate in decision-making, and to monitor the work of the government and oil companies. On the other side, the public sector is expected to have the will to include civil society in decision-making, to set the most favorable legal framework that recognizes and fosters the role of civil society, to apply openness, transparency, and accountability in its management of the sector, and to adopt an inclusive and constructive approach for the participation of civil society in the sector.

Whether civil society and Lebanese authorities are being compliant with these recommendations and provisions of international standards and best practices, this chapter shows that compliance in the case of Lebanon is achieved in certain issues while not in others. For instance, as for Lebanese authorities, the issuance of some national laws that provide an enabling legal framework for the role of civil society and the steps made by the Lebanese Petroleum Administration (LPA) to cooperate with civil society are in accordance with international standards and best practices. However, this chapter also shows limitations to compliance in these issues. In addition, the absence of politicians’ will to follow a participatory approach and the lack of genuine openness in sharing information with the public are not in compliance with these international standards. As for civil society, it is showing compliance with international standards and guidelines by abiding by their recommendations such as investigating cases of corruption,
advocating on transparency and good governance, and informing the public among others.

The second important thing to deduce is that, among the three main opinions listed in the literature review about the level of engagement of civil society in the sector, the first and second opinions are the ones recognized by international standards and guidelines as a role to be played by civil society. For instance, the first opinion was the one asking civil society to play a role in monitoring the sector and overseeing the work of the government. The second opinion was the one asking civil society to influence the decision-making process and to draft laws and policies. However, the third one, which was asking civil society to take control of the sector and manage it by itself or in partnership with the government, did not appear as a recognized or as a recommended role for civil society by international standards. In addition, the majority of the interviewees of this thesis agreed that the third opinion is too optimistic and that it is not possible to achieve in the case of Lebanon. For instance, Sukkarieh believes that civil society does not have the capacity to play such a role for two reasons. First, it does not have the legitimacy to play such a role and to manage the sector. Second, it is still struggling in achieving the second level of involvement in the sector, which is participating in decision-making. Sukkarieh believes that civil society is being able to raise awareness, but it still needs to work on building its capacities and proving itself as a credible partner in order to become able to influence decision-making and policy-making. Kaissy says that civil society does not want to manage the sector and is not asking the authorities to move aside. However, she believes that it should be a partner in the management of the sector through a participatory approach to be adopted by the
government if it really aims to ensure a good governance of the sector. She also believes that civil society should be a watchdog because it has a monitoring authority, and should advocate either for reform or for advancing a demand. Abdallah says that managing the sector is not on the agenda of civil society and that it does not have the legitimacy to play such a role. Chbat comments that the role of civil society is a mixture between the first and second opinions, and that playing a role in accordance with the optimist third point of view has more disadvantages than advantages. He adds that this role should also be at the macro level and not at the micro level which is usually more technical in nature. For instance, Chbat believes that civil society can play a role at the general policy-making and advocacy level of management. However, it cannot play a role at the technical and detailed level of management, and in the daily operations (W. Chbat, personal communication, March 15, 2018). From here, it becomes clear that the degree of involvement of civil society in the petroleum sector of Lebanon should be limited to the expectations of the first and second point of views. Thus, civil society is expected to play the role of an oversight body, an advocacy entity, and a decision-making partner.
Chapter Eight

Conclusion

8.1 Key Findings

A number of key findings helped this thesis reach a comprehensive conclusion on the effectiveness of the role played by civil society in the oil and gas sector of Lebanon and its compliance with international standards and best practices.

One of these key findings is the difference that appeared between national civil society and international civil society in terms of expertise, knowledge, financial capacities, and professionalism among others. Thus, concerning the expertise of international civil society, it showed that it is well prepared to play a role in the oil and gas sector of Lebanon; contrarily to the case of national civil society which is still in the process of building its capacities despite the advancement it made until now. Another issue to mention is that a similar difference appeared between local civil society groups themselves. However, in general, it is possible to say that Lebanese civil society is willing to acquire expertise and greater knowledge about the technicalities of this sector. It is also possible to say that until now it has made a great progress concerning this issue, given the fact that it is only around five years old and that it emerged from a society that is dealing for the first time with this sector as a producing country. Yet, it still does not have a full capacity to handle this sector by itself. It is also worth noting that the number of national specialized CSOs is still low despite the emergence of a number of organizations that are concerned about the petroleum sector.
In addition, concerning civil society’s contributions to the sector, it proved that it has contributed to the sector positively as it was expected by scholars and experts in the field. However, these contributions are still minimal in terms of importance. Yet, it could not be blamed for this because of two main reasons which are the procrastination in the development of the petroleum sector of Lebanon and the limited participatory approach applied by the authorities. For instance, an assessment of these contributions based on the different phases of the development of the sector shows that civil society is applying the requirement of international standards and guidelines that are expected to be done before the launching of the extraction process in order to fight corruption and secure a minimum level of transparency in the sector. Some of these contributions are assessing the SEA, lobbying for delaying the passage of the four draft laws, raising awareness, advocating on transparency and international standards, and lobbying for joining the EITI among others. Thus, it is possible to say that civil society is being effective to a certain level in playing its role in the sector, given the limited capabilities it has until now and the degree of cooperation of decision-makers with it. This is also not to forget the limited financial capabilities and internal challenges that it is still facing, which civil society is aware of. Yet, in general, the Lebanese specialized civil society in the oil and gas sector needs to keep on improving itself and on strengthening its capabilities in dealing with the sector in order to meet international standards.

Moreover, it is possible to say that civil society is not in direct contact with final decision-makers, legislators, and policy makers. This is especially true because, although the LPA is responsible for managing the sector and providing technical and advisory assistance to the Ministry of Energy and Water, it is not the one responsible for making
the final decisions about the sector and signing agreements. At the same time, it is the LPA who is mainly responsible for dealing with civil society and cooperating with them on different issues. However, given the fact that the LPA can shape the decisions of the Minister of Energy and Water, civil society can transfer its demands and advocacy to the final decision-makers through the LPA. For instance, this was the case with the declaration of the government to join the EITI and with the provisions made to the Strengthening Transparency Law. In both of these cases, the LPA showed a capability to influence decision-makers in accordance to what serve the work and activities of civil society.

Nevertheless, the tools available at the hands of civil society for monitoring the sector and detecting cases of corruption, such as the EITI and the established national laws, are not enough. It is not enough to rely on them according to experts in the field because cases of corruption can still happen. Thus, the thesis showed that the will of politicians to make the sector work in an environment void of corruption remains the most important condition. However, the available national and international transparency tools can strengthen the position of civil society as a main actor in the sector and as a representative of public’s interests in it. In addition, the lobbying approach that civil society is following is being effective in certain issues while not in others. For instance, civil society was able to achieve some of its demands by only referring to negotiations and to the results of research studies, such as lobbying for the signing-up to the EITI and its assessment of the SEA. However, in other cases it couldn’t have its voice heard unless it referred to a less diplomatic approach of lobbying, such as the video campaign launched by LOGI to delay the passage of the four draft laws. Yet, politicians’ will and
the balance of power that Abdel Samad explained showed to have a great influence on civil society’s lobbying capacity.

Also, a very important finding of this thesis is that according to international standards and best practices, civil society is not expected to play a greater role than monitoring, advocating, raising awareness, and participating in decision-making in the sector. Thus, it is not required to manage the sector by itself or in cooperation with the authorities. In addition, based on the different interviews conducted for the purpose of completing this thesis, no one of the interviewees expects civil society to play such a role. Thus, it is possible to say that civil society intends to play a role in the oil and gas sector of Lebanon that complies with international standards and best practices. For instance, civil society did not show any attempt to overcome the recommendations and provisions of international standards and guidelines in overseeing the work of the Lebanese authorities in the sector, raising awareness and training local contents, and advocating on policy formulation and initiating cooperation in decision-making. However, as it appeared from the analysis of facts and evidences, the role played by civil society is being partially in compliance with the discussed international standards and best practices. This is due to the reluctance of the Lebanese authorities in applying the recommendations and provisions of the international standards and guidelines. Lebanese authorities showed varying degrees of compliance with these standards when it comes to dealing with civil society. For instance, while they are working on establishing the Strengthening Transparency Law to set a legal framework that recognizes and fosters the role of civil society, they didn’t show a real will to include civil society in decision-making and to adopt an inclusive and constructive approach. This was obvious in their
reluctance to invite civil society members to the parliamentary discussion sessions of the four draft laws. It was also obvious from the minimal initiatives by politicians to cooperate with civil society. From here, this thesis believes that the role of civil society in the oil and gas sector of Lebanon is in partial compliance with international standards and best practices due to the varying degree in applying these standards and provisions by the Lebanese authorities and not by civil society, and also due to civil society’s need to strengthen its capabilities.

Last but not least, concerning the readiness and track record of the authorities to cooperate with civil society, the thesis showed that in different sectors the cooperation of politicians with civil society depends on the will of the individuals and their personality, as noted previously. Moreover, it was obvious that the number of initiatives launched by civil society towards the authorities for cooperation is greater than the one launched by the authorities towards civil society. Other than that, there is a difference between the openness of the LPA and that of politicians towards civil society. The LPA is being more open and inclusive in its approach than politicians, in general. In addition, the LPA is helping civil society in playing its role and securing its rights in the sector. Yet, this inclusive approach could be improved and the cooperation should be strengthened, especially that there is a fear that such cooperation might stop with the end of foreign cooperation programs. This is not to forget that the analysis of data showed that trust is a prerequisite for any future genuine cooperation between civil society and the authorities. In addition, the institutionalization of the role of civil society is also a prerequisite for strengthening and legalizing its right to play a role in the sector and participate in decision-making.
After listing all these findings, the thesis was able to conclude that civil society is playing a partially effective role in the sector. For instance, it was effective by its different activities and contributions to the sector, its awareness campaigns, its varied publications and reports about laws and assessment studies, and its lobbying capacity in stopping the passage of the four draft laws and for the joining of the EITI. However, it was not totally effective in influencing decision-making and drafting policies, and also in addressing job opportunities for the locals. In addition, the thesis was able to conclude that civil society aims at playing this role in accordance with international standards and best practices. However, the challenges it is facing in the sector, such as the unwillingness of the authorities to cooperate with it in decision-making and the limited expertise and financial capabilities it has, are preventing it from being fully in compliance with international standards and best practices. This fact resulted in having its role, although existing within the range of international standards and guidelines, still missing a number of activities and actions that it is expected to do in order to truly influence the sector positively. Consequently, this thesis concludes that Lebanese civil society is playing a partially effective role in the oil and gas sector of Lebanon, although compliant with international standards and best practices, due to two main challenges. These are the unwillingness of the authorities to genuinely apply an inclusive approach and the internal challenges existing within the national specialized civil society itself.

8.2 Situating This Research in the Literature on the Role of Civil Society in the Oil and Gas Sector

While the literature is limited to mentioning the positive role of civil society in the oil and gas sector of Lebanon, mainly by fighting corruption and securing the good
governance of the sector, this thesis was able to determine if Lebanese civil society is being truly effective in its role in the sector or not. It has also shown the strengths and weaknesses of the civil society working in the sector. Thus, it concluded that having civil society as a main actor in the sector is essential for securing at least a minimum level of transparency and good governance of the sector. For instance, this civil society proved to be able to advocate and advance some of its demands and contribute to the sector in certain areas.

This thesis also added to the literature an understanding of the reasons preventing civil society from playing a fully effective role which, as noted previously, has been the result of internal challenges and the unwillingness of the authorities to cooperate and apply a participatory approach.

Another contribution of this thesis to the literature is that it specified, according to international standards and best practices, the expected roles from civil society in the petroleum sector of Lebanon. For instance, it concluded that civil society is expected to monitor the sector, to advocate on transparency and good governance, to educate the public and raise awareness about the different aspects of the sector, and to participate in decision-making and cooperate with the authorities. Thus, it is not expected to manage the sector by itself or in partnership with the government, as noted in one of the three points of view explained in the literature review section. Yet, the active civil society in Lebanon’s oil and gas sector did not show any attempt not to comply with international standards and requirements.
8.3 Contribution of This Research to the Field of International Relations

This research has mainly contributed to the field of international relations by addressing the case of Lebanon and comparing it to the existing international standards and good practices in the field of extractive industries.

In addition, it contributed to the field of international relations by addressing a case in which the concept of norms diffusion is expressed mainly through the emulation mechanism. For instance, the thesis showed how national civil society organizations are dependent on learning from international civil society organizations on how to perform in the sector and what to adopt as internationally recognized standards and tools for civil society’s role in extractive industries globally. Thus, the latter constitutes a model for the former to learn from. This is especially true because the national civil society, before the support provided by the international one, did not have the required knowledge on advocating on transparency and on good governance of the sector. Nevertheless, by following the internationally accepted standards and guidelines such as the EITI, the national civil society is aiming to mimic successful models in the oil and gas industry, such as Norway.

This research also showed how international civil society groups can have an impact on the emergence of national ones and on building their capacity; thus, influencing the development of certain sectors in a country.

Furthermore, it highlighted the importance of international standards and agreements in providing guidelines for newcomers to the sector in order to adopt best practices and to prove themselves as knowledgeable stakeholders. The thesis also highlighted their
importance in making local CSOs adopt internationally accepted standards for fighting corruption, strengthening transparency, and applying an inclusive approach in extractive industries. It showed that these international regimes set a number of requirements for countries to abide by, through which the performance of various stakeholders can improve and be assessed.

Last but not least, it contributed to the field of international relations by explaining the effectiveness of international transparency tools and impact on fighting corruption in different countries and explained how civil society organizations worldwide are unifying their efforts on advocating for good governance and transparency by encouraging governments and other stakeholders in the extractive industries sector in adopting these same international standards and requirements.

8.4 Areas for Further Inquiry

This thesis opens the way for further areas of inquiry such as studying means by which the cooperation between civil society and decision-makers in the sector can be improved.

In addition, it would be valuable to study the effectiveness of national legal tools, namely the Strengthening Transparency in the Petroleum Sector Law, in strengthening and institutionalizing the role of civil society in the sector by comparing it to similar national laws applied in other oil producing countries.

Finally, once the sector in Lebanon moves forward and petroleum extraction begins, the role played by civil society can be reassessed by comparing it with the one existing now in order to check for any improvement in the quality of civil society’s performance in the sector and its achievement for its stated goals.
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Appendix

NOTICE OF IRB APPROVAL – EXEMPT STATUS

To: Mrs. Rana AbuRahim
Advisor: Dr. Makram Quassis
Assistant Professor
School of Arts & Sciences

Date: February 26, 2018
File: IRB # LAU.SAS.W17.26/Feb/2018
Protocol Title: The Role of Civil Society in the Oil and Gas Sector of Lebanon

Your application for the above referenced research project has been approved by the Lebanese American University, Institutional Review Board (LAU IRB). This research project qualifies as exempt under the following category:

B. Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless:

(i) information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and

(ii) any disclosure of the human subjects’ responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects’ financial standing, employability, or reputation.

This approval is limited to the activities described in the Protocol Exempt Application and all submitted documents listed on page 2 of this letter. Enclosed with this letter are the stamped approved documents that must be used.

APPROVAL CONDITIONS FOR ALL LAU APPROVED HUMAN RESEARCH PROTOCOLS – EXEMPT

LAU RESEARCH POLICIES: All individuals engaged in the research project must adhere to the approved protocol and all applicable LAU IRB Research Policies. PARTICIPANTS must NOT be involved in any research related activity prior to IRB approval date or after the expiration date.

EXEMPT CATEGORIES: Activities that are exempt from IRB review are not exempt from IRB ethical review and the necessity for ethical conduct.

MODIFICATIONS AND AMENDMENTS: Certain changes may change the review criteria and disqualify the research from exemption status; therefore, any proposed changes to the previously approved exempt study must be reviewed and approved by the IRB before implementation.

NOTIFICATION OF PROJECT COMPLETION: A notification of research project closure and a summary of findings must be sent to the IRB office upon completion. Study files must be retained for a period of 3 years from the date of notification of project completion.

IN THE EVENT OF NON-COMPLIANCE WITH ABOVE CONDITIONS, THE PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR SHOULD MEET WITH THE IRB ADMINISTRATORS IN ORDER TO RESOLVE SUCH CONDITIONS. IRB APPROVAL CANNOT BE GRANTED UNTIL NON-COMPLIANT ISSUES HAVE BEEN RESOLVED.
If you have any questions concerning this information, please contact the IRB office by email at irb@au.edu.lb


Dr. Costantine Daheir
Chair, Institutional Review Board

Institutional Review Board
Lebanese American University

26 FEB 2018
APPROVED

DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Document Description</th>
<th>Date Received</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LAU IRB Exempt Protocol Application</td>
<td>Received 19 February 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction to Questionnaire</td>
<td>Received 19 February 2018, amended 22 February 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questionnaire</td>
<td>Received 19 February 2018</td>
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<tr>
<td>IRB Comments sent:</td>
<td>PI response to IRB’s comments dated:</td>
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<td>22 February 2018</td>
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<tr>
<td>NIH Training – Mohamad Waxiss</td>
<td>Cert.# 1967252 Dated (8 February 2016)</td>
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<tr>
<td>NIH Training – Rana Abdul Rahim</td>
<td>Cert.# 26013588 Dated (23 January 2018)</td>
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</tbody>
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Questionnaire/Interview Script

Questions Common to All Interviewees:

Name:

Age:

Education/Field of Expertise:

Position/Title:

For how long have you been active in this field?

Questions for Civil Society Activists in the Oil and Gas Sector:

1. What can you tell me about the tools used by civil society and its work in the petroleum sector of Lebanon? (e.g. in monitoring the work of the government, in publishing information, source of expertise and knowledge, connecting with each other and with the government).

2. Since the beginning of its activities in the oil and gas sector of Lebanon, what were the contributions of civil society and the changes it made to the sector?

3. Concerning the actions you take and the activities you organize, is there any national law or regulations that regulate your work?

4. How do international NGOs and CSOs provide assistance to you? What is the weight and value of this assistance?
5. Do you cooperate with other national civil society organizations (CSO) and NGOs that work on other sectors?

6. Who has a greater role to play in this sector, national or international organizations? In what ways their role differs?

7. Does this specialized civil society in the oil and gas sector follow or abide to any of the international standards (or guidelines) placed by international organizations and institutions? If yes, what are these standards?

8. What are the benefits that civil society can get from the signing of the EITI Standard by the Lebanese government?

9. Although the government declared its will to join the EITI, it didn’t sign the EITI Standard yet. Why do you think the government didn’t sign it yet?

10. What have you learned from the international best practices of civil society in the extractive industry?

11. If we look at some of the articles that talked about the importance of the role of civil society in this sector, we are able to find three different opinions concerning the degree of involvement of civil society in the sector. The first opinion is the one asking civil society to play a role in monitoring and assessing the work of the government in the sector. The second one is asking civil society to play a role in advocating and participating in decision-making and drafting laws. The third one is asking civil society to manage the sector in partnership with the government or by itself. Where do you think the role of civil society fits best, taking into consideration the available capacities? And why?
12. Do you think civil society has the full capacity to play this role or it still suffers from some weaknesses and difficulties? (e.g. personnel, finance, expertise, access to information, EITI)

13. Was there any initiative taken by the government or the Lebanese Petroleum Administration (LPA) to include civil society in the sector? (e.g. in decision making, in drafting laws, in signing agreements)

14. Is there any difficulty or hindrance in dealing with the government and the LPA? If yes, how can you get over it?

15. How can you describe the cooperation of the government with you? How can you describe the cooperation of the LPA with you?

16. If we want to divide the petroleum sector into different aspects, we can mention: the governance aspect, the economic aspect, the environmental aspect, the political and strategic aspect, and the technical aspect. Among these aspects, the greatest focus of civil society is on the governance and economic aspects (governance, transparency, accountability, revenues, etc.). Why is this main focus on these two aspects more than the others?

17. What are the weaknesses of the public sector in managing the oil and gas industry of Lebanon?

Questions for Civil Society Activists in Other Sectors:

1. From your own experience in dealing with the government, how can you describe the government’s cooperation with civil society?
2. Is it easier to cooperate and deal with public sector employees or with ministers who are, in most of the cases, representatives of the different Lebanese political parties?

3. Do you think civil society in Lebanon, despite its capacities, is able to achieve some success in establishing good governance in a specific sector or in a specific public institution?

4. What are the challenges that civil society organizations face when dealing with the government and with public institutions?

5. Do international standards and best practices work effectively in Lebanon in case civil society activists wanted to adopt them or is it national laws and regulations that reign?

6. Did you hear before about a specialized civil society in the oil and gas sector of Lebanon?

7. If the answer on the above question was yes, please answer the following question. Do you have any contact or have cooperated with this civil society?

8. Do you think it will be easy for them to ensure a good governance of the sector and accountability?

9. What advice do you give to this newly emerging civil society on the best venues of influence that they should use to achieve their goals and demands?

10. Is it easy to transfer information and knowledge you acquire to the public?
Questions for Lebanese Petroleum Administration

Member:

1. Do you believe that civil society has the capacity to play an effective role in the development of the oil and gas sector of Lebanon? (Expertise, knowledge, finance, tools, activities, capabilities, etc.)

2. Since the beginning of its involvement in the sector, was there any changes or contributions made by civil society to the sector? If yes, what were these contributions and changes?

3. How do you describe the current performance of civil society in the sector?

4. Do you like to cooperate with civil society in decision-making, drafting laws, and managing the sector?

5. On the 21st of December 2017, at the 4th Global Business Summit, Prime Minister Saad Hariri promised civil society to postpone the passing of four draft laws in order to allow civil society to review these laws. How close are you from this promise?

6. Did you take any initiative to cooperate with civil society in this sector or to have it as a partner in decision-making? If yes, what are these steps? If no, will there be any future initiatives or cooperation?

7. Why has the government not yet sign the EITI Standard?

8. If we look at some of the articles that talked about the importance of the role of civil society in this sector, we are able to find three different opinions concerning the degree of involvement of civil society in the sector. The first opinion is the one asking civil society to play a role in monitoring and assessing the work of the
government in the sector. The second one is asking civil society to play a role in advocating and participating in decision-making and drafting laws. The third one is asking civil society to manage the sector in partnership with the government or by itself. Where do you think, among these three arguments, the role of civil society should be? And why?

9. Do you follow any international standards or guidelines regarding the degree and ways of engagement of civil society in this field?

10. Is there any national law regarding the work of civil society in the oil and gas sector?

11. Do you think that there is no hindrance on civil society to play its role in the sector and that it is being given all its rights?

12. Is civil society hindering or challenging your work in the management of the sector?

13. What are the weaknesses of the public sector in managing the oil and gas industry of Lebanon?

14. Why do you think the main focus of civil society is on the governance and economic aspects of this sector?

Questions for Experts in the Field at Think Tanks:

1. Do you consider yourself as a member of civil society?

2. What is your assessment for the role that civil society is playing in the oil and gas sector of Lebanon?

3. According to you, what are the strengths and weaknesses of civil society in the oil and gas sector?
4. Do you suggest for the Lebanese civil society any example on the role of civil society in other resource-rich country to learn from? And why?

5. Is the Lebanese government being cooperative with civil society or making any initiative to cooperate with it?

6. Do you think that the EITI will really add a value to the role of civil society in this sector and strengthen it?

7. What can you tell me about the Memorandum of Understanding signed between LCPS and LPA?

8. A review of the articles written on the topic of Lebanon’s oil and gas sector shows that the greatest focus is on the governance and the economic aspects of this sector. Why do you think there is a main focus on these two aspects?

9. How are the articles published by your institution helping this sector move forward?

10. What are the venues of influence that you believe you can use to influence the decision-making and the process of sector development?

11. Do you think that, despite all the activities and events organized by civil society, there is still lack in engagement with the public?

12. How can you describe the relation between civil society and oil companies?

13. Do you think the Ministry of Energy and Water and the LPA have the capacity to manage the sector without cooperating with civil society? And why?

14. If we look at some of the articles that talked about the importance of the role of civil society in this sector, we are able to find three different opinions concerning the degree of involvement of civil society in the sector. The first opinion is the one asking civil society to play a role in monitoring and assessing the work of the government in the sector. The second one is asking civil society to play a role in advocating and participating in decision-making and drafting laws. The third one is asking civil society to manage the sector in partnership with the government or by itself. Where do you think the role of civil society fits best, taking into consideration the available capacities? And why?