

LEBANESE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY

The Persistence of Clientelism in Lebanon

By

Joey Geadah

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Thesis Approval Form

Student Name: Joey Geadah

I.D. #: 200701350

Thesis Title: The Political Economy of Clientelism in Lebanon

Program / Department: International Affairs/Social Sciences

School: Arts and Sciences

The undersigned certify that they have examined the final electronic copy of this thesis and approved it in Partial Fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of:

Master of Arts in the major of International Affairs

Approved by:

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Imad Salamey

Signature:

Committee Member Dr. Sami Baroudi

Signature:

Committee Member Dr. Paul Tabar

Signature:

Date

26 January, 2015



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Dedication

To my mother and everyone who believed in me

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The Persistence of Clientelism in Lebanon

Joey Geadah

ABSTRACT

How does clientelism implicate the political, economic and governance foundation of a developing nation? This thesis examines clientelism as it coincides with sectarian consociational power sharing arrangement in a fragile environment. It describes clientelism's historic and contemporary role in shaping the political economy of Lebanon. It unravels the peculiarity of clientelism in contrast to both capitalism and socialism within a deeply divided society. A series of interviews are conducted with key public informants in order to inform the relationship between political allegiance and economic benefits that are often formulated by nepotistic and sectarian-based networks. The research reveals that clientelism combines variety of capitalistic as well as socialistic attributes in the formulation of sectarian allegiance and political leadership, outlined in a zero-sum game.

Keywords: Clientelism, Nepotism, Favoritism, Capitalism, Socialism, Welfare, Lebanese Confessionalism, Sectarian Consociationalism, Chaos Management, Political Economy, Governance, Transparency, Meritocracy, Clientele, Za'im, Patronage.

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Chapter One

Foundations of Clientelism's Political Economy in Lebanon

1.1 Introduction

In a country which still suffers from perpetual assortment of domestic political quandaries, the notion of clientelism continues to augment as political parties, warlords and sectarian affiliations have thrived to replace the role of a fair, egalitarian and virtuous country. Conventionally, clientelism is the exchange of public goods and services, in return for political favors conducted between patrons and clients, via clientelistic and nepotistic networks. Transparency, meritocracy, accountability and other related doctrines are yet to exist in a nation where political and economical awareness might be perceived as juvenile, which by default erodes any opportunity to establish effective governance. Clientelism is a self-proclaimed concept making it a new dynamic in the Lebanese politics, which with time probably nurtured on chaos that possibly render it into a standalone entity. The paper will try to detect the perseverance of clientelism via its networks that could ultimately emerge as an economic model principally managed through chaos, making it a skewed pattern. If this is proven, then it has represented a novel mode of economic production that is antagonistic to both capitalism and socialism. The paper will observe three interrelated disciplines which might get implicated directly and indirectly, consciously and

unconsciously by clientelism: the political spectrum, the economic field and public governance. Arguably, the paper will examine how clientelism has contributed to Lebanon's history of grievances, and if it has distorted the fragile constituents of the country's power sharing scheme, through zero-sum game schemes that are overwhelmingly based on sectarian consociationalism.

“Lebanon uses a mixture of consociational power-sharing principles to manage cleavages within its diverse polity alongside elections of varying degrees of cleanliness to allocate formal political power” (Corstange, 2011). Probably, the heavy dependency on clientelism perhaps converted the homeland into a privately owned firm, and the citizens as loyal clientele.

1.2 Political Economy of Clientelism

Clientelism as a doctrine was perceived as a premature indicator of modernism. Nevertheless, neither political advancement nor economic development was able to outmode or even eradicate it. “It assumed that clientelism was a vestige of early modern development and that political and economic modernization would render it obsolete and ultimately end it” (Roniger, 2004). With time, the political economy of clientelism proved to be an intriguing feature ought to be distinguished, as clientelism has become an integral component vis-à-vis contemporary economics and modern politics, simultaneously. In addition, clientelism influences the economic decision of a clientele, in parallel with the desired social welfare and/or status that he wishes to acquire. Such notions may

possibly be proportionally related to a clientele's political judgment that is shaped and molded via nepotistic context, as an outcome of a clientelistic relationship.

Clientelism has a political competitiveness nature, as political leaders rally against each other thriving to enhance their proposed incentives and upgrading the standard of anticipated promises, in order to make their offers more lucrative so that clienteles accept them; in exchange for political endorsements conducted via elections and communal lobbying. "In consolidated authoritarian regimes, where the policymaking component of elections is highly circumscribed, elections are best thought of as competitions over access to state resources, or "competitive clientelism," and the candidates and voters alike recognize this" (Lust,2009). Furthermore, clientelism in a political economy context, can act as an indicator regarding the dynamic of politics, the economic development status and the societal apparatus in less developed nations; enabling the observer to comprehend its persisting effects across the political economic realm.

"Clientelism as political economy helps us understand why political competition seems less than vigorous, why economic development is lethargic and why maldistribution and social segmentation are pervasive in many developing countries" (Medina & Stokes, 2002).

In general, regardless of a political leader's status whether as an incumbent or an opposition, clientelism can be pursued as a vibrant tactic in order to maintain existing supporters and concurrently tapping new addressable political followers.

“Politicians are in it to win, so to speak, and the incumbent must choose whether to employ good government practices or clientelism in his pursuit of this goal” (Weitz-Shapiro 2008). A political leader in office could have a slight advantage as he would be having direct access to public resources, and is forced to share his portion of goods and services with his once promised clientelistic base. “On the supply side of clientelist goods, it could well be that incumbents are more credible about delivering on those goods than are opposition candidates” (Wantchekon, 2003).

Political leaders deliberately penalize individuals who promised to vote for them, but later on abstained from doing so. Only devoted clienteles and their affiliates in return are given access to public goods and services, as a display of gratitude. This creates inequalities amongst citizens (clientele versus non-clientele) in a given geographic area, due to their electoral engagement vis-à-vis a winning candidate. “By definition, clientelism entails threatening recipients of government-funded benefits with the withdrawal of these benefits if they vote incorrectly” (Weitz-Shapiro 2008). However, in the successive electoral term, this fact can be used as an opportunity to blackmail citizens who didn’t cast their votes in the first electoral term. Hence, those who didn’t show any sort of allegiance and fidelity can be used as an election reserve to be potentially addressed, in order to expand their clientelistic club.

An additional clientelistic tactic is that in some cases sustaining the status quo of political and economic conditions is critical; alongside generating distortive

enticements, acting as a bait to halt down long term advancement. This will keep the prices of electoral votes as low as possible, when the successive election campaign approaches. What makes this a “winning formula”, is the fact that such tactical approach, lacks public disclosure from the producer side (political leader) and the consumer side (citizen). “ Other adverse consequences of clientelism - such as perpetuating the political power of established and dominant political parties, inhibiting political competition, and perhaps even creating perverse incentives among politicians to prevent long-term development in order to keep the price of votes low - are even harder to detect” (Bardhan & Mookherjee, 2012).

Noticeably, a vast majority of clienteles know beforehand the intentions of the politicians. This produces a sense of reluctance and pessimism of whether to support and follow a specific political leader, or not. Consequently, fluctuations of proposed incentives are recorded on the behalf of politicians, in order to better tempt citizens. This demonstrates that the relationship between a leader and a client can be described as not credible, since disloyalty and treachery could occur from both parties. “Both patrons and clients face temptations to cheat each other in every transaction, the patron by taking the client’s vote and withholding the payoff, and the client by taking the patron’s reward and staying home” (Corstange, 2011). It can be best described as an asymmetric association among the involved stakeholders. From the political leader’s side, a high probability is that he could not match any of his promised offers; which eventually would

entitle a wider periphery for clients to cheat and opt-out from voting. “Therefore, citizens must indeed deliver their support, and politicians, once in power, must pay for the support with the policies that they promised” (Robinson & Verdier, 2013). Consequently, a gap occurs between what was promised from the political leader’s side such as providing goods and services, and what was promised as political favors from the clientele’s side. This can be labeled as a “deadweight loss”, in which the loss of political-economic efficiency was not achieved due to disequilibrium. Within this margin of error, bargaining powers could be capitalized on and deployed by clienteles in order to reach an optimum point; or else tradeoffs could take place in a “take it or leave it” monopolistic approach. “Just as politicians might wish to commit to actions that are not ex post optimal, so might citizens” (Robinson & Verdier, 2013). In the vast majority of the scenarios, a political leader who depends heavily on clientelism lacks a concrete political agenda, beyond promising to cater for his clients’ needs and desires. Such distorting factors, lead to a speculation of clientelism’s market forces and with time clientelism becomes a public policy in disguise.

Whereas in non-clientelistic states, candidates running for elections, plan their electoral programs based on pragmatic and realistic objectives. Accordingly, their communal promises pertaining to the access to public goods and services can be perceived as convincing. “In non-clientelist countries, national candidates and national parties are able to make credible promises regarding public good provision or national economic and social policies” (Keefer & Vlaicu, 2007).

When it comes to the social status, it usually plays a crucial role in attracting clientelistic vibes. Citizens who are financially disadvantaged with inferior standards of living, have a high tendency and are more prone to pursue clientelistic approaches, in order to improve their socio-economic conditions. “Low levels of development and high poverty among voters facilitate clientelism, partly because their votes are cheap to purchase” (Bardhan & Mookherjee, 2012). What they require exactly is an effective patron and/or a highly connected intermediary.

Arguably, some perceive clientelism as a concept that could have a positive feature. In clientelistic communities, political leaders spend some time trying to figure out how they can offer a set of goods and services in exchange for political favors. Whereas in non-clientelistic communities, the political elites depend on drafting convenient public policies in order to cater for the basic needs of their citizens. “The contrast in the ways in which legislators from non-clientelist and clientelist countries spend their time provides some indication of the relatively reduced emphasis on constituency service in non-clientelist countries” (Keefer & Vlaicu, 2007).

As for non-clientelistic citizens who live in clientelistic societies, they might encounter a sense of urgency which triggers them to collaborate with their fellow counterparts who have access to public goods and services in a swift momentum, by being part of nepotistic networks; this generates a prisoner’s dilemma condition. “However, to use a game-theoretical analogy, citizens living in areas

where clientelism is robust are faced with what could be considered suboptimal outcomes in a prisoner's dilemma situation" (Network of Democracy Research Institutes (NDRI), 2001).

Another dimension of a prisoner's dilemma vis-à-vis clientelism, can be demonstrated by repetitively seizing clientelistic occasions whenever applicable, as long as affiliations are sustained and intact. "One prominent resolution to the prisoner's dilemma in theory, and opportunism in clientelistic exchange in practice, has been to embed individual, episodic exchanges in ongoing relationships with repeated interactions" (Corstange, 2011).

To better examine the political economy of clientelism, a cross-discipline analysis ought to be used among the fields of anthropology, sociology, economics and politics, in order to provide a better holistic view regarding the topic in question. "Moreover, since it is at the crossroads of politics, administration, markets, and society, the study of clientelism poses challenges of cross-disciplinary cooperation and varied disciplinary expertise" (Roniger, 2004).

1.3 Capitalistic Overview vs Socialistic Overview

As conventionally identified, capitalism is an economic political system profoundly based on the notion of free-markets' empowerment prominently known as laissez-faire approach, granting its capitalistic attributes to individuals who perceive them as standalone self-independent entities. On the other hand,

socialism is a socio-economic system deeply promoting egalitarian elements to its citizens. The two dogmas deeply diverge on the economic, social and political levels; such as ownership, equity, political systems, social responsibility, efficiency, employment and other multifaceted dimensions.

When it comes to ownership nature, capitalism endorses privately owned businesses via supporting individualistic initiatives, while socialism through public enterprises or joint collaboration, direct core means of production leaving almost no room for private planning, personal development and vigorous career aspirations. Another differential characteristic is efficiency which is essential for capitalism as it continuously strives to discover ways to diminish costs and promotes innovative goods and services to generate profit, which will be potentially reinvested and re-injected into the economy, acting as an economic stimulus for growth; whereas for socialism, due to the fact that approximately no monetary incentives are being offered, profit generation is correlated to mass-scaling economies, which are due to the exerted communal effort. Therefore any sort of revenue surplus attained by local industries and domestic enterprises, must benefit the public as a whole especially the labor faction. In parallel, under capitalistic conditions, price regulations and controls are determined by market forces, meanwhile for socialism it is stipulated primarily by the state.

On the social level, moving towards establishing status-less communities, capitalism considers that any sort of inequality is a result of distinction due to the

individuals' competencies and output; however socialism attempts to redistribute national resources to ensure communal cohesion and social equality.

Shifting to the political arena, some political systems are based on the beliefs of capitalism and socialism, or at least are associated to them due to similar shared features. On one hand, capitalism can be demonstrated in democratic states and even authoritative regimes. On the other hand, socialism can prevail in welfare states, social democratic nations and even in quasi communist regimes. Amid such ongoing contestation, one should bear in mind that the past century displayed contradictory ideological flows; as from one side the inclination towards promoting democracy and enthusiasm regarding civil society, was met with continuous proliferation of clientelism from the other side. "The unexpected persistence of patronage and clientelism in the late twentieth century, when the world should be moving toward greater equality, democratic consolidation, and the empowerment of civil society, has posed interesting problems for social scientist and observers" (Güneş-Ayata & Roniger, 1994).

Under these influential doctrines, the topic of clientelism can be felt consciously and unconsciously. Arguably, some pondering debates took place trying to conceptualize clientelism vis-à-vis capitalism and socialism; nevertheless no conclusive results can be drawn upon. "The biggest challenge to comparative analysis remains the difficulty with operationalizing the concept by developing indicators of clientelism that can be consistently measured across different political contexts" (Fox, 2012).

Critics of capitalism argue that clientelism has a capitalistic mannerism or even in some drastic cases, consider it heavily entrenched in it. For instance, they assume that clientelism leads to the inevitable outcome of what is eminently known as “crony capitalism”; an economic model whereby business networks connote the relationship between corporate figures and governmental officials, to ensure the profitable workflow of businesses. The wheeling and dealing of capital flow between governmental officials and their “clienteles” leads to the sustainability of nepotistic networks, causing societal disintegration and with time establishes communal disparities and social segregation. Likewise, Marxists’ forecasting can be best described as the emergence of clientelism as a class consciousness intensifier, which ultimately will be employed as a wildcard for political supremacy in order to have an upper hand in political and economical bargaining powers, to achieve social and economic hegemony.

On the end of the spectrum, capitalists counterargue that clientelism occurs due to the absence of free market forces and the lack of perfect competition.

According to them, the socialistic meddling of a government in the economy, leads to the favoritism of certain affiliates by obstructing competition and mandating economic activities to incompetent connections. This reality introduces clientelistic networks via a governmental regulatory grip, which also predetermines the prices of goods and services.

Conversely, another dimension of which clientelism is associated to capitalism is economic opportunity, due to the monopolistic access to the public goods and services by political leaders and their nepotistic affiliates. “Discriminatory access to welfare goods can create new inequalities or further entrench existing inequalities and, at the extreme, can even strain social cohesion” (Cammett, 2011).

On the contrary, contenders of socialism perceived clientelism as a way to brainwash and distort the mindset of citizens, by already choosing on their behalf the life’s basic preferences such as education, health care system and employment conditions via manipulating them through clientelistic associates; making them bear the consequences of their political inclination which is seldom declared. Hence, in that sense, opponents of socialism consider clientelism as socialism in camouflage, that gives no importance whatsoever for freedom of choice and obstruct the citizens’ necessary democratic rights. Nevertheless, socialists might rebut this point specifically as there isn’t definite proof that can validate this notion. “Yet the main question is not whether clientelism persists, but rather to what degree it interferes with citizens’ exercise of their democratic right” (Fox, 2012). In return, supporters of capitalism would heavily refute and emphasize that the perception of clientelism can barely be detected in communities that are initiated on the basis of personal willpower, similar to capitalistic societies that encourage and even reward individual initiatives. “Clientelism is less obviously a problem under an individualistic conception of

popular sovereignty in which the popular will must derive from individual wills” (Hopkin, 2006).

Henceforth, amidst the enduring contestation of whether clientelism has a capitalistic or a socialistic inclination, paradoxically enough, both capitalists and socialists tackle clientelism in a “cherry-picking” approach. Whenever the notion is ruthlessly scrutinized, both schools disown and deny any sort of rapport with it. Conversely, when clientelism and its derivative doctrines are perceived as exotic subject matters which are worth investigating and which they might contribute positively to the economic and political realms, both schools would promptly try to establish association with clientelism or even in some extreme cases try to adopt it. The paper examines how such phenomenon in Lebanon transformed into a new mode of economic production that counterbalances both capitalism and socialism, situating itself as a new dynamic in domestic politics. Hence, it studies clientelism in Lebanon vis-à-vis economic relations which are structured in a zero-sum game whether entrenched in capitalistic or socialistic framework or even if it functions as a distinctive political economic structure; preventing any sort of confessional hegemony.

1.4 Overview of Clientelism in Lebanon

The inauguration of Clientelism on the Lebanese soil can't be analogically mapped back in history without taking into account the atypical case of the Lebanese nation-building which witnessed an assortment of societal building

blocks. “As a case study for multi-communal nation-building, Lebanon has fluctuated between the two extreme poles of communal disintegration and exemplary intercommunal compromise and co-existence” (Ziadeh, 2006). Due to its geopolitical location, Lebanon faced several historic ruling powers majorly the Romans, Byzantines, Arab rule, Ottomans, French and some other nations in contemporary periods as a result of different alibis. In addition, many ethnic groups migrated to Lebanon and its safeguarded mountains, as it acted as a secure haven for ethnic and cultural minorities. This led to religious, political and economical mobilizations which ultimately launched rivalry over power, and triggered the inhabitants to seek access to influential figures which resulted in the emergence of favoritism. “The history of confessional Lebanon is paradoxical: members of the various confessions were persecuted and forced to leave their national homes and to make the rugged mountains of Lebanon their shelter, but the persecution they suffered in common did not bring them together” (Koury,1976).

Distinctly, it was under the feudal epoch where clientelism gained supplementary momentum. The era was nurtured and intensified by the Ottoman feudal system which aimed to manipulate and weaken the country’s political and economic autonomy. Under the administration of the “Two qaim-maqamat” and then the establishment of the “Mutasarrifiyah”, the allegiance of the public was granted to the landlords, feudalistic leaders and numerous influential intermediaries that were partisans of Ottoman officials; in return for security, economic subsidies

and social recognition whenever tolerated. “In feudal Lebanon, the whole fabric of the social structure was based on the fidelity of a man to his overlord” (Khalaf, 1968). As the nation’s administrative scheme fluctuated from the declaration of the State of Greater Lebanon back in September 1920 to the Lebanese Independence in November 1943, passing through successive existential crisis and a devastating fifteen years of civil war, reaching our current political labyrinth, clientelism survived, persisted and even amplified via new actors and innovative means and methods; yet regularly defying the proper evolution of a Lebanese political life and the development of its economy. “It is, therefore, of utmost importance to understand how and why clientelist arrangements emerge and persist over time” (Romaniuc, 2012). The mainstream of political leaders in Lebanon emerged as a result of two products: (a) feudalistic families and (b) warlords. Almost no single chief leader originated from outside those two “prerequisites”. Since the independence of Lebanon, a new socio-political term was coined, labeled as “Za’im”. In other words, the word “Za’im” is highly equivalent to a feudal leader or a landlord, who functions in a contemporary political realm employing his money, power and communal influence as some of his arsenal. However, as an alternative of supplying security, food and shelter, economic and social favors are offered such as providing jobs, paying academic tuitions, even simplifying governmental and bureaucratic processes and most reprehensibly using judicial interferences to preserve a supporter’s legal status despite any malevolent action. Exploiting and

capitalizing on an affiliate's set of basic necessities, is a common tactic among the proclaimed "Zu'ama" (plural form of Za'im) in exchange for perpetual political support and attachment, which is personified via elections and in some cases, ideological fanaticism. "The za'im will protect "his" clients and will foster his own interests at the same time as theirs" (Hottinger, 1961). Noticeably, the concept of a "Za'im" is not solely restricted to a given sect; on the contrary it transcends above all sectarian differentiations and distinctions, as this phenomenon is highly rooted in Lebanon's sectarian consociationalism. "The communal elite of the traditionalist political leaders, zu'ama', and regional dynasties, al-buyut al-siyasiya, were the dominant representatives of their communities" (Ziadeh, 2006).

On the other end of the spectrum, the clients are referred to as "Zilm". Their needs of goods and services vary with time and space. Nevertheless, the absence of a righteous and egalitarian government remains an everlasting administrative disorder. A Lebanese citizen with extensive nepotistic network will remain concerned to sustain them and frequently utilizing such connections, to realize his basic standards of living and beyond. Whereas those who lack direct access to a political leader or to his cadres, will either suffer or surrender, or eventually be carried away by the notion of clientelism and sectarianism which both hinder socio-economic opportunities based on meritocratic credentials; and ultimately they would turn into obeying clientele. "As long as the social structure remains predominantly ascriptive and particularistic in character, the Lebanese citizen

will derive greater satisfaction and security from his kinship and communal ties than from his involvement or participation in purely rational or ideological associations” (Khalaf, 1968).

1.5 Objective & Significance of Study

The paper aims to scrutinize how clientelism survived, amplified and persisted until it became a standalone economic dynamic in Lebanon’s societal building-block based on chaotic configuration that counterbalances both capitalism and socialism. The research examines the various effects of clientelism on the Lebanese political-economic domain, in parallel with its effects on the public governance. It allows the reader to become acquainted with the concept of clientelism, a notion that has been persisting for centuries in Lebanon, supposedly hindering the proper evolution of its political life, obstructing the development of its economy and abstaining it public governance. “Pervasive clientelism is at the core of the country’s political system (Bertelsmann Foundation 2012) making political corruption and nepotism Lebanon’s most serious corruption challenge” (Wickberg, 2012) . These shattering certainties have made competent governance a farfetched aspiration and a long term target, which is yet to be materialized.

Besides pinpointing the chronic ailments caused by clientelism, the paper proposes a set of solutions and recommendations that may help eradicate such malevolent phenomenon or at least minimize its enduring implications that still

resonates throughout the Lebanese society, through which politicians and their followers utilize chaos management schemes to undermine their communal counterparts by economically intimidating them.

This research serves as a reference for the readers who are interested in capitalizing on its content, for any potential research and more in-depth analysis, whether regarding the Lebanese clientelism or even for compare-and-contrast examination vis-à-vis peer states, specifically Middle Eastern and North African (MENA) based countries which share common attributes such as lack of accountability, deficiency in meritocracy, communal mistrust, corruption, incompetent governance and various other mutual features. Ultimately, the paper provides the readers with a critical thinking context which will permit them to judge and tackle the issue from a political and economic perspective, and intrigue them to offer alternative solutions and reforms for clientelism in Lebanon, which is becoming an economic mode of action, which might be nurturing from chaos and public distrust.

Chapter 1 demonstrates the foundations of clientelism's political economy in Lebanon, through which primarily the political economy of clientelism is discussed in a macro perspective. Then an overview is supplied regarding capitalism versus socialism inputs vis-à-vis the discussed subject matter. Later on, an outline of clientelism in Lebanon is showcased in order to pave the way to tackle the issue. This chapter is wrapped up by displaying the objective and the significance of the study.

Chapter 2 discusses how the sectarian route of clientelism in Lebanon is tracked, by mentioning the confessionalism and sectarian consociationalism profile of the nation. Then the chapter tries to detect whether clientelism in Lebanon is of a capitalistic or welfare features; acting as the pillar for clientelism identification in Lebanon.

Chapter 3 illustrates the pursued methodology in performing this thesis.

Primarily, the utilized approach of conducting research regarding clientelism in Lebanon was to touch base and interview experts and key professionals across sectors and interrelated disciplines who would give the paper an added value, by sharing their sets of expertise, personal experiences, anecdotes and offering real-life accounts. The interviews were carried out in Lebanon during the dates of November 19th and December 4th, 2014 in the offices of the interviewees (names of individuals and institutions are revealed in this chapter). Likewise, secondary research was practiced by referring to existing data through academic and scholar publications such as books, journals and articles all being pertained to clientelism and some other keywords related to the theme of the paper such as clientelism, nepotism, favoritism, capitalism, socialism, welfare state, Lebanese confessionalism, sectarian consociationalism, chaos management, political economy, governance, transparency, meritocracy, clientele, za'im, patronage among others; in addition to analyzing governmental studies such as the Office of the Minister of State for Administrative Reform in Lebanon (OMSAR). In

parallel, utilizing personal sets of professional expertise and academic background to benefit the chief objective of the paper.

Chapter 4 conducts analysis of the data and the different content sets. In addition, a set of parameters required to recognize clientelism is supplied to the reader. This chapter is fulfilled by revealing the diagnostic results of the analysis.

Chapter 5 supplies a full-fledged conclusion of the paper alongside a list of recommendations and reforms trying to eradicate clientelism, or at least to contain it to its minimal level.

Chapter Two

The Sectarian Route of Clientelism in Lebanon

2.1 Lebanese Confessionalism

Lebanon has been eminently known for its confessionalistic scheme, through which it propels the domestic political life. Far from theological regimes, yet close to it, Lebanon's religious elites and ethnic influential figures heavily impacted the political realm, by influencing decision and policy makers to accommodate to their custom-fitted needs that serve their confessionalistic benefits as a whole, and at the same time their private interests peculiarly. "In practice, the prevailing political set up tended to foster corruption, nepotism, clientelism, and laxity in upholding the public interest when it came to conflict with private interests" (Makdisi, 2004). What augmented such realities is that deficiency of meritocratic approaches alongside administrative unaccountability is still persisting till nowadays. Secular demands always hover in the horizon, yet in a state which holds fragile power sharing equilibrium, it seems impossible to separate religion and sectarian inclination from public governance. The formula that was injected into Lebanese politics, aimed to preserve civic cohesion and to establish the fundamentals of a democratic state. The first Lebanese constitution which was derived from the French Third Republic, did not explicitly demonstrate that Lebanon is a confessional state; nevertheless the sectarian greediness of religious and ethnic leaders, lead to the distribution of power to

take a confessional form, rendering the nation with a confessional silhouette, yet tacitly mentioned. “Like confessionalism, this vulgar clientalism has been institutionalized into Lebanon's political system, thus making the Lebanese state an association of a variety of patrons” (Hamzeh, 2001). From that moment and onwards, a vicious cycle of clientelism started to roll making the consumers’ side (citizens) depend on their sectarian and communal leaders to have better socio-economic opportunities by having access to the public goods and services, and in return the producers’ side (political leaders) would ensure political sustainability through electoral support which is personified by expanding their clientelistic base. “It has been observed that clientelism thrives in polities marked by deep ethnic divisions or by other kind of deep political cleavages” (Medina & Stokes, 2002). The nation has a mere outline of a political community due to its impulsiveness. The domestic political culture is composed of an assortment of ethnic and religious sub-factions which are triggered by deviating visions and contradictory communal agendas. Some of the communal common traits would be language, traditional clothes, music and food. Nevertheless, authentic domestic communal sentiments might sharply diverge. “Furthermore, because Lebanon’s ruling elite did little to promote nation-building” (Habib, 2009). Confessionalism has legitimized the institutionalization of sectarian discrepancies, undermining the essence of nationwide citizenship. Confessional institutions such as Islamic and Christian special courts are equipped, financed and protected by the government by allocating fraction of its general budget, in

order to safeguard their functions; as each confession has its own personal status structure. Moreover, ministries have built close rapport with sectarian associations, which primarily provide social services. Within such domains, confessional leaders act as intermediaries between their clients and such entities, with a competitive comportment in order to provide access to services and goods that are being offered. One can perceive that the politics of confessionalism are being used in an antagonistic behavior to avoid hegemony of other sects, or at least to reduce any possible advantage as much as possible. “Confessional politics in Lebanon may be linked to what game theorists call a zero-sum game for which a “minimax” strategy is proper; that is, all the actors conduct their affairs so that each seeks the lowest maximum disadvantage –which means (in a zero-sum game) the lowest maximum advantage for the sum of all other actors” (Koury,1976). Zero-sum game, grabbed momentum as it best functions in an environment via which political cleavages dictate the “no-winner and no-loser” motto, similar to the Lebanese confessionalistic milieu. This minimax tactic fortified the nation’s political structure which overlapped with an effective statehood and nation-building, rendering a wide gap between communal expectations and attained certainties. “Instead of promoting a monolithic national identity, the consociational state rests upon distinct ethnosectarian ‘pillars’ – a confederation of protected identity groups” (Hudson,1997).

2.2 Lebanese Sectarian Consociationalism

Examining the literature review of clientelism vis-à-vis confessionalism in general and Lebanese sectarian consociationalism in specific, is imperative as it will detect the breadth and depth of the research questions established throughout this academic paper. “The Lebanese republic gained its final boundaries in 1920, and its independent political entity by 1943” (Habib, 2009). In 1943, the Lebanese power-sharing fundamentals were constructed, via The National Pact which cemented the nation’s consociationalistic face that is heavily entrenched to its confessional paradigm. The pact identified and recognized Lebanon’s eighteen sects, primarily divided between Christians and Muslims. Perceptibly, it has institutionalized the confessional allocation of uppermost public administrative positions based on the distribution of population based on sectarian proportionality. “Most importantly, the National Pact turned into an ingredient for the perpetuation of power by sectarian elites through a system of clientelism (zuama), which further fortified political confessionalism as the ultimate realism of Lebanese nationalism” (Salamey,2014). Consequently, utter allegiance became to the sect rather than to the country, and to a za’im rather than to an official institution. In order to “righteously” represent the sect, individuals are on a quest to seek appraisals, blessings, approvals and sponsorships of their ruling confessional figures. In its turn, this “treasure-hunt” fortified the concept of clientelism and acted as a national “cash-cow”. A “cash-cow” is a term regularly used in the business and investment world, in order to

depict an asset or a product which after initial operation or investing in, will keep on generating money and capital gains regardless of its lifecycle

Continuous foreign intervention, internal political quandaries, demographic alterations and other existential dilemmas, all shook the Lebanese governance structure which led to everlasting political crisis that reached its climax with a fifteen years civil war. Such calamities, amplified the anxieties of sectarian hegemony which fiercely scrutinized the quintessence of consociationalism.

Lebanon's consociationalism model underwent two core reconfigurations. The first was in October 1989 through the Taef Agreement, which concluded the fifteen years Lebanese Civil War, re-promoting the doctrine of "mutual coexistence". Despite the fact that in pre-Taef era, the power-sharing structure was in favor of the Lebanese Christians, however the new 50:50 power-sharing ratio stamped the sectarian formula for Lebanon, as a pacifier for the post civil war's political and economical normality, establishing what is politically known as the "Second Republic". "And in times of inter-communal rivalries, the leader plays the role of an arbiter in the re-establishing equilibrium between the subcommunes involved" (Habib, 2009). Amidst the epoch of the "Second Republic", the Syrian intervention orchestrated the Lebanese clientelistic networks making it the chief maestro that guided, managed and deployed the clientelistic domestic life. Consequently, the custody imposed by the Syrian presence, widened the gap between sectarian groups as they were considered as the main patron of political and economical benefits. "The combination of

sectarianism, ‘familialism’ sustained ‘clientelism’ and, after the 1990, the growing direct influence of the super rich businessmen and of ‘political money’ proved to be a major impediment to political and institutional reform, and therefore to a stable political system”. (Makdisi, 2004). Meanwhile, in the aftermath of the assassination of the Late Prime Minister Rafic el Hariri, national and international inquiries started to augment towards the ambiguity of what Lebanon might encounter; fifteen years of consociationalism was deemed as expired, as the “godfather” of the Taef Agreement was arguably correlated to the countries economical, social and political visualization. “At the turn of the twenty-first century, Lebanon had no alternative to Harirism but chaos at the economic, political and societal levels” (Habib, 2009).

With persisting political turmoil such as assassinations, uprisings, 2006 Israeli War on Lebanon and May 2008 political tensions that turned into street sectarian clashes, primarily between Shia and Sunni affiliates, another power-sharing reconfiguration was being cooked behind political backstage. This time it was in Qatar, where the Doha agreement was initiated, signaling the kickoff of a new sectarian consociationalism epoch. Noticeably, like its previous counterparts, the Doha agreement undermined any sort of democratic dynamism and intensified the role of sectarian consociationalism; whereby sectarian leaders already pre-selected the Lebanese President, and agreed on a gerrymandered version of the 1960 electoral law, leaving the elections’ results already pre-determined with some margin of error in the Christian electoral districts. Meanwhile, a national

unity cabinet was agreed upon based on sectarian proportional distribution, with an “innovative” concept labeled as the “ensuring” or “obstructional” third of the cabinet portfolios allocation. This creed introduced a new dimension that would paralyze the emergence of a democratic political life in favor of sectarian exceptionalism, which was once again reinforced.

The agreement consolidated, deepened and advertised sectarianism via public speeches, electoral campaigns and even daily political talk-shows.

“Subsequently, Lebanon emerged as sectarian as ever and sectarian consociationalism was entrenching deeper within the country’s political fabric” (Salamey, 2014). Amidst all these given facts, the Doha agreement stood for merely three years, as the perpetual enriched sectarian power struggle magnified in a region where uprisings commenced to take the nations by storm. Since then until the date of publishing this paper, a new “regional patron” is yet to emerge in order to foster Lebanon’s sectarian leaders as his new clientele. “One of the most troubling features of the patronage phenomenon is the extension of the patron-client relationship beyond Lebanon’s national borders” (El Husseini, 2012).

Supposedly, consociationalism’s main objective is to attain and safeguard a phase of sectarian power sharing, however this is still unfeasible. The higher the probability of having one sect trying to overpower its counterparts, the higher the likelihood of having the entire nation going into a durable state of instability; resulting into a stalemate or even beyond, such as on ground clashes.

All these ailments that have been earlier pinpointed, reveal a pessimistically common denominator among Lebanese sects, which is the fear of power-sharing deprivation and the hegemony of other sects; they have contributed to clientelistic associations, producing leaders best described as sectarian populist. A Lebanese popular leader is one who holds sectarian agendas that are camouflaged by misleading political mottos, rather than being oriented by secular and reformative ambitions. Such popular leaders feed on mass actions of clienteles, to orient their affiliates, who in return empower him in order to get their share of the public's goods and services, as they lack absolute trust in governmental institutions, and simultaneously are frequently suspicious about the intentions of other sects. Clienteles primarily demonstrate loyalty to family, then to sectarian leader, next the sectarian party, after that comes the neighborhood/village. All these factors shift nation-building and patriotism, into a secondary priority vis-à-vis sectarian devotion. Clientelism endured due to power vacuum and the lack of a proper political culture which has allowed the warlords to stay in power. Lebanese political culture has not been evaluated righteously because no sincere post civil war reconciliation ever took place. This has amplified communal fear and sectarianism, bringing people closer to the warlords and opposing any systematic reform offered by the civil society to deconstruct such elite cartels. "It is doubtful whether Lebanese society can ever be a duplicate of a rational, secular and egalitarian society based exclusively on achievement-oriented and universalistic criteria" (Khalaf,1968).

2.3 Capitalistic Networks?

Clientelism is a universal creed that gained momentum and turned into a standalone disciplinary field for study, by the mid of the 20th century. The notion till our current time has been a critical topic due to its controversial nature as there is no clear cut regarding its classification and identification. “The study of patronage and clientelism –which has burgeoned in the social sciences since the late 1960s –can be considered part of a broad reaction against revolutionary assumptions regarding the allegedly generalized move toward western liberal forms of political development and bureaucratic universalism” (Güneş-Ayata & Roniger, 1994). In order to serve the major purpose of the research, the paper discusses the disposition of clientelism in Lebanon from a capitalistic and a socialistic perspective, and observes if the phenomenon has represented a novel mode of economic production, that is antagonistic to both doctrines.

As mentioned earlier, one of the prerequisites of which the mainstream of political leaders in Lebanon emerged is feudalism. Feudalism can be considered a simplistic capitalistic version of the medieval ages, despite the various grey scales present among the two doctrines. According to Marxists, the economic structure of capitalism is derived from that of feudalism. “The feudal regime disintegrated from within; only its prior dissolution “set free the elements” that came to form the capitalist regime” (Katz,1993). Feudal Lebanon was deeply shaped in terms of social classes via the prevailed feudalistic approaches established by fiefdom nobles, who persisted to become less than a dozen of

families who will be ruling the country for centuries to come. “In more than one respect, the whole political history of Lebanon, without undue exaggeration, can be described in terms of not more than a handful of leading families - families competing to reaffirm their name, power and privilege in their respective regions: the Arslans and the Jum-blatts in the Shuf, the Karamis and the Ahdabs in Tripoli, the As'ads and the Khalils in the South, the Duwaihiss and the Frangiehss in the North, the Hamadehs and the Haidars in the Beqa', and so on”(Khalaf, 1968). As time passed by, clientelism persisted by functioning in a receptive environment which launched the concept of “Za'im” who shares the same function of a noble, yet in a more liberal and fashionable context. Both feudalism and capitalism demonstrate a significant influence of employers inflicted by them on their employees, where the first has a relatively upper-hand in the decision making process on the behalf of the latter. “In contrast, Lebanon openly and explicitly opted for laissez-faire, an economic system that would be little interfered with by a political class whose legislative, executive and administrative powers were designed to be shared among sectarian lines” (Gaspard, 2004). Throughout this wide spectrum, clientelism penetrated by establishing nepotistic networks which offer economic and social inducements in exchange for enduring political affiliation, converting feudalistic ancestors into inter and intra sectarian political powerhouses, backed-up by patronage aficionados. “The relationship between a za'im and his client (or constituents, or subcommune) is essentially feudal, the za'im being an intermediary link

(mediator) between his client (or constituents or subcommunes) and the government” (Koury, 1976).

Clientelism can be competent in reflecting a healthy democratic image via the process of rewarding active members of a certain association. Devotees and partisans of a certain political leader or party, who are members of a wide clientelistic network with vibrant allegiance and dedication for the benefit of affiliation, would get rewarded extensively with public goods and services, not only restricted to basic necessities, but also given additional privileges compared to those who showed average and momentarily support. “Higher levels of political activism, which are characteristic of more committed supporters, are associated with access to more benefits, ranging from a single benefit to a combination of two or more benefits” (Cammett, 2011). If through a well executed clientelistic transaction, a political clientele was granted a key public administration position; his nepotistic obligations could be altered into political lobbying to endorse a particular political cause, which reasonably would cater for the needs of his direct clientelistic network and his served sectarian community. In case this is successfully placed, then the sectarian community would praise his political dynamism, and both sectarian and clientelistic appraisals would be granted; encouraging the public officer for further formulation and implementation of political economy policies not for the public benefit, but rather for the benefit of his clientelistic employer who awarded him the position. Accordingly, in a nation where sectarian hegemony always hovers in the horizon,

turning clientelism into political lobbying would be contagious among sectarian public officers, making clientelism function competitively in a capitalistic nature.

Lobbying also could be utilized as an inter-sectarian electoral tactic to grasp an election edge among competing candidates. Despite the fact that the vast majority of Lebanon's electoral districts have a homogenous sectarian dominance, in some cases such as a Christian candidate running in Baalback/Hermel district, needs to be endorsed by other sectarian groups who form an electoral majority (i.e the Shiites in this district). Once successfully elected, the victorious candidate has now obligations not only restricted to his sectarian community, but also towards the other sectarian faction that has crucially contributed to his win, by operating as an electoral "roller truck".

"When successful, then, clientelism can effectively guarantee the politician that employs it a certain number of votes" (Weitz-Shapiro 2008). In such a case scenario, if clientelism has been introduced as an electoral strategy, then this has led to the transcending of unilateral sectarian calculations, obliging the candidate to touch-base with other confessional group. A vivid example could be the case of MP Emile Rahmeh, who due to the Shiite electoral powerhouse organization, not only he overthrew his direct Maronite contestant (Shawqi El Fakhri) who gained the majority of his sectarian group's votes (13,768 votes), but also paradoxically he turned out to be holding the most electoral votes between all the elected members of the Lebanese parliament back in June 2009 with 109,060

votes out of around 126,038 total votes that were reported of being casted in the Baalback/Hermel district; a staggering electoral success rate of 87%.

Noticeably, in case the public officer displays complacency and deficiency in meeting the demands of his nepotistic network and his corresponding sectarian society, jeopardizing the appraisal given by them is on the line, and therefore breaching their clientelistic agreement would be highly probable; competitive clientelism could have misled the voters, who might have suffered from collective disenchantment. "Elections based on the logic of competitive clientelism foster public disillusionment with democratic institutions" (Lust, 2009). Consequently, the public officer is now liable for accountability, and then political assessment would be conducted. Thus, clientelism by transitivity promotes accountability in an embedded way; a concept that Lebanon is yet to foster in any normal democratic process; however, clientelism shockingly does so even if it is performed in a nepotistic milieu which is based on clientelistic commitment and sectarian attachment.

Moreover, In Lebanon, despite their mediocre mode of action, politicized parties seem to be the exclusive hub to generate and form elite lineups. This is augmented by patronage associations, which promote a forecasted political leader to his targeted sectarian community. According to Hudson, professional associations, syndicates, intellectual elite and interest groups were all marginalized versus parties based on feudalistic or even warfare dimensions. On the same hand, clientelism depends on an individualistic inclination which is a

common feature shared with capitalism that promotes the free will initiative and leaves the freedom of choice vis-à-vis market forces and personal initiatives. For instance, an undecided Lebanese voter leaves himself to the closing hours of the electoral ballots, waiting for the best proposed “incentive”, and accordingly he casts his voice. This action depends on two variables: (a) the enticement that was offered instantaneously by political affiliates to win his vote and (b) the anticipated goods and services he was promised of obtaining in the future. These two considerations show that the voter has an individualistic nature displayed in the freedom of choice; manipulating the market forces in his favor by delaying to cast his voice, in parallel with the competitive nature of clientelism in which different parties adjusted their offers to gain last second votes in order to guarantee a triumphant election campaign. For instance, it is assumed that last minute votes in the district of Zgharta, have reached to a shocking \$3000/per vote whether as cash or worth of its equivalence through goods and services; this was due to the toe-to-toe electoral clash between March 8th and March 14th candidates. In parallel, clientelism has a capitalistic nature similar to the market forces such as demand and supply, that guide nepotistic transactions between the seller side (political leader) and the buyer side (citizen). “Within these parameters, clientelism is highly adaptive to changing market logics, individualistic strategies, and capitalistic considerations, while at the same time it can be tuned to the agenda of politicians, brokers, and citizens willing to make

claims on grounds other than their only partially realized citizenship” (Roniger, 2004).

One fundamental aspect of capitalism in any country is to detect the activity of Private Equity, an asset class that is highly related to capitalism, due to its mode of action and its various types of funds; most prominently known as Growth Capital, Mezzanine Capital, and Venture Capital among others. In a nutshell, Private Equity is a source of investment capital intended to invest and acquire equity ownership in companies that aren't publicly listed on any stock market. Lebanon is a nation of prosperous entrepreneurship, having a competitive advantage which is demonstrated through its skilled and affordable labor force, which is recorded as 40% lower than the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). According to Zawya's MENA Private Equity Monitor, since 2002, around 65 investments by Private Equity Funds took place in Lebanon with a total of USD 270 millions. The Private Equity sector focuses' of investments in Lebanon are listed in descending order as follows: Information Technology, Financial Services and Media. Investments across other sectors are recorded with minimal activities. A quick historical analysis of Lebanese Private Equity shows that the year 2011 remains the most valuable with approximately around total of USD 36 million worth of investments. While the most active year, was last year (2013) with 13 Private Equity investments. Year to date data shows that 2014 so far has witnessed around 8 Private Equity funds worth USD 11.5 millions (*Data is correct as of October 2014). Despite the enduring impact of the regional

economic and political turmoil, Lebanon remains one of the main destinations for Middle Eastern and North African Private Equity firms; ranked third with 14% of total investments surpassing the United States of America, Europe (as a regional block), South East Asia and Turkey. Only the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC as a regional block) and Egypt are at the forefront.

Private Equity is one of the most lucrative industries to work within. First, return on investment is extremely rewarding due to its high risk-taking nature; and second, due to the prospective influential political contributions that could be employed. For instance, Former US Presidents George H.W. Bush and Bill Clinton, alongside Mitt Romney (ex-front runner for the Republican Party Presidential nomination) are eminently known for merging their private equity advisory and directory corporate roles with their political aspirations.

As a former Senior Investment Analyst for the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Bonds and Private Equity at Zawya and then at Thomson Reuters, I have reached out to a key player in the industry of Private Equity. Upon his request, his name was treated anonymously as he holds a delicate advisory role. In an interview with him, he emphasized that the utmost advantage of the industry is that it creates prospect job openings alongside identifying new investment opportunities. Nevertheless, the industry by itself encourages vicious capital gains. According to the interviewee, some of the Private Equity firms are directly or indirectly (via affiliates) associated to political figures. Many of those firms were used to fund and advertise for electoral campaigns. Moreover, some

of these entities have close ties with influential political leaders; accordingly they asked for a sort of governmental backed up loans. In return, once a startup, SME (small & medium-sized enterprises) or a venture capital firm is well positioned, capital gains are distributed accordingly among internal and external stakeholders. Despite the well-fitted regulations regarding entrepreneurship activities, there is a sufficient room for advisory manipulation, tax evasion, ownership flexibility and the recruitment of affiliates at the jobs that were created as a result of private equity investments. Ultimately when a buyout occurs, usually a close nepotistic figure enters the scene and executes the transaction, in favor of economic rewards and political recognition, for the sustainability of latent endeavors.

In general, capitalists don't give focal importance to equality as they consider it as an outcome of an individualistic performance. Accordingly, citizens ought to prove themselves at their workspace, and consequently they can be either rewarded or penalized based on their Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), which would defy any sort of inequality only based on output professional performance. This view intersects with a clientelistic perspective that considers clientelism as a sheer consumerism approach to tackle economic and social disparities. "In contrast, a clientelistic perspective sees the world as unequal, where clients develop strategies to fight against those inequalities" (Garcia, 2013).

2.4 Welfare Networks?

Historically, when it comes to communist regimes, clientelism was correlated to low developed countries with severe ethnic heterogeneity. Former communist regimes with such attributes were considered receptive environments for clientelism; this turned out to be a misconception. On the contrary, developed administrations with a well structured middle class with more homogeneous features, have functioned through a model equivalent to clientelism. “In the more developed and urbanized areas, however, the strong bureaucracy and extensive welfare system inherited from communism, higher levels of education overall and the predominance of a well-educated middle class, and the weak roots of the new political parties that emerged after the collapse of communism form a set of conditions inimical to the development of clientelism (Network of Democracy Research Institutes (NDRI), 2001)”. Socialism was vastly perceived as a communistic derivative due to some joint features, such as the perception of having the basic factors of production owned by the government and that communal equality should be the main premise of any societal building block. When discussing and analyzing the attributes of capitalism and socialism, Lebanon shares a mixture of both. Lebanon can be classified as a developing or a less-developed country, with a diverse ethnic community at the same time having a wide fraction of well-educated middle class, which forms the backbone of the Lebanese society, alongside weak foundations of recently emerged political

parties (whenever applicable as no significant party has recently proliferated the political scene).

This leads to another view towards clientelism in Lebanon, which is that its mode of action holds socialistic attributes. In a nation which is based on preserving a sectarian consociational power-sharing balance, clientelism might be one tool to promote sectarian welfare vis-à-vis the voluntarily absent government. “In Lebanon and many other developing countries where state institutions are underdeveloped or virtually absent, ethnic or sectarian organizations—including those with political aspirations— provide much-needed social services” (Cammett & Issar, 2010). Clientelism is perceived as a welfare system which ensures the basic necessities for the various Lebanese sectarian communities, making the notion of clientelism and favoritism two corresponding socialistic dogmas by nature. Socialistic clientelism has built a confessional bureaucracy which displays its success only in organizing consociational alignment among Lebanese sects. “The Lebanese bureaucracy is one of the institutions in which at least three informal structures-kinship, friendship and patron-client relations-cling to the formal structure and inhibit rational behavior” (Kisirwani, 2000). Moreover, clientelistic networks have hindered sectarian supremacy, and acted as a neutralizer among Lebanon’s various sects.

Clientelism has safeguarded the sectarian power-sharing scheme, in the sense that every sectarian leader is obliged to match his colleagues in providing access to the public resources. “It is within this context that sectarian populist political

movements in Lebanon, under the patronage of charismatic leaderships, became the dominant vehicle for advancing groups' interests" (Salamey, 2014).

In the aftermath of gaining political sustainability, a political leader promises his entire clientelistic base and nepotistic network to share with them his portion of goods and services that he grasped. This is equivalent to the socialistic definition of mass economy, where assets' surplus ought to be distributed among the citizens as a whole, ensuring communal cohesion at least among the homogenous group of affiliates. "Lebanese citizens indicate that welfare outreach gains political support by providing tangible benefits to those voters swayed by material rewards and by buttressing a positive reputation for "good governance," which builds support even among those who have not received services themselves" (Cammett, 2011). In parallel, when a political leader acquires control over a certain faction of accessible goods and services, himself in addition to his nepotistic network, transform into the owners of key means of production equivalent to a socialistic regime, where fundamental economic modes of production are possessed and regulated by public firms and their collaborators. "In other words, the evidence strongly points to the resilience of non-capitalist activity and to the absence of dynamic capitalism in laissez-faire Lebanon" (Gaspard, 2004).

Remarkably, clientelism in Lebanon involves an atypical category of social action. A clientelistic decision in Lebanon involves three different types of social action. First it holds an affection action, in which it would be emotionally

charged as for example a citizen would be psychologically and emotionally attached to a leader due to sectarian or ethnic purposes. Second, rational action is detected as an individual is profoundly triggered by his self-interest, and takes his action under the influence of his personal inclinations, only taking into account his ultimate goal without giving importance to the actions' legitimacy. For instance, a Lebanese citizen would pursue nepotism regardless of the possible repercussion and definitely without considering the authenticity of the action; only the end objective is what counts. The third classification is instrumental action, where an individual would calculate and forecast outcomes vis-à-vis other actors, and seeks the best possible mean to pursue any given action. For example, an average Lebanese clientelistic individual would practice such act, to ensure the lowest maximum disadvantage vis-à-vis his counterparts; hence avoiding sectarian hegemony via abiding by the playbook of a zero-sum game. This reiterates the profound dependency on the minimax theory, in which one sect's loss is equal to the other sect's gain; undermining the principles of game theory pertained to decision making, yet preserving the wellbeing of the state's stipulated consociational agreements.

One of Lebanon's communal traits is the societal willingness to help. This could be felt more among a given homogeneous sect, in which sectarian individuals function within a larger group. The preservation of the confessional equilibrium had utter supremacy rather than founding a public common denominator that would ensure national development and justice. Aid and assistance are provided

through confessional institutions, such as schools, universities, churches, mosques, charities, healthcare and confessional NGOs. “Sectarian party representatives use connections to reserve hospital beds and arrange government payment for the hospitalization costs of supporters” (Cammett, 2011). The Lebanese community is perceived by socialist theories having “collectivism” heavily entrenched throughout its society. In such a context, confessional institutions function best in the course of a clientelistic spectrum, in which individuals share their common experience and ultimately act as linkage and network for their peers. With time, clientelistic deployment reaches an optimum point when kinships and private connections are installed for the benefit of the whole, under the supervision of the government just for a sole cause; maintaining consociational equilibrium among the nation’s various confessional institutions. “Clientelistic practices tend to flourish more in less individualistic societies with high levels of power distance, where personal relationships are more relevant and the state plays a major role in economic life” (Garcia, 2013).

Clientelism has persisted and even evolved regardless of its nature. It has adapted to any societal matrix it had functioned through. The notion’s various elements absorbed legitimacy despite its inconsistencies, challenges and oppositions. The connection between its perseverance and transformation remained intact, maintaining equilibrium of its mode of action regardless of its entourage. The political economy of clientelism in Lebanon shows some preliminary signs of sharing both socialistic and capitalistic attributes with no conclusive clear-cut

separating the two. The first considers clientelism as a safety valve for Lebanese sectarian consociationalism, while the latter deems it as route towards improving the community by setting up a liberal framework for the nation's economic and political spheres based on freedom of choice, competition and prosperity. In the upcoming chapters, the paper will further detect in case clientelism had the possibility of establishing its own economic model via a systematic practicality, based on chaotic configuration that offsets both capitalism and socialism. It will try to observe what can be best described as a twisted socio-economic model, where the country's market forces are monopolized by sectarian cartel. Sectarian welfare networks provide access to public goods and services in exchange for political allegiance. Upon such clientelistic transactions, elite cartel manages such distortive structure by introducing chaotic schemes, which can evade any sort of regulation and accountability. In the upcoming Chapter (Chapter 3), the paper strives to detect and recognize clientelism in Lebanon, as this task does not have a clear-cut and definitely is not a trivial mission. Interviews were conducted with two of the country's most active NGOs engaged in combating governance distress, corruption, nepotism among other suspicious communal behavior. In addition to the key players in the healthcare and real estate sector, to inquire about clientelism across various sectors and to share their proficiencies, anecdotes and real life accounts. Further analysis of the acquired data will be utilized to validate whether clientelism in Lebanon functions in a hybrid mode of

action based on skewed economic foundations, or perhaps simply is one out of the two universally identified economic structures; capitalism or socialism.

Chapter Three

Lebanon: A Receptive Medium for Clientelism?

3.1 Methodology

Primarily, the paper pursues an approach of conducting research on clientelism in Lebanon by performing interviews with experts and key professionals across sectors and interrelated disciplines in order to share their sets of expertise, personal experiences, anecdotes and real-life accounts. The interviews were conducted in Lebanon during the dates of November 19th and December 4th, 2014 in the offices of the interviewees. Capitalizing mostly on the hub of connections that were personally accumulated as a product management professional at Thomson Reuters, touching base with some key officials via the MENA governmental relations department at Thomson Reuters in addition to other connections, was perceived as an auxiliary source to give the paper some more added value. As a former Senior Investment Analyst for MENA Bonds and Private Equity, I have interviewed over the phone a key player in the industry of Private Equity, who upon his request, his name was treated anonymously as he holds a delicate advisory role. The second interview was conducted with Mr. Abdo Medlej, President of Sakker El Dekkene NGO, at the organization's office in Monot. The third interview was performed with Mr. Yahya Hakim, General Secretary of LTA (Lebanese Transparency Association), at the association's office in Badaro. Afterwards, by the beginning of December, I interviewed Ms.

Lindsay Choueiry a Medical Product Manager/Sales consultant at Ets. F.A Kettaneh, at the firm's Head Office in Medawar. Last but not least, Mr. Tarek Hilal formerly held the position as Zawya's Real Estate Community Manager and currently he is Zawya Projects' Product Manager, was questioned to give his input regarding clientelism vis-à-vis the real estate sector; he was interviewed at the company's premise in Beirut Central District.

Likewise, secondary research was performed by referring to existing data through academic and scholar publications such as books, journals and articles all being pertained to clientelism and some other keywords such as clientelism, nepotism, favoritism, capitalism, socialism, welfare, Lebanese confessionalism, sectarian consociationalism, chaos management, political economy, governance, transparency, meritocracy, clientele, za'im and patronage; in addition, referring to governmental studies such as the Office of the Minister of State for Administrative Reform in Lebanon (OMSAR). In parallel, benefiting from information that was already individually and personally grasped through the media via television channels, newspapers and radios, permitted the writing of an extensive full-fledged paper.

It is always challenging to gain access to a nation's nucleus elite, particularly in Lebanon. The sole limitation that was felt was to overcome the sense of fear or mistrust displayed by certain contacts and key personnel, in order to obtain interviews; mainly, their fear revolved around denouncing of their names, their patrons' and the clienteles. Meanwhile, anonymity was promised to informants

and interviewees, who have concerns towards sharing their opinions and insights with reference to sensitive issues.

Nevertheless, the approach enriched a personal outlook regarding clientelism in Lebanon from different perspectives, and at the same time gave the paper an extended breadth and depth.

3.2 Sakker el Dekkene and Lebanese Transparency Association on Clientelism

On November 27th 2014, an interview was conducted with Mr. Abdo Medlej President of Sakker El Dekkene NGO. The NGO aims to collect data about the various forms of corruption spread across public administration in Lebanon; in addition some cases were recorded pertained to clientelism.

Primarily, the first question was to study why citizens and political leaders in Lebanon pursue clientelism. According to Mr. Abdo Medlej, the personification of public institutions pushes citizens to seek services from politicians in exchange of votes and loyalty. The unstable Lebanese economic situation and high unemployment rates contribute to this phenomenon because of politicians' influence on public sector and hence their ability to appoint competent employees in the public sector. This vicious circle increases the power and the "mainmise" of politicians on public services, which elevates the occurrence of clientelism.

Secondly, when asked regarding how clientelism can be detected in Lebanon, Mr. Medlej mentioned that the loyalty and support that citizens show to their corrupt political leaders is a strong sign of clientelism. Lebanese people know very well how corrupt Lebanese politicians are and yet they are not willing to make a change in the political stratum. Clientelism is even clearer when referring to public institutions with politicians' names as to indicate who exerts influence on these institutions, and how manipulation takes place.

Thirdly, when it comes to how clientelism can be reported in Lebanon, Mr. Abdo Medlej stated that citizens can report irregularities through some public bodies. But this reporting is limited, due to the lack of trust between citizens and public institutions. Thus citizens often resort to intermediaries such as NGOs and media to only exert pressure.

Fourthly, Mr. Medlej was inquired regarding what might be the negatives and/or positives aspects of clientelism in Lebanon. On a personal level, he doesn't think there is a positive side for clientelism except for that it provides people with solutions in the complete absence of public institutions (but again, the absence of public institutions is due to politicians themselves). When it comes to the negatives features, there are many. Clientelism further weakens public institutions and reduces law compliance. It has a very negative impact on the democratic political process in Lebanon, for it is a reason most incompetent politicians are still ruling the country. It also undermines the equal opportunities among citizens and reduces the social mobility.

Fifthly, Sakker El Dekkene's President was asked if he perceives clientelism in Lebanon as a capitalistic, welfare origin or neither, and why? Mr. Medlej believed that clientelism is not capitalistic as it lacks some of the main features of capitalism such as competitive markets from the suppliers' side. Also price is not determined by equilibrium between demand and supply. However, it cannot be considered as of welfare origin since welfare aims to redistribute fairly the wealth among the society, whereas politicians provide citizens with favors they are entitled to have from public institutions and not in a fair way. According to him, clientelism is a more distorted form of patronage.

Sixthly, Mr. Abdo Medlej was queried concerning the probable ways to fight or tackle clientelism (for example through set of recommendations and/or reforms). He stated that reform starts in the public administrations. Enhancing and increasing public sector's productivity reduces people's need to politicians. However, clientelism is deeply-rooted in Lebanon thus reform could take a long time and prove to be a lengthy process. Yet the ultimate solution resides in reforming institutions, empowering the rule of law (holding people accountable), and ultimately by changing the Lebanese political leadership.

On November 28th 2014, an interview was conducted with Mr. Yahya Hakim, the General Secretary of LTA (Lebanese Transparency Association). LTA's mission statement is "to curb corruption in its various forms, and at different levels of society and state. LTA seeks to promote principles of transparency and

accountability, establish the rule of law, and strengthen the respect of basic rights as declared in international charters and the Lebanese Constitution”.

First, Mr. Hakim was asked about the origin of clientelism in Lebanon.

According to him, clientelism is rooted in the Lebanese society since the Phoenician epoch, in that sense Lebanon's coined term being an intermediary between the East and the West should not only be perceived due to its geographical location, but also as an outcome of the clientelistic mindset of the Phoenicians, when it came to trade and commerce activities. Moreover, Mr. Hakim declared that clientelism has three aspects worth acknowledging; (a) mode of production, (b) way of thinking (c) most of all, with time it simply proved to be a lifestyle.

Mr. Yahya Hakim urged political leaders who use clientelism as a strategy to augment their political hegemony, by introducing what is known as “Product Differentiator”. Using product differentiation from the producer's side (in this case he is the political leader) would distinguish a good and/or service, and make it more luring and desirable for the intended addressable market (in this case they are the citizens). At least this method would somehow make the clientelistic approach more “beneficiary” as it would give the citizens a set of differentiated attributes of service, price and quality, to choose among. To back up his argument, Mr. Hakim gave the example of apples, as one of Lebanon's major agricultural products to pinpoint how all agricultural intermediaries conduct consortium in order to establish a sort of a monopolistic grip of products' prices.

The same happens with Lebanese politicians, who establish a similar consortium scheme to direct the sets of goods and services that are being offered, in a monopolized model. Hence, according to him, it is throughout product differentiation that such a deadlock would be deconstructed into enduring beneficial outcomes.

Second, Mr. Yahya Hakim was inquired of why usually clientelism is not reported, and in few cases when this is done, the reporting scheme is not tangibly reflected. He replied via a personal anecdote; once he was on a visit to Italy specifically to Palermo (eminently known as the capital of Sicily) to address the issue of international corruption. Upon his discussion with an Italian official figure, he asked him about the global famous Italian phenomenon; the mafia. The top notch Italian personnel declared that Sicilians first and foremost don't report or publicly denounce the structure of the mafia. Nevertheless, they function throughout this system as they are Mafioso by nature. Moreover, they are fully aware that this system would be beneficiary as long as they don't try to report it. Historically, repercussions vary from community exclusion to physical elimination via homicides and assassinations. As an analogy, Mr. Hakim stated that the Lebanese citizens are clientelistic in nature; they don't condemn or publicly acknowledge clientelism, as they know this phenomenon would render them socio-economic benefits.

Third, Mr. Yahya Hakim was queried if he perceives clientelism in Lebanon as a capitalistic, welfare origin or neither, and why? According to him, clientelism

has a capitalistic attribute as it functions in a consumerism perspective, as the consumers (Lebanese citizens) always seek the best quality of goods and services at the most economical price possible. This can be detected in the back-and-forth transactions via negotiation process between politicians and their clientele, of course whenever applicable.

Nonetheless, clientelism can be perceived from a welfare context, in the sense that any governance action is frequently executed under the umbrella and via the backup of a sectarian leader and/or the sectarian party. Mr. Hakim gave another anecdote, personified through being highly impressed by the recent austere measurements taken by the Minister of Public Health Mr. Wael Abou Faour, regarding health security. Mr. Hakim was shocked of how peer Ministers are not collaborating with the Minister Abou Faour in combating corrupted food institutions. This was even discussed recently in a meeting between the Minister and Mr. Hakim. Days after the meeting, Minister Wael Abou Faour was on air in a very prominent talk show. When asked about the sustainability of his campaign regarding the health security, the Minister publicly declared that this campaign will last until all objectives are accomplished as long as the Za'im Walid Jumblatt (Druze Premiere Leader and Progressive Socialist Party President) and the PSP (Progressive Socialist Party) are backing him up.

According to Mr. Hakim, this response shocked him and made him draw an analogy with another case, pertained to the former Minister of Public Works and Transportation, Ghazi Al Aridi. Minister Al Aridi resigned from the caretaker

cabinet in the end of 2013, after having several quarrels with Finance Minister Mohammad Al Safadi, regarding investigations of corruption allegations. The resignation took place notifying neither the Progressive Social Party nor its President Walid Jumblatt. Eventually the Minister was excluded and involuntarily retired for months from the Lebanese political life; before settling pending issues among Aridi and Jumblatt. Close acquaintances of MP Jumblatt, mentioned that Al Aridi political privileges were stripped in the favor of the emerging Minister Wael Abou Faour.

According to Hakim, this is a recent example that can prove to be so vivid, as to demonstrate that even when trying to fight such malevolent corruptive ailments such as the case of health security, clientelism and patronage are being checked and evaluated, in order to proceed in battling corruption and promoting transparency.

Without a sectarian umbrella, such moves may lack sectarian blessings and by then the consociationalism power sharing scheme could be at stake, since any given Minister would find himself at the forefront of a corruption battle, without any safe-guarder vis-à-vis other sectarian Ministers and politicians.

Fourth, the General Secretary of the Lebanese Transparency Association was asked on how to best approach clientelism. Using his know-how and proficiencies, Mr. Yahya Hakim stressed on the role of public awareness, the importance of abiding by the universal declaration of human rights, the urgency

of continuously promoting transparency and the significance of working closely with international bodies which strive for nepotism and clientelism surveillance.

He mentioned that in the latest Corruption Perceptions Index of 2014 which was conducted by the Transparency International organization, Lebanon ranked 136th out of 175 countries. According to Hakim, clientelism is becoming unrealistic as satisfying the largest portion of citizens in an egalitarian behavior, is simply becoming obnoxious. The government can't simply treat its citizens as clients, with the incorporation of a CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) agenda. At the same time, he criticized the citizens as "one can't simply ask to pay the same taxes level of our fellow Saudi Arabians do in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and simultaneously to enjoy a lifestyle equivalent to the Swedish Model".

At the end of the interview, Mr. Yahya Hakim shared a success story that the Lebanese Transparency Association contributed to. Three years ago, the LTA introduced several Shadow Municipal Councils formed of youth from their respective villages. 23 villages accepted to participate in the campaign through running and organizing transparent elections. The campaign was concluded last year, after its 3 years tenure came to an end. 2 out of 23 villages showed symptoms of inconsistency via setting suspicious public budget of their corresponding villages. As a main prerequisite, the Municipal councils were obliged to collaborate with their respective youth Shadow Municipal Councils. This activity, made the citizens of the participating villages, understand the

significance of benefiting and giving back to the community in a transparent manner. The three years old activity proved to be a success story.

However, noticeably no governmental bodies or international donors showed interest in sustaining such campaign beyond the stipulated life span of three years. Some wanted to correlate the funding schemes to clientelistic exchanges. One example could be showcased when “controlled” tendering was requested for restaurants which might host village dinners, in exchange for political promotion and endorsement of governmental and official bodies.

According to Hakim, if this had taken place, this would have proven to be a major blow for the mission statement of this campaign. Consequently, the program was concluded as expected within the predetermined duration of three years. Meanwhile, the 23 villages grasped the know-how and the adequate expertise required to lead a transparent and effective governance of a village, in order to become exemplary models. Mr. Yahya Hakim still hopes to find supplementary donors and sponsors, in order to reinitiate the program, this time widening the scope of the program, trying to cover the most possible Lebanese villages across all districts.

3.3 Clientelism in Lebanon’s Healthcare Sector

On December 1st 2014, an interview was conducted with Ms. Lindsay Choueiry a prominent Medical Product Manager/Sales consultant at Ets. F.A Kettaneh, being a pioneer in the MENA (Middle East and North Africa) region when it

comes to servicing the healthcare sector with top quality equipment and products, collaborating closely with governmental and private entities.

To start with, Ms. Choueiry was inquired regarding the presence of clientelism in Lebanon's healthcare sector. According to her, around 15% of the Lebanese hospitals whether privately or governmentally owned, belong to various different political parties, whether via direct cadres of the party or through indirect affiliates. For instance, hospitals in the suburbs of Beirut like "Rassoul el Aazam", patients of a certain sect specifically those related to Hezbollah, get admitted with special discounts and post hospitalization benefits. Another example could be demonstrated as the Nabatiyeh Government Hospital, which was later on named after Lebanon's Speaker of the Parliament Nabih Berri, who also leads Amal Movement. Another case would be the Tripoli governmental hospital which was primarily controlled by the cities' eminent families.

Currently, the hospital is dominated by religious stakeholders alongside the Islamic Group (Al-Jama'ah Al-Islamiyah) party, which uses this hospital due to its simplistic bureaucracy and cheap fees. Usually, political leaders interfere in the healthcare sector, by providing sponsorships to hospitals, dispensaries and other healthcare institutions which face bankruptcy, in exchange for political endorsement via electoral support and recruiting healthcare personnel via clientelistic networks.

Then, Ms. Choueiry was asked if clientelism in the healthcare sector can be reported in Lebanon. Ms. Choueiry stated that clientelism and nepotism in the

healthcare sector are of a delicate nature in order to be reported, as they are employed in the favor of an individual's health status, and are directly correlated to their wellbeing. Patients, who lack insurance and NSSF (National Social Security Fund) coverage, critically depend on nepotism and clientelism as the only means to get admitted to the hospital or get operated immediately, in exchange for political support. Hence, no one would want to report clientelism in the healthcare sector due to its direct correspondence with a patient's welfare.

Afterwards, when inquired regarding the probably pros and the cons of clientelism in Lebanon's healthcare sector, Ms. Lindsay Choueiry mentioned that the continuous donations such as capital investments, medical equipments, medical products, admission of patients and even personnel recruitment help both the medical institution at risk and simultaneously the financially challenged patient, demonstrating positive attributes of clientelism.

Whereas the negative aspects of clientelism with reference to the healthcare system, are personified via the direct control imposed by political parties on healthcare institutions, via nepotistic and clientelistic networks. For instance, each sect has its own hospital being ran and governed by the sect's confessional institutions and sectarian political parties, such as: Kamal Jumblatt Hospital (Druze), Al Zahraa Hospital (Shiite), Islamic Public Hospital (Sunni), St. George Hospital (Greek Orthodox), Centre Hospitalier Universitaire Notre Dame de Secours (Maronite) and many other. Henceforth, patients who require healthcare

services are under the mercy of sectarian affiliation vis-à-vis the absence of governmental efforts.

Last but not least, Ms. Choueiry was queried if she perceives clientelism vis-à-vis the healthcare sector in Lebanon as a capitalistic, welfare origin or neither, and why? According to her, clientelism in Lebanon's healthcare sector can be perceived of a hybrid nature. The way it initiates is similar to capitalism as political leaders rally against each other in a competitive manner, especially those who have homogenous sectarian background; in order to benefit patients who lack medical coverage, and concurrently can be targeted as potential political clienteles. Nonetheless, it ends by trying to provide a sort of a welfare program which functions in the favor of the patients' wellbeing. As previously mentioned, admission to hospitals alongside perpetual medical follow ups, with time proved to be an advantage for financially challenged patients. Hence, no one would want to report clientelism in the healthcare sector due to its direct correspondence with a patient's welfare. Clientelistic networks alongside religious institutions such as the Maronite Order, affiliates and political cadres, who pay membership fees or clientelistic payments, have their welfare services get funded through redistribution of taxes.

3.4 Clientelism in Lebanon's Real Estate Sector

On December 4th 2014, an interview was conducted with Mr. Tarek Hilal formerly held the position as Zawya's Real Estate Community Manager.

Currently he is Zawya Projects' Product Manager. Mr. Hilal is prominently specialized in MENA's (Middle East and North Africa) Real Estate sector. He led MENA's Real Estate community management at Zawya (the preeminent source of Middle East and North Africa business intelligence and is now part of Thomson Reuters, the world's leading source of intelligent information for business and professionals).

To commence, Mr. Hilal was asked regarding the existence of clientelism in Lebanon's Real Estate sector. According to him, clientelism in the sector can propagate through various forms, as there are several means to employ it. For instance, manipulation of property landscaping, altering brokerage fees, and maneuvering land valuation are some of the features that are influenced by clientelism in exchange for political favors. An example was supplied to demonstrate such certainties:

The instance is pertained to what is known as the "Metn Express Highway". In 1998, a very prominent politician continuously contacted one of his clientele working at the "Council for Development and Reconstruction". The clientele informed the politician that discussions are taking place in order to probably construct a milestone highway which begins from the Nahr el Mot area reaching towards Baabdat village. Accordingly, the politician alongside a close foreign acquaintance of him bought all the properties surrounding the anticipated highway area, at trivial prices that were never publicly disclosed. Two decrees were published, the first in 1998 and the second in the year 2000, mentioning

that the highway will be constructed at further stages without clear announcement regarding the exact due date. By the year 2002, the execution of the highway started taking place. As conventionally known, when a public facility ought to be constructed, individuals owning lands surrounding the projected facility, should be compensated accordingly by the Ministry of Public Works and Transportation, usually through the “Council for Development and Reconstruction”. Once again, clientelism was employed by the same political leader’s clientele, who previously acted as an “info-seeker”. The properties that were bought four years ago by the politician and his partner at insignificant prices, were compensated by manipulating the valuation of the bought land at around a surprising price of \$50/meter. The recorded benefits of the transaction were stunning, as they reached approximately more than quadruple. The surplus capital that was conducted through this counterfeit transaction was distributed among the political leader, his foreign partner and certainly the clientele who was the chief reason for making this deal possible.

Then, Mr. Tarek Hilal was inquired if clientelism in the real estate sector can be reported. He mentioned that real estate courts are found in every Lebanese district. Such courts are used to solve issues pertained to the sorting out of land and passage permissions for property construction. He emphasized that the fact when it comes to the suspiciousness in corruption and clientelism of real estate cases, usually penal courts are the eligible judicial institutions to pursue. For further follow ups and guidance, the Real Estate Syndicate of Lebanon

(R.E.A.L.) could play a fundamental role, far from political intervention and in an objective context.

Subsequently, Mr. Hilal was queried if he perceives clientelism in Lebanon vis-à-vis the real estate sector as a capitalistic, welfare origin or neither, and why?

According to him, clientelism of Lebanon's real estate sector can be deemed as an assortment of both features. The hefty portion of property private ownership, the market forces dictating the sector's pricing, the luring brokerage fees, acquisition and capital injection of property investments are all basic features that reflect the capitalistic framework of clientelism enduring throughout Lebanon's real estate sector.

However, in parallel to such capitalistic attributes, the main objective of religious and sectarian institutions in Lebanon remains to preserve the balance of demographic sectarianism. Sectarian institutions such as the Lebanese Maronite League, Dar El-Fatwa, the Council of the Druze Sect, the Shiite Council and other counterparts all try to direct or at least interfere in the process of real estate transactions, especially those directly related to their assets, as all sectarian institutions share a common concern which is the fear of severe demographic shifts. In addition, such councils and committees strive to utilize their properties for sectarian investments such as establishing schools, hospitals, residential compounds and recreational centers in order to ensure demographic balance by making their respective sectarian community attached to their land, and by

default preserving their identities and increasing their sense of belonging.

Sectarian real estate is dominantly conducted via brokers, consultants and real estate investment firms that are part of a wider clientelistic base pertained to the sect's premiere leader, party or a highly esteemed religious figure.

Hence, clientelism in Lebanon's real estate sector shares both capitalistic and welfare state attributes, enabling the sector to function in a hybrid mode of action based on skewed economic foundations.

When it comes to data collection, the data that has been extracted based on extensive research, official facts, figures, vivid case studies, relevant resources, anecdotes and interviews, were all utilized in an ethical and objective framework. To avoid subjectivity and prejudgment, cross-referencing and checking was executed vis-à-vis the information acquired between various references and interviews and informants, in order to establish a well structured thesis that would cater for the needs of the subject matter.

Chapter Four

Sectarian Capitalistic Welfare

4.1 Analysis

When analyzing the reasons behind the presence of clientelism in Lebanon, both socio-economic and political motives drive its existence. Clientelism with time has gained three main attributes. First it became a standalone mode of production that shares both capitalistic and welfare state elements. Second, it persisted by becoming a way of approaching and executing business transactions with a consumerist approach. Third, with time it cemented itself as an established lifestyle. Critically enough, clientelism hinders the functioning of a proper economic system, which is maneuvered and directed by the clientelistic networks manifested via chaos management, in which it can evade accountability and counterattacks transparency. This mode of action proved to be a major challenge for adequate public governance. As time passed by, clientelism became a basic ingredient of Lebanon's political culture, by situating itself in the core of the public attitude and the communal beliefs of citizens vis-à-vis collective aspirations. In addition, clientelism assisted in transcending the personal benefit above the communal benefit and having allegiance projected towards political leaders rather than the public interest. "It is worth noting that some employees are loyal to leaders and officials who support them more than it is to the public interest" (Office of the Minister of State for Administrative Reform,2011).

Noticeably, it is of a great importance to mention that serving the public sphere in Lebanon, historically have been perceived as worthwhile, not due to its sacred patriotic nature, but rather to its rewarding scheme demonstrated through the gained social and economical status. “Long before Lebanon's independence in 1943, public sector employment was popularly considered a satisfying source of a living, implying both a steady and predictable income from a tenured job, and an arena for power and prestige” (Kisirwani, 2000). In addition, what augmented the complexity of the phenomenon is that sectarianism is profoundly entrenched in clientelism, as it is used as a supplementary tool to maintain Lebanon's consociational power sharing balance. “An overall historical view of socioeconomic development in Lebanon shows continuous progress and modernization to satisfy the needs of some segment of the society” (Koury, 1976).

Identifying and detecting clientelism in Lebanon is not a straightforward and a simple assignment. Principally, the notion can be clearer realized when referring to public institutions, as politicians find in such spectrum a receptive medium to inflict and employ their nepotistic influences. The loyalty and allegiance that affiliated citizens demonstrate to their political leaders is a strong indicator of clientelism. Invading the public administration with incompetent personnel and exploitation of human and financial resources, are all masqueraded through sectarian clientelism. “The inefficiency of Lebanon's public administration is partly due to the misuse of available resources and inadequate staffing”

(Wickberg, 2012). What made the recognition of clientelism in Lebanon trickier are the overlapping and the contradictory features with the bribes that are being paid regularly, seasonally and conditionally. “According to Transparency International’s Global Corruption Barometer 2011, more than one out of three citizens admits having paid a bribe in the previous year, with the customs, the registry and permit service, the police and the judiciary being the most common bribe takers” (Wickberg, 2012).

Clientelism has an extended aura in the sense that even reporting it can be crippled or even shunned. As mentioned earlier, Lebanese citizens are clientelistic by nature; they don’t condemn or publicly acknowledge clientelism, particularly those who are members of a wider clientelistic networks, as they know that this phenomenon would render them socio-economic benefits. Primarily, citizens who are active clientelistic affiliates are not willing to expose clientelism so that they don’t lose their acquired privileges. They are fully aware that this skewed system is significantly beneficiary as long as they don’t try to report it. Seldom cases when they’re reported, the scheme is not tangibly reflected and recognized. Nevertheless, citizens can still report irregularities through public bodies. For instance, in the real estate sector, courts are used to solve issues pertained to the sorting out of land and passage permissions for property construction. When it comes to the suspiciousness in corruption or clientelism of real estate cases, usually penal courts are the eligible judicial institutions to pursue. For further follow ups and guidance, the Real Estate

Syndicate of Lebanon (R.E.A.L.) as a regulatory entity, could play an instrumental role in tracking any counterfeit business deal. Pessimistically, resorting to judicial bodies remains limited, due to the lack of faith in the judicial system in combating clientelism, and the anxiety of having patronage rematerializing in a more intensified manner. “As long as the macrosocial setting provides conditions in which socioeconomic and political, inequalities can be embedded within an ethnic or institutional district, particularistic trust, and a problematic extension of trust, clientelism and patronage will tend to reemerge as important strategies of social exchange” (Güneş-Ayata & Roniger, 1994). Consequently, citizens that might be negatively affected by clientelism, habitually resort to intermediaries such as NGOs and the media to simply exert communal pressure and raise public awareness. When striving to eradicate such a malicious notion, political allegiance and sectarian loyalty are being checked and evaluated in order to progress in the battlefield of clientelism. Without a sectarian parasol, such moves may lack sectarian approvals, which would jeopardize the consociationalism power sharing scheme. “As long as the sectarian formula of power sharing remains in place in Lebanon, only two forms of elite circulation will exist: generational inheritance and co-optation” (El Husseini, 2012). In some sectors, such as the healthcare sector, reporting clientelism is menacing as it is correlated directly to the welfare of an individual. Clientelism and nepotism in the healthcare sector are of a fragile genre, as political partisanship would literally save lives. “But the politicization of service

provision by these providers can lead to uneven coverage or inequalities that further entrench societal divisions and can even be a matter of life and death if access to care is contingent on ascribed identity or political allegiances” (Cammett & Issar, 2010).

Clientelism in Lebanon can have some “positive” attributes, due to the country’s delicate consociational constituents. It provides citizens with public goods and services in the voluntarily absence of an egalitarian state, such as healthcare coverage, donations such as capital investments, medical equipments, medical products, recruitment, admission to educational institutions, and other various endorsements. “A clientelist message, by contrast, would take the form of a specific promise to the village, for example, for government patronage jobs or local public goods, such as establishing a new local university or providing financial support for local fishermen or cotton producers” (Wantchekon, 2003). Such offerings of public goods and services are fundamentally supplied on sectarian basis, and definitely in exchange for political favors not bounded by time and space.

At the other hand of the spectrum, clientelism imposes a pessimistic flavor on the public governance in Lebanon, providing “negative” characteristics. Clientelism further deteriorates public institutions and offsets common and civil laws compliance. It reduces social mobility and distresses the political economy structure in Lebanon, as politicians control public resources in an incompetent manner to cater for their personal needs, the needs of their direct clientelistic

affiliation and their corresponding sectarian faction. These twisted configurations undermine the establishing of a fair state that treats its people with equivalent opportunities.

Currently, the entrenched clientelistic inclinations in the community, overshadows the proposed alternative schemes, particularly those that are hypothetically drafted. “For many, clientelistic ties that are voluntary may often be the most viable form of access to distributive programs, while the assumed alternative of redistributive, rules-based programs may be stuck in the realm of the hypothetical” (Fox, 2012). Accordingly, a list of reforms and recommendations will be offered in the subsequent chapter (Chapter 5) in a practical manner that would encompass for the multifaceted elements of clientelism in Lebanon.

Meanwhile, when cross-checking the proposed solutions offered by the interviewees to tackle clientelism, several common denominators were observed. First, institutional reformation, changing the Lebanese political set by voting for the righteous and competent candidates and empowering the rule of law (promoting the notion of accountability) all can be considered as the fundamental pillars for reformation kickoff. Currently, ineffectual and unlawful performances in the public sector are not faced with a solid punitive apparatus, which would help in hindering such trespasses. “Influence exerted through kinship, friendship, sectarianism, parochialism and patron-client relations is the major cause of the weak performance of the disciplinary mechanism” (Kisirwani, 2000). Such

skeptical outlook, elevates civic anxieties concerning the political and legislative liabilities of the government towards its citizens. Second, the role of public awareness, abiding by the universal declaration of human rights, constantly promoting transparency and working closely with international bodies which are specialized in monitoring nepotism and clientelism. These measurements if are well implemented, they would act as societal safe-keepers, through which the citizens would feel secured and able to demand for civic rights. Third solution would be the urgency of crafting a proficient cooperation between personal initiatives and the state. One form could be the collaboration between the public and the private sectors, which might prove to be instrumental on all levels (national, regional and international). This is typically known as the Private-Public Partnership (PPP). Such cooperation would act as the backbone of an efficient economy. Throughout this process, public administration could capitalize on the expertise and know-how of the private sector to lead a successful management of the public sector. Financial and human resources management are two features that need proper allocation of skills and proficiency in order to ensure adequate direction of governance. Fourth, the importance of altering the political culture in Lebanon, by which citizens ought to rely less on politicians, and depend more on their qualifications and competencies, and simultaneously stay up-to-date with the latest technological advancement specifically Information and Communications Technology (ICTs) by relying on e-governmental portals (which will be discussed further in Chapter 5); such

factors in their turn would fortify and enhance the public sector's productivity and boost its mode of action.

4.2 Recognizing Clientelism

One of the premiere challenges of recognizing clientelism is its ambiguity.

Therefore suggesting a set of steps required to attain such procedure is vital:

- a) *Measure/Quantify*: Producing clear comprehensible indicators that permit to objectively and scientifically quantify clientelism in all of its forms.
- b) *Analyze*: Examining and analyzing the collected data in systematic and vigorous manner. They should be authentic and mass representing. Such data can be used for breakdown analysis. For instance, by procedure, institutions and geographical regions.
- c) *Publishing information*: Sharing information with the public stakeholders via the mass media, social media, hotline numbers, mobile applications and Word-of-Mouth
- d) *Raising Awareness*: Managing events, workshops, seminars among other methods to better raise communal consciousness regarding clientelism
- e) *Reform*: Generating new initiatives to reform and regulate the affected parties by clientelism
- f) *Association*: If all of the steps are conveniently pursued, then association of clientelism among stakeholders becomes more familiar. This will encourage launching more exposure schemes.

Once the six mentioned prerequisites are successfully fulfilled, then recognizing clientelism becomes an identification cycle, which would tackle this phenomenon in an effectual and objective approach.

4.3 Diagnostic Result

The initiation of clientelism and its macro silhouette is of a capitalistic nature, since it functions through a set of competitive market forces commanded by supply and demand of goods and services. Zero-sum game is frequently utilized, as a game plan via clientelistic networks (whether of capitalistic or socialistic nature) in order to avert sectarian hegemony. Political leaders rally versus each other in a competitive comportment, especially those who share homogenous sectarian milieu. The competition is fierce between the opposing candidates, as their main focus revolves around the need to benefit citizens who lack access to the public goods and services, in exchange for political deeds. Concurrently, if clientelistic deals proved to be fruitful, then those citizens can be approached as permanent potential political clienteles. Furthermore, clientelism in Lebanon propagates in consumerism perspective, determinedly hunting for the best quality of goods and services at the most economical price possible. However, the end result of it can be felt similarly to that of a welfare state, as the main concern remains to safeguard Lebanon's sectarian consociationalism power sharing balance. For example, financially challenged citizens and/or even individuals who are part of a clientelistic base, require admission to hospitals alongside

perpetual medical follow ups regardless of the pursued mechanism. In this case, clientelism acts as welfare safety- net for their wellbeing status. Arguably, in a religiously pluralistic community such as the Lebanese public, political allegiance and sectarian devotion might prove to be decisive in providing social welfare. “Social welfare provision by sectarian parties has implications for debates about the “moderation” of politico-religious movements as well as redistribution in plural societies” (Cammett & Issar, 2010). Clientelism in Lebanon can be best described as a skewed economic model, based on chaos management. The previously mentioned cases across sectors, alongside its obscure identification, timid reporting schemes, the misleading contradictory aspects (capitalism and socialism) that it holds, its fluctuating positive and negative outcomes, the multifaceted set of reforms it requires, all have contributed to such a diagnostic result. Its hybrid nature demonstrates a distorted form of patronage within any given political regime. “In conclusion, conceptualizing clientelism as a type of political monopoly captures some basic feature of this hybrid type of regime, one that stands half way between authoritarianism and democracy” (Medina & Stokes, 2002).

Chapter Five

Therapeutic Stage

5.1 Conclusion

In a country which has been incapacitated by perpetual assortment of domestic political dilemmas to our current days, the notion of clientelism persists to amplify and fortify as political parties, warlords and sectarian affiliations have thrived to replace the role of a righteous and competent state. The fluctuation of clientelism on the Lebanese ground endured as the notion of nation-state building altered, due to the state's consociational zest that underwent successive political, economical and religious conflicts, resulting in an intermediary society serving its various communities. "With all its contradictions and imperfections modern Lebanon should rightly be seen –on the internal level/face –as a model accommodating a more diverse, more encompassing notion of national community, which has recognized and engaged 'the various communities', the 'intermediate societies'" (Ziadeh, 2006). Noticeably, it was under the feudal era where clientelism seized supplementary momentum and broadened its spectrum of impact. The Ottoman feudal system cultivated and fostered this epoch, intending to manipulate and weaken the country's political and economic autonomy. Lebanon's religious elites and prominent sectarian figures critically impacted the political realm, by influencing decision and policy makers to accommodate to their custom-fitted needs that serve their confessionalistic

benefits as a whole, and simultaneously their private interests specifically.

“Although there was a significant circulation of individual elite actors at the end of the civil war, as well as a realignment of the terms of the power-sharing arrangement among the different confessional factions, the same basic form of clientelistic elite recruitment and patronage that had existed before the war continued unabated” (El Husseini, 2012).

In 1943, the Lebanese power-sharing fundamentals were brought to light, through The National Pact which fastened the nation’s consociationalistic façade which is profoundly rooted to its confessional paradigm. The pact identified and recognized Lebanon’s eighteen sects, primarily divided between Christians and Muslims. Undoubtedly, it has institutionalized the confessional allocation of uppermost public administrative positions benchmarked with respect to the distribution of population, based on sectarian proportionality. Since the independence of Lebanon, a new socio-political term was coined, labeled as “Za’im”. In other words, the term “Za’im” is highly equivalent to a feudal leader or a landlord, who functions in a contemporary political realm capitalizing on his money, societal power and communal connections. “It is considerations like these which prompt us to suggest that the system of zu’ama is likely to persist in Lebanon as long as the primordial sentiments of kinship and fealty remain rooted in the culture” (Khalaf,1968). On the other end of the spectrum, the clients are referred to as “Zilm”. Their needs of goods and services fluctuate across the continuum of time and space.

Clientelism has been linked to economic and political disorders which by transitivity has initiated an innovative mode of political economic production, which is antagonistic to both capitalism and socialism. It contributes in molding the economic decision of a clientele, in parallel with the desired social welfare and/or status that he wishes to attain.

Both capitalists and socialists embark upon clientelism in a “cherry-picking” approach, which extended the debate on whether clientelism has a capitalistic or a socialistic inclination. Paradoxically enough, whenever the notion is intensely criticized, both schools disclaim and refute any sort of association to it.

On the other hand, when clientelism and its derivative doctrines are suggested as interesting and laudable subject matters worth exploring and which they might optimistically bestow to the disciplines of economics and politics, both schools would swiftly try to endorse them and endeavor for their investigation.

Clientelism is a self-proclaimed concept that introduced itself as a supplementary dynamic in the Lebanese politics, which ought to be tackled as a standalone entity. Regardless of its nature, clientelism has endured and even progressed. It self-tailored its adaptation to any societal matrix it functioned through, enabling it to absorb legitimacy in spite of its inconsistencies, hurdles and contenders. A supplementary feature is that it is a self-enforced notion as political favors are materialized impartial of any law, which can't realize such political transactions neither from a legislative context nor from a reformative perspective. “Because

the law cannot be used to enforce such political exchanges, they must be self-enforcing” (Robinson & Verdier, 2013). The correlation between its perseverance and renovation remained intact, sustaining equilibrium of its mode of action regardless of its environment that it functions through.

The paper inspects how clientelism in Lebanon survived, intensified and persevered, until it transformed into a new mode of economic production that counterbalances both capitalism and socialism, positioning itself as an instrumental dynamic in domestic politics and an integral element of the societal building-block. Besides, it studies clientelism in Lebanon vis-à-vis economic relations based on clientelistic networks (whether entrenched in capitalistic or socialistic frameworks) through a minimax equation, further initiated on chaos management. “The More the circumstances change, the more the Lebanese system –whether confessionalism or chaos, or both –remains the same” (Koury, 1976).

The political economy of clientelism in Lebanon shares both socialistic and capitalistic characteristics with no rigid clear-cut unknitting the two. The first perceives clientelism as a safety valve for Lebanese sectarian consociationalism, whereas the second reckons it as a path towards enhancing the community, by setting up a liberal framework for the nation’s economic and political spheres founded on the basis of freedom of choice, competition and prosperity. “In its present configuration, the Lebanese state cannot be expected to overcome the resistance of clientelism without significant measures or universalistic policies

that encourage the development of citizen participation, as democracy empowers people with the notion of representation” (Hamzeh,2001).

Objectively, as clientelism in Lebanon coincides between capitalism and socialism, rendering it as a distorted system, it would always be tricky to judge an overall governing structure based on clientelistic attributes without mentioning the reason that led to its emergence. “One of the most notable features of clientelism is its coexistence with other forms of state-society engagement, which makes it empirically problematic to refer to entire systems as clientelistic or not” (Fox, 2012).

When assessing the rationales that lead to the emergence of clientelism in Lebanon, both socio-economic and political causes stimulate its presence. With time, clientelism became an integral constituent of Lebanon’s political culture, triggering the attitude and beliefs of citizens vis-à-vis communal aspirations. “Hence, services and interests are exchanged on the expense of public interest, thus aggravating nepotism” (Office of the Minister of State for Administrative Reform, 2011).

5.2 Recommendations & Reforms

According to OMSAR’s latest report published in January 2011 under the name of “Strategy for the Reform and Development of Public Administration in Lebanon”, the number of vacancies across all categories is 15,344 job opportunities out of 22,029 full time civil service jobs. In other terms, only

around 70% of vacancies in full time civil service jobs are active, versus 30% inactive. Moreover, another statistic to look at is the fact that there are 1,965 jobs in which employees follow an outdated reporting system. Their administrations were canceled or even did not mention their positions through the new systems and/or they were redistributed. Financial irrational spending is also swelling, as no proper financial monitoring or auditing is taking place. “Due to the inefficient application of monitoring and accountability at public administrations and nepotism, cases of corruption and irrational spending of public finances are still not tackled despite the presence of several monitoring apparatus” (Office of the Minister of State for Administrative Reform, 2011). These are financial obstructions in the face of high quality forecasting and planning. The longer it takes to audit these issues, the more the losses will be incurred by financially distressed public administrations. Among the vacancies at the public administration, a staggering statistic is that of the fifth category, where 2,345 out of 2,903 jobs are vacant. Around 81% of the fifth category in the public administration is yet to be filled with competent personnel through proper recruitment process. Management of financial and human resources goes hand-in-hand, as for example, public administrations can’t recruit any personnel (reasonably to be a competent candidate) without having a clear vision of the required financial resources which is directly correlated to the budget allocation. All these figures and data reflect the shortage of public administrations of human and financial resources. Therefore, one should realize the problems of the

Lebanese public administration and accordingly try to establish a long term sustainable reform strategy which would maintain public institutions through the adequate management of both, the financial and the human resources which hopefully defy the infiltration of clientelism and other similar concepts such as nepotism.

In parallel with revealing the chronic ailments caused by clientelism, the paper proposes and suggests a set of solutions and recommendations that may help exterminate or at least alleviate the durable repercussions that still resonate throughout the Lebanese society; through which politicians and their clienteles employ chaos management schemes to destabilize their communal counterparts by economically and politically intimidating them.

Amidst conducting research on clientelism in Lebanon whether through secondary research that was performed by referring to existing data through academic and scholar publications, in addition to governmental studies such as the Office of the Minister of State for Administrative Reform in Lebanon (OMSAR), or by interviewing experts and key professionals across sectors and interrelated disciplines in order to share their sets of expertise, personal experiences, anecdotes and real-life accounts, utilizing sets of personal professional expertise and academic background to benefit the chief objective of the paper, can prove to be essential. As mentioned at the beginning of the paper, a set of probable reforms are offered trying to eradicate clientelism, or at least to contain it to its minimal level:

- 1- Drafting an electoral law based on truthful and fair representation.
- 2- Establishing administrative decentralization which would make the citizens feel closer to the state.
- 3- Promoting the principles of efficient administration and transparent governance through a well placed public administration capacity building program.
- 4- Promoting the principles of public liability and meritocracy through a well placed Performance Improvement Plan for public employees.
- 5- Promoting judicial independence from political interference, as a precondition for generating law that would safeguard public institutions and civil rights.
- 6- Enhancing the role of regulatory governmental bodies such as The Court of Audit, Civil Service Board and Central Inspection.
- 7- Drafting discretionary civil personal status codes that would decrease the dependency on the existing confessional various civil law.
- 8- Endorsing the public educational sector.
- 9- Expanding the public coverage of social security.
- 10- Promoting privatization and/ or the Private-Public Partnership (PPP), which would encourage entrepreneurship based on secularity and economic benefits, which would aid in undermining the significance of sectarian allegiance.

11- Drafting laws that support the establishment of political parties across Lebanon's various confessions.

12- Drafting compulsory personnel laws concerning public sector employees such as: refraining from any political/party engagement, abstaining from having an alternative career concurrently with his current public position, rejecting any sort of endowments and rewards from third parties; among other austere measures.

As mentioned in Chapter 4, the significance of shifting the political culture in Lebanon, by which citizens ought to rely less on politicians, and rely more on their credentials and simultaneously stay up-to-date with the latest technological advancements specifically ICTs, is instrumental; this would reinforce and develop the public sector's efficiency.

Lebanon ought to have a well drafted e-government initiative that would emphasize adequate governance, promote transparency and accountability. Such initiative would produce an efficient interaction between citizens and the government, based on a better public user experience and enhanced practices.

Back in January 2008, an e-government strategy was set by the Ministerial ICT committee. An overall e-governmental portal is of great significance in shifting the political culture in Lebanon, by which citizens ought to rely less on politicians, and depend more on their qualifications and competencies, and stay up-to-date with the latest technological advancements particularly ICTs (Information and Communications Technology) via relying on e-governmental

portals, that would act as one-stop-shop for them, linking them to all governmental hub of data and bodies. It simultaneously benefits both the citizens and the government itself.

From the citizens' perspective, it would raise integrity, increase accountability and transparency, eliminate bureaucratic procedures, make procedures faster, lower incurred costs and establish 24/7 services. All these aspects, would limit if not totally abolish any sort of dependency on clientelism and sectarian affiliation.

“The e-Reform pillar embraces the use of ICT within government to improve efficiency by using electronic processes for sharing of information, faster decision making, more transparent processes, greater accountability, ready storage and retrieval of information” (Office of the Minister of State for Administrative Reform,2008).Whereas from the government's perspective, e-government would lead to an improved operational accountability and transparency and superior management of financial and human resources.

Meanwhile, Dawlati.gov.lb (official website of the Lebanese e-governmental portal) acts as the country's main official guide regarding e-governmental services such as paying taxes and municipal fees, electricity and telephone bills, passport applications among other services. As an initiative, the portal is fairly convenient, yet more public awareness and promotion of this website is required, especially in a country where clientelism and technology move in a contradictory exponential pace.

These entire set of recommendations and reformative measures hopefully lead to lessen the reliance on clientelistic and nepotistic networks and at the same time contribute in alleviating sectarianism. By transitivity, socioeconomic inequalities and political disparities can be now combated ferociously. The country necessitates an appropriate system in which transparency and accountability ought to be promoted to ensure an effective public governing. Decisions and policies should take into account such reforms. At advance stages, post-implementation monitoring of these recommendations would guarantee their successful placement in case they were realized and employed in an objective behavior, far from sheer personal calculations. “Reforms that have been proposed to lift Lebanon out of debt have been consistently gridlocked, not for ideological reasons but simply because of the personal power struggles among the confessional blocs that constitute the “Troika” at the head of the Lebanese state” (El Hussein, 2012).

On the other hand, primary contenders would be those who have established elite cartels, which nurtured from the unsupervised nepotistic affiliations, making themselves as eligible decision makers in providing access to public goods and services for their clients. Amidst the absence of regulatory bodies, supervisory entities and long term governmental planning, this fuzzy economic model became an imposed reality. Chaos management conducted by clientelistic practitioners willingly maneuvered the market forces in Lebanon, by sketching distortive and skewed economic strategies in a hazy uncertain atmosphere, under

the alibi of maintaining sectarian equilibrium. The Lebanese economy has been sternly associated with “managed mismanagement”, as nepotism and public corruption, both stagnated any chance for economical development. “The Lebanese economy is currently in shambles, mired in clientelism and corruption” (El Husseini, 2012).

Consequently, these reforms will have effect on three main disciplines. First, on the political level, the public deficient structures will be tackled in a more systematic and scientific manner, ultimately leading to proper public governance. Second, on the economic level, the national economy could eventually find a breather in which economic advancement could finally witness its cycle’s wheeling and dealing. Third, on the social level, constructing sense of belonging and enriching the concept of nation state-building, by fortifying the state’s national capacity via human development, by investing in Lebanon’s human capital based on meritocracy and qualifications, putting an end to the excessive violation of legal and ethical obligations towards the public interest. “Altogether, private interests often overwhelmed public interest” (Makdisi, 2004). The formula of confessionalism that was once custom-fitted into the Lebanese politics, in order to safeguard public unity and to initiate the foundations of a democratic state, could have reached its expiry date. It has legitimized the institutionalization of sectarian disagreements, undermining the quintessence of national belonging. Thus, deconfessionalism may perhaps counterbalance such cynical effects and pave the way for a newly aspired contemporary civic mindset.

“It is of an urgent need for Lebanon to begin the process of deconfessionalism as a departure point towards modernizing the state and the mentality of the citizens” (Habib, 2009). Henceforth, Lebanese citizens will become acquainted with their sets of rights and obligations. Until then, clientelism will tend to persist as a fundamental strategy for social, economical and most of all welfare exchanges.

As previously mentioned, the everlasting sectarian power struggles augment in a region where uprisings and political turmoil are functioning as a societal wrecking-ball. “A comment is sometimes advanced that Lebanon’s economic performance is closely linked with the country’s particular political system of confessional representation, which operates in a politically unstable region” (Gaspard, 2004). Until the date of publishing this paper, continuous influx of a “regional patron” might emerge in order to foster Lebanon’s sectarian leaders as his new clientele. Clientelism in Lebanon intriguingly might prove to be a transnational phenomenon, throughout which even political leaders are a part of regional and even a wider global clientelistic networks.

This research serves as a reference for the readers who are interested in capitalizing on its content, for any potential research and more in-depth analysis, whether regarding clientelism in Lebanon, or even for compare and contrast examination vis-à-vis peer states, specifically MENA (Middle East and North Africa) based countries which share common attributes such as lack of accountability, deficiency in meritocracy, communal mistrust, corruption, fragile governance and several various shared features. It acts as a litmus paper towards

the current inclination of clientelism in Lebanon. The content of the paper offers empirical evidence that countering the influence of clientelism would cater to the communal needs of the citizens in terms of improved quantity and quality of public goods and services. Ultimately, the paper enables the readers to approach the notion of clientelism in a critical thinking context which will permit them to judge and tackle the issue from a political and economic perspective, and trigger them to offer further alternative solutions, vis-à-vis a belief that has been persisting for centuries in Lebanon, hindering the proper evolution of its political life, obstructing the development of its economy and simultaneously handcuffing its public governance.

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