

LEBANESE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY

Sunni Islamists in Northern Lebanon:
Relative Deprivation Reinforces Exclusionary Politics

By

Nisrine Ghassan Barakeh

A thesis

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts in International
Affairs

School of Arts and Sciences
April 2016

Thesis Approval Form

Student Name: Misrine Ghassan Barakeh I.D. #: 200601298

Thesis Title: Sunni Islamists in Northern Lebanon:
Relative Deprivation Reinforces Exclusionary Politics

Program: International Affairs

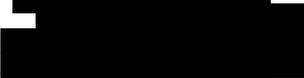
Department: Social Sciences

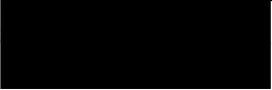
School: **School of Arts and Sciences**

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's in Arts in the major of International Affairs

Thesis Advisor: Imad Salamey Signature:  Date: 28/11/16

Member: Khalil Geban Signature:  Date: 28/11/16

Member: J. Skulte-Qwas Signature:  Date: 28/4/2016

THESIS COPYRIGHT RELEASE FORM

LEBANESE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY NON-EXCLUSIVE DISTRIBUTION LICENSE

By signing and submitting this license, you (the author(s) or copyright owner) grants to Lebanese American University (LAU) the non-exclusive right to reproduce, translate (as defined below), and/or distribute your submission (including the abstract) worldwide in print and electronic format and in any medium, including but not limited to audio or video. You agree that LAU may, without changing the content, translate the submission to any medium or format for the purpose of preservation. You also agree that LAU may keep more than one copy of this submission for purposes of security, backup and preservation. You represent that the submission is your original work, and that you have the right to grant the rights contained in this license. You also represent that your submission does not, to the best of your knowledge, infringe upon anyone's copyright. If the submission contains material for which you do not hold copyright, you represent that you have obtained the unrestricted permission of the copyright owner to grant LAU the rights required by this license, and that such third-party owned material is clearly identified and acknowledged within the text or content of the submission. IF THE SUBMISSION IS BASED UPON WORK THAT HAS BEEN SPONSORED OR SUPPORTED BY AN AGENCY OR ORGANIZATION OTHER THAN LAU, YOU REPRESENT THAT YOU HAVE FULFILLED ANY RIGHT OF REVIEW OR OTHER OBLIGATIONS REQUIRED BY SUCH CONTRACT OR AGREEMENT. LAU will clearly identify your name(s) as the author(s) or owner(s) of the submission, and will not make any alteration, other than as allowed by this license, to your submission.

Name: Msrine Barakeh

Signature: 

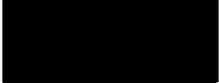
Date: April 20, 2016

PLAGIARISM POLICY COMPLIANCE STATEMENT

I certify that:

- I have read and understood LAU's Plagiarism Policy.
- I understand that failure to comply with this Policy can lead to academic and disciplinary actions against me.
- This work is substantially my own, and to the extent that any part of this work is not my own I have indicated that by acknowledging its sources.

Name: *Misrine Barakeh*

Signature: 

Date: *April 20, 2016*

Dedication Page

To my endless love and support, to my parents

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This project would not have been possible without the support of many people. Many thanks to my advisor Dr. Imad Salameh who helped me frame my research topic at the beginning and was completely supportive at all stages. Also thanks to my committee members, Dr. Jennifer Skulte-Ouais, and Dr. Khalil Gebara who offered me constructive critical guidance and support.

And finally, thanks to my mother, father, and brothers. Also many thanks to War Child Holland- Lebanon who showed me support and appreciation throughout my project.

Sunni Islamists in Northern Lebanon: Relative Deprivation Reinforces Exclusionary Politics

Nisrine Ghassan Barakeh

ABSTRACT

Sunni Islamist movements in Lebanon, particularly in the North, have grown in number against the backdrop of Syrian conflict. Islamists' appeal has attracted a large segment of the Sunni youth population, radicalized by fear of Shiite and Alawite dominance. Mobilization has been based on sectarian indoctrination that stresses their distinction while pursuing an Islamic State. This thesis draws an investigatory situational analysis in order to reveal the development of various Islamists strands in Northern Lebanon. It questions Islamists' willingness to join the Lebanese consociational system and explores prerequisites for their participation. The research design reveals the circumstances under which a sectarian exclusionary movement may ultimately yield to consociationalism and power sharing political arrangement. The hypothesis associates relative deprivation views with consociational and plural politics. A series of interviews with Salafist leaders and activists demonstrate views toward own state of affairs, compared to others, and ultimately capture comparative different attitude toward coexistence and power sharing.

Keywords: Islamists, Tripoli, Deprivation, Participation, Consociationalism

Table of Contents

I. Introduction.....	1
1.1 The rise of Islamists in Northern Lebanon	4
1.2 Sunni-Shiite Battlefield	6
1.3 Relative deprivation theory	8
1.4 Consociationalism in relation To Islamists’ deprivation.....	10
1.5 Hypothesis	14
1.6 Significance and statement of need	16
1.7 Methodology	17
1.7.1 Research design	18
II. Islamist Integration: Relative Deprivation Theory	20
2.1 Salafists in Northern Lebanon	20
2.2 Sunni Islamists vs. Hezbollah	22
2.2.1 Hezbollah: from Islamism to Integration.....	23
2.2.2 Hezbollah and Islamists Similarities.....	24
2.2.3 Islamists replicating Hezbollah’s model.....	26
2.3 Tripoli Islamists views on political participation	26
2.3.1 The Islamic Group or Al Jama’ah Islamiah.....	27
2.3.2 Islamic Tawhid movement.....	27
2.3.3 Liberation Party or Hezb Al Tahreer	28
2.3.4 Salafists	28
2.4 Relative deprivation and Islamist integration.....	29
III. Methodology	34
3.1 Research design	34
3.2 Methodology	35
3.2.1 Sample Interview Questions	36
3.3 Sampling.....	39
3.4 Procedure	40
3.5 Ethics	41
3.6 Limitations.....	42
IV. Relative deprivation reinforces Islamists’ exclusionary approach.....	44
4.1 Radical Islamic movements in Tripoli: The Relative Deprivation Theory	44
4.2 Interviews’ Findings.....	48
4.2.1 Theme 1: Political Participation in the consociational system	48
4.2.2. Theme 2: Relative deprivation.....	54

4.2.2.1 Relative deprivation measured.....	54
4.2.2.2 Relative deprivation resolved.....	57
4.2.3 Theme 3: Islamists replicating Hezbollah’s model: new Sunni representatives	59
V. Conclusion	63
5.1 Relative deprivation and integration: the link	64
5.2 Methodology	66
5.3 Reasons behind the rise of extremism: Tripoli Sunnis’ views	67
5.4 Relative deprivation indirectly yields to exclusionary politics	68
5.5 Islamists replicating Hezbollah’s model: New Sunni representatives	69
5.6 Extremism in Islam: Future prospects	70
VI. References	74
VII. Appendix	77
Appendix A: Institutional Review Board Approval.....	77

List of Figures

FIGURE 1: TRIPOLI RESIDENTS ANSWERS ON THE REASONS BEHIND THE RISE OF RADICAL ISLAMISM.....	45
FIGURE 2: PERCENTAGES GIVEN TO DIFFERENT ANSWERS ON THE RISE OF RADICAL ISLAMISM IN TRIPOLI	45
FIGURE 3: PERCENTAGES OF THE CLOSEST FACTOR WHEN THE ANSWER TO QUESTION 1 INVOLVED MORE THAN ONE REASON BEHIND THE RISE OF ISLAMISM	47
FIGURE 4: ISLAMISTS WILLINGNESS TO PARTICPATE IN THE LEBANESE CONSOCIATIONAL SYSTEM	49
FIGURE 5: ISLAMISTS NEEDS AND DEMANDS	55
FIGURE 6: ISLAMISTS' VIEWS ON THEIR SUNNI REPRESENTATION	59

List of Tables

TABLE 1: QUESTIONS TO ISLAMISTS ON RELATIVE DEPRIVATION AND CONSOCIATIONALISM.....	36
TABLE 2:QUESTIONS FOR TRIPOLI RESIDENTS ON THE RISE OF ISLAMISM.....	38

Chapter One

Introduction

Following the outburst of the Lebanese Civil War in 1975, the Arab League deployed an Arab Deterrent Force in Lebanon to restore security. The force was mainly made up of Syrian troops yet there were other Arab states participating like Saudi Arabia, Libya and others. Later in the 1979, all the Arab forces left Lebanon, leaving the Syrian troops alone in the country. Tripoli, Lebanon's second largest city has had a fair share of the Syrian guardianship up till 2005. Recalling political practices, Tripoli Islamists elicit atrocities committed from Hafez Al Asad, the longest reigning president his son equally. In February 2005, Syrian fingerprints were associated with the Hariri assassination, the fact that triggered Sunni rage against the suspected regime. After the 2005 Cedar Revolution, Syrian troops withdrew from Lebanon. Hezbollah, Syria's biggest ally, called its supporters for a movement to thank the regime for achievements during its presence, an act that generated feelings of humiliation and fear among Sunnis. In May 2008, Hezbollah invaded Beirut Sunni neighborhoods in an attempt to halt a governmental decision to limit Hezbollah's strategic communication system. The turbulent May events significantly damaged the relations between Sunnis and Shiites in Lebanon.

With the eruption of the Syrian uprising in 2011, Sunni Islamists in Northern Lebanon observed a prominent opportunity to pay a debt back to the Syrian regime by supporting Islamic movements and sending Jihadists to fight in Syria. In this regard, Islamist activism has been rising while attracting sympathy from anti-regime

Sunnis. Hezbollah's active participation alongside the Syrian regime in Syria and against Sunni rebellions, gave Tripoli Jihadists another reason to protect Sunnis. Islamists emphasized the need to strengthen themselves in the country in order to possibly change the Sunni prevailing weakness.

While comparing Hezbollah to Islamists, similarities seem to be numerous. Hezbollah resembles Tripoli's Sunni Jihadists in ideology and resistance, though the element of resistance varies. Hezbollah first started as an Islamic movement and was then fully integrated into the Lebanese consociational system. Likewise, Tripoli Islamists base their strategies on Islamic ideology and the idea of protecting the oppressed (Agha, n.d.) Trying to gain power in that sense, the question remains vague whether Islamists are willing to duplicate Hezbollah's successful experience (Are Salafis Preparing to Replicate Hezbollah Model in North Lebanon, 2012). Integrating Islamists into the Lebanese consociational system requires preset conditions. This thesis examines the possibility and the pre-requisites prior to Islamists' integration. The chief emphasis will link Islamists' exclusionary politics to relative deprivation.

This study aims to understand the link between consociationalism and relative deprivation theory. It is a research project designed to examine how consociationalism is attained when parties have equal balance of power. The thesis addresses the central research question: "Are Tripoli Islamists willing to join the Lebanese consociational system and under what conditions?"

Sunni Islamists have always expressed their need to establish an Islamic state. They have showed no interest in participating in the current political system. After the

Syrian Civil War many Da'wa Salafists¹ have shifted their interest from being solely religious to being more politically religious. It is evident that many Salafists are being more politically oriented which is clearly portrayed in their speeches and social media discourse (Abdo, 2015).

It is unclear though whether Islamists at the moment strive to join the Lebanese consociational system or not. For them, they have been marginalized and abused by this system mainly via the imprisonment of their Islamists. Their intention to accept consociationalism and the extent to which Tripoli Sunnis support this seems ambiguous. When it comes to voicing out Sunni social rights, local Tripoli Sunnis demonstrate support. They have continuously urged for having a strong Sunni representation, especially in the current vacant Sunni leadership (Neriah, 2012).

This study will first question Islamists' willingness to join the Lebanese consociational system and the conditions linked to this participation. It will correlate integration with relative deprivation. When Islamists feel deprived and weak, does it seem possible to incorporate them within the Lebanese consociational system? Will diminishing relative deprivation facilitate containing Islamists in the Lebanese system? Given the current vacant Sunni leadership, do Islamists stand a chance to become the new Sunni representatives?

Islamists' appeal has attracted a large segment of the young Sunni population, radicalized by fear of Shiite and Alawite dominance. Mobilization has been based on sectarian indoctrination that stresses Islamist distinction while pursuing an Islamic State. This thesis draws an investigatory situational analysis in order to reveal the development of various Islamist strands in Northern Lebanon. It questions Islamists'

¹ Salafists who call for Islam through preaching

willingness to join the Lebanese consociational system and explores the pre-requisites to this. When many of the internal political struggles are based on the relation between Islamists and the government, Hezbollah and their allies, it is important to understand the detrimental causes behind Islamists' political discourse.

Within the current rise of radical Islamism in the region, it is of utmost importance to understand and then contain the growth of such movements in Northern Lebanon, particularly when those groups receive attentive sympathy from the Sunni masses. Sympathy associated with political deprivation may lead to political exclusion and strengthen radicalism. This research questions whether social and political equalities are the prerequisites to Islamists' integration in the Lebanese consociational system. Integration means that the existence of those clusters is formalized and therefore their movements are observed. Linking relative deprivation to radicalism aims to understand when people shift to radical solutions. Perceiving this link proclaims that groups reach out for violent means when they are relatively deprived, which is happening at the moment all over the region.

This chapter offers a brief introduction to the research topic. It relies on some research review to introduce Islamists rise in Northern Lebanon, the Sunni-Shiite relationship, and the Relative Deprivation Theory. It also briefly explains the methodology used in the research and the statement of need. At the end of this chapter the hypothesis is presented followed by the significance of this research.

1.1 The rise of Islamists in Northern Lebanon

Following the Syrian Civil War, Islamist activism has been rising in Northern Lebanon. Therefore, understanding Salafism offers a better understanding of

Salafists' approaches and objectives. Salafists' emergence dates back to the 13th century. Rabil (2015) classifies Salafism into three main categories, quietists, activists and Salafi Jihadists. Quietest groups call for Islam through Islamic education; activists are those who are unsatisfied with their current governments and call for change in the political representation whereas Jihadists are those who aim at going back to the golden era of Islam through holy war or Jihad. Rabil highlights the role of the Lebanese army in fighting Islamist Jihadists and foresees their takeover if the Lebanese army falls down. According to him, the fall down of the Lebanese government will make Islamists soldiers representing Sunnis (Rabil, 2015).

Similarly, Dr. Jacques Neriah, a special analyst for the Middle East at the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, in his article "The Rise of the Salafist in Lebanon: A New Sunni-Shiite Battlefield" examines the rise of Salafism and the Sunni- Shiite battlefield. According to Neriah, the new Sunni leadership is represented by Islamists. The past experience in the Arab world shows that Islamists were able to take over when traditional Sunni leaders failed to do the job. In Lebanon, when Sunni moderate leaders failed to voice out the Sunni community needs, Islamists filled the gap and came into power.

Islamists, being the extension of the Arab Salafism, have been in Lebanon for fifty years. In Northern Lebanon they are concentrated in Tripoli, Akkar and Donniyeh. During the Syrian presence in Lebanon, they were not publically active and were only so after the Syrian withdrawal from Lebanon, and widely flourishing after the Syrian anti-regime uprising in 2011 (Neriah, 2012). In her research about Salafism and the use of social media in such momentums, Geneive Abdo, remarks that with the absence of Sunni leaders, Sunnis seem to be targeted and hence Islamists need to take action. As a fellow in the Center for Middle East Policy at Brookings and a

fellow in the Middle East/Southwest Asia program at the Stimson Center, Abdo published a study titled “Islamists and Sectarianism: Twitter and Communal Conflict in the Middle East” in which she explores non-violent Islamists groups that are using social media to express their views and gather public sympathy. Her study is divided into 3 different parts. The first part explains Islamists beliefs and how those have been altered after the Arab uprisings. The second and third parts feature key Islamist leaders and their use of social media in projecting their ideologies. Abdo reiterates the views of key Salafist figures on the Sunni –Shiite battlefield. For these groups, Hezbollah, the Iranian project, and the American support associated with this, are seen as a major threat to Sunnis (Abdo, 2013).

The Tripoli Islamist community has an increasing fear of being targeted and oppressed. They expressed their right to have their own beliefs, and call for them. According to them, they are passionate about their religion and values just as any other party is passionate about its values. Islamists do not see that they deserve oppression just because they believe in Islam and are calling for it (Ali, 2014).

Stereotyping is triggering anger not only within Islamists but also within the Sunni public mass. Tripoli Sunnis have an anger reservoir for the 8th of March Syrian allies, specifically Hezbollah. Sunni residents flag concerns regarding the discrepancies between how the Lebanese army attacks Islamists disregarding Hezbollah’s actions (Williams, 2014). This discrepancy in treatment between Hezbollah and Islamists in addition to the difference in resource-availability among them is better examined in the coming section.

1.2 Sunni-Shiite Battlefield

In the aftermath of Hariri’s assassination, Hezbollah’s power in relation to that of the Sunni community has been frequently debated. Islamists have been emphasizing the

threat Hezbollah imposes on the Sunni Umma and therefore has continuously called for protective measures. Tripoli has long been known as the foundation of Sunni politics and the home for both Lebanese and Syrian Islamists. Most of these Islamist groups fiercely oppose the Assad regime in the neighboring country.

With conflicts being infused with sectarianism, the Sunni Umma feels the threat of the growing Shiite-Alawite-Iranian coalition (Abdo, 2015). Shiites have always used Israel as the main threat. Likewise Sunnis are using the same strategy to justify their presence. For them, Shiites' presence is similar to that of Israel. According to Salafi leaders, Islam encourages plurality and coexistence but not to an extent that Sunnis become marginalized (Abdo, 2013).

In an attempt to foresee Islamists integration in the Lebanese system, a comparative analysis is drawn between Hezbollah and Islamists. While Hezbollah and Sunni Islamists seem to be divergent, some political analysts have drawn similarities between the two groups. Hezbollah's integration in the Lebanese political and social system is best examined in a thesis written by Thomas G. Esposito. "Political Integration of Hezbollah into Lebanese Politics", examines how Hezbollah transformed from a terrorist group to a legitimate political participatory actor. Esposito highlights the need of balancing legitimacy and militancy towards Israel. In order to be integrated in the Lebanese society, Hezbollah needs to be attentive to the needs of Lebanon and its different factions.

Trying to understand the transition of Hezbollah to a political party integrated in the Lebanese system, "The Shift in Hezbollah's Ideology, Religious Ideology, Political Ideology and Political Program", a dissertation by Joseph Al Agha, explores the development of Hezbollah's Ideology. It focuses on three aspects: religious ideology,

political ideology, and political program. The research studies how the identity of Hezbollah changed in stages towards a realistic political program.

In that sense, some political analysts have compared Sunni Salafists' current rise to that of Hezbollah in the early 1980s. Although Islamists present weaponry and ability to mobilize masses, replicating the Hezbollah model will not work for several reasons. Unlike Islamist groups, Hezbollah did not gather its power overnight and the party chooses its battles cautiously. This does not rule out an attempt of those groups to replicate the Hezbollah model and become the new "Sunni Hezbollah" (Are Salafis Preparing to Replicate Hezbollah Model in North Lebanon, 2012). But are Islamists actually open to integration? Within their public discourses they often refer to the unfair treatment they are receiving and to the minimal resources they enjoy in compare to what other groups enjoy. Therefore this study suggests that participation is linked to relative deprivation. So what is relative deprivation? The coming section explicates this theory.

1.3 Relative deprivation theory

Relative deprivation theory considers that violence or terrorism is inspired by people who feel an existing gap between their expectation and the attained outcomes in a society (Gurr, 1970). Recent studies show that terrorists have been from wealthy backgrounds. "Relative deprivation theory in terrorism: a study of higher education and unemployment as predictors of terrorism", a research conducted by Clare Richardson (2011), shows that the correlation between unemployment and higher education, which reflects relative deprivation, is associated with an increase in terrorist attacks. The study shows that when what is expected is higher than what is received, people tend to shift towards violence. Feelings of injustice are caused by the fact that what an individual "actually" receives is way less than what s/he is

“entitled” to. The concept of relative deprivation dates back to ancient Greece (Richardson, 2011). Aristotle articulated the idea that revolution is driven by a relative sense or feeling of inequality, rather than an absolute measure.

Dissatisfaction leads to frustration, and frustration leads to aggression (Richardson, 2011).

Delving into the causes behind terrorism seems to be quite challenging. Opinions vary and analysis are dispersed. Poverty, education and literacy, and oppression and liberalization are social factors that lead to terrorism (Ziemke, n.d.). Poverty may be an indicator of radicalization in the Muslim world, yet it is not solely responsible for the emergence of such movements. For instance, September 11, 2001 attacks against New York and Washington were planned, organized and implemented by a well off leader who comes from a middle class family. There is little empirical research that suggests poverty is the cause behind the rise of terrorism (Ziemke, n.d.). While none of the poor societies in the world seem to have organized terrorist movements, it also appears that lessening poverty still leads to an increase in the emergence of those movements. Oppression may be one basis for terrorism during periods of democratization and freedom. During those periods people notice an increase in radical Islamic movements. Terrorist movements emerge when there is a change and not when everything is stable. Yet it has never been proven that poverty and the rise of terrorism are directly correlated (Ziemke, n.d.).

Discrimination or social inequality may push people to join radical movements.

“Islamic Extremist Terrorism: The Public's Perception of its Causes”, a research study published by Lauren Whitehair (2012) investigates the public opinion of what people think the reasons behind the rise of terrorism are. The key themes discussed are religious influences, social influences, discrimination, political revenge,

psychological explanations and demographic features. Results show that religion, social influences, humiliation and discrimination all play a role in the rise of Islamic extremism (2012). Linking relative deprivation to radical arrangements, Hellen Hjordt Hansen (n.d.) uses Relative Deprivation Theory (RDT) as a tool to explain some social movements. In her study, “Salafi-jihadists in Syria: A Social Movement Theory Analysis”, Hansen explains that when a group feels deprived of a right, they tend to call for change and thus sometimes join radical movements. The study believes that deprivation illustrated by political restrictions and control combined with other factors lead to Islamic mobilization (Hansen, n.d.)

The reasons behind the rise of extremism support have been revisited by many scholars. Another article supporting relative deprivation theory is Ömer Taşpınar’s article, “You Can’t Understand Why People Join ISIS without Understanding Relative Deprivation.” Omer argues that although ideology, religion, culture and socioeconomic factors are valid reasons behind the rise of ISIS, yet relative deprivation is a much more valid base for their rise. The “growing gap between expectations and opportunities lead to ideological radicalization” (2015). Trying to understand why people join radical movements is not simple, especially when many factors intersect. People tend to use violence when they are frustrated, and they are often frustrated because they feel deprived of a right. When frustration becomes prolonged, it leads to aggression. Political violence is the outcome of collective discontent (Gurr, 1970).

Relative deprivation therefore offers a better explanation of why some Islamists resolve to violence to achieve their objectives. According to this theory consociationalism does not seem to be the desired path to achieve slamists’ demands.

1.4 Consociationalism in relation To Islamists’ deprivation

Fundamentalist religions like Judaism, Christianity in the past and Islam currently, share common ideologies when it comes to refusing multiculturalism. Some argue that governments cannot suppress religions and confine to only one broad religion because this will lead to bloodshed. According to those, when there is a democratic governance and separation of government from state, each religion practices its beliefs without dominating the other. Therefore, when religious freedom is emphasized, religions may not discriminate against each other. In this pluralistic society, law would grant intellectual freedom to those who abide by it and would deny rights to those who reduce the freedom of others (Crabtree, 2012).

In sectarian divided societies like Lebanon, some suggest that consociationalism seems to be the best political democratic practice. Lijphart proposes consociational democracy as a remedy for pluralistic divided societies. According to him, when traditional majoritarian democracy does not work for societies that are deeply divided over ethnic or religious cleavages, consociationalism seems to do (Lijphart, 1977). Critics of the Lebanese consociationalism argue that this system has deepened political divisions instead. In this thesis, whether Tripoli Islamists are willing to join such a system at the moment will be questioned. The main aim of the thesis is to delve into the pre-requisites to integration. According to Islamists, they have been feeling marginalized and deprived for so long. Taking that perspective, and if relative deprivation diminishes, would Islamists think of being part of this consociational system?

At the time being, non-violent Salafists are actively using social media to raise their concerns regarding Shiism, Syria and Iran combined (Abdo, 2015). Those Salafists are using social media to gain public attention. Although much attention is given to Salafi Jihadists yet those Salafists also have an enormous influence in destabilizing

the region while voicing out their concerns. The absence of a Lebanese Sunni leadership has given these Sunnis a chance to grow in influence. As the Syrian war continues and spreads on the Lebanese borders, moderate Islamists are being compared to Hezbollah during the 1980s mobilizing for support in Lebanon. Those Islamists acknowledge that they represent only five to six percent of the whole Lebanese population. One of the prominent Salafists in Tripoli is Sheikh Salem Rafiei. Rafiei started as D'awa Salafist, yet some believe that his ideas have become very extreme (Abdo, 2015). In that sense, he has been politically active for many years. Recently, he said that “[the Sunnis] see their political leaders as weak...today, the pulse of the street in Lebanon is with the Salafists” (as cited in Abdo, 2015). In Tripoli, there seems to be sympathy with Jabhat al Nusra and ISIS among Sunnis. Logically when Sunnis feel alienated from the state they tend to sympathize or affiliate more with extremist groups. If this trend continues, there will be ominous consequences for Lebanon and the region (El-Husseini, 2014). In June 2015, two videos were leaked to the media showing torture of Islamist prisoners in Roumieh prison. Torture practiced by the Lebanese Security Forces exacerbated anger among Tripoli Sunnis in general and Islamists specifically. In an interview with an anonymous Tripoli resident, the interviewee admitted that if it were his brother in the video, he would have joined ISIS directly (El-Husseini, 2014). Despotism, associated with this incident among others, leads to frustration, and frustration is causing those deprived to choose extremist paths.

According to a Salafist Sheikh Nabil Rahim, the Sunni Ministry of Interior, which Sunnis believed would enforce justice equally among Sunnis and Shiites, has been behaving disgracefully. Rahim adds that the Roumieh scandal has increased Sunni doubt about justice in the current Lebanese system. Following the security plan

implemented in Tripoli, Sunni youth still feel politically marginalized. They feel that the plan has been only applied in the north and not in Hezbollah's territories.

Furthermore, those youth have clearly stated that the future movement who was supposed to protect them and defend the Sunni Umma have instead took decisions against the Sunni community, marginalizing and restricting them. Most of the times, Sunnis feel that their back is not protected (El-Husseini, 2014). Deprivation associated with this drives Islamists away from the system and more into extremism. Through many interviews Sunnis regard Hezbollah as their enemy specifically after the party engaged itself fully in the Syrian war against Sunni rebellions. In addition, many of the Tripoli youths feel that they no longer have any political or religious leadership" (El-Husseini, 2014).

Many Islamists feel that their grievances are not given any attention by political leaders in the country. This is why they are resolving to exclusionary politics. Studies show that 67% of Tripoli population lives below poverty line. Poverty and unemployment in that sense partly justify the rise in extremism in the city. Also, the dual bombings in Tripoli have led many Islamic scholars to declare that from that moment on Sunnis of Tripoli will be resolving their own matters without the need for a government. Islamists blamed Alawites backed up by Hezbollah and the Syrian regime for the bombings.

Sheikh Salem Al Shahal, one of the prominent Salafists in Tripoli, frequently voiced his criticism not only against the Lebanese government, but also against all those he sees as being involved with the "conspiracy...targeting the Sunni sect to make way for the Iranian project." Furthermore, al Shahal has continued to maintain that the Sunnis of Lebanon were being specifically targeted: "Lebanon is held hostage and [its] army is treating its people as the Syrian army treats its people" (as cited in

Abdo, 2015). In this sense, it seems that Islamists are not open to the current Lebanese system. The thesis will look into whether Islamists could be incorporated in the Lebanese system when relative deprivation diminishes.

1.5 Hypothesis

Incidents in the Arab world have shown that whenever there is a lack of a Sunni led state, non-state actors, specifically Sunnis took over and filled the vacuum (Abdo, 2015). In Lebanon, Islamists took advantage of Hariri's absence and portrayed themselves as Sunni defenders. Sunnis in Tripoli have accumulated feelings of deprivation. Socially from poverty and politically from Hezbollah's privilege in the Lebanese consociational system. There has been a speculation that feelings of deprivation and lack of security is pushing Islamists towards replicating Hezbollah's model by arming themselves away from the Lebanese state (Are Salafis Preparing to Replicate Hezbollah Model in North Lebanon, 2012). The question remains whether Hezbollah model is feasible and desirable to Sunnis. Although the majority of Sunnis feel dissatisfied, only a minority of them support Sunni militarization (Are Salafis Preparing to Replicate Hezbollah Model in North Lebanon, 2012). Yet several incidents have showed that Islamists are well armed, like the deployment of armed militants in the aftermath of arresting a key Salafist figure Chadi Mawlawi.

Like Hezbollah, Salafists' thoughts are grounded on religion, yet they also have a political agenda. They fight against Bashar al Assad, they oppose policies of Western governments, and they warn against Iran's excessive interventions and ambition for greater influence in the Sunni Arab world. In addition, some are critical of the Sunni monarchies in the Gulf, and they present themselves as alternatives to the purists who tow the government line in some Gulf States. When discussions come to Sunni-

Shiite boundaries, Hezbollah argues that the religious differences between the two sects, Sunni and Shiites do not prevent unity and cooperation on common political-ideological concepts such as anti-imperialism, anti-Zionism, “the liberation of Jerusalem”, and so forth. In fact, such common ideologies have led to cooperation between Hezbollah and Sunni groups such as the Lebanese Harakat Al-Tawhid Al-Islamiyya and Al-Jama‘a Al-Islamiyya (Abdo, 2013).

At the time being, Sunni Islamists do not seem as open to dialogue and cooperation with other political parties specifically Hezbollah, who for them has been and still is shedding the blood of Sunnis. Taking this into account, Islamists integration into the Lebanese consociational system becomes difficult. Comparing that to Hezbollah’s experience, it is worth mentioning that the latter was able to successfully join the Lebanese politics only when it became open to other Lebanese groups like the Christians. To what extent could Islamists replicate Hezbollah’s successful experience? What are the pre-requisites of having another Islamic group joining the Lebanese consociational system?

The Lebanese system is based on sectarian divisions and representation in the parliament is divided accordingly among different sects who are represented by the Zu’ama. In the consociational system cooperation is sought among all communities. Lijphart has defined this as a challenging factor especially when a decision seeks consent from all players the process becomes complicated and is mainly characterized by delay (Barclay, 2007). Arend Lijphart highlights the importance of having different relationships among different actors in a consociational system. He defines those relationships as favorable to the “establishment and persistence of consociational democracy.” These relationships are among leaders themselves, between the public and between the leaders and the public (Barclay, 2007). If the

consociational system seeks cooperation among leaders from different sects, could this cooperation decrease the deprivation feelings among Islamists? Could power sharing solve the relative deprivation issue? It is actually the other way round. Only when relative deprivation diminishes, Islamists would think of accepting a power sharing model. Sharing power with very powerful actors does not seem to be a proposed solution. Only when a party is equal in power or resources is it able to sit around one table with stronger allies. The Lebanese consociational system brings actors from all over Lebanon around one table. The thesis links consociationalism or power sharing to relative deprivation. It seems that within the current relative deprivation, Islamists are unwilling to accept the consociational arrangement. As relative deprivation is a major concern for Sunnis in general and for Islamists in particular, it becomes vital to diminish the discrepancies prior to any integration. Once parties are equal in power, they tend to accept negotiation or discussions. In that sense, Islamists and Hezbollah cannot join one table while the former feel that they are powerless. Balance of power is essential prior to any discussion of integration or cooperation. When Hariri was strong in Tripoli, Islamists did not have the luxury of representation. They had to cooperate or remain silent (Abdo, 2013). Within the current Sunni anger reservoir, Sunnis might support Islamists and recognize them over the mediocre Hariri who has recently been performing poorly. Time will tell whether Islamists will develop into the 'Sunni Hezbollah' scenario or not (Are Salafis Preparing to Replicate Hezbollah Model in North Lebanon, 2012).

1.6 Significance and statement of need

Within the current rise of radical Islamism in the region, it is of great importance to understand factors leading to its growth, in areas such as Northern Lebanon, particularly when those groups receive significant sympathy. Sympathy associated

with political deprivation may lead to political exclusion and strengthens radicalism. This research explores whether social and political equality are prerequisites to Islamists' integration in the Lebanese consociational system. Integration means that the existence of those clusters is formalized and therefore their movements are observed. Linking relative deprivation to radicalism aims to understand when people shift to radical solutions. Understanding this link proclaims that groups reach out for violent means when they are relatively deprived. The hypothesis could be tested in the region, possibly creating a fair global system and limiting the intensification of radicalism, therefore, directly supporting peace actions.

1.7 Methodology

Data collection will rely on the content of some discourses and speeches made by Islamists. Some literature will be used to compare Hezbollah's rise to the rise of Islamists. Furthermore, I will rely on a study conducted on the reasons behind the rise of Jihadism in Tripoli. The study questions Tripoli Sunni residents on what they think the main reason behind the rise of Jihadi groups. The results assert that relative deprivation is a major factor behind this rise of radical Islamism.

This research will predominantly count on qualitative analysis through interviews conducted with Islamists leaders and activists from the movement in order to extract views toward their own state of affairs, compared to others, and ultimately capture comparative different attitudes towards coexistence and power sharing. Interviews with both Salafists and Islamists will question their willingness to be part of the Lebanese consociational system. Questions intend to measure to what extent relative deprivation is linked to Islamists exclusionary politics. If so, will diminishing relative deprivation resolve the conflict? In this regards, interviews will focus on Islamists demands and the corresponding strategy orientation. Therefore, the first question will

ask about Islamists willingness to join the Lebanese consociational system. As many Salafist leaders have been shifting more towards politics, their agenda and major demands need to be clarified. Linking this to relative deprivation, Islamists' input about possible solutions to diminish relative deprivation will be further investigated. If relative deprivation ends and Islamists are treated fairly according to their definition of fairness, will they be looking into being part of the Lebanese consociational system? Are they willing to sit aside Hezbollah on the same table? In this sense, it is essential to question whether Islamists think the Sunni public mass supports them and on what basis. Moreover, questions will provide a comparison between Islamists' current rise and Hezbollah's earlier experience. Could Hezbollah's model be duplicated? Are Islamists planning to do so? If yes, what are the lessons learned and what are the threats that they foresee?

1.7.1 Research design

This thesis is investigatory research that examines current Islamist strands in northern Lebanon and their developments in order to reveal potential pattern towards consociational politics. The research design will reveal the circumstances under which a sectarian exclusionary movement may ultimately yield to consociationalism and power sharing political arrangement. For this study, subsequent chapters include a literature review, the methodology, findings and discussions, and a conclusion. The literature review will reveal the direct correlation between relative deprivation theory and Islamists' exclusionary politics. Hezbollah will be taken as a case study to compare it to the current rise of Salafism. Drawing on many similarities, this chapter will question the extent to which Islamists may imitate Hezbollah's successful experience. Hezbollah's development from an Islamic group to a fully integrated group may set an example for Islamists to duplicate. Previous literature will be used

to examine Islamists' status in Tripoli, and their views regarding their own political affairs. Relative deprivation as a theory will be examined in this chapter and linked to Islamists' own social and political statuses. By the end of chapter two, the research hypothesis will be determined. Chapter one will explain the research methodology. The thesis will mainly concentrate on interviews with some Islamist leaders in Tripoli. It will introduce key Sunni leaders and present a sample of the interview questions that will tackle Islamists' demands and future prospects. The methodology explains what is going to be measured and how. In this regards, relative deprivation among Islamists and its direct implication on their exclusionary political discourse will be weighed. The study results will be finally presented in chapter four, with an in-depth analysis of the provided data. The outcome of the research will either assert the hypothesis or defy it. The final chapter sums up the research and concludes the study. In this chapter the research significance will be re-emphasized and future prospects will be presented.

Chapter Two

Islamist Integration: Relative Deprivation Theory

Recent years have shown a rise in Islamists movements throughout the Arab region including Lebanon. Following the Syrian uprising and the internal political fluctuations, Islamists' power in Tripoli is leaning upwards. Several internal factors have facilitated this upsurge. The absence of a Sunni leadership accompanied with Hezbollah's internal strategy and the imbalance of power, exposed Islamists as the "possible – new Sunni representatives." This chapter analyses the rise of Islamists and compare that to the rise of Hezbollah in 1985. Contrary to what is thought, both parties share common ideologies specifically those that are Islamic-based like the concept of Jihad. However, each group differently explicates, orients and justifies similar concepts. This section tends to examine Hezbollah's model and integration into the Lebanese state and poses a question to whether Islamists could imitate this experience. The study looks at the rise of Islamists from the perspective of relative deprivation theory, which affirms that when expectations are higher than achievements people tend to reach out to violence (Richardson, 2011). Findings assist that the pre-requisite to Islamists' integration into the Lebanese political system is a power balance manifestation.

2.1 Salafists in Northern Lebanon

In order to better understand Salafism, the term needs to be defined. Salafism calls for a return to Islam as practiced by the prophet and his ancestors, which the term

“salaf” stands for. Salafists are classified into three main categories: quietists, activists and Salafist Jihadists. Quietest groups call for Islam through Islamic education, activists are those who are unsatisfied with their current governments and call for change in the political representation, whereas the Jihadists are those who aim at going back to the golden era of Islam through holy war or Jihad (Rabil, 2015).

In Lebanon, the Salafist movement was established in 1946 by Salem al Shahal. The movement first called Shabab Mohammad and later Al Jama’ah Islamiya (which means groups of Muslims); initially focused only on charity work and Da’wa. As Salem grew older, his son Da’i took control which marked the second phase of Salafists’ work. Instead of merely focusing on the Da’wa, Da’i combined both the Da’wa and politics and during the Lebanese civil war, he founded an Islamic Army to defend the Sunni people. The Syrian army has quite managed to crack down on Salafists in Tripoli in 1985. After the Ta’if agreement in 1989, which ended the Lebanese civil war, Al Shahal resumed da’wa work through different means. He founded Jam’iyyat Al Hidayya wal Ihsan, which was abolished during the Syrian occupation accusing it of encouraging sectarianism. After Syrian withdrawal from Lebanon, the group operated again (Abdo, 2015).

In 2006, Sunnis were afraid that Hezbollah’s victory against Israel would make the party even more powerful and grant them control over the Lebanese territories. In May 2008, Hezbollah invaded Beirut cities in a reaction to a governmental verdict; this incident gave Sunnis credibility to further oppose the party. Due to the absence of a strong Sunni leader, Islamist power in Tripoli is growing. Some Islamists are being compared to Hezbollah’s occurrence in the 1980s although many Islamist group emerged before Hezbollah did. Yet those groups are aware of the inadequate number of supporters and their aim seems to transcend the Lebanese territories.

While linking the Sunnis abuse in Iraq and Syria to that in Lebanon, Islamists feel that they have a call of duty to stop the Sunni bleeding. Social media and the internet facilitate the discussion of atrocities from one country to the other (Abdo, 2015).

In that sense, Islamists feel that Sunnis are being targeted both inside and outside Lebanon. Feelings of marginalization and deprivation can be easily detected from the twitter account of D'ai al Islam al Shahal. On September 8 2013, he tweets: "The attack on our Sunni people and brothers in Baalbek and their vulnerability at the hands of the organization called Hezbollah, a sectarian power whose purpose is to create war and sedition... So it is normal for Sunnis of the world not to be quiet on the Safavid project targeting the Sunni people in Syria and Lebanon and the area" (as cited in Abdo, 2015).

Islamists are using social media to raise public awareness and influence opinion.

While media is attentive to radical jihadists, those non-violent Islamists also have a role in creating tension and instability. Tripoli Islamists or Da'wa Islamists are more often engaging in political affairs. For them, they think that they are being called for participation and dragged into the war in Syria and Iraq out of responsibility and duty of action (Abdo, 2015).

There is a wide divide between Shiites and Sunnis in the region. Policymakers are questioning whether the reasons behind that conflict are ideological differences or socioeconomic. Due to the empowerment of Shiites in Iraq and Lebanon, Sunnis feel threatened and Islamists are on the rise.

2.2 Sunni Islamists vs. Hezbollah

Ever since the assassination of Hariri, Sunnis have been feeling marginalized, targeted and unprotected. Several internal incidents has increased these feelings. The

collapse of the government in 2008 and Hezbollah's take over further threatened Sunnis presence (Neriah, 2012). Islamists in Tripoli feel that they are being accused with fabricated stories. They see themselves as individuals with beliefs and a right to share those beliefs. One of them says, "Just like any other party does, Islamists, being passionate about their religion, have the right to call for Islam." The treatment Islamists are receiving is leading them to become extremists (Ali, 2014).

Within the current state of affairs, it seems that the lack of a Sunni leadership is giving rise to Islamist's take over. It remains unclear whether those groups are capable of imitating Hezbollah's experience successfully. In the coming section, I present a historical investigation of Hezbollah's shift from a religious party to a party fully integrated in the Lebanese system. Then I compare between Hezbollah and Islamists questioning the possibility of having the latter imitate Hezbollah's earlier successful experience.

2.2.1 Hezbollah: from Islamism to Integration

Hezbollah, or the part of God, was created in 1982 as an anti-colonialism party fighting the Israeli occupation. Ideologically the party derives its beliefs from the Iranian ideology of Wilayat Al Fakih , or rule of Jurisprudent. The roots of their Islamic ideology is based on the concept of Jihadism, which is the willingness to die while fighting for something for the sake of God. Hezbollah's political ideology is mainly concentrated on Israeli resistance. The party strongly believes in fighting the oppressors in general in addition to the unity of Muslims and Jihadism. Since its emergence up till early 1990s, Hezbollah has presented itself as an Islamic group calling for an Islamic state. In 1991, the party shifted towards more openness and inclusive policy following the election of Aboon Al Musawi. This openness or "Infitah" was illustrated by initiating a dialogue with Christians, and offering

services to both Muslims and non- Muslims. While the shift from an Islamic Jihadist organization to an integrated and open political party seems extraordinary, it was clear that Hezbollah's new orientation focuses more on Lebanonization (Agha, n.d.).

2.2.2 Hezbollah and Islamists Similarities

On the concept of Jihadism, Hezbollah and Islamists share a common ground.

Hezbollah believes that Jihadism has two ultimate goals. The first is martyrdom and the second is the victory of the Umma. While the Umma differs in definition, both parties think that Jihadism is a religious duty in order to protect rights. The rights for Hezbollah are illustrated in land. The party practices martyrdom against Israelis.

Jihadism against Israel, being an aggressive occupant, in that sense is justified. For Hezbollah bowing oneself receives over value and glory as this preserves the dignity of the Umma. It is a matter of choosing to live humiliated in the world or die and live eternally in heaven while preserving the Umma honour (Agha, n,d).

When it comes to preserving the Umma honour and protecting rights Sunni Islamists seem to share the same ideology. Jihad orientation though differs widely between the two groups. It is clear from what is spread on social media and from the research done that Islamists regard Hezbollah as one of the enemies especially after the latter's participation in the Syrian civil war alongside the regime. Islamists sometimes go overboard, calling for Jihad against the Shiites, or as they call them "Rawafid."

In short, since the 1990s Hezbollah has been gradually evolving into a major player in the Lebanese consociational politics, offering services to both Muslims and Christians and participating in parliamentary, municipal, and governmental work. Through participating in the parliament, Hezbollah's voice becomes formally heard both locally and internationally. It is clear that following the Ta'if agreement and the

end of civil war, Hezbollah shifted from marginalization towards “infatih”, and from Islamization to “Lebanonization”, the subject matter that shaped its political discourse and priorities (Agha, n.d).

As mentioned before, one of the most important political ideologies for Hezbollah is the concept of the oppressed and oppressors. In Arabic, oppressed are called al mustad‘afin or those who are deemed weak; and the oppressors or the arrogant are called in Arabic Mustakbirin. Fadlallah had a religious theory of oppression where colonialism, imperialism and Zionism are regarded as evils and deserve to be attacked by the oppressed. According to Fadlallah, oppression steals from people the liberty granted to them by God. This leads to dehumanization and emerges feelings of helplessness and deprivation. The Quran urges the oppressed to revolt against those who are oppressing them, in order to preserve political and social justice. In that sense, Sunni Islamists and Hezbollah consent. At one point, Shiites themselves were deprived groups. Similarly, Sunni Islamists or Salafists tackle the issue of deprivation and dehumanization in almost every speech or discourse.

Locally Hezbollah’s program is to protect the oppressed, socially and politically. Internationally, its program is forged to offend oppressors, the US for the support of Israel and the west for their intention to conquer the Middle East (Agha, n.d).

The concept of the oppressed is a very common one to Islamists. They have used this terminology to describe their current status for so long. According to them oppression is best illustrated through the bitter relation they share with the Lebanese security forces. This is tied to the arrests and prosecution of Islamist members. In this regards, Islamists have expressed their discontent from the fact that they are used to scare people during critical political conflicts, and after things settle down, they pay the price alone (Ali, 2014).

2.2.3 Islamists replicating Hezbollah's model

An article published in *Karl Remarks* indicates that Salafists cannot replicate Hezbollah's model due to several reasons (Are Salafis Preparing to Replicate Hezbollah Model in North Lebanon, 2012). First, Hezbollah's military capabilities are accumulated over years through fighting against Israel and wasn't built overnight. Second, Hezbollah targets transnational states and not internal sectarian communities. Its agenda is fighting Israel and oppressors rather than carrying out sectarian divisions. When it does so it becomes a weakened party. Third, Hezbollah chooses its battles carefully and intervenes only when gains are higher than costs. Fourth, Hezbollah shares the government with the Sunni business class who administer economic and administrative errands. If Islamists join the political consociational system, the role of the Sunni Business class will be diminished. Therefore it seems obvious that the first and foremost pre-requisite to indulging Islamists in the Lebanese consociational system is that the Sunni leadership needs to stay vacant (Are Salafis Preparing to Replicate Hezbollah Model in North Lebanon, 2012). Having this pre-requisite, the willingness of Islamists to join the consociational system needs to be questioned as well. It is clear that with the Salafists being relatively deprived in comparison to Hezbollah, integration seems difficult. In the following section, relative deprivation will be explored. The study proposes that only when relative deprivation diminishes, Islamists could possibly accept a power sharing arrangement.

2.3 Tripoli Islamists views on political participation

Sunni Islamic movements in Tripoli have been divided among those who want to participate in the Lebanese system and those who reject being part of it. In this

section the extent to which Islamists involvement in the political life will be measured through looking into each Islamic party and their corresponding political discourse.

2.3.1 The Islamic Group or Al Jama'ah Islamiah

The Islamic group is a major Sunni Islamist movement in Lebanon. It originated from another group named "God Worshipers." The group's licensed founders are Fathi Yakan, Sheikh Faisal Mawlawi, Zuhair al-Obeidi and Ibrahim al-Masri. The "Islamic Group" in Lebanon is the first political Islamic movement that receives its license from a leftist and secular leader who was the interior minister at that time (Imad, n.d.).

Al Jama'ah Islamiah, has already participated in elections in the era of the Syrian presence, and their support voices did not exceed five thousand votes. While Al Tawhid Movement represented by Sheikh Bilal Shaaban, won seventeen thousand voices. This was an evidence that the majority of Sunnis in Tripoli tend to the support moderation rather than Islamism. It remains vague whether the current support reflects the same (Al Jama'ah Al Islamiya, n.d.).

2.3.2 Islamic Tawhid movement

Al Tawhid movement was founded in 1982 as a coalition between various small Islamic groups in Tripoli. Sheikh Sa'eed Shaaban was elected as the party prince. Even though the movement initially wanted to unite the Islamic movements, they have failed in doing so. After the death of Sheikh Shaaban, the movement split into two groups. The first group under the leadership of Sheikh Bilal Shaaban, Sa'eed's son, and the second led by Hashim Minqara ,after his release from Syrian prisons. It supported the candidates of Jama'ah Al Islamiya in the parliamentary elections. The

movement has participated in the municipal elections in Tripoli, yet after Hariri's assassination the group has lost much of its supporters in the Sunni public mass (Imad, n.d.).

2.3.3 Liberation Party or Hezb Al Tahreer

Hezb Al Tehreer was established in the 1950s. The party's main aim is to establish an Islamic state that governs all state affairs according to what God implies. The party considers Lebanon an annexation of the West ideology. For them, Lebanon does not fit for an Islamic state, but the Lebanese problem will only be solved by annexing Lebanon to Syria. The party rejects democracy and the resulting institutions. They have received their formal license in 2006 from the Interior Minister Ahmad Fatfat, after which the party resolved to public work. The party considers the Lebanese regulations that apply as "Kofr" systems. They do not look into being part of the Lebanese system because neither do they participate in the rule of disbelief, nor by using force or weapons to change (Imad, n.d.).

2.3.4 Salafists

In Lebanon today there are two types of such Salafists. The first are the Salafist Wahhabis and the second are Salafists -Jihadists. The Salafist Wahabis are interested in preaching and Islamic education and they do not have a specific structure. Those are not interested in politics but in the general interests of the Muslims. The Salafist Wahabis are divided among themselves between those who are deferring the participation in the Lebanese system or the "Lebanonization" process and those who are verbally dismissive of any participation in the political life through elections or other systems of disbelief. The Salafist Jihadists consider all the contemporary societies as ignorant and therefore should be resisted through armed Jihad.

Although there are differences among different Islamists in Lebanon, it seems that they are more involved in the political life, and their participation in parliamentary elections is counted as an important step towards "Lebanonization" across the Lebanese democratic mechanisms. However, engaging in the political life did not include all the Islamic organizations, but it happened variously between them. What applies to the Islamic group Hezbollah does not apply to Hizb al-Tahrir, or the Salafists for example. Assessing the role of those groups in a diverse society like Lebanon needs continuous surveillance (Imad, n.d.).

In Tripoli Islamic groups are not united towards one goal. Their political views regarding participation in the Lebanese consociational system are clearly dispersed and fragmented. For some Islamists, each situation has its own status and special interests. Fatwas on the political participation are therefore released according to varying circumstances (Nafe', 2013).

2.4 Relative deprivation and Islamist integration

Some political and social analysts have referred to feelings of deprivation through the relative deprivation theory. According to this theory, the discrepancy between what a person deserves and what they think they can actually achieve leads to violence. Gurr in his book, "*Why men Rebel*", tries to explain why people join radical movements. He links violence to frustration and aggression. People tend to use violence when they are frustrated and they are often frustrated because they feel deprived of a right. When frustration becomes prolonged, it leads to aggression (Gurr, 1970). According to Salafist Sheikh Nouredine Ghalayini, Hezbollah had been "shedding the blood of Muslims" since 2000 and "we feel that we usually and inevitably will pay the price of this injustice because we support the Syrian people so

long as our religion calls for defending the weak and the oppressed before an unjust ruler.” Ghalayini among others, regards Hezbollah’s fighting in Syria as a war against Sunnis (Ali, 2014, p. 4). This triggers feelings of frustration which most of the times leads to violence. Moreover, feelings of frustration are often linked to hatred. Some Islamists are being very open about their animosity towards Shiites whom according to them, disguise themselves under religious beliefs. For those Islamists, dialogue does not seem to bring any positive change (Ali, 2014).

Following the leakage of a video showing torture of Roumieh prisoners, Sheikh Salem Rafeii, a member of the Muslim Scholars Association, said that the Sunni sect has been oppressed for so long in Lebanon. In this regards, The Muslim Scholars have demanded a federal system, threatening that what is happening in Syria can happen in Lebanon as a result of injustice. For Salafists, federalism is not the end objective rather it is the normal result of the continuous aggression against the Sunni people. The Muslim scholars have continuously been speaking about "the sufferings of the Sunni people” in Lebanon and the region (Astih, 2015). It seems that this relative deprivation is leading Salafists to detach themselves from the government and seek private governance.

In the MENA region Islamists are feeling deprived and dominated by the west. Dominance is mainly revealed through cultural takeover. Salafist-Jihadists are trying to re-establish their culture and denounce western dominance. “People frequently mobilize in reaction to threats...” Hansen, n.d., p. 2). Individuals are mobilized when there basic rights and values are threatened. Islamic activism arises due to injustice. It is an outcome of both internal and external threats. Once opportunities become available, this activism turns into mobilization (Hansen, n.d).

In most times, discrimination leads to frustration and frustrated Muslims are more inclined to join radical movements. When feeling marginalized or discriminated against, groups become receptive to radical ideologies in order to change. Many individuals only became terrorists or radicals after an important loss, or feelings of deprivation, despotism or alienation. Defining themselves as victims or unjustly treated it becomes easy to radicalize them (Whitehair, 2012).

A survey conducted by the 1990 Trust during 2006 found that 81% of the 1,213 Muslims who answered the survey perceived the 'War on Terror' to be a war on Muslims (Whitehair, 2012). Boeker's labelling theory best illustrates this. The theory implies that when individuals are defined to act in a certain way, they tend to act according to how they were labelled (Whitehair, 2012). This makes individuals or Muslim communities attracted to radical groups that offer them the house of safety, and a sense of belonging. Studies have showed that terrorists tend to come from highly educated and wealthy families. Yet many of them are unemployed. This discrepancy between what they have, in terms of skills and education, and what is offered to them, in terms of employment, leads to dissatisfaction, frustration and feelings of deprivation. Relative deprivation occurs when individuals or groups subjectively perceive themselves as unfairly disadvantaged over others who are perceived to have similar attributes and be deserving of similar rewards (Gurr, 1970). Yet this theory does not explain why parts of the same deprived groups refrain from joining terrorist movements. Becoming a terrorist involves something more. However, conjointly, the primary research coupled with the earlier findings, has portrayed discrimination as an influential factor for motivating Muslims to join an extremist network (Whitehair, 2012).

The reason behind Muslims' joining ISIS is being forthly investigated. Some argue that ideology and culture are the main motives, while others think that it is the aftermath of lack of education and socio-economic factors. Instead, relative deprivation seems to offer a better explanation. The growing gap between expectations and opportunities leads to ideological radicalization. "Those who are educated and with high ambitions but no real prospects for advancement are the 'frustrated achievers' increasingly tempted by radicalism"(Taspinar, 2015, p. 1). Rising inequality and growing awareness about it go hand in hand. Gurr (1977) explains that instead of an absolute standard of deprivation, a gap between expected and achieved welfare creates collective discontent. Political violence is the outcome of collective discontent.

Globalization and the access to media is increasing feelings of deprivation and frustration. People tend to see what others are receiving worldwide and compare their resources. Therefore there is an increased awareness of one's relative standing in compare to others (Richardson, 2011). Some studies link low level employment to opportunities received. This reflects the hypothesis that individuals who obtain a higher education are more likely to feel a greater sense of deprivation from unemployment than those who did not necessarily expect to find work.

Analyzing the above, relative deprivation seems to offer a solid explanation of why Islamists are resolving to exclusionary politics. For them, several incidents triggered their anger. They have voiced out their extreme discontent about detaining their Islamists without charges for years. The absolute power Hezbollah enjoys in the country, and their intervention in the Syrian war against Sunni rebels generated frustration. In general, Islamists feel that they are attacked and targeted. In many of their discourses they refer to discrimination and feelings of deprivation. In many

cases they have been opposing the Lebanese armed forces for what they see as the law being applied solely on them. This is what makes them hesitant towards the current Lebanese system, which they view as being unfair. Therefore having them part of the Lebanese consociational arrangement becomes valid only when they are treated equally. Otherwise while they perceive themselves as unjustly treated, they will only detach themselves from the Lebanese system more and more.

Chapter Three

Methodology

This chapter explains and justifies the choice of the applied research methods. It will clarify the research design, the chosen sample, the procedures used, and the ethical contemplations. In this chapter a section about the research limitation will also be available. At the time being, it seems unclear whether Islamists in Tripoli are willing to join the Lebanese political system or not. This thesis intends to question this component first. It will then measure whether participation is linked to the relative deprivation theory. In that sense, would relative deprivation that Islamists continuously speak of, limit their choice of participating in the Lebanese consociational system, and will diminishing that be a pre-condition for their participation?

3.1 Research design

This research is an investigatory research that examines past radical Islamist groups and their developments with the current groupings in order to reveal potential pattern toward consociational politics. The research design reveals the circumstances under which a sectarian exclusionary movement may ultimately yield to consociationalism and a power sharing political arrangement. Primary empirical research is chosen in order to reveal Islamists' future prospects. The research addresses a central question of whether Islamists have visions of joining the Lebanese political system or not.

Looking into the available literature, it is clear that there is no consistency in the resources. This demonstrated that a qualitative methodology is the best option towards a better understanding of the current situation. The chosen approach takes into consideration the Moreover, this thesis will rely on a study conducted in Tripoli on the reasons behind the rise of Jihadism. The study called “Radical Islamic movements in Tripoli: The Relative Deprivation Theory”, was conducted in 2014. It questioned what Tripoli residents think the reasons behind the rise of extremists are. Results asserted that relative derivation is a major factor behind this rise (Barakeh, 2014).

3.2 Methodology

Information collection will rely on the content of some discourses and speeches made by Islamists and other political actors. Previous research done on Tripoli Sunnis will be considered in the research as an introduction to the political status. Furthermore, some literature will be used to compare Hezbollah’s rise to the rise of Islamists. This research will predominantly count on qualitative analysis through interviews conducted with Islamists leaders and activists from the movement in order to extract views toward their own state of affairs, compared to others, and ultimately capture comparative different attitude toward coexistence and power sharing. Interviews with Islamists will question their willingness to be part of the Lebanese consociational system. Questions intended to measure to what extent relative deprivation is linked to Islamists exclusionary politics. If so, will diminishing relative deprivation yield to their participation? In this regards, interviews focused on Islamists demands and their corresponding strategy orientation. The research study uses individual in-depth semi-structured interviews. This method seems to be the most suitable in order to delve into Islamists thoughts and ideas. The

interviews used provided the research with qualitative, detailed and specific answers to the questions. It has been well known that whenever a research aims to have a full sight into people’s views, interviews act as the best methodology to achieve so. Yet one drawback of the interviews is that sometimes it limits the opinions available for the researcher (Whitehair, 2012). In this research, this drawback does not count because I have chosen four different participants and their opinions are taken into consideration. The best way to conduct this research was through this methodology as the topic is very religious and political, thus very sensitive. Interviews were chosen over questionnaires because people communication and interaction always adds a source of relief to the interviewee and gives him/her a sense of human cooperation (Whitehair, 2012). As mentioned before, a small part of this research will rely on a previous study done in Tripoli, which is a survey study.

3.2.1 Sample Interview Questions

A series of nine questions related to the themes discussed in the literature review were drafted as in Table 1.

Table 1: Questions to Islamists on relative deprivation and consociationalism

1	As an Islamic group, are you willing to join the Lebanese consociational system?
2	What is your agenda and what are your major demands?
3	In your speeches you refer to Sunni deprivation quite often, how do you think this can be resolved?

4	If relative deprivation ends and Islamists are treated fairly according to your definition of fairness, will you be looking into being part of the Lebanese consociational system? Are you willing to sit aside Hezbollah on the same table?
5	Do you think Sunnis in Tripoli support being represented by an Islamic group rather than a mediocre party like Hariri?
6	Having Islamic background and ideologies, do you compare your rise to that of Hezbollah's?
7	Are you looking to duplicating Hezbollah's rise in Lebanon?
8	If any, what are the lessons learned from Hezbollah that you will use in your future plan?
9	What kind of threats do you foresee?

Questions discussed Islamists' participation in the Lebanese consociational system, relative deprivation and Islamists resemblance to Hezbollah.

Some questions have led to more discussions while others had clear cut answers. In order to guarantee security and confidentiality, interviews were not recorded, I was taking notes of the answers provided. The interviews took place in Islamists' private places. The discussions allowed for interactions on the subject in order to grasp ideas about Islamists' own political discourse. When discussions took a different direction I tried to bring the subject back to the point of interest to focus on relative deprivation rather than political views regarding Hezbollah. That was pretty challenging as the subject is very sensitive to Islamists and it got very personal when Hezbollah comes into discussion. That's why I had to take out the Hezbollah's part of questions when those seemed to cause tensions. Through interviews, I wanted to

know more about Islamists' views on relative deprivation. Interviews gave the opportunity for interviewees to discuss things they do not normally want to discuss anywhere else (Whitehair, 2012). In order to start this research I arranged a meeting with one of the prominent Sheikhs in Dar Al Fatwa. He gave me some information on who to approach and guided my research's first steps. He was very helpful to provide me with some Islamists' phone numbers, some of which did not collaborate at all. The questions in table 1 are drafted in a way that allowed discussions and more interaction while measuring relative deprivation.

As mentioned earlier, a small part of the thesis relies on a study that involved quantitative methodology. The study links relative deprivation in Tripoli to the rise of Islamists in the city. In an attempt to answer why Tripoli has observed lately an increase in Islamism, a survey was distributed among Tripoli residents to question what their views on the reasons behind the rise of Islamists are. The in-depth questionnaires provided the study with concrete details and practical examples of the opinions of Tripoli residents and helped in perceiving reality on the ground. In addition to the literature review present on the topic, the survey tried to answer why the number of Islamic groups has enormously rose lately in Tripoli. The questionnaire was a simple one composed of only three questions. See table 2.

Table 2: Questions for Tripoli residents on the rise of Islamism

1	<p>What do you think is the main reason behind the rise of Islamism in Tripoli?</p> <p>a. Socio-economic b. Psychological c. Political d. Religious e. to protect oneself f. more than one reason</p>
---	---

2	<p>If your answer to question 1 was f, how much percentage you give to the closest option you chose?</p> <hr/>
3	<p>Explain.</p>

The questions were direct and simple, “what do you think the major reason behind the rise of Islamic movements in Tripoli?” This answer had five options, a. Socio economic reasons, b. Psychological reasons c. Political reasons d. Religious reasons e. to protect oneself. The first five options were direct yet limiting the options to only one answer. This is why a 6th option was added and that was option f., “more than one answer.” If the answer to question 1 was f, the second question requests the highest percentage to the preferred choice. Therefore when the participants perceived that more than one factor play a role in the rise of Islamism what factor plays a higher role? The third and last question was to explain the choice. The results were as expected, relative deprivation seems to be the reason behind the rise in Islamism in Tripoli (Barakeh, 2014).

3.3 Sampling

The sample studied were Islamists who speak of relative deprivation, those who continuously refer to deprivation in their public discourses. The sample size was four Islamists, who clearly reflected relative deprivation in their speeches. My aim was to check whether those Islamists wanted to join the Lebanese political system in the first place and if not whether relative deprivation stands behind that abstain.

Therefore will diminishing relative deprivation affect Islamists’ decision of political

participation. The sample chosen was fair yet not outstanding. In fact one of the research limitation that is presented below is related to the sample studied. The intention was to interview eight Islamists of which I was able to reach only four. It is clear that when the research subject is sensitive the sample choice gets difficult. Even though the sample was relatively small being from the same culture limited any “interview bias” (Whitehair, 2012).

In regards to the study done with Tripoli residents, a total of 60 Lebanese accepted to participate in the study. The sample chosen was from poor areas in Tripoli, Tebbeneh, Kobbeh and Abi Samra. Those cities have been very well known for hosting many Islamists. The number of participants varied from one area to another. 50% of participants were from Tebbeneh and 25% from both Kobbeh and Abi Samra. The reason behind the dispersion is because Tebbeneh hosts the greater number of Islamists. Those Islamists practice more violent actions mainly during the clashes that has been occasionally happening between Tebbeneh and Jabal Mohsen- the Alawite majority area for the past years.

3.4 Procedure

Arranging interviews was not an easy task. I had to rely on personal connections to reach out for Islamists’ numbers and to convince them that I am a normal student undergoing research. The assistance of some of my personal networks were used in order to help me in introducing myself. Assuring Islamists that this research is just a research with no political backlashes was the most challenging part of the research. Therefore, it took me some time before being able to see any of the Islamists. Although some Islamists have been very hesitant to participate in this research,

others have been very welcoming and helpful, according to them they “had nothing to hide.”

Following the project introduction on the phone and interviewees oral consent, interviews were finally arranged. The interviewees were provided with the approved consent from the Institutional Review Board (IRB), see appendix A. The consent has a brief introduction about the project aim and the method used. After handling in a copy for those, the interview proceeded. The answers were documented in detail. At moments, some interviewees provided me with very confidential details, but I could not use that information in my study because they asked me not to include that information. During such incidents, I had to reiterate that all names will be kept confidential, but again some insisted that even though they do not want such information to be published, and therefore of course I had to leave those pieces of information out. The main research question was to check whether Islamists are willing to join the Lebanese consociational system. This is how the questions started, opening up a space for many discussions and sometimes directly deriving answers to coming questions.

3.5 Ethics

A main aspect of this study revolves around integrity and research ethics. As mentioned earlier, the topic discussed is a sensitive one. Furthermore, at the moment there seems to be many people linking all Islamists to ISIS or wrongly connecting their ideologies. This is why very strict ethical guidelines were incorporated in this thesis. Informed consent was the first step prior to any research. The information sheets given to interviewees informed them about the research goals and their rights as participants. It was clearly stated that participants have the right to refrain from

answering any question and the right to withdraw from the project at any time. This complies with the “do no harm” strategy. The research maintained confidentiality of names and information. The names of the participants were not mentioned, rather false names were given to the interviewees. In that way confidentiality was guaranteed. However, even when no names were mentioned confidential information were closed at the discretion of the interviewees. During the interviews the participants were promised to maintain confidentiality and as this research entails no deception, everything that was promised was complied with.

3.6 Limitations

Just as any research this thesis had some limitations. Noticeably, one of the major limitations is that some of the Islamists whom I wanted to interview were not available. Some of which were out of the country due to security reasons, and some of which refrained from participation due to the same reason. I wanted to employ a bigger sample in the research but this was restricted due to several reasons. In this regards, some Islamists did not feel at ease when they saw the interview questions. Although they showed respect and trust to the study and its objective, they refrained from answering those questions as that may have negative implications on them. Explaining that names will not be mentioned did not change much, still some Islamists felt threatened.

Another limitation was that during the interviews some Islamists were disclosing information that are opposite to what is available in some of the literature. It was challenging though to discover whether the information provided was truthful or not. In that sense, I had to restate my question referring to previous speeches done by those Islamists. Similarly some Islamists were not very direct in answering the questions. They preferred not to state their opinion directly, rather they were

indirectly stating them while speaking on behalf of all Islamists. Referring to one's opinions on behalf of many Islamists made the data analysis more challenging. In the coming chapter the data will be available for discussion.

Chapter Four

Relative deprivation reinforces Islamists' exclusionary approach

In this chapter, the findings will be presented using an in-depth analysis approach. As previously mentioned, the study requires a pre-set condition which is having a vacant Sunni leadership. It relies on the fact that there is a gap in the current Sunni representation and questions the willingness of Islamists to fill this gap. Islamists and mediocre parties compete on the same Sunni base. Therefore, this study intends to question whether Islamists are looking to become the new Sunni representatives and links that to the concept of relative deprivation. Does relative deprivation play a role in Islamists' exclusionary politics? In this regards, if relative deprivation diminishes, will Islamists look into being part of the Lebanese consociational structure and replicate Hezbollah's earlier successful experience and gets integrated into the Lebanese consociational system?

4.1 Radical Islamic movements in Tripoli: The Relative Deprivation Theory

Counting on the Sunni base, this thesis briefly relies on a study done with Tripoli residents on what they think the main reasons behind the rise of extremism in the city are. Surveys were distributed among 60 Tripolitians, and questions asked targeted their views on the main reasons behind the rise of extremism. The results as shown in figure 1 and 2 were as expected. People in Tripoli tend to join Islamic movements because they feel that they are unprotected. Relative power deprivation in

comparison to what other groups in the country possess is the reason many Sunnis in the poor northern areas chose the radical path.

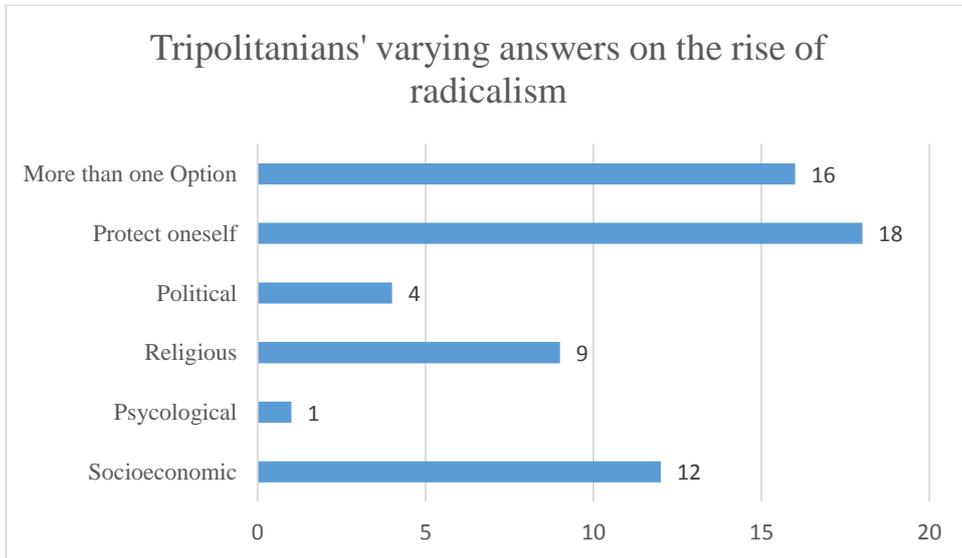


Figure 1: Tripoli residents' answers on the reasons behind the rise of radical Islamism

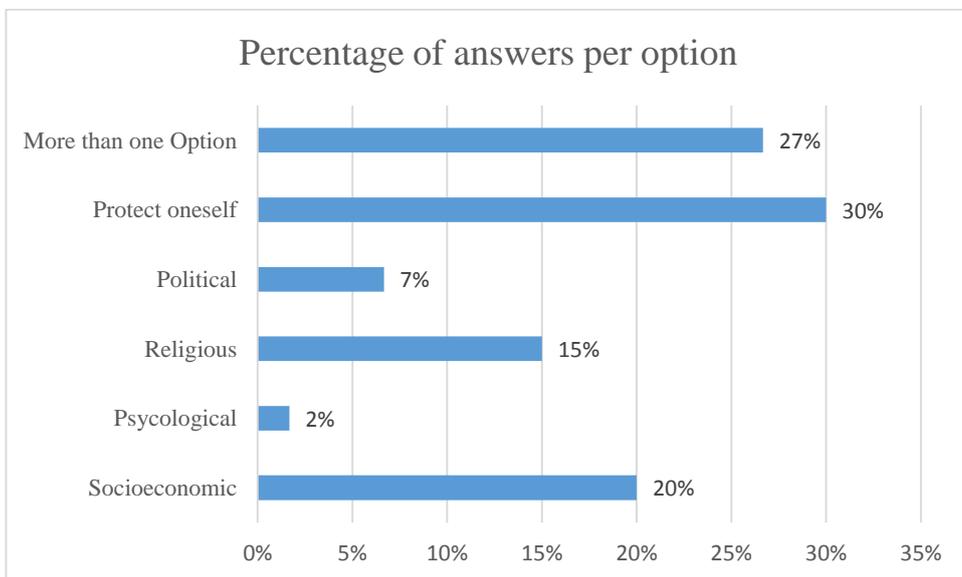


Figure 2: Percentages given to different answers on the rise of radical Islamism in Tripoli

Out of 60 participants surveyed in Tripoli, 12 saw that the socio-economic reasons are behind the rise of Islamism in Tripoli. One of the interviewees said, “Tripoli is the city of poverty, people here do not have jobs, and they are sitting all day simply doing nothing at all. What do you expect out of people who do not have anything to do? Of course they will join such movements; poverty destroys everything.”

9 out of 60 participants saw that there are religious factors behind this rise. Those saw that Muslims should join Islamic movements because they speak in the name of God. One of them said, “It is a duty that those movements increase in Tripoli because Tripoli is well known for being a religious city, and we all need to be part of Islamic movements to protect our city and our religion from any invasion of outsiders and of those who hate Sunnis.” Analyzing those who gave religious reasons as answers, one can see that there is a small component that calls for protecting oneself from others.

4 out of the 60 participants saw that political reasons stand behind the rise of radical Islamism in Tripoli. Those 4 mainly resided in Tebbeneh area. This is of course due to the political component of the clashes between Jabal Mohsen and Tebbeneh.

Residents of Tebbeneh see that they should join those movements because of the war that Syria is launching on their area by Alawaites in Jabal Mohsen. Again this means that those residents need to protect themselves and hence the relative deprivation theory is popping up more often.

18 out of 60 participants saw that protecting oneself is the reason behind the rise of Islamism in Tripoli. One of the respondents in Tebbeneh said, “It is a normal reaction when people feel inferior or weak. Look around you, Hezbollah’s power has invaded our cities and our religion, do you think when we see what has previously happened and how relatively weak we are that we will stay silent? Of course we will

join Islamic groups to defend ourselves and to take our rights in our hands”
(Barakeh, 2014).

16 out of 60 participants saw that more than one reason stand behind the rise of Islamic radicalism in Tripoli. Therefore, question 2 in the survey ² checks what factor seems to offer a better reasoning behind the rise. The surveyed then ordered their choices. The results reinforced the results of question 1, the highest percentage was to protect oneself as seen in figure 3.

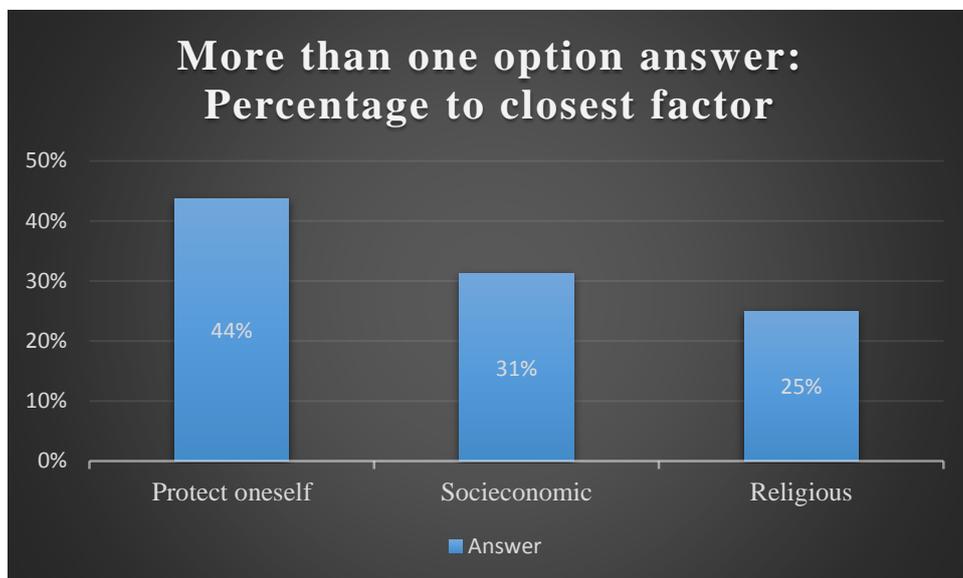


Figure 3: Percentages of the closest factor when the answer to question 1 involved more than one reason behind the rise of Islamism

The study shows that the majority of Tripolitarians see that there is a need to protect oneself against other powerful groups in the country. This means that those residents feel that they are unprotected and power-inferior, and hence the need to join such movements comes from the fact that they are feeling the presence of injustice. It was

² If your answer to question 1 was f, how much percentage you give to the closest option you chose?

obvious that within most answers negativity was present. When discussing political, or religious reasons; for instance, there has been always a part that stresses on the need to join Islamic movements because of inferiority feelings and the real need to protect the Umma (Barakeh, 2014).

4.2 Interviews' Findings

The dissertation's chief emphasis links Islamists' exclusionary politics to relative deprivation. It addresses the central research question: "Are Tripoli Islamists willing to join the Lebanese consociational system and how does that relate to relative deprivation?" Findings are divided among three main themes. The first is Islamists' political participation, the second is the concept of relative deprivation and the third is resemblance to Hezbollah's model.

4.2.1 Theme 1: Political Participation in the consociational system

Within the escalation of events in the region and the varying political discourses, it seems unclear whether Islamists at the moment are willing to be part of the Lebanese consociational system. Therefore, it was essential to reach those Islamists and know from them directly whether their views had changed with the change of circumstances especially after the Syrian Civil War. Political participation has been a controversy issue within the available discourses. Some Islamists had shown interest in being part of the Lebanese consociational system through participating in the electoral system several times. Al Shahal for instance nominated himself twice to the elections. Likewise, Al Jama'ah Islamiyah clearly do not mind being part of the system. Although many Salafists focus on Da'wa, at the moment the majority of those are actively taking part in the Lebanese and regional politics. This reflects in

their political discourse and their opinion regarding the war in Syria. Within this ambiguity it was essential to check what Islamists are determined to do. In that sense interviews were structured to measure Islamists' views on political participation and relative deprivation. The results are presented below. Three out of four Islamists are not willing to participate in the Lebanese consociational system. See Figure 4.

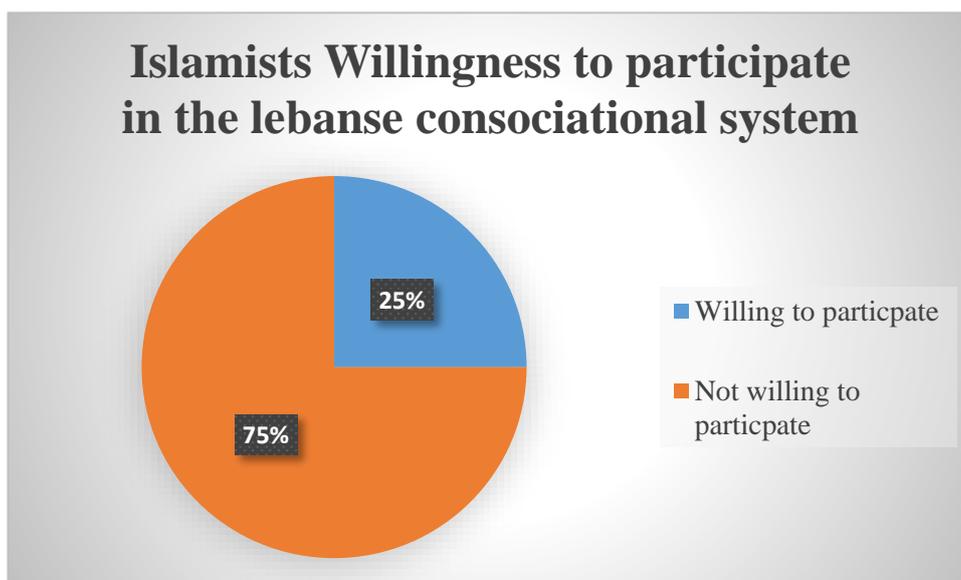


Figure 4: Islamists' willingness to participate in the Lebanese consociational system

The reasons behind this abstain focused around one aspect; justice. In fact all Islamists strive to have an Islamic rule in the country and that's why some of them do not see the need of participating in this system. Yet when asked why they call for Islamic rule, all of them answered that the only fair system is the rule of God directly referring to the sufferings they are currently facing in the country. According to one of them "It is worth mentioning here that most Islamists and Salafists within Lebanon in general and Tripoli in specific aim at establishing Islamic governance. We all look at applying Islamic law because it is the law of justice. The war on Muslims now is because they think that Muslims have no right to ask for an Islamic state just as any other person calls for another state of governance. Yet the only

difference is that we are not allowed to call for our beliefs.” Islamists see that they do not have any freedom of expression just as any other group does. Thus, it is true that many of them call for Islamic rule, yet this need comes from the fact that they see no rule allows their freedom of expression except the Islamic one. The question here would be whether they would still call for an Islamic rule if their rights are granted equally and they are treated as they would like to be treated. In other words Islamists do not want to participate in the current political system mainly due to Islamic beliefs. Those beliefs arise from the thought that the rule of God is the only rule that will guarantee justice and equality. Within the current imbalance of power, Islamists are getting more and more convinced that exclusion is the best way to deal with the current unfairness. In that sense relative deprivation is a reinforcing factor worsening detachment and deteriorating cooperation.

One of the Islamists, referred to as Sheikh Ahmad³, who is a member of the Muslim scholars in Tripoli and a student of the Salafist movement leader in Tripoli Sheikh Da’ii Al Shahal, sees that their political participation depends on the benefits and consequences. Participation is looked at through a wise analysis and vision, and accordingly a decision is made of whether this participation will provide any benefit to Islamists or not. If participation provides benefits then there is no problem in it; yet, if it does not bring any benefit then there is no need for it. While answering this, Sheikh Ahmad reflected that they do not see any benefit if they participate in the Lebanese system especially with the presence of Hezbollah as it will be mainly the participation of the weak alongside the strong. He mentions “We see that there is a huge despotism. Hezbollah has enormous power and huge military abilities. Whatever Hezbollah wants gets and whatever they do not want does not happen. In

³ This is a given name and not his real name

politics participating alongside Hezbollah is the participation of the weak alongside the super power. And hence no balance of power will be attainable. The only one who will benefit from this participation is Hezbollah itself and will benefit from us similarly.” This is a clear demonstration of how relative deprivation leads to exclusionary politics.

Sheikh Ahmad adds, “The current political structure does not allow participation as Islamists are scattered and weak. I will speak on behalf of all the Islamists. The Islamic groups are not united and they do not agree on one path. Some are with the political participation and some are against. Some parties have taken the negative side, some do not participate in any formation based on secularism or “Kofr⁴” systems. Political participation does not seem to be serious. In 1992, some Islamic groups have supported Islamists in their elections, for example Al Jama’ah Islamiah had three members reaching the parliament. Islamists are scattered on all levels, politically, religiously, in the Tripoli incidents, and in their opinions. Yet they all share the same feelings of mistrust towards this government.” He states, “If the Lebanese government is cautious about everyone’s participation then it should grow trust in the citizens; in order to participate, I should feel that I am supported.” It is clear for Sheikh Ahmad that when relative deprivation diminishes he does not mind participating in the Lebanese system. He says, “We see that projects in Tripoli are executed by foreigners. They benefit from the city’s resources while Tripoli residents do not benefit. We don’t see this in any other place. How can I participate when the government is dealing with me in a negative way?”

⁴ Kofr in English is disbelieve. As an Islamic term, Kofr is referred to those who are do not believe in Islamic rules

Another prominent Salafist, referred to as sheikh Said, who is the head of Muslim Scholars movement in Tripoli and one of the leading Salafists figures in Lebanon, does not mind participating in the Lebanese system. He sees that in the current situation participation is to assist in lessening deprivation and despotism. Sheikh Said says, “We look for the state of faith; if this is not possible, then we request the state of justice. Those who look for an Islamic state look for a fair state. We do not look for participation, it is not our ambition, but we want to participate to help in diminishing the despotism that is falling on our Sunni people.” Sheikh Said on the other hand sees that the current electoral system is not fair. The 1960s electoral law does not grant the right representation and does not represent people’s voice. He adds, “We demand a proportional electoral system and till now it is being rejected. If this electoral law is present we may participate. We participate to remove the despotism and to voice out the demands. We despise political elites because they were unable to voice out those demands and are still unable to do so.”

On the other hand Sheikh Mohammad, a prominent Sheikh in Tebenneh area, who had a role in Tripoli incidents along the past years indirectly revealed his unwillingness to participate. Sheikh Mohammad spoke on behalf of all Islamists rather than his own beliefs. He said, “All Islamists see that there are two separate reasons behind abstaining from participation. The first is deprivation and the second is religious. For him, Islamists’ participation in the Arab countries has not been promising and were not encouraging. When Islamists joined the democratic game, the previous experiences seemed to be non-promising. When Islamists reached power, or participated in governments, a certain conspiracy was prepared to get rid of them. As Sheikh Mohammad was referring to all Islamists in his answers, it was essential to ask him about his own specific beliefs; he did not want to answer. It was

very clear that he shared the same beliefs yet was not feeling very safe to reveal that. He adds, “There is no benefit for Islamists to participate, because they want to show the Islamists as failures.

Sheikh Ali ⁵ on the other hand who although is very close to Sheikh Da’ii Al Shahal yet has different political views from the latter when it comes to political participation. According to Sheikh Ali, Sheikh Da’ii does not refuse to participate but he does. “I am not willing to participate in this system as I believe the true governance should be under the rule of Islam. Issuing laws is the right of God and not people. This is based on Islamic ideology. We have no problem in participating in the administrative part but not in the political system where they legalize what God forbids and vice versa. If participation pushes away harm, then it may be possible. Yet in the current system we are being punished and held accountable because we have Islamic beliefs. Most of Islamists are in prisons because they want to apply Islam⁶; why is it acceptable for a communist to call for communism, for a democratic to call for democracy and not for Muslims to call for Islamic rule?” When asked why he thinks this is happening, he answered “It is because it is not allowed to have a strong Sunni state. The Islamic Arab regimes are extensions of Western countries. They do not represent the real Islam. Those regimes played a role in allowing the creation of an Alawite state in Syria for example but not a Sunni Islamic state anywhere. In Algeria, Muslims were not allowed to form an Islamic state; similarly, this happened with Mursi in Egypt; although we do not support Muslim brotherhood, it was a game to withdraw Muslims from the rule. All of this pushes a normal Muslim towards extremism. I would like to note here that they forced Muslims to

⁵ Is also a given name

⁶ Sheikh Ali was arrested and imprisoned several times

extremism, and I do not want to call it extremism, I would like to call it equal treatment: you get served what you deserve. Look at how Russia is bombarding civilians; look at how they treat Muslims all over the world. It is forbidden for any Arab country to call for an Islamic state but it is okay for anyone else to call for whatever they want. French President Hollande⁷ said it once when Algerians won the elections, no Islamic state shall be on my next door. ISIS are treating others as they are treated. They are using different means but still the goal is one, killing innocents.” Looking deeply into this, it is certain that those thoughts are encouraging exclusionary politics and detachment from the Lebanese political system.

4.2.2. Theme 2: Relative deprivation

The intention of this thesis is to link relative deprivation to exclusionary politics. In this regards it was essential to measure relative deprivation. In the below sections more emphasis is given to the topic.

4.2.2.1 Relative deprivation measured

It was very clear from the answers that deprivation played a role in all Islamists’ decisions. Measuring deprivation was not something tangible, that’s why the second question focused on Islamists’ needs rather than directly on relative deprivation. In this regards, the results showed that Islamists want to be treated fairly, and to have equal balance of power with the country in compared to what other parties enjoy. All four Islamists answered similarly. See figure 5.

⁷ François Gérard Georges Nicolas Hollande is a French politician, who has been the President of France since 2012

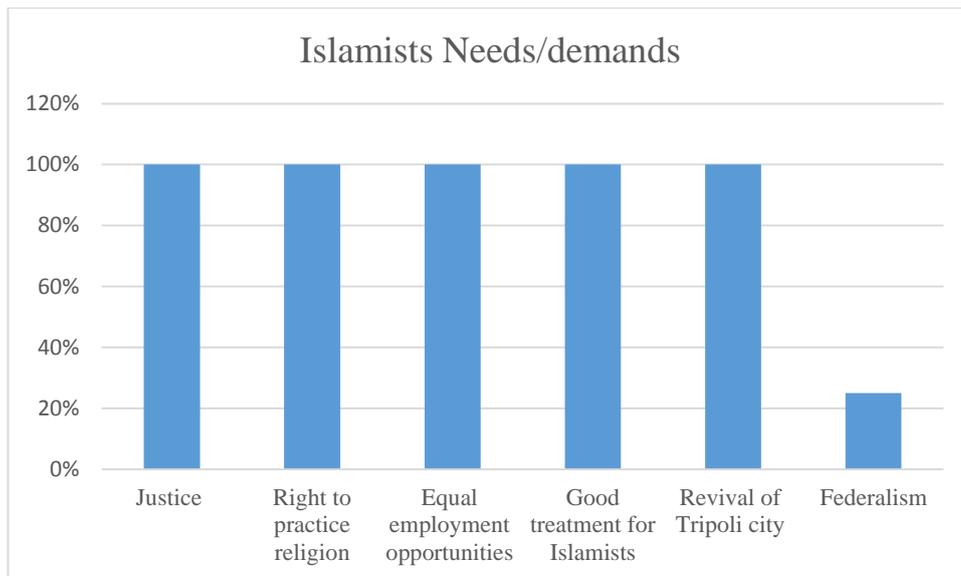


Figure 5: Islamists needs and demands

All Islamists requested justice, equal employment opportunities, reviving Tripoli, fair treatment for Islamists, all of which are not provided by the current political system.

Their common question was then why would they participate in such an unfair system? Sheikh Ahmad says, “We request justice. I see despotism falling on our Sunni Umma, and the government is not taking action. We ask for equal development of all the Lebanese regions. Development starts from Beirut and stops in Batroun⁸. In Tripoli there are no employment opportunities. The economy of the city needs to be revived, which is the total opposite of what is happening at the moment. For instance, some ships like the Iron ships are not allowed to enter our port. They go instead to Beirut port and all the economic gains go there.”

Researching this aspect, I found out the Head of Customs belongs to Amal party, a party closely affiliated with Hezbollah.

⁸ A city just before Tripoli , it is around 27 km away from Tripoli

Similarly Sheikh Said states “our demand is justice. Justice in order to provide dignity for people. What do we see know? Arbitrarily and unjustified detentions, bad unjust treatment in prisons, no employment opportunities. Tripoli is deprived but that deprivation is done on purpose, it is applied in such a way that it is organized and strategic. There are places in the country that are very developed while Tripoli is below underdeveloped. We demand justice so that it provides dignified living opportunities to Sunni people. Sheikh Said adds, “Lebanon is a nice state within its different components. The Christian presence gives us some sort of protection from the dictatorships in the neighborhood. This presence gave Lebanon a print of freedom of expression. If we were only Sunnis and Shiites we would have been a replication of what is happening in Syria at the moment.”⁹

Sheikh Mohammad on the other hand says “We ask for the right to practice our religion and call for it without any consequences. We demand equality between all citizens and we don’t see this happening by any chance. They shed the lights on Islamists but they do not do so on other groups who has a totalitarian mentality, referring to Hezbollah without naming it. As for the current pluralism in religions and sects, federalism is the only way out. There is no other option but federalism. Today if Hezbollah governs what will happen with the rest. The only solution to the current political mess is federalism.”

Sheikh Ali sees that Islamists are obliged to live with other groups in Lebanon and therefore their demands are to have access to rights just as any other partner in the country. He mentions “We as Sunnis are not just a group in the country, we are an Umma in the world. In the country they diminished our power and they did not grant

⁹ Meaning there would have been a civil war in Lebanon

us our rights. We want our rights that they confessed we should have. We look for justice, for employment opportunities and for economic revival.” Sheikh Ali sees that democracy should be applied in the right way so that anyone who wants to participate in the political system can do so. He adds, “Unfortunately today elections are played with and politicians in the end find a way that fits them and secures their representation.”

Speaking of solutions to the current complications, Sheikh Ahmad thinks that the Sunni political and religious leaders need to play their role in responding to the issue of deprivation. They should invest their money inside the city. He gives the example of Iran and the enormous financial support it offers to Hezbollah. On the other side, he gives the gulf countries as an example of the support they provide to Tripoli. Comparing the Iranian and Saudi financial resources the support is almost null. Sheikh Ahmad asks “Why don’t we open Bahsas factory and Tripoli citadel. The political leaders hold the responsibility of this deprivation. There should be collaboration in order to remove deprivation of the Sunnis.” Sheikh Mohammad thinks that the best way to diminish relative deprivation is to remove the authority from those who are despotizing Sunnis and marginalizing them. Sheikh Ali similarly sees that deprivation can be lessened through re-activating facilities in Tripoli for example Kolayaat airport, the Citadel, Tripoli port and many others. All what is mentioned above falls back on deprivation, injustice and unfairness.

4.2.2.2 Relative deprivation resolved

The other part of the study intends to check if all of the Islamists’ needs or demands are met, would they participate in the government? The question was formulized in a way that does not directly ask this rather it questions whether Islamists would sit aside to Hezbollah on the same table, i.e. participate alongside with that group. The

reason was to check whether the Islamists are willing to participate in the Lebanese consociational system even if it entails sharing the governance with Hezbollah, the party they always compare their resources to and always speak of its privilege over theirs. The results show that if those demands are met Islamists are not willing to sit next to Hezbollah and the reason is the latter's participation in the Syrian Civil War, or as they put it "killing Sunnis in Syria." This says it all. Again relative deprivation is coming into play indirectly. Islamists think Sunnis are being shut down and killed by Hezbollah in Syria. This is why any dialogue with Hezbollah will not be feasible as long as the party is fighting in Syria. In terms of sharing the political system with Hezbollah, Sheikh Ahmad says "there are some Islamic parties that already sit with Hezbollah in Ramadan for instance. Others do not sit not only due to relative deprivation but because of Hezbollah's war against the Sunnis in Syria." Sheikh Mohammad clearly stated, "As Islamists, we cannot forget what Hezbollah is doing inside Syria, the participation in Syria is not balanced. So we will never collaborate with Hezbollah because of this participation." All Islamists did not show any possible collaboration with the party due to its participation in the Syrian Civil War. Moreover, Islamists were clearly differentiating between how Hezbollah's participation is seen as something acceptable whereas when Islamists show interest in participating alongside the rebels in Syria they are directly accused of being terrorists. It is clear though that the issue of Hezbollah is not constricted to relative deprivation, the war inside Syria has deteriorated everything. Sheikh Nabil mentions, "We had previously visions and opinions of Hezbollah and now all those views are confirmed. We are different religiously but also politically and ethically."

Analyzing this it is clear relative deprivation is a hidden factor. Therefore, incorporating Islamists in the Lebanese consociational system entails diminishing

relative deprivation not only within the same country but also outside. Having Islamists cooperate with the current Lebanese system demands diminishing relative deprivation that is illustrated in Hezbollah's war against Sunnis inside Syria.

4.2.3 Theme 3: Islamists replicating Hezbollah's model: new Sunni representatives

In terms of Sunni representation, all Islamists interviewed recognize that Islamic groups do not represent the Sunni public mass. , as shown in figure 6.

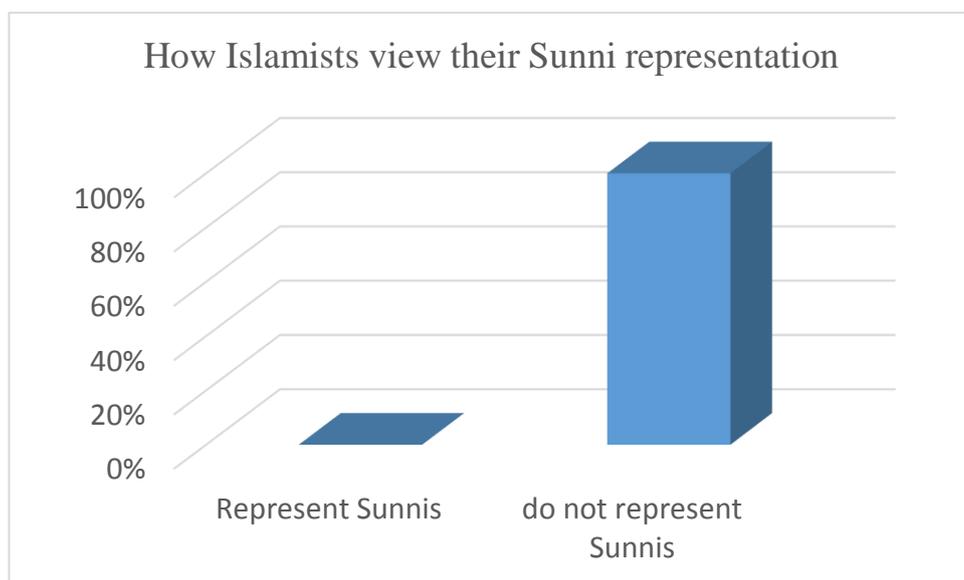


Figure 6: Islamists' views on their Sunni representation

In fact, Islamists stated that Islamic groups represent only 7% of the society. The political parties do not represent the majority of Sunnis neither. The majority of people are not represented by anyone. According to them, Sunnis at the moment are weak because the Sunni members of parliament did not voice out their demands. Tripoli Sunnis are not accepting Islamists representation and the latter did not succeed in this yet due to several reasons. The first and utmost reason behind this failure in representation is that Islamists themselves are scattered and not united. Islamists could not lead representation because each group has its own agenda.

Another reason behind this failure is because they were unable to diminish despotism. According to them their failure emerges from the current system in Lebanon. For them, this system is a copy of the Syrian regime. The government is suppressing the Muslim youth in all means. One of them mentions, “The government is refusing to issue Islamists passports just because they are Muslim believers. He adds “The council of ministers stopped this decision but it is still being done because everyone is working on their own and when it comes to us they want us to abide by the rules.” Islamists feel that despotism is in front of everyone’s eyes and yet no one is taking action to limit that. According to Sheikh Mohmmad,” Islamists are closer to representation than others but they do not represent the majority. They are lost and do not trust the government.” Sheikh Said on the other hand emphasizes that Islamists at least did not change their values as some other politicians did. For them, Hariri did not stay on the same values, he was dishonest. Hariri’s latest proposal to suggest Franjeh for the presidential seat was a shock for Islamists.

Do Islamists stand a chance of becoming the new Sunni representatives given the vacant Sunni leadership? Is it possible that those groups imitate Hezbollah’s earlier successful experience and get integrated into the Lebanese consociational system? A small discussion of the research compared Hezbollah to Islamists. Some discussions questioned the possibility of that group replicating Hezbollah’s model. The results above show that Islamists are not willing to join the Lebanese consociational system. If that is the case, Hezbollah’s replication becomes difficult. Cutting through this subject some questions focused on the comparison between the two to capture future possibilities of replication. Answers declared that there is no minimum similarity between Hezbollah and Islamists mainly due to the lack of support Islamists face. There is no state that sponsors Islamists as Hezbollah previously had. Saudi Arabia is

the least supporting. Iran supported and is still supporting Hezbollah to a very high extent, yet no one supported Islamists before and no one is supporting them at the moment. This illustrates why Islamists feel relatively deprived. The support Hezbollah receives in compared to the support they receive is almost null. According to them, Turkey in that sense is still very new to supporting Islamists and is not very open to them as well. Some Islamists declared that replication of Hezbollah's earlier experience will not happen because there is no common agenda for Islamists and there is no leadership. Yet a lesson learned from Hezbollah would be their patience. The party faced many difficulties and challenges and had patience to reach their goal, to have power and authority over the whole country according to what Islamists think. In their beliefs there is no real country there is only Hezbollah.

In short, Islamists' participation in the government is reliable on deprivation. Relative deprivation appeared more often though at times indirectly. As there is despotism participation will not bring anything new, it will only burn Islamists and that's why they are not looking into being part of the Lebanese consociational system. All of the interviewees viewed the current Lebanese system as unfair and unjust. For them, and based on their own experiences for years now, the only system that would bring justice is the Islamic one. However, Islamists are very aware that having an Islamic state or governance in Lebanon is not feasible. That was very clear from the answers provided. All four Islamists saw that this goal could be very difficult to attain yet meanwhile they are looking at a fair system that governs the country and provides them with their basic equal rights. Within the current system the minimum equality is not provided and that's why Islamists resolve to exclusionary politics. It is despotism and injustice that is leading Islamists to extremism. One of the Sheikhs mentions "in prisons I saw people who come with

10% extremism and they left with 100% due to the despotism they saw inside and the treatment they were receiving. There are some prisons like the Riyhaniyeh for example where no one is allowed in and no one is allowed to flag mistreatments happening inside.” The Riyhaniyeh prison belongs to the Military Police¹⁰ which makes a perfect link to why some Islamists oppose the Lebanese army. Others refer to how Muslim youth are detained and prisoned as children and leave as complete extremists due to the treatment they receive inside prisons. Therefore, Islamists in general are not willing to participate in the current present system, some of them see participation as a small phase towards working for the larger goal which is calling for an Islamic just state that preserves their rights and values. Others are relying on the Syrian war, therefore those do foresee a chance for them to participate in the Lebanese system if Syrian rebels win over the Syrian regime. Participation here would be participation of the strong along the strong. What is common among all Islamists though is that they wish that they are treated as anyone else, no one crosses the line of others and everyone is equal in rights.

¹⁰ The Military Police is part of the Lebanese army

Chapter Five

Conclusion

In the last decade, Islamic movements in Lebanon have gained power in the Lebanese politics. Many of these groups have enjoyed freedom in the country leaving major consequences behind. This freedom along with the political occurrences in the Middle East have led to the emergence of radical Islamic groups leaving the country unable to cope with those militias and incapable of putting an end to their rising power and their threat to security. Tripoli has been lately known as the home of Islamist groups. The city being close to the Lebanese –Syrian borders bears the major burden of the ongoing neighboring Syrian Civil War allowing more than 1,067,785 Syrian refugees in the country¹¹. Many radical Muslims fleeing their country found in this city the safe haven to practice their ideology and “terrorism.” Although political reasons play a major role in determining the causes behind rise of Islamism; the real reasons behind this occurrence are not easily detected or agreed upon. This dissertation intends to understand the link between relative deprivation and Islamists’ exclusionary politics in northern Lebanon. Many research has been done on Tripoli Islamists yet there has been minor previous linkage between how feelings of deprivation may yield to exclusionary politics and sometimes to extremism. The study therefore first questions Islamists’ willingness to participate in the Lebanese consociational system and then delves into the conditions of having this

¹¹ Those are the registered Syrians as per UNHCR information up last updated on 31 Jan 2016

participation implemented. In short, the central questions is “Are Tripoli Islamists willing to join the Lebanese consociational system and under what conditions?”

It has been very well known that Islamists strive to have an Islamic state in Lebanon. Yet within the changes in the political occurrences inside Syria and the effects of that on Lebanon, questions were raised whether Islamists at the moment are open to being part of the Lebanese system. In other words, does it look predictable that Islamists could imitate Hezbollah’s earlier experience and get integrated in the Lebanese consociational system? As it has been very clear that many Salafists who were Da’wa people are clearly getting involved in the political events, the question becomes more vivid of whether Islamists are actually looking at joining the Lebanese political game. On the other hand, within their discourses Islamists have always reflected the marginalization of Sunni people in the government and their continuous deprivation. So participation seems unclear and hence questioning that was essential. The intention to which Islamists would accept consociationalism was one aspect and then whether Tripoli Sunni residents feel represented by those groups is another one. Yet the research does not look into the second aspect, rather part of the research relies on a study that questions Tripoli residents of what they think the main reason behind extremism are. The main focus of the study depends on the current Sunni vacant leadership. In this regards, within this vacant leadership, do Islamists stand a chance to represent Sunnis? Are they actually looking for that? What are the pre-conditions prior to any participation and what hinders participation? Those are the questions that the research answers.

5.1 Relative deprivation and integration: the link

Relative deprivation theory states that whenever there is a discrepancy between what is expected and what is actually received people tend to shift to violence. The process

starts with dissatisfaction and frustration, and frustration often leads to aggression. The theory considers that terrorism or extremism is the outcome of feelings of injustice. Feelings of injustice are caused by the fact that what an individual “actually” receives is way less than what s/he is “entitled” to have (Richardson, 2011). In the MENA region, Islamists are feeling deprived and dominated by the west. Dominance is mainly revealed through cultural takeover. Salafists-Jihadists are trying to re-establish their culture and denounce western dominance. “People frequently mobilize in reaction to threats” (Hansen, n.d, p. 25). Individuals mobilize when there is threat towards their basic rights, and values. Islamic activism arises due to injustice. It is an outcome of both internal and external threats. Once opportunities become available this activism becomes mobilization (Hansen). Discrimination leads to frustration and frustrated Muslims become more extremists. In other words, according to Islamists in northern Lebanon, they have been receiving an unfair treatment and therefore resolved to exclusionary politics most of the times.

Within the current fear of the Shiite and Alawite’s takeover, a large segment of the Sunni youth has been attracted to the Islamist’s appeal. Youth are being mobilized based on sectarian lines and sympathy was mainly associated with feelings of deprivation and despotism. This thesis draws an investigatory situational analysis in order to understand the political discourses of Islamists in Northern Lebanon. It questions their willingness to join the Lebanese consociational system and explores the pre-requisites to that. Is Islamists’ participation linked to deprivation? If so, will diminishing relative deprivation yield to their participation? The hypothesis assumed that relative deprivation yields to exclusionary political discourse. If we are speaking of Islamists’ integration, relative deprivation should diminish. Balance of power is

essential prior to any discussion of integration or cooperation. Therefore, diminishing relative deprivation should happen before speaking of any political participation.

5.2 Methodology

The dissertation is an investigatory research that explores the political discourses of Islamists in Northern Lebanon in order to reveal a potential pattern toward consociational politics. The central research question investigates whether Islamists are looking to become part of the Lebanese political system at the moment. In this regards, would relative deprivation that Islamists continuously speak of affect their choice of participating in the Lebanese consociational system, or are there other variables that play a role in their political choices? While researching the subject, available resources did not provide a clear idea of where Islamists are positioned currently. Some literature clearly declared that Islamists are not willing to participate in any political arrangement while other research was not very clear on the topic. Some of the Islamists for instance had already nominated themselves to elections while members of the same groups were refusing participation. This ambiguity emphasized the importance of having a qualitative methodology to better understand the current situation. Therefore, information collection relies on the content of some discourses and speeches made by Islamists. The study employs individual in-depth semi-structured interviews. Interviews questioned Islamists about their willingness to participate in the Lebanese consociational system and delved into the reasons behind their decision. The questions therefore intended to link relative deprivation to Islamists political participation.

Quantitatively, the research relies on a study done with Tripoli Sunni residents questioning their thoughts on the reasons behind the rise of extremism in the city.

The study called “Radical Islamic movements in Tripoli: The Relative Deprivation

Theory”, was conducted in 2014. Results asserted that relative derivation is a major factor behind this rise of extremism in the city.

The thesis approach therefore combines qualitative and quantitative methodologies in an attempt to answer the central question. When it came to conducting interviews, the process was not very easy. In the beginning reaching Islamists happened through personal connections. Yet many of them were very hesitant about participation and some of them firmly rejected taking part of the interviews. So much effort has been put into building trust and clarifying the goal of the project. However, some Islamists were still not convinced to participate. The consequence of this directly implicated the studied sample. Instead of originally interviewing eight Islamists the sample was decreased to four and efforts were gathered to choose the most prominent four Islamists in Tripoli. It was very essential to respect the wish of those Islamists and respect their decision rather than pressuring them to participate. On the other hand, some Islamists have been very cooperative and welcoming. Those were already very open in their political discourses.

The first step was to introduce the participant to the research study and aim. The approved IRB form was given as part of the supporting document. Following an introduction, establishing rapport was essential. The participant needed to feel at ease and therefore active listening was employed and fears and concerns were understood. The study gave the participants the right to refrain from answering any question or withdraw at any time. Names were kept confidential and given names were rather used in the study. The conducted interviews went very smoothly and some answers were common among all Islamists especially those related to Hezbollah. On some topics the same answers were shared at many times.

5.3 Reasons behind the rise of extremism: Tripoli Sunnis’ views

As it has been frequently discussed, Sunni Islamists feel deprived and threatened. Those feelings were sometimes shared with Sunni residents in Tripoli. As incidents were escalating and extremism has been on the rise, it was vital to check with Tripoli Sunnis the causes behind the rise in Islamist radicalism in the northern city of Lebanon. Some scholars would argue that this rise is due to socio-economic shortages. Others would argue that the reason is purely political, mostly significant after the Syrian civil war and its effect into Lebanon. The psychological and ideological factors also seem influential on this occurrence. Yet the major reason seems to be related to the relative deprivation theory. A study titled, "Radical Islamic movements in Tripoli: The Relative Deprivation Theory" was done in 2014 on 60 Tripoli residents in poor Sunni areas questioning why they think radical Islamism has been lately rising in Tripoli. The findings of this study were reinforcing previous literature about the matter. Results showed that the issue of relative deprivation and injustice Tripoli Sunnis feel is the main cause behind the need to acquire power mainly in the form of joining radical Islamic movements (Barakeh, 2014). In this regards, relative deprivation seems to be discussed among Islamists and residents as well and therefore giving this topic the right attention and focus was essential. This is where the thesis comes to link exclusionary politics to relative deprivation.

5.4 Relative deprivation indirectly yields to exclusionary politics

Following the outburst of the Arab uprisings, events in the Arab countries had affected the political stances of many Islamists. Events in Egypt and Libya had majorly affected how Islamists look at their role in the region. Similarly and with greater impact, events in Syria had majorly affected the political approach of Islamists in Lebanon and specifically in Tripoli. Islamists had been mainly conservative about participating in the Lebanese consociational system. Yet, the

escalation of events in the Syrian Civil War and the participation of Hezbollah along the Syrian regime, and the absence of a Sunni leadership made it unclear whether Islamists still have the same political strategy. Due to the fact that Islamists refer to their deprivation in almost every speech they make, questioning the link between relative deprivation and political orientation was essential. This dissertation links relative deprivation to Islamists political participation. The study result shows that 75% of Islamists are not willing to participate in the Lebanese consociational system. Analyzing the reasons highlights the role of relative deprivation in the non-participatory model. Islamists' justifications of their stand revolved around one aspect, and that was justice. According to them, they are not willing to participate in the current political system because it is unjust. They are in fact striving to have an Islamic state which according to them is not possible at the moment. Again, when delving deeper into this, it was clear that for them an Islamic state would bring justice and equality that the current system does not guarantee for Sunnis. Therefore, within the imbalance of power Islamists are diverging away from the state towards an exclusionary political system. Participation in the Lebanese political bodies would not bring any change. The unfair system is further pushing them away from the state and closer to their own state of affairs. Unfairness and relative deprivation act as reinforcing factors behind their inherited thoughts of political practices.

5.5 Islamists replicating Hezbollah's model: New Sunni representatives

The thesis addresses another aspect which is the Sunni representation comparing this representation to that of Hezbollah. Within the current Sunni vacant leadership, do Islamists stand a chance to become the new Sunni representatives? Could it be possible that Sunnis imitate Hezbollah's earlier experience and join the Lebanese consociational system? In the study it was obvious that Islamists are divided among

different assemblies and agendas. According to all the interviewed Islamists, they do not represent the bulk of Sunnis in the city due to the fact that they are not united. Representation therefore is weakened by their divisions. In comparison to Hezbollah, all Islamists saw that there is minimum similarities between the two parties if none at all. In their views, Islamists never had the support Hezbollah enjoys through Iran. Although the main aim of the comparison was not to check future possibilities of replication and not to measure relative deprivation in this section, yet the answers Islamists provided referred to relative deprivation again. For them, Hezbollah controls the country politically, and economically. The privileged party has all it asks for and can do whatever it wants to. In short, given the available resources and circumstances, it seems far-fetched that Islamists would imitate Hezbollah's experience at least not at the short run.

5.6 Extremism in Islam: Future prospects

Islamic extremism has been grasping the attention of the international community since September 2011. Nowadays after the eruption of ISIS, Islamic extremism became a worldwide focus. The Charlie Hebdo incidents and the Paris attacks deteriorated how non-Muslims view the religion itself associating Islam with terrorism. Looking at the incident from an Islamist's points of view, the incidents of Charlie Hebdo were normal acts following an attack on the Muslim's Prophet. They were humiliated and disrespected and the ordinary reaction was to respond back to this. For them, the first action triggered their aggressive reaction.

Religious extremism is not only found in Islam. There are hundreds of Christian, Jewish, Hindu and other terrorist organizations. The Lord Resistance Army, the Ku Klux Klan, the National Liberation Front of Tripura, The Orange Volunteers and many more are all Christian terrorist organizations that are equal to ISIS (Here are 8

Christian Terrorist Organizations That Equal ISIS, 2015.) Those organizations are widespread and just as bad as the Islamic terrorists groups are. “The only difference between Christian Terrorism and Islamic terrorism is that Christian Terrorism never makes the evening news” (Here are 8 Christian Terrorist Organizations That Equal ISIS, 2015, p. 1). Many has been confusing all Islamists with ISIS. Although the reasons behind the Islamic extremism eruption seem to be vague, it is clear that ISIS is the child of despotism that has spread the region. That's why unsurprisingly its power base is in Iraq and Syria where Saddam Hussein and Bashar Al-Asad governed with despotism for decades familiarizing crimes against humanity. If the aim is to fight ISIS the root causes should be fought (Woodward, 2014).

What are the conditions that lead to the rise of radical movements? Answering this question seems hard when many factors play a role in this occurrence and not only one. Some would argue that the causes behind this emergence are socio-economic factors. The rise in the unemployment rate and the decline in education has led to an increase in favor of radicalism. Others would see that political reasons merely stand behind this rise. Political figures tend to be strengthening radical groups for political goals and the easiest way to do so would be through religion. Others would argue that the rise of those groups is the result of what they see as an unfair balance of powers. The Shiite extreme power in Lebanon illustrated by Hezbollah caused Sunni groups to acquire power in order to have some sort of equilibrium and protect the Sunni Umma. This explanation is directly related to the theory of relative deprivation. Whether the causes are socio economic, psychological, political, or based on the relative deprivation theory is something arguable. While it seems challenging to have a one answer to this question relative deprivation seems to offer a comprehensive explanation of many extremists' behaviors. This does not mean that

there are no other factors play a role in the rise of extremism, yet the major reason behind the rise of those groups in Northern Lebanon relies on the feeling of injustice among Sunnis (Barakeh, 2014).

Islam is not the only religion that produced violent militant fundamentalist movements in the world but it has been very difficult to detect the real factors behind Islamic fundamentalism or radicalism. A person's psychological make-up, ideological goals, or socio economic status all play a role in this occurrence. An individual may decide terrorism fits his or her own view of the world—that it makes sense. A group may come to use terrorism because it furthers and is supported by their ideology (Peace, n.d). Finally, groups or persons may use terrorism because of financial deprivation, poverty and the need of money and the unemployment they suffer, which was happening for some time in Tripoli. Economic factors played a major role in encouraging Islamism in Tripoli, yet feelings of deprivation were even more influential. People in Tripoli feel that they are relatively powerless in compare to other political parties in the country, mainly Hezbollah. They feel the need to protect themselves and hence call for a balance of power. Thus joining radical Islamic groups seems to be one way to achieve a power equilibrium and self-defense. Injustice Sunnis are feeling in their own country leads them to the path of radicalism. Islamists in northern Lebanon generally strive to call for an Islamic state. At the moment this goal seems very difficult and a bit farfetched. Islamists themselves realize that this is the reality. Calling for an Islamic state is not an easy objective and involves geopolitics as well. So far Islamists are not willing to join any political arrangement especially when it comes to joining an unjust and imbalanced Lebanese consociational system. For them the Lebanese government has not showed positive intentions towards them. Rather, they have been treated with discrimination and

despotism throughout their presence. Within that situation, participation does not seem to be possible. That kind of participation is what some Islamists referred to as the participation of the weak alongside the strong who are mainly Hezbollah. It is clear how thoughts and feelings of discrimination, despotism and injustice lead to a more exclusionary political discourse. That is what relative deprivation theory is about. Understanding relative deprivation and how it leads to frustration which then leads to violence can possibly help in containing extremism in Lebanon and the region. I say extremism in general because Islam is not the only religion that has produced radical and extremist groups be it Islamic, Christian, Jewish, Hindu or any other religion. Last but not least, deprivation, discrimination, despotism, injustice or repression is unpleasant. The natural outcome of such treatments is frustration, anger and fury. These kind of feelings will ultimately yield to aggression especially when those feelings are continuously reinforced within the same group. Lessening those feelings will lessen the aggression and gradually lead to peace.

References

- Abdo, G. (2013). *The New Sectarianism: The Arab Uprisings and the Rebirth of the Shi'a Sunni Divide*. The Saban Center for Middle East Policy.
- Abdo, G. (2015). *Salafists and Sectarianism: Twitter and Communal Conflict in the Middle East*. Center for Middle East Policy.
- Agha, J. A. (n.d.). *The Shift in Hizbullah's Ideology, Religious Ideology, Political Ideology and Political Program*. Amsterdam University Press.
- Al Jama' ah Al Islamiya*. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www.al-jamaa.org/pageother.php?catsmktba=15>
- Alami, M. (2015, July 1). *Radical groups lure Tripoli youths*. Retrieved December 18, 2015, from <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2015/07/lebanon-roumieh-torture-sunnis-tripoli-extremism.html>
- Ali, M. A. (2014). Tripoli's Salafist community fears being stereotyped, persecuted. *The Daily Star*.
- Are Salafis Preparing to Replicate Hezbollah Model in North Lebanon*. (2012). Retrieved from Karl Remarks: <http://www.karlremarks.com/2012/05/are-salafis-preparing-to-replicate.html>
- Astih, P. (2015). Al'oulamaa Al Mouslimoun You'alikoun Matalibihem Bitaksim Loubnan aw Houkmihi Mounfaridin. *ElNashra*. Retrieved from <http://www.elnashra.com/news/show/883364/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%85%D8%A7%D8%A1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B3%D9%84%D9%85%D9%88%D9%86-%D9%8A%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%82%D9%88%D9%86-%D9%85%D8%B7%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A8%D8%AA%D9%87%D9%85-%D8%A8%D8%AA%D9%82%D8%B3%D9%8A%D9%85>
- Barakeh, N. (2014). *Radical Islamic movements in Tripoli: The Relative Deprivation Theory*.
- Barclay, S. G. (2007). *Consociationalism in Lebanon*. University of Pennsylvania.

- Crabtree, V. (2012). *The Causes of Fundamentalism, Intolerance and Extremism in World Religions, and Some Solutions*. Vexen Crabtree.
- El-Husseini, R. (2014, December 9). The Current Status of Lebanon's Sunni Islamists. *Middle East Institute*.
- Esposito, T. G. (2009). *Political Integration of Hezbollah into Lebanese Politics*. California: NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL.
- Gurr, T. (1970). *Why Men Rebel*. Princeton University Press.
- Hansen, H. H. (n.d.). *Salafi-jihadists in Syria: A Social Movement Theory Analysis*. Roskilde University.
- Here are 8 Christian Terrorist Organizations That Equal ISIS. (2015, February 9). Retrieved 2016, from <http://aatp.org/here-are-8-christian-terrorist-organizations-that-equal-isis/>
- Imad, A. (n.d.). Islamiyū Lobnan bayn manhaj al mousharaka wa īydiyoulōjiya al takfir. *Rai Alakhar*. Retrieved from http://www.rai-akhar.com/ar/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=247&Itemid=84
- Lefevre, R. (2014). Lebanon's Pro-Asad Islamists. *Syria In Crisis*.
- Lijphart, A. (1977). *Democracy in Plural Societies: A Comparative Exploration*. Yale University Press.
- Nafe', J. (2013). Maza law Khada Al Islamiyoun Al antikhabat AlMooukbila Fi Tarablos? *Addiyar*. Retrieved from <http://saidaonline.com/news.php?go=fullnews&newsid=52480>
- Neriah, J. (2012). The Rise of the Salafis in Lebanon: A New Sunni-Shiite Battlefield. *JCPA*, 12(28).
- Rabil, R. (2015). Salafism in Lebanon. The Washington Institute for Near East Policy.
- Richardson, C. (2011). *Relative Deprivation Theory in Terrorism: A study of Higher Education and Unemployment as Predictors of Terrorism*. New York City.

Samuel-Burnett, S. (2014, November 13). Why pluralism can't substitute for religious freedom. *Centennial Institute* . Retrieved November 2015

Taşpınar, Ö. (2015). You Can't Understand Why People Join ISIS without Understanding Relative Deprivation. *The World Post*.

Whitehair, L. (2012). *Islamic Extremist Terrorism: The Public's Perception of its Causes*. Sheffield Hallam University.

Williams, L. (2014). Lebanon's Sunnis alienated by army actions. *Al Jazeera*.

Woodward, P. (2014). To defeat ISIS we must understand that despotism is the disease, not the cure. *War in Context*.

Ziemke, C. F. (n.d.). *Perceived Oppression and Relative Deprivation : Social Factors Contributing to Terrorism*.

Appendix

Appendix A: Institutional Review Board Approval



Institutional Review Board (IRB)

لجنة الأخلاقيات

NOTICE OF IRB APPROVAL – EXEMPT STATUS

To: Ms. Nisrine Barakeh
Advisor: Dr. Imad Salamey
School of Arts & Sciences

APPROVAL ISSUED: 15 January 2016
EXPIRATION DATE: NA
REVIEW TYPE: EXEMPT

Date: January 15, 2016

RE: **IRB #:** LAU.SAS.IS1.15/Jan/2016

Protocol Title: Sunni Islamists in Northern Lebanon: Integration Vs. Relative Deprivation

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

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

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

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

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

APPROVAL CONDITIONS FOR ALL LAU APPROVED HUMAN RESEARCH PROTOCOLS - EXEMPT

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

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

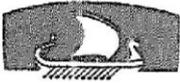
MODIFICATIONS AND AMENDMENTS: Certain changes may change the review criteria and disqualify the research from exemption status; therefore, any proposed changes to the previously approved exempt study must be reviewed and approved by the IRB before implementation.

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

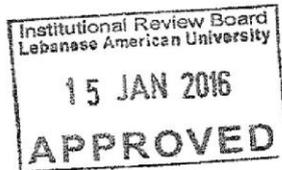
IN THE EVENT OF NON-COMPLIANCE WITH ABOVE CONDITIONS, THE PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR SHOULD MEET WITH THE IRB ADMINISTRATORS IN ORDER TO RESOLVE SUCH CONDITIONS. IRB APPROVAL CANNOT BE GRANTED UNTIL NON-COMPLIANT ISSUES HAVE BEEN RESOLVED.

BEIRUT CAMPUS	BYBLOS CAMPUS	NEW YORK OFFICE
P.O. Box: 13-5053 Chouran Beirut 1102 2801 Lebanon	P.O. Box: 36 Byblos Lebanon	475 Riverside Drive Suite 1848 New York, NY 10115
Tel: +961 1 78 64 56 +961 3 60 37 03 Fax: +961 1 86 70 98	Tel: +961 9 54 72 62 +961 3 79 13 14 Fax: +961 9 54 62 62	Tel: +1 212 870 2592 +1 212 870 2761 Fax: +1 212 870 2762

www.lau.edu.lb



If you have any questions concerning this information, please contact the IRB office by email at christine.chalhoub@lau.edu.lb



Dr. Costantine Daher

Chair, Institutional Review Board



Lebanese
IRB Registration # IRB00006954 LAUIRB#1

DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED:

IRB Exempt Protocol Application	Received 6 January 2016
Introduction Example-Interviews	Received 6 January 2016, Modified 14 January 2016
Sample Questions	Received 6 January 2016
NIH Training – Nisrine Barakeh	Certificate # 1931523 (dated 22 December 2015)