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Heidi Sofie Kvanvig
Oslo, May 20th
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9. REFERENCES
1. Introduction

Has Hezbollah contributed to the democratisation process in Lebanon and subsequently can Hezbollah be seen as a democratising actor?

Debates about Islamist movements in political life in the Middle East are based on definitions of democracy and perceptions of what constitutes undemocratic and democratic behaviour. I would argue that a main problem with this debate is that these perceptions are based on general definitions as well as historical examples derived from certain historical contexts and geographical areas. The challenge, as I see it, is to analyse an actor in relation to democratic theories, without abstracting it from its own context. This challenge has been the motivation for the writing this thesis.

I have chosen to analyse Hezbollah. There are two main reasons for this. First, Hezbollah has been a political party for a relatively long period of time compared to other Islamist movements in the Middle East. Hezbollah became a political party in 1992 and has since the first post-war parliamentary election been an important and influential actor on the Lebanese political scene.

Second, Hezbollah is an interesting example because of how it is perceived and portrayed in both the media public and academic debates. The party’s role is interpreted and explained in many different ways by academics. A common interpretation is that Hezbollah is a terrorist organisation. This is based on the memories from the civil war, and the party’s continued warfare against Israel in the post-war period. Hezbollah is also categorised as fundamentalist because of its Islamist ideology. This way of portraying Hezbollah does not take into account the extensive ideological changes that have taken place within the party, and Hezbollah’s increased engagement in Lebanese parliamentary politics since the party’s establishment in 1982. Today Hezbollah is a political party with a great social engagement and it has a significant role as an oppositional party in Lebanon. In my view this development is very interesting.
The murder of former Prime Minister Hariri in February caused massive anti-Syrian demonstrations and a call for Syrian withdrawal. Arguments presented by the worldwide press and by certain parts of the Lebanese population gave the impression that Syrian withdrawal would solve Lebanon’s democratic problem. However this was not the opinion of the Lebanese population as a whole. The anti-Syrian demonstrations were followed by a pro-Syrian demonstration organized by Hezbollah. This demonstration also gathered thousands of people. Hezbollah’s pro-Syrian engagement once again encouraged a perception of Hezbollah as an obstacle to democratic development.

Going back to Hezbollah’s important role in parliamentary politics during the last decade, I find the research question stated above both fruitful and relevant to the current debate about democratisation in Lebanon. I see Lebanon as a complex state and I understand democratisation in Lebanon to be about more than a Syrian withdrawal.

The aim of this thesis is therefore to provide a contextual analysis of democratisation in Lebanon and to assess the role of Hezbollah in this process. The challenge is to identify Lebanon’s democratic deficits as well as the characteristics of a Lebanese democratising actor. Lebanon is currently in a process of democratisation. Accordingly, Hezbollah will be seen as Lebanese actor that operates within a democratic process, and in relation to the Lebanese democratic challenges.

Due to time and space constraints, my discussion is by means exhaustive. However, the way the thesis answer the stated research question is a valuable contribution to the debate about Hezbollah and democratisation in Lebanon.
2. Methodological challenges and choices

2.1. Clarifications of concepts

In this thesis several concepts that need to be clarified will be in use. Most of these will be defined and conceptualised when they appear in the discussion. However to keep the argumentation as clear as possible I will define some of them here.

The first is a democratising actor. I have chosen to use this concept when I refer to an actor that has contributed to democratic development. This choice is made in relation to the distinction between an actor that contributes in an already democratic state, and an actor that contributes to the actual process of democratisation. A democratising actor therefore refers to the latter.

Theories of democracy and democratic development emphasise the relation between political institutions and the citizens of a state. However, only certain aspects of the citizen are important in relation to theories of democracy. This is often referred to as the citizens will, nature, wish or interests. I have chosen to use the latter when I describe the political side of the citizen. I have chosen to define citizen-interests as the expressed or unexpressed preferences of the citizen. Accordingly, it involves the citizens economic interests and interests connected to the social situation of the citizens life. It can also refer to systematized preferences as ideological opinions, or value-related questions.

I have chosen to use fractions or parts of the population when I refer to different constellations of citizens. I believe this is a suitable concept to use in relation to the Middle East and especially in the context of the plural and diverse Lebanon. This term will therefore refer to different social classes, religious groups, people with interests closely related to religious values, as well as those with values that can be conceived as secular. Lebanon is a sectarian society. However, each religious group is diverse and contains people with different sets of values, political opinions and interests. Fractions/parts are therefore used both about a sectarian group, as well as different fractions within each group.
2.2. Defining Hezbollah: A social actor and a political party

When describing Hezbollah’s role it is necessary to see Hezbollah as a complex social and political actor. A common question is whether the movement is a resistance movement or a terrorist organisation. This question opens up for a discussion regarding the legitimacy and legality of Hezbollah’s warfare. Is Hezbollah a movement, an organization or a political party? In many ways this depends on what issues are being analysed. In the beginning Hezbollah was movement and a belligerent in a civil war. During the 1980s Hezbollah also developed a welfare organization. Interestingly, Hezbollah even has its own football team playing in the national league. Hezbollah became a political party in 1992 by participating in the first post-war parliamentary election. In relation to the question raised in this thesis I have made some choices to delimit the problems involved.

I will focus on Hezbollah as a political party. The reason for this is that Hezbollah is very well organized from the top and all sub-units are integrated in the party’s political programme, ideology and the party’s identity (See Hamzeh, 2004: chapter 4). The time frame also justifies this choice. I have chosen to analyse Hezbollah in the years between 1989 and 2004 because it functioned as a political party (almost) this entire period. Hezbollah will therefore be referred to as a political party, with many sub-units. When it comes to the question whether the party’s military wing is engaged in terrorism or resistance fighting, this will not be discussed in this thesis. Nevertheless, since the focus is on Lebanese domestic politics I will refer to its warfare as ‘resistance’, firstly, because most Lebanese see it as resistance against an occupying power (Israel), and secondly because Hezbollah itself refers to the warfare as resistance.

Hezbollah is an opposition party. Accordingly, it has never been part of the cabinet. In fact Hezbollah has refused to have cabinet-positions and minister posts, and as such the party has refused to have executive power (Hamzeh, 2004: 120). I will therefore first analyse Hezbollah as a social actor in general that reacts and changes in relation to its own environment. More
specifically I will treat Hezbollah as a Shiite opposition party, with many sub-units. The role of the sub-units will be emphasised to the extent that they are relevant to the democratisation process in Lebanon. I will refer to government and political elite interchangeably. By these terms I mean those groups in Lebanon with executive power.

2.3. Use of sources

The empirical material consists of both primary sources as well as secondary sources. The main focus will be on Hezbollah’s role. Secondary literature will be the most important source of information. However, in the chapter covering Hezbollah’s ideology primary literature will be used. I hereby refer to a primary source as words that are directly expressed by a member of the party. Accordingly, published material by the party or party members, transcripts of interviews with party members and web pages originating from the party (both in Arabic and English) are examples of primary sources. The use of the party programmes will be clarified below. A remark has to be made about the book written and published by the party’s deputy secretary general Naim Qassem. This book has been valuable in relation to exploring the party’s thoughts about an Islamic state, Islamic society and the interpretation of religious sources but will only be used in the chapter concerning Hezbollah’s ideology.

I have used party programmes in order to discuss ideological changes. The method used here has been content analysis. The main problem has been the language barrier, which made it necessary to work with translated versions of the party programmes. It is therefore possible that some of the content has been lost in the translation. However my content analysis emphasises the use of words and concepts, and how this changes during the 1990s. The aim has not been to go deep behind the expressed message. If this had been the purpose, a discourse analysis of the sources in their original language would have been necessary.
As emphasised the main part of the analysis will focus on the party’s political role. This part is based mainly on secondary sources. My secondary material consists of books and articles written about Lebanon, Hezbollah, democracy and democratisation. The use of these sources will be elaborated upon in the following section.

2.4. Words and actions: Decoding as a methodological tool

I will follow Burgat’s line of reasoning when it comes to the relationship between words and actions. In the introduction to his book *Face to Face with political Islam* he discusses problems connected to the analysis of democracy on the one hand and Islamism on the other. He emphasises the following with respect to Islamist movements: “its authors (Islamists) will be judged on their actions rather than their words. Care will be taken never to build up these words as proof. On the contrary, one will try as carefully as possible to decode each of the presuppositions which determine their exact meaning….this should be done in all circumstances and without exception, something which is not always the case” (2003:4).

The analysis in this thesis is based on two main pillars: Hezbollah’s words and their actions. Burgat is making a clear distinction between the two, which in my view is suitable for analytical purposes. However, as will become clear from my analysis, words can also be seen as deliberate actions, when they are expressed in a specific context with a specific intention. Accordingly, words can have consequences. Both words and actions constitute Hezbollah’s role in the democratic process.

Burgat underlines important aspects that need to be clarified in order to make a balanced analysis. First, statements can be made for rhetorical purposes. It is therefore important that they are seen in relation to their context. The context clarifies why they are expressed. Secondly, words, both written and spoken, cannot be analysed in isolation. A single statement that for instance can be interpreted as democratic or undemocratic must not alone be
the basis for a conclusion. The focus must accordingly be on patterns and
tendencies that open up for a broader understanding of ideological changes.¹
The analysis will therefore consist of two parts. The first chapter will contain
an analysis of Hezbollah’s ideology in relation to a democratic process. This
will be done on the basis of primary sources as well as secondary sources.
Secondly, I will look at Hezbollah’s role in the Lebanese society. The focus
here will be on both expressed words and chosen strategy.

2.5. Structure of thesis

The thesis consists of two main parts: An analytical framework and an analysis.
One distinction has to be made: There is a difference between being an actor
within an established democracy, and playing a part in a democratisation
process. The first aim of the analytical framework is to identify the
characteristics of a democratising actor, in order to answer the question of
whether or not Hezbollah has contributed to the democratisation process in
Lebanon. Here it has been important to see the democratisation process in
relation to the conditions in Lebanon. I have therefore applied both a general
theory of democracy and democratisation, and an analysis of the regional and
domestic challenges concerning democratisation.

The analytical framework therefore starts with the general level, represented
by Dahl’s definition of democracy and democratisation. I then move on from
the general level to the regional level, with the aim of discussing the problems
of democracy in the Middle East. Dahl’s theories are here seen in relation to
the democratic problems in the region. Here, I include an additional definition
of democracy to broaden the perspective. The third level and final level is the
domestic level. Here I focus on Lebanon’s social structure and political system,
and locate two issues that can be conceived as challenges in relation to
democratic development. The aim is also to see whether the observations of the
regional level are valid for Lebanon.

¹ ‘Ideology’ will be defined and discussed in the section about Hezbollah’s ideology and ideological changes.
The purpose of analysing democratic values and conditions with reference to these three levels has been to work out certain criteria for defining democratic action. These criteria will be applied to assess whether or not Hezbollah is a democratising actor. The criteria are derived from all three levels because such an assessment involves both general ideas of democratisation and the knowledge of the contextual conditions of democracy, both regionally and domestic.

The analysis is structured by a statistical measurement of the level of democracy in Lebanon, done by Freedom House. I have used this measurement in order to locate what is the core of the democratic problem. In Freedom House’s measurement I have found three obstacles of special importance. These will structure my analysis in the chapters 5-7. The measurement carried out by Freedom House is accordingly the focal point for my discussion.

In the first chapter of the analysis (chapter 4) I analyse Hezbollah’s ideology. I see a thorough analysis of ideology as a necessity because it is impossible to understand Hezbollah’s political strategies without sufficient knowledge about their ideological foundation.

The three democratic obstacles, derived from Freedom House’s measurement, structure the next three chapters. Each chapter begins with an obstacle and proceeds by a discussion of Hezbollah’s role in relation to this obstacle. The aim is to answer the question of whether Hezbollah has contributed to the democratisation process in light of these obstacles. Through this debate it becomes clear that Hezbollah thus in fact contribute to the democratisation. In the final chapter, on the basis of the previous discussion, I apply the six criteria to Hezbollah and hereby summarize Hezbollah’s role as a democratising actor in Lebanon.
ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

3. Democratisation: An historical process

How do we explain historical processes in retrospect? A process is the sum of many incidents and factors. An explanation of a historical process needs to include both an idea of what started the process and what it led to, i.e. an account of the factors that make it possible to talk about an end. In other words, an understanding of events moving from a set point A to a set point B. An analysis of a process therefore consists of three main challenges; the identification of A and B, and the attempt to locate the driving forces between these points.

McCullagh suggests this method to identify the beginning of an historical event: “...explanations of events usually begin with the first event whose occurrence made the final event significantly more probable than it previously had been” (1998:185). This means that the identification of B is highly significant. If B here marks the state of democracy, a definition of what constitutes democracy is needed. We also need an understanding of the different factors bringing a state from A to B. Accordingly, an explanation of a democratisation process and a definition of democracy can help indicate when the process of democratisation was completed. The last and most challenging step is to find and explain how different factors contributed to bringing a state from A to B. In relation to a process these factors can be seen as the driving forces. These can be other important historical incidents, historical coincidences, other overlapping processes, natural phenomena, persons, movements etc. What makes a factor relevant for the explanation is the fact that it played an important role in the development, i.e. that the effect of its historical appearance contributed to bringing history from A to B. As will be evident in the theoretical discussion below, the definition of democracy will influence the perception of which factors that were important in the process, and how they were important. It is therefore important that the definition used is not too rigid in order not to exclude important explanatory variables. The definition used must therefore be realistic in regard to the actual state in
question, in order to enable an identification of the variables that can explain a particular historical democratisation process.

The question is whether Hezbollah can be seen as a part of those forces or factors that will bring Lebanon from A (non-democracy) to B (democracy). There are however several challenges involved when analysing democratisation in Lebanon. When writing history, the separation of points A and B is periodisation of past events. In Lebanon we are dealing with contemporary history where B lies in the future, if ever reached. The uncertainty regarding point B also makes it difficult to identify A.

3.1. Locating A and B

The fact that we are dealing with a party that acts in a process not yet ended constitutes a challenge. Point B represents a political ideal and not a historical fact. Drawing a line from point A to point B therefore implies a normative construction. It is based on two presuppositions. One is that Lebanon actually is heading toward democracy. The other is that this development is a valuable historical process. Being aware that the writing of history also involves historical constructs, I nevertheless see it as necessary identify beginnings and ends.

If a democratic society is set as a future goal for Lebanon, it is natural to start with the signing of the Taif Accord in 1989. This event marks the beginning of Lebanon’s post-war history. The end of the civil war and the rearrangement of the Lebanese political structure created a new beginning in the country’s political life.

To analyse Hezbollah’s role it is necessary to develop an analytical framework. This involves identifying the democratic challenges Lebanon is faced with in the process of moving from A to B. The purpose of the analysis is to find out whether Hezbollah has been a driving force i.e. a democratising actor. We therefore need to identify the characteristics a Lebanese
The aim of this chapter as a whole is therefore to answer the following questions:

1) What is a democratisation process?
2) What are the main challenges in relation to the democratisation process in Lebanon?
3) What are the characteristics of a Lebanese democratising actor?

It is essential to answer these questions first, before discussing the basic questions about Hezbollah’s democratic role raised in the introductory chapter.

3.2. Democratisation on the general level

The discussion of democratisation on the general level is based on Dahl’s theories of democracy and democratic development. The advantage of using Dahl is that his approach is built on empirical examples from the earliest democracies to more recent ones. Another advantage is that Dahl connects definitions of democracy to definitions of democratisation. His definition of democratisation processes is based on an understanding of what constitutes democracy. Factors seen as prerequisites or obstacles for democratic development is derived from this understanding. Accordingly, I will start with a presentation of Dahl’s definition of democracy and than proceed to his definition and conceptualisation of democratic development.

3.2.1. Dahl’s definition of democracy

The starting point of Dahl’s definition of democracy is equality. Accordingly, the aim of a democratic state is to make sure that all members of an association are considered politically equal (1998:37). This illuminates the fact that Dahl sees democracy and this kind of equality as two concepts that can be

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2 Dahl uses the concepts ‘association’ and ‘membership’. His writings are therefore relevant for organizations as well as states.
used interchangeably. If the criteria in his definition are enforced, they will provide political equality among the citizens, as well as function as mechanisms that ensure democratic rule.

Dahl presents five criteria for democracy. The first criterion is effective participation, which Dahl describes as the citizen’s right to have the possibility of making his/her interests known to other members of the community. The citizen must have the opportunity to express both preferences as well as discontent with regards to political decisions. The second is voting equality at the decisive stage, which means that expressed preferences by a citizen must be counted as equal in relation to another citizen’s expressed preferences. This means that all must have the opportunity to vote, and all votes must be counted as equal. The third criterion concerns the importance of enlightened understanding, which means that all citizens should have the opportunity to know other relevant political alternatives and their consequences. Dahl argues that a prerequisite for the enforcement of this criterion is at least a minimum level of enlightenment. Accordingly, the state must provide the opportunity for the citizen to become enlightened (1989:111). The fourth criterion is control of the agenda, which implicates that citizens must have the opportunity to decide what should be placed on the agenda, and that the members must change the agenda, if they choose to do so. The last criterion is inclusion of adults, which emphasises the right of all adults to enjoy the opportunities granted by the enforcement of the four preceding criteria (Dahl, 1989:37-38, 1998:37-38).

Dahl sees the need for democratisation both in non-democratic and democratic states. A fully developed democracy is an ideal never reached by any society. Dahl therefore introduces the word polyarchy to designate states that we call democratic (Dahl, 1971). A polyarchy is also threatened by forces that can move the state away from democracy. Polyarchy is therefore seen as an exercise where the aim is to keep as close as possible to the ideal of democracy. I believe Al-Jabiri has summed up this view of democracy in this

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3 The last criterion has been added later, to illuminate the importance of the principle of inclusion, see On democracy, 1998, chapter four. The last criterion is therefore from this book.
illuminating sentence: “for in this circle of imagination, there can be no democracy except with more democracy” (al-Jabiri, 1992:12).

3.2.2. Dahl’s definition of democratic process

Dahl describes the development of democracies as a state’s development from a closed hegemony to a polyarchy (1971:7), which is concurrent with my presentation of a process bringing a state from A to B. His argumentation builds on the idea that democracy is an ideal, and this explains why he uses the concept ‘polyarchy’. As such no states are democratic according to Dahl. Instead they are in a constant process of democratisation.

Dahl conceptualises democratic development by describing two paths. The first is contestation and the second is participation. (1971:10). Parry and Moyser have operationalized contestation as a transformation toward a more “fair competition for office and political support”. I will in the following refer to this as increased fair competition. They operationalize participation into “the right to take part in elections and office” (1994:45). This concept will in the following be referred to as increased participation. Both operationalizations are done in accordance with Dahl’s reasoning. The two processes can be seen both as interdependent and independent processes. As such one process can occur without the other, but both are needed if democratic development is to take place. For example, a process of increased fair competition without simultaneously increased participation will lead to “competitive oligarchy”. Such a state will have fair competition among candidates but this would be reserved for a small elite. If increased participation occurs without increased fair competition this will lead to an “inclusive hegemony” (Dahl, 1971:7). In this kind of state the people would be included, however the competition between candidates would not be fair.

Dahl uses the two concepts both as a condition and as a path. This is in line with his conception of democracy as being an unattainable ideal. As such a

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4 This is a reference found in Ghassan Salamé, Democracy without Democrats, in article by Al-Azmeh, page 114
polyarchy constitutes both an ongoing process of increased participation and increased fair competition. A polyarchy can of course also become less democratic if the state becomes less inclusive (decrease in participation), or if the political competition becomes less fair. However in relation to democratic development in states that are far from being democratic, it is most suitable to refer to these as paths or processes that lead to democracy.

Following the two paths implies a gradual enforcement of the five criteria of democracy. This involves far reaching changes within a state. If a state should enforce these criteria, it would mean societal reforms and changes in the political structure. For example, the enforcement of the criteria concerning enlightenment will demand educational reforms, while effective participation is dependent on a free press that can make the citizens’ interests known.

3.2.3. Dahl about political opposition

Our question here concerns the role of Hezbollah in the political process in Lebanon from 1989 until 2004. It is therefore interesting to use Dahl’s theories when analysing political actors.

As previously emphasised a democratisation process needs driving forces. For example, the government can be a democratising actor, by gradually providing the citizens with the opportunity to enjoy the criteria in Dahl’s definition. Many examples demonstrate, however, that democratic development is caused by pressure from an opposition. There are several examples of this in European history. Demands of the middle class were often met by concessions from the ruling elite. If concessions led to changes in the political structure with the result that citizens gained a greater opportunity to participate, which in turn increased the level of fair competition, this is concurrent with Dahl’s reasoning above. The development can be characterized as a process where demands led to concessions, which subsequently created new demands and new concessions. The democratic development in Europe shows such a spiral
of demands and concessions, which towards the end resulted in the creation of democratic states.

Dahl conceptualises the scenario referred to above in a simple cost-benefit model: “the greater the conflict between government and opposition, the more likely that each will seek to deny opportunities to the other” (1971:15). Accordingly, it is costly for a government to suppress its opposition. The role of the opposition is dependent on the government’s choice between continued oppression, or toleration, which again is a question of what is most beneficial to the government. Continuing opposition is therefore important because it makes the costs of oppression higher than the costs of toleration. Accordingly, the pressure an opposition exerts is by Dahl seen as crucial for democratic development.

The theories discussed on this general level have provided a broad understanding of what democratisation is. It is a process of increased participation combined with a process of increased fair competition. Dahl’s focus on the importance of political opposition also gives us an indication of the characteristics needed for an actor to be described as democratising. I have therefore derived three criteria from this general level for the forthcoming analysis: First, a democratising actor contributes to democratisation by increasing the level of fair competition. Secondly, a democratising actor contributes to democratisation by increasing the level of participation. Thirdly, a democratising actor contributes to democratisation by making it costly to the government to suppress opposition.

3.3. Democratisation on the regional level: The Middle East
Dahl’s definition of democracy and democratic development are claimed to be of universal value. Accordingly, Dahl claims that his theories are not related to time and space. I find it necessary to supplement the discussion of democracy on the general level with a discussion that opens for some of the specific
conditions in the Middle East. I will start with some observations made by Al-Azmeh.

Al-Azmeh argues that the Middle Eastern governments are disconnected from their people (2001:121). The Middle Eastern governments do not represent their people. As such the political sphere is cut off from most people, and only includes a few. I see his argument as being twofold. First, there is a little correspondence between the political decisions made and the people’s interests. Second, this disconnection can also be explained in terms of little correspondence between the political discourse and the interests of the people:

1) Political decisions - - - the interests of the people
2) Political discourse - - - the interests of the people

3.3.1. Political decisions and the interests of the people
The first disconnection, the gap between political decisions and the interests of the people, can be regarded as a consequence of the lack of the enforcement of Dahl’s criterion of control of the agenda. The result is that political decisions only reflect the interests of a small fraction of society. A process of increased participation and increased fair competition has not taken place. There is, however, another definition of democracy that even better illuminates this point. This is given by May: “There should be necessary correspondence between acts of government and the equally weighted expressed wishes of citizens with respect to those acts” (May, 1978). Here, the degree of democracy is measured in terms of the extent to which there is a realization of responsiveness by the government. This way of viewing democracy is called “responsive rule” (Saward, 1994).

Dahl’s understanding of democracy and the definition of responsive rule, exemplified by May’s definition, emphasises different aspects of

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5 For an elaboration and clarification of this view of democracy and May’s definition, see Saward, 1994
democracy. Dahl focuses on the opportunity for the citizens to use the political rights guaranteed by democratic rule. In order to measure this we would have to focus on the extent to which this opportunity is provided by the government. A measurement of the degree of responsiveness in a state would have its focus on the result of a democratic or undemocratic decision-making process, by viewing the relation between the content of the decisions and the people’s interests. In relation to the Middle East this definition therefore illuminates the consequences of undemocratic rule as a disconnection between political decisions and people’s interests. A democratisation process would therefore imply an increased level of responsiveness. Accordingly, the interests of the people must be included in the political agenda and the political decision-making process, in order to reconnect the state and the people.

3.3.2. Political discourse versus the interests of the people

The second argument derived from Al-Azmeh is the lack of correspondence between political discourse and the interests of the people. Interestingly he uses the concept of populism; “For populist discourse to proceed properly, the notion of democracy has to be brought in relation to the nature of the people for whom it is claimed” (Al-Azmeh, 2001:121). Is not clear what Al-Azmeh actually means with the phrase populism. If we apply the common meaning of the phrase given in Oxford Dictionary where populism is defined as the expressed words of “a member or adherent of a political party seeking to represent the interests of ordinary people” (Oxford Dictionary, 2003), we can argue that the political discourse in the Middle East does not concern ordinary people. It only includes a few. This argument is close to another criterion in Dahl’s definition of democracy. Dahl’s effective participation means that citizens shall have an equal and effective opportunity to express their preferences. He connects this to the political agenda by arguing that citizens must have an equal opportunity to place questions on the political agenda, and the opportunity to express discontent if the agenda does not reflect their
interests (Dahl, 1989:112). A political discourse must therefore be inclusive, which means that it must reflect the interests of all, and not only a few.

What is the relevance of this in terms of democratisation? A more inclusive political discourse implies that more people express their discontent with political decisions. The importance of this can be explained by Dahl’s cost-benefit model. Expressed discontent makes governmental indifference costly. It places governments under pressure either to choose indifference or to make concessions. As such, an inclusive political discourse can, in the long run, influence the content of political decisions and make them more responsive.

There is also another important aspect with an inclusive political discourse. In his definition of a democratic process Dahl is concerned with increased participation. This means that more and more people should be given the opportunities democracy provides. In the Middle East, a serious consequence of the disconnection between the state and the people has been that people feel politically alienated. There is a situation where large parts of the population do not see politics as something that concerns them. Politics is not regarded as a way of improving their lives. A political discourse is needed that gradually includes a wider range of citizen-interests. In this respect, I will argue that a process of an increasingly inclusive political discourse presupposes the people’s willingness to take part in political life.

What criterion for a democratising actor can be derived from the regional level? Democratisation in the Middle East appears to be about reconnecting the state to the people. In relation to the definition of democracy as responsive rule, this will increase the level of democracy. The content of the political discourse was also seen as important. An inclusive political discourse can influence the political decisions as well as prohibiting political alienation.

We have now reached to the fourth criterion that will be used in analysing the role of a political actor in relation to the development of

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6 This definition corresponds with Harik’s operationalization of ‘political alienation’ in her survey amongst Shiites in Lebanon, where she found that there were a considerable degree of political alienation amongst Shiite citizens (Harik, 1996).
democracy. This criterion comes in addition to the three criteria derived from Dahl’s understanding of democracy and democratic development on the general level: *A democratising actor contributes to increased responsiveness by reconnecting the political discourse and the interests of the people, or the political decisions and the interests of the people.*

### 3.4. Democratisation on the domestic level: Lebanon

Lebanon is a state that is still recovering from civil war. The civil war, which lasted from 1975 to the signing of the Taif Accord in 1989, involved a breakdown of the system that made peaceful political competition possible. The rebuilding of this system is therefore a challenge both to the society and its politicians, as well as to a process of democratisation. In this section I will look closer at the political system in Lebanon, highlighting historical tendencies and the characteristics of the Lebanese society. The aim is to find the last two criteria for defining a democratising actor.

#### 3.4.1. The political system in a sectarian society

Lebanon is a divided society. The political system is a confessional system built on the model referred to as consociational democracy. According to Lijphart Lebanon is a predetermined consociational democracy (Lijphart, 1995:284). However, since Lebanon cannot be characterized as democratic, I will refer to the political structure as a predetermined consociational model or state. There are four characteristics that make Lebanon a consociational state; it has a 1) grand coalition and 2) segmental autonomy, 3) proportionality is the basis for political representation and 4) there is minority veto (1995: 277-78). Lebanon is a *predetermined* consociational state because the president is always a Christian, the Prime Minister always a Sunni and the speaker of parliament is always a Shiite. This practice is codified in the country’s constitution.
The roots of the confessional system can be traced back to the time when these geographical areas were under Ottoman rule. The system was not, however, codified before in the constitution of 1926, where 17 sectarian groups were recognized. The foundation for the consociational model was laid in the 1943 Pact, when the three highest political positions were distributed to the three largest sects (Gresh & Vidal, 2004). The number of seats was to a large extent shared on the basis of the size of each group.

Demographic changes challenged the legitimacy of this political structure. This can be illustrated with the growth of the Shiite community. In 1943 the Shiite community was the smallest of the three main religious groups. The demographic growth and size of the different communities in Lebanon is difficult to estimate precisely. Generally in 1970 an average Shiite family had nine members, while a Christian family had only six. This indicates how rapid the demographic growth was within the Shiite community. At the same time in 1972, the parliament consisted of 99 members where 30 were Maronite Christians and only 19 were Shiite. In addition the Shiite community held the post with least political influence of the three highest positions in the Lebanese political system.

The Taif Accord of 1989 rearranged the parliamentary system and dealt with several issues. Compared to the 1943 Pact the Presidency now had less power compared to the two other posts in the coalition. The seats in the parliament were distributed equally between Christians and Muslims. Nonetheless, this was not seen as satisfactory by the Shiite part of the population, which is now the largest sectarian community. (Høigilt, 2002:66). The Taif system can be seen more as a way of ending the war, than as a lasting political system for Lebanon (Krayem).7

3.4.2. The consociational model and democratic challenges

The purpose of a consociational model is to distribute power and influence in accordance with the group’s size, as well as securing the rights of smaller

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7 This article is not dated, see references.
minorities. As such it can be seen as a model that should function as a conflict regulating mechanism, as well as a system that secures the political rights of each sectarian group.

The argument that this is the best way of structuring political life in divided societies is a contested issue. Hudson criticises the model’s abilities as a conflict regulating mechanism (Hudson, 1976). He argues that the model was too static to handle the challenges caused by the modernization processes in the 1950 and 60s. Instead of easing the political situation, the political structure itself became a cause of the escalation of the political conflict, which ended in the outbreak of the civil war in 1975.

Horowitz is critical to the consociational model because he believes that it segments and reifies the sectarian cleavages in a divided society (Horowitz, 1993). Bose, in his book about the consociational structure in Bosnia and Herzegovina, refers to this as its first flaw. The second flaw, in his opinion, is the model’s underlying basic idea of elite compromise as a way of making political decisions. Bose argues that the assumption that the political elites will make decisions on the behalf of the population cannot be taken for granted. In fact the result will be that the representatives will make decisions, which secure and favour them as a political elite (Bose, 2002, 217). Horowitz also underlines the democratic deficiency in the model. According to him there are “undemocratic results” of democratic institutions. The reason is sectarian communities’ unwillingness to vote for something that does not serve their community’s purposes. This creates a society based on sectarian interests rather than political ideology, which is “poisonous to political health” (Horowitz, 1993:32). It is therefore important to enforce mechanisms that can help overcome this problem. Krayem argues that the Taif System was not a lasting solution for Lebanon, because, despite improvements, it is a continuance of the unequal distribution of power between the sectarian groups in Lebanon.

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8 Horowitz uses the concept ‘ethnicity’ when referring to different sectarian groups, which does not suit Lebanon. However, his argumentation suits Lebanon as well. I use the more general term ‘sectarian groups’, ‘sects’ or ‘community’, when referring to Lebanon’s different religious groups. This concept does not exclude the ethnic minorities, which are represented among the 17 recognized sects in Lebanon.
Making politics independent from sectarian interests is therefore important in order to avoid future conflicts. It is also important because it can contribute to making political decisions reflect the interests of the people in general, independent of sectarian belonging.

3.4.3. Cross-sectarian participation and activity as a solution

I have chosen to make a distinction between cross sectarian participation and cross-sectarian activity. The first takes place when political parties choose to go into coalitions, or use other parties’ electoral lists, to obtain political power. The second takes place when people are involved in common activities in society. Sectarian activity refers to incidents where the aim is to express political interests, and where people from different groups of the society are involved.

The importance of cross-sectarian participation is reflected in the consociational model in Lebanon. Accordingly, there are inbuilt mechanisms with the purpose of increasing cooperation between sectarian groups (Harik, 2004). These mechanisms can therefore be seen as a source of increased cross-sectarian participation. In my view a second source is the parties’ willingness to cooperate. To participate across party and sectarian boarders mean in practice to sacrifice political principles or interests seen as important or crucial. This is of course a natural consequence of coalition politics, but in sectarian societies there is usually more at stake. The parties’ willingness to agree to cross-sectarian participation cannot be taken for granted. The difficulties involved can be seen in Bosnia, where the attempts to build in such mechanisms have failed (Bose, 2002: Chapter 5).

Cross-sectarian activity is important because it precedes cross-sectarian participation. Cross-sectarian activity is accordingly a presupposition for cross-sectarian participation.

From the discussion of democratisation on this domestic level we have reached the fifth criterion that will be applied in the analysis of the role of a political actor in relation to democratic development: In Lebanon an important
3.4.4. Freedom House and distribution of benefits

Social inequalities can be seen as one of the causes for the civil war in Lebanon (Hudson, 1976). Nevertheless, the situation after the civil war has not improved considerably. According to Perthes over one third of the population lived under the poverty line in 1997 (1997:17). The most extreme poverty is found in Shiite areas. It is therefore evident that Al-Azmeh’s observation in relation to the Middle East region also is valid for Lebanon. The economic differences in the population are a sign of the gap between the conditions and interests of the people, and the decisions made by the political elite.

Democratisation in a post-war state implies the elimination of sources of conflict. An equal distribution of benefits must therefore be seen as a prerequisite for democratic development. However, the issue of equality in terms of distribution of benefits is not only important because Lebanon is a state that recently experienced a civil war. A comparison of the survey methodology of Freedom House and Dahl’s definition of democracy illustrates this issue.\footnote{The elaboration of Freedom House is thorough because it is relevant also for the next section about the statistical measurement of the level of democracy in Lebanon.}

Freedom House has since 1970 evaluated political rights and civil liberties throughout the world. Measurements are done annually and a report is published about every state every year. Freedom House’s methodology and Dahl’s definition of democracy overlap to a large extent. In fact a comparison of their methodology as a whole and Dahl’s definition of democracy reveals that Freedom House’s definitions and operationalizations are derived from Dahl (Vreeland, 2003).

Freedom House defines democracy as “a political system in which the people choose their authoritative leaders freely from among competing groups and individuals” (Freedom House, 2001). This only reflects a few aspects of
Dahl’s definition. However the similarities become evident if we look at the methodology as a whole. Freedom House’s starting point is ‘freedom’ which is defined as “the opportunity to act spontaneously in a variety of fields outside control of the government and other centres of potential domination” (Freedom House, 2001). This definition is further conceptualised into two categories of questions labelled political rights and civil liberties. Political rights are defined as the possibility for “people to participate freely in the political process. This includes the right to vote and compete for public office and to elect representatives who have a decisive vote on public policies.” Civil liberties are defined as “the freedom to develop opinions, institutions, and personal autonomy without interference from the state” (Freedom House, 2003). The two categories contain sub-questions, which cover all aspects of democracy. The scores a state obtains in relation to these questions function as indicators of how democratic it is.

The questions in the two categories cover Dahl’s five criteria, as well as his elaboration of them. The questions on the political rights checklist are concurrent with Dahl’s criteria of effective participation and voting equality at the decisive stage. The questions on the civil liberties checklist are concurrent with the criteria of enlightened understanding and control of the agenda.

Both Dahl and Freedom House’s definitions of democracy presuppose that the enforcement of the criteria will lead to societal changes, as well as to reforms in the political structure. This aspect is present in both Dahl’s elaborations of the five criteria, and in Freedom House’s methodological framework. There is, however, one major difference between the two approaches. Freedom House emphasises one additional aspect in the sub-questions on the civil liberties checklist, which is not covered in Dahl’s definition or elaboration of the definition.

Freedom House adds another aspect to equality, the equality of people in terms of economic advancement and welfare benefits. Such an equality in a society demands changes in the social structure. According to Freedom House
this kind of societal change is necessary for the people to be able to enjoy civil liberties.

We have now reached the sixth and last criterion that will be used when analysing the role of a political actor in relation to the development of democracy in Lebanon. This is derived from Lebanon’s long history of social inequalities, and from Freedom House’s survey methodology: A democratising actor contributes to a democratic process by creating social equality and a more equal distribution of benefits.

3.5. What is a democratising actor?

3.5.1. Summary and presentation of criteria
I have until now discussed the theories that have been used in order to reach the criteria that can be used to identify a democratising actor. This was done though discussions of 1) the general theory of a democratic process and definition of democracy by Dahl, 2) al-Azmeh’s argument about the lack of democracy in the Middle East as a region, and 3) challenges related to Lebanon’s political system and social structure. A small summary will now follow, as well as a clarification of the criteria that will be used when analysing Hezbollah’s role.

The three first criteria were derived from Robert Dahl’s definition of a democratic process and his arguments about the importance of political opposition. As emphasised above, an assumption of how a state develops democratic rule is based on a definition of democracy. It is the latter that decides what is viewed as obstacles and prerequisites for democratic development. Accordingly, Dahl’s two paths were therefore seen as the two first criteria, which indicate how an actor can contribute to democratic development. The first is contestation, which can be operationalized as a process, which in turn results in fair competition for office and political support. The second is a process of increased participation, which means that more people are given the opportunity to participate in political life.
The third criterion was added on the basis of Dahl’s argumentation about the importance of political opposition. This criterion was based on Dahl’s assumption that political opposition can make governmental suppression costly. I choose to see this as twofold; firstly, the actor can exert pressure on the government, secondly, it can stimulate the population itself to protest.

The fourth criterion was based on al-Azmeh’s argumentation about how the governments in the Middle East are disconnected from the people. First, an increased level of correspondence between the people’s interests and the political decisions is also important to democratic development, because it can make the political decisions reflect the will of the people to a larger extent than before. Secondly, a democratising actor contributes to democratic development by increasing the correspondence between the people’s interests and the political discourse.

The fifth criterion was derived from the political structure in Lebanon and the importance of cross-sectarian participation and activity. The importance of this is based on the argument that a political system based on cross-sectarian participation is healthier because it expresses general interests and not sectarian interests.

The last criterion was derived from the long-term inequalities between parts of the population in Lebanon. How this constitutes a democratic problem was illuminated by Freedom House’s survey methodology. Here it was underlined that social equality is an important presupposition for democratic development. The sixth criterion is therefore that a democratising actor contributes to equality when he causes a more fair distribution benefits in the state.

To sum up:
1. A democratising actor contributes to fair competition
2. A democratising actor contributes to increased participation
3. A democratising actor constitutes a political opposition, which exerts pressure on the ruling elite, either by public critique or making people itself protest.

4. A democratising actor contributes to increased responsiveness by reconnecting the political discourse and the interests of the people, or the political decisions to the interests of the people.

5. A democratising actor engages in cross-sectarian participation and/or activity.

6. A democratising actor contributes by creating social equality and a more equal distribution of benefits.

3.6. Three Lebanese obstacles to democracy

This section is a preparation of the analysis of Hezbollah’s role. I have chosen to use a measurement carried out by Freedom House to locate the issues that can be seen as most problematic for democratic development in Lebanon. These issues are according to Freedom House those areas, which are most decisive for Lebanon’s bad scores when measuring the level of democracy from 1989 until 2004, referred to below. These will be labelled the Lebanese democratic obstacles. I have derived three such obstacles from the measurement done by Freedom House. These three obstacles will structure the second part of the thesis, the analysis. The focus on these obstacles for democracy will also determine my analysis of Hezbollah. This means that the analysis of Hezbollah’s role will be formed by the focus on these obstacles. This is the last step in fulfilling the aim of analysing Hezbollah within its own context.

3.6.1. The level of democracy in Lebanon from 1989 to 2004

Freedom House claims to measure the level of freedom. Accordingly, the sum of the scores derived from their concepts of political rights and civil liberties is the basis for their categorization of the measured countries as free, partly free
or not free. Nevertheless, since the definitions and operationalizations by Dahl and Freedom House are so close, Freedom House’s measurement of Lebanon can be seen as an indication on the level of democracy in the country.

Freedom House categorizes Lebanon as partly free or not free in the period from the Taif Accord in 1989 to 2004. The measurement uses a scale from 1 to 7 where 1 is the best score indicating that a state is free or democratic. In 2004 Lebanon scored 6 on the political rights scale, and 5 on the civil liberties scale, which if taken together labels the country as not free. In the years from 1989 to 1991 the scores were approximately the same as in 2004. There was an improvement in the scores from 1991 to 1995 making it possible to categorize the country as partly free. In the latest years from 1995 to 2004 the situation deteriorated and Lebanon was back in the not free-category. This is explained by the legislature’s decision to extend the president’s term indefinitely.\textsuperscript{10} Even though there was a slightly better result in the years from 1991 to 1995, this does not mean that the country was close to democracy. I will therefore refer to Lebanon as non-democratic during the whole period that will be discussed.

3.6.2. The three obstacles

Freedom House’s methodological framework is published on the Internet, which has been helpful in the process of writing this thesis. However, Freedom House does not publish the scores on each sub-question, which would have been very useful for the analysis of my thesis. My aim is to uncover the issues that are responsible for the lack of democracy in Lebanon. Knowing the scores on the sub-questions, would have led to a more specific analysis. However, through personal contact with employees in Freedom House, analysis the general scores, and country reports on Lebanon, I believe that I have reached the three issues that can be seen as Lebanon’s main problems in relation to the

\textsuperscript{10} I don’t regard the changes as big enough to divide the analysis. This kind of precision could be fruitful if the aim was a quantitative measurement of the effect of Hezbollah’s role as a democratiser.
definition of democracy, and accordingly the main obstacles for democratic development.  

The first obstacle is derived from the summary of the sub-questions on the political rights checklist and the country report on Lebanon. The next two are taken from specific sub-questions. The first obstacle concerns the ability of the government to offer the opportunity to choose freely among candidates, and to what extent the candidates are chosen independently of the government.

The second obstacle concerns the people’s freedom from unelected forces. Lebanon performs badly in this field because of Syria’s influence over the political sphere in the country (Freedom House, country report, 2004). Freedom House also emphasizes that the Syrian presence has put Lebanon’s independence and sovereignty into question. This issue is therefore seen as the second obstacle to democratic development.

The third obstacle concerns governmental indifference and corruption. Freedom House emphasizes the importance of not confusing constitutional rights with rights in practice. According to Freedom House it is the level of corruption and the inequality of the population that are especially important in relation to Lebanon’s bad scores on the civil liberty checklist (Freedom House, country report, 2004, and personal contact with Freedom House, 2005).

The three obstacles constitute important democratic principles, and will be the fundamentals when discussing Hezbollah’s role. The obstacles can thus be listed as follows:

1. The Lebanese government has not offered the people the opportunity to choose freely among candidates, and the candidates are not chosen independently of the government.
2. The people in Lebanon have been under domination of unelected forces.
3. The Lebanese government shows a large degree of governmental indifference and Lebanon has a high level of corruption.

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11 According to Freedom House the scores on the sub-questions, as well as how they weight variables, will be published from 2006.
The aim of the analytical framework is now fulfilled. We have an answer the question of what a democratisation process is, and what democratisation means in the Lebanese context. Furthermore, we have an answer to the question of what characteristics a democratising actor must have if it is be granted the title *democratising actor*. The following analysis will start with an exploration of Hezbollah’s ideology, in search for issues that shed light on Hezbollah’s role in Lebanese society. In the next three chapters Hezbollah’s political role will be discussed in relation to the democratic obstacles derived from Freedom House’s measurement of Lebanon, one by one. The aim will be to see if Hezbollah has counteracted these or the consequences of them. This will be the basis for answering question of whether *Hezbollah has contributed to the democratisation process in Lebanon?* Through this debate it becomes clear that Hezbollah thus in fact contribute to the democratisation process.

In the final chapter, on the basis of the previous discussion, I apply the six criteria to Hezbollah and herby summarize Hezbollah’s role as a democratising actor in Lebanon.
ANALYSIS

4. Hezbollah’s ideology
The aim of this chapter is to explore Hezbollah’s ideology. This provides a useful basis for a better understanding of the role the party has played in Lebanese politics. It also provides information and analytical arguments, which are useful in relation to the basic research question about Hezbollah as a democratic actor. It is however not possible to explore Hezbollah’s ideology without knowledge about Hezbollah’s establishment and its role in Lebanese political life. Therefore I will first give a brief historical outline.

4.1. Hezbollah’s establishment
Hezbollah was established in 1982 as a result of three factors: 1) the Iranian revolution 2) the long-time political and social inequalities between the sectarian groups in Lebanon 2) the civil war, which lasted from 1975 to 1989, where the Israeli invasion of the country in 1982 was crucial.

The Iranian revolution served as a source of inspiration for many political groups in the Middle East, independent of the division between Sunni and Shiite Islam (Cleveland, 2000). It was accordingly also an inspiration for religious Shiite leaders in Lebanon. The Iranian revolution and the establishment of the Shiite Islamic state in Iran became decisive because it provided Hezbollah with political and economic support. Iran’s support to Hezbollah can be seen as partly independent of the civil war in Lebanon. The new Iranian regime saw Hezbollah as a realization of the revolutionary state’s campaign to spread the Islamic revolution (Norton, 1999:10)

According to Norton discontent with the social and political inequalities in Lebanon caused a politicisation of the Shiite community. This was an increasing tendency during the 1950s, to the 70s (Norton, 1999:5). Hezbollah
was a latecomer on the Lebanese political scene. First, *zu’ama* bosses\(^{12}\) led the political activity in the 1950s and 60s. Later, politically active Shiite joined secular political movements as the Lebanese Communist Party and the Syrian Social Nationalist Party. In the 1970s Amal, which was based on the Shiite community, became the most rapidly growing movement, and challenged the political role of the *zu’ama* bosses. This movement became the biggest Shiite movement, and is still the biggest Shiite party in the Lebanese parliament today (Norton, 1999:5-7). The leader of the party, Nabih Berri, has been the speaker of parliament since Lebanon’s first post-war election in 1992. Hezbollah was established as a Shiite alternative to Amal, but was in contrast to Amal not secular but religiously based. The religious content of Hezbollah’s ideology was the reason for substantial support from the Shiite community already from the beginning.

The decisive cause that led to the establishment of Hezbollah was the civil war, and especially the Israeli invasion of the country (Harik, 2004 and Norton, 1999:10). Syria played an important role in this historical situation. The Syrians saw Hezbollah as an actor that could preserve Syrian interests in Lebanon, one of them being to defeat Israel.

Accordingly, Hezbollah was founded as a religious movement, based on Shiite members and support. These causes and circumstances made Hezbollah a belligerent in the war with an expressed aim to protect the rights of the Shiite population and the establishment of an Islamic state. Nevertheless, Hezbollah chose to participate in the parliamentary system, which changed Hezbollah from an Islamist movement to an Islamist political party. The focus of this chapter, which deals with Hezbollah’s ideology, is threefold: first to find out what consequences these changes had for the content of the party’s ideology, secondly to explain why these changes occurred, and finally, to discuss Hezbollah’s ideology in relation to democratic principles.

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\(^{12}\) Zu’ama is a word for powerful family, often compared with the role of feudal lords in European history.
4.2. **What is ideology?**

Analysis of ideology is important in order to understand political parties. The ideology can explain choices of actions, statements and the party’s identity. I choose to use ‘party identity’ because this refers both to how a party views itself and to how it is viewed by the public. This can be connected to ideology, but also to general statements, which are made to legitimise actions or the political agenda, and to improve the public’s image of the party. Ideology can be defined as “set of beliefs and goals of a social or political group that explain or justify the group's decisions and behaviour.” (History Central, downloaded 2005). This definition rests on two suppositions. First, the group is seen as social and/or political, which means that ideology is something that is not static, but continuously changing. Secondly, even if the ideology changes there are certain beliefs and goals, which can be seen as a core. Third, ideology can be seen as something that explains a party’s actions, as well as how the party justifies these. Accordingly, a party’s ideology is highly relevant in order to understand its role in a parliamentary system.

4.3. **What is Islamism in Hezbollah’s ideology?**

Hezbollah has an ideology that can be characterized as Islamist, where Islamist refers to an ideological category that is based on the idea that Islam should be the foundation for both the religious and the political spheres. In fact they cannot be separated. Islamism can therefore be seen as a political expression of the religion Islam. As the political idea of democracy, the idea of an Islamic state is expressed though writings of philosophers and theoreticians, and constitutes numerous varieties and suggestions of how to organize political life. Hezbollah’s ideology is built on Shiite Muslim doctrines, which makes their state model different from Sunni Muslim Islamist state theories. One of the causes of the establishment of Hezbollah was, as emphasised, the inspiration of the Iranian revolution, and Iran has given both ideological inspiration and financial contributions to Hezbollah. As a Shiite based religious party
Hezbollah also builds its ideology on the principle of *vali-ye faqih*, which implicates that the Iranian jurisprudent, *faqih*, is seen as “the designated deputy of the twelfth Imam during his occultation” (Saad-Ghorayeb, 2002:64). In practice this means that if there are disputes within the party’s council, *Majlis al-Shura*, the jurisprudent will make the decision. This was for instance done in 1992 when Hezbollah leaders disagreed on the issue of participation in the parliamentary election. The *faqih* therefore intervened and ruled in favour of participation (2002:43). The acceptance of the *faqih*’s supreme authority in matters under dispute within the party is also a prerequisite for party-membership. Accordingly, Hezbollah’s political framework constitutes an independent ideology. However, it is based in Shiite Muslim traditional ideas, inspired and influenced by Iranian politics and politicians, and it has developed within the Lebanese political framework.

To illuminate the most important aspects with Hezbollah’s ideology, a definition of Islamism is necessary to use. Bjørn Olav Utvik defines Islamist movements as follows:

- “They are those who refer to themselves as an Islamic (or Islamist) movement (al-haraka al-islamiyya).
- They call for the establishment of an Islamic state. The main criterion defining such a state is that it should be ruled by the Sharia, the revealed law of Islam.
- They organise themselves into social and political movements in order to achieve this aim” (Utvik, 1993).

First, Hezbollah has from its establishment referred to itself as an Islamist movement. This is evident from the name of the movement, which means Party of God. Its religious basis was made clear in the party’s first public statement, published in 1985. The Open Letter has many references to Islam, Islamic traditional concepts are in use, and it is made clear that the movement

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13 *Vali-ye faqih* means ‘the rule of the jurisprudent’ and refers to the highest religious leader in Iran. Traditionally, political rule was seen as illegitimate in the absence of twelfth Imam, who, according to the Shiites went into occultation in 847. The concept was introduced by Khomeini as a religious legitimisation of political rule by religious leaders as long as the Imam is absent.

14 I here use ‘movement’ and not ‘party’ to make the discussion concerning the definition of Islamism clear. I also use ‘movement’ about Hezbollah before it became a political party in 1992.
wishes “to lay down the bases of a Muslim state which plays a central role in the world” (Open Letter, 1985). Secondly, in the Open Letter and the 1992 election programme, Hezbollah calls for the establishment of an Islamic state. Hezbollah’s idea of an Islamic state under the rule of the faqih has been twofold. On the one hand, the aim is that countries in the region shall unite in the formation of an Islamic state. Lebanon will only be a part of this. On the other hand, if this is not possible, or proves to be time consuming, an Islamic state should be established in Lebanon (Saad-Ghorayeb, 2002). Such a state will be based on the law of the Sharia.

Hezbollah does not support an Islamization from above. The party does therefore not agree to the use of violence to obtain this goal. This is in accordance with the injunction from the Koran, “Let there be no compulsion in religion” (Saad-Ghorayeb, 2002:256). Their struggle for establishing an Islamic state in Lebanon has therefore been based on the idea of Islamization from below (Qassem, 2005). This means that the non-Muslim citizens must either consent to the establishment of an Islamic republic, or convert to Islam (2005:31). Nevertheless, inquiries made among Shiites in Lebanon, reveals that only 13% wanted an Islamic state in 1992 (Harik, 1996:56).

Third, the reason for the establishment of Hezbollah is connected to the circumstances under the civil war. It concerned the basic question what kind of state Lebanon should be. In this question Hezbollah explicitly stated that Lebanon should be an Islamic state. Accordingly, Hezbollah answers to the third criterion in Utvik’s definition.
4.4. Pragmatism: ideological changes during the 90s

Hezbollah underwent extensive ideological changes in the period from its establishment until 2004. In my view Hezbollah has had a broad appeal in Lebanon because of its use of pragmatism in relation to many issues that can be conceived as religious-political questions. The cause of the pragmatism can be seen as twofold. First, it is evident that its participation in the parliamentary system has influenced Hezbollah’s ideology (Norton, 1999:21 and Saouli, 2003:73). Second, I will argue that it has been important for the party to be seen as a serious actor on the Lebanese political scene more broadly. Accordingly, Hezbollah has not only adjusted to its own potential voters’ preferences, but to the general public as well.

I will in the following discuss how extensive Hezbollah’s ideological changes have been. This will be done with a content analysis of three of Hezbollah’s written statements. These are The Open Letter published in 1985, and the election programmes from 1992 and 1996.

I see a party programme as an expression of the party’s identity. It can therefore explain how the party views itself, and how the party wants to be perceived. However it also refers to the party’s ideology as a system of beliefs. And it also says something about the party’s political agenda, which indicates what the party will vote for and do, if it obtains political power.
4.4.1. Content analysis of three party programmes

(Horizontal: the three documents analysed. Vertical: The concepts used as indicators.)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1985 The Open Letter</th>
<th>1992 Election programme</th>
<th>1996 Election programme</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lebanon</td>
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<td>17</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lebanese</td>
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<td>26</td>
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<tr>
<td>Words and concepts referring to Islam*** (and **** and *****)</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Words, names and concepts referring to Iran******</td>
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</tbody>
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* The analysis is done on the basis of translated versions. It is very likely that the results would be slightly different on the basis of the Arabic versions.

** Every use of the word Lebanese refers to something considered negative by the movement; as the Lebanese forces (2), “Israel’s Lebanese dream” (abstract from the text), Lebanese Front, Lebanese crisis, Lebanese defeatists.

*** All verses from the Koran are counted as one reference to Islam.

**** The concept “Sharia” (Islamic law) is mentioned once, in the Open Letter. In the 1992 election programme this is referred to with the words “Islamic project…is the track that is chosen”. The 1996 election programme does not have any references to an Islamic state or Islamic law. The programme starts with a verse from the Koran. The words that can be related to Islam is 1) Allah (4 times) used to express gratitude, or as an Islamic greeting, 2) martyrs (2 times), 3) Islamic (3 times) referring to the Islamic Resistance or Islamic countries.

***** The word and concepts with reference to Islam (all three documents) are: Allah, Islamic, Islam, martyrs, Ummah, Muslim, Prophets, Muhammad, Holy, Koran, Sunnah, Marja al-taqlid, religion, sanctuaries, Sharia, akham, salvation, jihad.

****** The words, names and concepts referring to Iran are faqih, vali-ye faqih and Khomeini.
**References to Iran**

The comparison of the Open Letter published in 1985, and election programme from 1992 and 1996 illustrates several interesting developments. This can be illustrated by the references to Iran. The Iranian support can be seen as a result of geopolitical matters, but most decisive was the Islamic state’s aim of exporting its revolution (Cleveland, 2000:426, Norton, 1999:10). Although Hezbollah received both economic and political support from Iran, as it did from Syria, it is on the ideological side that Iran has been most visible.

Nevertheless, from the findings in the content analysis it is evident that this was limited to the period before the party’s first election. As the table above shows, references to Iran and Iranian matters are only found in The Open Letter. This can therefore indicate that Iran was decisive for Hezbollah’s ideological establishment as a Shiite movement. However, the two other documents indicate that Hezbollah did not want to be perceived as an Iranian-influenced party. This is concurrent with other scholars’ observations, which indicate that Hezbollah has changed into a Lebanese party, accommodated to the Lebanese political system after it participated in the first parliamentary election in 1992 (Saad-Ghorayeb, 2002:Ch.2). In the basic ideology there are clear parallels between Iranian Islamism and Hezbollah’s ideology. However, this has not been visible in Hezbollah’s political programmes or agenda.

**Lebanonization of Hezbollah: references to the ‘people’**

The most interesting finding is the change in the way to which ‘people’ is referred. Who does Hezbollah want to reach? The question of who belongs to the state depends on the shape of the state, whether Hezbollah is imagining an Islamic state or a Lebanese state. The use of the word ‘Lebanese’ is of particular interest. This indicator has been chosen because it can illuminate what the focus of the party has been.
In The Open Letter the concept *ummah*, and ‘Muslims’ has been used when referring to the citizens of the envisioned Islamic state. These have been used interchangeably. It is therefore evident that the receivers of the message were meant to be the Muslims. Another interesting issue in The Open Letter is the use of the expressions ‘oppressed’ and ‘oppressor’. ‘Oppressor’ is used about Israel/ the Zionists, USA and the Phalanges (Christian forces collaborating with Israel).

In The Open Letter ‘Lebanese’ is used only 6 times, and all in relation to elements seen as negative to the movement. A reasonable explanation would be that the Open Letter was written during the civil war, and the aim most likely to attract support. But there is also another reason. The Open Letter resembles other kinds of war rhetoric. The document must be seen in relation to the fact that a civil war makes the future uncertain. It was not clear what shape the territorial map would have after the ending of the war. Because Hezbollah was founded as a movement fighting for an Islamic state, references to something considered Lebanese was therefore not in accordance with the movement’s ideological motivations at the time.

In the 1992 election programme, ‘Lebanese’ is not used in this way. Here the word is used when referring to the people and the parliament. Also the combination ‘Lebanese nationality’ is mentioned once. Interestingly, ‘Lebanese’ is combined with ‘oppressed’, where the audience is addressed by the following greeting: “To our noble Lebanese, our dear oppressed”. As such, ‘oppressed’ is used about the Lebanese people in general.

In the 1996 election programme, ‘Lebanese’ is mentioned 26 times in total. This time the word is used in relation to the people, the parliament, and the political system in general and in relation to territorial claims. It is an interesting finding that ‘Lebanese’, when referring to the people (not the

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15 *Ummah* is a concept that traditionally refers to the notion of a universal Islamic community and sometimes a nation (Cleveland, 2000:530).

16 Worth mentioning is the interesting use of the word *phalange* later in the document. It is evident that the movement used the word about the Christian forces that were collaborating with the Israeli forces. Nevertheless, the document also contains the use of “Christians”. It is unclear what this implicates, but a natural interpretation could be that the movement is making a distinction between those specific Christians that were collaborating with the enemy, and Christians in general.
parliament etc.), often is combined with the word ‘all’. An example is the party’s statement regarding equality: “…establishing a stable dignified and prosperous country in which all the Lebanese engage in the process of construction…” (My emphasis) and “…we will seek to continue working until we achieve a just and balanced electoral system that treats all the Lebanese even-handedly…” (My emphasis).  

Thus the party’s ideology has undergone a process of Lebanonization, which has resulted in an ideology that bears resemblances with nationalist rhetoric. Hezbollah gradually changed its view on the Lebanese state and on who the citizens of this state should be.

**Downplaying religious engagement**

I do not regard these changes as an election strategy, i.e. Hezbollah does not necessarily do this with the hope of obtaining votes from ‘all Lebanese’. According to Harik’s analysis only 13% of the Shiite population wanted an Islamic state. As a dynamic political party, it is not strange to see that the religious rhetorical elements are downplayed considerably. The issue of an Islamic state and Sharia is not mentioned in the 1996 election programme at all. The party is speaking of an Islamic state, but emphasizes that this must be achieved through a process starting from below. Nevertheless, Fadlallah\(^\text{18}\) has stated that this is unrealistic because the population of Lebanon belongs to different sects (Fadlallah in interview, Soueid, 1995:68). It is obvious that the issue of an Islamic state is a matter of inconsistency in Hezbollah’s ideology. Hezbollah plays down the Islamic religious engagement in public statements because it needs to accommodate to the Lebanese system, as emphasized by Saad-Ghorayeb, Norton and Saouli.

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17 The term “oppressed” is not used in the 1996 election programme.
18 Fadlallah is conceived as Hezbollah’s spiritual leader.
4.5. **Hezbollah’s recent ideology**

It is evident that Hezbollah’s ideology has changed remarkably since its first public statement made in 1985. It is therefore interesting to again compare Hezbollah’s ideology with Utvik’s definition. According to criteria number one, concerning how Islamist groups refer to themselves, Hezbollah still refers to itself as an Islamic movement. When it comes to criterion number two, concerning the issue of an Islamic state, the picture is not as clear anymore. As emphasized above, on the issue concerning the intent to establish an Islamic state, the party has been very ambivalent. The third criterion in Utvik’s definition concerns the fact that Islamist movements organize themselves in order to establish an Islamic state. In the context of Hezbollah it is no longer clear whether the establishment of an Islamic state is high on the present agenda. The issue of an Islamic state was in focus in 1985, but is not an issue that has been frequently promoted in the last years. Hezbollah’s pragmatism on this issue has resulted in a movement away from Utvik’s definition.19

4.6. **Hezbollah’s ideology versus democratic principles**

It can be useful to distinguish between an Islamist ideology’s religious content and its societal content. This is an analytical distinction, where the first refers to principles derived directly from Islam, and the latter to the ideology’s adjustments to political reality. This means that some principles refer to Islam, while others refer to general political issues. The latter can be perceived as more secular. By keeping these two sides of Islamism apart it becomes clear how Islamism constitutes one line of reasoning and democracy another. Some elements in Islamist ideology are easier to assess in relation to democratic criteria, others belong to a different level of thought. Accordingly, there are principles, which are more concrete and tangible, as for instance ideas about political structures and processes. Other principles are more like visions and

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19 This definition will be updated in *The Pious Road to Development: The Ideology and Practice of Islamist Economics in Egypt*, by Bjørn Olav Utvik, London, 2005 (forthcoming), pp. 8-9.
motivations that are directly derived from belief. In Islamist reasoning the two aspects are united, while in our analysis it is fruitful to make a distinction in order to compare Islamist ideology with democratic ideals.

4.6.1. Establishment of an Islamic state

One example of an idea that is derived from religious sources is the hope that the Lebanese people will convert, or simply wish for the establishment of an Islamic state. Traditionally this has been one of Hezbollah’s main pillars. Another issue is what should be the purpose an Islamic state. The aim is often argued to be the moral refinement of the people. An Islamic state will lead to a morally pure society, and a just political system. Accordingly, in this perspective the Islamic state is not seen as an end in itself, but as a means of fulfilling justice (Nashrallah\textsuperscript{20} in interview, LBC, 1997, quoted in Saad-Ghorayeb, 2002:36). Justice is defined as the people’s endorsement of the Islamic republic (2002:36). In connection to the principles of Islamization from above and below, this is an example of how Hezbollah has traditionally called for an Islamization from below because the precondition for an Islamic state will be an Islamic community. An Islamist society must therefore precede an Islamic state (2002:37).

4.6.2. Jihad

The interpretation of \textit{jihad} is another issue derived from religious sources. When defining ideology I emphasised that ideology can function as a tool for justifying and legitimising certain actions. \textit{Jihad} is relevant in relation to Hezbollah’s warfare against Israel because it has been used to justify the violent acts as well as giving soldiers a reason to fight and put their life at risk. Israeli occupation has been an important element of Hezbollah’s ideology from its establishment in 1982. A just society therefore also means freedom from Israeli occupation.

\textsuperscript{20} Nashrallah is Hezbollah’s Secretary General.
I see the party’s use of the *jihad*-concept in warfare as more defensive than other Islamist movements that use violence to obtain political goals. While other movements use the ideologue Qutb’s more offensive interpretation of the concept to legitimise violent actions in general, Hezbollah’s interpretation can be seen in relation to the struggle against Israel. Hezbollah defines itself as a resistance movement fighting on the behalf of the Lebanese population. In many ways this can be interpreted as an expression of nationalist values. Nevertheless, this warfare has been connected to Islamic values. Hezbollah therefore accepts military jihad, when this is used against oppressors and occupants (Qassem, 2005:36). It is of course a question of definition whether their violent behaviour is defensive, but their interpretation, as I see it, is developed to justify their actions religiously.

Hezbollah’s interpretation of the concept is of further reach than legitimising the warfare against Israel. In his book, deputy secretary general Qassem sees the concept also in relation to the establishment of a just state and a morally pure society. The word *jihad* can be translated with “battle” and has traditionally referred to a battle within the soul (2005:53). Hezbollah argues that this battle should have the purpose of serving God, and God alone.  

This can therefore be connected to the goal of a morally pure society. *Jihad* is therefore the individual’s task, and the individual’s contribution in the process of creating an Islamic society and state. Qassem also connects this struggle with the individual’s fate on the Day of Resurrection (2005:35). An Islamic society is a prerequisite for an Islamic state. An Islamic society that lives up to God’s expectations will also, according to Hezbollah’s ideology, determine the fate on the Day of Resurrection. This demonstrates how intimate individual beliefs and political theories are interwoven in Hezbollah’s ideology.

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21 Deputy Secretary-General Qassem here refers to Al-Tabtabai, *Tafsir al-Mizan*, vol.14 p. 114
4.6.3. Legitimacy

‘Legitimacy’ is a concept that can be compared with democratic principles. However, the way ‘legitimacy’ is conceptualised by Hezbollah poses a challenge because it is also derived from religious sources. In the same manner as in the democratic model, legitimacy is seen as a product derived from the political structure in question. In an Islamic state, as Hezbollah pictures it, the legitimacy comes from God. Accordingly, it is not connected to the relation between the political structure and the population, but to the relation between the people and God. Legitimacy is therefore related to moral, and to how God relates to humans.

The debate around the concept ‘legitimacy’ within democratic theories is a complicated one, and it has produced various definitions of the concept. I use the word here in accordance with Freedom House’s definition of democracy. Accordingly, a political system can be seen as legitimate when Freedom House’s criteria are met, i.e. a state with a measurement score around 1. What produces legitimate rule is therefore the criteria of political rights and civil liberties and how these are put into practice.

A useful way to illuminate the differences between the two conceptions of legitimacy is to say that ‘democratic legitimacy’ is measurable; ‘Islamist legitimacy’ is not. According to critics of Islamism the argument is therefore that it is impossible for humans to know when the rule is legitimate, because this understanding belongs to God and is grounded in His view of the Islamic state and its citizens. If we equate legitimate rule with just rule we find the reasoning in Hezbollah’s own ideology: “Divine justice demands that God does what is best for humanity, and divine truthfulness has generated such a faith. God’s promise will be fulfilled, if humanity keeps its covenant of working for God’s just society” (Nashrallah, quoted in Hamzeh, 2004:28).
4.6.4. Political pluralism and the position of the *dhimma*

The concept ‘political pluralism’ can be connected to how Hezbollah views the possible role of the *dhimma* in an Islamic state. *Dhimma* refers to the non-Muslim groups within a society, which have traditionally been protected under Muslim rule (Cleveland, 2000:527). Hezbollah has included this aspect in its ideology. However, non-Muslim communities will not enjoy the same rights as Muslim citizens. They will not have the possibility of achieving the highest political positions. They will, however, be protected by law and have religious freedom.

According to democratic principles Hezbollah’s view of the position of these groups in the Islamic society becomes problematic in many ways. If the principles concerning the political role of non-Muslim groups in the Islamic state are connected to the principle of equality and total inclusion, it is evident that Hezbollah’s thinking is not in line with democratic principles. First, these communities will not be regarded as equals in relation to the Muslim citizens. Secondly, they are viewed as excluded from political processes, and denied access to executive power.

The principle of inclusion of all groups as a prerequisite for democracy is therefore challenged. Even though the non-Muslim groups will be included and can participate in the parliament, the exclusion from power positions can lead to a situation where their interests is not reflected in political decisions. Hezbollah responds to this criticism by stating that this will not be a problem because an Islamist society must precede an Islamic state (Saad-Ghorayeb, 2002). Ultimately this becomes a question of how absolute this view is. As Raad\(^{22}\) states, an overwhelming majority must wish for an Islamic state. In relation to democratic principles, even a small divergence becomes a problem. Even if an overwhelming majority of the Lebanese people wanted to establish an Islamic state, the democratic problem would arise in relation to the small minority that is against such an establishment.

\(^{22}\) Hezbollah parliamentary member.
4.7. How democratic?

It is interesting to see that Hezbollah’s Islamist ideology and democratic principles in many instances overlap. Both are preoccupied with the importance of equality, even when the two theories operationalize ‘equality’ differently. Both contain ideas of a mechanism that will diminish oppression and establish a just rule. We observed extensive changes in the party’s ideology, which brought the party closer to democratic principles. The question is therefore where this leaves us. Is it possible, on the basis of an analysis of the party’s ideology, to say whether the party has been a democratising actor or not? Verbally, they seem more democratic, but this can be seen as tactical moves by the party in order to gain more political influence. In my view we need to look at the relation between words and actions to be able to assess whether Hezbollah has contributed to the democratisation process. In the following the focus will be on the party’s role in the Lebanese political life as well as in the social sphere.
5. Hezbollah in local and parliamentary politics

The Lebanese government has not offered the people the opportunity to choose freely among candidates, and the candidates have not been chosen independently of the government (Freedom House, 2004).

5.1. Clientalism and elite rule in Lebanon

The statement from Freedom House quoted above relates to the family structure of the Lebanese society. This structure is often referred to as a clan-system. In the clan-system the group of people that are defined as family is much larger than for instance European families. As such, a family or a clan can have more than a thousand members (Harik, 2004:102).

With regard to democratic principles this observation is relevant because the nature of the family structure has influenced political life in Lebanon to a large extent. For example, a candidate running for office is often a key member of a clan, or a person with close relations to a key member. In addition family belonging is decisive in relation to who is elected. Often candidates who run for office have a relation to already elected politicians. Other deciding factors for election have been personal networks in general and bribes. A concept that is often used to describe systems that are based on family ties, bribes and personal networks, is clientalism. I will therefore use this concept in the following.

There are several examples that illustrate how clientalism has influenced the political system in Lebanon. The post-war parliament was filled with 80% newly elected compared with the pre-war parliament. However, one third of these were close relatives of earlier deputies. The pre-war parliament consisted of 20 powerful families, dominating the parliament. 11 of these were still present in the post-war establishment, represented by other or younger candidates (Hudson, 1999). Hamzeh gives another illustration in his listing of election results in a book about Hezbollah. When referring to Hezbollah’s election results, he interestingly adds ‘family’ as a category. The table consists of three categories; Hezbollah, Amal and candidates marked as ‘family’. In the
1998 parliamentary election Hezbollah received 8 seats, Amal 9 seats, and Zu’ama-families was granted 10 seats (2004:113). This indicates how important families have been as a political force.

Further, it is evident that money has been an important mechanism in elections. In the post-war parliament 85 of the 128 deputies were very wealthy, and the sources for their wealth were independent of their official salary (Hudson, 1999). According to Hudson “money appeared to be talking loudly” and he describes the political structure as an oligarchy, which resembled the oligarchic parliament consisting of traditional leaders before the war (1999).

It has also been common in Lebanon that election laws have been changed to favour certain candidates, in order to protect the network of loyal players in the country’s political system. In fact, governmental manipulations of the election machinery have been observed in all elections from 1992 (Freedom House, 2004, Harik, 1998 & 2004, Hudson, 1999, Keesing, 1996). Harik argues along the same lines as Hudson, and sees a continuance of the pre-war characteristics in the post-war establishment. She characterizes it as a political system where political authority is derived from familial, confessional and locational sources (1998:161-163).

Harik adds another characteristic to the present establishment, namely Syrian influence. It has been a necessity for Syria to keep the Lebanese government loyal in order to maintain Syrian influence. Accordingly, the post-war manipulations have to a large extent been carried out to secure Syria-friendly candidates a good election result (1998:161-163). Syria’s role in Lebanon’s politics will be further discussed in the next chapter.

According to Freedom House one of three main obstacles to democratisation was the state’s inability to offer the opportunity to choose freely among candidates including those that are independent of the government. This becomes evident if we look closer at the consequences of the empirical examples mentioned above. Clientalism excludes candidates without the right family belonging or interests. This causes a situation where candidates are not elected on the basis of personal skills or the fact that he/she represents
ordinary people’s interests, but on the basis of protecting the interests of those already elected. This demonstrates that people cannot choose freely among candidates, due to clientalist mechanisms that decide who can run for office and who actually get elected.

Clientalism also constitutes a problem in relation to the consociational model. As Hudson argues the Lebanese political system is built on the idea of compromises between ruling elites. Accordingly, it is elitist in nature (1976:111). Even though this means that a certain extent of elite rule is accepted, I would argue that clientalism has increased the level of elite-rule beyond an acceptable level. This has resulted in a situation where only a spectre of the society has been part of the political elite. The consequences of this are, as emphasised by Freedom House, that the competition is not fair. It has effected the distribution of benefits as well. This will be elaborated upon in the last section of the analysis, but is also relevant here. The exclusion of the majority of the Lebanese from the political system has created a situation where the interests of most people have been neglected and were only a few have benefited from the system.

5.2. **Hezbollah’s role**

5.2.1. **Hezbollah in political competition**

An interesting question is how Hezbollah has acted in relation to the clientalist networks, and how it has tried to find the best strategy to obtain political power. The Lebanese political system is based on geographical areas, and the number of seats in parliament is granted the different sectarian groups in accordance with their size (Harik, 1998:160). Hezbollah has mainly competed for power in geographical areas with a majority of Shiite citizens. Political competition has therefore mainly been an intra-group activity, where Hezbollah has competed against other Shiite political parties and candidates for power (1998:160).
Hamzeh argues that Hezbollah’s influence is based on a strategy of pragmatism. The pragmatist strategy has been used in local as well as in parliamentary elections (Hamzeh, 2004:124). The strategy can be illustrated by the way the party competes in elections. Here Hezbollah has often used three different electoral lists. The first electoral list has only been for party members, and the second for party members and candidates from other constellations considered as loyal. The third has consisted of party members and candidates from other political parties. In local elections the party has therefore been in coalitions with candidates from the Democratic Socialist Party and the Communist Party, as well as candidates from other sectarian groups (2004:126). This practice has also been present in parliamentary elections, as for example in 1992 when four out of twelve deputies elected were not Shiite (Harik, 1996:42, Norton, 1998).

These observations are significant. First, they demonstrate that the party has followed the rules both of the parliamentary system and confessionalism. Secondly, they illustrate that the party has been willing to go into coalitions with parties with other ideological platforms, as well as with members from other sectarian groups. The party has also taken the challenges of the cross-sectarian participation seriously. In relation to the party’s cross-sectarian participation Hezbollah has, according to Hamzeh, constantly called for a dialogue with the Christians to find the shared values and common ground between the two religious groups (1993:324).

We can, however, observe that Hezbollah has taken advantage of the clientalist system in elections, something that does not count as positive in relation to Freedom House’s statement. The party has used the open electoral lists to include specifically influential clan-members (1993:331-32). This has increased Hezbollah’s chances to win votes because the inclusion of a powerful clan-member has provided clan-votes for all candidates on the electoral list. Nevertheless, this has not been the customary way for Hezbollah to obtain political influence. The main pattern has been the use of different electoral lists, which shows that Hezbollah has been willing to go into coalitions with
candidates from other sectarian groups. The party has therefore been flexible in crossing party and religious lines.

5.2.2. Hezbollah: Recruitment and membership

According to the assessment of Freedom House Lebanon is not democratic because the political system is based on an exclusion of the participation of large parts of the population. This is to a large extent a result of the clientalist system. At this point Hezbollah’s practice has been different. This can be seen in the way the party has recruited its members. Hezbollah consisted of over 200 000 members in 2004, where most were Shiite Muslims (Hamzeh, 2004:74). Recruitment to Hezbollah has depended on the religion of the potential member. He/she has to be a Muslim but not necessarily a Shiite (Saad-Ghorayeb, 2004:45). Hezbollah is therefore working within the boundaries of the confessional system. In practice the party has been tied to the Shiite group and therefore to the confessional system, but in theory (according to Hezbollah’s own ideology) it is a religious party based on the Muslim community as a whole.

The most common way to become a Hezbollah-member has been through a programme offered by the recruitment section (Saad-Ghorayeb, 2004:74). Nevertheless, personal skills that are important for the party can in some instances count as qualification for membership as well. Medical doctors, engineers, university professors and students specialized in computer or media science have been recruited on the basis of such skills. These members have not followed the recruitment programme, but have been recommended by the party’s clerics. The members of Hezbollah have therefore been a mixture of poor peasants, educated urban citizens, businessmen, and people from the part of the society referred to as the middle class (2004:76). Accordingly, Hezbollah has members from all fractions of the Shiite community.

It must also be added that members have the possibility of advancing within the party and getting elected to parliament. It is only the three kinds of highest positions that are reserved for religiously educated members, namely
the secretary general, the deputy secretary general, and membership in the Shura Council.\textsuperscript{23} Hezbollah recruits members to parliament regardless of their position in society.

Hezbollah’s recruitment practices give people an opportunity to participate, independent of family belonging and personal ties. Ordinary people have the opportunity to advance within the party system and get elected to parliament. Thus Hezbollah actually provides citizens with an opportunity to vote for candidates that are independent of the government. However, the recruitment practices exclude non-Muslims from participation through Hezbollah.

5.2.3. Grass-root politics

The clientalist system has resulted in political decisions being made by only a small elite. This excludes large parts of the population. Hezbollah has been a party based on grass-root support, showing engagement on behalf of the citizens. This will be illustrated in the discussion of the party’s welfare engagement. However, the grass-root support and agenda are evident also in Hezbollah’s activity in relation to political institutions, both local and central.

In parliament Hezbollah has represented the interests of the poorer parts of the population. The party has exerted considerable pressure on the behalf of the poor, both on the politicians in parliament, and directly on the former Prime Minister Hariri. The party voted against the budget in 1992, 1996 and 2000, because it did not, in their view, benefit people with low income. Hezbollah’s parliamentary representatives have often accused the cabinet and other parliamentary members for running Lebanon more as a business than as a country with people with needs (Hamzeh, 2004:121).\textsuperscript{24}

The programmes from parliamentary elections show that the focus on matters connected to an Islamic state and other religious content have been

\textsuperscript{23} At the moment, however, there is one member in the party’s Shura council, who is not religiously educated (Hamzeh, 2004:45)

\textsuperscript{24} Hezbollah has, in parliament, had its focus on agriculture and industry (Hamzeh, 2004: 121)
replaced by a detailed agenda concerning education, health and economy. In local elections we observe the same tendency (2004:123). In the programme of action from the local election in 1998, the agenda contains important issues such as healthcare, education, development projects and improvement of infrastructure (2004:123-24).

As emphasised above a party programme cannot alone be the basis for conclusions. However, the party’s political programme corresponds with the party’s broader social engagement. The party programmes correspond with what the party actually does. On the basis of the party’s actions and its political agenda it is possible to argue that Hezbollah is a party that represents the interests of the many and not the few. Even though Hezbollah has, to a certain extent, participated in the clientalist game, it is obvious that this has not blurred its social agenda.

Hezbollah can therefore be seen as a party that has counteracted the elite character of the Lebanese system. It can therefore be perceived as a grass-root party because most of its voters are ordinary people without advantageous family belonging or personal ties, and because it has an agenda, which corresponds with these people’s interests.

5.2.4. Open criticism of family politics

Hezbollah has been a party that has taken the responsibility of being in opposition seriously. This is of course a strategic move by the party, because it corresponds with their image as being a party representing the grass-root level of society. As a party in opposition Hezbollah has exerted strong public criticism. The party has repeatedly criticized the political elite both in parliament, and in the public sphere.

The episode before the local election in 1998 serves as a good example. A new law was passed by the parliament a few days before the election. The law made changes in the size and amount of electoral districts. This would increase the chances of success for specific candidates to assure that the local councils remained loyal to the central government (Harik, 2004 and Keesing,
It also decreased the chances of other candidates’ chances of being elected. This change of law was an example of how the government often manipulated the electoral system to promote certain candidates. Hezbollah formed part of the opposition, affected by this law and this issue therefore became one of the party’s main campaign issues. Nashrallah’s choice of words when criticizing the law is interesting. In a speech in Balbek he stated that the changing of the law resembled “the old kind of feudal politics dressed up in modern clothes” (Harik, 2004: 99). Nashrallah received extensive public attention and the incidence also became one of the main headlines in many Lebanese newspapers and television programmes.

The extensive attention Nashrallah attracted illustrates the strength the party has as an opposition. It also shows how the party’s ideology overlaps with democratic principles.
6. Hezbollah in the geopolitical context

The Lebanese people have been under domination of unelected forces (Freedom House, 2004).

One issue that Freedom House emphasises in their country report on Lebanon is the fact that Lebanon has been under the domination of Syria. This has constituted a democratic problem because it means that the Lebanese have been under domination of a force that has not been democratically elected. In order to assess Hezbollah’s role in relation to the obstacle quoted above, several issues must be discussed. First, the nature of Syrian influence and the public’s opinion of this issue must be elaborated upon. Furthermore, the relation between Syria and Hezbollah and, as well as the relation between Hezbollah and the Lebanese people with regard to the party’s relation to Syria must be discussed. Hezbollah has been conceived as a pro-Syrian actor. The aim is to see whether this has been a problem for democratisation.

6.1. Syria and Lebanon

The Syrian influence was a result of Syria’s invasion in the civil war in 1976. Thus, its power was manifested in the Taif Accord signed in 1989, with the text: “the Syrian forces present in Lebanon will terminate their security role within two years at the most. The time during which the Syrian forces will remain in these regions will be specified in the agreement which will be established between the Lebanese and Syrian governments” (Taif Accord, 1989). The Syrian role became far more extensive than simply that of maintaining peace. The political influence has ensured that no agreement has been reached during the period of time discussed in this thesis.

Syria’s influence has four main aspects: firstly, there has been Syrian soldiers present in Lebanon (14 000 troops in 2004), secondly, secret service agents have operated in the country, third, there is a large amount of Syrian

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25 There were 30 000 troops in Lebanon during the 1980s (BBC news, Internet edition)
workers employed in Lebanon, and Lebanon has functioned as a free place for Syrian entrepreneurs, and finally, the Syrian government has directly pressured the Lebanese government to secure a pro-Syrian regime (Harik, 2004, Hudson, 1999).

Syria entered the war in 1976 under the slogan “Lebanon is a part of Syria” (Harik, 2004). Harik argues that Syria’s main interest was to regain lost territory, mainly the Golan Heights, by fighting Israel, which had controlled the area since the Six-Day war in 1967. The same interests explain the continued Syrian influence after the Taif Accord. The economy has, however, also been an important factor. There is no doubt that Lebanon’s quite open economy has been highly profitable for Syria. Accordingly, increasing economic interests have followed the territorial and geopolitical motivations for dominating Lebanon.

It must be added that large parts of the population have not seen this as an occupation, or Syria as a foreign power. There are therefore many nuances to this debate. Syria has also been seen as the state that secured the peace after the signing of the Taif Accord. Furthermore, the two neighbouring states have a lot in common both historically, geographically (common borders and shared rivers and mountains), economically and culturally.

6.2. The Syrian presence: Only a matter of democratic principles?
An interesting question is whether the Syrian-Lebanese relation only can be assessed on the basis of democratic principles. I will argue that this issue is also related to historical alliances. There are disagreements between the religious sects regarding which actors that represent the allies for Lebanon. The development after Hariri’s death in February illustrates this.

It is interesting to observe the international press’ version, and the argumentation by western state leaders concerning the Syrian presence in Lebanon. Here, Syrian presence has to a large extent been viewed as a factor
influencing Lebanese domestic politics, and accordingly as a democratic problem. As in the statement by Freedom House this has simply been seen as a matter of illegitimate influence held by a foreign power. However, if the Syrian influence is seen in relation to Lebanon’s historical development, the Syrian presence can also be regarded as a question of foreign politics and as a choice of alliances.

Historically the question of whether Lebanon’s diplomatic relations should be tied to the west or to the Arab world has been a disputed issue. In the National Pact of 1943, it was agreed that there should be no ties to either side. Nevertheless, the alliance-question caused problems already in the 1950s and 60s. It resulted in a verbal clash between the pro-western conservatives, constituted by mainly Christians, and the supporters of the Nasserist wave, represented by the Muslims (Hudson, 1976). On the one hand this was a pure foreign political question, on the other it was connected to cultural values, and to the question about the formation of the future Lebanese state.

I will argue that these aspects are still present in the Lebanese political discourse in 2005. The anti-Syrian opposition is arguing for Syrian withdrawal on the grounds of both democratic and nationalist principles. For Hezbollah, which is a part of the pro-Syrian constellation this is a question of foreign alliances to secure stability in post-war Lebanon. At the core of the disagreement is the question of what will happen when Syrian withdraws, and what direction Lebanon will take. Nashrallah has declared that the time is ripe for Syrian withdrawal from Lebanon, but that this has to be done in a way that does not jeopardize peace. Nevertheless, he also emphasized that withdrawal is not a green light for other powers to step into Syria’s shoes: “Sovereignty and freedom mean to be masters of our own destiny. We are ready to unite with the opposition in the fight for true freedom and independence. If sovereignty means anything at all, then it means independence from the United States and Israel as much as it means independence from Syria” (Daily Star, March 7th 2005, Beirut). Accordingly, Nashrallah sees this as a foreign political question as well as a domestic one. Syrian presence is therefore tied to opinions concerning how
Lebanon should develop. It is therefore a question about Lebanon’s future. The recent political discourse in Lebanon can accordingly be related to old disputed questions, and be seen as both a democratic problem as well as a difficult foreign political question.

6.3. Hezbollah’s role

6.3.1. Syria and Hezbollah

Syria has from the establishment of Hezbollah supported the party economically and to a certain extent politically. Nevertheless, Syria has not wanted Hezbollah to be too strong politically (Saouli, 2003:77). Accordingly, their support has mainly been channelled to Hezbollah’s military wing, in terms of weapons and financial support, with the aim of strengthening the party’s military capabilities.

After the Taif Accord Hezbollah’s focus was on the areas in the south of Lebanon, which had been occupied by Israel since the country’s invasion of Lebanon in 1982. After the Israeli withdrawal from Israel’s ‘security zone’ in 2000, Hezbollah’s warfare has continued but has been limited to the Sheeba farms. The warfare has to a large extent been coordinated by Syria, and Hezbollah has been dependent on Syria to finance the warfare (Norton, 1998)

6.3.2. The Lebanese state and Hezbollah

The question of why Hezbollah has been allowed to keep its resistance role is an interesting one. It is quite clear that Syria and Lebanon have common interests in relation to Israel. It has not been the Lebanese government’s interests to fight Israel itself because of the country’s historical past. Accordingly, an arrangement between the Syrian and the Lebanese governments was the basis for Hezbollah’s continued warfare. Hezbollah was therefore the only military movement that was not disarmed in 1990 (Gresh & Vidal, 2004:298).
Several tacit rules were implemented. These can be seen in relation to
the observations referred to above, regarding Syria’s interest in keeping
Hezbollah, particularly its military wing, relatively strong. This was certainly
in agreement with Lebanon’s own state interests. According to Harik the rules
implemented were the following: 1) Hezbollah had to limit their armed
resistance to the occupied “Security Zone” in the south, and 2) both the
Lebanese and Syrian government were allowed to use Hezbollah as long as the
military unit’s actions were in accordance with their interests, which were to
weaken Israel (2004:116). According to Hamzeh Hezbollah’s entrance into the
parliament in 1992 has given Hezbollah a foothold in the Lebanese system, and
it has legitimised as well as protected its role as a resistance movement
(Hamzeh, 2004:121). Hezbollah’s role as a resistance movement is accordingly
a result of an arrangement between the two states, as well as of the movement’s
own wish to continue the fighting.

6.3.3. Hezbollah’s relation to Syria: keeping the balance

The relation to Syria has constituted a political dilemma for the party. One the
one hand, Hezbollah has used the warfare against Israel actively in its political
argumentation. On the other hand, the party has been careful not to stretch this
too far. It has, however, gone quite far in using the issue in slogans during
election campaigns, as exemplified by the slogan from the 1996 election “they
resist with their blood, resist with your vote” (Norton, 1999:24). As such the
warfare has, as emphasised earlier, been legitimised in both religious and
political terms. With regard to the latter case the party has emphasised that it
has been engaged in a national battle against a common enemy.

The nationalist motivation for their warfare has granted Hezbollah
national recognition, and has increased the party’s legitimacy politically despite
its religious and sectarian platform (1999:24). Although the resistance has
resulted in a broad, both tacit and explicit support, the dependence on Syria in
this matter has created limitations. The recent development in Lebanon is not a
new phenomenon. Anti-Syrian protest and critique of Hezbollah has been a
recurring scenario since the end of the war. For example, Syrian domination was one of the reasons for the Christian boycott of the election in 1992. Some parts of the population have regarded Hezbollah’s ties to Syria as an evil good, other parts have not agreed in this evaluation.

Nashrallah’s statement above illustrates Hezbollah’s relation to Syria. The party does not support the Syrian presence at any price. This fact was evident already during the war when the Syrian army and Hezbollah soldiers clashed in Beirut in 1987 (Saouli, 2003:73). Hezbollah has also often criticized Syria openly for being a part of the corruption-network in Lebanon (Gambill & Abdelnour, 2002). This message has been spelled out so bluntly that it would probably not have been accepted in Syrian public discourse. As Hudson argues, there is not a neat overlap between Hezbollah’s and Syrian interests.

Hezbollah’s relation to Syria has been a matter of balancing public opinion, while the Syrian relations to Hezbollah have been a matter of balancing the latter’s strength. First, Syria does not want a politically too strong Hezbollah, because the party is not as loyal as other actors in Lebanese politics (Saouli, 2003:77, Norton, 1999:23). For instance, Shiite Amal is seen as a political party with closer ties to Syria, a relationship that probably resulted in the election of the party’s leader, Berri, as speaker of parliament in 1992. Secondly, secular Syria has not supported Hezbollah’s ideological platform in the same way as Iran. Syria’s interests have therefore been of a different kind than those of Iran. Thirdly, it is evident that a Hezbollah that becomes too strong in the military sense will not serve Syria’s interests. A strong Hezbollah might act quickly on its own, which in turn can lead Syria to direct confrontations with Israel. In this respect Hezbollah’s warfare against Israel can be seen as a proxy war fought on Syrian premises. While Syria and Israel is fighting a cold war, the Hezbollah warfare can be seen as a small flame, which must be kept in check.

The question that must be raised in relation to democratic principles is whether Hezbollah’s relation to Syria has been an obstacle for democratic

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26 Another reason for the boycott was to protest against the decrease of the Maronite power compared with the pre-war constitution (Harik, 1998:163).
development. Has Hezbollah kept one enemy out, by inviting another in through the back door?

6.3.4. Syrian-Hezbollah relations versus democratic principles

The Hezbollah-Syrian relationship according to democratic principles is a complex issue. In the discussion above it became evident that Syrian influence is regarded as a matter of democratic principles by parts of the Lebanese population, while others approach the issue from a wider perspective. The complexity can also be illustrated when the relationship is discussed in relation to the principle of sovereignty. A prerequisite for democratic development is sovereignty, which is also the reason why this variable is included in Freedom House’s measurement. Furthermore, Hezbollah’s warfare becomes problematic in relation to Weber’s definition of ‘state’ as having monopoly of the use of force, because Hezbollah is still armed and not a part of the national military force (Weber, 1947, Simon & Stevenson, 2001:33). The Syrian influence has been the reason for the categorization of Lebanon as a weak state (Rotberg, 2004:4).

Hezbollah’s role can be seen as twofold. On the one hand the party has fought a battle against an occupying power, which ended in partial withdrawal in 2000, when Israel surprisingly retreated from the security zone in the south. Hezbollah’s fighting for the Sheeba farms is a continuance of this battle, even though the extent of the warfare has diminished. On the other hand Hezbollah has had a relation to another force that puts Lebanon’s sovereignty into question. The issue of Syrian presence and influence in relation to Hezbollah is therefore, in my view, a matter of assessing what type of influence is the worst, Israeli or Syrian influence.

With regard to Freedom House’s obstacle I would argue that Hezbollah has not been responsible for the fact that the Lebanese population has been under domination of unelected forces. First, the party has received public support and respect for its warfare against Israel, which can be seen as a public legitimation. This has to some extent been independent of sectarian
belonging. Secondly, Syrian presence has basically been an arrangement between the Lebanese and the Syrian governments. Accordingly, Hezbollah can be regarded as an actor that has found itself in the middle of a political game based on the region’s need for geopolitical balance.

Further, Hezbollah’s political support from Syria has only been indirect in contrast to Syrian support to Amal. This party has had stronger ties with the Syrian government and has gained politically in getting access to important posts (Hamzeh, 2004). Accordingly, Hezbollah is a party that has received economic support to continue its warfare against a common enemy for both Hezbollah and Syria. The economic support has been directed toward the warfare and not toward political activity in the sense that it has influenced election results. Therefore, I would argue that Hezbollah has only gained indirect political advantages as a result of its relation to Syria.

During the time period in question I would not regard Hezbollah as an obstacle to democratisation, because the party has not been responsible for the Syrian influence and the relation has not given it direct political advantages.

One note has to be made in relation to this conclusion. The functioning of Hezbollah as an armed force can be explained by the geopolitical situation in the region and the relation between the Lebanese and the Syrian governments. Nevertheless, in the context of a possible future consolidation of a Lebanese democracy, it is obvious that Hezbollah cannot continue its role as a warring actor.

27 CNN reported on April 26th 2005 that 60% of the Lebanese population, independent of sectarian belonging, admired Hezbollah for their warfare against Israel, and supported their continued fight after the Israeli withdrawal from the south of the country.
7. Hezbollah’s welfare politics

The Lebanese government shows a large degree of governmental indifference and Lebanon has a high level of corruption (Freedom House, 2004)

7.1. Inequalities in Lebanon

During the period from 1989 to 2004, there is little correspondence between the written laws and the practice of the laws that should provide equal opportunities for the Lebanese population. This has resulted in large parts of the population living under the poverty line. Inequalities are found within all groups in Lebanon. Nevertheless, Shiite areas such as Bekaa, the Shiite suburbs of Beirut and areas in the south of the country have in particular been victims of governmental indifference (Harik, 2004:83). To a certain extent the inequality of the citizens of Lebanon has therefore followed sectarian lines. This is evident during the time-period discussed in this thesis, but it is also rooted in Lebanon’s history and was one of the causes for the civil war. Norton argues that the rapid socio-economic changes during the 1950-60s resulted in new challenges for the ruling elite. This resulted in an admittance of the need for new reforms related to social security, civil service reform, agricultural development and planning. The bad conductance of these reforms resulted in increased dissatisfaction within the Shiite community, mainly because it left the situation of extensive inequality unchanged (Hudson, 1976). Despite the changes in the political structure after the Taif accord’s ratification, the government’s willingness and ability to meet the needs and the demands of the population did not change (Young, 1998). More than one quarter of the population lived under the poverty line in 1997 (Perthes, 1997:17). The indifference of the government has created a situation where whole geographical areas have been neglected with respect to welfare facilities, such as water supplies, electricity the and rebuilding of homes after the war. The government has neither provided these areas with proper educational institutions or health facilities. The inequality among the population is also caused by the tax system. According to Perthes, the government favours the
wealthier part of the population because it operates with a flat ten percent tax, which has been seen as deeply unfair by the poorer parts of the population (1998:17). In the following the focus will be on how the post-war government has handled, or more precisely not handled, the situation of large inequalities in the country.

7.1.1. Post-war reconstruction: ignoring the poor

The first example concerns the reconstruction programme, which had as its aim to rebuild Lebanon’s infrastructure, economy, and reputation, and to improve the everyday-situation for ordinary people (Young, 1998). Former Prime Minister Hariri governed the programme, with the name “Horizon 2000”, which was a ten-year plan divided into two stages. The programme’s first stage was to restore the country’s war damaged infrastructure. The second stage was supposed to improve the education system, as well as the health care system, and stimulate the growth of agricultural production and industry. The problems were visible already in the middle of the 1990s when it became evident that it would be impossible to reach the second stage (1998:5). The part of the programme aimed at improving the everyday situation of the people, was not implemented (1998:5). An increased economic crisis made it legitimate to focus on stabilizing the marked and the Lebanese pound and to reintroduce the laissez-faire economy.28 Even if Hariri’s aim was to establish Lebanon as a centre for regional business and finance, his pictured tax-paradise struggled with both domestic and foreign debt. In 1997 40% of the budget was used to pay debt (Perthes, 1997:17). There has been a slow growth as a result of foreign investments and building activity in Beirut. Nevertheless, this has not increased the size of the budgets aimed at the social sector of the country (1997:17).

28 Lebanon has traditionally had a liberal and open economy compared to other states in the region.
7.1.2. Corruption in Lebanon

Young argues that it is a misconception that the economy has been genuinely free, and describes it instead as “oligopolistic” (1998:6). This concept refers to how major industries and the entire economic sector are controlled by leading political personalities. This problem has long historical roots in Lebanon, where one elite has been replacing another (1998:5). Young calls attention to the complaint often voiced by Hariri, namely that the Lebanese system has prevented him from introducing reforms. He had forgotten, however, that he himself had been the architect of this system. He has also been the one who benefited the most from it (Young, 1998:6). The former Prime Minister was a key figure in the corrupt economic system in Lebanon according to Young.

Corruption must be seen in relation to the political system and the economic structure of Lebanon. The reconstruction programme and the system of candidate election, discussed above, have heavily influenced the economic system. Accordingly, this section of my thesis is an elaboration of both the previous section concerning the reconstruction programme and the section dealing with the political system and the election of candidates. In the following the focus will be on corruption, with a particular focus on economic corruption.

According to Freedom House, Lebanon is the most corrupt country in the Middle East (Freedom House, 2004). The level of corruption is seen as one of the most negative indicators responsible for the high score of 5 on civil rights issues (Freedom House, 2005). This high level of corruption can be traced back to the situation before the civil war. It can also been seen as one of the causes of the war (Hudson, 1976:115). Corruption and its consequences for the Shiite population resulted in the formation of grass root organizations, firstly Amal and later Hezbollah (Harik, 2004:21).

The roots of corruption can also be traced back to the clientalist system. There are, however, other additional factors that have contributed to sustaining the high level of corruption. In particular, the reconstruction programme after the war has had a negative effect. It provided only a small fraction of the
society with increased possibilities and welfare benefits. Through this programme the pre-war corruption continued and increased (Young, 1998:5-6).

During the period of the reconstruction programme former Prime Minister Hariri mixed his roles by being both a politician and a businessman. The aim of the programme was to reconstruct Lebanon’s infrastructure. It was therefore important to attract investments. Nevertheless, it turned into a project, which favoured certain actors, and excluded others. This can be illustrated in several ways. The persons heading the Council for Development and Reconstruction were engineers selected by Hariri, from his own contracting company, Ogar Liban (Harik, 2004: 100). Accordingly, these close ties secured Hariri’s own company large contracts. I regard this as an example of how a political leader can misuse his political position to secure beneficial economic deals. Furthermore, the director of the Lebanese central bank was a friend of Hariri. This resulted in interferences in the marked, which again served the interests of Hariri (Young, 1998:5). This can be seen as a manipulation of the role of the Central bank, which should stabilize the marked and secure fair play. Hariri has not only taken advantage of his position as a politician to improve his role as a businessman, he has also used his role as a businessman to strengthen his political position. He used his network in business to increase the chances of winning the election (Harik, 2004:100 and Young, 1998).

A further example is how contracts were given to people belonging to the political elite. Senior officials in the reconstruction programme have admitted that contracts for the southern part of Lebanon’s motorway were given to the construction firm owned by Randa Berri, the wife of the Shiite speaker of parliament, Nabih Berri. The contract was considerably overpriced, with at least a three-digit dollar sum (Perthes, 1997:17).

These examples demonstrate how the economic and political elites have been misusing their roles to secure their positions. Their roles in the economic sector have secured their political positions, and vice versa. Corruption has therefore had many sides, creating obstacles for a democratic development. It has prevented fair competition in both political and economic life, as well as
sustaining the traditional unequal distribution of benefits. The consequence has been poverty for large parts of the population.

7.2. Hezbollah’s role

7.2.1. The welfare programme

Norton argues that Hezbollah has managed to build an extremely impressive social base in Lebanon. He also sees the party as the most effective political party in relation to welfare issues (Norton, 1998). Its role as a provider of basic social needs started during the war, but increased after the Taif agreement was signed. With regard to healthcare Hezbollah runs 6 hospitals, 21 dispensaries, 12 mobile dispensaries, and 10 dental clinics, mainly located in Shiite areas (Hamzeh, 2004:54). Both Christian and Muslim doctors are employed. The standard of the hospitals are high and supply medical treatment in large areas where healthcare is not provided by the government. In addition, Hezbollah has provided former combatants and their families with houses and medical care.

Hezbollah also runs both primary and secondary schools, as well as providing cheap books for children from poor families. From 1990 to 2001 they granted scholarships for higher education to more than 11 000 young Lebanese. Hezbollah’s Education Unit spent over US$ 14 000000 on financial aid and scholarships between 1996 and 2001. According to Hamzeh the Lebanese government has invested less in educational institutions in Shiite areas than Hezbollah (2004:55).

Hezbollah’s reconstruction unit did renovation work on Hezbollah’s institutions, and private homes in poor areas. Between 1988 and 2002 the party’s Holy struggle Construction Foundation, Jihad al-Bina rebuilt or renovated 9640 homes, and according to the UN, Jihad al-Bina’ has been one

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29 Hezbollah’s welfare programme is described in details by Harik, 2004, Chapter 6 and by Hamzeh, 2004, Chapter 4
30 The schools teach the national curriculum, but also religious studies. The latter constitutes a considerable part of the school day.
of the best equipped engineer-units in the region (Hamzeh, 2004:49)\textsuperscript{31} Hezbollah has also been responsible for providing pure drinking water to villages and suburbs without proper water supply. In many areas, Hezbollah has also been responsible for the garbage collection (Harik, 2004:85).

In rural areas the party runs agricultural centre cooperatives. In addition, Hezbollah has provided loans to farmers. These loans are to be paid back without interests, in accordance with the Koran. The aim of the loans has been to help farmers manage bad harvest seasons or invest in new equipment. In 2004 the loaning system covered 190 villages in the Bekaa and was followed up by Jihad al-Bina (Harik, 2004: 88). The agricultural centres have also provided technical assistance, for instance in the south where Hezbollah provided these services to 115 villages in 1999. Hezbollah’s welfare work has been financed though contributions from private persons and Iran.

The focus of the welfare programme has been those areas ignored by the government. Citizens, who have been victims of governmental indifference, have been provided with health facilities, educational institutions, economic help and assistance to rebuild their homes after the war.

7.2.2. Explicit critique on the behalf of the poor

As was emphasised in the section concerning the Lebanese political system and Hezbollah’s role in parliamentary and local politics, the party has exerted pressure on the behalf of the poorer part of the population. This has been twofold. First, the party has itself exerted pressure by criticizing the government. Secondly, the party has made the citizens themselves protest. This can be illustrated through several examples. In 1991 the party encouraged the population to establish organizations in the suburbs of Beirut. The aim was to put pressure on the government in order to improve the water-supply (Harik, 2004:89). These areas had no proper water system because of the heavy

\textsuperscript{31} Hamzeh and Harik are referring to the United Nation Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia’s reports, from 1999
fighting during the war. The only water available was the 4000-litre water reservoirs, which was provided by Hezbollah.\textsuperscript{32}

A second example is the “revolution of the hungry” organized by the former secretary al-Tufayli in 1997. This campaign gathered 10 000 people in Balbek, and threatened the government that they would march all the way to Beirut. The citizens protested against the inequalities in the country. They demanded proper water supply and electricity. Another important issue was the unfair tax system (Keesing, 1997). The rally ended in a governmental promise to invest US98 million in development projects in the area.\textsuperscript{33} The “revolution of the hungry” attracted support from other sectarian groups, as well as from several trade unions (1997).

First, this underlines how significant the words of Hezbollah are in Lebanese public discourse. The fact that the government made a concession during the demonstration shows that Hezbollah has the ability to exert heavy pressure on the government. Secondly, it illustrates that Hezbollah’s agenda in these instances has been concurrent with democratic principles. It demonstrates that the principle of equality has been important in Hezbollah’s activity.

7.2.3. Hezbollah’s anti-corruption engagement

The issue of corruption has been high on Hezbollah’s agenda since the establishment of the party. This has been directed against the political elite and the economic elite (which are entangled) and Syria (Gambill & Abdelnour, 2002). The anti-corruption activities have taken on many forms. Corruption has been one of the main issues in the election campaigns. This was for example reflected in the party programme in 1996. The focus on the issue of corruption has increased concurrently with the Lebanonization of the party. This process resulted in less focus on Israel and regional issues and more on issues in the Lebanese society. In the analysis of Hezbollah’s ideology we saw that its

\textsuperscript{32} Hezbollah runs its own Center for Developmental Studies, which among several tasks, carries out surveys regarding the water problems in these areas.

\textsuperscript{33} I have not been able to find any information either disapproving or confirming whether this promise was carried out.
religion focus has diminished. Instead, corruption has gained increased attention (Norton, 2000:34).

Hezbollah has also drawn attention to corruption by criticizing the political elite in the media. One illustration is Hezbollah MP Mohammed Raad’s explicit message in August 2004: “The phenomenon of corruption has crossed its limits more than any other period before…We want to create a popular atmosphere against corruption and any coming government should consider this issue a priority” (Raad in interview, As Safir newspaper, August 10th 2004). The example mentioned in the section about the election fraud is also relevant here. If we distinguish between political and economic corruption, Hezbollah has on the one hand criticized the political elite for being corrupt in relation to the reconstruction programme and their general unwillingness to provide large fractions of the population with basic welfare facilities. On the other hand they have criticized the government for being involved in political corruption for changing laws to secure the position of the political elite (Hamzeh, 2004 and Harik, 1998).

The party’s anti-corruption agenda is in line with its general grass-root politics. This political agenda and the engagement to create a more equal system of distribution of benefits are concurrent with democratic principles. In relation to this the party has criticized both Syria and its own government. This can, as was mentioned in the previous section, be seen in relation to the fact that Syria does not see Hezbollah as a totally trustworthy ally, especially not in the political field. It also illustrates how headstrong Hezbollah has been as a political party.
8. Is Hezbollah a democratising actor?

The empirical findings in the three previous chapters make it possible to conclude that Hezbollah has contributed to the democratisation process in Lebanon. Despite the fact that Hezbollah is conceived as an actor that has been responsible for Syrian influence, the party cannot be placed at the core of Lebanon’s democratic problem with regard to this democratic obstacle.

The aim of this last chapter is to summarize Hezbollah’s role as a democratising actor in Lebanon. In this summary the six criteria reached in the analytical framework will be applied.

8.1. **Increased fair competition**

I would argue that Hezbollah has not contributed to increasing the level of fair competition in Lebanon directly. This means that the party has not caused changes in the political structure. The party has also participated in unfair competition. This was illustrated by the example of how the party has tried to make clan-leaders participate on their electoral list to attract voters. Despite these observations I would argue that the party has mainly played by the rules of parliamentary participation. This was exemplified by the fact that the party has generally been independent of clientalist networks. As such they are a good example of how to obtain political power without using un-democratic procedures.

8.2. **Increased participation**

The empirical examples show that Hezbollah has contributed to increased participation. This argument is mainly based on Hezbollah’s recruitment practices. Even though the candidate has to be a Muslim, the party has given candidates who would otherwise not have the opportunity to participate a chance to be included in the political system. This opportunity has been given independent of the citizen’s family belonging and personal network. It is also
important to notice that social status has not been decisive for advancement within the party. Accordingly, ordinary people can climb within the party system and become candidates both in local and parliamentary elections.

Hezbollah has also given people the possibility to participate through providing education. The inequalities in Lebanon have lead to a situation where the government has not provided educational facilities to the children in many areas. Hezbollah has given citizens from these areas scholarships leading to higher education. Hudson argued that Hezbollah’s welfare organization is functioning well, schools are built, kept in repair and ran by Hezbollah. The schooling facilities have therefore not been provisional, but permanent institutions, giving Shiite children an education since the civil war. Based on the argument that basic enlightenment is necessary for citizens to participate in political life, I would argue that Hezbollah has at least provided the Shiites with a solid basis for achieving ‘enlightened understanding’. Through this effort the people in these areas have been given a better opportunity to participate on the same terms as other parts of the population.

8.3. Being in opposition and encouraging opposition

Even though the party has not contributed directly to changes in the conductance of electoral practices in Lebanon, the party has made it costly for the government to continue its corrupt practices. Dahl’s simple cost-benefit model explained the importance of a strong opposition, and this underlines the importance of Hezbollah.

Hezbollah is a party that has attracted extensive attention from the media. Accordingly, the party’s opinions have great impact on the Lebanese public discourse. In my view this is the most important aspect of Hezbollah’s role as a political opposition. In relation to the democratisation process this can be seen in two ways. First, the high level of attention can be seen as an indicator of the party’s strength and importance as an opposition. Secondly,
public attention toward bad governance will strengthen the party’s oppositional role in the long run.

Their role as an oppositional party has been illustrated by several examples. One was their reaction to the changing of the electoral law in the 1998 election. The party’s reaction can be explained by its own strategic concerns, because the law reduced Hezbollah’s chances of gaining votes. However, even if it was a strategic move, this does not undermine the fact that the party managed to make the government’s undemocratic behaviour widely known to the public. The party explicitly criticized the government for engaging in unfair competition and for excluding other candidates from participating.

Hezbollah has also been a strong oppositional party in relation to governmental corruption in the country. First, the party has, when in parliament, explicitly criticized the government for corruption. Secondly, the party has also made corruption a public matter by using the press to criticize the government.

Hezbollah has openly criticized Syria for being a part of the corrupted network engaged in the reconstruction programme. The criticism of one of its most important economic beneficiaries, illustrates how headstrong the party has been on the issue of corruption.

The party has also stimulated the population to protest against the unfair distribution of benefits. One example was when Hezbollah encouraged the people suburbs of Beirut to protest in 1991. The aim was to make the people organize themselves and express their interests and discontent with the lack of proper water supply. Another example was the ‘revolt of the hungry’ in 1997, which gathered over 10,000 people. This was a protest against the unfair tax-system and the unfair distribution of benefits. The demonstration exerted considerable pressure on the government and ended with a concession. This implied a promise by the government to spend around US$98 million on development projects in the Bekaa. This shows that it was more costly for the
government to ignore the demonstration than to make concessions and distribute more resources to this area.

8.4. Interests versus political discourse and decisions
Hezbollah has contributed to increasing the government’s responsiveness by decreasing the gap between the interest of the citizens and the political decisions. This tendency is present both in parliament and in local politics. This can be exemplified by reference to how Hezbollah voted against the budget in parliament. It can also be exemplified by Hezbollah’s role in districts where it has had a majority of the votes. The party has had a chance to fulfil its agenda on the behalf of a part of the population that has been ignored by the government. The grass-root agenda can of course be seen as a strategy to attract votes and obtain increased influence. However, this does not undermine the fact that the party is representing a spectre of the society, which interests have not been reflected in political decisions.

Making ordinary people’s interests a part of the political discourse was seen in relation to how this in the long run can contribute to including these interests in political decisions. In a democratisation process this was also seen as important because it prohibits political alienation. It is therefore a presupposition to increased participation.

I would argue that Hezbollah has contributed to increased responsiveness by decreasing the gap between the political discourse and the interests of the people. A consequence of the clientalist characteristics of the Lebanese political system has been a political discourse that has not reflected the interests of all citizens, but only a few. Hezbollah’s engagement, on the behalf of ignored citizens, has made their interests a part of the political discourse. One the one hand this can be illustrated by the structure of the party. The fact that the party consists of members from all fractions of the Shiite community illustrates that the party has an agenda for the many and not the few. On the other hand Hezbollah has also represented the interests of all the
Lebanese, and made these interests present in the political discourse. This can be exemplified by the party’s commitment to its anti-corruption agenda. The empirical examples illustrate how this has been one of the main issues of the party’s political agenda because of the excluding effect corruption has had on the population. By illuminating the elites’ excluding politics, Hezbollah has made the interests of the many a part of the political discourse.

8.5. Cross-sectarian participation and activity

One should not take cross-sectarian participation for granted. Even if there are inbuilt mechanisms in Lebanon’s political system that stimulate cross-sectarian participation, it is in the end a matter of the parties’ willingness to participate over sectarian boarders that determines the success of cross-sectarian participation.

Hezbollah has shown a willingness to go into political coalitions with parties with different ideologies, and with parties and members from other religious groups. Hezbollah has increasingly shown that this pragmatism is part of their political strategy. The party has consequently sacrificed ideological principles to obtain increased influence. Nevertheless, the cross-sectarian participation has not blurred the party’s grass-root agenda. The party has continuously taken the initiative to engage in dialogues with Christians in order to find common ground regarding political values.

Cross-sectarian activity can be seen as important because it is a prerequisite for cross-sectarian participation. Hezbollah has to a large extent contributed to stimulating cross-sectarian activity in Lebanon. This can be seen in welfare work and its role in opposition. The facilities that Hezbollah provides have not only been available to the Shiite population, despite the fact that the hospitals are placed in areas inhabited mainly by Shiites. The hospitals also have many Christian doctors.

Furthermore, Hezbollah has attracted citizens from other sectarian groups in demonstrations because these have agreed with Hezbollah’s main
argument. This was exemplified with the cross-sectarian participation in the Revolt of the Hungry in 1997. I would argue that this shows that Hezbollah is a party, which represents the grass-root level. The party also attracts general support and sympathy across sectarian borders. Hezbollah has enjoyed respect for its explicit and unconditional criticism of the government. Finally, it has attracted wide support due to its warfare against Israel.

8.6. Equalizing the distribution of benefits

The inequalities between the citizens in Lebanon can be explained in terms of little correspondence between the people’s interests and political decisions. However, extensive corruption can also be seen as an explanatory factor. The inequalities illustrate how the government has not been preoccupied by providing all citizens of Lebanon with benefits that are seen as prerequisites for participation and living a life of quality. For example, only a small part of the population has benefited from the reconstruction programme, which focus has mainly been on Beirut. Since contracts have been deliberately distributed to a handful of entrepreneurs, the return of the investments has also been in their favour. Freedom House states that Lebanon is the most corrupt country in the Middle East. This is a severe accusation since the level of corruption is generally high in the region.

Through its welfare programme, Hezbollah has provided basic welfare facilities such as the building of houses and hospitals and health stations. Hezbollah also runs the hospitals. The party has provided areas with water supply and electricity, and given loans to poor peasants for investments in equipment. Through its engagement the party has provided more equality in terms of welfare and quality of life. In this matter Hezbollah has contributed to an equalization, which can be seen as independent of the governmentally distribution of benefits. Accordingly, it has itself provided a considerable amount of welfare, which has been crucial for poor Shiite areas. Hezbollah has raised the quality of life for many people, as well as laying the foundation for
citizens to enjoy their civil liberties. The party has also laid the foundation for Shiite participation on equal terms with the other groups of society.

8.7. Concluding remarks

The starting point of this thesis was the question of whether Hezbollah has contributed to democratisation in Lebanon and subsequently whether it can be seen as a democratising actor. In the analytical framework the Lebanese democratic deficits were identified as well as the characteristics of a Lebanese democratising actor. This was done to a discussion of democratisation with reference to three levels: the general, regional and domestic. I then used a statistical measurement by Freedom House in order to identify the three main obstacles to democracy in Lebanon. The role of Hezbollah was therefore not discussed in general but rather in relation to the main obstacles to democratisation in Lebanon. Hezbollah was not abstracted from its own context but rather seen as an actor operating within a specific process. This fulfilled the aim of undertaking a contextual analysis as was stated in the introduction.

From this contextual analysis it became clear that Hezbollah has contributed to the democratisation process in Lebanon. In the final chapter the six criteria reached in the analytical framework, were applied to Hezbollah, which enabled a summary of Hezbollah as a democratising actor in Lebanon.

Hezbollah is an interesting example because of its pragmatism, its social engagement and its stubbornness. It is a party that has changed considerably since its establishment in 1982. From being a belligerent in a war with the aim of establishing an Islamic state it has become a vital Lebanese political party with many supporters, voters and sympathisers.

The discussion in this thesis underlines that democratisation in Lebanon is not only about Syrian withdrawal. It has also illustrated that democratisation is not only about democratic ideals but also about challenges posed by a specific historical and political context. The current situation in Lebanon has
perhaps created another chance for democratisation. If this development takes place, it will be interesting to see how pragmatic and flexible Hezbollah will be. It will also be interesting to see whether the party continues to be a democratising actor.
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