AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT

CORRUPTION AND WASTA IN LEBANON

by

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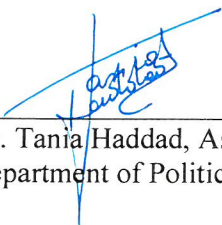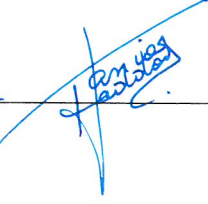of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences
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AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

Rita Bassil Bassil   for <u>Master of Arts</u>

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Title: <u>Corruption and Wasta in Lebanon</u>

   To most in Lebanon, whether private citizens, members of NGO's, the media, scholars, and even public officials, the presence and prevalence of corruption in general and *wasta* in particular is almost a given. This 'fact' of corruption and *wasta* having an almost normal and natural presence in Lebanon is hardly disputed; it is however one that seems to have received very little academic research and study. Despite the prevalence of discussions of this in the media, social media, and in very day life conversations, the subject matter has not received much study and research, and knowledge of its nature, causes, and impact remains limited to say the least.

   With an aim to improve our understanding or our knowledge about corruption and *wasta*, and the importance of their study, this thesis will address the following research questions: What is corruption in general? What overlaps could be identified between *wasta* and corruption? Is *wasta* in some an expression and manifestation of corruption? What are the possible causes and manifestations of corruption, and what are the different causes that propagate the culture of clientelism and *wasta*? What are the cost and impact (economic and otherwise) of corruption and *wasta* on the functioning of the public sector apparatus? What are the ethical considerations that need to be addressed? What factors and considerations could explain the continued prevalence of the use of *wasta* in Lebanon, as well as possible justifications for said prevalence?

   In the course of this thesis, these questions will be addressed through a literature review of scholarly works covering corruption, as well as those covering clientelism and *wasta*. They are also addressed through a series of interviews with both academics and members of various NGO's in Lebanon. The case studies in particular produced a number of findings: first, that *wasta* is viewed as somewhat distinct from the overall problem of corruption in Lebanon, though it is explicitly identified as being one manifestation of corruption; second, that corruption in its broader sense is considered by most interviewees as the more serious matter to address, whereas *wasta* was seen as less of a harmful issue in itself; and thirdly, that whereas no positive aspect could be attached to corruption in its broader sense, the exercise of *wasta* on the other hand was given such possible positive consideration. Finally, the study concludes that more research on this important subject matter is needed, whether in terms of studying the preponderance of clientelism and *wasta* in the Lebanese culture, the impact (whether positive or negative) of the practice particularly in the public sector, and possible measures that would address the clear and explicit manifestation of these forms of corruption.

CONTENTS

To Hani,

The one I love the most.

Without you, none of the greatest things in

my life would have ever happened.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Problem

The question of what constitutes corruption, its various manifestations, its impact and cost, and the possible measures to curtail it has been a more and more prevalent issue of discussion and legislation in the closing decades of the 20th century and through the opening years of the 21st century to date. In the 1990s, the issue of corruption, particularly in the developing world, came to be an interest of scholarly study as well as a concern for international organizations and legislation. This, for instance, is best seen in the preamble to the 2004 United Nations Convention Against Corruption where it states that "corruption is no longer a local matter but a transnational phenomenon that affects all societies and economies, making international cooperation to prevent and control it essential." Similarly, in their study entitled "Corruption in Developing Countries", Olken and Pande note that the onset of the 21st century bore witness to "a very significant increase in the international policy community's interest in corruption" (Olken and Pande, 2012, p.2). In that regard for instance, it is worth noting that The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, (OECD) Convention on Combating Bribery of Foreign Public Officials in International Business Transactions went into force on February 15, 1999, and to date has 43 signatory countries, and the above referenced United Nations Convention against Corruption (UN-CAC) went into force in December 2005, and to date has 140 signatories. It is here

also worth noting that Lebanon is not a signatory of OECD convention, though it did declare its accession to the UN-CAC in April 2009.

In connection to the discussion of corruption in general, the issue of the use of *wasta* in the Arab world and in Lebanon in particular may be broached and tackled as a possible expression or a facet of corruption. Loosely understood, *wasta* can be said to be the use (or abuse) of connections to acquire or attain certain good and services, job position, or to secure winning a project bid or government transaction. In some sense, it is the practice of calling in favors from influential figures to give undue advantage to someone in securing said desired ends. In this broad sense, *wasta* is generally regarded to be "widely practiced throughout the Arab world." (Barnett, Yandle, and Naufal 2013, p. 42), though it may not always be perceived as being negative or an aspect of corruption, as will be discussed in further sections of the thesis.

In an approach to the study of corruption, and to a discussion of clientelism and *wasta* within that context, one of the key obstacles faced is the general lack of studies and reliable data. This is a natural consequence of the fact that the activities that would fall under the heading of corruption are generally considered illegal. In this regard, Olken and Pande note that although "Anecdotal and survey evidence suggests that corruption is rampant in the developing world and more prevalent in developing countries than in rich ones […] there are remarkably few reliable estimates of the actual magnitude of corruption and those that exist reveal a high level of heterogeneity." (Olken and Pande 2012, p. 3) Indeed, most data is rooted in perception surveys, and that in itself can be considered a key limitation to a study of corruption in the public sector in the developing world. A researcher into various acts and manifestations of corruption, whether bribery or nepotism, or whether seeking to analyze *wasta* within the

context of the broader discussion on corruption, would have difficulty finding subjects involved in such acts as willing participants in any survey or study. Nonetheless, despite the limitations and perhaps precisely due to them, the issues of corruption in general, and its broad manifestations and possible overlaps with clientelism and *wasta*, remain ones in need of much study, and their causes and implications in need of analysis and review.

One of the key questions to consider in this regard is not only what corruption is but also why corruption is an aspect that should be eradicated from the public sector and the socio-political system. It may seem obvious that corruption is wrong, morally and legally, and the word itself is negatively loaded. Whether speaking of developing or developed countries, whether addressing high-level of corruption or petty corruption (concepts that will be addressed in detail further below in this study), the term itself has a negative connotation and evaluation. The term corruption itself is broadly understood as "the abuse of public office for private gain"[1], and is an act rooted in some manner of unethical mechanisms and immoral considerations that could occur at any time and place at different levels of governance.

Beyond the moral or ethical element, there is also the question of corruption's impact on efficiency and its cost to the public sector. That is to say, over and above the moral question, which some may suggest is a debatable one and open to various levels of discussion, there remains the more central and perhaps more tangible question of efficiency and impact: what is the cost (economic and otherwise) of corruption on the functioning of the public sector apparatus? One could imagine that there is no real cost to corruption, and could suggest that there is not much that is wrong with this

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[1] Preamble to the United Nations Convention Against Corruption, page 1. Retrieved from: https://www.unodc.org/pdf/crime/convention_corruption/signing/Convention-e.pdf

phenomenon. However, as one peruses the literature and international legislation on the issue of corruption, one finds that there is indeed a considerable cost to consider. In the foreword to the UN-CAC, the then Secretary General Kofi Annan, and labeling corruption as "an insidious plague", summarizes its impact in terms of undermining democratic institutions and the rule of law, leading to human rights violations, allowing organized crime and terrorism to flourish, distorting markets, discouraging investment, and stunting economic development. The Convention Against Corruption goes into some detail on the various forms and manifestations of corruption, as will be addressed in detail below; but Annan's statement covers any and all and forms of corruption, and their seemingly inevitable impact.

The exercise of *wasta*, save for a few scholarly works that discuss the subject matter, has not been addressed or analyzed in connection to corruption, as a facet or expression of corruption. Its prevalent use is not a matter of contention, nor indeed its being an almost normalized part of 'getting things done' in the Arab world in general and in Lebanon in particular. However, its overlap with a discussion on corruption has not been studied, and its possible impact and cost has not been highlighted. One could further add that defining *wasta*, its elements and manifestations, is itself not fully developed, and this is perhaps part of the reason why it has not been given scholarly attention. A preliminary definition of *wasta*, which will be attempted in further sections of this thesis, would allow us to approach it and analyze its exercise in the context of a discussion on corruption in general. This would help us to identify its various modes of employment, on a spectrum spanning from its being rather harmless and generally 'beneficial' on the one end, to its being a clearly harmful facet of corruption on the other end. In this regard, and in light of approaching clientelism and *wasta* in the

context of a discussion on corruption, this study will undertake to examine the extent to which their impact is as insidious as that outlined in the foreword to the UN-CAC. It aims to present the general framework of defining and analyzing corruption, and thereof situating certain aspects of *wasta* within that discussion. Treating *wasta* as a form of clientelism in the Arab world in general and Lebanon in particular, and examining the possible overlaps commonalities between wasta and what is counted as corruption in the broad sense, this study will present the sources (mostly historical) and causes (mostly contemporary) of the preponderance of *wasta* and its impact, and the manner in which some of its facets may be considered as forms or expressions of corruption.

B. Significance of Problem

As with the question of defining corruption in general, defining *wasta* is itself not a simple matter. As will be presented in later parts of this thesis, the root definition of the term is historical in the Arabic language, and stems from *wasata*, which perhaps is best understood as mediation or intercession (Cunningham and Sarayrah 1993). In the context of a discussion on corruption in the public sector, the use of *wasta* develops in a manner that can best be captured as "the use of personal networks for the purpose of gaining access to scarce resources like, for example, jobs, building permits, university admissions, and doctor's appointments." (Marktanner and Wilson 2016, p. 79) However, and despite the fact that *wasta* is taken to be a prevalent occurrence in our society, treated in some of its manifestations as a form of corruption, and despite the fact that corruption is an almost every-day topic of discussion in the media, on social media, in very day life conversations, and even by the public officials themselves, the subject matter has not received much study and research, as will be illustrated in the

literature review chapter. Additionally, knowledge of its nature, causes, and impact remains limited to say the least. In that context, this thesis aims to improve our understanding or our knowledge about corruption in general and *wasta* in particular in Lebanon, and the importance of the study and analysis of its causes and impact. In researching for this thesis, it became evident how little scholarly work has been done on the topic covering the Arab world in general and Lebanon in particular, and this emphasized further the need for such a study. The scarcity of resources on Lebanon was a limitation for this study, but was equally an added impetus for undertaking it.

Having said that, it is important to note at the outset of this thesis that the final aim is not to arrive at some all-encompassing definition of corruption nor one of clientelism and *wasta*. As will be discussed in various sections of this present work, and in relation to the different issues addressed, arriving at a universal definition of corruption is not really possible, though a working definition of sorts can be and has been proposed. Similarly, a definition of *wasta* is also difficult to formulate, as such an attempt would inevitably leave something out and something to be desired. In examining the various approaches taken to defining and analyzing corruption, and to studying *wasta* and situating it within that discussion, this thesis aims to offer a better understanding of both, as well as of their possible causes and factors. Arriving at such an understanding would, as this thesis will argue, highlight the need for further serious research and study of corruption, clientelism and *wasta*, of their various manifestations, overlaps, and perceived cost and impact.

C. Research Questions

This study will examine the discussion and treatment of the issue of clientelism and *wasta* in Lebanon under a broader analysis and discussion on corruption. As such, the thesis will address the following research questions: What is corruption in general? What overlaps could be identified between *wasta* and corruption? Is *wasta* in some an expression and manifestation of corruption? What are the possible causes and manifestations of corruption, and what are the different causes that propagate the culture of clientelism and *wasta*? What are the cost and impact (economic and otherwise) of corruption and *wasta* on the functioning of the public sector apparatus? What are the ethical considerations that need to be addressed? What factors and considerations could explain the continued prevalence of the use of *wasta* in Lebanon, as well as possible justifications for said prevalence?

CHAPTER II

METHODOLOGY

As stated earlier in the introduction, and given the generally illegal nature of acts of corruption and the generally negative ethical connotations attached to clientelism and *wasta*, studies and data that could provide an accurate survey and insight into the presence and occurrence of such acts are generally unavailable, and rather difficult to procure. In this regard, a researcher would mostly need to rely on perception surveys and anecdotal references to try and gauge the prevalence of such phenomena. In light of that, and taking into account the various limitations already alluded to above, the study undertaken in this thesis will use two methods of research. The first and more prevalent one is that of literature review, which will cover scholarly works and UN conventions defining corruption and its manifestations, and analyzing its possible causes and impact. It will also cover scholarly works addressing clientelism and *wasta* in the Arab world in general and Lebanon in particular, and analyzing their causes and impact, seeking to identify overlaps between these and identified forms of corruption in general. The second method of research utilized is that of interviews with persons considered to be experts in the field, selected because each in his/her capacity and organization are involved in studying the issue of corruption in Lebanon and in pursuing policies and actions to counter it. The interviews were conducted with four individuals: a representative of a local Non-governmental organization (NGO), a representative of a local Civil Society Organizations (CSO), a representative of a United Nations (UN) body, and a local civil servant (CS).

A. Qualitative Research

The mode of research conducted for this thesis is qualitative. This mode is typically used to generate an understanding of some aspects of social life. In this case and in order to generate a better understanding of corruption in general and of *wasta* in particular, and given the lack of literature written on *wasta,* semi-structured interviews were conducted with experts in the field of corruption, with the purpose of generating a better apprehension and better knowledge of the subject at hand. The interviews conducted were thematically interpreted in accordance with Braun and Clarke's model, which defines thematic analysis as "a method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data." (Braun and Clarke 2006, p.6)

The synthesis of the conducted interviews followed this model by establishing a thematic overview of the different aspects that relate to corruption and *wasta*. By doing so, the data analysis and information was made clearer and more useful.

B. Data Collection

The data collected for the purpose of this exploratory study is through semi-structured qualitative interviews. The interviews were very beneficial in trying to reach an in-depth understanding of the topic at hand since they allow a comprehensive opportunity to gather primary data from relevant sources.

In order to be able to conduct the interviews, questions were prepared in advance and the same questions were asked to the different interviewees in order to generate fairly distributed information on the subject. The questions were concentrated on the broad theme of corruption, and then moved to more precise definitions of the

subject matter, along with follow up questions by the investigator to produce more tangible data.

C. Recruitment

The participants of the study were recruited through a research conducted over the internet. The investigator gathered publicly available names of potential participants. The final list of participants were chosen based on the area of expertise. All the information gathered about the participants were publically available online. That includes the name, the title of, and the contact information of the participant.

D. Consent

A recruitment e-mail was sent to the potential participants. The e-mail included: an introductory note on the project, the consent form, the procedure of the interview, a confidentiality clause, the right of withdrawal clause, and the contact information of the investigators.

E. Interview and Data gathered

The interviews conducted took place in a private setting, and the data collected from the interviews were generated through notetaking. Once the interviews was over, the notes were kept in a safe place and were later transcribed into the thesis (the originals were then destroyed). To ensure the privacy and confidentiality of the participants, their names and affiliations were omitted from the thesis and were referred to as interviewee A, B, C, or D.

F. Ethical Considerations

The interviews did not pose any risk to the interviewees. After securing their consent to conduct the interviews, the questions did not create any psychological, physical or emotional harm.

G. Limitations

The topics of corruption in general and *wasta* in particular, are somehow sensitive ones. The investigators faced several limitations, the first being that they could not interview politicians; and given that politicians might have been most suitable participants for the interviews in this study which focuses precisely on the public sector in Lebanon, their exclusion did pose a limitation. Additionally, and again given the sensitive nature of the subject matter, and its possible legal and ethical implications, it would not have been possible to get info and data directly from persons who themselves were either beneficiaries of *wasta* or individuals who provided *wasta* for the benefit of others. In light of that, the study could not generate information from all parties that are or could be involved in the topic at hand. Additionally, and in light of the already discussed scarcity of the available resources and studies on *wasta* (which is itself a limitation), the investigators did not have empirical data and information that could have been used as benchmarks for the evaluation and perception of corruption and *wasta* derived from the interviews. As such, the info derived from the different interviews could only be set again and read comparatively against one another.

CHAPTER III

LITERATURE REVIEW

In recent decades, and particularly as of the 1990's, one notes an increased scholarly interest in the study of corruption, its prevalence, causes, and impact (political, economic, and otherwise). One indicator of this is the launch of Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index in 1995[2], which signifies a move towards an empirical approach to the study of corruption, with the first of its reports covering 41 countries, that number then climbing up to 90 in the year 2000, and 176 countries in its 2016 report. This increased interest is also reflected in changes in policy and approaches to tackling the matter globally by international organizations, including the United Nations (as will be discussed further below). The literature and the scholarly work in the field covers a wide range of key questions and problematics, from the very definition of corruption itself, to an analysis of its causes, manifestations, to political and economic cost, all of which will be covered in the below sections. On the other hand, scholarly works on *wasta* are very minimal, and not much has been written on the subject matter in Lebanon in particular. Marktanner and Wilson, for instance, note this limitation explicitly, stating that "The literature on *wasta* in general and empirical studies of *wasta* in particular are very limited." (Marktanner and Wilson 2016, p. 80) With that in mind, this chapter will include sections on clientelism and *wasta* to consider the manner in which they may be studied as illustrations of trading in influence (one form of corruption), and to examine the extent (if any) to which they can be regarded as aspects of corruption in the broader sense.

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[2] https://www.transparency.org/research/cpi/overview

A. On Corruption

The common approaches to studying corruption are taken from social anthropology, and in more recent times have been appropriated in the realm of social economics and political economics. (Harrison 2007) The literature often establishes a separation of trends between bribery, nepotism, and extortion. However, in policy making that aims to address and tackle corruption, these distinctions between the different manifestations disappear, and we may be left with a clear straight to the point definition of corruption as "the abuse of public office for private gain." (Harrison 2007, p. 673) Of course, such a definition does not mean that corruption does not occur in the context of the private sector, nor is it always related to personal and private gain, but could for instance be for other people's gain (i.e. the gain of people other than the person who may be abusing the public office). On the issue of the private sector, there are a number of scholarly works on corruption that address that arena, and it is worth noting that the UN Convention Against Corruption sets down two articles that clearly address the private sector level (Article 21: Bribery in the Private Sector, and Article 22: Embezzlement of Property in the Private Sector). For the purposes of this thesis, however, the focus of the discussion is on the public sector, and as such I will suffice with the definition cited from Harrison above, and which is more or less a verbatim reference to the definition of corruption as set down by the World Bank[3].

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[3] http://www1.worldbank.org/publicsector/anticorrupt/corruptn/cor02.htm

1. *The various approaches to the study of corruption*

As a general remark on the approaches to the study of corruption, Leys (1965) notes that there are three general types of literature written on the subject matter in English. These three he denotes as historical studies (connecting centrally to the study of corruption in England), inquisitional studies (connects to the "United States and the English speaking West African and Asian countries), and sociological studies, which can be best denoted as "dealing with corruption incidentally" (Leys 1965, p. 215) To these three approaches, Leys then adds a fourth which he references as that of the 'moralists', stating that the issue of corruption in the contemporary world "has so far been taken up almost solely by moralists." (Leys 1965, p.216) Perhaps this latter observation by Leys, as he himself notes, should not come as much of a surprise given that the very meaning of the notion of corruption signifies turning something good into something bad, and as such the moral aspect of the subject matter is inextricable from the study.

Much research has been produced and much has been written on corruption since the appearance of Ley's article in 1965, and the scholarly output on the subject matter can indeed still be generally placed under one of the types he identified. As will be further addressed in the present thesis, there are numerous approaches that address the subject matter of corruption from the historical, sociological, and indeed moralist approaches. Other approaches, however, can also be encountered in the literature, which one may refer to as the socio-economic approaches, those that focus on the cost-benefit analysis of corruption particularly in the public sector, and the legalistic approaches, those that focus centrally on the legal aspects of the discussion. Underlying all these

various approaches and common to them all, is an attempt at defining corruption, and at offering some universal definition to the term that could be taken to apply across different epochs and geographies. However, and as Farrales (2005) explicitly notes such an overreaching, all-encompassing definition would be very difficult to arrive at and identify, if at all possible. Farrales 'poetically' describes an attempt at defining corruption as being "Herculean and Sisyphean in nature." (Farrales 2005, p. 1) He explains that it is 'Herculean' due to the almost impossible task of studying all the various manifestations and types of corruption across all of history, and 'Sisyphean' given the fact that the concept of corruption has continuously evolved and continues to do (Farrales 2005).

Nonetheless, and despite the pertinence of Farrales' note, one can perhaps offer a sketch of sorts that would identify that most common aspect of corruption, as well as its possible sources and causes. In the sections that follow below, this work will present the most prevalent approaches towards offering such a sketch.

2. *Corruption in History*

Perhaps the fundamental approach to the study of corruption is one that examines it from the perspective of historical evolution, what Leys had denoted as the type of 'historic studies'. Such an approach generally seeks to identify various forms and manifestations of corruption in various epochs and circumstances, and in doing so attempts to both identify and define the subject matter as well as connect to possible historical roots and causes.

It is worth noting here at the outset that though many scholars hold that it is essential to consider this historical aspect in a study on corruption, some in fact come

close to denying its importance, on the grounds that corruption did not in fact exist in, or rather than the concept is inapplicable to previous systems of governance. Van Klaveren (1989) is one such author who argues along such lines, holding that the two most common forms of governance or statehood historically were ones in which the concept of corruption does not exist, namely: absolute monarchy and popular sovereignty. In absolute monarchies, for instance, all the resources of the state are essentially the monarch's, and are allotted and distributed by the monarch to nobles and 'public officials' as the monarch sees fit. As such, in this context, corruption as we may now understand it would not really apply. In contrast, Van Klaveren (1989) notes that the mid-twentieth century witnessed key changes. The systems of modern economy became more sophisticated, as well as very pertinent to the developments of the socio-political levels. As such, the discussion on corruption, whether in terms of defining it or analyzing its causes and consequences, becomes essential and central in a way that one could not see with the previous epochs of history and the earlier forms of governance (Van Klaveren in *Political Corruption: A Handbook*, 1989) .

Along similar lines to those of Van Klaveren, Koenraad Swart (1949) also holds that one may find in history actions that one may deem as manifestations of corruption, but that would in fact not be an accurate or useful evaluation in the broader context of analyzing and studying corruption. Swart notes, for instance, that in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the sale of public offices was prevalent in many countries and nations, such as France, America, and Africa (Swart 1949). This act of selling and buying public offices for money, known mostly by its French reference of venality (v*énalité des offices*) essentially involved the King's selling of privileged public offices for money, as an alternate to taxation. It is indeed estimated that by the eighteenth

century, there were about 70 thousand venal offices in France. (Doyle 1996) In many ways one could indeed say that such was an authorized establishment: Public offices were more or less regarded as 'private entities' that could be sold and bought. The inclination and trend was even to 'appoint' life-long public officials who were in turn able to appoint their successors without the consent of the government. One may find in such practices a clear historical illustration of corruption; Swart, however, notes that it has been argued that the system of buying and selling public offices did not really constitute corruption as such, since those buying the offices wanted to advance themselves, and by doing so preserved the very offices they were buying. Nonetheless, it remains true, as Swart also notes, that the prevalent sale of offices soon became outdated, as it weakened governments, promoted oligarchies, and disordered fiscal systems, and as such, amplified the possibility of revolutions.

Coming at the matter from a broader perspective, James Scott (1972) proposes that corruption is best understood as an "informal political system," as opposed to the common statutes, policies, and the platforms of political parties that are more or less the recognized front of the governmental structure. In some sense, it could in fact be argued that corruption is at the heart of political systems. In this regard, corruption is as prevalent as politics itself, but, according to Scott, the legal understanding of corruption and corrupt acts changes historically. The sales of offices mentioned in the section above, for instance, would be considered a clear illustration of a corrupt act nowadays, but not in its own time and context; indeed, Scott notes that most scholars would agree that the sales of offices were a 'legal part' of the political system prevalent at the time (Scott 1972). Numerous countries and monarchies were involved in this as regular practice, openly offering such sales, with various terms of sale: sometimes the office

would be sold for a limited period of time, and at other occasions, and given the right amount of money, an office would be sold to be held indefinitely, even with the possibility of bequeathing it unto an heir.

In that context, and in his article tracing the various historical roots of corruption, Heidenheimer et al (1990) follows Max Weber's approach in outlining the rise and role of the public official in the bureaucratic systems of employment. The author notes that in the pre-bureaucratic systems, employment in the 'public sector' was moved by patrimonial systems. Feudal systems were focused on appropriating lands and placing them under the control of those who took, or were granted, 'public office' and became governors and rulers. These public figures abided by no statutes as such, and there was no clear tablet of laws and accountability to which they could be held (Heidenheimer, Johnston, and LeVine 1989). In this context, corruption was clearly attached to the manner in which public office was gained or conferred, in that in the early eighteenth century, the promise of office was the route to gaining votes. In contrast, and still working closely with Max Weber's analysis, Heidenheimer presents the role of the public official, within the context of a bureaucratic system, as one that carries the expectation that they he/she would be dutiful to his/her role in public office, and that once in office he/she should be loyal to a specific task and position. In such a context or system, the notion and understanding of what corruption is will differ from that encountered in the pre-bureaucratic systems and societies.

Addressing himself to the manner in which the notion of corruption, along with its manifestations, varies across historical epochs, Carl Friedrich (1972) argues that one running motif is the treatment of corruption as an aberration from the norms in a particular context with a specific stimulus, with one desired end result: private gain. But

if gain is identified on the one hand, that is to say with the public official engaged in corrupt acts, then on the other hand would be identified a certain loss so to speak, and this latter is usually identified at the level of the public interest (Friedrich 1972).

   According to Friedrich (1972), the modern understanding of the term corruption was first established by Jean Jack Rousseau in the 18th Century, who argued that corruption has a moral basis, positing that all humans are essentially weak, and that if they are given power they can become corrupt, or in the least more corruptible. As such, and from this perspective, corruption is analyzed with respect to a moral compass; and consequently, political corruption specifically is best understood as the abuse of power which deviates from moral values and norms.

   Following in this vein of historical analysis, Daniel Lowenstein remarks that by the 19th century, public reform movements had developed in a direction such that they begin to shed more light on political corruption. Counteractive measures began to be taken by states such as Prussia, France, and Bavaria against public corruption (Lowenstein 1985).

   In brief then, and with the above in mind, one notes that most scholars argue that corruption has indeed presented and manifested itself in various forms across different epochs, and as such if any full understanding is to be had of corruption and its causes, a historical study would be necessary. However, it would seem that such a study would not be sufficient to arriving at a working definition of corruption itself, even a broad one. Historical approaches tend to slip into some form of relativism or another, whether legal or moral, as will be further shown below.

3. *Defining Corruption*

As noted earlier, a number of authors acknowledge the difficulty of defining corruption, of arriving at a definition that would apply to all instances, and Theobald (1989) is one such author. He maintains that the difficulty to define the concept of corruption lies within the difficulty to define the moral principles behind it, or those that one would want to reference in defining it. In such a statement, it is then clear that Theobald holds that a definition as such, a universal definition so to speak, would need to be grounded in some moral framework rather than a historical or legal one.

To highlight this purported difficulty, Theobald examines and evaluates three proposed general definitions of corruption. The first such definition is phrased in terms of corruption as the misuse of authority by public officials to gain profit. Such an approach to defining corruption, as well as that mentioned above in relation to Heidenheimer et al (1990), works with the backdrop of analyzing bureaucracy along the lines of Weber. The form of 'rational-legal' bureaucracy outlined by Max Weber develops, or rather evolves, with the progress of industrial and modern societies, particularly with the rise of the nation states in the 19th century. Theobald notes that the rise of the nation states resulted in the "the appearance of the career public servant who allegedly makes decisions on the basis of neutral, universalistic criteria, and scrupulously segregates public affairs from personal interests." (Theobald 1989, p. 3) In this regard, conceptions of corruption are built up with this image of the 'public servant' in mind, an image that comes out of Weber's conception of bureaucracy as a hierarchical system wherein which people are employed to perform specific tasks based on their suited particular skills. However, Theobald notes that a number of scholars objected to this 'public office centered' perspective, especially since this definition

emerged in western societies and is inapplicable in underdeveloped countries where norms are different, and where some acts of corruption may indeed be socially acceptable. Another objection to this 'public office centered' definition of corruption is that we cannot accept the norms of a government in all its aspect (such as in the case of government-sanctioned torture for instance). Finally, scholars would further object to this definition of corruption on the grounds that it accuses bureaucratic systems of engaging in systematic rule breaking behavior

Theobald then moves to examine a second approach, one which in contradistinction to the above would be termed as the 'public interest centered' perspective. This perspective states that corruption is an act that harms the public interest; or in other words: any act that results in harm to the public interest and/or endangers the public good would be an act of corruption. However, a criticism that emerges in this regard is the difficulty involved in defining the concept of 'public interest' or 'public good'. A related criticism of this perspective is that, understood as such, some acts of perceived corruption may in fact under certain circumstances, actually benefit 'public interest' or enhance 'public good'. For instance, one could imagine that a generally perceived act of corruption as bribery may in fact be found to be an efficient manner of increasing public interest and enhancing public good; should bribery then, specifically the bribery of public officials, not count as an act of corruption? (Theobald 1989).

The third approach to the definition of corruption which Theobald then examines is one that focuses on the 'public opinion' perspective, and stipulates that it is essentially public opinion that would decide whether an action is corrupt or otherwise. But much like the other previous alternatives, this one is also open to criticism, if not

more so than the other two. Putting aside the question of whether public opinion is an accurate depiction of the facts and evaluation of corruption, if one were to follow this proposal one would in the least face the following two problems: the first is the fact that public opinion shifts and changes, and as such this would lead to a similar relativism as that discussed in the context of the historical approach above. Perhaps more centrally, however, is the question of how one may gauge or measure public opinion: what percentage of the public ought to consider an act as corrupt for it to be considered corrupt? Further, what is the 'sample size' of the public that ought to be consulted for such consideration? As such, according to Theobald, the difficulties that would arise out of adopting a 'public opinion' approach seem to be even more than those of the first two considered approaches.

In light of his examination of the three possibilities, Theobald nonetheless opts to favor and adopt the public opinion approach as the best possible way to defining corruption. In support of this preference for the public opinion approach, he distinguishes between administrative corruption and political corruption, and therein clarifies favoring the public opinion approach in defining administrative corruption, given the narrow scope of function and application of the administrative in comparison with the political (Theobald 1989). In other words, Theobald does not opt for public opinion as a reference point in terms of defining and identifying political corruption, as this would indeed be very open to flux and shifting points of view. However, with respect to administrative corruption, i.e. corruption at the level of the administrative apparatus, he favors the public opinion approach to defining what would count as corruption.

Alternatively, Heidenheimer et al (1989) approach the question of defining corruption from a different angle. Similarly to how Aristotle described corruption as a deviation from the public good when a monarch turns into a tyrant, Heidenheimer et al draw a parallel description to a public official, wherein corruption is essentially the official's deviation from serving the public good towards serving his/her own interests. Having said that, he does however clarify that such a parallel may be an oversimplification, as it doesn't take into account the factors surrounding the action, factors which the authors here, as well as others, believe are central to both defining and analyzing corruption (as will be discussed in later sections of the work). (Heidenheimer, Johnston, and LeVine 1989)

In this regard, the authors describe the 18th century's perception of corruption as rather different from the current understanding, referencing J.G.A. Pocock's statement: "…distracting parliament from its proper functions…these means of subversion are known collectively as corruption." (Johnston 2017) Such a statement would suggest that a previous understanding of corruption existed, and derived from its 18th century context it was an understanding or perhaps a definition that was more general and encompassing than the current attempts at defining and understanding corruption.

Working towards refining a definition of the concept, the authors move to distinguish between political corruption and moral corruption. They explain that the predominant explanation of political corruption is often associated with public-private trades, or in other words best understood in terms of the abuse of public office for private gain. This understanding of political corruption, however, is criticized by the authors as being "elastic" and "expanded". In this they accord with the British scholar Robert J. Williams that the term 'political corruption' has been used too lightly to

describe almost any action that deviates from moral values or from the norms established for public office (Heidenheimer, Johnston, and LeVine 1989). Building on this, the authors note that the current understanding of the term corruption in its political aspect is directly correlated to a moral dimension and normative evaluation.

Having presented some of the varying approaches to defining corruption and analyzing it historically, we can now state that, in general, there are three approaches utilized in the scholarly literature to defining and understanding corruption:

- The universalist approach: this approach essentially holds that that the definition of corruption, and the designation of an act as corrupt or otherwise, would be the same irrespective of any space time considerations; that is to say that corruption is what it is whether in the past, present, or the future.

- The relativist approach: in contrast, this approach holds that corruption, its definition and consequent designation of acts, differs from epoch to another and from culture to another, and varies from one political structure and framework to another. As such, for instance, one could state that corruption as we now understand did not exist in the eighteenth century. Likewise, what may be counted as corruption in contemporary democratic structures of governance may not be likewise identified in monarchies of previous centuries.

- The evolving perception approach: this approach to the study of corruption could be seen as a hybrid of the first two, in that it does accept that corruption as such is universally present and prevalent at all times, but that our perception of corruption and corrupt acts changes and evolves with time.

Of the three approaches, however, the most commonly adopted approach is the evolving perspective approach, which basically holds that corruption is identified differently from culture to culture, but is nonetheless universally viewed as harmful, though the definition of what corruption is changes and shifts with the shift in perspective.

4. *The manifestations of corruption in the public sector*

With the above in mind, this research will move to present the most common manifestations of corruption in the public sector. In doing so, this thesis will rely on the classification used in the UN Convention Against Corruption (2005), hereafter referred to as UN-CAC, as it is the most comprehensive framework on identifying and defining the various forms of corruption, particularly in the public sector. Having said that, and though this thesis will present the manifestations in line with the UN classification, this study will, where appropriate, present certain sub-categories of corruption for further illustration.

The UN-CAC lists and defines the most general forms and manifestations of corruption, as well as the key considerations that make these forms wrong, whether in the moral sense or in the legal sense.

- *Bribery of public officials (whether local, foreign, or officials of international organizations – Article 15 of the UN-CAC):* The first form the UN-CAC identifies is perhaps one of the most common, and costly forms of corruption, namely bribery. It is defined as "the offering or giving […] of undue advantage, for the official himself or herself or another person or entity, in order that the official act or refrain from acting in the exercise of his or her official duties", or in the case of actually asking

for a bribe it is defined as the soliciting of "an undue advantage, for the official himself or herself or another person or entity, in order that the official act or refrain from acting in the exercise of his or her official duties"[4].

In brief, bribery as such involves the offering, accepting, or soliciting of undue advantage so that the official may get something done or stop it from being done. Most often, bribery involves an official abusing his/her status. The act mainly includes the exchange of money or goods, though it could also involve favors and compensation in kind. Rose and Peiffer (2016) state that bribery implies an interchange among an individual who requires a public service to which he or she is not entitled to, and a public employee seeking a certain gain from using their will to deliver service (Rose and Peiffer 2016).

In terms of its socio-economic impact, bribery generates severe economic damage on government resources, the general public (mostly the disadvantaged) and global market (Boles 2013). In this regard, an International Monetary Fund (IMF) report published in 2016, entitled "Corruption: Costs and Mitigating Strategies", noted that one of the most recent estimates on the associated economic impact puts "the annual cost of bribery [...] at about $1.5 to $2 trillion (roughly 2 percent of global GDP)"[5].

One form of bribery that one could note, particularly as it is not one that we automatically associate with corruption, is that referred to as "improper political contribution". This essentially pertains to when individuals offer money or other goods and services to receive political support or 'undue advantage'. It is, in other words, a financial or non-financial contribution to a political party or a charity that could in many

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[4] Article 15 of the UN-CAC:
https://www.unodc.org/documents/treaties/UNCAC/Publications/Convention/08-50026_E.pdf
[5] IMF Discussion Note: "Corruption: Costs and Mitigating Strategies", published May 2016
https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/sdn/2016/sdn1605.pdf

ways be considered a bribe, similar to any unwarranted and 'illegal' compensation granted to public servants.

Although for most, bribery may be the most obvious and common form of corruption, it is worth noting that researchers have fallen short of shedding light on the act of bribery as a common manifestation of corruption, and one that could inform the broader discussion on corruption in general. The general statutes against the act of bribery are clear when describing the behavior of a public official, in that he/she would need to be involved in the act for it to qualify as an act of corruption. Other descriptions in the statutes, however, fall under a grey area since they do not define the act itself in a clear manner but just follow guidelines that include receiving financial or valuable remuneration. As such, Heidenheimer et al argue that there is no legal definition of the term bribery, and the term falls under the general area of corruption as a forbidden act by legal statute, rather than being rooted in the more general moral consideration. (Heidenheimer, Johnston, and LeVine 1989).

- *Embezzlement (or more generally the misappropriation and/or diversion of property by a public official – Article 17 of the UN-CAC)*: The second form of corruption identified in the UN-CAC is perhaps embezzlement. Embezzlement is most generally defined as the act of unrightfully taking physical valuables like money or properties, or in more technical terms it is defined as "the embezzlement, misappropriation or other diversion by a public official for his or her benefit or for the benefit of another person or entity, of any property, public or private funds or

securities or any other thing of value entrusted to the public official by virtue of his or her position".[6]

In "Fighting Corruption and Embezzlement in Third World Countries", Fantaye (2004) argues that the act of embezzlement is best understood as an economic crime, or more broadly as an occupational crime. Such crimes, as well as their categories, are best defined as "any act punishable by law that is committed through opportunity created in the course of an occupation that is legal." (Friedrichs 2002) Embezzlement happens at many levels, from a worker who steals small amounts of money from petty cash accounts, to leaders of big organizations who steal large amounts of money. In regard, the Fantaye (2004) notes that embezzlement is most pervasive in third world countries. He relates this observation causally to the fact that the political systems of said countries are generally weak, and not equipped with the administrative or financial tools to diminish the exercise of embezzlement (Fantaye 2004).

- *Trading in influence (Article18 of the UN-CAC)*: The third form of corruption identified in the UN-CAC is 'trading in influence'. This form of corruption includes any and all forms of promising and giving or soliciting and accepting a personal gain and/or undue advantage "in order that the public official or the person abuse his or her real or supposed influence with a view to obtaining from an administration or public authority of the State Party an undue advantage for the original instigator of the act or for any other person"[7]. In our local and regional language, and in relation to the focal point of this present work, this form of corruption perhaps can be

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[6] Article 17 of the UN-CAC:
https://www.unodc.org/documents/treaties/UNCAC/Publications/Convention/08-50026_E.pdf
[7] Article 18 of the UN-CAC:
https://www.unodc.org/documents/treaties/UNCAC/Publications/Convention/08-50026_E.pdf

viewed as most coinciding with the general trend of clientelism and the common use of *wasta* with a public official to obtain some undeserved undue advantage either from the public official directly or through the public official's influence. Another associated form or corruption under the heading of 'trading in influence' could be seen in certain facets of favoritism and clientelism, which are rather common in developing countries, and which are themselves also facets of the notion and practice of *wasta*. Favoritism or nepotism revolve around public officials abusing their status of power and influence to help and offer 'undue advantage' to people they know or people in their family. For instance, it could manifest in employing people who do not meet the needed qualifications and merit standards, which could have serious consequences and impact on the functioning of organizations in both the public and the private sectors.

The aspects or manifestations of *wasta* and favoritism/nepotism may also be related and connected to the next category set down in the UN-CAC, that being:

- *Abuse of Functions (Article 19 of the UN-CAC)*: This form of corruption as addressed in the UN-CAC essentially pertains to a relevant public official illegally performing, or failing to perform, an act "for the purpose of obtaining an undue advantage for himself or herself or for another person or entity."[8]

Engaging in acts of *wasta*, as an individual in a position of power using *wasta* for the sake of another, can in this sense be regarded as an abuse of power. That is to say, the public official would be abusing his/her position to obtain "undue advantage" for a third party. A certain grey area may herein arise, in that certain acts of intercession or 'putting in a good word' for someone may be construed as *wasta*, and consequently

[8] Article 19 of the UN-CAC:
https://www.unodc.org/documents/treaties/UNCAC/Publications/Convention/08-50026_E.pdf

as abuse of power. But the key terms to keep in mind in Article 19 above are "undue advantage", and as such this allows us to distinguish between *wasta* as an instance of abuse of power and *wasta* as intercession or recommendation.

In brief, and working from the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UN-CAC), one can summarize public sector corruption under the four broad headings of 1) bribery, 2) embezzlement, 3), trading in influence, and 4) abuse of functions. Naturally, these are not exhaustive, and the UN-CAC does go further than these 'headlines'. More centrally, they are not exhaustive in the sense that they do not cover all possible manifestations of various types of these headings. For instance, one can further speak of various types of bribes and abuse of functions, and the various arenas that the various forms can influence and impact. Such a discussion, however, would not cover or present various forms of corruption as such, but rather would go more particularly into instances and examples of its manifestation, and that is beyond the scope of this thesis.

5. *Further classifications of corruption*

In what follows, this study will build on the previously presented headings to provide further possible classifications of the manifestations of corruption. In this approach, it is not so much a question of what is being abused or exchanged, but rather a classification in terms of the scope and arena of corrupt acts and activities.

- Systemic Corruption

By definition, systemic corruption is the consequence of corrupt leadership (Khan 2008). Systemic corruption mirrors conditions where corruption is found

embedded at the heart of society (Morris 2011). Systemic corruption becomes a state in which most processes and methods, in a given society, are characteristically and consistently ruled by corrupt individuals and groups. Indeed, corruption on such a scale can impede the functionality of a society and could have negative implications on economic development.

- Sporadic (Individual) Corruption

Sporadic corruption can be taken as being the opposite of the previously presented systemic corruption. This sporadic corruption refers to corruption that occurs irregularly and in random instances. These are generally thought of as lacking much impact and are treated as not affecting the system as a whole. However, and despite its limited occurrences and effects, this type of corruption can still impact the functioning of the public sector apparatus, and can in certain cases come at a high cost to resources.

- Political (Grand) Corruption

A political corruption operation is described as a deal that takes place between a public actor and a private actor. In this corrupt act, a public good is illegally transformed to a private gain. This type of corruption often implicates large sums of money involving global corporations frequently making the payments (Rose-Ackerman 1996).

Political corruption or "grand" corruption implicates high-level political decision-makers. It occurs when politicians and civil servants who ought to enforce the law (ab)use their authority to sustain wealth and power. This type of corruption will

lead to the loss of financial resources at the level of the government and will also

misrepresent the manner in which political decisions are made.

- Petty Corruption

Petty corruption happens at the low levels of government services. It is related

to bureaucratic tools and services offered to citizens. However, it is quite regular since it

involves services required on a daily basis, such as passport renewals, or issuance of

identity cards. Petty corruption involves small sums of money and has been called in the

literature 'low level' and 'street level' corruption. It is the kind of corruption that people

may experience daily, in their encounters with public servants, in public schools,

municipalities, and local authorities. Petty corruption is often ignored since the impact

is thought to be minimal on economic development (Carr and Jago 2014).

- Legal and Moral Corruption

Corruption becomes a case when the law is evidently broken. This

understanding clearly stipulates that there is a precise law and it is being broken. A legal

reading of corruption delivers an unmistakably defined borderline between what is

considered to be a corrupt activity and what is not. If a civil servant performs an act that

is prohibited by law and by government, it amounts to an act of corruption. In this

regard, it is worth noting that corruption not only impacts the socio-political fabric in

which it occurs but also and perhaps more centrally "Corruption also destroys the

integrity of the one who offers the corruption" (Rendtorff 2010, p. 126). In this sense,

Rendtorff explains that the welfare of the government and the society are not included

in the act of corruption and the act is focused towards a satisfactory outcome and prize received by one individual on the account of the government.

6. *Possible causes and sources of corruption*

Having presented the various forms and manifestations of corruption as treated by the UN-CAC, as well as by numerous scholars in the field, tackling the issue both from the perspective of identifying the acts of corruption as well as it scope, this present work will now move to present the various approaches to understanding and unearthing the possible sources and causes of corruption.

It is argued by some scholars that the act of corruption is surrounded by a complex mechanism that makes it difficult to pinpoint a clear cause that lead to a corrupt act. (Fischer et al. 2014) Along similar lines, and in their article on corruption, its causes and its consequences, Hartman et al. 2014 state that available literature and experts find it difficult to determine the causes and roots of corruption. One major reason for this is that the act of corruption must revolve around discretion and secrecy, as people need to protect themselves from exposure.

Nonetheless, the authors outline a rather interesting possible cause of corruption, tracing the concept back to its roots: the root of trade or exchange of goods and services, which is part of human nature; a reciprocity that exists within our nature that serves a survival instinct. It is in the human culture and norm that people have a sense of obligation towards returning favors. Even society plays a role in that phenomenon and adds a certain pressure on those who don't return a favor. The authors argue that reciprocity in its social context tends to be a slippery slope: corrupt officials

often justify their acts, the fraudster cannot look him/herself in the mirror and eventually rationalizes the reasons behind a fraudulent act (Victor Hartman et al. 2016) .

Toke S. Aidt (2011) narrows down the possible factors for the rise of corruption to the following three roots:

- Discretionary power: where the public official has unrestricted power to create, change, and apply policies and rules.

- Economic rents: whereby the same power highlighted above would allow access to existing rents, or the ability to create new rents that could later be extracted.

- Weak institutions: which essentially incentivize the public official to both abuse their discretionary and exploit economic rents (Aidt 2011).

Coming at the question from a different angle, and emphasizing the distinction of causes from results in her analysis, S. Rose-Ackerman (1997) distinguishes three key causes of corruption: the first cause is that a public sector's division is such that it may be organized as to expand its own wealth. The second is related to corrupt electoral systems and the absence of true democracy, where money is a main factor. And the third cause is related to the large scale of government projects that affect the business climate of the given country (Susan, Rose-Ackerman 1997).

Rather than seek the causes in the structure of governance frameworks or the power and access of public officials, De Graaf (2007) approaches the matter by seeking to understand the context within which corrupt acts manifest. He states that to answer the question of why corrupt acts are committed, studies should be conducted on the circumstances surrounding corrupt acts, and the reasons behind why people choose to engage in such illegal acts. In this regard, according to De Graaf (2007), some scholars believe that the causes of corruption cannot be pinned on the person performing the act

of corruption, while other scholars believe that the cause of corruption is directly linked to the person performing the act (De Graaf 2007).

Treisman (2007) has a similar approach to that of Graaf's, but focuses more broadly on the political context than he does on the individual and the situational. He argues that certain criteria, if found in certain countries, curb corruption. Such criteria include liberal democracy systems, which involve women in governance, have free press, and have a well-established history of trade. Contrarily, countries that are contingent on oil trades or have invasive business systems and volatile price increases are found to be more corrupt (Treisman 2007).

Bardhan (1997) addresses another socio-political approach to explaining the roots and causes of corruption. According to the author, the sources of corruption, as explained by liberal economists, are found when central and controlling governments have an expanding organism of authorization that eventually gives birth to corruption. This approach, however, is deemed insufficient by the author, giving the counter-example of the continued entrenchment of corruption in Russia and China post market-reform movements.(Bardhan 1997)

In his article entitled "Political Corruption", Myrdal argues that in societies where the market is generally meek, political and public officials tend to use their powers to gain profits. As such, Myrdal argues that corruption fills the gap of a 'soft state' (Myrdal 1968).

Expanding the analysis of the possible rise of corruption beyond the merely political, and beyond the socio-economic arena, Graycar and Sidebuttom (2012) note that the absence of civil society organizations could be one of the reasons that corruption exists in institutions. To support this hypothesis, they consider various cases

of corruption in the public sector, and present the following findings (Graycar and Sidebottom 2012):

- Corruption cases and acts present themselves after opportunities arise

- Cases of corruption are specific and take different forms

- The acts of corruption are specific to a certain time and a certain place

- One act of corruption leads to another

- New technology and social changes lead to new opportunities for corruption

- Finally, to prevent acts of corruption, opportunities for corruption should be reduced.

The article presents the measures to understand the direct causes of corruption, which include the setting in which the act of corruption occurs and the opportunities that arise within this context. The authors argue that even if ways to reduce corruption are found, those guilty of corrupt actions will work around them. Nonetheless, Graycar and Sidebottom suggest that 'situational crime prevention' could be the answer to eradicating corruption. Situational crime prevention is an approach that can reveal underlying causes of corruption and perhaps find ways to eradicate it. In other words, considering corruption as a form of a crime, they argue that 'behavioral opportunities' of the act should be found to try and identify approaches to eliminate corruption. The behavioral explanation in this case is the immediate cause of the act of corruption where certain individuals seek financial gains in the situation that are higher than the risks of the act itself.

7. *The impact and cost of corruption*

Alongside what is to be found in the literature on defining corruption, and identifying its possible causes and sources, and in the context of attempting to pinpoint the wrongness of corruption (be it moral or legal), a number of scholars and studies have attempted to highlight the impact of corruption on various levels. They also highlight the complexities involved in fighting corruption. In this regard, a number of international organizations, such as the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, the United Nations with its Convention Against Corruption (UN-CAC), the World Bank, and Transparency International, have worked on minimizing fraud and corruption. Such organizations have piloted studies that show evidence on corruption's negative impact on economy, the damage on wealth accumulation, the inefficiency of development aid, and finally the proliferation of inequality in income and increase in poverty (Bandaranayake 2014). According to the World Bank Anti-Corruption Brief (2016), "Empirical studies have consistently demonstrated that the poor pay the highest percentage of their income in bribes"[9]. The referenced brief then adds that it is essentially an established fact that the impact of bribery and corruption is mostly felt by the underprivileged, as it affects their access to basic needs, discouraging "poor people from accessing health services and negatively impacts health outcomes," and eroding "the social contract between citizens and the state."[10]

One of the earliest authors who dedicates himself to a cost-benefit analysis of corruption, highlighting not only its impact but indeed its possible sources, as well as possible argument for it, is J.S. Nye in his 1967 article "Corruption and Political Development: A Cost-Benefit Analysis" (Nye 1967). In the article, Nye argues that

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[9] http://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/governance/brief/anti-corruption
[10] http://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/governance/brief/anti-corruption

although corruption is prevalent in every government, not enough attention is given to it from scholars of government, noting that the matter has been generally approached from two perspectives: the first from the point of view of politicians, and the second from the point of view of political scientists.

When one observes corruption in countries at first glance, the first charge against leaders of developing countries always seems to be corruption. Corruption is perceived as an immoral act that hinders the wellbeing and livelihood of societies. A more recent perception of corruption describes it as an action that deteriorates the good will of people. From within this approach of studying the impact and the effects of corruption, Nye notes that it is more prevalent in lesser-developed countries since these seem to offer more suitable conditions that allow the perpetuation of corrupt acts. (Nye 1967). It is worth noting that Nye argues that some aspects of corruption may in fact positively boost the economy of a state (as will be elaborated on below), though even these perceived benefits would still lead to the deterioration of the political arena as a whole all things considered. In addressing the subject matter, Nye adopts a somewhat specific definition of corruption, one that targets a political perspective, opting to reference corruption as a behavior that "deviates from the formal duties of a public role", for personal/private advantage.

Defining corruption as such, and analyzing its impact from this political perspective, the author argues that corruption could be viewed as beneficial in three broadly considered cases. The first such case, which he addresses under the heading of Economic Development, concerns the possibility of corruption leading to economic advantages and promoting legitimacy of government. In this context, Nye cites examples where corruption could assist in capital formation when government cannot

resort to further taxation; it could also help in cutting red tape and offering a work around in certain rigid systems. Additionally, Nye cites examples where corruption could be perceived as promoting entrepreneurship, for instance in terms of allowing "the entrepreneur from a minority to gain access to the political decisions necessary for him to provide his skills." (Nye 1967, p. 420) The second case, which he addresses under the heading of "National Integration", considers the manner in which corruption may play a part in the community building and promoting political growth by bringing together those in power and those who are wealthy, and as such minimizing socio-political division. The shared interests of those who have wealth and those who have power, brought together in acts that would fall under the heading of corruption, "may help overcome divisions in a ruling elite that might otherwise result in destructive conflict." (Nye 1967, p. 420) Additionally, such acts may also help integrate the 'non-elites' so to speak, who in the Nye's words care "far less about the rational impartiality of the government and its laws than […] about its awesomeness and seeming inhumanity." (Nye 1967, p. 420) The third case considered, under the heading of "Governmental Capacity", concerns newly-established states, wherein Nye notes that corruption can be beneficial because it can ease the process with which the elite rule by using corrupt acts to favorably gain trust and support (Nye 1967). Having said that, it is important to note that though the author holds that corruption might lead to economic growth, he adds that it may also cause economic instability and political destabilization. As such, and particularly in the context of discussing developing countries, Nye essentially approaches the matter from a utilitarian perspective of an analysis of means and ends. That is to say: if the political well-being of a state may be promoted through certain facets of corruption, then one could indeed be in favor of its presence, especially

at such junctions of political development considered in the three cases by Nye. Indeed, he adds that the matter of corruption should not be left to moralists to evaluate since it may prove to be a crucial component for developing countries.

Tackling the issue from a different perspective, Shleifer and Vishny (1993) present an analysis of the impact of corruption on the cost of development through highlighting the consequences of weak central governance and secrecy on the spread and level of corruption. (Shleifer and Vishny 1993)

The authors present a basic model of corruption where they make a number of assumptions, which include the following: 1) that one governmental good or service is the commodity being sold (such as a passport or a permit), 2) that the good is sold by an official who can restrict supply or access to the good/service with minimal risk of detection or punishment, and 3) that the cost of production of the good/service to the official is negligible. With these assumptions, the authors examine two scenarios: a case denoted as *without theft* in which the buyer or the individual citizen demanding the service pays for the cost of the service in addition to a bribe , and a second scenario, denoted as *with theft*, where the buyer pays only the bribe. In this second case, the cost to the buyer is reduced, and as such, it is more attractive than the first.

In this model, Shleifer and Vishny (1993) argue that corruption spreads due to competition between officials and among consumers. In addition, corruption 'with theft' is likely to spread, as the buyer has no benefit in exposing the seller.

The authors then consider the supply of government goods and its effect on the level of corruption. Unlike the model considered by the authors in the previous section, where part of the assumptions was to consider one public good/service and one seller (a

sort of monopoly), the reality is different and generally includes a number of goods the buyer needs as well as a number of suppliers.

They consider two general cases, one where the various suppliers act independently and set their own prices (bribes) to "maximize their own revenue", and the second where they collude and work together to supply the various complementary goods. In the final analysis, argue that if the various suppliers coordinated they would be able to provide the best prices (bribes) that would in turn encourage the buyer to secure all complementary goods and thus all suppliers would benefit (Shleifer and Vishny 1993). Additionally, in the case where the good/service can be secured from different possible suppliers, the cost can decrease as alternatives are available to the buyer. As such, this increased competition between suppliers benefits the buyer. This competition also stops the increase of the cost of bribes prices.

The authors also discuss other important factors that control the cost of bribes including police states, oligarchies, and homogeneous societies. For instance, when a country develops from a less developed 'autocratic' to a 'democratic' state, corruption could increase, especially in the early stages of change where the governmental apparatus is still weak. To alleviate this problem, the scholars suggested the creation of "competition in the provision of government goods while intensively monitoring theft."(Shleifer and Vishny 1993, p. 611)

Finally, Shleifer and Vishny note that there is a noticeable correlation between corruption and poverty, and one could almost certainly conclude that corruption is detrimental to socio-economic development. According to Shleifer and Vishny (1993), the weakness of central governance and the secrecy involved in bribery perpetuate corruption and make it costly on the state. (Shleifer and Vishny 1993)

One possible critique to the authors' discussion is of the proposal they put forth in the conclusion: the political and economic competition they propose would generally require development. However, as the authors argue in their paper, 1) development would be costly due to bribes, and 2) in the early stages of development, with weak government apparatus, the cost would increase as corruption would increase. As such, it is not clear how one could pursue political and economic competition to decrease the impact of corruption, when the early stages of development could mean an increase in corruption, especially as corruption itself brings an added cost to development (Shleifer and Vishny 1993).

In line with the analysis of the cost of corruption, but spotlighting its criminal nature more than others, Graycar and Sidebottom (2012) examine the costliness of corruption, which they take to be caused by immediate environmental opportunities, which, if eliminated, would diminish the level of corruption. Treating corruption as "the abuse of entrusted power for private gain", (Graycar and Sidebottom 2012, p. 385) along similar lines to that of Shleifer et al, the authors study its impact and argue that corruption weakens good governance and negatively impacts overall efficiency, in addition to posing a danger to democracy (Graycar and Sidebottom 2012).

B. On Clientelism

Given the general lack of scholarly work on *wasta* in the Arab world in general and in Lebanon in particular (as previously discussed), as well as the lack of scholarly works examining if and how *wasta* could be viewed as a facet of socio-political corruption, the most suitable entry point into the topic is through a discussion on clientelism, and thereon moving to address *wasta* as a particular manifestation of

clientelism. The overlap between clientelism and corruption is not lost upon scholars in the field, as they "Both involve political actors manipulating public resources for personal gain (be it financial or political)." (Singer 2009, p. 2) Notwithstanding the overlap, however, the two are not treated synonymously, though they are in general viewed as arising within similar socio-political contexts. (Singer 2009) Likewise, it would be inaccurate to propose that clientelism in its broad sense and exercise is necessarily to be regarded as illustrations of corruption. However, if and when clientelism exhibits itself rooted in some form of corruption covered under articles 18 and 19 of the UN-CAC (namely Trading in Influence, and Abuse of Functions), clientelism may indeed be examined as indicative of corruption.

In the most general sense, clientelism is understood in terms of the "relationship between individuals with unequal economic and social status ("the boss" and his "clients") that entails the reciprocal exchange of goods and services based on a personal link that is generally perceived in terms of moral obligation."[11] In the political or public arena, this exchange occurs between a person of a certain political status and a citizen. In this regard, it is generally argued that clientelism has a certain form of patronage at its heart, in that it works with one party having a certain upper hand of political or financial support to the other party, and whereby the second party acquires some moral obligation towards the first part as a result of the support.

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[11] Encyclopedia Birtannica online: http://www.britannica.com/topic/clientelism

1. *The Different Components of Clientelism*

Hicken (2011) believes that scholars use the term clientelism without defining it properly, adding that the most agreed upon definition of clientelism includes several elements that shed light on the nature and scope of this notion:

The first aspect of Clientelism that Hicken highlights is one that primarily involves having the client in close relationship with the patron, where the relationship becomes a social exchange in which both parties interact with each other face-to-face (Hicken 2011). In this type of relationship, one can identify a valuable consideration of a central element of clientelism, as it captures both the personal socio-political side as well as one of the facets of the working framework of clientelism that he defines as Dyadic Relationships.

The second type or manifestation of clientelism addressed by Hicken is what he refers to as a 'contingency' relationship. This aspect is somewhat conditional, and addresses a mutual exchange, or at least the promise of a mutual exchange, between the patron and the client. This aspect of clientelism essentially means that if the patron were to provide a service or favor for the client, then the client is expected to return the favor, generally in a manner defined by the patron himself/herself (Hicken 2011). The contingency aspect of this form is precisely captured in this kind of 'if, then' relationship. This 'if-then' is indeed a general kind of expectation in a social exchange context. As such, if one does a favor then he/she most likely expects the favor to be substituted back with some sort of other service at some point in the future. In fact, even among friends and family, and outside any discussion on clientelism, one could say that is almost a norm that one ought to return a favor done to them by a family member or a

friend. In this sense, Hicken's identifying this 'contingency' relationship is applicable to both the notion of clientelism and to that of social exchange relationships in general.

The third element is what Hicken refers to as 'Hierarchy'. From a social perspective, it is no surprise that Hicken factors hierarchy in his discussion as a clearly important element of clientelism. In most cases with clientelism in its various forms, the person who offers the service is of some important social status and the person receiving the favor is generally from a lesser socio-economic status (Hicken 2011). One could say that this is to be expected as normal, since if one is to be considered as someone able to grant a favor or service of a certain type, the kind of favor or service the individual himself/herself cannot secure for themselves, then it would only make sense that the person they go to and identify as the patron would be someone of a 'higher' socio-economic status with political clout, and who would be able to secure for the client what he or she wishes. Of course, the exchange of favors or services among individuals of equal class and status can also be highlighted and discussed in this context; however, this would then not really qualify as clientelism, as it would have lost the element of hierarchy and clout.

The final aspect that Hicken addresses could be seen as coming out naturally from the consideration of two earlier aspects, the dyadic relationship and the contingency aspect. This one is that of 'iteration', which is best understood as the ongoing relationship between the person who offers a favor and the person receiving the favor, that is between the patron and the client (Hicken 2011). This relationship can be understood as ongoing because there is an unwritten agreement between two people regarding the exchange of favors. When this action is repeated, there will be an increased sense of trust that the two people will benefit from each other in the longer

term. One way to put it in terms of contingency is to say that the patron provides the favor or service on the grounds that the client will return the favor, and in some sense the client will return the favor on the grounds that this would open up opportunities for further favors from the patron, who will provide those future favors in return for future services from the client and so on and so forth. This kind of expected iteration itself can be better understood in light of the dyadic relationship that Hicken had addressed. This last point, and based on the other aspects that Hicken had presented, sheds light not only on the various aspects of clientelism, but also on the work and framework of clientelism itself.

In brief, based on Hicken's exploration of the notion of clientelism and its presentation in terms of defining it, one can identify four basic features or aspects of Clientelism, in terms of the dyadic relationship, contingency, hierarchy, and iteration, and can also gain some understanding of the working of clientelism as a mode of socio-political exchange.

2. *Examining 'New Clientelism'*

To further explore and understand clientelism, this section will address it in its political perspective and context. As will be discussed in further detail below, clientelism, and in the Lebanese context specifically, can most clearly be illustrated in the context where a political party or an individual exchange a political vote from someone for a service the latter receives, or the promise of a service he/she will receive (Hopkin 2006).

It is rather interesting to look at this from the perspective of an affiliation between a patron and a client: this affiliation binds the two together within a framework

of mutual benefit as each one benefits from the other's favors and services. It may be true that the patron is generally of a higher status and social rank, but he/she benefits from the exchange in the same manner that the client does. This sort of arrangement is referred to as 'old clientelism'.

As societies evolved and political parties progressed along various lines, and as new forms of exchange developed, there is identified an emergent 'new clientelism' alongside these newly developed forms of exchange political development. In this new mode, the clients themselves changed and developed, as they become more educated and informed, and lived in better standards. As such, the old system of 'favors for votes' no longer functioned as simply as it did in 'old clientelism'. These new clients were in some sense more demanding and more persistent in their demands of what they would expect from the patron in exchange for their votes. With this new form of clientelism better benefits were attained and materialized faster. In this context, one may actually consider that with the rise of new clientelism, the aspect of the Dyadic relationship highlighted by Hicken may no longer be applicable, especially in terms of the face-to-face relationship between patron and client.

In this regard, one could argue that 'new clientelism' works itself in to be an almost natural part of governance networks, particularly in the vertical sense of the model, though equally on the horizontal level. On the horizontal level, clients in this 'new clientelism' actually form networks of cooperation that would allow them to then utilize the vertical relations with the patrons to their favor, particularly when 'lobbying' their patron for a certain service or good which could only be procured though some channel of policy-making and implementation.

At this level, new clientelism may start to look more like a democratic process, where 'people' have a say in power and governance; but that is indeed not the case. The clients are still very much dependent on the patron, the *zaim*, and he is much less dependent on them as his position is not all the result of an election process, which the clients can influence. Nonetheless, the elaborate network of clientelism and governance in new clientelism is certainly more complex and perhaps more 'client oriented' in terms of the policy-making and implementation aspects that could come out of it.

3. *Clientelism in the Lebanese Context*

In his article, "Clientalism, Lebanon: Roots and Trends", Hamzeh (2011) argues that, despite the seemingly modernized society in Lebanon, clientelism is still found at the core of the Lebanese society. He further argues that Lebanese citizens find it important and essential to keep clientelism running or in other words, to keep the exchange of services running since both parties mentioned above benefit from the exchange. Hamzeh explains that Clientelism is not only found on the level of the electoral systems, but also at the level of governmental agencies, and in the private sector as well as in public organizations. He also proposes that in the latter decades of the 20th century, clientelism evolved and became more connected to sectarian representations (Hamzeh 2001).

Hamzeh (2011) notes that clientelism continues to be a central means used by Lebanese people, and the relationship between the relevant 'tribal-figurehead' or 'clan-leader' (the *za'im*) and the client persists in modern times, noting that the *za'im* has a role in governance, though he himself may indeed not be any official government officer. Throughout the centuries, and down to our contemporary times, the Lebanese

people have found it necessary and beneficial to keep those sorts of arrangements and services.

According to Hamzeh, clientelism in the Lebanese context can historically be traced to the eighteenth century, when peasants were given their lands in exchange for their loyalty. This later evolved and became connected to the sectarian level. The organizations in Mount Lebanon at the time, whether social, economic, or political, were feudal (*iqta'*) in nature; and as such, politics were in the hands of self-governing feudal (*iqta'i*) families. Under the rule of the Ottoman Empire, the princes or *emirs* (who were the heads of prominent families) acted as mediators between the Ottoman Empire and the people of Mount Lebanon. The *Emir* used to collect money for the benefit of the Ottoman treasury, and was responsible for resolving family disputes within the realm. In that context, he remarks that the relationship among the different representatives at the different levels of 'governance' in Mount Lebanon were based on a patronage system, that is to say a system wherein dispensation of rewards and favors, including public office and official titles, were dispensed by the patron to those who were deemed loyal. Titles received through this system were kept within the client's bloodline, and the relevant political loyalty was equally transferred from generation to generation.

Beyond the 19th century, clientelism in Lebanon continued to thrive and reflect the initial historical context it appeared in, arguing that its has taken various forms since the independence in 1943, including what he references as the clientelism of leaders, and the clientelism of political parties. For instance, Hamzeh (2011) argues that clientelism of leaders appears when a political leader uses *wasta* to turn things in politics or elections to his/her advantage. Those leaders operate through kinship bonds

and use the patronage system for their allies. As such, those leaders would be re-elected to gain further supporters. These leaders gain the people's support by providing those who support them with rewards, privileges, and services they may require. On the form which he labels 'clientelism of political parties', he argues that this emerged after World War II, wherein political parties were being formed on ideologies and principles. In a similar vein to the clientelism of leaders, the services that these political parties rendered through the use of *wasta* enabled them to receive the votes of people that they helped.

In conclusion, and working from Hamzeh's overall evaluative reflection on clientelism and *wasta* in Lebanon, it can be stated that the various modes of clientelism that emerged and continue to persist did not help the Lebanese society become more democratized nor modernized, but instead contributed to the continued negative status-quo of the country and its people (Hamzeh, Nizar A. 2001).

Similarly, Hopkin (2006) explains how clientelism develops and works, clearly noting and identifying the destructive impact in can have on a community and society at large. Hopkin explains that in clientelism, the exchange of services is featured in an uneven sense of power distribution. The first party is of a high social or political status and is generally also powerful socio-economically, whereas the second party usually comes from a lower socio-economic status and is essentially in need of something from the former. The latter wants to benefit either financially or socially, while the *zaim* seem to require nothing less than unwavering loyalty in exchange. This loyalty could, for instance, come in the form of voting for the person, or whomever the person supports (Hopkin 2006). Essentially, clientelism leads to the indebtedness of one party to the other, and usually at a high cost. If we are to dissect this form of exchange we would

need to note that the sense indebtedness, that results from this clientelism, with the supposed moral basis for it, is itself a rather high price. The *zaim* is powerful enough and his position of power seems to be guaranteed in one-way or the other. The citizen, on the other hand, is dependent on the *zaim* and has a weak status; he/she will feel obliged to continuously offer his/her loyalty. There is some sort of unspoken agreement that connects both parties. If this agreement breaks, the person with the weaker socio-economic status will suffer more than the person of power and position. In brief, one could say that though there may some interdependency, it is a non-symmetrical type, because the client depends on the *zaim* in a different way than the *zaim* depends on the client.

As such, this exchange is not fair. In that regard, it can be argued that clientelism does not only hinder the advancement of society but is actually destructive to it. People should not have to seek favors from a *zaim* or a person of authority to advance in their career, education, or life in general. Rather, they should be able to rely on their own qualifications and merit. Clientelism and its mechanism(s) transforms the normal process of social exchange into a difficult and corrupt act. Many people who are unwilling to play the game of clientelism suffer, and instead of having a merit-based system in society, one which promotes ethics and meritocracy, we are indirectly (and perhaps directly) promoting the framework of clientelism. We favor people based on whom they know or how close they are to a *zaim*, or an important social or political figure.

C. On Wasta

Following the above discussion in the previous sections on corruption and its various manifestations and causes, and an examination of clientelism in its relation to articles 18 and 19 of the UN-CAC, we now arrive to treating *wasta* in the Middle East and Lebanon. In reviewing the literature that addresses this particular Middle Eastern phenomenon, a commonly proposed notion is that *wasta* is in some sense "widely practiced throughout the Arab world." (Barnett, Yandle, and Naufal 2013, p. 42), and may indeed be seen as "a fixture of everyday life in the Middle East." (Barnett, Yandle, and Naufal 2013, p. 46) In terms of evaluating *wasta* and its use, the available literature on the subject matter characterizes it as a form of nepotism, or even corruption, though it must also be added that not all treatments of the subject characterize it as such. (Barnett, Yandle, and Naufal 2013) Nonetheless, the overall evaluative tone on *wasta*, both in the literature and in common perception (as will be illustrated in the case study below), leans towards considering it in some (though not all) of its instances as a manifestation of corruption, and connects it to a broader evaluation of the political environment in which it thrives. In the context of this work, the key aim in approaching the subject matter of *wasta* is to identify the manner in which *wasta* may in fact overlap with the parameters of corruption (discussed in earlier chapters), and wherein it could be regarded as a form or facet of corruption. The section below will begin by offering an introduction meant to familiarize the reader with what *wasta* is, what it is used for, and how it is performed, and the manner in which it feeds into and shapes the network culture. It will then move to address the question particularly in the Lebanese context, with a view of evaluating it and considering a possible 'positive' role of *wasta* therein.

1. *Wasta, a Middle Eastern conceptualization of Clientelism*

In their book on the subject matter, Cunningham and Sarayrah (1993) present *wasta* in its origins as the 'middle' or the mediator, where *wasta* is seen as an act of mediation between conflicting parties (Cunningham and Sarayrah 1993). Thereon, and moving beyond the mere origins in history and language, the authors differentiate between two general understandings of *wasta*, mainly in Eastern Arab societies. The first sheds light on the traditional (tribal) outlook of the term, which signifies a *wasata* or mediation, and which is understood as a conflict resolution between two tribes; or in other instances, this *wasata* or mediation is performed for arranged marriages. The second is mostly understood from the viewpoint of using *wasta*, in the sense of pulling strings and using connections, for political or social favors, services, and benefits.

In that context, one common form of *wasta* employed is that of nepotism, which plays an important role in forging many of people's careers in the region. Nepotism herein is used to signify the act of employing people without the proper qualifications (or in some cases with qualifications, but not on the basis of these qualifications) to certain positions based on kin relations. Nepotism is viewed as damaging in its nature and workings, as it could be directly associated with poor performance in organizations because employees are not hired based on a merit system. This would also mean that there is a lack of commitment on behalf of those hired through nepotism, as there is a sense that they will maintain and retain their positions no matter what they do or do not do. Drawing upon the conclusions of the impact of corruption in general on the socio-economic level, the claim can then be made that if and when nepotism is found active in a certain society, that society's economy is very likely to be negatively impacted.

Nonetheless, some scholars (Jaskiewicz et al. 2013; Hayajenh, Maghrabi, and

Al -Dabbagh 1994) nepotism is not strictly negative in nature. If someone

employs family members or acquaintances, the performance might actually be higher

and may positively influence the institution, particularly in Arab societies where

families maintain a central role. The individual's honor is bound to his/her family, and

in this regard one who is hired to a position through nepotism may commit themselves

to performing to the best of their ability to avoid damaging their family's name and

reputation. They may in that way honor the person who hired them based on the

connection which led them to be hired. In this sense, nepotism can be regarded as an

asset in Eastern Arab societies, where it is generally considered wrong and frowned

upon for someone not to help and support a family member if help is needed and if it

can be provided. There is inherent commitment towards members of the family, or

family acquaintances, where it is viewed as a sense of duty to help. This type of

commitment makes nepotism a less negative form of clientelism and *wasta*, and more of

a positive aspect of the social relations maintained in these cultures.

With this in mind, and in light of the general shortcomings of the functioning of

government and governing bodies in Eastern Arab societies (governing bodies which

themselves are subject to considerations of nepotism), people tend to look for their

families for support. It is here worth noting that within Arab societies, trust is often an

asset that belongs to families, and often seen as a natural building block of the family

unit (the extended family and tribe as much as the nuclear family). This significance

that is given to relationships and ties between family members and across family

relationships may be referred to as *wasta* in one sense of the term; and in this sense, one

would not identify an overlap or connection between *wasta* and corruption. Rather,

whereas one would be hard pressed to offer some positive connotation to corruption, this above presented viewpoint on *wasta* carries a clearly positive evaluation.

Wasta is used in different social interactions: it can start at the level of using *wasta* to find a suitable bride, *wasta* used to perhaps admit someone into college, and developing to what may be termed as 'full pledged *wasta'*, or 'pulling a *wasta*', to get hired in a certain position at a certain institution. In other areas of its manifestation and application, it could also be called upon to 'cut corners' in getting things done through the red tape and bureaucracy in the public sector, or alternately help deal with certain issues or 'problems' that one may face with public servants and officials (be it getting out of a speed ticket, or securing a settlement of some illegal construction).

As such, *wasta* is used on all levels of social exchange. Sidani and Thornberry (2013) point out that there is a thin line between networking and using *wasta* to achieve one's goal in the Arab world. To this note, the authors add that it is taken for granted that if someone attains a certain position of power, he/she is expected to help and support individuals from their family members with services and favors. If that person does not help their family members, this would be considered almost tantamount to an act of treachery (Sidani and Thornberry 2013).

2. *Wasta in the Arab World*

In Arab societies where the family and the tribe still hold sway socially and ethically, *wasta* is a very common and natural behavior, expected and demanded in families almost as the given 'modus operandi'. In this regard, one could posit various possible reasons or causes for the continued prevalence of *wasta*, and consider whether this may be due to socio-economic factors, socio-political factors, or perhaps even

factors related to education as such (these are addressed in further detail in the section on the case studies). One general cause identified, or in the least alluded to, would seem to be the generally weak existing government of the states in the region. Broadly speaking, the causes of *wasta* and its prevalence are perhaps best understood as a combination of all of the above, taken together with a historical-cultural left over from the recent days before the establishment of nations and governing systems (Sidani and Thornberry 2013).

In Jordan, for instance, *wasta* remains at the heart of the society. To encounter it, one could begin by looking not at the level of granting favors and hiring to certain positions, but at an even more basic social level of conflict resolution. The dispute resolution process mirrors how a culture is formed and reflects the norms of that culture. The Jordanian people, echoing Arab culture at large, put family and clan first, ahead of any business relation and transaction. In this context, addressing conflict that may arise in families, or across families, is more pressing than matters of political favor and business hiring. Arab culture in general and the Jordanian culture in particular are different in this regard from Western societies. In Jordan, *wasta* is a natural process to accomplish tasks and receive services. It is found at the tribal level of the society, and as such, *wasta* is used for conflict resolution between different parties. It is used to guide two conflicting parties towards a point of reconciliation; and it is worth noting that in such a context, *wasta* here refers to both the act as well as the person. Staying close to the original root of the term in Arabic, the term could be taken to mean 'mediation', or indeed the 'mediator' himself. Al Ramahi (2008) points out that *wasta* was at the heart of the foundation of Jordan and was part of its institution because it had tribal origins. In these tribal origins, people were accustomed to use mediation (*wasta* and *wasata*) to

fix inter-tribal problems, and subsequently *wasta* became and continues to be a natural part of society and social relations. However, the concept and its meaning evolved over time (Al-Ramahi 2008).

While it may have started as basic mediation between parties in tribal disputes, in more recent times, *wasta* is used as an intervention to keep ones' honor within Jordanian society, to address the newly arising situations that would require the intervention of family and tribe, or the giving of service to the family and tribe. Currently, it can take one of two basic general forms: the form of a networking of relations to get an advantage in a certain situation, say in work for example, or the more negative form and connotation, seen as a direct exemplification of corruption (Al-Ramahi 2008). In light of the complex administrative measures and processes, important people in Jordan use connections (*wasta*) to speed up services and administrative practices. In this context, one could indeed speak of a particular manifestation of *wasta* as favoritism in the broad sense. This manifestation of *wasta* understood as favoritism, however, is more particularly related to administrative processes: people use 'favoritism' to gain preferential treatment. Although not directly synonymous, some scholars do refer to favoritism as being similar to *wasta* in the Arab region. The more accurate relational, however, would be to speak of a particular manifestation of *wasta* which may be best understood as a form of favoritism.

In this regard, it is worth noting that favoritism, though generally not perceived as damaging as corruption, can indeed be approach as a form of corruption in the broad sense, and *wasta*-as-favoritism in the narrower sense. Indeed, Loewe et al. (2008) perceive favoritism as part much being a part of corruption. Nonetheless, and with its negative connotation, favoritism still seems to be naturally perceived as an acceptable

way to accomplish things, particularly in relation to the one's dealing with the public sector. Treated as a form of 'corruption', favoritism is different from the act of bribery, for instance, as the latter involves exchanging material goods, such as money, in return for the favor or service, whereas favoritism does not involve an exchange of materialistic goods, but is rather a form of preferential treatment that involves granting favors or services. When someone offers a favor to another individual in Jordan, the latter is not really expected to return the favor but mainly to give support to the former and be loyal to him/her. Nonetheless, if the individual who received the favor was able to offer a service for the who granted it, he/she will most likely be compelled to do so in appreciation, and as etiquette dictates. This act of reciprocity is viewed as a vital quality of the Jordanian society in particular, and the Arab East in general (Loewe, Blume, and Speer 2008).

The notion of *wasta* is also employed in Egyptian culture, and to a large extent it carries a meaning similar to that one encountered in Jordan. People in Egypt tend to use *wasta* to employ people they know, or to have someone interject on their behalf with someone they know (i.e. a *wasta*), to place a person he/she knows for a certain position. Naturally perhaps, and this is true of Egypt as it is of other societies that may employ *wasta*, the assumption is that those employed through *wasta* are not qualified for the positions they take, and that they only got the job because someone intervened on their behalf.

The use of *wasta* in Egypt could perhaps be understood in the context of the recent political history of the country. Political representatives succeeded in creating highly centralized administration after independence, and they handpicked people that they trusted to be in positions of power and decision making. As such, the utility of

wasta here, as elsewhere, was to enhance the power of the rulers; and in that context, a citizen could not really expect to get things done or to receive certain services without having access to *wasta* with a small group of selected administrators who run most of the country's affairs. As such, whether to receive services or to get hired in certain jobs, *wasta* became (and many would suggest remains) the standard *modus operandi*. Nonetheless, and despite the fact that *wasta* and its use is somewhat normalized in Egypt, as it is in Jordan and Lebanon, in the eyes of the general public *wasta* users are perceived to be less competent and less moral than people who do not use it. Interestingly however, and despite this general perception, people (especially from lower socio-economic classes) still perceive its use as acceptable in many cases, on the grounds that one cannot get things done or get access some basic services otherwise (Mohamed and Mohamad 2011).

3. *Wasta in Lebanon*

As discussed earlier in this thesis, the practice of *wasta* can also be said to be a common one in Lebanon. Nonetheless, its use and presence can be seen to have become more felt in the more recent decades and following the end of the civil war. With the conclusion of the Taif Accord in 1989, the state of Lebanon focused on reconstructing the city districts and urban centers (where the effects of the war were perhaps more readily visible), and neglected development in rural areas in Lebanon, and some may say before and after the war (Makhoul and Harrison 2004). This 'uneven development' so to speak, enabled and increased the use of *wasta*. The *wasta* performed during this period of time and after is a sort of mediation used to employ people or to get approval for developing projects in rural and less developed areas. Beyond the government itself,

however, numerous non-governmental agencies expressed a clear interest and willingness to participate in the development of rural areas in Lebanon, which were underdeveloped in comparison to other areas already before the years of the war. While people in villages of Lebanon owned lands, there was increased competition over who worked in those lands, especially as non-local workers from nearby countries got paid less to accomplish the same kind of labor. This discrepancy hindered local the socioeconomic development of local villagers, as the land-owners were more ready to employ foreign workers for cheaper labor. As such people turned to their village representatives (who were not necessarily public officials) seeking support. In some instances, if people were affiliated with certain political parties, they were more likely to get the financial support, and the general presence of poor economic growth contributed to the rise of the place and role of *wasta*. The application of *wasta* in this context allowed people a faster way to obtain material goods, and receive services. If someone is familiar with a person in a position of power, they would seek this person's help to get immediate support to elevate financial difficulties (Makhoul and Harrison 2004).

Makhoul and Harrison (2004) discuss the role of *wasta* in villages in contemporary Lebanese society, notably as a manifestation of 'trading in influence'. The findings of Makhoul and Harrison's, one of few scholarly works on the subject-matter of *wasta* in Lebanon, are significant in addressing this particular manifestation of corruption in Lebanon, and tackling *wasta* as such a manifestation.

The study conducted in this article is an exploratory one through which the authors examine the role of *wasta* in the contemporary life of villagers in Lebanon. The research focuses on the use of *wasta*, and its impact on project development in the rural

areas. The authors explicitly set down that the study is aimed at addressing the presence of *wasta*, as referring to both "the person who mediates or intercedes" as well as "the act of mediation or intercession" (Makhoul and Harrison 2004, p. 25), in rural Lebanon where development is most needed but not provided by the state. In that context, the authors focused on what they termed 'intercessory *wasta*', which they defined as "social exchange, which entails the intervention of a patron on behalf of a client or clients to obtain a service, a benefit or other resources for the client," (Makhoul and Harrison 2004, p. 25). In this regard, and based on their observations over the research period, the authors explained how *wasta* in the villages of Lebanon is used to access funds for development projects.

The central hypothesis or claim of the article is that given the lack of support and provision of goods in the rural areas of Lebanon, people tend to rely on *wasta* to achieve some sort of development, even if the support is limited and minimal. According to their approach and analysis, they suggest that *wasta* thrives in Lebanon because of the country's poor economic growth, its position on the map, and the weak state of the government. Working from these factors, and given the various complexities of the political and economic framework of Lebanon, the authors propose that *wasta* will continue to thrive in Lebanon because it is easier for people to pull strings to attain a goal then to go through the system and normal processes and channels (Makhoul and Harrison 2004).

On the whole, the authors note that the patronage system develops in areas where the state does not support the infrastructure, prompting people to rely on their intermediate leaders to intercede on their behalf in order to benefit from certain goods and services. The patron-client relationship endures in such areas because of need, and

because the state is not helping out its role is consequently weakened and generally disabled (Makhoul and Harrison 2004). Similarly, other scholars cited in the article by Makhoul et al. (2004) argue that the leader (*zaim*) strives to keep the client-patron relationship alive since the leader equally benefits from this relationship as it strengthens his/her position as a leader. It is in the *zaim*'s interest to have the people asking for their support instead of the state's services in exchange for loyalty. As such, political leaders maintain a certain status quo where the needs of their followers are not met or attained "except through them." (Makhoul and Harrison 2004, p. 30) Once *wasta* is performed by someone important, like a political figure, a religious figure, or a political leader, an unspoken agreement is generated. This unspoken agreement is commonly understood as the following: if a *zaim* performs a *wasta* or, in other words, performs a favor to someone, the latter is, in turn, 'owes' the *zaim* and will one day be called upon to 'return the favor' so to speak. Since the *zaim* is nowadays mostly an elected figure, or is the head of a party which has elected officials, the general expectation is to have the person granted a favor to elect or re-elect the *zaim* and/or his/her representatives. Naturally, the relation of exchange is not only political and electoral, but may come up in other areas and aspects.

According to Makhoul and Harrison, and in the context of the underdeveloped villages of Lebanon, the *zaim* is expected to request support from different non-governmental organizations to develop villages under their areas of influence. Those projects, if and when attained, are not necessarily quality-oriented. In some instances, because non-governmental organizations seek more funding on the basis of the money spent on many projects or donations, and consequently the quality of the 'favor' or

'project' is not ensured, and in some cases, the project is neither well followed nor evaluated upon completion.

The dynamics of *wasta* do not only benefit the *zai* directly, but could also grant anyone who with access to the *zaim* the possibility of becoming a leading figure or person of reference in their respective communities. In rural areas of Lebanon, it is also possible for people to attain support from party-representatives where the political parties offer funding or assistance (Makhoul and Harrison 2004). As such, the act of *wasta* could benefit people from different areas of life: it could make a *zaim* more powerful by securing an election or re-election, it could help people benefiting from *wasta* as end users, and it could help someone become a leading figure by securing *wasta* that could benefit many people in a rural area.

One inconvenience of *wasta* is related to those who do not use it because they have no refuge in a *zaim*. Thus, the people who do not have access to *wasta* feel threatened by those who are able to employ it to receive goods and services. Those 'underprivileged' people (in the sense that they do not have access to *wasta*) require the support of the government to take charge of development in the villages, which they cannot otherwise secure. In other words, while in principle public goods and services are open to all to benefit from, the 'system' of intercessory *wasta* does not benefit everyone equally.

In brief, Makhoul's and Harrison's article (2004) provides a clear analysis of the use of *wasta* in rural Lebanon, and support for the hypothesis which holds that the lack of governmental support and provision of goods in the rural areas of Lebanon prompts villagers to rely on *wasta* to achieve some sort of development. However, there is one drawback to this research, namely that it focuses on two villages in north Lebanon and

forms generalization from what is observed in those areas. Although one could say that there is much in common between villages across Lebanon, this thesis believes there are certain differences that should not be overlooked in such a study, differences which if and when accounted for may lead to different conclusions and generalizations. Ethnographic study would be beneficial for research on the topic of *wasta* in rural Lebanon, but it would be more prudent to cover a larger number of villages from different areas in Lebanon to be able to draw more generalizable conclusions from the study.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

As noted earlier in this study, studies and research data on the subject matter of corruption and *wasta* in Lebanon are very scarce to say the least, and it was as such that this thesis relied on a literature review of scholarly works on corruption in general, and some available scholarly works on clientelism and *wasta* in the Arab world generally and Lebanon specifically. The literature review in that regard, however, does not include much in terms of an analysis of the causes of corruption and *wasta* in Lebanese society and public sector, perceptions of these, and the impact and cost of such forms of corruption. In light of that, and in addition to the literature review covered earlier, this study sought and conducted interviews with individuals in various sectors of the Lebanese society that were directly engaged in activism and projects intended to counter and remedy corruption in the broad sense, and particularly in the public sector. The study conducted interviews with four individuals representing the NGO sector, Civil Society sector, the Pubic Service sector, and the International Organizations sector. The main purpose of the interviews was to seek the input of the interviewees on the causes and impact of corruption in general, and on the manner in which certain forms of *wasta* and its use may share certain characteristics of corruption (please see Appendix I for the interview questions, and Appendix II for a detailed presentation of the individual interviewee responses).

A. Synthesis of responses

1. General observations

The interviewees' responses to the questions and their approaches to answering them ranged from the academic to the more applied, and mostly differed in terms of whether to root corruption and *wasta* in politics, culture, or education. Nonetheless, one interesting general remark is that for all interviewees the issue of *wasta* was seen as less detrimental and serious than that of corruption in its broader sense, with some even suggesting that in the current Lebanese context it may actually been seen as having a positive pragmatic role, though they did consider it to be a form of corruption,

2. Defining corruption

With respect to defining corruption, and much in line with the general definitions encountered in the literature, the interviewees generally approached this as being a form of abuse of power for personal gain, with some clearly highlighting the illegality of the activity. One of the interviewees (representing the International Organization sector) noted the difficulty of defining such a complex concept of corruption, and two of the respondents included a discussion of some causes of corruption in the definition itself.

3. On the Causes of Corruption

On the question of the possible causes of corruption, all interviewees indicated some level of political rootedness, only varying in the degree to which they considered this a direct and central cause. One interview explicitly held that the causes of

corruption were directly rooted in and propagated with the politics of Lebanon, whereas the other three did not attach such direct causality. Nonetheless, they did indicate the political atmosphere, the functioning of the public administrative sector, and the fact that the war lords became the political leaders, the secrecy and opacity of policy making, and the general lack of political accountability as being part of the causes of corruption in Lebanon. In addition to the political causal dimension, one interviewee added the presence of bad laws and regulations coupled with a general weakness of law enforcement as being a central cause; another focused on the lack of proper civic education, and added that corruption is somewhat an aspect of human nature that can only be overcome through education as nurture; another of the interviewees focused on the generally inefficient bureaucracy in Lebanon as being a cause of corruption in general.

4. *On the Culture of Corruption*

Asked on whether one could identify what generally promotes a 'culture of corruption' in Lebanon, the interviewees differed somewhat in their response to this prompt. One interviewee placed the culture of corruption squarely with an egotistical mindset that the citizens in Lebanon have, whereby anything is justified if it facilitates a person's getting what they want or need. In addition to the egotistical mindset, the interviewee noted that confessionalism can be considered as a second layer to the 'culture of corruption' in Lebanon. In that context, individuals tend to consider whatever promotes the benefit of their particular sect as equally justified as what promotes their own personal benefits; in fact, the two layers (the egotistical and the confessional) are treated as directly correlated. This aspect of confessionalism and

sectarianism was also addressed by another interviewee, approaching it from the perspective of an engrained culture of clientelism. In addition, however, this second interviewee remarked that the 'culture of corruption' is exacerbated due to excessive inefficient bureaucracy. Another interviewee noted that the 'culture of corruption' in Lebanon is propagated through a general sense of apathy among the Lebanese. This could be connected to the fourth interviewee's remark that the said culture is rooted in a general lack of trust from the citizens towards the government apparatus, and a general distortion of the relationship between the two.

5. *On Defining wasta*

On the question of how *wasta* in the Lebanese context can best be defined, the interviewees generally agreed in their response that it was a form of using connections with someone who is in a position of power in order to promote a personal interest; and all interviewees treated it as a form of corruption in Lebanese society. However, two of the four interviewees suggested that, given the current context of politics and public administration in Lebanon, *wasta* could indeed be seen as having some positive role to play, especially in terms of being a mode of mediation and conflict resolution. Beyond the general agreement on its definition, the interviewees differed to some extent on various aspects they highlighted in their response. One interviewee for instance discussed as a form of networking, albeit a generally non-transparent form; the interviewee also added that one could speak of two types of *wasta*, one stemming from connections and another from money, and each of these can manifest in a harmful or not harmful form. On the other hand, another interviewee identified *wasta* as the main and clearest manifestation of corruption in Lebanon; and a third interviewee also expressed

a similar stance, noting that it was an explicit form of trade in influence and abuse of function. To this, the interviewer added, however, that *wasta* was not as easy to identify and prove as corruption. Finally, one interviewee considered that *wasta* is best defined as using personal connections to promote personal interests, adding that it flourishes due to the current bureaucratic process in place in Lebanon.

6.   *Forms of wasta, and its manifestation in the public and private sectors*

With a more focused discussion on *wasta* in Lebanon, the interviewees were asked of the forms of *wasta* and whether they believed that it manifested itself differently in the public sector than in the private sector. With respect to the form that *wasta* takes in Lebanon, all four interviewees spoke of it in terms of using socio-political connections for a desired end, whether that end be a specific outcome, or changing a specific outcome, or perhaps halting a specific outcome from materializing. In addition to the use (or abuse) of connections, two of the interviewees also noted a form of financial *wasta*, were one would use their wealth status and money to impact a certain outcome or to gain a certain desired end (this is not to be confused with petty bribery).

On the question of whether *wasta* (and corruption in general) manifested differently in the public sector than in the private sector, all interviewees remarked that there is no difference as such, and that corruption and *wasta* work more or less the same way in either sector. Three of the interviewees further noted that the difference is not in the manner of manifestation, but in the impact and cost of *wasta* and corruption: the cost of such acts is much higher in the public sector, particularly as those effected are the citizens at large. Additionally, two of the interviewees also noted that it is easier to

counter such acts in the private than in the public sector, chiefly since in the former it is easier to put in place measures and process for increased transparency and accountability (excepting, that is, private sector industries and organizations that have politicians as their main stakeholders).

7. *On fighting corruption in Lebanon*

It is worth noting that on the question of how best to counter and fight corruption and *wasta* in Lebanon, the interviewees most differed in their responses though on most other questions there was considerable overlap between them. Four distinct answers were offered: one interviewee proposed that the approach needs to be top-down from the political institutions, informed by (much needed) data from the NGO sector; a second interviewee proposed that the best approach would be one of 'public shaming' and scandalizing; a third interviewer, however, felt that no punishment or reprimand would really works, as there seemed to be a general disregard for the laws and 'what people may say' already. As such, this interviewee proposed an approach rooted in 'investing' in youth leadership so to speak, and in promoting knowledge as a tool of pressure on the subject matter; a fourth interviewee proposed that the best approach would be to strengthen the relevant government bodies that are mandated to fight corruption, and to enable them and protect them. The interviewee also added that a form of 'whistle blowing agency' would be an important tool in this regard.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

In view of the academic literature and studies on corruption covered earlier, along with the legislative and international policy-making level of discussion on corruption, there is little room to doubt the negative impact of corruption in the public sector. The definition of corruption, and the economic as well as the socio-political costs and harm of corruption are now a matter of consensus. No matter the divergence in analyzing the causes and roots of corruption, and in bringing to light the various enables of cultures of corruption, the need to combat corruption and to take measures to curtail it are equally an issue of general agreement.

The question of *wasta* on the other hand, is not that clearly addressed and articulated. Primarily, and as already noted, the literature on *wasta* is very limited, and empirical studies are almost non-existent. This may be partly due to the difficulty of studying something which most take to be somewhat immoral, if not illegal, and (as is the case with empirical studies of corruption) is one that heavily depends on perception and anecdotal analysis. Another possible factor, however, is that *wasta*, as noted by scholars who have studied it (covered in earlier parts of this work) is perceived as a natural and historical component of the sociopolitical culture in the Arab countries in general and in Lebanon in particular. *Wasta*, though commonly perceived as negative, is nonetheless not perceived as alien to the culture, nor certainly as illegal. As noted from the interviews, *wasta* is perceived as being a facet of corruption in general, but it is not taken to be as severe and immoral as the more commonly identified forms of corruption such as embezzlement and bribery. Whereas the cost and impact of corruption in

general, and specific manifestation of corruption in particular, have been closely studied

and the findings clearly used in the fight against corruption, clientelism and *wasta* have

not received the necessary study that would allow us to fully examine its level of

coincidence (if any) with corruption. Additionally, and as discussed earlier, in Lebanon

wasta is so closely connected to the confessional and tribal societal fabric, almost as an

integral aspect of said societal fabric, that explicitly holding that *wasta* is manifestation

of corruption would be tantamount to claiming that the Lebanese societal fabric is

integrally corrupt.

In brief, the exercise of pulling *wasta* or offering a *wasata* is so 'commonplace'

in the Arab world in general and in Lebanon in particular that it could perhaps explain

why not much has been undertaken in terms of studying it and its economic and socio-

political impact and cost. Nonetheless, arguments against certain aspects of *wasta* can

be formulated and presented, from the perspective of treating these as manifestations of

corruption. It is equally true, however, that arguments in defense of the use of *wasta* can

be put forth precisely in the context of a socio-political culture perceived as generally

corrupt; that is to say that in a socio-political milieu generally perceived as guilty of

corruption, *wasta* may in fact be defended precisely as a work-around the corrupt

apparatus of the public sector.

A. Arguments against *Wasta*

Wasta is perceived to be entrenched at all social levels in Lebanon, generally

exercised as a means to an end, the end being a service that is rightfully needed by the

citizen and in most cases is rightfully deserved. Due to various factors of politics and

bureaucracy, however, the citizen may not be able to obtain the services without time

consuming bureaucratic procedures. In certain other cases, the legal mechanisms and civil servants do not complete their tasks properly, and this leaves the citizen at the mercy of a relatively powerful acquaintance, who is influential enough to obtain that service for him/her in exchange for some favor or service. As such, the use of *wasta* here can clearly be seen as a case of abuse of functions (as per Article 19 of the UN-CAC), or in the least as some form of trading in influence (as per article 18 of the UN-CAC). Additionally, such exercise of *wasta*, and even if the state administrative apparatus is not functioning properly and efficiently, interrupts the normally accepted procedure of the provision of goods and services, by favoring a few citizens (with access to *wasta*) over the many, and by essentially turning what ought to be the 'public service' of providing what is rightly due the citizens to a system of trading in influence. This could be seen as the first argument against the use of *wasta*.

The second argument against *wasta* takes on a different approach, and addresses the wellbeing of the state. In a developing country like Lebanon, where the power of government is heavily centralized, the use of *wasta* weakens the state. Citizens go through the 'wrong' channels and means to obtain goods and services. The image of the government becomes weaker and malfunctioning, and consequently more people will resort to *wasta* as a normalized *modus operandi*. This further weakens the state, and as the state is further weakened, more and more people will resort to *wasta*. The picture eventually becomes one of a self-perpetuating vicious circle, where the weakness of the state encourages the use of *wasta*, and the latter in turn further weakens the state.

The third argument against Wasta, and perhaps the most cited in popular discourse, is that this process, in most of its instances, supports the undeserved. In a sense, the use of *wasta* helps people attain positions and services they do not necessarily

deserve. For example, the use of *wasta* to hire an acquaintance over hiring qualified people, challenges the whole merit system, which eventually breaks down as more and more people, even the skilled and qualified, resort to *wasta* to counter what they may perceive as the unfairness of hiring those who are not qualified.

B. A Positive Aspect to *Wasta*?

If *wasta* is considered a mechanism that paralyzes functional administrative processes, it is considering the other side of the question and discussing why it is that people insist on using this channel. Since the Lebanese Civil War, Lebanon has not been properly functioning administratively. The parliament has undergone many changes and fluctuations, and in recent years we have been witness to two unprecedented self-extensions of its mandate. After almost 28 years since the Taif Accord, the administration still suffers from the fallout of the civil war. It is true that many reform movements have since addressed, or at least attempted to address, some of what the failures and chaos resultant from the war years, but people still feel they lack the proper procedural channels that would allow them to have access to the goods and services, which are essentially their rights.

As such, and whether it is goods and services or basic functions expected from the central state, people are used to cut through the time consuming procedures to obtain what they need and want. In this regard, *wasta* can be seen as filling certain gaps and helping people to have a 'clearer' and more reliable method of access to public services.

This perhaps can be more readily witnessed in the context of transferring services to certain areas and neighborhoods. Procedurally, there are clear steps in place

that one would take to file a petition for a certain issue with the relevant local government offices or agencies (such as for instance a petition to have a certain road fixed). Yet, rarely would anyone follow that process, as there is a preconceived sense of futility in doing so. Instead, most often, people will simply turn to someone in a position of power or influence that they know, whether *zaim*, local government official, or member of the central government, and raise the matter with them in the context of a '*wasta'* to get the matter resolved.

On a more general scale, a lot of non-governmental organizations with the financial aid of international and transnational organizations could not provide assistance at the local level without being supported by a political figure. The political fabric of Lebanon can be viewed generally as a grounded in politics of sectarianism, which "reproduced itself through interest-based and clientelist coalition building at the expense of institutionalized structures." (Fakhoury 2017, p. 682) This political structure of local chieftains and sectarian leaders impacts the manner and process through which aid can arrive and enter certain areas at the local levels, as they essentially have to go through the relevant persons of power, or their representatives. In that sense, one could make the argument that, *wasta* could be viewed as a tool, or rather as an informal aspect of governance that is used to benefit people, especially if one considers that decision making in this respect "oftentimes articulated itself through elite bargaining and informal deals." (Fakhoury 2017, p. 682)

This study also has to refer back to the original meaning of *wasta*, as in *wasata* or intermediary, which is helpful in resolving disputes between major political parties in Lebanon. The resolution of such disputes often, if not always, has direct socio-economic and political implications, as it allows a return to some sense of a normal flow of things,

whereas not having the resolution of the tension puts the State apparatus in paralysis, so much so that we end up with non-governance defined as 'the government's *inability* to make or enforce rules, or to deliver services' (a negative formulation of Fukuyama's definition stated earlier). In some sense then we could say that *'wasta'*, as it is present and performed in Lebanon, may in fact be seen as an informal part of the *de facto* state apparatus, as in fact part of what allows things to proceed and move forward where otherwise they may stand still, or in the least take much longer to be accomplished.

C. Possible Counter arguments

Despite the possible approaches and arguments one can put forth in considering a positive role of *wasta* in the context of a country like Lebanon, one could still counter-argue that if Lebanese citizens find it useful to use *wasta* to connect to people and find solutions to their everyday problems, its widespread use does not help the administrative state become a more legitimate one, nor does it help the government establish the proper channel to exercise its governance over people.

In other words, one could say that the excessive and wide-spread use of *wasta* itself becomes an agent of State paralysis, to the point where one begins to sense that there are in fact two frameworks of governance in the country: one which is the official State framework, and that is excessively bureaucratic, slow and inefficient, and another which is the governance network of the *wasta* system, and that is basic parlance 'seems to be getting things done'. As such, the common use of *wasta* should be limited or even eradicated, and one should instead look at more feasible and long-term solutions to fix the deficiency of the present Lebanese administrative system.

Furthermore, one could add to this counter-argument to the supposed positive aspects of *wasta* that even if in some cases the use of *wasta* was to help people obtain rightly deserved goods and services, or to put qualified people in the right jobs etc., *wasta* in itself carries an implicit, and sometimes explicit expectation that the person who seeks and gains from *wasta* will in return be expected to give a favor in return, making him/her indebted to the strong person who offered him/her help, which puts the first person in a compromised or weak position. Such a consequence could be said to have a deteriorating effect on the entire social fabric, as it turns the majority of the people into indebted persons to an already strong and influential majority, thus bringing onto the scene not so much a 'new Clientelism' as Hopkin suggests, but rather a 'serfdom', which re-establishes and strengthens the historical Lebanese feudal systems and structures.

D. Governance and *Wasta*

Building on the above, and notwithstanding the possible justifications offered for the exercise of *wasta*, a final and broader counterargument to it may be offered grounded in a basic understanding of governance and the role of the public sector therein. For the purposes of this work, we will work with the definition of good governance set down in by United Nations Commission on Human Rights, where in its resolution 2000/64, it identified its key attributes as being "transparency, responsibility, accountability, participation, and responsiveness (to the needs of the people)"[12], and the centrality of the rule of law is ever emphasized in addition to these five attributes. In this regard, and in relation to good governance, *wasta* will have to have no part of neither government nor any of the social aspects, as its exercise essentially goes against both

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[12] http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Development/GoodGovernance/Pages/GoodGovernanceIndex.aspx

transparency and accountability, weakens the impact of participation, and most clearly does not follow the rule of law, though it may be a very clear expression of convention.

E. Concluding *Wasta*

The above sections of the thesis presented an overview of and discussion on *wasta* and the different modes through which it works. It also discussed how *wasta* is apparent in the Middle East and how it is entrenched in Arab societies, such as Jordan and Egypt, and with a special focus on its manifestation and role in the Lebanese society. Through the discussion and review, this study hoped to show how *wasta* is rooted in how societies are formed and their various cultural norms. We see *wasta* in government transactions, in how government representatives frame policies, and on the level of employment whether public or private. In that respect, clientelism and *wasta* can be shown to be informal components of the governance networks of such countries, and indeed perhaps even forming a parallel governance network.

Clientelism and *wasta* are regarded as possible causes for the exploitation of resources, corruption at various levels, and to the weakening of the governing and administrative institutions. When the government and governance systems are weakened or/and corrupted, this will naturally have a negative outcome on the country as a whole (Cunningham, Robert and Sarayrah, Yasin K, 1993). Additionally, one can clearly see that in many cases, *wasta* is used to overrule conventional rules and procedures. As we presented earlier, *wasta* historically flourished when the governments were weak or when there is political instability (Makhoul and Harrison 2004). This weakness and instability encourages the use of *wasta* and clientelism, and so it goes on. When society suffers politically and economically, there is an increased

use of connections and favors to facilitate services for personal gain. With that being established and with the use of *wasta*, the society will in turn continue to suffer and the government will continue battling corruption.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION AND FUTURE RESEARCH

This study sought to initiate academic research and study of corruption in general and clientelism expressed as *wasta* in particular in the Lebanese public sector. As has been shown in the relevant sections above, the study of corruption, its causes, and its impact, has been a matter of serious endeavor since the closing decades of the 20th century and into the 21st century. Indeed, international policy has become more and more concerned with addressing the matter globally, through various conventions and initiatives. Nonetheless, and despite the fact that corruption in its various is considered to be very much present and even rampant in the Arab world in general and Lebanon in particular, very little studies have been conducted and available to address the causes and impact, as well as propose possible approaches to remedy it. Such scarcity was one of the main limitations of this study, which it attempted to address through interviewing relevant individuals in various organizations in Lebanon working to address the matter.

As a general note, and based on a combination of the key ideas encountered in the literature review as well as key points put forth by the interviewers, it can be stated that corruption is best understood as the abuse of public office for the attainment of personal gains. Such activity is considered to be both illegal and unethical, particularly as it involves the abuse of office and authority with which one is entrusted. To this, it can also be added as an observation that corruption is more likely to occur in the context of inefficient bureaucracy, weak states, and states in transition or conflict. These various observations can be applied to Lebanon as they can to any other nation, for they apply to corruption independent of location. Beyond the definition of corruption and its

possible causes, it can also be surmised that the cost and impact of corruption is high, whether in terms of economic cost, or cost on the citizens, and on the governing apparatus itself. This is true of corruption in general and of *wasta* in Lebanon in particular. As this study alluded to in earlier sections of the works, the presence of corruption and *wasta* in Lebanon results from and feeds into an almost vicious cycle: people resort to corruption because of the lack of the inefficiency on the one hand and the lack of corrective measures and accountability on the other hand; but the more people resort to corruption and *wasta*, the weaker the state apparatus and more the inefficiency. It is for this reason, for instance, that interviewee B proposed the measure of competing with the government sector in assisting people to attain their rights and needs, thus curtailing the possible propagation of the culture of corruption in the public sector. But this approach itself, needed though it may be to combat corruption, again further weakens the state apparatus, and offers little impetus for the government to take corrective measure. On the other hand, and as interviewee D noted, there is little trust between the people and public officials, and as such an approach which would have the matter addressed from within the public sector itself, as interviewee C proposes, would face clear obstacles. The added layer of complexity in the issue of corruption and use of *wasta* in Lebanon is the general sense of apathy experienced by many citizens (as interviewee B notes), in addition to the habit of rationalization exercised by so many in Lebanon (as noted by interviewee D). This is exacerbated further by the deep-seated confessionalism (noted by all interviewees), and that feeds into both the apathy towards the public good, as well as the rationalization of acts that are perceived to further the well-being and benefit of the sect to which one belongs. Taken together with the historical rootedness of clientelism in Lebanese society, and the almost 'natural'

deference to the *zaim* and religio-political figures, this make the matters of corruption and *wasta* both quite prevalent and equally quite a challenge to counter.

In light of that, and in view of both the conclusions drawn from the literature review and the findings from the interviews, this study concludes that there is a pressing need for further research and data collection on the problem of corruption in general and *wasta* in particular in Lebanon. The issue is publicly recognized, and no media outlet, private individual, or public official would be apt to deny it; but the recognition that there is a problem is in this case not even functioning as a step towards addressing it, rather it seems to be part of normalizing the problem. As such, serious further study and further research is much needed to bring to light the extent of corruption in all its forms in the Lebanon, and the impact and economic cost of such corruption both on the public and the private sectors. The gap in the literature remains quite significant, and such a gap translates into the lack of data and studies that could inform possible policy changes. It also means that there is little to build on in terms of informing the direction of objectives of both the public sector and relevant civil society actors in addressing and tackling the problem of corruption at large. As such, this thesis concludes the need for further research, both qualitative and quantitative, and the necessary collaboration in that regard between the public sector, civil society and the judiciary. The various components of this conclusion of the need for further research can be summarized in the below listed points:

- Researchers should begin a consorted effort to study corruption and *wasta* in Lebanon, to compile data, to analyze the causes and effects, and to study the impact of acts of such acts in Lebanon, whether these acts be classifiable as petty or grand.

- The NGO and CSO sectors participate in the research effort, and at the same time step up their work and campaigns in terms of raising awareness of the proliferation of *wasta* and corruption in Lebanon

- NGO's and CSO's should form pressure groups to work closely with relevant public agencies and public servants towards highlighting the need for this kind of study, and the related need to work from the data towards the implementation of the requisite accountability measures, as well as protecting and supporting the agencies and public servants involved in such processes of accountability (this is both in line with interviewee A's and C's propositions that the public sector needs to play a central role in countering corruption)

- NGO's and CSO's should work closely with the legal apparatus and the judiciary in Lebanon in order to promote awareness on the various laws already in place that counter corruption in its various forms, and to pressure the judiciary to enforce said laws and promote transparency and accountability.

In addition to the central role of NGO's and CSO's, as well as the importance of stepping up serious academic studies and empirical research on the subject matter, other measures could additionally be proposed as possible remedies to the general problem of corruption.

The first such proposal would be to move and more and more towards e-governance as a tool in curtailing corruption in general, and some facets of *wasta* in particular. In their article entitled "E-Government and Corruption: A Longitudinal Analysis of Countries"*,* Zhao et al (2015) argue that the implementation and adoption of e-government enhances transparency and increases accountability. In that regard, the promotion of e-government through policy initiatives, which could themselves be

supported by the NGO and the CSO sectors, can be effective in reducing corruption. (Zhao and Xu 2015) In that regard, research shows that with governments that adopted e-governance tools, corruption significantly diminished. If the government in Lebanon was to adopt public administration via e-governance they can improve the delivery of public services by preventing possibilities of interventions of corrupt mechanisms in general, and the exercise of *wasta* as trading in influence in particular. E-governance can enhance the trust of citizens in their government and allows for cost-effective service delivery to citizens. (Ionescu and others 2015)

A second possible remedy that could be pursued is that of fiscal decentralization. Gulsun Arikan (200$) argues that there is enough empirical data that proves how fiscal decentralization (among other variables such as higher public wages, less restriction on trade, and level of education) diminishes corruption. (Arikan 2004) Fiscal decentralization or fiscal federalism assumes fiscal matters to local governments (i.e. municipalities), noting that local government is the closest to citizens it terms of provision of services and tackling the everyday problems and concerns. Whether local governments generate their own revenues, or receive a bigger part of their finances from the central government to allocate and spend at their discretion, the matter would help in curbing the level of corruption in general and *wasta* in particular. If citizens are receiving their due services, and are dealing with their local governments in the context of procuring such services, the possibilities of pulling *wasta* may indeed be decreased, and the more general manifestations of corruption (such as bribery) would be curtailed. Indeed, taking this a step further and combining with the above proposed remedy, it may be best to consider the implementation of fiscal decentralization hand-in-hand with the implementation of e-governance at the level of local governments.

Naturally, such pursuits would not tackle all possible forms of corruption, nor indeed of the use of *wasta*, but they may provide a starting point that could function as a pilot to speak. This pilot would offer the possibility of empirical study and research upon which one could develop further policy suggestions and remedies.

Beyond the above suggestions specific to the role of NGO's and CSO's, e-governance, and fiscal decentralization, perhaps further recommendations may be formulated and put forth. Nonetheless, this study centrally finds that if we do not first have good data and information to build on, especially in terms of the impact and cost of corruption and *wasta*, then any endeavor to counter these would be long and difficult. Additionally, and as noted in the recommendations, this study finds that the crucial initial steps would need to be taken by researchers and the NGO and CSO sectors. The reason for that being that the corruption being addressed, and its sources, is perceived to most occur and encouraged at the level of socio-political figures and public officials. As such, to expect to begin the change there with them would be rather far-fetched, as interviewee D notes the lack of trust between the citizens and the government. Additionally, it would be very difficult to ask the public at large to participate in such measures from the beginning, given the general confessional framework that seems to govern the public, as well as the general sense of apathy that seems to have become a characteristic of the citizens of Lebanon.

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APPENDIX I

Interview questions:

Each interviewee was asked the same series of eight interview prompts listed below:

1. What is the definition of corruption?

2. What are the causes of corruption?

3. How could a 'culture of corruption' be defined, and how does it arise?

4. What is the definition of *wasta*?

5. What are the different manifestations and forms of *wasta*?

6. Is there a difference between corruption and *wasta* in the public sector and in the private sector?

7. What are the possible ways to counter corruption in general and *wasta* in particular in Lebanon?

8. What initiatives has the interviewee's organization taken to counter the various forms of corruption in Lebanon?

Appendix II

Individual Interviewee Responses

        The individual interview responses are herein presented below. Please note that the first interviewee will be denoted as A, the second as B, the third as C, and the fourth as D.

    i.   Interviewee A (selected to represent the NGO sector in Lebanon)

    The first interview was conducted with the president of a leading NGO whose mission is to combat corruption in Lebanon. As a general remark on the subject matter, the respondent believes that corruption is detrimental to a country's socioeconomic development and that it is always conducted with a hidden agenda. However, A held that *wasta*, in comparison, is more simply an act of networking and can oftentimes achieve positive results in the Lebanese context.

    1. <u>On Defining Corruption in Lebanon:</u>

        On defining and classifying corruption, A does not support the classification of under the broader categories of petty versus grand corruption. A believes that corruption in Lebanon is encouraged and thrives because of the support it receives from governmental institutions and agencies. According to A, the definition of corruption in the Lebanese context is when someone tries and takes a shortcut to get ahead of people. The definition also implies a lack of transparency, and a process that favors people who should not be favored.

    2. <u>On the Causes of Corruption:</u>

From A's perspective, the lack of education is the main cause of corruption. A holds that people are corrupt because they are not well educated, and as such may not understand the concept, and those of public interest and common good. He adds that corruption happens when people feel the need to get ahead of everyone to secure their future. Another cause behind the presence of corruption for A is linked to the lack of the Lebanese government's ability and willingness to provide the people with their basic rights. A then identifies a more 'natural' cause of corruption, namely that people are inherently prone to it; it is in their nature to be corrupt if they can get away with it. In that regard, he notes that usually, when a need has to be fulfilled but it is not possible to meet through 'normal' channels, this unethical behavior arises. A poses a question for consideration in this context, asking: "Are people honest because they haven't gotten the chance to be otherwise?"

3. On the Culture of Corruption:

According to A, culture of corruption is the 'culture of begging', and it is a 'me first' culture. When someone wants something, they work on getting it no matter what the cost might be to others. Additionally, inn Lebanon a main driver of corruption is confessionalism. A believes that the latter is rooted in Lebanese society to the extent that a certain economic class of people in a certain confession will feel closer to a different economic class of people within the same confession rather than feeling closer to the same economic class of people in a different confession.

4. On Defining Wasta in Lebanon:

The concept of *wasta*, according to A, is best captured as getting a contract or a service one should not get. *Wasta* occurs when there is no accountability, no

transparency, and therefore no consequence management. He summarizes it as the act of non-transparent networking.

5. On the different forms of Wasta:

In order to illustrate his idea, A outlines two different forms of *wasta*: *wasta* through connections, and *wasta* through money. Some people use money to perform either a harmful act or a not harmful act; and others use connections to perform either a hurtful act or a not hurtful act.

6. On the Difference of Wasta in Public or Private Sector:

According to A, corruption and *wasta* are more serious in the public sector. In the private sector, there is more accountability as people are governed by a set of rules and regulations that ensure an effective and efficient way of accomplishing tasks. If mistakes happen in the private sector, one would simply miss an investment, whereas in the public sector, a mistake can hinder the delivery of public goods and services and will be detrimental to the people's welfare.

7. On Fighting Corruption and Wasta in Lebanon:

A strongly believes that fighting corruption needs to be research and data driven, which is not currently the case in Lebanon. Nongovernmental organizations need to highlight the risks of corruption so if and when they can get the government's support, they will know where to start the fight. Nonetheless, A notes that the fight against corruption is hard and takes time, but people expect to see quick results.

A adds that in the Lebanese context the change should begin from the top with political leaders, and trickle down to the political institutions in order reach the people at the end.

8. On Institutional initiatives taken to counter the forms of Corruption:

With respect to the role A's organization is playing in the fight against corruption in Lebanon, A explained that they had received a fund from the EU to work with five municipalities on creating websites that publish the income and expenditure of each of the five municipalities. He believes that this step is a start to teach people about the importance of transparency of public offices, and can be a first step in countering corruption in the public sector.

ii. Interviewee B (selected to represent the Civil Societies sector in Lebanon)

Interviewer B has been an active member of the civil society sector in Lebanon of many years, as well as being an academician in the field of civil society and public administration. On a general note, B strongly believes that corruption and *wasta* arise from purely political causes and roots, with the socio-political milieu being the arena where corruption and *wasta* can easily develop. The political milieu in itself provides the elements that one may use or abuse for personal gain.

1. On Defining Corruption in Lebanon:

B takes an academic approach in defining corruption, stating clearly that it is the misuse of public goods for private or partisan gains.

2. On the Causes of Corruption:

From the above stated definition, B argues that the causes of corruption are rooted in the institutionalization of the lack of accountability (that is that the lack of accountability has become an organic part of the public institutions in Lebanon), and that was amplified through allowing civil-war lords to become political leaders. As such, B observes that the causes of corruption are political and systemic. The parliament works in parallel to the government, and not as an institute of accountability and checks

over the government; the system itself is corrupt and there is little or no room for integrity. Another reason behind corruption according to B lies in the fact that politicians are not afraid of public opinion and are not accountable to their constituents. Their political decisions are made in secret, at a higher level where the system is corrupt.

3. On the Culture of Corruption:

On the question of how we can best understand emergence of a 'culture of corruption', B claimed that it has to do with the citizens becoming apathetic, and this culture transforms into one of depression in Lebanon, as there is no communal and collective action, which paralyzes any possibility for systematic change. On the other hand, and with respect to *wasta*, B remarks that it can in fact play a positive role in resolving and avoiding conflicts in Lebanon. This is mainly accomplished in terms of thinking of *wasta* as mediation using connections, whereby '*wasatas'* can be utilized to ease the tension and the probability of conflict (even armed conflict).

4. On defining Wasta in Lebanon:

In terms of defining *wasta*, B believes that it is essentially and historically an act of mediation, and that viewed as such it can play a positive role in our society; *wasta* then become a solution to a given problem. However, we the more commonplace use of *wasta* as using power connections and its being a form or aspect of clientelism, B adds that we can consider *wasta* in Lebanon to be the main face of corruption.

5. On the different forms of Wasta:

B believes that the spectrum of *wasta* varies from petty to grand, as it may range from small-scale use of connections to grand-scale interference of politicians.

6. On the Difference of Wasta in Public or Private Sector:

Interviewee B believes that there is more corruption and *wasta* to be found in the public sector; adding, however, that since most big private companies and enterprises in Lebanon have politicians are their main shareholders, one could also find manifestations of *wasta* and corruption therein.

7. <u>On Fighting Corruption and Wasta in Lebanon:</u>

On the question of fighting corruption in Lebanon, B does not feel very positive about eradicating it or *wasta* in Lebanon. B added that the best approach to changing the culture of corruption is by scandalizing the acts and by shaming those who use *wasta* or are involved in corruption in general. It is only then that people will stop participating in corrupt acts.

8. <u>On Institutional initiatives taken to counter the forms of Corruption:</u>

On the role of the civil sector in countering corruption, B argues for a holistic approach to tackling corruption in Lebanon. As such, the initiatives taken are to find direct solutions by competing with government institutions to secure the right of the people through private sector and businesses. In such a way, people would become less reliant on the public servant and as such less likely to engage in acts or corruption or *wasta* to secure their needs and what is rightfully theirs as citizens.

iii.   Interviewee C (selected to represent the Public Sector in Lebanon)

Speaking of corruption and addressing it in general, interviewee C, and having served as a civil servant, believes in the power of reform movements inside the public agencies, and that the change should come from within public offices. Unlike A, C believes that a corrupt act can be easily conducted by a very educated person, and that the rise and preponderance of corruption is not a matter of education or lack thereof.

1. On Defining Corruption in Lebanon:

C defines corruption as an illegal behavior that does not comply with rules and regulations; it is the mismanagement of power with the purpose of attaining illicit wealth and benefit. He further explains that a corrupt act involves a purposeful deed, and notes that grand corruption is the most risky. In the Lebanese context, C also remarks that one of the aspects of corruption is that it guides the selection of political incumbents and decision-making. It is, in other words, subjective and people will ignore rules and morality.

2. On the Causes of Corruption:

According to C, the causes of corruption in Lebanon are related to the complexity of the administrative system, red tape and the bureaucratic political system in place. This bureaucratic system offers a predisposition and a pretext for corruption. Another cause C highlights is the lack of automation, especially since the latter streamlines the governmental bureaucratic procedures.

A third cause according to C lies within the politicians themselves: there is no political determination, and while the politicians would count on civil servants because the latter know the internal procedures, the former will always try to find shortcuts.

3. On the Culture of Corruption:

With the above causes in mind, C acknowledges that one aspect of a culture of corruption is sociological, and this has been aggravated because of the excessive bureaucratic system; in addition to the lack of government support of the people. C adds that another aspect of this culture in Lebanon is the manner in which the confessional system is abused. He notes, however, that the elimination of this system cannot happen over a short time period. A key problem in this regard that C addresses is that of

clientelism, and *wasta* in particular, noting that the current system does not account for merit along with religious confession.

C summarizes the culture of corruption and *wasta* in Lebanon as a chaotic environment where people blackmail each other into receiving benefits and advantages they should not be attaining.

4. On defining Wasta in Lebanon:

C defines *wasta* as a pulling of string or use of connections to receive something specific or to promote personal interests. It can happen in the hiring process or in awarding contracts in the government. C added that in general, and with respect to the citizens, *wasta* in Lebanon is mainly used to speed up a bureaucratic process and cut through the inefficiency of the process. As such, C allows that *wasta* may be seen as playing a positive role, because the government is complicated and inefficient, whereas the use of *wasta* can result in higher efficiency, sometimes being used for instance to simply reduce the time needed for a certain process to be completed.

5. On the different forms of Wasta:

C identifies two different forms of *wasta*: the financial and non-financial. The financial is when one uses their wealth and money to buy support in all its forms; and the non-financial is when one is in a position of power and is able to use this power to change or block the outcome of an event, or to attain a desired outcome.

6. On the Difference of Wasta in Public or Private Sector:

According to C, corruption is the same whether it occurs in the public or in the private sector. The difference C notes is that in the public sector, the cost is higher since it affects the citizens at large. On the other hand, in the private sector, the act is simply business transactions, and its impact is limited to the business arena.

7. <u>On Fighting Corruption and Wasta in Lebanon:</u>

Believing that the change can be initiated from within the government, C argues that the best way to fight corruption is to strengthen the control bodies in the government. C notes that there ought be a redefinition of their roles, and improvements to their methods; in addition, they need to be protected and immune from political interference and intervention.

In addition, C proposes that adopting a whistle blowing agency on corrupt actions should also be established, in addition to offering such agencies the ability to remove the political cover off of anyone who is politically connected.

8. <u>On Institutional initiatives taken to counter the forms of Corruption:</u>

C's work is in a government agency whose explicit aim is to fight corruption through promoting reform in the public sector. As a civil servant, C strongly believes that the change can come from within the government apparatus.

iv. Interviewee D (selected to represent the International Agency sector in Lebanon)

Interviewee D works with the United Nations on various projects that are directly related to anti-corruption in the Arab region and Lebanon. Somewhat as a reflection of that perhaps, his approach to the various questions were clearly rooted in an academic and theoretical level, and equally geared towards realistic windows of implementation.

1. <u>On Defining Corruption in Lebanon:</u>

On the question of defining corruption, D believes that to be a difficult task since corruption is a very complex phenomenon from a legal and political perspective. D explains that the definition of corruption revolves around three elements:

1- Somebody has authority entrusted to him/her in the public or private sector (i.e. the element of power and authority need to be present)

2- There should be an act of abuse of authority committed, and in that regard the power they have is used to perform the corrupt act.

3- There should willingness and clear intent to benefit financially or otherwise from the act of corruption.

With that in mind, D proposes that corruption then is the abuse of entrusted authority for private gain.

2. <u>On the Causes of Corruption:</u>

According to D, the different causes of corruption according, though to simplify we can say that corruption arises due to two main reasons:

1- There are drivers that push a person to commit a corrupt act

2- There are no constraints to make the person refrain from committing a corrupt act

D explains that the drivers can be political pressures, social pressures, economic pressures, organizational or regulatory pressures, or simply temptations.

In brief then, according to D, corruption occurs when the drivers are high and the restraints are low. In Lebanon, corruption occurs because there are bad laws and old regulations, in addition to the lack of law enforcement; therefore, the result is a culture full of corruption. D adds that, as things now stand, there are no sources that could help in restraining corruption.

3. <u>On the Culture of Corruption:</u>

Following from the above point, D remarks that in Lebanon there is complacence with respect corruption. There are three main determinants for such complacence:

1- The rationalization of corrupt acts is high (i.e. people justify and rationalize acts of corruption, for themselves and others)

2- There is an accumulated distortion of the relationship between the citizens and the government (the people do not fight corruption because they do not trust the government to actually follow through on any reform policy or any such possible actions…)

3- The way it was dealt with in the past has increased the lack of trust (people's experience does not feed positively into building trust with those who may be able to fight corruption).

As such, D holds that the culture of corruption becomes as follows: people do not differentiate between private and public property, people will want to take advantage of situations, and people think it is better to follow a leader thinking he/she will fight for them and get their rights.

4. On defining Wasta in Lebanon:

According to D, *wasta* is essentially a trade in influence; and the use of *wasta* is vulnerable to corruption. D explains that *wasta* has a three-way connector:

1- The Influencer

2- The decision making/ decision maker

3- The needy

In brief, *wasta* is an abuse of function: person abuses a function to help another person in need. In Lebanon, *wasta* is more common in places where there is no, or very

little, rule of law. Interestingly, D notes that it is indeed generally assumed *wasta* is present when one is close to power or in a position of power; however, *wasta* and its practice cannot be proven or measured, where that is possible with corruption.

5. <u>On the different forms of Wasta:</u>

D does not believe there are different forms of *wasta*, it is just the one: using connections to influence and/or change an outcome of an act.

6. <u>On the Difference of Wasta in Public or Private Sector:</u>

According to D, corruption occurs in both the private and public sector. Its occurrence is not related to the sector, but rather to where power resides, and to when there is entrusted power.

7. <u>On Fighting Corruption and Wasta in Lebanon:</u>

In terms of fighting and countering corruption in general and the use of *wasta* in particular, D believes that punishing people will not fix nor address the problem. That is because in Lebanon people do not respect the law, and the sectarian factor is very string and more central in Lebanon. As such, D proposes the following as a means of countering corruption:

1- Create a strong pressuring (lobbying) power in society

2- Create knowledge to create the pressure

3- Invest in the youth

4- Invest in younger politicians, and convince them that their political survival depends on fighting corruption

8. <u>On Institutional initiatives taken to counter the forms of Corruption:</u>

As regards the initiatives D's institution is currently engaged in, D explained that it is adopting measures for electoral assistance and support, and working on highlighting the alignment between political and economic powers and factors.