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"What's your story?"
An examination of the emergence of civil society in the context
of Lebanese broadcasting

by

Dina Salha, B.A.

A thesis submitted to
The Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfilment of
the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

School of Journalism and Communication

Carleton University
Ottawa, Ontario
August, 1998

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An examination of the emergence of civil society in the context
of Lebanese broadcasting

submitted by Dina Salha, B.A.

in partial fulfilment of the requirements for
the degree of Master of Arts

for Michael Dorland

Thesis Supervisor

Paul Allaire

Chair, School of Journalism and Communication

Carleton University

Abstract

This thesis examines the emergence of civil society in the context of Lebanese broadcasting. The author argues that civil society is not culturally specific and offers various discussions about civil society in the Middle East and Lebanon. The thesis starts by examining the emergence of a new Lebanese talk show, Let The Brave Speak, on the Lebanese Broadcasting Corporation International and its significance as a forum for civic participation. By looking at the novelty of the show, its source, and the opposition to it, "What's Your story?" offers an updated look at the changes in broadcasting and society in Lebanon. It also provides a historical account of the ethnic conflict in Lebanon that led to the 1975 civil war. In summary, the author considers Let The Brave Speak as a symptom of the rebirth of civil society in Lebanon.

Acknowledgement

This thesis is dedicated to my mother, Alia Rawda Salha, who supported me in different ways through the preparation of this thesis and through my life. Her love and support gave me strength and taught me to believe in myself. My first thanks is to her. I also thank my kids, Jad and Joy, for reminding me of my goals, and H.H for being there for me unconditionally.

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I acknowledge an enormous debt to the individuals who made their voices heard on Let the Brave Speak.

HERE IS MY STORY: "WHAT'S YOUR STORY?"

How did it all start? A phone call. A simple long distance call, in 1995, to a dear friend back home, in Lebanon , initiated this whole project. One question: "So, what's new?". I did not know how important this question is until I realized it is a contribution to a new consciousness of meaning and interpretation of events and how many dimensions it could take . Intended to inquire about personal matters and about relatives and common friends, my question was answered with elaborate information about a new television show whose impact on Lebanese viewers, such as my friend, was so significant that it had to be communicated overseas as a personal new experience . As my friend put it , " [the show] *haqiqi w' fadouhi w' lebnani kaman!* A'la l' LBC, C33" meaning "it (the show) is real and scandalous and Lebanese too! It is on LBC, C33". Driven by curiosity, and expecting a Jerry Springer-type show, I asked for a tape to be sent to me. It was a talk show dealing with sensitive topics and taboos in the Lebanese context . However, unlike Jerry Springer, the show was not about personal disclosure but rather about the disclosure of issues that used to be popular but only in gossip circles and behind closed doors.

Later that year, I visited Lebanon and, to my surprise, the show was under attack from various religious groups, officials, and individuals demanding it be taken off the air. The more they complained , the more popular the show became; the more my interest grew. I contacted the station and interviewed the producer; I attended the behind the scene production of several on-air broadcasts; I inquired further about the topics aired and the history of media in Lebanon; and, I started a journey for

knowledge about the significance of this talk show . The show stopped airing after a year and the producer concluded that the show " is a democratic experiment in an undemocratic environment". Why this fear from one TV show? Why this fear of what people tell, say, and ask? "It is only talk on television!", I thought; It is only a question, I thought.

"What's new?" The talk show El Shater Yihki (Let the Brave Speak)...and it asks : " What's your story?" .

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Map Of Lebanon

Introduction

*I cannot convince myself that there is anyone so wise, so universally comprehensive in his judgement, that he can be trusted with the power to tell others: "You shall not express yourself thus, you shall not describe your experiences; or depict the fantasies which your mind has created; or laugh at what others set up as respectable; or question old beliefs; or contradict the dogmas of the church, of our society, our economic systems, our political orthodoxy."
(Zeitlin, cited in Pfaffenberger, 1996:373)*

On April 26th 1995, The Lebanese Broadcasting Corporation International (LBCI) , on its C33 affiliate station, and in prime time (8:30 -10:30 p.m), launched a new genre of talk show, El Shater Yihki (Let the Brave Speak). The first episode was on civil marriage. The show invited various religious leaders well-known in the Lebanese society; political figures; male and female lawyers,; men and women of different ages and backgrounds from the general public , and also individuals who chose civil marriage instead of the traditional religious contract. In all the episodes, the combination of guests includes a variety of individuals ranging from private citizens to experts and politicians. They are seated in a semi-circle theatre fashioned on the Greek model and the host is in the center of it all. It is important to mention that all the religious sects that exist in Lebanon are represented in the episodes of the show. Conversation starts, debates arise, and "ordinary" individuals challenge, question, and come face to face with the experts and authority figures. Also, sometimes experts and authority figures are invited - successfully or not - to leave their social status behind and participate as individuals with questions, experiences

and concerns. The host makes sure that each individual has a turn in expressing views and asking questions. The focus of the show is the conversation and the exchanges that are taking place. Unlike Oprah or Jerry Springer, the guests are not, but rather the issue remains the focus of the show. Often, individuals are invited to phone the show, to participate and have an input. The show ends with no answers, solutions, claims or conclusions.

Let The Brave Speak continued to broadcast for 43 episodes. The episodes were pre-taped and subject to editing before airing on television. They covered the following topics: Civil marriage (26/4/95), Media Supervision and Censorship (3/5/95), Work and Employment (10/5/95), Premarital Sex (17/5/95), Housing (24/5/95), Insurance (31/5/95), Mexican Soap Operas (7/6/95), The Lebanese and Illness (14/6/95), Divorce (12/7/95), Citizenship (28/6/95), Adoption (5/7/95), Inheritance of Political Positions (non diffuse), Environment (22/11/95), AIDS (29/11/95), The Masonic Religion I & II (6/12/95 and 15/12/95), Aging (20/12/95), Future -Telling (27/12/95), The Lebanese Song (3/1/96), The Devil and Hard Rock (17/1/96), Abortion (24/1/96), Writing History (31/1/96), Euthanasia and Assisted Suicide (7/2/96), Love and Passion (14/2/96), Consumerism (21/2/96), Public Security (28/2/96), Interracial Marriages (6/3/96), Sports, Politics, and Money (13/3/96), Motherhood (20/3/96), Sexual Problems (27/3/96), Forgiveness and Pardon (3/4/96), Racism (10/4/96), Theatre (24/4/96), Work and Employment (1/5/96), Donation of Organs (8/5/96), Archaeology (15/5/96), Life After Death (22/5/96), Drugs (5/6/96), Universities (12/6/96), The Lebanese and The Law (19/6/96), Various Sexualities (10/7/96), Journalism and Objectivity (17/7/96), and The Episode of All Episodes (24/7/96). The show increased C33 viewing rates from

4% to 40% (Banna, 1995; also, refer to rate comparison sheet - Appendix

1 (a); Distribution of weekly audience by station- Appendix 1(b))¹.

After these 43 episodes the show went off the air with the closure of C33 due to government policies on media monopoly. Then, after almost one and a half years, in 1997, the show returned to air on LBCI, still dealing with the same type of controversial issues but with one major difference : The show was now broadcast live². This is very significant because it avoids censorship by governmental organizations and it eliminates editing the show to fit the two hour time slot given to it in 1995. The new direct-to-air episodes exceeded the time frame of two hours and took as long as required to include the various conversations, debates, and opinions, and to listen to guests and callers. Some episodes ran for four hours and some topics took more than one episode to cover.

Never before had a similar program been broadcast on Lebanese television. This show brings to the open topics that are sensitive and controversial in the Lebanese context. Also, it permits an open dialogue among the guests of the show who are not only limited to known or privileged public figures . Previously, Lebanese programmes were confined to educational purposes and to the promotion of national feelings. What this talk show has done is challenge the notion of using broadcasting merely for extraction or reception of information. It showed that broadcasting can provide a space for dialogue between "traditional" sources of information and

¹ Copies of statistics obtained from Future TV. The Future TV is the television station affiliated with Prime Minister Rafic Hariri, a Sunni Muslim. The statistics provided cover the period from 12-18 June and 4-10 December 1995.

² Some of the issues are : Incest, abuse, and suicide.

previously excluded voices and issues. It brings together many perspectives and opinions. It is a representation of a forum for civic participation, and thus it is a part of an emerging civil society.

Other stations have copied the format of the show but dealt with less exclusive issues that are not considered too private and intimate (such as legal property issues, medical problems, etc,) and that fit into the limits of beliefs about popular morals and the constraints of religious values. The issues were discussed in a purely "professional-documentary" manner with minimal civic participation . The difference in the two cases is that Let The Brave Speak brings what is marked as private or controversial in the society (meaning too personal, shameful, threatening to values and norms, and not to be shared in the open - taboos) to the open, to the public and with the public's participation. The topics listed at the beginning may seem very "ordinary" to the West and less entertaining to watch than Jerry Springer, Sally, Oprah, and Montel , but in the Lebanese context they are considered taboo and threatening. This does not mean that these issues did not exist in Lebanese society; it means that they were either confined to print media (a limited "reading public") and to "gossip" circles (a limited face-to-face communication). They were generally confined to private spaces and kept out of public view. Everyone knew about them but no one talked about them in public. Private beliefs, attitudes and prejudices thrived precisely because they were never confronted with each other.

The transfer, exposure, and disclosure of these topics on television via the format of talk shows is very significant. This genre of talk show that does not limit itself only to celebrities and deals with controversial issues is new in Lebanese television programming. " Clearing a space in which ordinary people with "authentic"

experience may face a representative of elites on an equal footing is no doubt valuable" (Liebes, 1995). The resurrection of this public space marks the emergence and formation of civil society. However, the talk show, Let The Brave Speak, has received violent reactions from some politicians and ministers arguing that it was a product of collaboration with the enemy (meaning Zionists). The Islamic Group Organization, the Islamic Unification Movement, and other Islamic groups protested against the show by gathering in mosques and many petitions were signed and submitted to the government asking for its cancellation. Janane Mallat, the producer of the show, noted in an interview with the author in December 1996, that violent negative reactions toward the show originated mainly from certain politicians and some Islamic and Fundamentalist Islamic organizations. She added that the viewers did not complain much and that, in fact, the show was the most popular one on the station. Authorities extended their argument by saying that the topics were too morally threatening to the viewers and that they contributed to the disruption of the "civil peace" of the country (Al-Diar, 1996; Banna, 1995; Annahar, 1995). One important question that this thesis addresses is: why and how can manifestations of civil society be threatening to "civil peace" in Lebanon? and what is the status of civil society in the country and in the context of the Middle East?

Setting the stage: The Case of Lebanon

Examining the history of Lebanon is extremely helpful and important in understanding the socio-political communication process. From this history conclusions about the importance of identity and membership groups can be derived.

Politically, the republic of Lebanon, on the Eastern shore of the Mediterranean, is a nation with an Arab face and comprises a total area of 10,452 Km².³ The population is estimated at about 3.2 million (Fisher, 1995:656). The country contains a number of religious sects, the most prominent of these being the Sunni⁴ and Shi'a⁵ Muslims, the Maronite⁶ and Greek Orthodox Christians⁷, and the Druze⁸. These various ethnic and religious communities have always vied for political power. No proper census has been taken since 1932 for fear of upsetting the delicate political balance amongst the various sects or confessions. At that time, it was found that the population was almost evenly divided between Muslims and Christians. All political and administrative offices were allocated on the basis of the 1932 census which showed Christians in the majority by six to five over non-Christians. It has been recognized for many years, however, that Muslims now account for about 60% of the

³ Lebanon is characterized as having an Arab face because, during the course of its history, supporters of Arabism wanted it to be a part of Syria and the non-supporters of Arabism wanted it to be separate from Syria. The middle ground they reached was that the country would be "with an Arab face" (Phares, 1995).

⁴ Adherent of Islamic orthodoxy, the largest group in Islam. Sunni accept the Islamic tradition (Sunna) and the legitimate authority of the caliphs as the prophet's successors (Dessouki, 1982)

⁵ Adherents of Islam heterodoxy, the Shi'a (literally, faction). The Shi'a originated among the supporters of Ali, the Prophet's cousin and son-in-law, and his descendants. Eventually, important doctrinal differences developed between the Shi'a and the Sunnis. Shi'a are divided into Zaydis, Twelvers and Isma'iilis. The Alawis and the Druze are offshoots of the Isma'iiliyya (Dessouki, 1982).

⁶ A formally Aramaic speaking Christian people, native to Syrian area, who settled in Mount Lebanon to escape persecution during the tenth century. Entered into communion in 1736 with Roman See as Uniate Church retaining own rites, ceremonies, canon law and bishops, but recognizing the Pope's authority (Deegan, 1994:105)

⁷ The Arabic speaking followers of the Eastern Church are centered in Beka'a valley (Deegan, 1994:105).

⁸ A secretive sect adhering to the mystical teachings of fatimid Caliph al-Hakim (996-1021 AD), often considered as

total population⁹.

Throughout history, the strategic location of the Middle East- Lebanon, in particular - has made the country both a crossing-place and a meeting point of East and West¹⁰. Elements of these two cultures permeate all aspects of modern daily life. Its strategic position led foreign powers to interfere in its local affairs. Lebanon has been vulnerable to this interference from as early as the beginnings of the Ottoman rule (1516), and remained so even after independence in 1943. Some reasons for this interference lie in Lebanon's religious and ethnic pluralism; others in the contemporary events of the Middle East and of Lebanon itself. The sectarian differences were formalized and politicized in Lebanon's history in order to ease the tensions and conflicts between the confessional groups in the country (which persists to this day). In fact, politicizing confessionalism simply made matters worse. In Lebanon, the inhabitants became virtual prisoners of the sectarian communal system to which they perforce belonged. The system is based on the belief that each religious community is a separate and distinct entity whose interests are incompatible with those of other sects. Early during independence, a national pact was created to define Lebanese leadership according to confessional division¹¹. It was established that the president would be a Maronite and the Prime Minister a Sunni muslim. The national pact further divided the top posts within the administration where it was

non-Muslim by many Muslims (Deegan, 1994:105).

⁹ In 1983 the combined Shi'a and Sunni Muslim population was estimated at 1.95 million, while the combined Maronite and Greek Orthodox Christian communities were numbered at 1.15 million. The increase in the Muslim proportion occurred partly because Muslims tended to have higher birth rate and to emigrate less than Christians (Fisher, 1995:656).

¹⁰ See appendix 2 for important dates in Lebanon's history.

¹¹ In 1945, Lebanon joined The United Nations. The evacuation of the French troops from Lebanon was completed in

agreed "the Speaker of the House should be a Shi'ite and that whereas the commander of the army should be a Maronite, his chief of staff should be Druze" (Cobban, 1985:70-71).

Also, the Pact guaranteed that the Christian sects should have six representatives at any given level of government to every five Muslim representatives; thus the Lebanese parliament contained a number of members which was a multiple of eleven, divided in these proportions¹². This new political structure led to the 1958 civil war in Lebanon. It is an oversimplification to assume that the basic division in the country occurred only between Muslims and non- Muslims. Groups such as Armenians, Nasserites, Communists, and Palestinians have helped make the political history very colourful and, in many cases, explosive. As a matter of fact, the 1975 civil war was ignited by the presence of Palestinians in Lebanon. As the activities of the Palestinian guerrillas intensified in Lebanon, the country increasingly became a target for Israel's grievances against the Palestinians. The alliance of several sects (Druze and Shi'a) with the Palestinians further fractionalized the population of Lebanon. The initial fighting did not end until an Arab League peace-keeping force dominated by the Syrian army occupied parts of the country in 1976. During the fighting, thousands of people were killed and much of Beirut (the capital) was destroyed. By 1979, a facade of normality had returned to sections of the country. But by the early 1980s chaos reigned again. One result was the creation of a multinational Western force, including American marines, whose function was to supervise the withdrawal of Palestinians from Lebanon. The bombing of the U.S. military barracks in 1982 motivated the

December 1946. In 1949, Lebanon joined the Arab League .

¹² In 1989, however, the Taif agreement stipulated that Christians and Muslims should be represented by an equal

departure of the US army and once again plunged the state into violent civil war. In 1982 Israel launched a full-scale invasion of the country. It was not until 1990 that Syria once again regained the upper hand and that the long lasting war began to disappear.

So far, a brief historical overview has been given. However, if we take a closer look at the Lebanese social structure, we notice that the society has been divided into subgroups based on religious affiliation. Moreover, these subgroups have come to occupy a hereditary hierarchy of ranks which, since 1943, follows the descending order of the Maronite, Sunni, Shi'i, Druze, and other.

The mosaic social structure in Lebanon has been so far described as either tribal, sectarian, community-centred, or feudal in nature. More precisely, it is "a closed stratum based on heredity that determines its members' prestige, occupation, place of residence and social relations. Each caste is endogamous and social relations between members are severely limited and formalized" (Choueiri, 1993:64). In Lebanon, as well as throughout the Middle East, the bonds of loyalty are grounded in kinship and religion. Outside family loyalties, the Lebanese belong first and foremost to their religious confession. Where in the West religion is a private matter, in Lebanon and in the Middle East, religion is a public matter. The caste system promotes sectarian identities and undermines the belief in a common national fate. The country continues then to be fragmented due to lack of political consensus and order. Christians see Lebanon as their independent, separate, national home while Muslims consider it an integral part of the Arab nation (Barakat, 1977:7). Orthodox Christians and Druze see Lebanon as an integral part of Greater Syria (Barakat,

1977:7). These characteristics forbid an open dialogue and promote disagreements on many ideological issues. This results in a lack of loyalty to the country and a nationalism based on religious identification rather than on citizenship. It also results in social stratification and in social relations being manipulated by the government and its politics. This social division is reinforced by the geographical representation (see Appendix 3) of the different religious groups, the educational system, and the gap between the poverty belts and other rich neighbourhoods in Lebanon¹³. In conclusion, any historical account of the Lebanese state and society reflects instability and division. The nature of the domestic conflict from 1956 to the early 90s was mainly a struggle for survival and conservation of identity and power amongst the different castes.

The method of analysis

In the Lebanese context, Let The Brave Speak can be analyzed as a cultural text revealing the dynamics of Lebanese society and assessing its condition. It would not exist apart from the social structure. The interest in looking at Let The Brave Speak stems from its creation and provision of a new social space, a public sphere that facilitates expression of diverse voices, for individual assertion and the discussion of previously unmentioned topics. More importantly, it is a manifestation of civil society. The concept of civil society is my main theoretical framework in looking at the significance of the show in the Lebanon. The show is then examined according to specific elements: its novelty, its emergence on LBCI, and its ignition of fierce

1995:656).

¹³ Map taken from McDowall, David. "Lebanon: A conflict of minorities" in The Minority Group Report No.61.1986.

opposition. From these three elements, arguments about civil society, history, identity, culture, religion and mass media are generated.

The first chapter looks at the various interpretations of civil society and examines the different arguments about its status in the Middle East. Looking specifically at the Lebanese case, the end of the chapter presents reports on manifestations of civil society in the country and evaluates their challenge to authorities.

The second chapter examines the novelty of the talk show and its departure from existing laws and policies on content and presentation. Looking at the significance of the show highlights its provision of a forum for civil society formation in a confessional environment. This chapter provides a detailed and updated account of the situation of television broadcasting in Lebanon.

Establishing that the face of Lebanese broadcasting has been shaped by the quest for preservation and promotion of identity, the third chapter focuses on the LBCI and its roots that are embedded in a history of Christian Lebanese ethnic nationalism. This chapter introduces the idea that the success of the LBCI in the Middle East, and especially in the Gulf area, is an assertion of Maronite identity in the region.

Looking briefly at the situation of minorities in the Middle East in the face of Islamic expansion, and specifically at the history of Maronites in Lebanon and the loss of their territorial struggle during the civil war, the chapter argues that through a very successful handling of mass media, international and satellite communication, they have won a distinct recognition and representational expansion that goes beyond territorial borders. This increasing recognition of the Christian Maronite identity - through the popularity of the LBCI in the region - is discussed in terms of symptoms of

modernity¹⁴.

This success presents threats to other traditional groups within the Lebanese contexts, namely Islamic groups. Although this conflict of identities is a conflict over the power structure in Lebanon, it also represents cultural and theological differences. Chapter 4 looks at the interface of Islam with concepts of civil society, knowledge and truth, and individualism. It provides tentative explanations for the opposition to bringing private issues to public knowledge.

The conclusion puts into perspective the interrelation of all the previous issues and their contribution to the present events in Lebanon and the assessment of the status of civil society formation in the future of the country.

"What's your story?" is a story-teller by itself of a past history of conflict and a future history of challenge. Once upon a time....

¹⁴ Such as individualism, liberalism, and separation between public and private.

CHAPTER 1

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND ON CIVIL SOCIETY: THE MIDDLE EAST, THE LEBANON.

The familiar image of the Middle East transmitted through various media and constructed through various stereotypes suggests that civil society has little resonance in the region (Shaheen, 1984; Roberts, 1998)¹. Does the reality of civil society exist in the Middle East? If not, what are the forces that prohibit its emergence in the region? If it does, what are the symptoms of its emergence and what are its characteristics? How is it manifested?

To answer these questions, one must realize that the Middle East is not a homogeneous region. The Middle East comprises many countries of different cultures within which many other cultures also exist. It is very simplistic to assume that the Middle East is composed of one kind of people, such as Muslims only, who follow only one set of rules. On the contrary, the region is a combination of various peoples, cultures, religions, traditions, and ethnicities. For instance, Lebanon is completely

¹ For an excellent review of books written on Islam consult "The Politics of Islam" by P.W.Roberts in The Globe And Mail. The books reviewed are :

- 1) Beyond Belief: Islamic Excursions among the Converted Peoples. By V.S. Naipaul
- 2) In the Shadow of the Prophet: The Struggle for the Soul of Islam. By Milton Viorst
- 3) The Challenge of Fundamentalism: Political Islam and The new World Disorder. By Bassam Tibi
- 4) Shattering The Myth: Islam Beyond Violence. By Bruce B. Lawrence

different from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, from Iraq, from Morocco, from Egypt, and so forth. Social structure, history, government laws and practices, geographical location, language and dialect, and many other factors contribute to that difference. Furthermore, many divisions exist within the same religion such as the Sunni and Shi'i sects in Islam. Moreover, not all Arabs are Muslims; many Arabs are Christians or Jews for example. The point is that the Middle East region cannot be seen as only one unified entity. Indeed, many of the difficulties in Middle East politics stem from a desire to manufacture a single identity². More importantly, it is crucial not to classify the Middle East as the opposite to the West. This dichotomy is misleading for it suggests a comparison along only one trajectory of development - that of the Western model. This is a very important point in studying adequately the question of civil society in the Middle East.

Interpretations of Civil Society

Civil society in the Middle East has emerged as an important topic for debate among Western and Middle Eastern scholars alike³. Moreover, the topic has gained popularity among citizens, policy makers, and activists as well (Schwedler, 1995:2 ; Norton, 1995:8 -11). Before delving into debates about civil society in the Middle East, though, it is useful to look at the several competing definitions of what this concept involves. John Hall points out that "civil society is complicated, most notably in being at one and the same time a social value and a set of social institutions"

² This is partly related to the project of Pan-Arabism initiated by Egypt's President Abdul Nasser in the 60s.

³ Civil society in the Middle East emerged as an important topic because it is, at least theoretically, related to modernization, political reform, and democratization. Yet, when it comes to the Middle East, the widespread assumption seems to be that there is little to say about civil

(1996:2). According to the Concise Oxford Dictionary of Sociology, it refers mainly "to public life rather than private or house-hold based activities; it is juxtaposed to the family and the state; and it exists within the frame work of the rule of law. Most authorities seem to have in mind the realm of public participation in voluntary associations, the mass media, professional associations, trade unions and the like" (Marshall ed., 1994:55-6).

The writings of John Locke, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, Karl Marx, Antonio Gramsci, and Jurgen Habermas are important to the understanding of civil society. Their general idea of civil society is that it occurred as a result of the rise of capitalism. The Lockean interpretation of civil society sees the latter playing an important role "as the sphere of social activities men entered in order to protect their individual and property rights" (Schwedler, 1995:3)⁴. This conception arose from discussions in emerging capitalist countries and the passage from *Gemeinschaft* to *Gesellschaft*⁵ ⁶. These German terms generally refer to Ferdinand Tonnies' "community" and "society" couplet, although the latter is sometimes also translated

society and most of it negative.

⁴ Schwedler (1995:25) refers to Pateman, "The Fraternal Social Contract" for an excellent discussion of gender discrimination of various conceptualizations of civil society. Pateman (1988:10) explores the "silence about the part of the story which reveals that the social contract is a fraternal pact that constitutes civil society as a patriarchal or masculine order". Also see "Gender and Civil Society" (1993:22-26), an interview with Suad Joseph, in the Middle East Report, no.183, July-August, 1993.

⁵ *Gemeinschaft* is the world of close, emotional, face-to-face ties, attachment to place, ascribed social roles and status, and a homogeneous and regulated community (Marshall, 1994:196).

⁶ *Gesellschaft* is linked with urbanism, industrial life, mobility, heterogeneity, and impersonality. In essence, *Gesellschaft* and *Gemeinschaft* are concepts that constitute ideal types, as do similar notions of tradition and modernity. Both are to be found in different proportions in most social

as "association"⁷. The term *bürgerlichen gesellschaft* (civil society) captured the idea of both "civil" and "bourgeois". Hegel sees civil society as interposed between the individual and the state and as a temporary phenomenon, to be transcended when particular and common interests combined. Hegel argues, as Jillian Schwedler explains, "that civil society developed as a means for protecting the individual rights and needs of the privileged to guarantee freedom in economic, social and cultural spheres. The organization and cooperation of various groups within civil society enable it to operate outside the state's coercive apparatus" (1995:3). Marx developed Hegel's interpretation to include the notion of production and the understanding that civil society develops alongside capitalist expansion: "Civil society as such only develops with the bourgeoisie; the social organization evolving directly out of production and commerce" (Tucker, 1972:163). Others, such as Gramsci, argue that the major vehicle for bourgeois hegemony is civil society. Gramsci distinguishes this social hegemony located within the role of non-state organizations from the use of force, as the principal means of maintaining social order in capitalist societies. This means that the state exercises power over society through physical force while civil society does it through the control of organizations of civil society itself. For Hegel and Gramsci, civil society is theoretically distinguished from political society where both government institutions and political parties aim to play a direct role in government. Civil society for them is a sphere where citizens want to protect specific interests. However, some groups may play both roles (Shwedler, 1995:11).

relations (Marshall, 1994:196-97).

⁷According to Tonnies' thesis on European modernization, the passage from *Gemeinschaft* to *Gesellschaft* proceeds through a rationalizing process, involving a move from relationships based upon family and guild to those based on rationality and

In his early work on the public sphere, Habermas argues that even though the civil society of the 17th and 18th centuries was based on capitalist market economy, it also included institutions of sociability and discursive formations loosely related to the economy. "Transformations of the economy nonetheless produced transformations in all of civil society" (Calhoun, 1996:7-8). However, Habermas also argues that as civil society develops and becomes more inclusive, it emerges as a non-economic, populist component and can only be fully conceptualized once the state is constituted as an impersonal locus of authority (Schwedler, 1995:4; Calhoun, 1996:8). This means that organizations of civil society can challenge the state over issues regarding the public interest and can practice rational and critical reasoning; the public sphere encourages rational will-formation (Calhoun, 1996:21-2; Schwedler, 1995:4; Hall, 1996:6). In other words, it is not just a bourgeois public sphere:

Because, on the one hand, the society now confronting the state clearly separated a private domain from public authority and because, on the other hand, it turned the reproduction of life into something transcending the confines of private domestic authority and becoming a subject of public interest, that zone of continuous administrative contact became "critical" also in the sense that it provoked the critical judgment of a public making use of its reason.

(Habermas, in Calhoun, 1996:9)

With the work of Habermas, the classical idea of civil society as being a result of capitalism begins to be overshadowed by the idea that it is rather a sphere of rational and democratic social interaction. Habermas notes that, in addition to being a sphere of pluralist activity, civil society broadens to include all nonviolent activity between the citizens and the state. In this view, civil society becomes a key element in the calculation (Marshall, 1994:196).

transition from authoritarianism to democracy. Schwedler notes that " the purpose of civil society is not to allow the bourgeoisie to protect their interests against encroachment from the state, but to enable all citizens to insure a degree of government accountability...Civil society emerges with the resurrection of the public sphere" (1995:5). The author remarks that "when individuals and groups begin to challenge the boundaries of permissible behavior - for example, by speaking out against the regime or demanding a government response to social needs - civil society begins to take shape" (Schwedler, 1995:5).

Furthermore, civil society entails a set of rules governing behavior. Larry Diamond defines it as " the realm of organized social life that is voluntary, self generating, (largely) self-supporting, autonomous from the state, and bound by a legal order or set of shared values" (Schwedler, 1995:6). Civil behavior of members towards each other is central to civil society. Concepts of civility, citizenship, equal participation, and tolerance refer to some main ideals of democracy. In contemporary debates, according to Schwedler, civil society represents two ideals (1995:6):

First, the rights of each member of a community or nation to interact with a representative government; and , second, the establishment of a set of rules of acceptable, tolerant behavior between civil society and the state as well as within civil society. In particular, tolerance towards those with different views is paramount.

The degree of adherence to these normative components is a useful indicator of the existence or absence of civil society in specific areas. However, civil society has enemies; they render difficult the task of achieving tolerance and civility. John Hall lists five enemies of civil society. He classifies them as enemies because of the power of their views. They are despotism, the revival of the tradition of republican civic

virtue, certain forms of nationalism, ideologies, and cultural ideals (1996: 7-15).

The first enemy is despotism. Despotism can be understood through the writings of Montesquieu and Tocqueville⁸ ⁹. Montesquieu presents the notion of fear as a suppressive element of individuals. Tyranny and absolutism cause "enslavement of the heart and mind" and only the voice of fear is heard¹⁰. People do not act as themselves but as subjects suppressed by fear¹¹. Also, Tocqueville, in his systematic comparison between France and the United States, warned against the "tyranny of the majority", by which "every citizen, being assimilated to all the rest, is

⁸ See *Persian Letters* where Montesquieu anticipates the master-slave paradox in demonstrating the self-defeating quality of despotic rule (Hall, 1996:7).

⁹ Tocqueville is an early French sociologist who travelled to the United States in 1831-2. He came to study the penal system and developed an interest in American democracy. In comparing France and United States, he found that, in France, the post-revolutionary history revealed the dangers of trying to impose equality without first establishing the liberty of self-government. In the United States, he found that the constitutional principle of federalism provided for a multiplicity of intermediate voluntary associations which people may access. In both cases, Tocqueville warned of the "tyranny of the majority". This could be found in His Classical work *Democracy in America* (1835-40) (Marshall, 1994:534-5).

¹⁰ Quoted from *The Persian Letters*. This is where Rica, the friend of Usbek, notes that "being so firmly in possession leaves us nothing to desire" (Hall, 1995:8). Also, Rica tells his master that freedom enables individuals to speak, referring to French women:

I knew nothing about women until I came here. I have learnt more about them in a month than I should have done in thirty years inside a seraglio. With us everyone's character is uniformly the same, because they are forced. People do not seem what they are, but what they are obliged to be. Because of this enslavement of heart and mind, nothing is heard but the voice of fear, which has only one language, instead of nature, which expresses itself so diversely and appears in so many different forms.

(Montesquieu, *The Persian Letters*,
letter 63, in Hall, 1996:8)

¹¹ In *The Spirit of the Laws*, Montesquieu emphasizes the notion of fear and despotism (in Hall, 1996).

lost in the crowd" (Hall, 1995:7). His basic proposition is that democracy undermines hierarchy. This discourages the formation of intermediate groupings between the individual and society. If unchecked, tendencies towards centralization and anomic individualism may result in an authoritarian state.

The second enemy faced by civil society is the revival of the tradition of republican civic virtues. Virtues are usually defined as qualities that hold great moral value or as the internal analogue of a set of moral principles . They amount to dispositions to obey or follow what the rules prescribe. For example, ancient ethics recognized four cardinal ethical virtues : temperance, courage, justice, and practical wisdom. In the Middle Ages, Christian philosophers added three theological virtues: faith, hope, and charity or love, to the list of major virtues (Honderich, 1995:901). Hall argues that the views of civil society and civic virtue are opposed to each other. The problem is that virtues locate knowledge and goodness in the individual rather than in the debate amongst individuals. Virtues are accepted more as dispositions than as skills or capacities. Another explanation of that opposition is found in Seyla Benhabib's "Models of Public Space: Hannah Arendt, The Liberal Tradition, and Jurgen Habermas" (in Calhoun, 1996:86-7). Benhabib (1996) explains that - unlike the advocates of civil society - the supporters of civic virtue formulate their views of participatory politics excluding the institutions of modern civil society with their highly differentiated spheres of economy, law, family, politics and civil life. Also, the difference could be seen in the understanding of public space. In the modern conception of civil society, public space is understood " democratically as the creation of procedures whereby those affected by general social norms and collective political decisions can have a say in their formulation, stipulation, and adoption"

(Benhabib,1996:87). The civic virtues perspective understands it as a place of competition for the political elite. The idea behind this differentiation is that adherence to civic virtues may eliminate individual choices and restrain the voices of civil society.

The third enemy is one form of nationalism ; Hall defines this form as the varied practices by means of which complete social homogeneity is created. These practices include mass population transfers, forced integration, ethnic cleansing, and genocide (1995:12) . This form of nationalism links a single nation to its own state. Hall adds that " such nationalism can strengthen , create or subverts states; whatever the case, its characteristic practices make it opposed to civil society"(1995:12) . Gellner and Bryant look at this form of nationalism in a different way (Hall, 1995:12-13). Gellner considers it as an "occasional friend" to civil society because "nationalists can stand close to liberalism when they are part of a struggle against a despotic regime". He also implies that homogeneity is a background condition for civil society as much as it is for industrial society¹². This is problematic because Gellner explains nationalism in socioeconomic terms: he sees nationalism as being caused by the needs of industrialism. Bryant notes that nation can be imagined in civic as well as in ethnic terms. "Ethnic imagining even in combination with social homogeneity can lead to continuing incivility" (Hall, 1995:13)¹³. This is true especially when homogeneity is

¹² Gellner implies that thanks to the depredations of Hitler and Stalin, countries such as Slovenia and Poland have a better chance of establishing civil society than does Ukraine or Russia (Hall, 1996:12).

¹³ This is true of the situation in Lebanon regarding the historical struggles between Maronite Christians and Muslims. Maronite Christians are seeking to establish a state and a nation at the same time based on their view of Lebanon while the Muslims want to include Lebanon

given the value of purism in ethnicity rather than the value of equal participation for dialogue.

The fourth enemy is ideology. Hall says it has consequences. Drawing on the Nicos Mouzelis' chapter, "Modernity, Late Development and Civil Society", Hall gives the example of both Marxism and nationalism and how they have been used as strategies of forced development (Hall, 1995:224-249). The argument follows that this late development is an enemy of civil society for it concentrates economic and political power massively in the name of total ideologies. Any "totalizing" belief excludes the possibility of debate and is therefore an enemy of civil society. This is true of religion, scientism or ideology¹⁴.

The final enemy is cultural. Hall refers here to cultural ideals such as the Indian cast system that condemns people to a status order (1995: 14). Gellner, in the "Importance of Being Modular", refers to Islam as caging individuals in kinship groups (Hall, 1995:32-55). In both cases, the emphasis on escaping preset frames or "social cages" is important - for civil society depends upon the ability to do so.

On Civil Society In The Middle East

amongst the Arab nations. The ethnic nationalism of the Maronite Christians caused division and intolerance amongst Christians themselves. Some Christians did not find the claims of the Maronites to be representative of their own views and aspirations. In this example, religion is taken as an ethnic marker. This case exemplifies how 'religion of the citizen' is a "public matter of the individual's relation to society and government" (Bryant, 1996:149).

¹⁴ "Totalizing" beliefs work according to the following logic: if I know the truth why would I debate with you? Shouldn't I "enlighten" you?

Many scholars find the enemies of civil society to be characteristic of the Middle East and blame them for the lack or weakness of civil society in the region. These scholars are usually referred to as Orientalists because they focus on cultural and civilizational factors such as primordialism, traditionalism, and Islam as preventing the formation of democratic governments. Others find that fragments of civil society have the potential to achieve eventual political reform. However, it is important to note that the existence of civil society does not presuppose the presence of democracy. Democratic processes- equality, participation, tolerance, political inclusion - may exist within civil society but not as a general political practice of the state or government. This explains the constant challenges of civil society to authoritarian rules. Civil society is fundamental to the transition from authoritarianism to democracy because it enables citizens to insure a degree of government accountability.

The Orientalist View

Islam As Anti-Civil Society

Drawing on the first argument that civil society is weak or absent in the Middle East, scholars such as Elie Kedourie (1992) and Bernard Lewis (1994) share the opinion that this weakness is a consequence of the Islamist tradition in the region. They both argue that the Islamist tradition lacks the organizational nature of the West. Kedourie explains that, in the West, citizens organize themselves in a multiplicity of groups and associations while:

there is nothing in the political traditions of the Arab world - which are the political traditions of Islam - which might make familiar, or indeed intelligible, the organizing ideas of constitutional and representative government. The notion of the state..., the notion of popular sovereignty..., the idea of representation, of elections, of popular

suffrage, of political institutions being regulated by laws laid down by a parliamentary assembly...of society being composed of a multitude of self-activating, autonomous groups and associations - all of these are profoundly alien to the Muslim political tradition.

(Kedourie,1992 :4; Schwedler,1995:7)

Supporting Kedourie, Lewis says that " Islamic history shows no councils or communes, no synods or parliaments, nor any other kind of elected or representative assembly... There was no point, since the need for a procedure of corporate, collective decision never arose" (1994:45-6; Schwedler, 1995:7). However, both authors note that social and political organizations exist in the region but are fragmented and are not based on the idea of tolerance and pluralism. Some do present a form of challenge to the authorities but are weakened by traditional forces such as kinship, sectarian lineage, and religious affiliations - therefore, these organizations are not seen as contributing to civil society. In fact, Ernest Gellner finds that secularization is the missing link in the world of Islam for the development of a civil society. He concludes that: "Islam... exemplifies a social order which seems to lack much capacity to provide political countervailing institutions or associations, which is atomized without much individualism, and operates effectively without intellectual pluralism" (1994:29). He adds that "the *Umma* defined as a shared commitment to the implementation of the Islamic Law" is believed to be the one to hold the ruler to account ¹⁵. Sharing this function with a civil society seems unrealistic and impious: "the state can be called to account for violation of the divinely ordained Law, or for the failure to implement it, but not for some additional requirements imposed by the popular as opposed to the divine will" (Gellner,1994:28).

¹⁵ The *Umma* is the Muslim version of nation. The *Umma* is not defined by territorial borders but in terms of membership

Apologists of Islam: civil society is too culturally specific

Other scholars agree that the Arab world has not developed the associations to form civil society but they do not blame culture and Islam for its failure; they say that state dominance and despotic rule - a historical characteristic of the Arab world - prevent the formation of autonomous corporate institutions which operate with minimal state control^{16 17}. Despotism aims to eliminate all opposition to its authority, as in Iraq and Sudan. Moreover, the organizations that do exist have failed to organize themselves in an effective way in order to challenge the authorities¹⁸. This pessimistic view concludes that, without strong challenges, these organizations are powerless and no hope of change or the emergence of democratic politics is expected in the future. Some scholars, such as Hamid Mowlana, Serif Mardin, and Adam Seligman - take this view further to reject the usefulness of studying civil society in the

in Islam.

¹⁶ Elia Zureik is one of these scholars. He rejects the Orientalists' focus on religion and concludes that Arab states had not developed institutions of civil society by the 1980s. See his article "Theoretical Considerations for a Sociological Study of the Arab State". Others, such as Lewis in The Shaping of the Modern Middle East, note that the region existed under autocratic rules until ideas of parliament or representative assembly were introduced to the region in the aftermath of the French Revolution (which is considered the historical time-mark for the transition from a traditional society to a modern one).

¹⁷ The argument stating that despotism is a characteristic of the Arab world is problematic. If despotism is a characteristic of the region, then why is it so? Isn't it because of cultural and religious reasons? And doesn't this return us to the previous position?

¹⁸ Their failure to organize themselves in an effective way is mainly because of the strategy of the state to eliminate all potential opposition. This does not mean that civil society groups have not mounted significant challenges to the ruling governments; it means that the fear of violent state actions make these challenges fewer and less successful.

Middle East mainly because the concept is too culturally and historically specific . They provide a critique of studying civil society in the region.

Skeptics of the study of civil society in the Arab world highlight mainly the following points: a) Civil society originated in the West; b) Exporting Western models to different contexts does not capture the diversity present in the Middle East thus the idea of civil society cannot be understood outside of its context; and c) the development of other kinds of solidarity communities in the Middle East.

Schwedler explains that skeptics find applying the Western model of civil society difficult especially when its logic goes as follows (1995:15):

1. Civil society comprises voluntary organizations such as trade unions, professional associations, and minority right groups.
2. Since such groups in the Middle East are few in number and generally ineffective, civil society is, for all practical purposes, nonexistent in the region.

This attitude causes difficulty because it seems automatically to describe the Middle East as 'traditional' and 'backward' in comparison with the 'modern' and 'civilized' West. Adam Seligman (1992), in The Idea of Civil Society, argues that civil society has specific historical roots in the West, namely, the Enlightenment (1992). He argues that the balance between reason and religious revelation in the specific Western historical context infused the notion of civil society. This historical specificity no longer provides an adequate contemporary argument for civil society. Moreover, the development of civil society in Europe is based on the differentiation between public and private interests and spheres. Public sphere and private space, Seligman argues, " must exist in a dialectical unity for sense to be made of either one"

(1992:27) ¹⁹ . However, he notes that civil society can only be understood as a particularistic moral vision, for the characteristics of civil society are "rooted in a sphere of values predicated on the mutuality of individual recognition" (1992:27). For these reasons, Seligman finds it problematic to transfer the Western conceptualization of civil society to foreign grounds and expect similar social and political trajectories.

His view accuses civil society of being a Western concept. Mowlana, like Seligman, argues that Islam and the Enlightenment have two opposite trajectories (1993;1996;1997). Mowlana also argues that the notion of community in Islam makes no sharp distinction between public and private because the Umma is the political life of the individual and the Islamic society (1996;1997). The problem with this kind of analysis is that it over-concentrates on the historical origins of civil society²⁰. There is no denial that it has Western origins but one of the major characteristics of civil society is that it is divorced from all particular contexts (which does not make it genuinely Eurocentric).

Serif Mardin shares the same view as Seligman and Mowlana when studying civil society and Islam (1995:278-300). He outlines the development of civil society in the Western setting and tests its relevance for Muslim culture and more specifically for the history of the Ottoman Empire and modern Turkey. He describes civil society

¹⁹ Also quoted in Schwedler (1995:15-17).

²⁰ If the argument is that the Enlightenment occurred only because of specific conditions at a specific time in Europe, then isn't this implying that historical consciousness derives only from historical accidents beyond our control? that context determines knowledge? How then are slave revolts explained? changes in the economic base of society? the deliberate and self-conscious choice of belief or action by various groups?

as a "Western dream" because it has a particular structural manifestation of human agency specific to the West and in the frame of rationalized law (1995:279-291). He states that there was no structural equivalent in the Middle East and that civil society does not translate into Islamic terms. It was not until the Ottoman Empire that a systematic effort at modernization and secularization was undertaken. This influence of colonialist projects interfered in the region's social-political trajectory²¹. Instead of looking for civil society in the Middle East, Mardin prefers to identify two "dreams" : A Western one and an Islamic one. The Western dream , Mardin finds, was driven by rational - legalism . The acceptance of the notion of law and the well -established idea that political rights and obligations stemmed from property are very important in the development of civil society in Europe. In Europe, monarchical authority was eroded by ideas of property. Merchants played an important role in expanding their legally protected sphere of action and created a community of interests between the town and the monarchy. The rights of property were a key element in the constitution of civil society. Later in history, all - including King and Parliament- were committed to legal standards that provided a constant conceptual framework for political action. Moreover, a radical anti-religious definition of man surfaced: "We are not able to attain absolute certainty and truth...no philosophical system can give us the absolute truth or pretend to do so; each gives only a portion of the truth" (Mardin, 1995:283). These historical facts, intertwined with social and economic forces, do not appear in the history of Islam, Mardin argues. The Muslim "dream" relied on the charismatic authority of the leader and on the full submission to the political obligations set by the Qur'an and the Qur'anic commentators. However, doubts arose about the intentions

²¹ Here, Mardin implies cultural imperialism.

and interests of the commentators . The solution was a dream of social equilibrium created under the aegis of a just prince. This dream of social equilibrium precluded the concept of the gradual perfectibility of man through man's making of his own history and destiny , for knowledge was not for the consumption of the masses and truth was not a relative matter. The nature of the social relations and conditions were different than those in the West. In the Islamic municipal life, governors were indifferent to mercantile interests. No enforceable legal contracts were recognized. Islam only recognized the physical person and not corporations²².

Serious reservations may be raised in regards to the views of Mardin and those who agree with him. There is opposition to authority. Civil society is reducible neither to property nor to historical accidents. In the defence of Islam, Mardin uses peculiarly Western strategies. It seems that one of the key factors contributing to the differences between the experience of the West and the Middle East lies in the nature of the relationship between the merchants and the political authorities. Two main questions arise: What allowed merchants in the West to challenge the authorities? Why did merchants in Islam and authorities not compete as noted by Mardin? No definitive answer exists.

For example, regarding opposition to authority, Serif Mardin(1995), Fatima

²² Mardin argues that civil society emerges only because of specific conditions. It has nothing to do with individual or group aspirations. In fact, the type of society and knowledge are themselves totally particularistic and any attempt to export them is a gross aggression of the most colonial kind. If that is true and if Mardin did not grow up in the West, how was he ever able to acquire the mental structure and habits to launch a rational attack on reason? How was Marx, the son of an upper bourgeois family ever able to sympathize with the working class? If everything we think and say is the product of our context - historical, social, geographical - then it is impossible to talk to one another.

Mernissi (1992), Ernest Gellner (1995), Hamid Mowlana (1996) and Mahmood Ibrahim (1990) report that, in Islam, centralized political power such as the church never existed²³. The *Ulama* and the *Imams'* role was to serve and please their community²⁴. The maintenance of their status was vulnerable to the decision of the Muslim people to whom they attended. Although Ibrahim agrees that Muslim merchants did not have the same social and political conditions as their European counterparts, he, unlike Mardin, offers a long historical examination of merchants and commerce in Islam and argues that they had an important role in shaping social, economic, political, and religious conditions in Mecca. This is important because it shows that Islam can be understood in a manner consistent with civil society. In fact, many of his findings contradict Mardin's claims of neutrality between merchants and authority. Ibrahim's findings show that the merchants acted as a group of individuals who put limits to authorities.

His approach challenges the notion of sterile and static history and refocuses the attention onto internal social forces and their relations. More importantly, if indeed merchants challenged authorities, why did non-religious legal and contractual standards not develop in the Arab Muslim world as in the West? Tentative explanations can be found in Ibrahim's historical reporting but, again, no clear answer is provided. Ibn Warraq, in Why I am not a Muslim, explores the origins of Islam and

²³ However, Mernissi, in Islam and Democracy (1992), argues that media changed the role of the Imams and made it more powerful and that the media Imam is less accessible to the power of people.

²⁴ The Imam is the one who leads the Muslim community (ie: Ayotollah Khomeini).

The Ulama are those whose knowledge of Islam is deep and recognized in the Muslim community. They are "orthodox Islam's most senior officials, but jurists, not clergy" (P.W.Roberts,

finds explanations that are offensive to Muslim believers and followers for they challenge the holiness of Islam and the truth claimed by the Qur'an²⁵. However, he reinforces the claim of civil society. It seems that uncertain and inadequate readings and reporting of Islam's history by apologists for Islam are misleading and, often, contradictory. Ibrahim argues that Islam, growing in a merchant economy, introduced relevant solutions to the rising contradictions by providing an ideological and institutional superstructure that proved to be advantageous to the merchants. Ibrahim reports that in the Arab civilization, merchants' activities existed during the *jahiliyya* and before Islam²⁶. He also notes that religious authority was not manifested through the power of one person or institution. However, when it did assume that form under the rule of Uthman (A.D.656) and proved to be authoritarian and guided by self-interest, the ruler was overthrown and killed. The key element here is that the rulers and the religion were not considered as one or representative of each other. These actions represent civil society. Ibrahim finds that religion actually furthered the interests of the merchants. He states that merchants were also responsible for the rise of Islam and its spread in the region. This indicates that the merchants found Islam useful to their objectives otherwise they may have rejected it. A story illustrates how Islam benefited the merchants. Before Islam, the region of Mecca was declared holy because of the Zamzam water²⁷. The sacredness of the land promoted it as a

1997:D12).

²⁵ Ibn Warraq is an alias. Not revealing the real name of the author is a preventive action against violent retaliations and death.

²⁶ The pre-Islamic era.

²⁷ This footnote is intended to explain why the Zamzam location is sacred and it also shows the superstitions built around the black stone. The legend goes as follows: in the Arabic tradition it is believed that Abraham brought his wife

destination point for many travellers and foreign traders. The business of Meccan merchants prospered. With the claims of prophecy by Mohammed and his struggle to install monotheism and belief in Allah alone, the sacred land of Mecca became more sacred and the attraction to it increased largely, as did the profits of local merchants. However, all merchants were not equally rich. Cleavages developed. This decline manifested itself in the following forms: a) The widening gap between the wealthy merchants and the *Mustad'afun* who are mainly poor and have no clan backing; b) Social relations became based on the individual and his possession of wealth and power; c) Stratification within the clan system and the concentration of wealth in the hands of a few merchant clan leaders; d) Merchants opted for more accumulation at the expense of family ties and social harmony by the practice of *Ihtikar* (ie:monopoly of foodstuffs in time of famine) (Ibrahim,1990:77-78). Watt explains that this transformation in society required new ideals: "Therefore on the eve of Islam, Mecca's was a ripe environment in which change not only was required, but was eagerly

and his infant, Isma'il to Mecca. Mecca had neither an agricultural surplus nor any commodity production to take advantage of. It had, however, water provided by the water well of Zamzam. Zamzam is believed to be a result of a divine intervention. The story continues that while the panic-stricken mother was searching for water to give her thirsty son, a stone hit the earth and burst the well of Zamzam. This stone came to be known as the Black Stone or the Ka'ba (It is said that Abraham used it as a house for his family) (Ibrahim,1990:34-35). Also, Ibn Warraq (1995:41) explains that it is believed

"the Ka'ba was first built in heaven, where a model still remains, two thousand years before the creation of the world. Adam erected the Ka'ba on earth but this was destroyed by the Flood. Abraham was instructed to rebuild it; Abraham was assisted by Ishmael. While looking for a stone to mark the corner of the building, Ishmael met the angel Gabriel, who gave him the Black Stone, which was then whiter than milk;it was only later that it became black from the sins of those who touched it"

sought by many members of society. These became the core of a new movement led by a prophet" (1953:20; Ibrahim, 1990:81). What Muhammad did is put the concept of authority in the realm of religion rather than that of traditional tribal responsibility. Mohammad introduced monotheism to remedy the ills of the society in question. By redefining the concept of Allah as an authority that is above and more enduring than that of the Meccan deities, Muhammad reduced the usefulness of idols and those leaders who worship them and rejected the kind of authorities developed around them. Also, he introduced the concept of *Umma* whose members pledged to support one another against anyone outside it. Furthermore, the members of the *Umma* were no longer bound by clan ties especially if the ties interfered with the allegiance to the *Umma*. The *Umma* ultimately provided ties more durable than clans or tribes. It provided a link between religion, social, economic, political, and military developments. Moreover, Muhammad introduced a system of distribution of wealth known as *muzara'a*²⁸ and land reclamation. Ibrahim explains how the merchants took advantage of the new system (1990:196):

...When the merchants were the dominant social force, they successfully appropriated institutional beliefs within Islam to advance their interests. as the infrastructure slowly changed during the first century of the Abbasis rule, they attempted to formulate a supportive ideology based on Islamic arguments but they lost out to the landed aristocracy. As the latter became the dominant social force, they in turn appropriated institutions within Islam to safeguard their interests. And the maintenance of their interests required the presence of military. Therefore, military *iqta'* became the more logical option.. There were enough precedents in Islamic history and mechanisms within Islam to legitimize this practice. The military eventually became legitimate with the coming of the Mongols and especially the Crusades, and *iqta'* was normalized by the Mamluks²⁹.

²⁸ A contract relationship similar to share cropping whereby the produce was shared according to fixed ratios.

²⁹ *Iqta'* means feudalism.

What Ibrahim concludes in comparing the transition from feudalism to capitalism in Europe with the experience of the Middle East is that " the destruction of the feudal system in Europe gave way to the merchant capital and eventually industrial capital". "In the Islamic world", he states, "the opposite took place: merchant capital and its accumulation gave way to the growth of feudalism and military rule".

Therefore, unlike Mardin, Ibrahim's report on the Islamic and Middle Eastern historical experience, does not show that civil society is only historically specific. He shows that it tried to emerge in the Middle East, but failed. The conditions of its success were not present, but the aspiration towards the value of civil society were obvious to everyone, especially to those who oppose it and who are in power. Civil society threatened the authorities and put them in check. However, the main difference between civil law and the Islamic law is that the former is subject to change if needed while the latter should remain unchallenged as it is divine and immutable ³⁰.

³⁰ Muhammad forbade the drinking of wine and alcohol. According to Islamic law, drinking is punishable by eighty lashes and by death. In sura 5.92 He actually said: "O true believers! Surely wine and maysir and stone pillars and divining arrows, are an abomination of the work of Satan; therefore avoid them, that ye may prosper". However, even with this divine order put forth, the praise of wine remained an integral part of Arabic poetry, known as *Khamriyya*, for centuries (Ibn Warraq, 1995:329). It expresses the spirit of opposition to the divine order and a living protest against the religion. I would go further by saying that this phenomenon is a symptom of a civil society challenging authority.

Abu Mihjan was imprisoned and exiled for continuing the praise of wine:

Give me, o friend, some wine to drink; though I am
well aware of what God has revealed about wine.

Give me pure wine to make my sin bigger because
only when it is drunk unmixed is the sin complete

....

When I die bury me by the side of a vine so that my

The implication of Ibrahim's elaborate discription of merchant capital and Islam is that other kinds of solidarity communities closely resembling civil society have developed in the Middle East . Although Ibrahim does not directly address the issue of civil society, his description reveals symptoms of groups putting authorities in check. This is the function of civil society . Moreover, it shows that civil society is not culturally specific to the West alone.

Civil Society : Not Foreign To Islam

Drawing upon this line of thought, Goldberg (1993:248-271) argues that, even in Medieval times, the Arab world was charachterized by a rich assossiatlional life similar to that of civil society:

Only if we assume medieval Muslims were increadibly stupid or if we are willing ourselves to be exceptionally obtuse can we assert that there was no civil society in a world in which men....managed to assert claims to and defend their property from kings on a systematic basis.

(Goldberg,1993; also in Schwedler,1995:18)

Others pay attention to the fact that the Middle East was not excluded from the influence of Europe and Western civilization and that the emphasis on resources and religion is too simplistic to evaluate the presence or absence of civil society in the region (Bromley, 1994:16-18;Batatu,1978)

Along with the Orientalists and the skeptics, a small group of scholars believe that the study of civil society in the Middle East is useful and relevant "because it brings into question the idea that the region lacks the necessary social and political awareness to demand more inclusive political process" (Schwedler, 1995:9). One of

bones may feed on its juices after death.

Do not bury me in the plains because I am afraid

these scholars is Augustus Richard Norton . In "The Future of Civil Society in the Middle East" , he describes civil society as "the place where a melange of groups, associations, clubs, guilds, syndicates, federations, unions, parties, and groups come together to provide a buffer between state and citizen" (1993:211). Authors such as Patricia Springborg (1992) , Michael Hudson (1988), and Ellis Goldberg (1993) argue that interest-based groups have indeed been effective in setting the rules for the interaction of state and society. Springborg notes that "not only does ancient Near Eastern society have the longest recorded history of civil and private law regarding the rights and property of the trader, but it likely pioneered the contractual forms in which they are expressed", echoing the thoughts of Goldberg on Medieval Islam (1992:20) . For Norton , however, the three primary characteristics of civil society are civility, associability, and citizenship. Civility is defined as the tolerance of the other and respect for difference (1995:10-13). More importantly, Norton notes that the issue is behavioral and not psychological. What is important is how people act towards each other rather than how they feel towards each other. This is an important point because general arguments around civil society exclude groups wanting to overthrow and replace the extant regime through violent behaviour. Norton recognizes the presence of some groups who do not employ violent tactics but still do not respect the right of other organizations to promote different objectives. Such groups are some Islamic fundamentalists in Lebanon who opposed the talk show Let The Brave Speak . They protested in mosques and filed a demand to the government to silence the show and punish its producers (See Appendix 4) . Associability involves a spirit of

cooperation and the possibility of a peaceful process of organization around any common interest.

Citizenship is the most important characteristic in civil society:

To be part of the whole is a precondition for the whole to be a sum of its parts. Otherwise, society has no coherence, it is just a vessel filled with shards and fragments. Thus the individual in civil society is granted rights by the state, but in return, acquires duties to the states.

All governments, particularly autocracies, tend to trivialize citizenship, emphasizing displays of citizen support and patriotic ceremonies, while paying only lip service to the rights of citizenship.

(Norton, 1995:11)

Norton also states that "it is naive to expect civil society to topple the state. The interface between government and civil society will often be defined by cooperation rather than conflict" (1995: 13). However, the significant question is the following: if the groups, such as Islamist organizations, through democratic processes and elections gain sufficient power within the system, would they maintain a democratic system or would they implement an authoritarian rule?(Norton, 1995:16-18).

Islamist organizations differ in their objectives and behaviour. Norton divides them into two categories: moderate and radical (1995:18-25). Moderates are those who do not employ violence to further their objectives and work for reform within the existing system. Radicals are those who seek to take control of the state by force. Norton argues that the spirit of participation in legitimate political processes and peaceful coexistence are sufficient conditions to consider any organization as a part of civil society. However, his argument suggests that all of the Islamist organizations fit nicely into the civil society paradigm (Schwedler, 1995:13). Challenging this line of thought, Rosefsky-Wickham draws on the experience of Egypt and says that the goal of Islamist groups is to cause social and political transformation from the bottom up

and to extend the Islamic domain to encompass the state itself (1994:508) . This threatens democracy. Should their participation be discouraged? In all cases, one must not ignore the fact that Islamist groups present a challenge to existing authorities in the Middle East and that they are an integral part of Middle Eastern society. It is necessary to recognize that each Islamist organization is different from its counterparts. Although they all are individual movements, they all work within the framework of Islam. While some seek reform through peaceful means, others forbid difference of opinion amongst their own group members. Some employ revolutionary means of change and others respond to social needs. Changes in the Islamic world are occurring as well. For instance, In 1997, President Mohammed Khatami went further than any Iranian leader by voicing his hope for a thoughtful dialogue with the American people: "Instead of talking with forked tongues, we want to have a rational dialogue. We want to have a dialogue of civilisations" (May, 1997:5). In considering his vision for a civil society, Khatami said Iran should draw many lessons from the West. Even in secular and liberal states, religion and religious groups are considered a part of civil society (Asad, 1992:3-16) . This statement brings us to the question of the relationship between civil society and the state.

Civil Society And The State

There are two basic approaches to this question. According to Schwedler (1995:19-24), the first approach addresses the nature of the relationship between the state and civil society. This is done by providing criteria to distinguish between the state and civil society. The second approach questions this distinction and seeks to "explore the power structures that are hidden behind the idea of autonomy between

civil society and the state as well as alternate social structures operating within the region" (Schwedler,1995:19).

On the first approach, Shils lists autonomy as an important feature of civil society vis-a-vis the state and insists that state and civil society must be understood as two separate entities (1992:15). He argues that adherence to civility is a central concept in civil society because it is a norm that regulates the conduct between individuals themselves and individuals and the state. " The existence of civil society thus depends upon broader state-society relations and norms" (Schwedler, 1995:19).

Stemming from this belief is the link between civil society and democracy. It is argued that civil society is a necessary condition for democracy but the presence of civil society does not necessarily mean the existence of democracy. Gellner notes that democracy and civil society are sometimes used synonymously but " 'civil society' is probably a better, more illuminating slogan than 'democracy' " (1994:184).

This is true because democracy is generally associated with governments' politics and with the idea that "majority rules". Civil society is more about individuals coming together to peacefully protest and put pressure on the authority that rules them. This authority can itself take many shapes or forms (meaning that it may be in the form of democratic government, dictatorship, or any other kind).

The transition from authoritarian rule to democracy entails the resurrection of civil society.O'Donnell and Schmitter (1986) argue that authoritarian rule is successful at turning the attention of citizens away from matters of public concern but it is when the government shows willingness to tolerate limited political contestation that civil society begins to reemerge. However,

the catalyst in this transformation often comes first from exemplary

individuals, who begin testing the boundaries of behavior initially imposed by the incumbent regime....in the precarious public spaces of the first stages of this transition, these individual gestures are astonishingly successful in provoking or reviving collective identification and actions; they, in turn, help forge broad identifications which embody the explosion of a highly repoliticized and angry society.

(O'Donnell and Schmitter, 1986:48)

Thus the seeds of political reform come from outside the state and provide the emergence of civil society. However, this is more likely possible when the pressure from within society increases. These "exemplary individuals", the authors argue, emerge from the intelligentsia, professional associations, religious groups and other organizations and compose "civil society" only when they collectively challenge state authority. They also suggest the existence of alternative systems of power, other than the public sphere regulated by the state, that could provide avenues to social mobilization. They argue that individuals who enter civil society come from these alternative systems of power, such as social movements. They find that this approach may be useful in studying the Islamists groups in the Middle east by locating them within alternative power systems. However, they recognize that sometimes the line between civil society and the state and these alternative systems of power is not clear. Therefore, they believe that it is best to consider the concept of civil society as a tool to facilitate analysis, for in the real world, social and political phenomena, power structures, and state-society relations are complex and intertwined.

O'Donnell's and Schmitter's notion that all social movements can be understood as power centres is not correct. Not all social movements are centres of power. Confusing "power" with civil society and with associations should not occur. Yes, civil society influences the conduct of government and the behaviour of the state. That is a type of power but it is not clearly hierarchical or centrally located. Yes, social

movements, which are the very stuff of civil society, have goals and aspirations which they seek to achieve. But unless they organize themselves militarily, they are not really "power centres"; unless they transform themselves into political organizations with specifically political goals, they are not "power centres".

Islamic organizations can be power centres because they use force; and the state responds with force. But this is the exception rather than the rule. Usually, social movements do not use force. The renunciation of force is the pre-condition of civil society because it means you are willing to tolerate the other.

In the context of the Middle east, political liberalism can be furthered through the development of civil society but it requires a limited cooperation between the state and civil society. As for the role of the state, Norton believes that the government should play the role of the referee to prevent chaos for he considers it meaningless to speak of civil society in the absence of the state (1993;1995). He also believes that the authoritarian environment is a fertile soil for the emergence of civil society. This is true. Civil society and the state need each other. While voices of civil society should help state policy, the existence of legally institutionalized guarantees of freedom of speech, association, and assembly are necessary for the emergence of civil society (Schwedler, 1995:20). Also, this kind of interaction between state and civil society where "the attempt to establish fixed boundaries, to reform and standardize their beliefs and practices, to secure their loyalties, and to define their community membership" is a distinct characteristic of the modern nation-state (Asad,1992:11). However, it is important to realize that access to political channels and the protection of civil rights may not be equal for all segments of society for political and ruling elites seek to protect their status quo "by directly defining what constitutes civil society and

by establishing and maintaining the rules governing behaviour within the public sphere" (Schwedler, 1995:21). This allows the promotion of civil society without sacrificing any of the real power of the ruling elite. This is why civil society exerts influence on the state. Schwedler (1995: 21) gives the example of Jordan and how manipulation can occur:

In Jordan...King Hussein champions the participation of political parties in the country's multiparty elections. Behind the scenes, however, he manipulated the electoral process to undercut the strength of the Islamic Action Front, a group that made considerable gains through official political channels.

Another case is that of Rafik Hariri in Lebanon. During elections in 1996, Hariri unofficially encouraged voting for him by giving 100 000 Lebanese pounds (the equivalent of 60 American dollars) for each vote, using his financial status and the difficult economic condition of the majority of the population to manipulate the voting process. Such facts do not get reported either in Middle Eastern media or in the West³¹. Other extreme cases appear in Sudan and in Iraq where the governments restricted emergence of new organizations and abolished the existing ones, thus suffocating the voices of civil society.

The idea of "controlled pluralism" - ie: where political parties contestations are severely controlled from above - envisions the role of the state in a softer light "under the guise of guarantor of constitutional law in a society ruled by social contract "

³¹ These happenings can only be told by an observer or a participant or a researcher doing field study. In most cases, the media remain under the control of the government and/or the political elite. Also, the media of the West may be restricted from accessing the cultural and societal dynamics of elections and would have to accept second-hand reporting.

(Schwedler, 1995:21; Rosefsky-Wickham,1994:507-509) ³². Schwedler and Rosefsky- Wickham consider that this idea blurs and renders problematic the distinction between civil society and the state. However, these situations of political manipulation do not blur the distinction between state and civil society because civil society does not become the state , merge into it, with the eventual possibility of exercising state-like authority. Of course, manipulation is possible and the state is always tempted to invade and manipulate civil society. The manipulation is deplorable and should be denounced, but it does not mean that a blurring of distinction is occurring. The language of blurring emerges only when we want to show that civil associations are really power centres and that everything is a power relationship. This is a largely pre-theoretical view of power. Going on to explain this point of view but not personally supporting it, in this case, civil society becomes a moral vision, according to Seligman (or a "dream" according to Mardin) and not a "buffer" between the citizen and the state. The boundaries between the state and civil society then are purely theoretical and clearly locating them in any society, especially in the Middle East, is questionable: "the elusiveness of the state-society boundary needs to be taken seriously, not as a problem of conceptual precision but as a clue to the nature of the phenomenon" and the idea of the state as distinct from society "must be taken not as the boundary between two discrete entities, but as a line drawn internally within the network of institutional mechanisms through which a social and political order is maintained" (Mitchell,1991:78-79; also quoted in Scwedler, 1995:22). Of course, when the state manipulates civil society, it is not fully democratic.

³² This moves beyond Weber's vision of the state possessing a monopoly on the legitimate use of violence within a specific

This confusion and uncertainty raise the question of the usefulness of studying civil society, specially in the Middle East. As mentioned earlier, civil society is best used as a heuristic to facilitate analysis regardless of its Western origin. Civil society is not culturally specific.

So far, interpretations of civil society have been presented and discussed as well as the key positions and views on civil society in the Middle East. To return to the main question posed in the beginning of this chapter, does the reality of civil society exist in the Middle East? The answer to this question is yes, the reality of civil society does exist in the region, but not in the same fashion as in the West. Also, it does not manifest itself uniformly in the region. This may be related to the diversity of the region. Separate incidents of emergence of civil voices appear to be more frequent in the Middle East and in more countries within the area. Tension, pressure and conflicts threaten the advance of civil society but also fuel it. Many are not content to live under authoritarianism; traditional culture and kinship, as well as individual Islamist movements, may present obstacles to political reform but on the other hand, many of these have accepted democratic processes as a legitimate means of negotiation. Moreover, many organizations advocating issues of human rights and so forth are forming in Lebanon, Egypt, Iran, and Syria; many governments in the Middle East are allowing for gradual political inclusion as a response to the voices of civil society; and last but not least, mass media and mass communication are playing an important role in providing information, alternative views, and a forum for debate and civil voices in the Middle East, as in Lebanon and in Jordan. It seems fair to say that symptoms of civil society are present. It also seems fair to say that requisites for

territory.

fostering civil society such as tolerance and respect for individual liberties are weak. Some are getting weaker and some are getting stronger depending on the context of their emergence.

Conceptions of civil society: Lebanon

Although the writings on civil society in the Middle East are numerous, very few look specifically at the Lebanese case. Countries under Islamic rule such as Iran and Saudi Arabia, or experiencing major upheavals of fundamentalist politics and violence such as Algeria and Egypt, or governed by one form or another of authoritarianism, such as Syria and Iraq, or which have achieved a secular state such as Turkey, seem to be of a greater interest to scholars of civil society. Most writings assume that, because of the Lebanese confessional system of government, civil society in Lebanon is either relatively strong compared to other Middle Eastern countries or simply weakened by fragmentation in society itself (but no detailed analysis is given). Usually, the topic of Lebanon turns up when literature on the Middle East turns to problems of democracy, and military and religious conflict. Although the terms "democracy" and "civil society" are sometimes used interchangeably by many authors, the former seems to dominate in this literature, which superficially touches upon the notion of civil society but hardly defines its meaning. Moreover, the examination of the case of Lebanon often focuses on government characteristics, the nature of the state, confessionalism, and political reform within the power structure rather than on non-governmental associations.

One rarely finds literature dealing profoundly with laws protecting the rights of citizens, rights of women, values of citizenship, or respect for individual liberties in Lebanon. Most of the books and articles on Lebanon deal with the civil war emphasizing that Lebanon's political system - a parliamentary democratic system - is unique in the region because it attempts to unite disparate groupings within society and allows them proportional representation in the political arena. The system provided equal rights for the 17 religious communities in the country. In other words, most of the reporting about Lebanon treats the country as a special case by looking at its political structure, electoral system, political parties, and the set of unions and organizations that represent segments of civil society. However, despite claims that Lebanon has a democratic environment which relieves one of the responsibility of examining civil society, and that within the country "democracy and freedom are indispensable ingredients for a stable political system", the awful civil war revealed the system's vulnerability to internal confessional conflicts, to foreign interference, to cultural division, and to the weakness of government (Deegan, 1996 ;1994:103-104; Goldberg,1993:144). This proves that an existing parliamentary democracy in Lebanon is not a sufficient pre-condition for civility and for respect of individual freedom.

The case of Lebanon shows that most public spaces are fragmented where state and religion are very close and where confessional regimes are dominant. It shows this fragmentation because, in Lebanon, each sectarian zone has its own public space. This is important because these public spaces represent a threat to each other rather than a reinforcement of each other as a forum of civic participation. Even if they did not represent a threat they were not mutually accessible because of

confessional territorial divisions. Of course, public spaces can be different and oppositional but , in the case of Lebanon, they are fatal because, most of the time, they aim to eliminate each other rather than to tolerate differences. This makes it difficult to have an inclusive public space where confessional belonging is not important. This may not be the desire of ordinary citizens but, nonetheless, their choices are limited to the manipulation of their confessional authority and to the mercy of cease-fire agreements. This was particularly true during the war even though peaceful protests took place. The post-war period still shows fragmented public spaces for the same reasons listed earlier but with one difference. This difference is that the physical war ended but the consciousness of confessional territorial belonging did not. One can argue for state tolerance because of confessional pluralism in Lebanon. This argument, however, is problematic because, in civil society, tolerance is about respecting the differences of others even without approving them. In the case of Lebanon, a pluralist confessional representation is an appearance of tolerance. In reality, this pluralism is not about equal participation but rather about power and control. We used to play a game when we were children that describes perfectly the situation in Lebanon. We used to form a circle and put an empty chair in the middle. One of us turned on and off the music recorder. The others ran around the chair as long as the music played. When the music stopped they tried to sit on the chair. The one who succeeded to stay on the chair won.

If in Lebanon the individual is sacrificed for the benefit of the group and if democracy is the ability of the individual to be and to participate in decision making, can we say that civil society exists in this country? Many argued that Lebanon is democratic because of its integrative political system of parliamentary democracy.

Some Lebanese authors see the attributes which contribute to a smooth political process as not general Lebanese attributes, but specifically as attributes of the Maronite community and especially of the Maronites' deep respect for man, their spiritual vision, and their fidelity to authenticity: "The Maronite way of life may be considered...as a society universally open to development and progress, and by no means a closed totalitarian society" (Khashan, 1992:122). Others, such as Salame, argue that democracy in Lebanon is a representative democracy and that "Lebanon as a state would not have existed but for the progressively forged alliance between the nationalist Maronite Christian movement and France" (1995:87-88). He argues that in confessional Lebanon, the price of independence was a certain measure of democratization which contained concessions and limitations, but promised development towards a regime of effective power sharing. This weakened the sense of nationalism in the country. In other words, nation and individual were sacrificed for the benefit of "democracy" (Hermassi, in Salame, 1995).

If we assume that civil society is integral to democracy, then the following question arises: Is there a civil society in Lebanon? Al-Sayyid sees that the operational criteria for a civil society in the Middle Eastern context are: formal social organizations, the spirit of tolerance, and limits on state powers. Fraser (1996) emphasizes that a civil society is a moral issue (1993). To an extent, the history of Lebanon satisfies the first and last condition that Al-Sayyid presents but the issue of tolerance is questionable. The civil war grew out of intolerance and symbolized the spirit of intolerance amongst the sects, their different public spaces and interests. It is increasingly claimed that the civil war is truly over, and that the spirit of tolerance is settling in the country. I think it is too early to decide. All I can suggest for now is that

Lebanon is undergoing a process of modernization. It is probably in a transitional phase. The provision of a public space for dialogue and the use of talk rather than force as a form of social and political participation is a starting point. However, many also argue that the talk is confined to television and that "it is just a show" that generates business.

In "The Confessional State -The Lebanon", Deegan establishes the following major characteristics of Lebanon and the nature of its politics: The political system in Lebanon between 1943 and 1975 is an example of a consociational model of government which is considered to be a more appropriate form of democracy in countries ethnically and religiously divided (1994:103-118) . Deputies are elected to the National Assembly on the basis of religious quotas and... autonomy is awarded to each sect. " Each sect would create its own welfare, educational and recreational organizations with a correspondingly minimal role accorded to the state within the frame work of laissez-faire economy" (Deegan,1994:13). The confessional system as operated in Lebanon was set on a 6:5 ratio of Christian to Muslim. Critics of this model point to what they consider to be the promotion of the particularist interests of individuals, families, and clans. Critics also blame confessionalism for having made Lebanon a country with no unity, with no sense of nationhood whose citizens are loyal to their religious communities rather than to the state or to the bonds which tie their fates together. These established facts (confessionalism, political inheritance, loyalty to communal and religious affiliations, and absence of citizenship) have lasted for 30 years and present challenges to civil society. In fact, Shils notes:

Lebanon is not a civil society...The politically relevant members of Lebanese society are not inclined to allow the obligations which arise from their membership....[in a plural political system] to supervene when

they feel that the interests which they regard as vital are threatened...[It is] a country where different religious communities regard each other with mutual suspicion and hostility, which have exploded in time to time in civil war and massacre.

(in Khashan, 1992:120)

Lebanese society suffers from the following ailments according to Assaf:

1. It is inflicted with injustice, not just among its multiple confessions, but also within each sect.
2. Its people are subjects, not citizens. They are highly fanatical and opportunistic.
3. It is a selfish and awkward society.

(in Khashan, 1992:167)

All these factors presented above fertilized the ground for the bloody civil war but it is still important to take into account the status of civil society in Lebanon in order to understand contemporary developments.

Lebanon suffered 15 years of civil war that was not so civil, from 1975-1990. It resulted in the loss of nearly 170,000 lives (Oxford Business Group, 1998:15)³³. During this period, militia organizations and parties dominated the country and controlled massive financial resources, including the media and the economy. "These militias were largely autonomous organizations essentially pursuing their own interests unencumbered by a dominant state" (Deegan, 1994:108). They illustrated the gap between the state and the people, and contributed to the political disintegration of Lebanon.

³³ According to the same source, around 300,000 people are believed to have been injured. Close to 800,000 Lebanese were displaced and became refugees inside their own country. Between 300,000 and 400,000 Lebanese and foreign residents migrated abroad. Estimates for the total damage to Lebanon's physical assets and infrastructure range from \$9 billion to \$25 billion, depending on definitions used.

Moreover, as Messara notes, the militia extracted about 15 billion dollars from the Lebanese economy (1995:63)³⁴. They consolidated their control in sectarian zones or cantons. Silencing those opposed to the war took the form of assassinations, kidnapping, and intimidation, especially of press and political figures. Messara, in one of the few articles on civil society in Lebanon - "Civil Society Against the War System: The Lebanese Case" - argues that "nonetheless, civil society in Lebanon which opposed the war system, not only survived but proved to be remarkably assertive in expressing opposition to the war system" (1995:63). The National Union of Lebanese Workers, the Lawyers Union, and the National Union of Teachers are among those organizations that opposed the war system. Their opposition mainly took the form of strikes, protests, and demonstrations³⁵. For instance, in October 1987, Lebanese teachers protested the deterioration of the political and economic conditions in Lebanon by launching a national strike. Lawyers refused to hold elections for their own association as long as some of their members were prevented from participating. The National Union of Workers held one of the largest demonstrations to protest the continuance of war; it involved 300 000 participants representing all major confessional groups³⁶. Sana'a Osseiran, on the role of non-governmental organizations in Lebanon, argues that Lebanese non-governmental organizations have been strengthened during the war and that they were the only structure operating on behalf of the general population. "The need to end the war led to NGO efforts in education for peace and human rights, through holding debates and

³⁴ Messara (1995:63) points out that this amount did not include the taxes of import and export collected throughout the country by militias, or the profits of the drug trade, or the value of weapons seized from the Lebanese army.

³⁵ Also reported in Norton (1995:15).

reflecting on the most appropriate methods of linking universal human rights with local rights" (Osseiran,1994:87). She gives the example of the Lebanese Association for Human Rights which started a quarterly newsletter in 1991 dealing with human rights, women's rights, and international treaties. Such organizations performed the important function of spreading awareness and widening the understanding of democratic practices. However, the impact of these initiatives on the general population should not be exaggerated for nongovernmental organizations remain fragile in the overall system between the interests and power of the state and those of fundamentalist groups. These examples confirm an active role of segments of civil society. The extent to which they actually challenge the authority remains questionable, however.

Evelyne Accad , in Sexuality and War:Literary Masks of the Middle East, highlights the role of women in challenging boundaries and forging new spaces for social and political mobilization (1990:2) ³⁷. She describes the challenging of war's imposed territorial boundaries and the challenging of the distinction between "women's issues" and "politics". She refers to the Lebanese women who have crossed the demarcation line in Beirut that she describes as "the most desolate, depressing, and often dangerous spot in the city" and explains the significance of this

³⁶ About 10 percent of Lebanon's population.

³⁷ For further discussions on gender issues in democracy and peace formation in the Middle East from a feminist perspective see Simona Sharoni's article (1994) in which she argues for the implementation of feminist perspectives on peace building in the Middle East and outlines some of the challenges facing women such as stereotypical depictions of Middle Eastern women and the move from dialogue to solidarity as a major avenue of conflict resolution. Other authors to consult include Rabab Hadi (1992), Naomi Chazan (1991), Nayerreh Tohidi (1991), Nahla Abdo (1991), and Annika Rabo (1996).

daring and symbolic act:

Most of the time they go on foot, since only a few cars that have a special permission are allowed through. They go because they are convinced that by this gesture, real as well as symbolic, Lebanon's reunification will take place....Women friends who cross the demarcation line, defying weapons, militia, and political games...walk assuredly through the apocalyptic space...conscious that their march is not an ordinary one, that their crossing is a daring act, important to Lebanon's survival.

(Accad, 1990:2; also quoted in Boulding, 1994:104)

No doubt, pressure for change has been building up in the country. War, fear, economic discrepancies, imbalance of power between the sects especially because the 1932 population consensus remains the most recent, and the internal and external pressures to boost the economy encouraged experiments in opening up a political space for previously marginalized groups. In 1990, the Ta'if agreement was signed and claimed a more equal redistribution of political powers between Christians and Muslims. In essence, the role of the Prime Minister and the cabinet was upgraded and the power of the presidency was reduced. In 1992, for the first time in 20 years, a general election was held in which Islamic organizations participated in democratic exercises despite the fear that they would replace one authority with another authoritarian rule especially after the home-grown Islamists electoral success of the Islamic Salvation Front in Algeria (Norton, 1995:6).

However, it is unreal to suppose that Islamist groups are the only oppositional groups in the country. Norton reports that in May 1992, organized labour toppled the government of Omar Karami (1995:15)³⁸. The Karami administration included many

³⁸ Omar Karami is the brother of the former Prime Minister Rashid Karami. A government of national unity was appointed under the Sunni Muslim, Rashid Karami in 1984. Rashid Karami

representatives of the war time militias. Later other organizations boycotted parliamentary elections under Syrian supervision. They were boycotted by the majority of Christians, who were disenchanted with the post-Taif system of government, the strong Syrian influence over Lebanon and the fact that Hizbollah had been allowed to retain its arms. Voter turnout was low (at 25%).

In the context of Lebanon, collaboration and dialogue amongst different groups are missing. Nongovernmental organizations act separately from each other and with different degrees of intensity . Their efforts are often weakened by the ignorance of common people that they themselves are and can be effective voices of civil society. Most people are busy living their everyday lives in Lebanon especially with the great rate of inflation and the high cost of living. Many individuals handle more than two jobs in order to provide for their families. More women are now participants in the workforce and, unfortunately, some children too. The point is that few people belong to and are active in organizations. This weakens civil society. Nonetheless, there is still the possibility of organization. Frustration and poverty, the huge gap between the rich and the poor, human dignity and an individual sense of right and wrong, tend to organize people together sometimes to protest worsening conditions of living (Haddad,1996).

Recently, in February 1998, which was proclaimed as *shahr al tassawuk* (shopping month) in Lebanon and during which sales of up to 50 percent are common, around 100 persons wearing banners on their chests walked silently on the

sidewalks of the Hamra street protesting the high cost of living³⁹. The banners said "We can't even afford your fifty percent!". Also, the General Confederation of Lebanese Workers (CGLW) has repeatedly criticized the Hariri government's economic policies, which the union claims have paid little attention to the social well being of the great mass of Lebanese⁴⁰.

Another example of civil society is the mass media. Since the privatization of broadcasting and the mild loosening of regulations, mass media, international communication, and information flow play an important role in informing and providing a space for social and political expression in Lebanon. As Alan Richards argues "the flow of information is part and parcel of the free market and to try to stifle that flow would be a fool's errand for any state pursuing economic liberalization" (in Norton:1995:4). He adds that "even without the penetration of the electronic media or the fax machine, hundreds of thousands of labour migrants moving back and forth across the region, carry powerful images of change and dissent" (in Norton, 1995:4).

³⁹ Shopping month is mainly meant to be an attraction for tourism from neighbouring countries. Such a practice exists also in Dubai.

⁴⁰ According to a UN Report on Poverty in Lebanon (Haddad, 1996):

Twenty-eight percent of Lebanese families are estimated to live below the absolute poverty line. Of those, 7.25 per cent live below the extreme poverty line. This implies that around 1 million Lebanese are poor, and 250,000 of those are extremely poor.

War is seen as the main cause of poverty in Lebanon during the last 20 years. War caused death, inflation, unemployment.

According to current economic theory, priority is given to controlling cash flow, which is considered responsible for inflation. Improvement of the standard of living should be achieved indirectly without increasing wages, especially in the public administration sector, which is characterized by a high number of staff and low productivity.

On the other hand, violent reactions against the symptoms of civil society have also occurred on the part of the state and the military. An interview -based show on Murr Television (MTV) was prohibited from airing an interview with General Aoun in France^{41 42}. Supporters of MTV and of the exiled General surrounded the television station protesting the prohibition of the episode and were also joined by supporters of freedom of speech and information. However, on orders from the Minister of Communication and the Prime Minister, the Lebanese military raided the area arresting protestors. The latter group was then joined by members from the Lawyers Association in support of freedom of speech. The incident escalated and violent arrests occurred (Ghattas and Yehia, 1997:2; Darrous, 1997:1; As-Safir, 1997:4).

The event was reported and broadcast on satellite news throughout the world and it caused severe criticism of Lebanese state officials (The Economist,1998:40). In response, Prime Minister Rafik Hariri prohibited the satellite broadcasting of local news. However, this prohibition - as wrong and aggressive as it was - could not stop the transmission of news about this incident and other local events through the websites of the various Lebanese television stations and through the web sites of private individuals , electronic mail , and cellular telephones.

The Lebanese case illustrates the durability of symptoms of civil society despite great pressures. Nonetheless, still much needs to be done to ensure and implement basic human and individual rights since the end of the war.

⁴¹ Aoun is the Christian army commander who was appointed as interim Prime Minister in a military government. He declared the Taif agreement null and void and was forced to flee to France by the Lebanese army and the Syrians.

⁴² The MTV is a television station that emerged during the war and is affiliated with the Murr family who is one of the elite Lebanese families.

On Investigating Civil Society

As most of the literature suggest, the status of civil society in Lebanon, as well as in other contexts, should not be understood solely on the presence of participatory non-governmental organizations but also, as Messara (1995:64) concludes, by the presence of :

- Laws to protect the rights of citizens, including the right to establish associations, the rights of women, and laws to preserve the autonomy of Arab universities and protect them from state control.
- The instilling of the values of citizenship, including tolerance, democracy and the respect for individual liberties.

Civil society depends on : (1) guarantees of autonomy of non-state associations;(2) guarantees of human rights, including free speech; (3) freedom of association; (4) distinction between public and private. This checklist of civil society is not only for Western contexts. The anti-civil society arguments of some Muslim scholars describe symptoms belonging to this checklist but do not identify them by the same name. They claim that civil society is confined to the West. This is not true because civil society is not a prisoner of any culture or society.

Hann and Dunn (1996) argue that there should be a shift away from debating civil society in terms of formal institutions and organizations and towards an investigation of beliefs, values and everyday practices. They employ the term civil anthropology to look at social reality and ethnographic particularities thus challenging Western models of liberal-individualism. This contributes to the "investigation of moral aspects of power, cohesion and social order in contemporary societies" and

their manifestation in practice, in everyday social behaviour (Hann and Dunn,1995:3).

This approach proves to be helpful in the Lebanese case along with the recognition of Western thinking on the formation of civil society. Civil society is no doubt linked to other debates of modernity, individualism, pluralism, the boundaries between public and private, and also to religious culture.

This theoretical chapter looked at the idea of civil society and traced it back to early modern European political thought. A detailed account of the modern conceptions of civil societies was then provided, especially concerning its application to the Middle East and the Arab World. Drawing from this background, a comprehensive look at manifestations of civil society in Lebanon was presented. However, this presentation alone is neither representative of the status of civil society in Lebanon and how it is mediated nor of the social and cultural-moral conditions that help its emergence or demise. The next chapter will discuss the emergence, through broadcasting, of a public space hosting a formation of civil society. It will look at the significance of this space being on a television talk show in the Lebanese context.

CHAPTER 2

LET THE BRAVE SPEAK:

A NOTION OF CHANGE IN BROADCASTING AND IN SOCIETY

"Let the Brave Speak" is a common expression in Lebanese society intended to challenge. The show of the same title not only symbolizes that challenge, it also reflects the changes in the role and structure of television broadcasting.

Television transmissions, in Lebanon, started in the 1950s, after a group of businessmen submitted an application to the government to form a company for television broadcasting and the sale of television sets. In August 1956, and after two years of negotiations, a license was given to broadcast television on two channels - one devoted to Arabic programmes or with Arabic subtitles, and the other for foreign programmes¹. The station, la Compagnie Libanaise de Television (CLT), began broadcasting in 1959 and was joined in 1962 by Tele-Orient (Compagnie de Television du Liban et Proche Orient) which was partially financed by the American Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) and also operated as a commercial station^{2 3}. Plagued by financial difficulties and an inability to buy new equipment, the stations were forced to co-ordinate their programming to reduce competition. The agreement between the government and CLT, and later Tele-Orient, stipulated 21 articles of which the most relevant to programming are:

1-The government does not give the company monopoly rights.

2-Broadcasts should be under government scrutiny and should not include

¹ This license was not a monopoly as had been requested. CLT was the first commercial television in the Arab world.

² Tele-Orient signed with the government an agreement identical to that of CLT.

³ Although television in Lebanon is commercially managed and in this sense its programmes are expected to be determined by its viewers interests, it is nonetheless controlled and directed by the government.

programmes which threaten public security, morals, or religious groups, or enhance the image of any political personality or party.

3-Programmes should be restricted to education or entertainment, and advertising should not exceed 25% of broadcast time.

4-There should be at least 20 hours per week of programming, and the company undertakes to broadcast free of charge news programmes and official bulletins provided by the Ministry of Guidance and Information⁴.

5-Television is to respect all laws and regulations relating to the rights of the press and of authors, and shall be subject to all laws and internal or international regulations dealing with wireless communication and broadcast institutions. It shall also exchange sound programmes with the Lebanese radio in the sphere of overall co-operation⁵.

6-If the television station stops broadcasting for 30 days on two occasions in one year without compelling reason which the government considers to be valid, the government has the right to take over the station directly and to operate it on a commercial basis. The government can cancel the licence without indemnification by giving advance notice which shall not exceed four years.

7-The agreement, once approved officially, shall be in force for 15 years, at the end of which the government has the full right to buy all facilities connected to the project, at the prices specified by two experts, one representing the government and the other the company whose agreement has been ended. In the event of any dispute on the estimates the two parties shall seek an international arbitrator to decide the points at issue....

(Dajani, 1979:26 -27)

During 1975-6, the war so severely damaged the equipment of Tele-Orient and CLT that they were forced to combine into a single station resulting in a public-private

⁴ In September 1971 the Lebanese Ministry of Guidance, Information and Tourism was renamed the Ministry of Information, following a decision by all Arab governments to adopt this title (Dajani, 1979:28)

⁵ Lebanese Radio is completely under governmental control and receives its budget from the Ministry of Information (Kamalipour and Mowlana, 1994:165)

partnership. This transformed Tele-Liban into a national television network with a 25 year monopoly on broadcasting starting in 1977.

In December 1977, another agreement with CLT and Tele-Orient stipulated the following:

1-Transmission of cultural and entertainment programmes should be of the highest possible standard;

2- Two government censors, one from the Surete Generale, and the other from the Ministry of Information, must be present in the station^{6 7};A daily one-hour programme prepared by the government is to be included between 6 and 7pm

.....

6- The government owns the television transmitters and leases them to CLT and Tele-Orient;

.....

8- The government is to receive 6.5% of the net advertising revenue;
(Dajani, 1979:32-33)

⁶ Security officers from the Surete Generale "have the control of all recorded programmes, local or foreign, in addition to advertisements". Representatives of the Ministry of Information "are mainly concerned with checking the news and the film commentaries, even though the news is prepared by the government's national news agency and the news films are prepared at the direction of the government" (Dajani, 1979:32).

⁷ "This form of censorship led the television companies to adopt a safe role in Lebanese affairs - to 'maintain or preserve (not to introduce or develop)certain national or regional values, traditions, philosophies, and outlooks'. This role for television gives the viewers, by government design, an image of stability in the country, rarely broken by visions of internal dissent, disruption, or political problems.The television companies, particularly CLT, have tried to break away from this prescribed role, but faced with the government censors, they have been obliged to accept it" (Dajani, 1979:38-39).

In short, the articles of the agreement are specific to the country's social , cultural and psychological framework. They have not changed in principle much since their implementation but the situation in the country has. Also, they indicate that the state and the mass media have had a very close relationship in Lebanon, as in the Middle East region generally, as Kamalipour and Mowlana argue (1994:xvii;160).

The idea of monitoring and controlling the flow of information and dialogue seems to provide the government with a safety net. Why? Unmonitored information is considered a potential source of imbalance to the political system in Lebanon. This is also reflected in the freedom of the press in Lebanon that is "traditionally limited only by the laws of libel; by the 'law of kings and heads of state', which forbids the criticism of heads of state; and by the law of national safety, which forbids the publication of secret documents and national military news" (Dajani, 1979:8). Any minor criticism of the government or the political machinery is not tolerated:

Most television viewers, for instance, recall the female journalist, Leila Rustom, who captivated them with her programme 'A Chat with the People' in which she interviewed Lebanese celebrities. The programme was discontinued by the government, and Miss Rustom banned from appearing on television, because one of the celebrities interviewed criticized the inefficiency of the political leaders and of parliament as a whole. This state of affairs is common knowledge in Lebanon. It has been exposed in numerous newspaper editorials and articles, in parliamentary debates and press conferences, and is even joked about by the man in the street (Ibid:57).

Dajani (1979:38;39;56) argues that "television has a strange status in Lebanon" because it is supposed to be commercial thus catering to viewers' taste but at the same time it is government controlled and directed. This act of censorship by the government and the financial pressures of their commercial basis, led television companies (which, by 1974, had increased in number to four) to assume a conformist and safe role serving "to maintain or preserve (not to introduce or develop)

certain national or regional values, traditions, philosophies, and outlooks" thus promoting "an image of stability in the country, rarely broken by internal dissent, disruption, or political problems" (Dajani, 1979). Both Mowlana (1994) and Dajani (1979) make the observation that generally the Lebanese broadcasting media do not adequately inform the public and have failed to contribute to national and societal development. This examination shows that the programmes did not provide a public space with variety of opinions and debates and that Let The Brave Speak was a departure from this tradition.

Significance and contributions of the talk show on television

Story-telling , a performative mode of the talk show, links together the expression of personal experience with the personification of social issues and problems, providing relevance, and giving relevance to various voices. Through debate, established power becomes accountable to personal experience "providing the opportunity for legitimation through consent together with the danger of discovery." (Livingstone and Lunt, 1994:180). These two processes, story telling and debate, reflect the opposition between "the concrete and the abstract, disempowered and the powerful, lived-in experience and expertise" (Livingstone and Lunt, 1994:180). This provision of a public sphere where different public opinions come together in the form of negotiation is " a factory of politics -its site of production...the space in which politics are first possible at all and communicable" (Kluge, 1981-2:213) This means that the public sphere has an influence over power, and forms a challenge to authority, by creating a critical consensus.

" The talk show is the only type of program that proclaims its intention (one might say the pretension) of presenting issues for public debate andwhose discursive format is conversation rather than commentary or debate", according to Carpignano(1990:45). This feature distinguishes the talk show format from traditional news reporting and implies a change in the function of mass media. Carpignano lists other distinguishing features of talk shows such as being self-referential and typically intertextual (1990:45). They explain that the talk show's "ultimate strength is in its popularity and ability to establish a bond of familiarity with television audiences" and this is usually accomplished through decorating the set as " a sort of living room" or "town assembly"; the framing of the screen, editing, and "democracy of lighting" where " everyone is given their share of illumination" enhancing the sense of participation and belonging (1990:46-47). Moreover, the role of the talk show host "is more that of an intermediary" and "the performance is not judged on the basis of congeniality with individual guests but on the basis of the host's handling of the topic of the show" (Carpignano et al.1990:47). Also, the show is built around a topic , "its fulcrum", and the structure of the talk show (in the Western model) "is not a balance of view points but a serial association of testimonials" (Carpignano et al,1990:51). In the case of Let the Brave Speak, both dialectical and testimonial natures characterize the show. What is common, however, is that "at the end there is no resolution, the show provides no conclusions" (Carpignano et al, 1990:51)⁸. The talk show format features the presentation of common sense over expertise (Carpignano et al, 1990:48). More importantly, through promotion of conversation, it introduces the studio audience and the outside audience as major players, rather than passive,

⁸ Untrue of Oprah, Montel, etc. they always provide

"know - nothing" viewers.

Livingston and Lunt (1994) , in *Talk on Television : Audience Participation and Public Debate*, examine the value and significance of public discussion and debate on television, and the relations between mass media and participatory democracy. They state that "mass media public discussions construct a role for the ordinary person who participates in them, a role which affects our understanding of the public - as citizen, consumer, client, social problem, individual or mass" (1994:5). They draw on the work of Blumler (1970) on the political effects of television in Britain. Blumler (1970:97) presents four potential roles for television current affair programmes: Acting as spokesmen for the government; conveying information to the general public; providing independent comment and criticism; editorializing on behalf of preferred policies or parties. In Britain, the emphasis on the second role is severely diminishing to the benefit of the critical function, "thereby raising controversies over the media's interpretation of critical judgement, civic participation and dispassionate debate" (Livingston and Lunt, 1994:5). Moreover, Livingston and Lunt (1994:5), reviewing Blumler, find that television has taken on a populist role concerned with accountability as " 'it sets out to hold politicians to account for their policies and decisions on behalf of the public by proxy' (Blumler:1970:97) ". They further suggest that three additional roles are present::

they [mass media] can act as spokesmen for the people to both government and experts, conveying opinions, experiences, information and criticism 'upward' to the elites. They can allow the public to hold politicians and experts to account directly, rather than by proxy (raising questions not of whether the media present public concerns without bias but of whether studio audiences are representative of the public). And they can provide a social space for the communication among the lay public itself, both in the form of the studio audience and in the relation between studio and home audiences, and thus

give everyday experiences and opinions a new and powerful legitimization (1994:5).

This means that the media are changing their relationship to the political processes and that "these changes affect the relationship between ordinary people and elite representatives of established power" (Livingstone and Lunt, 1994:9). Recognizing the complexity of the relationship between mass media, the public sphere, the market, and the state, Priest (1995:191) argues that sometimes the "public has virtually no other options for getting its message out" but through infotainment. Gini Graham Scott (1996) finds positive and negative sides to the shows. The negative side of these shows is that they need to attract audiences; increasing personal anguish and subjecting guests to public humiliation have been some strategies to increase ratings and viewership. The most recent example of going too far in a talk show is the discovery that guests on Jerry Springer show were actors and that whole scenes were manufactured. The positive side of these shows is their contribution to a national dialogue: "People become more informed about current events and more understanding about the personal relationships aired on these shows" (Scott, 1996:4-5). Stressing one of the positive perceptions of talk shows, Priest (1995:93;111) explains:

The resulting exposure to a variety of groups outside the margins of society may have a significant effect on the public's attitudes toward members of such groups....

Although daytime talk shows are derided by the mainstream public, members of marginalized groups look to the programs pragmatically as forums for stigma management. Their 'reading' of the show....is vastly different than those reading from society's center. This is due in part to the lack of alternative forums...such that outgroup adherents make the best of their limited choices of access. The different attitudes toward the genre also speak to the negotiated and sometimes oppositional view taken by members of marginalized groups resisting society's depiction of them.

This brings us to the nature of the topics on talk shows. Most topics are shocking or controversial in nature in order to engage audience. While competing to attract viewership is one explanation for the nature of the topics, many see the topics as an avenue for social change. "In the audience discussion programme, we can see both the use of emotionally shocking material to disrupt stereotypes and also a demand for a rational account from representatives of the established power" (Livingstone and Lunt, 1994:177). Talk shows can provide a space for bringing together diverse publics and public voices with individual experiences; "through their diversity and particularity, stories also resist institutional or dominant explanations, bringing together the public and private by asserting the private, the lived reality, over public control and institutional inadequacies" (Livingstone and Lunt, 1994:140).

Opposition to these shows - in the forms of anger and fear - is common. As Scott notes, these shows raised concern among religious leaders, conservative and liberal politicians alike, as well as among ordinary citizens (1996:1-2). Opponents claim that the topics of the shows - such as open sexuality - are disturbing and contribute to the breakdown of the family and the status quo. Illustrating this point, Priest (1995:11-12) reproduces the following story:

In 1993, a Christian dentist in Dallas began a campaign to pressure advertisers to pull their ads from Donahue unless the show aired in a late-night time period, when children would be less likely to be present in the audience. Some advertisers did pull their campaigns, but the show still airs during daytime⁹. Parental advisory labels that warn of frank discussions of adult themes have become more common¹⁰.

Oppositions to television shows, however, is not directly exclusively towards talk shows. In Guadalajara, Mexican Catholics are protesting a new television soap opera

⁹ So, the show has also responded to opposition.

about a priest falling in love. Tentaciones is just the latest in a series of what, by Mexican standards, are racy Azteca soap operas with controversial and previously untouchable themes. Lead actor Jose Antonio Llamas, playing the priest, begins every episode with the phrase : ' Why can't it be possible to love a woman and God?' (Ballesca, 1998) .The protest against this soap is a nationwide campaign claiming that "the danger is that the case [priests falling in love] may become widespread" (Ballesca, 1998).

In Lebanon, Mexican soap operas are very popular and were not the object of observable controversy. The soap operas are viewed as fictional and foreign¹¹. The view of the talk show, however, is different because, since it is on television, it is more accessible , it reaches more people (literate or not), it reflects issues specifically pertaining to Lebanese society (meaning that the content is not foreign), and it give whatever used to be "gossip" an observable reality^{12 13}. Moreover, being a show on television means that it has a high degree of social visibility. This is very important because it provides a weekly site for the suspension of traditional power. It is then fair to say that Let The Brave Speak threatened traditional sources of information

¹⁰ Donahue has since gone off-air (late 1994).

¹¹ Television programming in Lebanon ranges from American mini-series and films to Mexican Soap operas and locally produced shows. Pirating of foreign shows was a fairly common practice during the war. Currently, the stations can only show the programmes for which they have paid.

¹² Lebanon has 32.5 TV sets per 100 population compared to 10.9 sets in Egypt and 6.0 sets in Syria (UNDP, in OBG, 1998:144).

¹³ For an excellent account of the psychological and anthropological aspects of gossip, see Levin and Arluke's Gossip: The Inside Scoop, 1987. They address questions such as "why had gossip survived throughout the centuries in every known society under the most hostile conditions, regardless of the local laws and customs designed to obliterate it?" (p:13); they look at the difference between men and women in gossiping (p:20-22); the function of gossip (p:25; 125-165); etc.

simply by being an alternate route for the dissemination of information. As a result, the show was put under pressure and many episodes were delayed from being shown in their set time. Despite all these difficulties, the show continued to air and, in fact, invited its opponents to air their complaints on the show itself. Some opponents agreed to participate and others did not.

This last point finds in the media a potentially liberating power as "the public sphere's most preeminent institution" , which, in the spirit of Habermas, promotes "the idea of a sovereign, reasonable public , nourished by the critical reporting of the press and engaged in the mutually enlightening clash of arguments " (Peters, 1993:541). Recognizing the significance of Let The Brave Speak , it is then necessary to look at the changes contributing to its emergence which are changing in broadcasting and society.

Changes in Broadcasting

Lebanon's broadcasting and media industry flourished during the 1975-1990 war period, when rival militias established their own radio and television stations that broke Tele-Liban's official monopoly.

This section shows that the privatization of broadcasting was a factor in allowing alternative voices promoting views other than nationalism and offering content which was exclusively informational. This occurred despite the controversial Media Law of 1994 that reduced the number of private broadcasters .

In the Lebanese case, the quest for the preservation and promotion of identity and power shapes the current face of Lebanese television broadcasting stations . During the war, chaos reigned. Channels, already suffering from bureaucratic supervision, lack of innovation, inadequate funding, and outdated equipment, fell

under the control of various militias. Various parties with vested interests funded "illegal" stations (Hammoud and Afifi, 1994 :167-168). Some of these included:

- The Lebanese Broadcasting Corporation (in 1985 by Lebanese Forces Militia / Christian);
- Al-Mashriq TV (in 1990 by Lebanese ministers/Muslims);
- New Television (in 1992 by the Communist Party);
- Al-Manar TV (by Hizballah/the Party of God)¹⁴ ;
- Sigma TV and Kilikya Television (by the Al-Nahda Organization)¹⁵;
- C33 (also by the Lebanese Forces Militia);
- Murr TV (by Michael Murr - a former defense Minister, his son, and a group of Lebanese businessmen);
- Independent Television (by Henri Sfeir, a Maronite Priest);
- Al-Mahaba Television (by Maronite priests);
- Al-Salam TV (owned by Muslim businessmen);
- TV One (broadcasts music videos);
- FUTURE TV (Lebanese billionaire, Rafik Hariri, who became the Prime Minister of Lebanon/ Sunni);
- Al-Amal TV (operated by Israeli-controlled militia).

This long list shows the different stations and their affiliations. It also implies that owning or running a television station is good business.

Only recently, in 1994, the Hariri government introduced the Audio-Visual

¹⁴ Another religious station is The Middle East Television operated by Pat Robertson, the US televangelist.

¹⁵ Affiliated with the Syrian Socialist Nationalist Party

Media Information Law (AVIL) . The main points of AVIL are :

- (1) to revoke Tele-Liban's monopoly and establish a limited number of private television and radio stations;
- (2) to establish proper licensing procedures for existing stations allowed to carry news, political and entertainment programmes, stations allowed to carry political and entertainment programmes, stations allowed to carry entertainment programmes only, and for encrypted stations and satellite stations;
- (3) to allow the private sector to lease certain television and radio frequencies for sixteen year periods whilst asserting that these frequencies are the exclusive property of the state (AVIL Document, 1994-5).

As a result, the government ordered the closure of all "illegal" stations and granted the LBC (which added International to its name making it LBCI), Future TV, and Murr TV licenses to continue broadcasting. It also required the closure of C33 that is affiliated with LBCI in order to prevent the formation of monopolies.

Also, NBN (yet to be launched by Speaker Berri) and the state owned Tele-Liban were approved by the government. Hizbollah's 'Manar' station was not granted an official license, but was given permission to broadcast as long as Israel's occupation in the South continues¹⁶.

The reduction in TV stations had the purpose of allowing surviving stations a greater share of advertising revenue. In addition to ensuring their commercial viability, fewer stations means fewer technical problems. However, opposing views argue that the law dictating the reduction of the TV stations imposed by Hariri would give the

¹⁶ This is a decision made for political reasons. Prime Minister Hariri does not want to give the impression that Lebanon is not supporting voices opposed to the Israeli

government greater control over stations' programming content. "This was particularly true as licensed stations would now be split into those allowed to carry news and entertainment programmes and those permitted to carry entertainment programmes only" (Oxford Business Group, 1998:22) . It is reported that:

On 17 September 1996, the Information Ministry ordered those stations that had not received a license to stop broadcasting news as of the following day (which they did), and to shut down by November (which, in the end, many did not). Lebanon's opposition was unimpressed and a wave of protests by media workers and opposition politicians ensued. In November, these culminated in confrontations between the government and the main trade union, the General Confederation of Lebanese Workers. The Union called for a general strike, whilst the government banned the planned demonstrations and threatened to impose a curfew. In the end, the strike went ahead nevertheless and scuffles and arrests followed.

(Schneider and Hack, 1998:22)

After these confrontations, the Information Ministry decided to implement the media law under a new mechanism. The unlicensed stations were granted a temporary reprieve. While all unlicensed stations continued to stick to the ban on news broadcasts, most stations had closed down, and a few had continued to broadcast. Schneider and Hack (1998:22) describe the measures taken by these unlicensed stations:

Four stations that had not been awarded a license in 1996 had announced plans to merge to try and avoid closure. They are currently reapplying for a license, and PM Hariri is said to be looking 'favourably' at their applications. Observers note that the most likely outcome of the dispute is the survival of 6 TV and 10 radio stations.

Defending his domestic policies related to the introduction of the Audio-Visual Media Law , Hariri claims that the law's function is to force the stations to abide by certain technical and administrative standards. However, the Media Law is about

occupation.

more than technical regulations. So far the Media Law has awarded broadcasting licenses to several stations owned by Lebanon's political elite, including Future TV which is owned by Hariri himself. The explanation given for this is that the stations are not awarded licenses because of their political stance but for their technical, administrative and financial advantages:

This is not a question of Mr. Hariri, the Prime Minister, awarding Mr Hariri, owner of Future TV, a broadcasting license. In fact, Future TV was obviously worthy of a license, as it is one of the best television stations in Lebanon. Look at the Lebanese Broadcasting Corporation (LBC), which is related to the opposition. We awarded LBC a license, because it is a technically, financially and administratively sound television station. It had nothing to do with its political stance, which as it happens tends to be rather anti- government. As for stations that are complaining about being closed down, I believe that even they understand that our initial refusal to grant them a license was due to problems in their applications, and had nothing to do with their political affiliations.(Interview with Hariri, in Oxford Business Group, 1998:32-34)

The Media Law also allows the government to close stations on the grounds of "general security" - a vague phrase that is open to much interpretation ¹⁷. The explanation, however, for this section of the law is to compare it to laws elsewhere, such as Germany and England, that forbid people from making anti-Semitic or racially inflammatory remarks. In the case of Lebanon, a similar prohibition applies to comments concerning Muslim-Christian relations that are so sensitive as a result of the war. "If a Muslim, for instance, now came on TV and made derogatory remarks about the Christians, it would have nothing to do with freedom of speech, but would only be an incitement to violence. This is why the Media Law bars such expressions on air", explains PM Hariri in an interview (Ibid,1998). He adds that television and radio are free to criticise ministers and everything else they want so long as they do

¹⁷ A number of books, such as Robert Fisk's Pity The Nation, are no longer on sale in the country, also as

not undermine the principle of religious coexistence in Lebanon.

Whilst there is no formal censorship for television, the Lebanese TV stations have traditionally adopted the same sets of rules as cover the country's print media.

The Oxford Business Group summarises the interpretation of these codes:

Shots of breasts and full frontal nudity are strictly prohibited (footage of up to 30 seconds of bare bottoms, on the other hand, appears to be acceptable). As far as other contentious content is concerned, broadcasters take the view that things which cannot be printed in newspapers cannot be broadcast on television. For the most part, violence is accepted, but anything that smacks of pornography is strictly forbidden. For example, before Basic Instinct could be shown in Lebanon, it had thirty minutes of film removed. The down -side of this practice is that Lebanese viewers often leave a film wondering what the real story line was, as all plot developments that come to light in a bedroom are usually cut. Films shown on television can be cut just as appallingly ¹⁸.

(1998:145)

If TV stations have enforced their own guidelines on the censorship of visual displays, they have been less willing to prohibit the discussion of previously taboo subjects, especially the LBCI. As mentioned before, many copied the topics covered on Let The Brave Speak, but the inclusion of many voices and traditionally excluded voices remains the exclusivity of this particular show since the imitators tend to adopt the interview format of known personalities .

Changes in society

While religion and discussion of religious coexistence in Lebanon raise 'national insecurity', what is the social environment that allowed discussion of taboos

a result of the security provision.

¹⁸ It is significant to mention that a committee made up of clergy, writers, and politicians is currently drafting a new

to emerge in the country? And are taboos religious interpretations and regulations? Looking at the changing social conditions lets us put the emergence of Let The Brave Speak in perspective.

The historical marker for social change in Lebanon is the civil war.

What happened during the war contributed significantly to the individual's development of a strong sense of self after the end of the war. The environment during the war emphasized the following:

- Confessional identity: During the war confessional identity played a huge role in determining survival. Since religion is literally public in Lebanon (religious affiliation written on identity cards; family name and place of birth indicate religious origins; first names are good indicators (i.e: Mohammad versus Pierre). Many individuals were kidnapped, massacred, and torured because of " what they are ". It seemed that "who they are" as individuals did not have any value. The individuals were solely defined according to their sect, at least in the case of innocent civilians. This means that the notion of the individual is assimilated to the notion of the group. The former does not exist without the latter thus the individual is equal to the group but not to its authority figure. Individuals who condemned authorities and their strategies to advance personal interests lost their lives or the lives of loved ones.

- Militia identity: The civil war saw the emergence of hundreds of militia groups led by opportunists advancing their personal status . Excuses for militia formations varied from the revival of past ethnic discrimination to the claim of personal revenge. Militia members did not escape the massacres and killings of the war.

- Suppression of dialogue: The horrors of the war resulted in failed attempts to create

a dialogue between the conflicting parties. It failed at both the local and the national level. Freedom of expression, speech , and choice were greatly limited by regimes of knowledge, authority and legitimation. This means that knowledge was only legitimate if its source was a figure of authority. The gap grew larger between the purposes of authorities and the needs of the citizens, who, in the Lebanese context, are subjects. The war prevented dialogue but also served as a message itself. It was a message that left the dialogue to the authorities and made them the primary definers of the way of life. Socialized to silence and acceptance, and menaced by challenge and punishment, the individual, during the war, was discouraged from self expression outside the social values or norms. This means that the individual lacked the self-perception as a producer of information.

- Disappointment: However, the results of the war encouraged disappointment with authorities whose objectives proved to be contrary to their claims and not inclusive of the good of the people. During the war, ordinary people lost control over their lives. Many fled the country , others willingly stayed, and others could not leave. The country became divided into multiple territories, each internally conflicted and separated from the other. Beirut was divided into East Beirut and West Beirut. The former represented and still represents the Christian section and the latter the Muslim section. However, this does not mean that Muslims only lived in West Beirut and Christians only in East Beirut. In matter of the fact, many neighbourhoods such as Ras Beirut, where I lived, hosted people from different sects who worked hand in hand to provide food and water for each other. Families who knew each other and became separated by the East/ West division waited for the "cease fire " to cross the dividing line with loaves of bread and other hard-to-find goods such as sugar and flour. Many

refused to leave their neighbourhoods because of the religious distinction. And yet, up to the present, children who grew up during the war in one section do not know children from the other section. When the fighting stopped and the war came to an end, buses of students from each section travelled on touristic field trips to the other section. The Lebanese became tourists in their own country. These divisions were also reflected in the flourishing of media stations during the war as previously indicated.

-The war increased poverty, inflation, the gap between the poor and the rich, and actually reinforced the sharp inter-group differences. Illiteracy, lack of access, information poverty, and so forth, increased the influence of traditional authorities over war politics. Individuals not belonging to militias, individuals who only wanted peace, saw that they were represented neither politically nor by the existing media.

After the war, society became more complex. Inflation hit the Lebanese pound. Projects to rebuild the country and to modernize it were multiple. Militias were dissolved and many of their leaders were deported (with many supporters still in the country). Others regained powerful positions in the government, especially after the Taif Agreement. The rapid commercialization of the country and the rise of entrepreneurship forced people to resort to hard work to adapt to the changing conditions. Social conditions did not improve in terms of poverty, health care, unemployment, and education. Many graduates in different fields find that they are not appreciated in the Lebanese job market ¹⁹. Priority is usually given to foreign employees for their advanced expertise in technological innovations.

One of the major changes occurred in family values. According to a United

¹⁹ Many of them find work opportunities in the Gulf area.

Nations report (1995), changes are occurring in the Arab world which contribute to the reshaping of family life and values ²⁰. These changes are not radical but are mostly incorporated into the existing system of social and interpersonal relations.

In general, the changes are the following: the decline of the agrarian sector and the rise of industries and the service sector (Lebanon, Syria, Egypt, Algeria) (p:7-8); the spread of cities as an index of progress; a population shift to urban centres from rural areas (especially youth) (p:9-10); higher access to education and educational institutions; higher participation of women in the work force and increased literacy (p:11-12).

These changes contributed to the decline of the extended family structure and the dominance of nuclear families (Beirut, Cairo) , along with the "feminization" of the family due to wars, divorce, and immigration . These factors also mutually contributed to a decrease in the size of the family (p:11-16) ²¹ .

The relationships inside the family underwent some change as well. Although the authority of the father and the bread winner is still dominant, the relationship between the parents and their children has changed because of physical dislocation,

²⁰ The main framework of this text relies on the study of the patriarchal system in the Arab countries and the changes that are occurring in the family unit and the relations, specifically between men and women and between elders and the young generation.

The report starts by characterizing the classical patriarchal social system focusing on two variables: age and gender. It then relates them to other variables such as the economy, religion, politics, and the production and reproduction of existing values (p:1-6).

²¹ However, extended families still form a considerable portion of the existing family structures and are not limited to a certain social class. Marriage between cousins, keeping inheritances in the family, the fact that sons and daughters do not leave home until marriage, caring for elders in a couple's home (encouraged by religion and praised by society) - all contribute to the maintenance of the extended family system.

economic independence, education, and the pursuit of self-interests (p:17-20)²² . Religious values are the binding force in the Arab world between traditional ethics of behaviour and the particularisms of individualism.

The values and codes of behaviour inside the family have been changing slowly: from family mentality to individualism , from restricted dress to a somewhat less limited freedom of choice, from assumed obedience to freedom of movement (p:25-29)^{23 24} .

Secularism is still unthought of in the Arab countries . Religion plays a strong role and is mainly tied to the political system and this combination extends to the family structure and values. Although individualism within the family is more apparent, still the separation of the individual/self from the dominant group is minimal. In spite of repeated pledges to abolish confessionalism in Lebanon, most political and administrative posts continue to be allocated on a sectarian basis. This fact only revives the confessional identity not only on the political level, but in the minds of people as well (which is another war of its own).

Two other major contributors to these changes are: a) Lebanese expatriates and tourism; and b) higher access to information through the spread of telecommunication systems and flourishing of commercial media institutions.

²²The authors mention that the authority of fathers on sons and daughters is manifested practically in the prohibition of: civil marriage, leaving home for independent living, premarital sex, political party affiliation, and dress codes. Permissiveness proved to be higher in families with higher economic status as shown by Khashan's study in Inside the Lebanese Confessional Mind.

²³Ex.: freedom to choose a partner; teenagers having Girl/boy friends indicating importance of personal feelings.

²⁴The individual still acts within a social system embodying certain values and codes of behaviour.

Expatriates returning from France, the United States, Canada, and Australia for visits or for relocation in Lebanon bring with them various cultural experiences and knowledge that reflect modern thought. Also, they bring with them interracial marriages, civil marriages, single parenthood, and many norms unfamiliar to the Lebanese context. Since 1992, tourist arrivals from all generating markets totalled 177,000 and in 1996 the total was 420,000 which is an increase of 137% (Ministry of Tourism, 1996). This translates into a high outcome of economic benefit and a high interaction with Western culture. These two factors contribute to the facade of modernization in Lebanon as a destination for tourists and foreign investment. As for the higher access to information, Lebanon's telecommunication infrastructure rehabilitation project introduced the Global System for Mobile Communication (GSM) network which proved to be an operator's dream. In less than two years, more than 225,000 subscribers have signed up to the networks (Oxford Business Group, 1998:121). This means more international connection and increasingly personalized and individualized communication. Also, the Internet community is growing in Lebanon. In early 1997, it was estimated that the country had around 7,000 subscribers linked to the net through 13 Internet Services Providers (Oxford Business Group, 1998:121). As for the media, the industry, as stated earlier, is now commercialized, thus relocating its interest in the audience and attracting the highest market share of viewers and advertisers. This means that the viewer now is not only regarded as a receiver of information but as a critical and informed consumer of information, products, and programming - which is a move away from the traditional view of viewers as mere observers. Individual participation and input without traditional framing of thought and expression are thus encouraged and credible.

Although these changes in Lebanese society seem positive to us in the West, and contribute to the transition to modernity, traditional authorities, heads of families, and conservatives view them as threats to Lebanese society. Also, these changes are happening so quickly that people are finding it hard to catch up and to explain the changes around them.

Given all these factors, a political system unresponsive to the needs of the citizens, the ever increasing changes in social conditions, the reinforcement of sectarian politics that weakened the previously powerful Maronite Christians, and the denial of social fissures, people are increasingly feeling a deepening sense of victimization, loss of faith, and distrust in traditional values and sources of information.

Gini Graham Scott (1996:14) explains that because of

the breakdown of traditional sources of values, such as the family and traditional religious and educational institutions, the self became the measure of all values, leading the individual to question the traditional standards of morality, responsibility, and cause effect consequences once taken foregranted ²⁵.

This questioning of authority is relevant to the emergence and popularity of Let The Brave Speak. Although the talk show presents challenges to traditional authorities, it does not direct its challenge specifically at the authorities. The key point is that, in this show, traditional authorities become participants in the public space presenting their case and their beliefs and demonstrating how they interface with certain "risque" topics. This means that they are not acting as the primary point of reference anymore, but rather as footnotes in an essay. It also puts them on a footing of equality with

²⁵ She adds (1996:14) that "unfortunately, one result of this focus on the self and the psychologizing of life was that people began to turn just about everything into a mental or

other intervenors rather than making them the arbiters of truth. This is a tactic of inclusion in the show that welcomes opposition and diverse view points. The idea behind the show is the realization that, if the Lebanese people are divided by religion or confession, they are nonetheless united by social issues, personal relationships and experiences that go beyond the powers of religion and confessionalism.

The show

Although the show is created to attract viewers and advertisers and its survival depends on ratings, it nonetheless provides a forum for releasing the feelings of malaise, fear, and anger by those voices shattered by bombs and bullets during 20 years of war. Moreover, in some cases, those voices are confronting the sources they blame for their discontent. The more important factor is that this space provided through the show is safe. Participating in a dialogue without fear is the condition for the dialogue to be productive. It is also anonymous: guests who may suffer legally, politically, culturally or socially from their appearance on the show are hidden off-screen and their identity is protected from the participants and from the viewers. For example, homosexuals are persecuted legally in Lebanon and are not tolerated by the general population. The concepts of family disgrace and shame are dominant and guide the public life of individuals. Taking taboos "out of the closet" may simultaneously, on one hand, reinforce traditional norms, and, on the other, discredit them. The show's main virtue, however, is that it constitutes one of the few public spaces in Lebanese society, and a safe place at that, in which the norms which regulate collective and traditional behaviour can be subject to the rational scrutiny of

public debate, one of the few places in which the defenders of the norms appear as equals without the advantages of tradition, exclusion or the prohibition of debate. Furthermore, the fact that guests on the show can be literally hidden from public view demonstrates how distant Let The Brave Speak is from its American counterparts. Whereas American talk shows operate in a confessional and therapeutic mode which, when combined with their exhibitionism and spectacle, serves mainly to provide emotional cues for the regulation of behaviour, the Lebanese talk show is not structured around confession or spectacle. It takes the social norm seriously and enacts it by the visibility/invisibility of some guests, an explicit recognition of the power of the norm. Let The Brave Speak is also not confessional in the sense of inviting guests to expose their emotions; it is debate-oriented in that it uses the guests as examples of a norm's outcomes. This focuses debate on the rule rather than on the putative pain of individuals. In all cases, the show is a success although many complain that it does not provide concrete solutions or answers to the problems discussed. The producer of the show, Janane Mallat notes that she wants people to listen rather than to talk (Interview with the author ,1997). She claims that people want to know what other people think. The talk she hopes for occurs not during the show but after it and is usually evaluative. Whether judgements of praise or of blame are adopted, many viewers return to the show . Mallat says that many discredit the show as gossip but it is sometimes the only way of obtaining accurate information²⁶. This is

²⁶ She explains that many topics on the show are informed by gossip because it could tell her researchers what is happening and why, who is doing what, when and where. She explains that participants in the show are not paid and the only reward they get is that of expressing themselves. People want to speak out themselves. This process shows that people have more in common than their religious affiliation. The preservation of the dignity of the persons participating is

a further distinction from American talk shows. Let The Brave Speak represents a particular balance of public and private, of transparency and opacity. Whereas in American talk shows, private experiences are invited to parade on the public stage, under the assumption that the exercise will be therapeutic for the individual and for others in the same situation and might result in social change or at best the foundation of a support group, in the Lebanese talk show the public is invited to withdraw from the private. On US talk shows, private experiences invade public space and are implicitly offered as new norms of behaviour. On the Lebanese talk show, it is precisely the invasion of private space by the public which is at issue. The Lebanese talk show argues for tolerance by re-imagining a private sphere free of public norms; the American talk show advocates a public norm bent to the particularities of private desire. Mallat says that the show is a "democratic experience in an undemocratic environment". The show permits individuality, plurality of views, opinions, and choices, and rational dialogue amongst individuals on a national level. This kind of dialogue has never been achieved before. Protests and formal social organizations existed before the show but most of the time they were overcome by state oppression and chaos. However, the show, as argued previously, provides a safe place for the expression of views other than those of the powerful. Its repeated appearances within a recognizable time slot on a private broadcasting station have vaulted that station to the number one position in Lebanon. Being on the LBCI, allowing a form of sociopolitical participation, bringing together many perspectives and opinions, reaching people in their homes, paying attention to individuals, Let The Brave Speak provides a forum for civil society and modern ideas, favored by viewers

very important to Mallatt and the station.

and protected by advertisers. The show and its properties form a challenge to authorities in Lebanon who are pressuring the station through the delay of administrative processes. It also poses a challenge to other stations whose socio-religious and political affiliations discourage such blunt, uncensored, national dialogue and civic participation. Let the Brave Speak is more than an innovative idea for a commercial station. However, what is the significance of its emergence on LBCI rather than on another station? The next chapter attempts to answer this question by looking at the LBCI , its development and success; it establishes how relative these are to a sense of history and ethnic identity.

CHAPTER 3 LBCI: A STATION AWARE OF ITS HISTORY

This chapter argues that where the use of politics has failed, the use of national and international mass media and satellite communication has succeeded in the project of asserting a Maronite Christian identity in Lebanon and the Middle East. Starting by mapping the development and achievement of the LBCI in the region , this chapter looks at the position of the Christians as minorities in the Middle East and their connection to Lebanon. Summarizing the influence of the civil war on their political position leads to the conclusion that the emergence of Let The Brave Speak on LBCI is directly related to the history of the Maronites and their struggle for a distinct identity in the Middle East.

LBCI

The Lebanese Broadcasting Corporation International started as the Christian Lebanese Forces station and soon became the most popular channel across the confessional spectrum. According to LBCI's tenth anniversary commemorative document, it was launched on August 23, 1985 as the first private TV station. During this period Lebanon was characterised by political unrest, military conflagration, and popular despair. Challenges faced the station: In 1989, the premises of the LBC were bombarded after Lebanese Army Commander General Michel Aoun declared a war of liberation. Again, in 1990, its location was a target during artillery duels that caused damages and the death of one of its journalists. In 1992, the Lebanese government forced the LBC staff to relocate without any prior notice. "Within a single day, everything was moved - to the last nut and bolt - to a new location in Adma

several kilometers away [from Jounieh]. And that evening, at 8pm sharp, viewers were able to watch the LBC news bulletin, broadcast from an improvised studio" (LBCI, 1995:11). At the end of the civil war in Lebanon, LBC added International to its name thus becoming LBCI.

LBCI relies mostly on advertising revenue and on well-trained human resources¹. In 1990, LBCI forged a link with CNN enabling its reporters to receive training from CNN while LBCI provides CNN with regional back-up news coverage. In 1994, several teams from LBC International attended training workshops in the United States, France and Holland. They also rely on market research - which is relatively new in Lebanon - that has proven to be a particularly useful and informative tool of analysis for the management. They like to consider themselves "interactive TV" and "not a one way communication medium with the viewer fulfilling a passive role" (LBCI, 1995:9). This view of "interactivity" however, should not be confused with computer-mediated interactivity. It is rather a way for LBCI to underscore its attentiveness to viewer interests as evident in its recourse to market analysis, its advertising base, and its evident popularity.

The LBCI has seven main transmitters providing the widest possible national coverage. It now ranks as the number one Lebanese television station in terms of area coverage. In 1996, it introduced four new major transmitters as well as several other low power transmission sites.

¹ The LBCI has more than 400 highly skilled employees and contractors. Meanwhile, it is estimated that 90% of the employees are Maronite Christians and Christians. Janane Mallat (Interview, 1997) argues that this is due to Christians been located near Adma and that it is a matter of demographics. The LBCI has no preferential employment policy for Christians.

Surviving the Media Law (AVIL), the LBCI, in 1996, was among the top four stations in the country. Of the largest stations, LBCI remains by far the most successful. It is watched by over 70% of the Lebanese adult population and accounts for 55% of total television advertising revenue. It is also believed that it is the only station making a profit (Oxford Business Group, 1998:144). " Even in the temporary period when the government owned Tele -Liban and had the exclusive rights for airing news, their market share never exceeded 39.9 while LBC still retained a leading 54%" (LBCI, 1995:49). It is the most technologically advanced station. The LBC spent \$17 million on new equipment in 1996 compared to \$9 million spent by Tele-Liban. Television programming on the LBC is diverse and includes Mexican soap operas, Hollywood blockbusters, locally produced discussion programmes, political comedies, Arabic programmes, and it also produces its own foreign language news programmes. One innovation of the LBCI is the reporting of news in the spoken Lebanese dialect rather than the literary Arab language that traditionally represents the language of the Qur'an and of Arab/Muslims.

LBCI's professional approach and quality programming signal a bright future for the station. Nonetheless, competition may arise from Saudi Arabian, Egyptian , and Israeli companies.

In 1994, LBCI was looking to launch a satellite service in Lebanon but, at the time, the Lebanese government decided to ban local television stations from broadcasting abroad via satellites. In response to such restrictions, the LBCI moved its satellite division, LBC-SAT, to Rome. Transmission from Rome began in 1996. The government claimed an absence of regulatory statutes to control such transmissions. Once implemented in full, AVIL will permit stations such as the LBC's

satellite division to broadcast from Lebanon only under strict guidelines on political programming content.

ARAB-SAT leases a satellite transponder to the LBC-SAT . LBC-SAT's programme differs slightly from that broadcast on terrestrial LBCI because the LBCI does not have the Gulf rights to all of the programmes that it broadcasts in Lebanon and partly out of respect for the more conservative values expressed by many Gulf countries². In January 1997, an additional satellite aimed at the Arab community in Europe was launched under the name LBC Europe³.

In an interview in a local magazine, the Chairman of LBCI, Pierre El Daher, stated that their target market is the Gulf area and that they are using "physical seduction" (meaning women as sex symbols) as a factor for attracting viewers. In another interview with Oxford Business Group , El Daher states: " In a regional context, we believe that there is a vast market for programmes in Arabic, which is

² Mallat, in an interview with the author (1997) said that Let The Brave Speak was not broadcast on satellite.

³ The Channel distribution of LBCI

Programme	Sattelite name	Region
-LBC PLUS (Coded)	Nilesat 7 degrees West and ARABSAT 2A 26 degrees East	Middle East
-LBC-SAT (Clear)	ARABSAT 2A 26 degrees East	
-LBC Europe (Coded)	EUTELSAT Hot Bird 2 13 degrees East	Europe
-ART AFRICA (Coded)	Pan Am Sat 4 68.5 Degrees East	Africa
-ART AMERICA (Coded)	Echostar	USA
-ART LATINA (Coded)	Pan Am Sat 3 43 degrees West	Latin America
-ART AUSTRALIA (Coded)	Pan Am SAt 2 169 degrees East	Australia

Regions also include Canada and Brazil.
Information obtained from the LBCI website.

currently being stifled for political and protectionist reasons. With time, I think this will change and technology will reduce the forces opposed to change and greater openness" (1998:147).

A study by Alhumood on foreign television consumption in Saudi Arabia found that the two Lebanese satellite channels, LBCI (affiliated with the Lebanese forces) and Future TV (owned by Prime Minister Rafic Hariri), are located in a hybrid terrain where the local meets the global (1998:263-266)⁴. Television consumption in Saudi Arabia does not concern this thesis. However, Alhumood's research is useful because : a) it looks at the expansion and popularity of LBCI in the Middle East region; and b) it reflects to the degree which liberal ideas and content are received, accepted , and desired (even in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia) . Alhumood concludes that the LBCI (ranking first) and Future TV (ranking second) are followed with much interest and are intentionally selected and viewed for longer periods of time than all of the other stations studied, except for CNN, that viewers watch for news although they find that CNN concentrates its reporting on USA and Israel; he adds that CNN gained credibility during the Gulf War ⁵. Alhumood argues that these two stations offer programming that is wanted by viewers due to the lack of innovation in Gulf stations and also because they offer a compromise between aggressive Western content and a more conservative Muslim- Arab approach . The viewers seem

⁴ The popularity of these channels is also related to the relatively high numbers of Lebanese people working and living in the Gulf area.

⁵ These consist of :Arab Radio and Television (ART); CNN (American); CFI (French); Futur TV (Lebanon); LBC (Lebanon); Middle East Broadcasting Center (MBC);Orbit Communication Company (OCC);Abu Dhabi; Ach-Chariga; Bahrein;Doubai; Egyptian (ESC);Koweit; NILE (Egypt); Oman; Two Saudi Channels;Sudan;Syria;Yemen.

fascinated by the female presenters of the two stations, their beauty and physical attributes, via programmes of fashion shows, Arabic song video-clips, and the like. Alhumood and viewers understand that this form of content is necessary for the promotion of the station and its commercial aspects. Although Lebanese shows reflect Western influences, they are not considered threatening to Saudi Arabian values and norms. The author rejects the theory of globalization of culture and accepts the theory of active reception of content. However, he argues that - although some extremely Western content is subject to active reception, interpretation and filtering based on social, cultural, and religious norms - the Lebanese programmes, coming from regional stations, may not be subject to the same level of active reception and filtering. Thus, the possibility of a different kind of "regional" imperialism is raised. Herein lies the danger of Saudi youth slowly and gently assimilating contradictory and improvised values and norms. Moreover, two factors contribute significantly to Alhumood's observations: the environment in which viewing is done and with whom it is done. They are both taken into consideration when selecting programming. Alhumood emphasizes that satellite television programming has a great socio-cultural and political importance. He suggests increasing investments in developing Saudi Arabian content and in the local institutions of cultural production.

Although Alhumood puts LBCI and Future TV in the same category, they differ greatly in the Lebanese context. LBCI is more liberal in its views; Future TV, owned by Rafic Hariri, follows restrictions in content that reflect the close relations of PM Hariri with Syria, Saudi Arabia and France. As commercial TV, Future TV has to attract advertising revenue. Highly placed sources report that Future TV could not use

alcohol commercials because of the Hariri's relationship with Saudi Arabia. This meant the loss of major revenues. According to the same sources, Hariri sold his TV station to the board of directors -"only on paper"- in order to allow advertising of alcoholic beverages, without stirring up criticism. It seems that looking at beautiful girls is less of a sin than promoting drinking. However, it is important to stress that these stations cater largely to a highly diverse Lebanese population .

The point of this discussion is that whether one rejects or accepts the cultural imperialism thesis, content, culture, and circulated norms and values in specific contexts mutually contribute to the interpretation of messages. These interpretations are self-generated, reflect individual preferences and desires in choosing programming, and are self-regulated in terms of permissiveness.

In short, the LBCI is the most watched station in the Middle East and generates the highest advertising revenue in the region. Its tremendous success and popularity highlight high ideals of professionalism and liberalism lacking in other stations in Lebanon. However, the history behind the LBCI also reveals the Christian aspiration toward ethnic nationalism that failed with the signing of the TAif Agreement. In the mind of the Lebanese, the LBCI always symbolizes the Maronite community, and for Arab Muslims more widely, it symbolizes the Christian community. While establishing territorial power and control is useful , it is now a lost cause. The Maronites now have consequently sought to master the art of national and international mass communication in order to promote their identity. The LBCI represents a "modernist" strategy for the preservation of identity and its popularity throughout the Middle East represent a symbolic form of territory. Maronites control the most successful operation in the production of information, a cultural institution that circulates modern norms

and values throughout Lebanon and the Middle East where once they feared assimilation and loss of identity. It seems that the roles are now reversed between maronites and Muslims.

Minorities in the Middle East

Middle Eastern culture is predominantly Islamic . As a total way of life, Islam is not solely based on spiritual practices but incorporates the domain of the state within the religious community. Islam was understood to form the basis on which political society would rest. Legitimacy and rules within the political order derived from religion. The nation, or *Umma*, was anchored in religion. Membership in the *Ummah* is based solely on religion. Non-Muslims or minorities⁶ in that *Ummah*, especially Jews and Christians, were given protected status because they were considered "People of the Book". They were allowed to practice their religion and develop their own civil laws and to maintain their communal identity. Religious autonomy and communal identity were retained for non-Muslims so long as they did not assume a direct authority over Muslims. This shows that Islam tolerated the presence of

⁶ Hourani (1947:1-2) gives a list of the most important minority groups in the region. He (1947:1) defines minorities "as those communities that resided in the Middle East" and "whose members possess their legal nationality, but which are not Sunni Muslim by faith, although they are Arabic speaking; there are others which are Sunni Moslem but not Arabic speaking, and others again which are neither Sunni nor Arab". Amongst the Arabic speaking but non Sunni Muslims are the Christians: 1) Greek Orthodox; 2) Syrian Orthodox (Jacobites); 3) Coptic Orthodox; 4) Nestorians (Assyrians); 5) Roman Catholics of the Latin rite; 6) Maronites; 7) Greek Catholics; 8) Coptic Catholics; 9) Syrian Catholics; 10) Chaldaean Catholics; 11) Protestants: Anglicans, Presbyterians, etc...

specific minorities (People of the Book) as long as they obeyed the rules of the majority (meaning Muslims). This means that tolerance may have existed but coexistence in the sense of equality between the different groups has not. Sectarianism, therefore, has a long history in the Middle Eastern political order. Phares (1995:11-12) describes the "Islamization" process that was imposed and lists the three options that were given for the Christian, Jewish, and Animist Middle East (who were strongly influenced by the Greco-Roman civilization) during the Arab Islamic conquest, *Fateh*, in the year A.D. 634⁷ :

1. First, to adhere to Islam, which would guarantee them the same rights as the Arab citizens.
2. Second, to maintain their own religious beliefs, but deprived of their political, social, and cultural rights. Their latter option, known as the Dhimmi status, required the payment of supplemental tax called Jizya. The tax was supposed to guarantee the protection of Jews and Christians living under Muslim rule⁸...
3. The third option was confrontational: the coercion of Islam by the sword. The conquered people were forced to accept the new religion; if they did not, they were either "eliminated" or forced to leave the area.

The *Fateh* was then followed by the *Mameluke* dynasty (1305-1516) which divided the Middle East into provinces ruled by Arab caliphates. In the year 1514, the Ottoman invaded Syria and took over the *Mameluke*'s occupation in 1516. Under the Ottoman Empire, islamization included the imposition of the ethnic, cultural, and

⁷ In A.D. 636, Arab Muslim soldiers defeated the Byzantine Army at Yarmuk (a river between present-day Syria and Jordan) and invaded the Middle East. They then marched through North Africa into Spain and reached the borders of India through Persia. (Phares, 1995:11)

⁸ Ibn Warraq explains the position of non-Muslim subjects (dhimmi) in Islam (1995:228-230). He says that the dhimmi was forbidden to exercise any authority over a Muslim. Also, there was an inequality before the law: "in all litigation between a Muslim and a dhimmi, the validity of the oath or testimony of the dhimmi was not recognized. In other words, since a dhimmi was not allowed to give evidence against a muslim, his Muslim

linguistic identity of the Arabs by the conquerors' use of their bureaucratic powers. This succeeded in creating a sphere of Arab predominance. It was a process untouched by democracy and modernization. Many were islamized in culture, social life and popular ethics such as the Copts in Egypt. Many resisted the islamization process such as the Christian-Maronites in Lebanon.

Maronites in the Middle East and Lebanon

This section looks at the origins and characteristics of the Maronites and at the major factors that contributed to the rise and fall of their Christian ethnic nationalism in Lebanon. These factors are: the Ottoman empire, Arab nationalism, Islamic Fundamentalism, and the Lebanese civil war (Hourani, 1947; Nisan, 1991; Phares, 1995). These historical events were marked by division amongst the Christians rather than their unity against the forces that threatened their survival.

Origins and characteristics of the Maronites

The Maronites sharply differentiate themselves from Arabs. They claim that their origin is from greater Syria and not the Arabian peninsula. They descend from the Phoenicians and or/Mardaites who moved south from northern Syria and established their home in Mount Lebanon where they built monasteries, convents, and churches. They moved to Mount Lebanon to escape the religious persecution by Orthodox Byzantium and later by Islam (between the seventh and tenth centuries). Being neither Arab nor Muslim, Maronite people claim that they are the true Lebanese people.

The major characteristics of the Maronites are : 1) close ties to the West; 2)

faithful ties to Lebanon;3) distinctive religiosity ;4) financial prosperity; and 5) a warrior tradition.

In the twelfth century, the Maronites had contact with the Crusaders in the East. As a result, they turned to the Orthodox Catholic church. In the fifteenth century, they travelled to Rome, preached the papal faith, and founded a Maronite college in Rome in 1584. However, they stayed faithful to their communal ties in Lebanon, especially through the patriarch who headed the community from north of Beirut.

The Maronites were distinctively religious people. "Foreign visitors to Lebanon, like the Frenchmen Volney and Lamartine, were impressed by the religiosity of the people" (Nisan, 1991:171). The church acted as a unifier of the Maronites and the Christian groups in the region. Symbolizing the native strength of their faith is the establishment of the National Seminary in Ain-Warkah in 1789.

The Maronites had close ties to France and Europe. They adopted the French language as a cultural tool to differentiate themselves from other Christian and Muslim denominations. The Edde and Jemayel families, two typical Maronite families, "were choice products of French Mediterranean culture, lodging Lebanon as part of the West more than the Arab world" (Nisan, 1991:172).

The style of Maronite life reflected a European-inspired ethos. Balancing a viable agricultural vocation in the mountains, a commercial vitality in Beirut, and connections with French manufacturing, the Maronites became prosperous and envied by Muslims. The Maronites could afford foreign education, elegant housing, hiring maids, and travel , while Druzes and Shiites, for example, drowned in poverty.

Another differentiation between the Maronites and other religious groups is the Maronites familiarity with the secularism of revolutionary France. This secularism

contrasted with the religious entrenchment of traditional Lebanon.

Due to a long legacy of survival in a threatening environment, Maronites developed a warrior tradition to organize independently for communal security. It is "a kind of feudal mentality of allowing the traditional...leaders to call the men to arms..[which] became an accepted Maronite norm" (Nisan, 1991:73). This tradition appears in the Mardaite raids in the vicinity of Damascus in the late seventh century and in confronting the *Mamelukes* in the thirteenth century. Similar resistance and effort for independence also appears during the Ottoman period of rule.

The Ottoman Empire

The Ottomans invaded Syria in 1514 and completed thus entry to Lebanon in 1516. Under the Ottoman system of government, Lebanon obtained its sectarian culture. This system is known as the *millet* system (Nassar, 1995:246-250). It is organized on the basis of merging political identity with political authority. Community leaders, who were often religious leaders were left considerable authority. Marriage, divorce, inheritance, and most aspects of personal status were regulated through the *millet* system. On the whole though, minority groups formed closed communities. "Each was a 'world', sufficient to its members and exacting their ultimate loyalty. The worlds touched but did not mingle with each other; each looked at the rest with suspicion and even hatred" (Hourani, 1947:22).

When the Ottomans invaded Syria in 1514, the Druze princes, under Emir Ma'an, aligned themselves with the new conqueror. This resulted in the sultan recognizing Ma'an hegemony over Mount Lebanon, under the Ottomans' sovereignty. This provided an environment for Maronite welfare for the Druze and the Maronites had coexisted tolerably in the area. In 1617, the Shehab family inherited the

sovereignty of Mount Lebanon from the Ma'ans. They ruled from 1697 to 1841.

" While the Druze provided legitimacy to the emirate and even assumed its leadership, the Christians provided the manpower to its army and agricultural support to its economy" (Phares, 1995:45). Moreover, with the help of the church, Christians established external relations with the European powers, especially with the French Revolution in Europe and Napoleon's invasion of Egypt and the Levant⁹.

For four centuries, Christians and other *dhimmi* people found themselves under the pressure of: the Arab sociocultural assimilation, the Ottoman domination, and the Muslim-Sunni caliphate. These conditions reinforced the efforts of Maronites to fight for independence. However, for 350 years, the Maronites allied with the Druze because they wanted a political shield, a chance for autonomy, and a local ally in Mount Lebanon. During this period, many Druze emirs converted to Christianity and many Maronite peasants arrived in central and southern Mount Lebanon. These two facts irritated a substantial number of Druze. The internal entente between the Druze and the Christians collapsed, resulting in the wars of 1840 and of 1860. The 1860 war witnessed violent massacres of Maronites by the Druze. These massacres implied the inefficacy of French protection and the Christian disunity in the mountain when other Christians did not come to the rescue of the Maronites. The European powers intervened in the crisis and pressured Istanbul to institutionalize a solution in Lebanon. In 1861, a *Reglement Organique* created Mount Lebanon as an autonomous *sanjak* or *Mutassarriyya*, "Petit Liban", with its own Christian governor and administrative council, protected by France, but still under the authority of the Ottomans. This imposition of autonomy was infuriating to the Turks who were not

⁹ The Levant is the land around the eastern Mediterranean,

very happy with the arrangement. Also, many citizens felt that the war of 1860, coupled with Ottoman pressure, was intolerable. Many fled "Petit Liban" to America. Many Lebanese Christians, unlike Muslims, emigrated to America abandoning their traditional way of life. Emigration to big cities and the contact with other cultures resulted in the questioning of their traditional loyalties to their community. The West represented an opportunity for them to be anything but minorities. As a result, they adopted the western way of life and held allegiance to foreign governments. This assimilation into the Western culture increased the gap between Muslims and Christians. Christians adopted French as their language and wished to forget the process of Islamization they had undergone. However, many Christians felt that they had a role to play in the Muslim Orient which manifested itself in the revival of Christian Churches, such as in Beirut. The contact with the West and the adoption of its language and the increased trade with the West contributed to the formation of the Levantine bourgeoisie. Cleavages between Muslims and Christians grew wider. Muslims who came under the influence of Western civilization developed three different attitudes towards it: a) some hated it because it was Christian and it threatened their world; b) some who recognized the Western tradition but wished to retain elements of Islam sought to modernize Islam; and c) some who wanted to abandon Islam and build a secular Western civilization in the Arab world.

During the *Mutassarifiyya* period, two forms of nationalist movements arose. The first took place in Mount Lebanon and called for complete autonomy . The second called for the independence of the "Arab Nation" from the Turks. Both independent currents organized themselves into associations in Lebanon and in the

diaspora asking Europe and the United States for assistance. But, in 1914, with the outbreak of World War I, the Turkish army invaded Mount Lebanon and submitted its inhabitants to humiliation and famine. In 1917, the allied forces liberated Lebanon and , in 1919, a French mandate was imposed on Lebanon and Syria .

Arab Nationalism and Lebanon

At the onset of the French mandate, different attitudes towards the establishment of the new entity of Lebanon emerged. Ideologically, the debate was between the supporters of Lebanese nationalism and the supporters of Arab nationalism. Lebanese nationalists wanted to ensure international recognition of a separate and independent Lebanese state. Yet Arab nationalists denied Lebanon's existence as a distinct nation.

The mission of Arab nationalism is to "unite the Arab nation and liberate Arab land" (Phares, 1995:15). This mission caused conflict with non-Arab nations such as the Jewish people over the promised land and the Christians of Iraq, Egypt, and Lebanon over their national identities¹⁰. Muslims preferred Lebanon as a Syrian-Arab state. Christians were divided in two camps: 1) Those who were the majority - Maronites - and who strongly advocated the extension of Lebanon's borders (Grand Liban) because they were economically involved with the Arab world ; and 2) those

¹⁰ Syrian and Lebanese Christians played a significant role in the Arab nationalism movement. In order to escape the Ottoman repression, Christian intellectuals of the Orient imported the concept of secular nationalism (nation-state) from Europe and presented it to Muslim Arabs as an alternative to the religious state. They hoped to achieve a secular arabism, in which Muslims and Christians would be equals, against the Turkish Islamism that excludes Dhimmi (Phares,

who were the minority and who preferred to maintain the Petit Liban as a refuge for the Christian minorities of the Middle East¹¹.

Finally, in 1920, the borders of modern Lebanon were drawn and "Grand Liban" was declared as a separate, binationalist state where sixteen religious communities had to coexist¹². This means that the wish of the Christian majority came true and their appetite for more territory was satisfied. However, many observers argue that this desire for expansion caused "the Christians to lose their basic homeland" meaning Mount Lebanon (in Al-Maruni, 1980) . The Christian political establishment had the following objectives:1) to secure a separate entity of Grand Liban from any type of unification with Syria thus a determination to integrate the annexed territories and to assimilate their mostly Muslim population ; 2) to guarantee full control of governmental institutions; and 3) to consolidate an alliance with the French in order to ensure a separate Lebanese entity and Christian domination.

In 1926, a unitarian constitution was declared as the foundation of the Lebanese republic. Confessional life was regulated according to Articles 9 and 95. The former gave religious communities the right to promote education and the latter regulated the distribution of the administrative positions of the government based on community quotas implying the assimilation of Muslim elements of the republic. It also regulated the relationship between Lebanon and France. In 1936, a long

1995:15)

¹¹ Grand Liban is modern Lebanon. It includes the cities of Tripoli, Saida, and Tyre as well as the districts of Akkar, Bekaa, and Nabatiah, inhabited mostly by Muslims.

¹² Muslim majority of the annexed regions opposed this annexation and refused to accept it as a final arrangement. As a result, many Sunnis remained attached to Syrian movements opposed to French rule and to the Christians. Moreover, some Muslim communities associated their struggle with the Arab nationalist movement.

negotiation between the mandate and the various political factions resulted in the signing of the Treaty of Paris. The treaty favoured the Christian agenda of securing Lebanon's borders, the preservation of Christian dominance, and the granting of French protection. Moreover, it was affirmed that only Christians were to be presidents in Lebanon (Nisan, 1991:181)¹³. As a result, for the Christians, Lebanon is the only country in the Arab world in which they are not second-class citizens. This meant that the traditional Muslim claim of national sovereignty within the framework of Syrian union was abolished.

In the spirit of asserting a Maronite dominant identity, Pierre Jemayel established the Phalangists (Kata'i'b) in 1936 who were designed as a paramilitary force to: a) defend Lebanese independence; b) more importantly, to protect Christians; and c) to contain the political kernel of the Maronite strategy - an optimal position in the confessional mix. In response to the Phalangists, the Sunnis established the Najjada militia in 1937. Nisan describes the philosophy and mentality adopted by the Phalangists (1991:182):

[The Phalangists'] ultimate vision was a Maronite dominance of Greater Lebanon and against Muslim Arab pretensions. It strove to develop and maintain ties with Maronites abroad, enlist their material support, and even have them considered Lebanese citizens with active voting rights. Based on a philosophical outlook rooted in western humanism and a national outlook that defined Lebanon as an ancient and integral national unit, Jemayel explicitly equated patriotism with Maronitism. Those who opposed union with Syria or with a pan-arab political framework were necessarily Lebanese patriots, but this patriotic vision came naturally to the Maronite Christians, who had always spearheaded the struggle against Lebanon's absorption...by any comprehensive larger system.

¹³ According to the same source, when a Muslim, al-Jisr, wanted to be president in 1932, the French high commissioner demurred; the constitution was suspended, and the chamber was dissolved.

Two other Christian families, the Chamouns and the Eddes, consecutively formed the National Liberal Party and the National Bloc Party. Raymond Edde led the National Bloc Party and Camille Chamoun led the National Liberal Party.

In 1943, an "unwritten" National Pact was created and constituted the basis of an internal entente between the various factions. The National Pact gave an "Arab face" to Lebanon. This means that the Arab-Muslim establishment agreed to recognize Lebanon as separate from Syria but not from the Arab world. Also, it means that the Maronites were asked to abandon efforts to separate Lebanon from the Arab world. Gabriel (1978:45) argues that from this angle, political arabization was underway. The Pact laid down, for a temporary period, a system of governance aimed at appeasing contradictory community ideologies. Based on the 1932 census, it distributed government positions giving the position of President to a Maronite and that of prime minister to a Sunni¹⁴.

During 1943, the Maronites lost the support of France when they demonstrated with all Lebanese protesting the arrest of the President Bishara Khoury by the French. Khoury had called for the end of French privileges in Lebanon. His call contributed to the independence of Lebanon, in 1943, and later to the exit of the French. Standing against the French weakened the Maronites position because they lost foreign support and they lost the chance of having a state apparatus in their hands.

In 1945, following independence, Lebanon joined the Arab League thereby fuelling the Christian ethnic nationalist vision which had wide popular support among the Maronites. The leader of this movement was Monsignor Ignace Mubarak who

¹⁴ The Lebanese consensus found that the Christians

affirmed the Christian character of Mount Lebanon, rejected the National Pact and Arabism, equating the latter with Islam, called for the establishment of a Christian homeland in Lebanon, and, in 1947, called for the establishment of a Jewish homeland in Palestine (Zisser,1995:889-918) ¹⁵. This latter call was not supported. In 1948 , after the Arab -Israeli war, Lebanon welcomed over 100,000 Palestinian refugees and witnessed the launching of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), sponsored by the Arab League. In 1969, the PLO was granted extra-territorial rights in Lebanon. Also, in the 1960s and onward, the region experienced the rise of Islamic fundamentalism influenced by the Iranian revolution. These events reflected an Arabist progress into Lebanese affairs and a threat to Christian ethnic nationalism.

In Lebanon, however, during the course of events that led to the war, the rise of Islamic fundamentalism, in particular, contributed to the weakened position of the Maronites.

Islamic Fundamentalism or *Ussouliya al- Islamiya*

In Lebanon, Islamic fundamentalism developed as a Shiite fundamentalism. In general, *Ussouliya* movements seek to restore an integrated Islamist society through the imposition of *Shari'a* (Islamic law). The Shiite mobilization as a communal group occurred in the 1960s when Musa Al Sadr, an Iranian-born cleric, founded the Movement of the Dispossessed. Many factors contributed to the support of this

constituted slightly more than half of the population.

¹⁵ Zisser (1995) argues that the outbreak of the 1975 war in Lebanon was a result of the Lebanese Maronites closer ties with Israel. The author gives a detailed account of the ties that were formed in the 1930s - 1950s. He says that these contacts were held with marginal figures and lacking in any power in the Maronite community. He adds that the only thing that the Maronites wanted was to recruit discreetly Israeli support for their struggles in the Lebanese domestic arena. Also, he brings to attention the fact that the Maronites who brought about the links with Israel from the 1970s onward

movements¹⁶. They are: 1) a Shiite resentment of the fact that they had not received the comparable share of political influence required by the National Pact although Muslim sects appeared to have surpassed Christian population ¹⁷; 2) a resentment of the fact that Shiite sectors in Lebanon remained neglected while Christian sectors enjoyed an advanced socioeconomic development; 3) the Iranian Islamic Revolution that furthered the sharpening of Shiite consciousness based on their numbers and strength (Harik,1996:44-45).

Other groups, such as Harakat Amal and Hizballah (The Party of God), developed and increased their military strength hoping to contribute to a political reformation of the Lebanese System of government and distribution of communal power. Amal was formed in 1974 as a reaction to Christian military groups. Hizballah introduced itself as a Muslim community rather than a Lebanese political party. Its objectives include the vow of a holy war against Israel in support of the Palestinians , the Christian forces connected with them, and their Western supporters (Nisan, 1991:186; Harik, 1996:44).

In addition to Amal and Hizballah, Palestinian and Druze communities strengthened their position in Lebanon furthering the polarization of the Lebanese confessional system and adding to the power of Islamic fundamentalism . The Palestinian Liberation Party (PLO) took Beirut as its headquarters while the

had not been a part of the earlier contacts (1995:914-915).

¹⁶ Before the mobilization of the Shiite in Lebanon, individuals who opposed the confessional system and their traditional leaders joined secular opposition parties such as the Lebanese Communist Party and the Syrian Social National Party.

¹⁷ As a result of the Pact , the Shiite holds the position of the Speaker of the House while the more powerful positions are divided between the Maronite Christians and the Sunni Muslims.

Progressive Socialist Party, led by the Druze leader, Kamal Joumblatt, and later by his son Walid, challenged the legitimacy of the political system. Joumblatt called for greater participation of the Druze in national affairs and a secularization of the polity for the establishment of a more purely democratic system.

In response, resistance started to appear in the Christian community. It appeared in the Christian nucleus in the Lebanese Army, within the traditional political parties, and within the civil society. This resistance reflects at once a Christian unity, specifically Maronite solidarity, and the signs of division that marked the Christian community.

In the public offices such as the Lebanese Army, the Surete Generale, and the presidency, Christian senior officials formed an apparatus of networks that successfully contained the Palestinians and their Muslim allies during the sixties¹⁸.

Next to this network, the alliance of the three traditional political parties (Phalanges, Chamounists, and National Bloc) formed a favourable milieu for the growth of a Christian movement. Although Jemayel, Chamoun, and Edde attempted to conciliate with the Lebanese Muslims, the Christian masses were more radical than their leadership and produced an ethnic resistance to Arabization. Moreover, undercurrents from within the parties emerged. In the 1970s, Bashir Jemayel, the youngest son of Pierre, organized his followers from within the Phalangists and prepared them to confront the Palestinians and the Muslims. Bashir and his followers were known as the Christian Lebanese Forces.

Outside the traditional parties, a group of technocrats, activists, and intellectuals founded several resistance groups amongst which are:

¹⁸ The Lebanese army was predominantly Christian.

- 1- The *Tanzim* (the Organization) : Founded in 1969, it promoted radical Lebanonism.
- 2- Guardians of the Cedars : Originated in the 1970s from the General Union of the Lebanese Nationalist Students who promoted the idea of a (Christian-Muslim) Lebanese nationalism. They were influenced by the poet and essayist Said Akl.
- 3- The Lebanese Nationalist Front (LNF): founded by a law student, Sami Fares, who openly promoted an ethnic-nationalism for the Christian people of Lebanon and who called for the implementation of their right of self-determination beginning in 1969.

The conflict between Muslim and Christian groups and their shifting alliances marked the events of the Lebanese civil war and its outcome.

The Lebanese Civil war (1975-1990)

The spark that ignited the Lebanese civil war was an incident between Phalangist and Palestinian groups at Ain Al Rummanneh in April 1975. This led to an outbreak of street fighting which divided Lebanon into Palestinian controlled areas, Muslim areas, and Christian areas. At this stage, Syria was providing support for Muslim-Palestinian political demands.

In the Christian areas, the various Christian militia gathered into a political front and included: the Phalangists of Pierre Jemayel, the National Liberals of Chamoun, the partisans of President Suleiman Frangieh, the Guardians of the Cedar and the Tanzim. Also involved were communitarian religious associations such as the Maronite League and various intellectual and political figures.

In late 1976, the Christian Lebanese Forces were created under the command of Bashir Jemayel and were involved in eliminating most of the Palestinian camps surrounding eastern Beirut. Meanwhile, the PLO and its allies toppled most of the

resisting Christian villages and were able to control 70 percent of Lebanon.

Meanwhile, internal quarrels over racketeering and hegemony erupted between the Phalangists and Frangieh. Frangieh opted to keep an alliance with Syria and to split from the Lebanese Front. Syria supported Frangieh. This resulted in the killing of Frangieh's son, Tony, his family, and 33 of his followers, by Phalangists armed groups led by Samir Geagea. This led the Syrians to invade the northern part of the Christian enclave. In 1978, Christian militia were able to recuperate one thousand square kilometres including the eastern part of the capital, later known, as East Beirut or *Al-Sharquiah*, the Christian zone.

In 1980, struggles over the domination of the Christian zone took place between the Phalanges and the Chamounists. The forces led by Bashir Jemayel and supporting the Phalangists stormed the scene and killed many of their opponents. The struggle ended in bloodshed and with the Christian Lebanese Forces of Bashir controlling the Christian zone. Bashir and his followers established a militia radio station and weekly magazines promoting the Christian people as a national ethnic group.

Bashir Jemayel, taking a severe political stand against Syria, met with Israel's Defense Minister Sharon, and many strategies were discussed to help the Maronites. In 1982, Israel invaded Lebanon. The attack facilitated the election of Bashir Jemayel as Lebanon's president in August 1982. Once president, he was expected to fulfil the demands of the Maronites and Israel. His assassination three weeks after his election cancelled all expectations.

After Bashir's assassination, his brother, Amin Jemayel, took over the post of president. Meanwhile, Fadi Frem, a militia man, took over the Lebanese Christian

Forces and , with his followers, started a wave of media diffusion of the Christian ethnic claim. They established the militia's radio station and weekly magazine, Al-Massira, and started to work on the foundation of a television station that later became the LBCI. During this period, many militia affiliated television and radio stations each promoting its own ideological and political views, were born. This battle of media diffusion was accompanied by further ongoing battles on the ground.

The period between 1982 and 1990 witnessed many massacres between the Druze and the Christians and between the Muslim/ Syrian alliances and the Christians. More importantly, this period witnessed what was known as the era of the Intifadas (1985-1988) and the Christian civil war (Jan-Oct.1990); also, during this time the national Lebanese army was getting stronger due to a major reorganization initiated by Amine Jemayel and supported by the United States. In this context, the Intifada is not associated with the Palestinians but with the internal uprising that occurred in the Christian areas. The Lebanese Forces ruled the Christian areas firmly. The traditional power controlling the Lebanese Forces was the Jemayels and their handpicked followers. However, after the assassination of Bashir Jemayel, many distrusted the leadership of the Jemayels and their dominance over Christian affairs. Samir Geagea and Elie Hobeiqua, both military commanders in the Lebanese forces, initiated the uprising and eliminated the Jemayels' dominance over the forces. " The revolt of the Lebanese Forces against the Phalangist leadership had wide-scale support from the population of East Beirut...the movement promised to initiate reform and reestablish international credibility to the community" (Phares, 1995:152). However, more division took place within the movement. Hobeiqua suddenly declared his allegiance to an "Arab-Syrian option" which was a radical ideological threat to the

historical nationalist claims of the Christians. Seven months later, Geagea reacted to Hobeiqua's coup by attacks that left 600 of Hobeiqua's followers dead ¹⁹. In January 1986, Geagea appointed himself commander of the resistance and reorganized the militia through the nomination of a new class of officers. He also established "security services" which were "capable of ensuring tight control on the organization" (Phares, 1995:153).

Meanwhile, President Amine Jemayel reorganized the national Lebanese Army and modernized its structure by absorbing thousands of young, educated, mostly Christian, soldiers and officers. Jemayel appointed General Michel Aoun, also a Christian Maronite, to be the commander of the Lebanese Army.

The Lebanese Army, under the command of Aoun, and the Lebanese Forces, under the command of Geagea, both felt that only one force should launch the liberation movement against the foreign presence and that only one authority should control the process (Phares, 1995:159). The struggle between Aoun and Geagea to be that one authority created a threatening and vengeful climate in the Christian area which led to more battles and massacres. The Christian population's loyalty was divided between those supporting the Lebanese Forces (LF) and those against the absolutist control of the LF thus supporting the Lebanese Army. Also, at the time, Amine Jemayel's presidency was close to its end. The members of the Parliament failed to elect the head of the executive body and Lebanon was left without a president. Jemayel, the departing president, according to the constitutional procedure, appointed in extremis the head of the army, Aoun, as acting prime minister. This appointment was automatically opposed by Syria and by Muslims in

¹⁹ Hobeiqua was saved by the national Lebanese Army

Lebanon. It also escalated tensions between the Christians and fights erupted between the Christian militia and the army. In 1989, an Arab solution was proposed under the title of the Taif agreement to end the war in Lebanon and to alter constitutional imbalances among the sects. Opposing the agreement and refusing Syrian involvement in Lebanese politics, the interim Prime Minister, General Michel Aoun, declared war on Syrian troops²⁰. Artillery exchanges between the Lebanese army units loyal to Aoun and Syrian soldiers caused substantial loss of life, particularly in the Christian zone. In 1990, fierce battles erupted between the Aoun army and the Lebanese Forces known as the "Christian civil war". The fight ended with an anti-Aoun operation led by Syrian troops aided by the Lebanese army and with the support of President Elias Hrawi²¹. Also, in 1991, all Lebanese and non-Lebanese militia were dissolved.

In summary, the failure of the Christian ethnic nationalism was marked by the signing of the Taif agreement which was concluded by the Lebanese parliamentary deputies in October, 1989. As stated in the introductory chapter, this agreement attempted to deal with the balance of power among Lebanese sects. In a bid to establish communal balance, the Taif agreement has set the stage for a new era of politics characterized by political deadlock. The agreement has linked the powers of the legislatures, executive and judiciary in such a way that any combination of one major and one small sect can effectively block the entire Lebanese political system. It arbitrarily increased the prerogatives of the Sunni Prime Minister and the Shi'i

reorganized by Amine Jemayel.

²⁰ The Lf did not unite with Aoun in his war against Syria.

²¹ Rene Moawad was elected in 1989, after the Taif agreement, as president, but was assassinated because he advocated close ties to Syria. Hrawi, also a close ally of Syria, succeeded Moawad.

speaker of the parliament at the expense of the Maronite president, thus effectively creating three presidents. Although many Christian groups were in support of the Taif Agreement, "after the new constitution reduced the power of the Presidency, many Lebanese Christians have considered themselves to be the biggest losers of Lebanon's 1975-1990 conflict" (Oxford Business Group, 1998:23). Despite this weakening of Christian power, a vocal opposition movement was recently formed to take the mantle for the Christian leaders exiled in France who are now calling for a re-balancing of the political equilibrium between Lebanon's Christians and Muslims

The increase of the Prime Minister's powers also increased the relevance of his close ties with Syria in the context of media content and highlighted past aspirations of Arabism. Trusted sources explain that stations know that they should not include in their political criticism anything related to Syria. They also note that this is related to Hariri's banning of satellite broadcasts of certain news items.

Back to LBCI

Considering the LBCI in this context, relating it to the history of the Christians, and its survival as a private broadcasting station that now ranks as the number one Lebanese television station in the Middle East, it is fair to say that where politics have failed in the quest for identity recognition, entertainment has succeeded. Drawing from the experience of the Christians in general, and from the Maronites in particular, through history and through their encounter with Western modernity, it is significant that Let the Brave Speak emerged on LBCI for it embodies the principles of modernity apparent in the encouragement of individual participation, in the promotion of the individual as an agent for social change, in the practice of pluralism, in using the

mass media as a forum for civil society, and in the challenge of traditional hierarchal sources of information through conversation and debates. The challenge to the traditional authorities did not go unnoticed.

The next chapter looks at the fierce opposition the show generated and examines its sources mainly on political, cultural, and theological grounds.

CHAPTER 4

THE OPPOSITION TO LET THE BRAVE SPEAK A MULTI-DIMENSIONAL VIEW

"It is channels of the mass media, and their multifarious crafty means and devices which increasingly exploit art and history, which transmit views and concepts hostile to Islam"

(Hujotol Islam Val Muslemin Muhammad Ali Taskhiri)¹

With the broadcast of Let the Brave Speak in 1995, and again with its live broadcasts in 1997, there emerged fierce opposition to the show. This opposition manifested itself in several ways: a wave of newspaper articles questioning the usefulness of the show and its relation to actual problems of Lebanese society, articles discrediting it for being a dead end looking only for ratings, politicians accusing the show of breaching the law of "national security", religious authority figures publicly condemning the show as immoral, Muslim leaders describing it as a plague of Western influence and a "Zionist conspiracy", and as a call for secularization. Many Islamic groups held gatherings in mosques calling for the cancellation of the show and the punishment of those responsible for it.

Newspaper and magazine articles commenting on the show in general and those on specific episodes in particular feature titles such as : "The Brave Speaks...Why?" (fadlallah), "Sex On Air" (Al Kabihih, 1997), "A Brave Speaks and A Crazy Understands" (Habshi Al zayek, 1997), "Wanted: A Brave to Determine The Objectives of Let The Brave Speak" (in Al-Tammadun, 1997), "The Brave SpeaksBut

¹ In *Political Comments on Islam and Communication II*

Does Not Converse" (Asfahani, 1996), "The Brave Attracts and Its Ad...Disturbs" (Al Haj, 1997), "Remarks on Let The Brave Speak" (Mikati, 1997), "Let The Brave Speak Reflects Clearly The Dilemma of Lebanese television Programmes in Lebanon" (Al Jaq, 1997) and "The Moral File : Between The Carelessness Of The Government And The Responsibility of Spiritual Leaders" (in Alliwa'a, 1997); other more supportive titles are " Let the Brave Speak : A Message Not Reaching" (S.N.,1997), " Return Of Let the Brave Speak" (Marchelian, 1997), " A Programme Involved In A Difficult Process" (Jaber, 1995), and " Let The Brave Speak: Supportive of Justice and Freedom" (Akkawi, 1995).

The content of the skeptical articles reflects the concern of conservatives regarding the topics explored on the show . Most of the arguments revolve around the danger of bringing private issues and taboos to public discussion on television, with an emphasis on the negative effects that it may have on children and teenagers, since such discussion does not reflect the values of Lebanese society and family. By exposing the "forbidden" with no reservations and giving it priority on television, the argument goes, these issues become normalized. Other concerns regard the actual manner in which the talk show is conducted. They criticize the neutral input of the presenter, the lack of solution-giving conclusions, the limited time given for participants to speak, and, on the one hand, the presence of "unprofessional and uneducated" voices, and, on the other hand, the constant inclusion of religious figures representing the sects in Lebanon.

These concerns have implications among which the main are: A fear of degradation of family values and ties which may encourage selfishness, disrespect of

parents, and the diminishing of traditional authority and received norms; a fear that topics discussed will not be dealt with appropriately, allied to the notion that "what is kept private is controllable"²; a fear that viewers will seek answers outside the self rather than in religious laws and beliefs; a fear that the show will merely reinforce sectional differences simply by mentioning personal issues ; displeasure with what the show is mirroring about the reality and dysfunctions in the society.

Those articles supporting the show highlight the importance of addressing issues pertaining to everyday life and interpersonal relationships, the function of the show in raising awareness and supporting freedom of speech, its therapeutic contributions, and its inclusion of civic voices. They attribute the show's success to the fact that it allows for marginal voices to come forward and for people to discuss issues they feel cannot be discussed with their families, representatives, and even their doctors. This implies that people are actually looking for an outlet to make their voices heard without being personally judged or recognized. Moreover, it implies a lack of comfort with traditional sources of explanations.

As for those politicians waving red lights at the talk show , they are arguing their case in the light of the Media Law that prohibits the broadcasting of material contributing to national friction. Politics and religion in Lebanon are intertwined. When ordinary people test the accountability of their politicians they are directly doubting and checking the accountability of their spiritual leaders and the conventional role of

² However, Pagliassotti (1993:472-3) speaks of Foucault :In The History of Sexuality, Foucault points out that "power does not need to be exercised through prohibition, censorship, and non-recognition...Power, that is, can be exercised by encouraging speech, or 'confession', as Foucault characterizes such speech acts."..."What is spoken aloud can be monitored - and all thoughts that are verbalized can be analyzed and categorized - and thus controlled".

religion. This presents an inversion and a suspension of traditional power because ordinary people and representatives of established power are suddenly sharing the same space and with similar rights (Livingstone and Lunt, 1994:173). This implies that while discussing issues at the individual level, there is also a recognition of the political, religious and social forces that underpin the topics, especially in Lebanon. Moreover, the individualization of these topics shows a gap between the socially accepted view of authority and actual happenings in day-to-day experience. The actual presentation of this gap through exchanges in the show is threatening to established powers because it causes them to lose credibility.

As for the position of religious authority, it coincides with that of politicians. However, more aggressive opposition to the show appears to come from Muslim sources. Accusations of collaboration with the West, and specifically with Zionist forces, in order to deteriorate the Arab family and Islam originate from their known opposition to Western imperialism and to Israel's occupation of Palestine. However, given the origins of the LBCI, the accusation of collaboration with Zionists refers to the political alliances of the Lebanese Forces during the war (noted in the previous chapter).

This whole situation reflects the conflict in ethnic identities that characterizes the history of Lebanon and of the region in general. A valid argument is that religion in this context is used to mark the ethnic identity such that the conflict is not really religious but an ethnic one (Phares, 1995). However, this argument undermines the power of religion (and its various interpretations) in circulating values and norms. What happens when private issues become public? It diminishes the power and authority of those who traditionally determined the issues. Thus, taboos maintain

certain social classifications precisely because they cannot be spoken publicly. Breaking them indicates a shift in the hierarchy of credibility that frames information "to reproduce symbolically the existing structure of power in society's institutional order" (Hall:58). Becker calls " 'the hierarchy of credibility' - the likelihood that those in powerful or high status positions in society who offer opinions about controversial topics will have their definitions accepted because such spokesmen are understood to have access to more accurate or more specialized information on particular topics than the majority of the population" (in Hall:58). With the hierarchy of credibility comes the hierarchy of information. In such a society, information that gets primacy is the one that reinforces the status quo and the current social order. Information, its framing and control, contribute to the circulation of the desired social values and norms of the major institutions in society.

At first glance, the struggle over the show may seem to stem from its "immoral content" and a desire to control access to such information. However, this view masks the deeper issue, that of expressing diverse voices and beliefs. Opposing the show, therefore, is an attempt to control what people say and as an attempt to control what people do.

This opposition is not particular to Lebanon. In Tehran, Snowman, a film about an Iranian who resorts to cross-dressing in an effort to emigrate to the United States has come under fire from Islamists opposed to the government's liberal policies in permitting the screening. A series of attacks on cinemas showing the movie took place. As a result, however, tickets for the movie have been sold out for several days in advance (Daily Star, 1997).

Why are Islamic groups opposed to the talk show, to the forum of civil society

formation? Why are Islamist groups opposed to individual expression? and elements of modernity such as individualism and civil society? Is it the religion that prohibits open public discussions of sensitive issues or is the religion used as an excuse by militants? Mernissi (1992) offers a splendid analysis of why governments and religious elites in the Middle East are opposed to democratization. She understands that a democratic society is one that is composed of individuals rather than families and sanctioned hierarchies. She even goes further to show how language in religion plays an important role in social control. She notes that the religion itself may not be the problem but the way it is interpreted and revealed to the people is. Her argument centres around the discourse of fear, fear of individualism, fear of self-disclosure, fear of modernity, fear of change and also fear of violence. The talk show embodies all these fears. It permits individuality, plurality of views, opinions and choices through television. It permits the formation of civil society. Basically, civil society undermines religious authority, and its worldview, by counterposing reason to divine transcendence.

The next logical questions would be : Where does Islam stand on the ideas of civil society, information, and mass media? What is the interface of Islam with individualism, reason, freedom of thought, all elements of modernity? Mernissi (1992:32-34) notes that civil society, the space where individuals define themselves as autonomous beings, is a part of Islam's rationalist tradition (Mu'tazila philosophy) that threatened the caliphes who condemned the rationalists for spreading foreign ideology against Islam. Mowlana (1990:8) explains that in Western social philosophy " the concept of civil society was another attempt in search of community where the lines of the state and individual rights could have been drawn and clear". Mowlana

(1997:210) adds that there is no sharp distinction between public and private in Islam for " what is required of the community at large is likewise required of every individual member". This is due to the concept of Umma where sovereignty belongs to God and not to the state, ruler or people, "therefore, the concept of Umma is not synonymous with 'the people', or 'the nation', or 'the state' which are the vocabulary of modern international relations and are determined by communication grids, information flows, geography, language and history or combinations of these" (Mowlana, 1993:18).

The umma based on belief in the same religion rather than geographical barriers reflects the concept of unity of God and the brotherhood of mankind. The theory of tawhid (unity of God, human beings and the universe) determines the parameters of information. "Information and knowledge are not value free but have normative, ethical and moral imperatives" (Mowlana, 1993:13). Pasha (1993:65) explains that knowledge is the key that drives civilization according to the Muslim cultural theory. Knowledge links humans to God according to the Qur'an which is the Muslim belief system that is literally the Word of God:

Only knowledgeable persons...fear God (35:28); everyone must pursue knowledge ceaselessly (20:14); knowledgeable persons cannot be equated with those without knowledge (39:9;58:1); and knowledge provides the entitlement for human pre-eminence and leadership - God's Viceregency - on earth (2:31) (in Pasha, 1993:65)

As for information, expressed in the notion of news Naba' or Khabar (in Arabic) it is defined as follows in the Qur'an: 'truth unmixed with wilful falsehood' (2:42) and it has two origins : Divine and Other (Pasha, 1993:74). In the first case, God is the source and He is the most knowledgeable; in the second case, the reporter is the source of news and has to abide by reporting the truth, it must carry a strong sense of responsibility and accountability on the part of the source, and very importantly, it

must provide benefit to the people . Based on these principles, the content of the mass media should be compatible with Islamic ethics and tenets. Media content should not violate Islam's traditional ethical and legal codes. These codes are expressed in the doctrine of 'commanding to the right and prohibiting from the wrong' (Mowlana, 1997:209).

These Hudud (limits and boundaries) are those dictated by God. Pasha (1993:74;75) notes: "God forbids the preaching or practicing of Fah'Shaa' -things considered generally obscene, indecent, and shameful (6:151;7:33;24:19)....Ma'roof (good:generally, that which meets community standards) must be 'ordered', 'commanded' or 'enforced' " while the bad, Munkar, "must be 'forbidden' or 'stopped' (3:104,110, 114;7:157;9:71)". These principles guide the practice of censorship in Islam (Pasha, 1993:77). This reinforces the view that there is no separation between the religion, the state , and civil society. This characteristic is explained by Mardin (1995) in a comparative manner with the historical experience of the West ³. He concludes that the two cultures had two different trajectories of social change.

Mowlana (1993:16-17) compares Islam with Western political thought based on the notion of secularism. Secularism is alien to Islamic social and political thought because "it attempts to separate religion from politics, ideas from matter and rationality from cosmic vision"; also, the spiritual and the temporal powers are inseparable. Mowlana (1993:17) contrasts the French Revolution to the Islamic Revolution in Iran in that the removal of the Shah marked the death of the secular thus reviving the spiritual and the temporal. Mowlana (1993:17) associates the adjective *taghut* (oppressor) with the secular Shah. Mernissi (1992:105) reports that

³ See at the theoretical chapter above on civil society and

the *taghia* in the Qur'an means the "tyrant" and it reflects the relationship between God and the individual in the *jahiliyya* that " was the reverse of the ideal to be proposed by Islam: it was the gods who were hostage to the will and critical reasoning of men rather than the other way around". Mernissi (1992:114-129) argues that the *jahiliyya* is used as a veil by Islamist discourses to hide the past that is full of violence due to Muslim expansion. This veiling is reflected in the reporting of Muslim history characterized by omission of historical facts. Recently, a call to review the writing of Islam's history was made by scholars and religious experts meeting in Beirut (fall 1997) in an attempt to discuss the inadequacies of this history. The review of the reported history identified problems of bias, Orientalism and subjectivity, influence of kinship, lack of exploration of sources, and problematic sources (Nasser El Dine, 1997:9).

As previously mentioned, rationality in Islam's history was manifested through the Mu'tazilites or "freethinkers of Islam". However, Ibn Warraq (1995:245-247) notes that they were "first and foremost Muslims, living in the circle of Islamic ideas, and were motivated by religious concerns" but were important in introducing Greek philosophical ideals into the discussion of Islamic dogmas. This presented a challenge to current orthodoxy because of the introduction of reason, 'Aql: "The first, necessary condition of knowledge is doubt...fifty doubts are better than one certainty" (Ibn Warraq, 1995:246). They denied God's supreme control of human affairs and criticized the Qur'an doubting the authenticity of certain verses. They went further to say that the Qur'an is not eternal but created.

The rationalism of the Mu'tazalites failed because it was not included in the

theology of Islam. The difference between the rationalism of the Enlightenment and that of the Mu'tazilites is that the former made for reason and rationality a place in their theology (Ibn Warraq, 1995:249). This difference is clear in the concept of God and its relationship to individuals. In Islam, Allah is omnipotent, omniscient, and benevolent. Man's will is totally subordinate to God's will (predestination). Allah must be obeyed absolutely, without doubts, without questions, and without qualifications.

Ibn Warraq quotes one Muslim thinker (1995:183-4):

Personal freedom [in Islam] lies in surrendering to the Divine Will...It cannot be realized through liberation from external sources of restraint...individual freedom ends where the freedom of the community begins...Human rights exist only in relation to human obligations...Those individuals who do not accept these obligations have no rights...Much of Muslim theology tends toward a totalitarian voluntarism.

In Christianity, especially in the natural branch of the theology, God is known by the light of human reason. It promotes the idea that the presence of God is within every individual (Touraine, 1995:13). This thought is the basis for Human Rights. It is the idea that "there is a good reason for ascribing rights to human beings simply because they are human beings" (Ibn Warraq, 1995:184). Human Rights appeal to human reason, critical thinking, and rational arguments.

These theological differences explain the manifestations of intolerance to public talk on "forbidden" issues and to manifestations of individualism. However, it is important to recognize that there is a gap between those who promote the rules and the daily practices of the population they represent.

Dale F. Eickelman (1998:80-89) argues that our times imply change for Muslims. The combination of mass education and mass media invoke "highly deliberate examination of the faith". Debating the fundamentals of the Islamic belief is

what constitutes the Islamic reformation (Eickelman, 1998:82). He (1998:82) suggests

a far more important element of the Islamic Reformation is the unprecedented access of information and knowledge about religion and other aspects of their society. Quite simply, in country after country, government officials, traditional religious scholars, and officially sanctioned preachers are finding it hard to monopolize the tools of literate culture.

The author says that the "News" is no longer a monopoly of the few and that television brings people and places previously at the margins of awareness into the foreground and that "this is helping to alter the way large numbers of Muslims...think about themselves, their religion, and their politics"(Eickelman, 1998:83). The particular situation in each country and region varies widely but "No Muslims - whether their outlook be deemed 'fundamentalist', 'traditionalist' or 'modernist' - have been unaffected by the sweeping changes of recent decades". He adds that "Islam has been "democratized" (1998:86-87). Like Martin Luther at the Diet of Worms in 1521, more and more Muslims today claim attachment to god's unmediated word, as interpreted by their conscience". This self-referential activity is important to the creation of civic voices that would eventually contribute to a formation of civil society. Civil society's task is to create a public with tolerance and mutual respect yet a sense of its own values. Barber (1996:281) comments on civil society:

Civil society, or civic space, occupies the middle ground between government and the private sector. It is not where we vote and it is not where we buy and sell; it is where we talk with neighbours about a crossing guard, plan a benefit for our community school, discuss how our church or synagogue can shelter the homeless, or organize a summer softball league for our children. In this domain, we are "public" beings and share with government a sense of publicity and a regard for the general good and the commonweal; but unlike government, we make no claim to exercise a monopoly on legitimate coercion....Civil society is thus public without being coercive, voluntary without being privatized....The media too, where they take their public responsibilities

seriously and subordinate their commercial needs to civic obligations, are part of civil society,

Although Barber argues that the privatization of civil society and its commercialization weakens the public's voice in exchange for profit, I tend to find that in some cases this public's voice cannot be heard unless it is provided an opportunity by a privatized and commercialized habitation that offers the abstract idea of a public voice, of a democratic citizen rather than a confessional subject. Barber (1996:279) illustrates the importance of citizenship in democracy::

To prepare the ground for democracy today either in transitional societies or on a global scale is first to re-create citizens who will demand democracy: This means laying a foundation in civil society and civic culture. Democracy is not a universal prescription for some remarkable form of government, it is an admonition to people to live in a certain fashion: responsibly, autonomously yet on common ground, in self determining communities somehow still open to others...

Again, these communities have to be tolerant, share respect, share a dialogue with each other in civility. It is the community itself that needs to be democratic rather than a rule of government.

This chapter opened with a discussion of the opposition to Let The Brave Speak and established that the show challenges authorities, especially the Muslim ones. The chapter provides a look at the theology of Islam as an attempt to find the sources for the intolerance towards civic participation, free thinking, individualism, and the symptoms of modernity. However, although religion is a circulator of norms and values, there is a wide gap between the real life lived by the population and the ideals of the religion. The opposition is associated with the most fundamentalist strands of Islam and Islam itself is full of examples of potential shifts towards a civil society. This internalization of religion to the judgment of the conscience is a possible forum for rational and critical thinking characterizing the notion of citizens able to

participate in civil society formations. In Lebanon, the host for this formation is Let The Brave Speak on LBCI.

Conclusion

"What's your story ?" is about many voices coming together to Let The Brave Speak. Each voice tells a story, each story describes a history, each history voices a struggle, and each struggle starts with "Once upon a time"...

"What's your story?" is my story. It started with the emergence of the Lebanese talk show, Let The Brave Speak, on LBCI. By looking at the novelty of the show, its emergence on LBCI, and the opposition the show generated, my story answers two main questions: What is the significance of Let The Brave Speak? What is the significance of "What's your story?" ?

Throughout the thesis, it has been established that the significance of the Lebanese talk show itself is that it provides a public space for the voices of private citizens. In other words, Let The Brave Speak is a forum for civil society in Lebanon. Civil society is a sphere of rational, pluralist, non-violent and democratic interaction. Examining the situation of Lebanon reveals the following:

- 1-A close tie between religion and state, and an absence of secularism.
- 2- A society emerging from 20 years of war damaged by sectarian divisions and politics.
- 3- A historical conflict between Muslims and Christians reflecting a continuous conflict between Western liberalism and Islamic traditionalism.
- 4- A traditional society in transition to modernity.

This is important because the country experienced 20 years of civil war during which public spaces were fragmented, dangerous, limited, and subject to sectarian membership. This fragmentation of public spaces reflects the sectarian politics of the

country where religion and state are intertwined, where private matters are handled by public religion, where power and rights are determined according to ethno-religious affiliations. Also, the show provides a safe space where all different and various opinions encounter each other and validate their relevance. Moreover, it unites the fragmented public spaces into one space where a national dialogue occurs. It also puts authority in check and on an equal footing with the public.

The significance of "What's your story?" is that it recognizes the restraints and the difficulties threatening civil society in Lebanon and it also calls upon the individual to speak. It also recognizes that the significance of looking at the Lebanese television talk show through the lenses of civil society is the realization that the concept is not culturally specific. It is time that we put aside some old assumptions about civil society. Clearly, it is much more than just a Western imposition on non-Western societies. Claims that civil society is culturally specific echo the views of Orientalists and Islamist apologists. They reject the notion not because it is Western but because they are embarrassed by it and ashamed to feel inferior. This then leads them to discover in Islamic society all sorts of associations which are the functional equivalent of civil society.

Unfortunately, if they can find functional equivalents of civil society they have not proven that civil society is foreign or a Western concept. They have proven that any society is able to generate something that looks like civil society. This brings us back to the question : why did the civil society of Islamic societies not become more dominant? Essentially because of the forms of authoritarianism which those societies maintain. But the recognition of authoritarianism - or rather the desire to claim that it is not really authoritarian and that the religious belief which support it are really benign -

is precisely what motivates the rejection of civil society.

Another significant contribution of "What's your story?" is the notion that mass media, regardless of their profit driven purposes, can actually provide, such as in the case of Lebanon, a non-fragmented public space allowing an ongoing dialogue between citizens and authority on an equal footing. This challenges classical and determinist views of civil society.

Also, "What's your story?" makes the distinction between Let The Brave Speak and other Western talk shows such as Oprah, Montel and Jerry:

- 1- It is broadcast in Lebanon, about Lebanese society, and on a Lebanese television meaning that it is not a foreign content.
- 2- It is not about self-disclosure but about disclosure of issues. These issues may seem banal to a Western audience but are shocking to Lebanese viewers.
- 3- It is debate - oriented and not structured around spectacle and confession.
- 4- It is not about being out of the norm but about being moulded by the norms.
- 5- It is not about exhibitionism but about concealment
- 6- It is not about exploitation of the private but about withdrawal from the private.
- 7- It is about the private sphere free of public norms rather than a public norm catering to private desires.
- 8- It is intended to put in check traditional authority rather than overpower it.
- 9- It is about dialogue, listening, and tolerance rather than story-telling and solution-offering.

Moreover, "What's your story?" 's significance is its awareness of the stories behind Let The Brave Speak . These stories are expressed under the three examined elements of the show: its novelty, its source, and the opposition to it. It has

been established that the significance of the Lebanese talk show is manifested in the content (issues discussed), the format (civic participation), and the medium (television). The issues discussed are considered taboo and subject to sectarian interpretation, they are open to public discussion via the public, and on the medium of television that transcends barriers of location, of literacy/illiteracy, of status, and of ethno-religious affiliations. The new content and format are significant because:

- 1- They show a transformation in the use of television from only a mere transmitter of information to an effective and concrete space for individual participation. This is in itself reflective of the changes in the Media policy and the increasing reliance on commercial content.
- 2- They indicate the adoption of liberal approaches related to modernity such as individual participation, rational debate, and free thinking.
- 3- The popularity of the show indicates an interest in the topics. Also, the popularity of the LBCI nationally and in the Middle East indicate an acceptance and/or an attraction to liberal views. More importantly, they reflect the exercise of personal and individual choice outside the cultural and social pre-requisites.

Important to the show is its source: LBCI. Looking at the LBCI, it has been found that it is affiliated with the Christian Maronite struggle for assertion of identity in Lebanon and the Middle East against the forces of Islam and Arabization. Relating the show to the history of Christians in Lebanon and their connections with Western civilization and modernity indicates the relevance of the show emerging on this station and its promotion of the individual as an agent for social change. The success of the LBCI and its expansion throughout the Arab world via satellite demonstrate how satellite TV can become a medium for cultural forces of

identification and/or differentiation.

Having said that the show is reflective of Western ideals, it partially explains the opposition to the show on the part of traditionalists and religious authorities, particularly Muslim ones. The opposition reflects the protection of interests and power status. The opposition is mainly associated with Islamic fundamentalist groups stressing the unity of the *Umma* and singularity of the *Shari'a*. They argue that civil society is foreign to Islam. However, the history of Islam is full of examples of civil society in formation. However, looking at the theology of Islam, it has been found that the individual is totally subordinate to the wishes of God, while in Christianity God is within every individual. The opposition is also reflective of the insecurities of a traditional society facing elements of change towards modernity in a short period of time after the end of the war; at the same time, it is reflective of the wide gap between the general population and the representatives of religious authority and its ideals.

In summary, Let The Brave Speak indicates the rebirth of a civil society that was buried under the ashes of the Lebanese civil war. It is a patched civil society healing from its fragmentation and trying to sow itself together by sharing a dialogue long over due.

"What's your story?" is a story of challenges and it has not ended yet...

Update on Lebanon

During Spring 1998, President Hrawi proposed a project to introduce civil marriage in Lebanon. The project had a wide appeal to the general population and a wide and absolute rejection by the Islamic authorities. Theoretically and

ideologically, Christian religious authorities oppose the civil marriage project but say that they are willing to accept it and tolerate its presence once it is installed. Voting on the project by the population and the parliament occurred but no results have been disclosed. The project is also being put on hold because priority has been given to the municipal and presidential elections. The former took place in July 1998 and the latter will take place this coming October 1998.

Some argue that this is the last Lebanon has seen of civil marriage. Others argue that people are listening and that a seed of change has been successfully planted in a fertile soil.

A similar seed have been growing and still growing : Let the Brave Speak is still broadcasting live on air and its success is phenomenal. In 1998, LBCI broadcast the show on its satellite channels, including those covering the Middle East. Let the Brave Speak is still asking: "What's your story?"....

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Appendix 1(a)

WEDNESDAY	F TV	LBC	T L	C 33	M TV	OT HERS
	Rate Share	Rate Share	Rate Share	Rate Share	Rate Share	Rate Share
07:00 - 07:30	1.9 76.0	0.4 16.0	0.1 4.0	0.0	0.0	0.1 14.3
07:30 - 08:00	2.8 77.8	0.6 16.7	0.2 5.8	0.0	0.0	0.0
08:00 - 08:30	3.5 85.4	0.5 12.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1 14.3
08:30 - 09:00	3.8 77.6	0.8 16.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.3 21.4
09:00 - 09:30	3.8 63.5	2.6 36.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.7 17.5
09:30 - 10:00	3.1 50.8	2.1 34.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.9 23.1
10:00 - 10:30	2.4 52.2	0.9 19.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.3 37.1
10:30 - 11:00	1.9 43.2	1.5 34.1	0.1 2.3	0.0	0.0	0.9 28.5
11:00 - 11:30	3.5 58.5	1.3 21.0	0.1 1.6	0.0	0.0	1.3 32.5
11:30 - 12:00	2.8 51.9	0.6 11.1	0.2 3.7	0.0	0.0	1.8 40.9
12:00 - 12:30	0.1 6.3	0.3 18.8	0.1 6.3	0.0	0.0	1.1 42.3
12:30 - 1:00	0.0	0.3 30.0	0.1 10.0	0.0	0.0	0.6 37.5
1:00 - 1:30	0.0	0.3 23.1	0.9 69.2	0.0	0.0	0.1 7.1
1:30 - 2:00	0.1 5.9	0.3 17.6	1 58.8	0.0	0.0	0.3 15.8
2:00 - 2:30	1.1 39.3	0.7 25.0	0.4 14.3	0.0	0.1 3.6	0.5 22.7
2:30 - 3:00	1.1 37.9	0.5 17.2	0.1 3.4	0.0	0.6 20.7	0.6 25.0
3:00 - 3:30	3.6 32.4	2.1 18.9	0.1 0.9	0.0	3.6 32.4	1.7 18.5
3:30 - 4:00	3.6 30.5	2.1 17.8	0.1 0.8	0.0	3.9 33.1	2.1 20.4
4:00 - 4:30	3.4 29.1	2.1 17.9	0.0	0.0	3.9 33.3	2.3 21.7
4:30 - 5:00	1.1 12.1	1.7 18.7	0.1 1.1	0.1 1.1	3.8 41.6	2.3 22.3
5:00 - 5:30	0.4 6.7	1 16.7	0.0	0.1 1.7	2.9 48.3	1.6 22.2
5:30 - 6:00	0.3 5.6	0.6 11.1	0.1 1.9	0.1 1.9	1.9 35.2	2.4 32.0
6:00 - 6:30	1.1 15.5	0.8 11.3	0.1 1.4	0.0	1.3 18.3	3.8 38.8
6:30 - 7:00	1.4 11.4	2.1 17.1	0.3 2.4	0.0	4.4 35.8	4.1 27.3
7:00 - 7:30	4.4 15.3	10 34.7	1.9 6.6	0.1 0.3	6.6 22.9	5.8 19.2
7:30 - 8:00	4.6 11.5	11.8 29.0	8.8 22.0	0.5 1.3	6.3 15.8	8.2 18.8
8:00 - 8:30	7.5 11.8	32.9 51.6	5.3 8.3	2.1 3.3	9.9 15.5	6 9.6
8:30 - 9:00	2.2 3.2	17.7 25.4	22.8 32.8	16.7 24.0	1.6 2.3	8.6 11.3
9:00 - 9:30	2 2.9	16.8 24.6	21.7 31.7	17.8 26.0	1.4 2.0	8.7 11.6
9:30 - 10:00	2.1 4.0	10.3 19.7	8.3 15.9	20.4 39.0	1.6 3.1	9.6 16.1
10:00 - 10:30	1.9 4.9	7 17.9	3.6 9.2	17.7 45.4	1.5 3.8	7.3 16.4
10:30 - 11:00	0.6 4.5	3.3 24.6	1.5 11.2	4.5 33.6	0.9 6.7	2.8 16.9
11:00 - 11:30	0.4 6.8	2.2 37.3	1.1 18.6	0.7 11.9	0.3 5.1	1.2 17.9
11:30 - 12:00	0.3 11.5	0.4 15.4	1 38.5	0.1 3.8	0.2 7.7	0.6 20.7

Appendix 1(b)

**DISTRIBUTION OF WEEKLY AUDIENCE BY STATION
FROM 4 TO 10 DEC. 1995**

Appendix 2

- 3000 During the Phoenician era, the first city states are established along Lebanon's coast 1570 BC
- 634 The territory of modern -day Lebanon falls under Arab rule
- 1095 The first crusaders arrive from Europe and begin a two hundred year campaign in the Middle East
- 1516 Lebanon becomes part of the Ottoman province
- 1861 Lebanon officially becomes an Ottoman province
- 1918 After the end of World War I, Lebanon becomes a French mandate
- 1920 Lebanon is expanded and the modern-day borders of the country are established. 'Greater Lebanon' includes the coastal cities of Tripoli, Beirut and Sidon and the Bekaa valley
- 1926 Lebanon first constitution is drawn up
- 1943 Lebanon receives its independence; Bishara Khoury is elected the country's first President
- 1952 Camille Chamoun is elected President
- 1958 Against the background of widespread disturbances, Chamoun requests US military support; General Fuad Shihab is elected President
- 1964 Charles Helou is elected President
- 1970 Following the defeat of armed PLO factions in Jordan thousands of Palestinian fighters cross into Lebanon; Suleiman Franjyeh is elected President
- 1975 A deterioration of Lebanon's political situation leads to an outbreak of street fighting; in April, events come to a head after clashes between Christian Phalangists and Palestinian groups at Ain Al-Rummaneh; Lebanon plunges into an all-out war
- 1976 Syrian troops enter Lebanon as part of an Arab Deterrent Force; Elias Sarkis is elected President
- 1978 Israel invades and occupies a large area of southern Lebanon; the UN passes Resolution 425, demanding an immediate and unconditional Israel withdrawal from the country
- 1979 Israel troops pull out from Lebanon leaving a 10km "Security Zone" in southern Lebanon under the control of their allies, the South Lebanon Army
- 1982 Israel Launches "Operation Peace for Galilee", a full-scale invasion of Lebanon; Bashir Gemayel, the newly elected President, is assassinated after three days in office and his brother, Amin, is appointed President; Israel's Army allows Christian Phalangist militiamen into the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps to slaughter hundreds of Palestinian civilians; PLO leaders and fighters leave Beirut; the US citizen David Dodge, President of the American University of Beirut, becomes the first western hostage to be taken in the country
- 1984 Amal pushes the Lebanese Army out of West Beirut; Amal militias attack Palestinian camps, initiating the three-year "War of the Camps"
- 1987 Fighting breaks out between Druze and Shia groups; hundreds of civilians are killed
- 1988 After the end of President Gemayel's term, the Christian army commander General Michel Aoun is appointed as interim Prime Minister in a military government; his appointment is not accepted by Selim El-Hoss, the last Prime Minister under Gemayel, and for a while two separate governments exist in Lebanon
-
- 1989**
- Mar. The staunchly nationalist Aoun launches a "War of Liberation" against Syrian troops in Lebanon
- Oct. Under international sponsorship, negotiations by Lebanese MPs in the Saudi Arabian resort of Taif conclude with the adoption of the 'Taif Agreement', designed to bring an end to the Lebanese war and to alter constitutional imbalances among the sects
- Nov. Rene Moawad is elected President; he is assassinated after only seventeen days in office and is succeeded by Elias Hrawi a deputy from Zahleh and close ally to Syria's
-
- 1990**
- Aug. The amendments of the Lebanese constitution envisaged in the Taif Agreement are officially passed by parliament; General Aoun declares the amendments null and void
- Oct. Syrian forces assisted by the Lebanese Army shell the Presidential palace and oust General Aoun from his seat at Baabda; the general flees to the French Embassy and later receives political asylum in France; his forces surrender to the Syrian and Lebanese Armies
-
- 1991**
- Jun. The Lebanese Army, Backed by Syrian troops, begins implementing a security plan for Greater Beirut
- Mar. The cabinet decides to dissolve all Lebanese and non-Lebanese militias
- May. The Lebanese Army begins its deployment in former militia-ruled areas; on 22 May, Syria and Lebanon sign the 'Treaty of Brotherhood, Cooperation and Coordination', linking the two countries on the political, military, internal security and economic level
- July. Lebanon's Palestinian guerrilla groups hand over their weapons to the Lebanese Army
- Sep. Lebanon and Syria sign a security and defence pact
- Nov. A Lebanese delegation takes part in the Madrid Middle East peace conference; British hostage Terry Waite is released after five years in captivity
-
- 1992**
- Aug. Lebanon holds its first parliamentary elections in twenty years; amid a wide-spread boycott by most Christians and many Muslims voter participation drops to minimal levels
- Sep. Syrian troops fail to withdraw from Lebanon as called for in the Taif Agreement
- Oct. The Lebanese-Saudi businessman Rafic Hariri is appointed Prime Minister of Lebanon

Sources **Lebanon** The Annual Business, Economic and Political Review 1997-8

LEBANON**NOVEMBER 1983**

showing its:

1. present boundary —————
2. Ottoman boundary (1861 – 1920) - - - -
3. historic names of main districts
4. broad traditional location of main communities

النائب السابق يمكن حمل بشدة على برنامج " الشاطر يحكي " :
الدولة تخلت عن واجبها في حفظ الآداب وخرقت الدستور

وطنية انتقد النائب السابق الدكتور فتحي يمكن اغلاق الدولة لبعض وسائل الاعلام
معتبراً انها تخلت عن واجبها في حفظ الآداب وخرقت الدستور وروجت للجريمة والعنف ، معتبرا
أن الاعلام المرئي يقوض القيم الدينية والاخلاقية ،

وقال النائب السابق يمكن في تصريح له اليوم :

في الوقت الذي تقوم الدولة بأغلاق اعلام القيم والفضائل المؤمن على بناء الوطن والمواطن
على اساس راسخة من مكارم الاخلاق تمتد الى تشجيع ما يخالف ذلك وما يحضر على المهر
والفجور والخرج على الآداب العامة وترويج الجريمة والعنف عبر الاعلام المرئي الرسمي
منه والخاص .

ورأى ان الدولة تنتهك بذلك مواد قانونية صريحة وردت في قانون الاعلام ومقدمات
د فتر الشروط " معتبرا " انها تتخلى عن دورها في المحافظة على الآداب العامة ما يفرض
مقاضاتها امام الاجهزة القضائية المختصة " .

وقال : " ان الدولة تنتهك المادة السادسة من الدستور اللبناني ، من خلال
السكاح بهدم القيم الدينية عبر العديد من البرامج الاعلامية التي تبث على الهواء مباشرة
وفي مقدمتها برنامج " الشاطر يحكي " .

وختم : " من موقعنا الاسلامي ، وباسم كل الطوائف الدينية نطالب المجلس النيابي
بالتدخل الفوري لوقف هذه الانتهاكات كما نطالب الاجهزة القضائية بأن تأخذ دورها
في ايقاف الجريمة الرسمية المنظمة ، وتحديد المسؤولة وملاحقة المسؤولين وفق الاصول
وابما كانت مواقعهم " .

ع/ =====

Appendix 4

From the National Agency of Communication
complaints by a Muslim Politician regarding Let The Brave Speak
dated October 14, 1997

Appendix 5

Source: Oxford Business Group 1998

Top Telly 1996

Channel	Viewers*
LBCI	74%
Télé Liban	32%
Future TV	32%
MTV	28%
NTV	7%
ICN	4%
CVN	2%

* Percentage of adult viewers watching a channel for any time during any day
Source: Stat-quest

Appendix 6

Source: Oxford Business Group 1998

The Money Spinners

Major Broadcasters, Media, and Publishers

Television	Percent
LBC	58%
Télé Liban	20%
Future TV	10%
MTV	10%
Others	5%
Radio	Percent
Voix du Liban	20%
Radio One	19%
Radio Mount Lebanon	10%
Radio Liban Libre	10%
SLB	10%
Nostalgia	7%
Magic 102	7%
Others	11%
Press	Percent
An Nahar	38%
L'Orient-Le Jour	28%
Al Dhyar	10%
As Saïr	8%
Al Anwar	5%
Others	17%

Source: OBG

Appendix 7

Source: Oxford Business Group 1998

Please Buy Us!		
Products	Brands	Clients
Whiskies	Dewar's	Patel
Banks	Pepsi	Transmed
Cars	J & S	Obegi Consumer Pro's
Cigarettes	Arist	S.M.L.C.
Restaurants	Coca-Cola	Brown & Williamson
Soft-Drinks	Bytlos Bank	Pharmabai
Watches	Hyundai	F.A. Kellamish
Casual Wear	Kent	Proentia Staff Office
Appliances	X-Box	Boat
Detergents	Pasall	Abou Adid
* Assess all local needs		

Appendix 8

Source: Oxford Business Group 1998

Appendix 9

Source: Oxford Business Group 1998

At The Helm Of The State	
President	Term
Bishara El-Khoury	1943-1962
Camille Chamoun	1962-1966
Fuad Shihab	1966-1984
Charles Helou	1984-1970
Suleiman Frangieh	1970-1976
Elias Sarkis	1976-1982
Bashir Gemayel (assassinated)	1982
Amin Gemayel	1982-1988
Michel Aoun as 'Interim Head of State'	1988-1989
Rene Moawad (assassinated)	1989
Elias Hraoui	1989-1995
Elias Hraoui (3-year extension of term)	1995-1998
Source: OBG	

Appendix 10

Source: Phares, 1995

Map 4.1 The Mutassarrifiyya (A.D. 1860–1914)

Appendix 11

Source: Phares, 1995

Map 5.1 Greater Lebanon

- Mount Lebanon
● Major Cities

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IMAGE EVALUATION TEST TARGET (QA-3)

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