



## DEMOCRACY OR NOT: V-DEM INDEX IN LEBANON VERSUS SWEDEN

**Ghada Awada<sup>i</sup>**

PhD, American University of Beirut,  
Lebanon

### **Abstract:**

The study set to measure the V-Dem index in Lebanon in comparison with that of Sweden. The study employed the meta-analysis method to ensure delving into the different democracy indices. The findings of the study revealed that the V-Dem was significantly efficient in purposely investigating the level of democracy in Lebanon and Sweden in terms of democracy components; electoral, liberal, participatory and deliberative in addition to politics, freedom of press and freedom of accessibility to political information. The V-Dem could surpass previous difficulties encountered using the democracy traditional measure tools in Lebanon. Contrary to democracy high V-Dem index in Sweden, the study revealed that the V-Dem four indices are low in Lebanon. However, the Lebanese model of democracy could be still employed as a pattern to disseminate democracy in other Arab countries especially the ones with segmental divisions based on religion and culture.

**Keywords:** BTI measure, consociationalism, democracy, V-Dem index

### **1. Introduction**

There is no single definition of democracy due to the ambiguity of the indices that set such definition. Should democracy be solely reliant on elections, defining it will be much more feasible than going through tremendous plethora of literature. There are traditional measure tools of democracy determined by the definition of democracy. However, measuring the level of democracy is problematic since there are many obstacles which impede the measuring process. Therefore, a reform is critically needed to measure democracy in Lebanon, in the light of the democracy project applied in Sweden. The V-Dem tool could be effective in measuring the characteristics and the components of democracy in Sweden.

Lebanon has witnessed rigorous turmoil which could shape the democracy index in such a country. On May 6, 2018, the Lebanese elected a new parliament in accordance with a proportionality representative system; the new Lebanese electoral law, enforced

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<sup>i</sup> Correspondence: email [ghadawada@gmail.com](mailto:ghadawada@gmail.com)

and implemented, is based on voting by lists, and by preferential voting. Many Lebanese people voted on May 6, 2018 in accordance with this new electoral law. Ever since the last majoritarian elections on June 7, 2009, Lebanon has faced an unbalanced governmental system where in 2014, the members of parliament had failed to conduct elections and extended their own term an additional 4 years. The members of the parliament finally elected Michel Aoun to be president of Lebanon on the 31st of October 2016 which finally broke the 29-month deadlock. The President of Lebanon, Michel Aoun, believed that the new electoral law could ensure that the Lebanese people's voice be heard. Saad El Hariri, the Lebanese Prime Minister, believed that the new electoral law is not in the biased interest of the political parties that constitute the Lebanese Parliament. Nabih Berri, Lebanon's speaker of Parliament, believed that the new Lebanese electoral law could engage Lebanon in a new phase and could give hope to the Lebanese citizens to build a new future (Carney, 2018). Furthermore, Lebanon adopted a liberal constitution in 1926 that has survived in several turbulent situations. The unwritten National Pact of 1943 organized *"relations among sects, whereby the country's Maronite Christian plurality promised to forgo traditional dependence on France while Muslims gave up desire for union with other Arab states...by the mid-70s, internal socio-economic problems began interacting violently with demographic change and the presence of armed Palestinians and other groups in the country, leading to the breakdown of the system and a civil war, which began in 1975"* (Khouri, 2006,p.72). The civil war came to an end only after ratifying the Taif accord in 1989. A parliament proportional sectarian representation was established by the virtue of the Taif Accord.

In alignment with the above mentioned events, there have been several democracy indices which attempted to measure democracy in Lebanon. The present study employed the V-Dem index which is *"a new approach to the conceptualization and measurement of democracy. It is co-hosted by the University of Gothenburg and University of Notre Dame"* (Ing, 2016, p.2). The V-Dem approach was the utilized measure to have a good grasp of democracy especially that several instruments were hindered by many obstacles that emerged along the way such as the local inaccessibility of information and the insufficiency of the measuring tool to properly address all indices. As such, the V-Dem approach was utilized to create the most effective measure tool and to detect all components of democracy and to create a convenient, reliable measure of democracy. The V-Dem was employed to measure the democracy index in several countries such as Sudan, Egypt, Sweden and other countries bar Lebanon. As such, the study intended to investigate the effectiveness of the V-Dem tool in determining whether Lebanon is a democracy in comparison with Sweden which is amongst the top democratic states in our modern era. Furthermore, the V-Dem approach was the utilized approach since *"V-Dem's multidimensional and disaggregated approach acknowledges the complexity of the concept of democracy...The V-Dem project distinguishes among five high-level principles of democracy: electoral, liberal, participatory, deliberative, and egalitarian, which are disaggregated into lower-level components and specific indicators"* (Mechkova, Andersson & Lindberg, 2016, p.2).

As such, the present study intended to address the following questions:

1. How is the V-Dem approach different from other democracy indices in measuring democracy in Lebanon?
2. To what extent is Lebanon a democracy in comparison with Sweden?

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Definitions of Democracy

There is no single definition for democracy since democracy is a broad term to define. The online Cambridge dictionary defines democracy as *"a government system in which people of the state exercise directly, or indirectly power through elected representatives to form the governing body that is set to govern the country"*. Therefore, democracy might sound an ideal system which grants people their entire rights to rule themselves. Yet, should democracy be an ideal system, then why did many countries adopt a different system from democracy? Historically, democracy was first employed in Greece as "Demos" and "Kratos" combined to indicate *"Common people's strength"* (Fleck & Hanssen, 2013). United States employed a democratic system with a crude, direct people's ruling mechanism, and along history. United States set complex state democracies. President Abraham Lincoln described democracy using the most powerful words on November 19, 1863 as *"... that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth."* Lincoln's words in Gettysburg about the crucial necessity for American democracy to survive shaped him as a great political leader who made history. Therefore, a democracy state is characterized by certain features that should be present so that the system could be defined as democracy. "By the people" is the first rule which indicates that every citizen who is legally age eligible has the right to direct representation to speak for oneself or to indirect voting system that sets representatives speaking one's voice. The indirect voting system takes place through a defined electoral system which provides a fair election. There are major differences in the electoral systems of different countries when it comes to representation and voting. The voice of the minority should be given weight as a key concept to govern the majority rule system. The majority rule system should be set after carrying out amendments to consolidate and fuse the minorities with the aim of keeping all citizens satisfied in the state (Dahl, Shapiro & Cheibub, 2003).

### 2.2 Forms of Democracy

Representation is an important characteristic of a democracy, which could operate directly or indirectly, in accordance with the type of democracy people encounter. The direct democracy is first type of democracy created in Athena. The direct democracy was exceptional back in 508 B.C for citizens who were directly selected randomly from the people to undertake political and governmental responsibilities along with assemblies which gathered the moral, capable and decision-making people to deliberate decisions (Fleck & Hanssen, 2013).

Throughout history, certain challenges shaped democracy which evolved to become more of a representative system. The elections of political officials would hold

power in the government to rule in the name of people to be legitimate in a representative system. In addition, in some states, the people directly elect the prime minister of the government in a republic. Therefore, elections and representation are key determinants in such a form of democracy. In representative democracy states, parliamentary and presidential types of democracies prevail. As such, a parliamentary democracy is a form of state whereby people elect the government officials who, in turn, elect the president of the state. Conversely, the presidential systems provide a state president who is directly elected by the people (Gerrig, Bond, Barndt, & Moreno, 2005).

### 2.3 Measuring Democracy

Democracy is an ongoing, rising system which evolves to adapt to any fluctuations that might influence it. Therefore, it is difficult to conclude a clear-cut definition of democracy, which renders the rise of many challenges, namely measuring and conceptualizing democracy. Yet, the motive behind delving into the abstract world of measuring democracy is to detect the democratic rule that emerges at various levels and can be applied in different conducts; therefore, not all democratic states embrace the same level of democracy. As such, measuring democracy is vital to set a framework for questioning the policy implemented by the government, economic development, applied social policies as well as deciding on the international relations as addressed by the country under study (Knutsen, & Wig, 2014).

There are many democracy indices, which rely on different combinations of concepts and characteristics of democracy. Several indices were utilized, and they yielded conflicting or dissimilar results as they are different, for each tool might draw a different conclusion about the measurement of democracy although the tools might measure correlated factors. Accordingly, to correctly draw a conclusion about the democracy level, some indices were innovated; four democracy tools stood out as they were mostly utilized. They include the Binary measure of democracy and dictatorship ("DD"), Multidimensional index produced by the Economist Intelligence Unit ("EIU"), Bertelsmann Transformation Index ("BTI"), and the Polity 2 (currently Polity IV) (Coppedge, Gerring, Lindberg, Skaaning, & Teorell, 2017). Contrary to other democracy indices, *"The V-Dem dataset is created by combining factual information from existing data sources about constitutional regulations and de jure situations with expert coding for questions that require evaluation"* (Mechkova, Andersson & Lindberg, 2016,p.4).

The Binary measure of democracy and dictatorship ("DD") was created by [Adam Przeworski](#). The DD index categorizes regimes into two main types and each into three subtypes extending from parliamentary, semi-presidential to presidential democracies. The DD index classifies democracies and dictatorships into monarchic, military, and civilian. It strictly categorizes regimes, which challenges the flexibility permitted in measuring democracies in equivocal regimes (Knutsen, & Wig, 2014). Second, the Multidimensional index created by the Economist Intelligence Unit ("EIU") builds upon the idea that democracy should provide the individuals' political freedom and civil rights; accordingly, the EIU measures the political freedom and civil rights which are

the most significant factors of democracy. Freedom is the crucial part of democracy, yet the EIU states that freedom must coexist with the political involvement and appropriate government (which applies the strategic aspects of democracy). Conversely, other democracy measuring tools give freedom less weight. EIU utilizes five main indexes to properly measure democracy: the election process, political participation, political culture, government's effective function in society, and civil rights and freedom (Kekic, 2017). Third, the Bertelsmann Transformation Index ("BTI"), which is a modern tool employed in the form of a global education to provide a qualitative analysis and assessment which is later transformed into a quantitative score to mark the practices in democratic transitions of 129 countries under study (Nunn, 2009). Fourth, the Polity 2 (currently Polity IV), which is a political science research which presents coded information on the levels of democracies for the studied states. The Polity IV is grounded on the evaluation of elections and public participation with the intent to receive a better picture of political competitiveness. All coded components are kept in the Polity codebook (Coppedge, Gerring, Lindberg, Skaaning, & Teorell, 2017).

The criteria utilized to measure the western democracies should be adapted to apply to Lebanon which is characterized by plurality, many religions and traditionalism. The Freedom House rating and the Polity IV rating gave Lebanon 5 out of 10 for democracy in 1974. However, due to fifteen years of war, fifteen years of Syrian occupation and the Israeli invasion, Lebanon didn't keep the significant democracy and freedom ranking it obtained in 1974. Polity IV rating has been chosen because it considers the years of war in Lebanon, from 1975 through 1989, and the years of the Syrian occupation from 1989 through March of 2005. The Democracy Watch in Lebanon investigated the significance of liberties, political and civil rights in Lebanon from February through September of 1998. Most of the respondents believed in the Significance of the freedoms related to democracy. However, Lebanon is progressively obtaining better scores on the Freedom House ratings and the Polity IV scale. The Polity IV rated Lebanon in 2013 as Partly Free and it was given a score of 8 for democracy (Ghattas, 2013).

#### **2.4 Challenges and concerns in measuring democracy**

The validity, reliability, and relevance of utilizing some measures to investigate the level and extent of democratic rule power in a state raise questions and concerns. Therefore, according to Coppedge and Gerring (2011), there are six key points that should be considered while measuring democracy: definition of democracy, precision of testing, coverage and sources used, coding, aggregation, and validity and reliability tests.

Defining democracy remains a challenge as the term democracy cannot be firmly defined. As a result, the whole calculation might be dismissible; therefore, employing universally used definition of democracy necessitates having a consensus. For instance, the Polity 2 measuring index was employed to measure democracy in the United States which had a complete democratic system, yet delving further into the aspect of representation, we could notice that at that time females and African American people

were barred. Another measuring index might be the Political Right's index, which mainly focuses on the freedom of the individual in some cases such as crimes, corruption, possession of land, and various personal freedom rights. The measuring tool is also an extensive tool to measure democracy irrespective of its focus on freedom of the individual. Therefore, we might conclude that the definition of democracy is inconsistent; furthermore, each tool tackles only one aspect of democracy. Another problem we might face while using such measures is the lack of precision since some tools might be one dimensional, crude and unresponsive as well as might lack a proper evaluation system. For instance, the Democracy Dictatorship measure tool employs a "yes or no" measure tool, which doesn't enable employing a grading system for lacking any flexibility. Certain democratic systems in African countries, for example, could have the same characteristics found in a well-developed European country which makes both countries equally democratic. Such controversy was pointed out when on the "DD" Scale, New Guinea and Sweden scored the same even though a clear evidence can be easily recognized to show the differences between them (Coppedge & Gerring, 2011). A third problem might entail the limitation of sources and coverage in some countries. Some measures might employ historical data and build on the steadiness of data (Buhlmann, Merkel & Wessels, 2007). As such, the quality of data available might raise questioning about the outcome of any measure. Another example pertinent to the absence of coverage could be the multidimensional index which relies on polling data. Furthermore, when participation levels reach 50%, data analysts and experts might have to build on estimations. In addition, surveys for the public to cover opinions might also be inaccurate due to a lack of coverage of all citizens along with the participation levels which might create a gap in data placed ahead. The fourth problem might lie in coding. For instance, experts who work in coding encountered a problem when the "Nations in Transit" survey was administered. The survey included five questions which showed unclear responses, so clear-cut conclusions were not probable. Therefore, data, surveys and questionnaires might fail to hold clear coding and clear questions to be responded to, which makes the experts' analysis more subjective (Buhlmann, Merkel & Wessels, 2007). The fifth concern that might rise is the aggregation or the collection of all data and indicators into one index which facilitates the measurement of democracy. However, the major problem fails in providing proper weights to each indicator when reaching the aggregation process. Each weighing plan might end up in different results; therefore, it will be crucial to have a common global weighing scheme which is the difficult task. The final obstacle we might encounter might be the validity and reliability of tests. Validity determines how legit the testing is while measuring democracy; reliability sets how consistent the testing across nations through history is. Along different countries, the correlation among different measures might vary. Correlations or measures might score the highest in what is envisaged as top democratic countries such as Sweden and United States. Furthermore, the correlation and consensus reach the lowest in the less democratic countries which make the test less reliable in determining democracy.

## 2.5 A Reform Measuring system

There is an ongoing increase in problems encountered while measuring democracy in the modern world, which urges experts to create a more fashionable system. The new reformed tool emerged as a middle solution to attempt removing possible deformities that were previously current. In addition, the new established tool addressed the issue of globalization of democracy in order to create a more globally functional measuring tool. The purpose was to create a tool that can combine all the above previously mentioned measures, and it led to the establishment of the variants of democracy project (Coppedge & Gerring, 2011).

The new reformed tool relies on defining democracy as a multidimensional aspect with the help of different experts (to get rid of the issue of subjectivity). Furthermore, a new strategy should be implemented to create a better data collection system that addresses reliability, precision, and validity. Each aspect of democracy should be measured by a point scoring system while keeping a score bracket for each grade given to set the level of democracy. As such, the reformed tool will measure democracy on the macro level and not merely deal with it on the citizen level. The reformed tool should measure the political units and the political involvement process which considers that as the representation of people. The tool deals less with micro democratic issues that convey daily life issues of citizens in the neighborhood, work, schools and places which are affected by factors and not by democracy (Beetham, David, Bracking, Kearton, & Weir 2001).

## 2.6 Variants of Democracy Project (V-Dem)

V-Dem focuses merely on five diverse key principles: the "electoral", "liberal", "participatory", "deliberative", "majoritarian", and "egalitarian" systems. The key principles were set in accordance with complete distinctiveness with the exception of the electoral factor which dictates that no democracy emerged without elections. Nonetheless, on a micro level, they are correlated since the V-Dem divides the five broad concepts into subcomponents bringing out hundreds of subcomponents in order to improve the validity of the measurement (Coppedge, Gerring, Lindberg, Skaaning, & Teorell, 2017).

The electoral system is the foremost component shared in every democratic system which represents the core of every democratic state and provides a level of competition for the approval among the representatives of citizens. Therefore, the important questions will be if the board holding the office resembles a proper representation of the masses and if the elections are fairly contested to create the possible representation of their opinion.

The liberal dimension is the second component that might symbolize the basic values for protecting citizens and minority's rights in the state. The stronger the protection the more democratic the state will be; therefore, the indicators that denote civil liberties, "rule of law", accountability and application of the constitutional law might show a high score. Furthermore, the more liberal a state is, the more active role the private institutions, media, interest groups and other such organizations might have

and the more effective rules in the society and in creating laws we might recognize. Again, here the purpose is to answer questions such as to what extent the rule of law is decentralized.

The "participatory" dimension is the third component. Participation, as only one indicator, is embodied by elections and voting. Participation also encompasses participation in civil societies, local governance, and other forms of direct democracy where the voice of the citizen is straight heard of.

The deliberative component is the fourth to be re-evaluated, and it raises the question if the political decision is the result of public deliberation. Another question might be, therefore, if the process of political decisions could be covered and whether they are set in the good of the public or not. Processes, such as hearings, discussion panel, and the media should be examined; furthermore, the deliberative component should also cover the deliberation process and the extent to which the decision makers and the citizens informed of the implications of any political decision. After the examination of the dialogue and the analysis process to reach the final decision that should fall into the wellbeing of the public only.

The fifth component might be the "egalitarian" factor, which tackles the issue of reaching the extreme political equality. Equality is a key feature of democratic systems as aspects such as the equality of participation, representation, protection ensured by law, income, education, health, and several other subcomponents should be properly covered.

The sixth component might be the "majoritarian" concept which reflects to what extent the force of the majority is available in the state, and, therefore, the question remains if the majority ruling is powerful and to what extent their power is.

Taking into consideration the six components of the new form of V-Dem, it can be noticed that, in contrast to classical measures, the new form of V-Dem further covers a wider view of democracy. The purpose is to less define democracy and to more describe the active components of the new form of V-Dem to measure democracy in an effective, reliable and valid manner (Coppedge, Gerring, Lindberg, Skaaning, & Teorell, 2017).

### **3. Methodology**

The study utilized a qualitative design whereby a meta- analysis of extant literature including democracy indices and instrumental variables was conducted to address the study questions. The study utilized the V-Dem approach and criteria to investigate whether Lebanon, in comparison with Sweden, could be considered a democracy in terms of four dimensions; electoral, liberal, participatory and deliberative. The researcher relied mainly on the V-Dem report revealing the democracy index in Sweden and in other countries. The study intended to bridge the gap in the extant literature as there was no single V-Dem report examining democracy index in Lebanon. The adopted methodology was also utilized to explore the differences among the effective democracy indices in measuring democracy in Lebanon. *"In the V-Dem conceptual*



*scheme, the electoral component of democracy is fundamental and understood as an essential element of the other principles of representative democracy – liberal, participatory, deliberative, and egalitarian; without it, we cannot call a regime “democratic” (Mechkova, Andersson, & Lindberg, 2016.p.3).*

## **4. Findings**

### **4.1 Findings on question one: How is the V-Dem approach different from other democracy indices?**

#### **A. Applications of V-Dem model in Lebanon and Sweden**

The V-dem model makes Sweden fall in the 3rd place of the most democratic countries in accordance with the latest statistics done in 2015 (Mechkova, Andersson, & Lindberg, 2016). Using the V-dem model, each dimension scored the following: 25% for political rights, 25% for civil liberties, 25% for global gender gap report, 10% for press freedom, 10% for corruption perceptions index, 2.5% for change of the head of government, and 2.5% for political party change of the head of government. The main indicators emerge from aggregated sub indicators compiled by experts to reach the final ranking (Coppedge, & Teorell, 2017).

The V-dem model should be employed as well to measure the level of democracy ensured in Lebanon. Using the V-dem model, each dimension be scored separately from other dimensions; namely political rights, civil liberties, global gender gap, press freedom, corruption perceptions index, change of the head of government, and political party change of the head of government. The Information International in Beirut carried out a survey in 2000 to elicit data about the presence of the freedom of expression indicated that many Muslim respondents who formed 76.1% Sunnis and 70.1% Shiites believed that freedom of expression exists in certain forms while 51.1% of the Christian respondents endorsed that statement. The Christians' responses could be the consequence of the history of arbitrary arrests and interrogations conducted by the security forces and the Syrian troops against the Christians who declared anti-Syrian perspectives. The Information International survey reported negative responses of the Christians who believed that it is also crucial to free the country of any foreign troops. Moreover, the Democracy Watch study reported the high standing the Lebanese hold to the liberties connected to a democratic regime. Conversely, the Christians kept acknowledging that the freedom of expression was absent and the freedom to express thoughts under the Syrian occupation didn't exist as well. The controversy between the views of the citizens and their respective behavior on one hand and the conflict resolution methods they resort to is perplexing. The citizens can't tolerate living under any regime other than democracy, which ensures them a major space for practicing their freedoms and guarantees them respect and rights; however, the violent behavior and confrontations which happen very often intend to influence the Freedom House and the Polity IV classifications. More importantly, the sit-ins and demonstrations some Lebanese resorted to wouldn't be accepted or tolerated by any regime other than democracy (Ghattas, 2013).

#### **4.2 Findings on question two: To what extent is Lebanon a democracy in comparison with Sweden?**

To address the study questions, the researcher utilized along with the extant literature on decentralization and local government independence, representation, judiciary system, civil liberties and equality, as well as the V-Dem index electoral, Liberal, Participatory and Deliberative components. Sweden adopts a Western European democratic style of ruling with a framework based on a parliamentary representative democratic system that works in accordance with a set constitution prevailing under a monarchy system. An elected prime minister heads the parliamentary system and the national [legislature](#) along with the supreme decision-making body of [Sweden](#) which is called the Riksdag. Furthermore, there is a clear division of power among the executive, legislative and the judiciary branches. The Swedish government is uniquely characterized by having all policy-making decisions made collectively and the implementation of those decisions should require bigger efforts. In Sweden, the public and private institutions hold higher power making authority and people get to be more in control and therefore giving less commanding influence for ministers and public officials. For instance, ministers can't under the law officially intervene in individual benefit claims or immigration cases. The V-Dem data "...illustrates the democratic development of Sweden from 1900 to 2014. ..Sweden is a monarchy and a parliamentary democracy with direct elections held since 1902." (Mechkova, Andersson & Lindberg, 2016, p.3).

The 1926 Lebanese constitution states that Lebanon is a parliamentary republic whose political regime is a democracy, but the separation of power is based on religion, unlike western democracies which are characterized by a separation between church and state. Democracy in Lebanon survived irrespective of the violent internal and the external challenges along with the civil war which broke out in 1975 to last till 1990, the Syrian occupation which started in 1990 and lasted till 2005, the Israeli war which broke out on July 2006 and lasted till August 5, 2006 as well as the blockades which rendered the overdue of the presidential elections in 2008. Lebanon has plurality created by eighteen different religious sects and seventy-eight political parties along with thousands of active non-governmental agencies. Values, cultures, history, economy, and heritage factors influence the political system in Lebanon. The political system comes from within the structure of the country (Carney, 2018). Lebanon doesn't fall under the western democracies, yet it remains a "Parliamentary Democratic Republic" as stated in the constitution. Lebanon is a state whose political model is a democracy although it is based on equal sharing of power among the eighteen sects, which opposes the western concept of democracy separation characterized by the separation of state and religion. The western concept of liberal democracy is established through "free and fair elections, freedom of expression, alternative and independent sources of information, and associational autonomy" (Dahl, 1998: 197). Education and the socio-economic status influence the level of and quality of democracy (Inglehart & Wenzel. 2010).

### **A. Decentralization and local government independence**

Local governments hold a greater deal of independence. There are two types of local governments in Sweden; the "Primary Kommuns" which oversees education, residential issues, roads, and social work, and the "Secondary Kommuns" which is in charge of public healthcare. Decentralization of power and authority in Sweden gives local councils the ability to charge their own income taxes making all local areas have a different tax amount in return of different quality of services ensured. The government in Sweden pass laws characterized by ambiguity and simplified frameworks passed to the local governments. Even more, local governments decide on the policies, and the implementation procedures. Therefore, the final say is given to the local governments on how to implement, control, and amend policies the government passes down.

The Lebanese Center for Policy Studies and decentralization reforms reinforced decentralization in Lebanon. Support might reinforce decentralization but may also contribute to increasing corruption and supporting centralized governance (Eaton, Kaiser, and Smoke, 2010). On the other hand, decentralization might foster good governance by solidifying citizens' access to decision-making (Houdret, & Harnisch, 2018).

### **B. Representation**

Sweden applies a proportional representation electoral framework, which grants every party a place in the parliament should certain conditions be met. The electoral system operates upon granting the parties their right of votes; for instance, should the Government Alliance receives 40% of the votes, it will get 40% of the 349 members of the Riksdag. Elected officials in the Riksdag are not elected for an area but rather for the entire state and the voters can simply vote for the whole party and not for individuals only. One main condition for admission to a party into the government is that the party should get a minimum of 4% of the nation's votes. Effective governance at local levels, strong international relations and strong political rivalry foster the implementation of decentralization and democracy in this Lebanon (Harb & Atallah [2015](#)).

### **C. Judiciary system**

The judiciary system also shares a decentralized system. When any issue arises concerning public concern pleas, it will go to central agencies and not to courts. For instance, should people encounter a problem with the education system, they will petition to a section of 'Skolinspektionen' and not to courts (Mechkova, Andersson, & Lindberg, 2016)

### **D. Civil liberties and equality**

Freedom of the press act is a fundamental civil liberty in Sweden which provides public access to all official documents. Such access grants the public an open culture related to the work of the Riksdag and all laws being worked on. It also exposes any possible sort of corruption that might occur. The public experts have an access to the government files which enables them to assess the work of the Riksdag and to provide public

criticism in case they need to steer their work more towards the public wellbeing. The Minister for Gender Equality in Sweden is in charge of all gender equality issues which might occur in the country and the work of this minister also focuses on laws concerning workplace equality as well as maternity and paternity issues. Furthermore, the Education Act focuses on eradicating gender inequality and encouraging educating children in early stages using diverse teaching methods and techniques. Furthermore, a local agency called the "Equality Ombudsman" works on fighting discrimination and protecting equality in terms of rights and life opportunities for each citizen (Gender Equality: The Swedish Approach to Fairness, 2017). Political equality is evident in recent statistics indicating that in 2015, 82 women and 90 men were heads of Sweden's top government agencies positions were appointed by the government. Furthermore, Sweden holds the highest level of Women representation in the parliament. For instance, women held 152 (43.6%) out of the 349 seats in the Riksdag in 2014 (Coppedge & Teorell, 2017).

Conversely, in Lebanon, "...the government is not working equally for the religious groups it was intended to fairly represent. Shia Muslims consistently give the Lebanese government more positive evaluations on issues related to democracy when compared to Sunni Muslims, Maronite Catholics, and Druze. Maronite Catholics and Druze respondents consistently give the Lebanese government the most negative evaluations on these issues" (Ellis, 2018, p.2).

### **E. The Electoral component**

Throughout history, Sweden witnessed elections with tremendous public involvement which was always widespread. The public along with the opposition parties showed interest in participation in the competitive elections without any restrictions held. In terms of the election's index (scale 0-1), it has always had a score close to 1.

Conversely, the examination of the indicators of the Electoral component in Lebanon yields a low index due to the fact that Lebanon's "...outdated and controversial electoral system", in addition to "...the current majoritarian electoral laws serves to undermine democracy and exacerbate sectarian tensions as it now runs counter to the original integrationist goals for which it was designed (El Machnouk, 2018, p.1).

### **F. The Liberal Component**

In terms of the liberal component, Sweden as stated above has properly guaranteed the protection of individual and minority rights. The constitution has always been present to protect civil freedom through a proper system that reflected assuming full accountability and liability of officials, elected and appointed, for their actions. Individuals are equal before the law and the individual liberty was ensured to a large extent; laws are also transparent and firmly enforced through local governments. There is an access to good judiciary system that protected freedom movements, and freedom of thought and expression. Furthermore, the V-Dem also scored high on indicators that reflected a receptive executive power and the ability of the citizen to question,

investigate, and exercise oversight over the executive decisions made by the Swedish liberal index near perfect.

Conversely, the examination of the contemporary Lebanese consociationalism has indicated that “...ethnicity is central to debates about revising consociationalism, via qualitative interviews with Lebanese political elites and civil society activists, ...these subjects conceptualize ethnicity in contrasting ways which generate different approaches to consociationalism but which ultimately frustrate meaningful reform” (Nagle, 2016, p.1143).

### **G. The Participatory Component**

The participatory dimension of democracy embodies the values of direct rule and active participation of citizens in the political process. Sweden witnessed extensive involvement of citizens in civil society organizations with high participation of women. Civil societies are also a stop for policymakers in eliciting their consults to create the most effective policies touching the entire country. On the other hand, Sweden doesn't implement the direct popular vote which forms a setback in the measure of the aspect of participatory democracy. Moreover, Sweden reaches an average of local democracy level when regional governments showed that they could operate on unelected personnel at local levels and not the fully elected. However, Sweden still reached an index average of 0.6 (Mechkova, Andersson, & Lindberg, 2016).

Conversely, the examination of the participatory component in Lebanon has revealed that “confessional democracy hinders citizenship reform and paves the way to arbitrary naturalization practices, and that, in turn, the citizenship regime contributes to the resilience of the political system. In other words, the citizenship regime and the political system are mutually reinforcing” (Jaulin, 2014, p.250)

### **H. The Deliberative Component**

Sweden has experienced a top score in the “engaged society” indicator showing that many social and political groups, and regular citizens could reach the media to discuss policies and present their views. The Deliberative Component in Sweden is outstanding. The egalitarian component reflects the equal distribution of resources, education, health, and public services across the country, which could increase political equality. As such, Sweden holds a full score for the interest in forming procedural policies to cover aspects of equality in citizenship.

Conversely, “Sectarian and ecumenical tropes recur throughout Lebanese deliberation about the role of religion in public life. Lebanon's founding National Pact states that the country's “supreme welfare” requires the “curing of sectarianism and the halting of its evils” which “poison the spirit of relations” between the confessional communities and articulates the ideal that “the hour in which we abolish sectarianism will be the hour of the most blessed national awakening in the history of Lebanon” (Corstange, 2012, p.124).

## 5. Discussions

The purpose of this study was to investigate the characteristics and the different forms of democracy, and most importantly to investigate the effectiveness of the different tools utilized for measuring democracy and identifying the most effective democracy measure tool. In fact, democracy is defined and applied differently in many countries, which necessitated employing different measuring tools. *"...on all but two V-Dem principles of democracy, Sweden's score cross the middle of the scale and most are clustered around the level of .8. The indices on local and regional governments have not yet reached top levels, suggesting that the aspect of participatory democracy is to be improved. In terms of the characteristics of deliberative and egalitarian democracy, Sweden receives the highest scores on the V-Dem measures"* (Mechkova, Andersson, & Lindberg, 2016.p.12). V-dem presents the aspect that influence the level of democracy in a country. In the case of Sweden, what made the application of the different forms of measuring tools was the level of accessibility of information and the proper surveying which is available in the country. The separation of authorities makes it feasible to discover any policy making process at the highest and the lowest levels of local governments and policy implementation levels. One of the more important factors that helped experts in measuring democracy in Sweden is the "freedom of the press act". This brought in transparency of information and the right to access all proper data so it can be collected to properly assess democracy indicators.

*"As of 2014, Sweden reaches near top scores on all democracy indices, except for the participatory, in which the country scores near .7 on the index ranging from 0 to 1"* (Mechkova, Andersson, & Lindberg, 2016.p.4). The tools such as the "DD" could equally classify Sweden and New Guinea as democratic states which was a fundamental issue that weakens the reliability and validity of the DD tool. The V-Dem provides a subtle description of the democratic state of Sweden. The weighted indicators were existing and given a proper weighted average which accordingly presents eventually a quantitative result to classify the rank of Sweden on the democracy level ladder. Furthermore, when referring to the BTI measure of democracy, Sweden had a lower rank since many aspects of its government functions and roles were disregarded. Since BTI follows the ideology of carrying out a comparison between the transformation processes of democracy and market economy worldwide, the BTI focuses more on transformational system and economics. Electoral systems, equality, and freedom might be overlooked as well. The V-Dem model renders an equal, non-biased representation that is built on indicators that cover all aspects of democracy.

Examining democracy in the Middle East in general and in Lebanon necessitates taking into consideration the unconditional, unquestionable trust in the traditional tribal leader (za'im) whose decisions are always met with absolute compliance. Unlike the democratic regimes where elected officials are held accountable towards those who voted for them, elections in Lebanon are always done to reelect the same "za'im" out of veneration and loyalty even when the Lebanese are discontented with the facilities the government is providing. However, Lebanon has a traditional plural society

encompassing 18 religions and this is why Lebanon is a consociational democracy since the Lebanese political system, regime and system are based on confessional segments. Ethnic divisions form the backbone of consociational democracy that exists in similar political systems like those in Cyprus or in Belgium. Removing the religious affiliations out of the political arena, the regime in Lebanon could become like that of Switzerland which used to adopt the consociational democracy. Lebanon should overcome some challenges before the Consociational democracy becomes consolidated. Lebanon should adopt the Consolidated democracy which should include behavior, perceptions, constitution, religion, statehood and tradition. Excluding Switzerland, Consociational democracy didn't work, so it shouldn't be permanent as it is a transitional regime which should result in having the western democracy.

Lebanon couldn't be considered fully a democracy since the measures of democracy which are free elections, sovereignty, equal and inclusive citizenship and civil rights, universal suffrage, protection of civil and human rights of minorities aren't indicative of democracy presence in Lebanon (Khoury, 2006). Another limitation that impedes the use of the Western measure of democracy in Lebanon when we apply the western model in a traditional society like Lebanon is that it does not take into consideration the Nation State perceptions of Muslims. The Muslims believe that the state and the religion shouldn't be separated. However, many Sunnis and Shiites Muslims in Lebanon are secular, and they are in support in the separation of state and religion (The Economist, Feb. 4, 2006). In Lebanon, the coalition of the different religions forms a democratic government in place even though the presence of factions contradicts with the principles of democracy. The media portray the Sunni, Shiite and Christian leaders calling for keeping the diversity in the Lebanese society. The consolidated democracy of Lebanon could be employed as prototype to be applied in other countries (Linz & Stepan, 1996: 6). In comparison with the Consociational democracy in four western countries in 1977, the democracy in Lebanon was successful (Lijphart, 1984). Moreover, the events along with the changes that occurred in Lebanon didn't stop Lebanon from being ranked as a democracy (Lijphart, 1984).

Democracies incorporate the elements of pluralism in the state. Pluralism starts first by recognizing the diverse political thoughts, lifestyles, and interests of the people forming the governing body. The democratic society presents many private organizations that provide amenities to people without governmental authority or controller over the rules. Recognizing pluralism, democracy operates as a moderator to bring together differences from political to personal interests to detect the form needed to create the most cohesive social fabric. Democracy is directly connected to freedom which goes beyond the free will in choosing governing representatives. Democracy denotes giving value to individual freedom, which dictates incorporating several aspects such as freedom of speech, religion, privacy, protection, voting, and defense rights including the right to petition elected official provided the presence of the convenient circumstances to do so. Furthermore, such freedom should show tolerance and acceptance to all people living under the rules of the state.

An important characteristic is the decentralization of power provided by democracy which versus the authoritative regimes and dictatorships which hold and monopolize all powers in the name of the leader. Democracy decentralizes the monopoly of power and disseminates granting power to people in accordance with the existent system of the state; if presidential, power shall be given to the president and if parliamentary, to the elected governing board. The decentralization of power offers diverse challenges and breaches that result in protection against corruption and protection against mob rule. In addition, the decentralization of power shall help all minorities and majority to be represented in the government; for instance, the decentralization of power is utilized in United States' electoral system to help all citizens to set their vote whether physically or by online voting. In addition, every city, province, or state is equally represented without presenting any discrimination making the representation of the people's power decentralized in a board that represents all citizens. Further elaboration will be presented on electoral systems later on to describe the function of such systems.

## 6. Conclusions

Delving into the different democracy measure tools reflected a dominant observation which is that each tool examines democracy in a way. For instance, the BTI measure could investigate the economic effect of democracy on the country. As such, it might mislead experts using the different indexes of democracy and could make the result vary. The finding itself might not form in itself an issue for every study purpose, which results in defining the purpose for measuring the level of democracy in a certain country. Defining the purpose of study could make experts choose a more effective tool they could need to utilize. As a result, when selecting the proper measure tool to purposely investigate the level of democracy in terms of politics, it was evident that the new form of V-Dem was significantly efficient. The findings of the study indicated that governments could or could not make democracy measure tools most effective and greatly valid. Analysts utilizing scientific conclusions could help to improve and solve issues the state currently had missed to address. Experts and coders could obtain greater accessibility to analyze the political system properly without any hindrance. Furthermore, the reformist first world countries like Sweden could summon political experts to investigate their system which voluntarily could provide them with all the needed information to carry out the experts' examination. As such, it could be concluded that the problem of measuring democracy was addressed by the introduction of the V-Dem which could reflect well on a democratic state. One clear observation is that Sweden is a democratic state in every sense. The score V-Dem attributed to Sweden proved that the more the state is set to be democratic, the more effective measuring democracy becomes. The high level of freedom and the freedom of press and accessibility to political information concerning the government make the democracy measure tool most effective and greatly valid. Experts and coders could obtain greater accessibility to analyze the political system properly without any



hindrance. Furthermore, the reformist first world countries like Sweden could summon political experts to investigate their system which voluntarily could provide them with all the needed information to carry out the experts' examination. The experts' conclusions could help to improve and solve all the issues the state currently has or has missed to address. Eventually, V-Dem could surpass previous difficulties encountered using the democracy traditional measure tools. As such, it could be concluded that the problem of measuring democracy was addressed by the introduction of the V-Dem which operated on increasing the coverage of indexes measured along with giving each the proper weighted average that could reflect well on a democratic state. However, some Lebanese abused the freedoms that enabled them to demonstrate and to arrange sit-ins, which were guarded by a democratic regime such as that of Lebanon. Religious affiliation could be the backbone of the Lebanese political system which is based on a local model of democracy. The Lebanese model of democracy could be employed as a pattern to disseminate democracy in other Arab countries especially the ones with segmental divisions based on religion and culture. It is difficult to use a measurement tool employed in a western country to measure democracy in Lebanon as the Lebanese society remains traditional and the adopted norms are based on family ties and not on the contract ties that dominate in the western societies.

### **About the author**

Ghada Awada holds a Ph.D. in Public International Law and International Relations and Diplomacy with the highest distinction from Hautes Etudes Internationales ET Politiques- Paris with concentration in conflict resolution and crisis management. She is currently a Faculty and Consultant at the American University of Beirut. She is an expert in arbitration and conflict resolution.

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