THE THIRD SECTOR AND SUSTAINABLE SOCIAL CHANGE: NEW FRONTIERS FOR RESEARCH
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It has been argued that community institutions, cultural norms, social capital and the local context are some of the main determinants of supply and demand of social service provision and health and education related outcomes (Filmer 2003). The purpose of this research project is to examine Civil Society Organisations in general and in particular Faith Based Organizations when it comes to social service provision in a development context (Sida 2004a) and more precisely, their configurations, options, expectations, limitations and eventually growing roles. The main question is: In what way does the provision of social services by Faith Based and Secular Organizations affect the outcome of such services in the context of development? The focus is on basic social service provisions that are directly related to human development and poverty (cf. Prop 2002/03:122, World Bank 2004, Sida 2004b). As an empirical case study, Lebanon, amid its complex configurations of different confessional Faith Based Organizations and secular social service providers, will be the focal point for this research. The regulating, financing and providing of social services in the MENA-region are mainly a traditional public responsibility. However, Faith Based Organizations as well as secular social organizations play a major role in the interaction between clients, providers and policymakers (World Development Report 2004).

In order to examine the possible correlation between social service provision and its outcomes, we need to develop and understand the local context and the main determinants in Lebanon, based in theory and capable of being validated by empirical data. For this purpose, we will use three models: The first one is Filmer’s model of social service provision and the determinants of health and education outcomes. The outcomes can be described in terms of level of child mortality, child nutrition, school completion, learning and/or achievements (Filmer 2003, Arab Human Development Reports 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005). The second model is taken from Mansuri & Rao and their framework on community-based and community-driven development. They argue that governments, the public, private sectors as well as citizens, through civil society, use a variety of community-based-methods which are the essential ingredients of human development, such as education, health, water, sanitation, and electricity. (Mansuri & Rao 2003). The third model is “the Associationist Model” which develops a framework for the funding, regulation and implementing of social services from different social providers (Hogget & Thompson 1998).

We believe that one important factor which could influence the decision whether a citizen would select one form of social provision before another is the general or particularized trust expressed towards the producer of these services. (Rothstein 2002, Uslaner 2000, Cross 2005. From Svedberg & Trägårdh 2007). That is also the case in Lebanon where, for instance, NGOs and the private sector is dominating the health and education sectors as alternatives to an absent and what many consider a corrupt public sector (Lebanese Centre for Policy Studies 1999). Civil Society is replacing the state in these sectors at the same time as the political role of religion is on the rise in Lebanon. Data will be presented from the last World Values Survey, conducted in Lebanon during 2008.

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