

Lettres de Byblos
Letters from Byblos

No. 13

TAMIRACE FAKHOURY-MÜHLBACHER

**Power-Sharing Systems:
Theoretical Approaches and Case Studies**

A Conference Report



Centre International des Sciences de l'Homme
International Centre for Human Sciences

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The Fourth Byblos Autumn School (September 5 to 15, 2006) was held at the institute of Wiesneck in Kirchzarten (Germany). In cooperation with the Political Science Departments of Cairo University, Université Saint Joseph, Notre Dame University in Beirut and res gerendae in Freiburg, the Autumn School was funded by DAAD (German Academic Exchange Service). This academic platform brought together a group of political scientists, academicians, researchers and students.

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Objective

The power-sharing model has been linked to plural, segmented, and deeply divided societies in which linguistic, economic, racial, ethnic, or religious dividing lines have threatened the rise of a stable democracy. Despite its various advantages, the model has been criticised for various reasons. Main criticisms target its inability to bring about political steadfastness and its obstinate attempt to sustain artificial divisions which could have withered away under different circumstances.

This year, the fourth Byblos Autumn Autumn School (September 5 to 15, 2006, Wiesneck) revisited the consociational theory and its application to divided societies. First, it explored the theoretical aspects of the power-sharing approach and the different scholarly approaches that help understand consociational theory. Then it probed into controversial case studies in which different patterns and modes of consociationalism have been applied. The Autumn School tested to what extent the consociational approach could so far regulate and contain conflicts, and whether this approach - as a normative and prescriptive cure for unstable societies - has been able to

