

An Agenda Paper on "Culture"

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Introduction

Creation of a "national culture" has been one of the major concerns of intellectuals in Arab society for the past several decades. The various problems which arise from the rapid change in society stimulate this concern for the creation of a set of values and institutions which will transcend the various points of view and conflicts within the society and give a new impetus and harmony to national development.

Among Arab intellectuals "national" often has two levels of meaning. At times it refers to the political unit or country, at others to the "Arab nation." This latter sense concentrates on the common linguistic and religious heritage and makes little of the differences which may exist among the various regions. In some cases the term "national culture" has taken on a strong ideological coloring so much so that the creation of a national culture means the imposition of an ideology.

Beneath these various differences is the common concern for finding the means to surmount the various and often contradictory trends which rapid change and dislocation provoke in a developing society.

These various trends are frequently reduced to three rather broad currents: 1) the current that turns to the past as the only valuable cultural model, 2) the current which looks to contemporary western industrial society as the model, and 3) the intermediate current which claims that the model

does not exist but is to be created by incorporating the useful values, beliefs and institutions of one's heritage into the framework of contemporary society.

It is this third position which is most frequently espoused by intellectuals regardless of their ideological tenets. Their concern is to inculcate the values needed to make a viable contemporary state while guarding their own cultural identity. It would be difficult to fault this position save on the grounds that the discussion usually remains too theoretical and the inculcation of new values or the preservation of old ones are, generally, beyond the capacities of those concerned.

In any case, it is clear that the concept of culture, though rarely defined precisely, is one which embraces the broad spectrum of belief, knowledge, values, customs, language and institutions which characterize a given society. The definition of culture often cited in sociology and cultural anthropology is: that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, arts, morals, law, custom and other capabilities acquired by man as a member of society. As is immediately clear, this does not exclude the more popular and limited definition of culture which focuses on the artistic and literary production of a society and the values of its intellectual elite.

In this paper we have chosen to focus on Lebanese culture as it is reflected in Lebanon's political, religious, educational and family institutions and in the values implicit in the behavior of Lebanese.

Any discussion on the reconstruction and development of Lebanon and its future role in the area must take into account the reality which is Lebanon and the effects which the war and subsequent events have had on Lebanese culture.

## I. LEBANESE SOCIETY 1950-1975

### A. Lebanese Institutions

#### 1. Political institutions

The confessional structure of Lebanon and the strong community sentiment marking each of the various "ethno-religious" groups led to the creation of a political system in which the various groups would be assured of participation in the political process. The system partitions the three presidencies and distributes Chamber seats and government posts in such a way as to assure these various communities a "proportional" participation. The arrangement was explicitly labeled as "transitory" but has proven to be quite permanent. The basic confessional composition of the country which led to this system continues to influence most aspects of political life.

For example, one indicator of "deconfessionalization" of political outlook would be the development of political parties cutting across confessional lines. However, most Lebanese do not join parties (69%) and parties consequently play little role in the electoral process.

Even among those who do join parties, their grouping tends to be along confessional lines. Many parties do have a "mixed" membership but one or other confession predominates even in the most "progressive" groupings.

Indications are that most Lebanese are content with Parliamentary representation in confessional areas -- family ties and confessional affiliation still have a major role in determining political outlook.

The major expression of discontent with the system came from the Muslim community, but the discontent was less with the system than with the imbalance which exists within the system. This led to some minor adjustments such as Pres. Frangie's redistribution of general directorates in February 1974.

The late 60's and early 70's also witnessed the growth of leftist parties. Undoubtedly this is a sign of discontent with the system but it lends itself to various interpretations. One aspect is the intra-community tension caused by the lack of mobility in the political system. The traditional leadership maintains such a tight grip that younger elements are frustrated. Thus it is not clear whether the expressed opposition to the system is equally as strong as the opposition to the people who hold power in the system.

The vocal opposition to the system does not necessarily exclude attachment to Lebanon. A survey in the early 70's showed that Lebanese citizenship was ranked as more important than confessional affiliation, local ties, or "being Arab." This same survey also indicated that Arab identity, long a point of division between Muslims and Christians, appeared to be on the increase among Christians with a consequent decrease in attachment to family, region, and sect.  
(Smock and Smock)

Thus, although there is abundant evidence of the deep-rootedness of confessional ties and clear indication that in crises institutions and groupings tend to function on confessional lines, these indications of changing attitudes towards Lebanon and towards Arabism were taken as a hopeful sign that inter-confessional tensions would decrease and that the system would better foster national accommodation.

## 2. Religious institutions

Community identity in this area is expressed through the Religious courts applying the personal status laws of each community, and by the community councils which group the political, religious, and intellectual elite of the major communities.

The political role of the community councils is not always clear, and the leadership of many of them is subject to intra-community disputes. But even here, it is worth noting that intra-community disputes do not apparently lead "progressive" elements to reject confessional identity, rather the reaction is to try to gain control of other community institutions.

On occasion some groups propose a common personal status law and/or civil marriage as a means for breaking down confessional identity. However, this is not only contrary to Muslim doctrine but is also considered by many Muslims as a direct threat to the continued existence of the community in as much as it would facilitate inter-community marriages.

The Christians, on the other hand, have no doctrinal reasons to oppose a common personal status law, but they too are community oriented. For instance, in 1952 Christian religious leaders sponsored legislation for

enlarging the jurisdiction of the personal status courts and provoked a lawyers strike. However, a study in 1973 showed that 40% of Christian religious leaders and 46% of the faithful questioned said they had no objection to civil marriage.

This 1973 study on the role of the Bishops shows that the Bishops themselves and the faithful consider the Bishops role not merely as spiritual but also as social and political. However, many see the social aspect as a necessary substitute for lack of state concern and just over half thought that the state would ultimately replace the Bishop in this area. Also, it should be noted that approval of the Bishop's role was stronger in those areas where the Christians were a minority.

There are no available studies on the role of Muslim religious leaders. The Muslim communities do not have the same hierarchical organization as the Christians, but the evolution of the multi confessional system in Lebanon has led to the strengthening of the position of the Mufti of the Republic; more recently, a similar process has been taking place with regard to the position of Imam Sadr in the Shiite community.

These religious institutions are a symbol and reinforcement of community identity, but they do not usually play a primary political role, rather they tend to follow the lead of political groups and persons.

### 3. Associations

Voluntary organizations including youth clubs, literary-cultural groupings, professional associations and labor unions also tend to form on confessional lines or to be dominated by one or other confessional group. There is not very much information available in this area, but it appears that at least half of all the voluntary associations have an explicit religious or ethnic character. (Smock<sup>2</sup> p. 66).



There are Christian and Muslim boy scouts and girl scouts, and youth clubs obviously reflect the dominant population of a given quarter or neighborhood.

There are also numerous cultural associations but for the most part their regional location would tend to give them a membership dominated by one or other of the major confessions. Most of these associations have a very low political profile, however, a few became quite visible in the early 70's: Dar al-Fann which catered to a mixed intellectual audience; the Arab Cultural Center which also drew a mixed clientele but tended to take a much more leftist position; and the Cultural Council for South Lebanon which mobilized support for the left also. It would appear that the latter Council was dominantly Muslim.

These associations become visible only inasmuch as they become heavily politicized. It would be interesting to know exactly what role they play with regard to confessionalism and politicization of their membership.

The general atmosphere following the 1967 war and the rise to prominence of the Palestinian problem served to politicize some Christian organizations to the point that they took public positions, more in line with general Arab policy and less cautious than their own communities (Greek Orthodox Youth, Committed Christians). This phenomenon and other similar developments gave the impression that a common political and social awareness was developing among younger elements in both the Christian and Muslim communities.

National associations, professional groups and labor federations are of course, mixed. But it is not evident that they serve to create strong class or social ties which cut across confessional lines. The exception perhaps

was the labor unions. These unions are in part formed along confessional lines due to regional location, employment practices, etc. (See below) They were mobilized effectively to obtain amelioration of working conditions within the existing system. The general leadership has been moderate and non-ideological. However, the unions enroll only 15% of the non-agricultural work force and the membership lacks class consciousness. (Smock p. 91)

Also in the professional associations regional divisions lead to dominance of one confession or another, in certain instances. There is no evidence that they effectively dampen confessional consciousness.

#### 4. Education

The educational system would appear to <sup>be</sup> a sensitive point where national consciousness could most effectively be developed. However, the majority of Lebanese students attend private schools most of which have confessional ties.

The public school system has grown steadily from 1943, when it served only 17.5% of the student population, to 1965 when the percentage reached 40.9. This was followed by a slight decrease, so that from 1967 to 1971 the development of both public and private schools remained even, with 63% of the students in private schools.

The official statistics give a simple breakdown into public/private schools with no indication of confessional ties. However, the Secretariat des instituts religieux libanais pour les affaires sociales (SIRLAS) published a study on education in 1970 in which they grouped schools as follows: those run by Catholic Religious Institutes, those run



by Catholic Bishops, those run by private religious groups (both Mus. and Christian), those run by private lay groups, and those run by the state. The following table is taken from the SIRLAS study:

Percentage of students in each region attending various types of school.

<u>School Region</u>	Beirut	Mt. Lebanon	North	South	Biqa'	All Lebanon
Catholic	25.8	43	21	11	24	25.5
Private Lay	42	14	12	10	12	23.9
Public	16	39	60	70	52	39.6
Private Religious	<u>16.5</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>11.0</u>
	100	100	100	100	100	100

Note: Schools of Religious Institutes and of Bishops have been grouped under one heading "Catholic".

It is clear that the Christian engagement in education is more extensive than the Muslim. The history of the Christians' relations with the Church in Europe explains this. The table also shows clearly that private education is most prevalent in Beirut and Mt. Lebanon.

Another indication of the relation between confessional affiliation and private education was recently given in the Bulletin of the Latin Vicariat of Beirut, based on statistics from Le Centre des recherches et développement for 1974:

	Christians	Muslims	Total
Public Schools (1,400 schools)	93,345 (31.44%)	203,637 (68.56%)	297,000 (45%)
Private free schools (700 schools)	67,268 (37.85%)	110,432 (62.15%)	177,700 (27%)
Private paying schools (550 schools)	119,880 (62.88%)	70,768 (37.12%)	190,648 (29%)
Total	280,493	384,837	665,330

Note: The figures given for the total school population vary considerably, perhaps because the figures for private education are not full reliable.

In any case, the predominance of private education and its being centered in Beirut and Mt. Lebanon is very clear.

Beirut and Mt. Lebanon comprise roughly 64% of the population of Lebanon, but 59% of public enrollment is in these two areas and 73% of private enrollment. Also Beirut and Mt. Lebanon have 69% of all the secondary schools in Lebanon.

The predominance of private education and its confessional . could serve to reinforce community identity save for those instances where private schools succeed in having a mixed student body. In this respect both private and public schools suffer from the same problem: because of location the student body tends to be of one or the other community, as do the teachers. A public school in a predominantly Christian area with all Christian teachers is not going to be much different from a private school, save for the point that the curriculum of the public school is directly controlled by the Ministry of Education. This, of course, allows the enforcement of a common program and the control of the standard of education.

Murray, in Lebanon: The New Future (1974), sees the development of public education between 1961-1971 in a positive light:

Already a point has been reached where state secondary education is on a par with private, and some State schools are distinctly superior. The natural result will be the disappearance of sub-standard private schools while those that can compete successfully with the rising and more consistent standards of the public sector will survive and prosper. Before then, however, liberalization of the curriculum will have become an even more urgently sought-after goal. (p. 57)

The elimination of private schools of low standard, however, has not been an easy matter. In November and December 1970, demonstrations and strikes followed the government's attempt to eliminate equivalence between the Syrian and Egyptian Muqabbala and Jawthiyva for students residing in Lebanon. The evening schools preparing students for these exams, as well as the students involved (about 9,500 per year) were threatened and succeeded in mobilizing part of the secondary student population to gain a reprieve from the application of the law due to take effect in March 1971. (See Irvaux et Joura no. 38, Jan.-Mars 1971, pp. 65-80)

There is an official curriculum dating from 1946 but it has not served to create uniformity. Lebanese history, geography and civics must be taught in Arabic, but in most subjects the schools are free to employ Arabic, French or English. The intensity of training in a foreign language has, of course, a decided influence on the students options for higher education.

The diversity of text books used in the schools is singled out as one of the major obstacles to creating a homogeneous national outlook. Theoretically the Ministry of Education has control over the texts used, but its approval tends to be a mere formality. Various efforts have been made to create some common texts in history and civics but without much success. A former program was suspended, and the most recent effort to introduce a new history curriculum in 1973-74 came up against the divergence of political and historical outlook which divides the communities. (Smock p. 257).

The Educational Center for Research and Development created in 1972 with a view to reforming education and teacher training has produced some text books on neutral subjects, but its products were criticized from several points of view.

Smock (p. 260) concludes with E. Valin (Le Pluralisme Socio-Scolaire au Liban 1969) that the educational system is not a very effective agent to socialize children to a national perspective, rather it tends to reinforce the strength of subsystems.

#### 5. Social Services

Social services are also in large part left to the private sector and are heavily centered in Beirut and Mt. Lebanon. 85% of hospitals are private and 62% (almost all private) are centered in Beirut and Mt. Lebanon.

66% of the clinics in Lebanon are private and 54% are in Beirut and Mt. Lebanon. The private clinics listed in the 1971 statistics are attributed either to the Red Cross or to Le mouvement sociale.

Information on the confessional affiliation of clinics and hospitals is not available except for the Catholics who have 13 hospitals and 26 dispensaries (SIRLAS). Some of the main hospitals in Beirut, however, are clearly labeled as belonging to confessional groups (Maronite, Greek Orthodox, etc.)

Orphanages and old age homes are also confessionally affiliated. The Catholics have 22 orphanages and 4 old-age homes.

#### 6. Rural-urban distribution and confessional affiliation

There is very little information in this area, but we felt it useful to point out two factors: first, the high concentration of the Lebanese population in Beirut and its suburbs, and secondly, the migration towards Beirut and its suburbs which was taking place in this period.

Table: Rural-urban distribution

Number of residents	Number of Communes	Population	% of total population
Less than 1,000	1,469	391,440	18.4
1,000 to 5,000	321	434,487	20.4
5,000 to 10,000	33	68,175	3.2
Over 10,000	10	293,313	13.8
Beirut & suburbs		938,940	44.2
Total		2,126,355	100.00

(Source: Population Active au Liban Nov. 1970 (Heyrouth 1972))

A survey concerning migration was carried out in the fall of 1971. A migrant was defined as someone who had changed residence at least once in his life, while a resident was considered as anyone who lived at least six months of the year in the same place. It should be noted that the following figures represent only the last migration and not all prior changes of residence.

Of the Lebanese as a whole, one in two have migrated during their lives (men, 48.8%; women, 54.8%). The general direction of the migration was towards Beirut and its suburbs (66%) which originated from two principal internal regions: Mount Lebanon (18.6%) and southern Lebanon (19.1%). Within the suburbs of Beirut internal migration was very high (80%) while a good proportion (26.4%) lived previously in Beirut proper and later moved to the suburbs. Finally the rural origin of the migrants was striking with 53% of male migrants and 46% of female migrants coming from villages of less than 10,000 inhabitants.



## 7. Differential regional development

The concentration of population, services and education in Beirut and Mt. Lebanon is already evident from some of the facts cited above. The following table from the study of the active population (1970) show the regional distribution of the population:

Table: Regional distribution of the population

Beirut:	22.3%
Mt. Lebanon	39.2%
North	17.2%
South	11.7%
Biqqa'	9.6%

The IRFED study of 1960 established a scale for rating the level of life in the various regions. The Center (Beirut and Mt. Lebanon) was rated at 2.22 (out of a possible 4.0), the East was rated at 1.61, the South at 1.75 and the North at 1.70. The scale set up considered 2.0 barely acceptable, and 3.0 as good.

The relation between level of life and confessional affiliation is difficult to establish for want of information. However, it is clear the Mt. Lebanon and Beirut (the Center) are predominantly Christian, and the South is predominantly Shiite. This, of course, is one of the glaring differences. Yet, the North which rated lowest on the IRFED scale is considered to be just over 50% Christian.

The explanation can, perhaps, be based more solidly on historical background than on confessional differences. Before the creation of Greater Lebanon, the south was more orientated to Palestine than to central Lebanon, and the North and the Bqaa' valley were turned towards Syria. The break with Palestine in 1948 and the rupture with Syria in 1951 dislocated these three regions, and for a variety of reasons they have not yet been fully integrated into the development of the country. The efforts in the 1960's to develop the Litani were stymied, and the efforts to develop the North in the 1970's also proved futile.

This failure to integrate the three regions was further aggravated by the political and military situation in the South, especially in the frontier villages, with the consequent migration of many people from the south to the suburbs of Beirut.

## B. Social and Cultural Values

### Family

The family in Lebanon, in spite of differences associated with several variables (such as socio-economic class, religion, and rural-urban differences), is described as fitting the stereotypes of the traditional Arab family in being patrilineal, extended, relatively large in size, showing preference for males over females, assigning lower status for women and secluding them at home, encouraging early marriages and arranging them (particularly in the case of females), etc. This traditional picture of the Lebanese family has obviously been gradually, though very slowly, changing all the time. Moreover, these changes in family life and patterns, applicable only to some aspects of family life and only to some segments of society, became more noticeable in this century.

In commenting on these changing family patterns in the Arab East including Lebanon, some writers have pointed out that "family patterns, and the role of women, are undergoing change in a number of areas: these changes have occurred gradually, and have usually spread from the upper and middle classes of the cities to the remainder of the population; moreover, the changes are selective rather than general, and constitute modification rather than abandonment of established patterns". While keeping the above comments in mind, what are some of the changes in family patterns which became noticeable in this century?

Age at marriage for women is increasing and daughters, as well as sons, are having a greater say in deciding on their future marital partner. The preference for marrying relatives, though still noticeable, is on the decline in urban areas, though marriages preponderantly occur from within one's own religious sect or religious affiliation. The number of married couples residing in neighborhoods or places other than those of the husband's or the wife's parents is on the increase. The large family is losing ground as being the ideal family for a more moderately-sized family, of about four to five children, and the practice of birth control is reported more frequently by married couples, particularly in cities and for middle and upper classes. Beliefs about the status of women are changing, again especially in cities and for middle and upper classes: Education for women is generally encouraged, employment opportunities for women are increasing, and mothers participate in important family decisions. In general, these changes are in the direction of greater freedom and equality for women and for youth.

#### Group Loyalties

It is difficult to define precisely the social identity by which the Lebanese defines himself. Family is certainly important, especially agnatic family, in his system of reference, but the mobility which has

come with the rural exodus and the effects of education may have diminished the strength of family ties to some degree.

Next comes village or region: this element remains very much alive and reveals itself, for instance, in the fact that rural migrants to the city tend to group together according to their place of origin. These same village ties function in the choice of employment: workers from the same village end up in the same factories in the suburbs of Beirut. This element of identity is reinforced by the "client relationship" uniting members of the same village to a given political leader who, in theory at least, protects them and is their recourse in case there are problems with the administration. The village ties are also reinforced by the electoral system which requires everyone to return to his village to vote.

Then comes confessional identity. The numerous occasions of living together and working side by side in commercial and industrial enterprises do not prevent the Lebanese Christian or Muslim from seeing himself as part of a cultural universe different from the other. The differences may be slight but they are sufficient to pose many problems on the political level. The reasons for this ethnico-religious differentiation within the Lebanese ensemble come both from history and the various influences which predominate in a given community (the West for one, the Arab world for the other). In time of crisis these differences tend to be magnified.

These three criteria just mentioned are without doubt fundamental. They do not, however, represent all the elements of social identity. Account must be taken of economic differences which lead the Lebanese to see himself as part of a particular group whose characteristics are very different from

those mentioned above. It is possible to group Lebanese society into 8 different social classes. The table below lists these classes with the percentages given in the study on the Active Population:

1. Large landholders, leading merchants and industrialists	3.6%
2. Liberal professions, top civil servants and upper cadres	2.1%
3. Employees, civil servants, middle cadres	25.7%
4. Traders, small merchants, those offering independent services	20.3%
5. Landowning farmers, not salaries	12.5%
6. Urban proletariat	22.2%
7. Urban sub-proletariat (day workers)	7.4%
8. Salaried farmers and share croppers, rural proletariat	6.2%

The breakdown of the population into these social categories in function of purely economic criteria is, however, artificial. Claude Dubar and Selim Nassar, authors of the book Les classes sociales au Liban, prefer to take as a reference "three sub-groups which are economically homogeneous and socially rigid" which oppose the bourgeois-capitalists to the middle class and the lower classes. Moreover, they note that the middle class (58/136 of their sample) has come from the "access to property of Christian peasants of the mountain in the 19th century" as well as from "the constitution of a class of merchants (Sunni) in the cities during the same epoch." Finally, they underline the fact that the Lower class (61/136) --which arose from the transformation of share-croppers into salaried farmers



in the rural areas, and the rural exodus of poor peasants from the periphery"--is the class that has undergone the greatest development and within which is manifest both <sup>the nucleus of</sup> a working class which is typical and very politicized -- people for whom the family, regional and confessional references become very secondary, and a sub-proletariat which is fatalist and lives in wretched conditions.

There is one final point to single out. The Lebanese only rarely defines himself as a "Lebanese citizen". The reason is that for him the State which has always been foreign or inaccessible and powerless does not really exist (*ma fi dawla*). On another level, however, and due to the repeated confrontations on Lebanese soil and the role played by regional powers in these conflicts, there is progressively more marked affirmation of a certain "Lebanon-ness". The problem that remains is the different context in which each situates this "Lebanon-ness". One is certainly Lebanese, but one too often is such according to the Maronite mode or the Sunnite mode. Each affirms he is not the same as the other -- while waiting for the appearance of a strong state capable of going beyond the differences.

#### Lebanese theatre

Since 1953 Lebanese theatre has developed a new consciousness reflecting Lebanese problems. The freedom of expression allowed in Lebanon gave rise to a group of playwrights conscious of Lebanon's political and social problems who used the theatre to criticize the system. Each group in the country had

its own theater with its own particular slogans, but in all there was a clear current of criticism: the common man, neglected or forgotten by the system. During this period the theatre also began to draw on a more "popular" audience. This was probably due to the popularity many of the leading actors had gained through exposure on television.

Some critics point out two major trends in Lebanese theatre. The first is symbolized by Nabih Abu Hasan in his "Akhat Shanayi" which presents the Lebanese as essentially attached to his village; his mentality and fundamental values remain those of a people grouped together in a common heritage of traditional "wisdom." The second is symbolized by the musical theatre of the Rabhani brothers featuring Fairuz. They stress the ideal, the notion of Lebanon as the homeland. In a certain sense these trends represent the two poles of allegiance: the "real" which is the village, and the "mystical" which is Lebanon.

#### Summary

In general, various writers on Lebanon, including historians and social scientists, have stressed the omnipresence of sectarianism in Lebanese social life and have expressed the view that religious affiliation, in addition to satisfying a variety of psychological and other needs for the individual, actually determines to a large degree his legal and social status. In fact, the above view is also supported by results from several studies conducted on university students. In these studies, a number of university students, predominantly Lebanese and consisting of both Muslims and Christians, were asked to characterize the Lebanese people. Of all the adjectives or

stereotypes mentioned, the word "sectarian" was more frequently mentioned by the subjects than any other word as being the one characteristic which is considered to be most typical of the Lebanese people.

Thus, in the light of the above, it is clear that the Lebanese society is perceived as being divided along sectarian lines, not only by outsiders, but also by the Lebanese themselves. However, as true as this picture may be, the fundamental question which should be raised here is the following: Does sectarianism necessarily result in intersect animosity? Or, to put it differently, does the existence of different religious groupings in Lebanon lead, in and of itself, to hatred among the various religious groups? A number of studies, with particular relevance to Lebanon, lead us to answer the above questions in the negative.

In one study carried out in the early 1960's, a number of 11-year old Lebanese boys, both Muslim and Christian, were selected from different schools in Lebanon and were then brought to live and play together in a two-week summer camp. Most of these boys came from sectarian or denominational schools, none of these boys was acquainted with any of the other boys before they met in the camp, and all of them happened to have names by means of which their religious affiliation could easily be identified. In line with what is known and written about Lebanon, it was expected that friendships formed spontaneously during the first few days of the camp will follow religious lines of demarcation, thus reflecting the highly sectarian nature of the Lebanese community. However, the results of this study on friendship choices did not support the expectations. The study concluded that religious group membership, or sectarian divisions, did not seem to

operate either as a unifying or as a dividing factor in interpersonal relationships among these 11-year old Lebanese boys. As to why the situation is different in the larger community, the answer may be in the fact that religious group membership was not made salient nor brought into focus in the camp setting; while, on the other hand, religious membership and identity is stressed in the larger community by various laws, both written and unwritten, and by a variety of institutionalized customs and practices.

In addition to the above, and on purely logical grounds, some people may argue that what applies to 11-year old boys may not necessarily apply to grown-ups. Again, several studies on university students showed that an individual's religious group affiliation was considered to be less important than his other affiliations (eg. the family) and that, for both Lebanese Muslims and Christians, religious affiliation became significantly less important over time from the late 1950's to the early 1970's. The overall results in the early 1970's showed that, for both Muslim and Christian university students, family still ranked first in commanding the loyalties of these subjects, followed by national (ethnic) affiliation as still second in importance as in the late 1950's, with a slight improvement in the ranking of citizenship and political party affiliation, but with religious affiliation becoming significantly less important in the early 1970's in comparison to the late 1950's. The question remains, however, as to whether these results, based on university students, can be generalized to the Lebanese population as a whole or not. It goes without saying that further research is needed to answer this question.

## II. CHANGES PRODUCED BY THE WAR

The virtual partition of Beirut which occurred in 1976 as the fighting reached its high point and which has persisted despite the relative calm is perhaps the clearest symbol of what has happened. The confessional division which was always present has been reinforced. There has been a physical displacement of groups which were in a minority in a given section, e.g. Naba'a and Demour, and undoubtedly several thousand families which felt themselves in a hostile environment, some of whom hastened to sell their lands after the war (Ghouf, Biqa'). The exception remains Ras Beirut and part of Marjaythe-Madra'a where the population remains mixed.

This quasi-geographical partition has been reinforced by a "psychological partition": a lack of confidence in the "other group" and a conviction among many that it is no longer possible to live as before with the "other." This could be attributed to the normal effects of any war. There can't be a war without an enemy and the enemy has to be painted in black. The effects of this do not wear off easily, especially in a case like Lebanon where the war reinforced existing confessional divisions.

The retreat of commercial enterprises from the mixed center of Beirut to within their respective quarters and the operation of two somewhat separate economies is another reflection of that has happened. Without doubt there are fewer enterprises grouping Muslims and Christians as employees in central offices. The banks, for instance, have established branches in which the employees form more homogeneous groups.

This same phenomenon appears in almost all other areas. The political leaders have grouped into an Islamic Grouping and a Lebanese Front (Christian), and more recently parliamentarians have formed a Maronite bloc and a Shiite bloc. Cecek has pointed out that the parliament never split on confessional lines and that political groupings were always heterogeneous confessionally. This is not so at present.

Apparently this same division has affected the "leftist" political groups: while they maintain a certain Christian public, they are now limited in their recruitment to West Beirut and Muslim areas.

Education has also been affected. Private schools which had a mixed student body have now become predominantly Muslim or Christian in most all cases. School buses do not usually traverse the imaginary line that divides Beirut.

As for the universities, during the war Lebanese U. was divided into two sections within Beirut; and AUB and USJ provided "temporary" branches when travel across the city was impossible. This accommodation facilitated the later development of "regional" branches for Lebanese U. and USJ. This fission is accommodating all groups, but obviously it is not bringing them together to share in a common training. However, it should be pointed out that some studies done on students at AUB after the war give contrary indication on the importance of sectarianism to these students.

One of these studies investigated, among other things, the effect of attitudinal similarity on interpersonal attraction towards a stranger when the religion of the stranger is either the same as, or is



different from, the religion of the subject. The results, based on questionnaires given to both Muslim and Christian Lebanese university students in 1977, showed that overall attraction toward a stranger is effected only by the similarity of the stranger's political attitudes to those of the subject and not by the stranger's religious group membership. In other words, both Muslim and Christian Lebanese subjects were significantly more attracted toward strangers of a different religion than theirs holding similar political attitudes than toward strangers of similar religion to themselves but holding different political attitudes.

In another study on Lebanese university students in 1977, the results of which are not yet fully completed, both Muslim and Christian subjects showed a tendency to rank citizenship as the most important and religion as the least important of their several group affiliations. More specifically, citizenship was ranked even above the family in its importance to the subject and religion was ranked even below political party affiliation. These results, in addition to those mentioned above, lead us to conclude that, in 1977, both Muslim and Christian Lebanese university students believe that citizenship is more important than family and religion, and they also believe that what attracts them to another Lebanese is not his religion but rather the similarity of his attitudes on important political issues. The significance of these results is in showing that in the case of Lebanese university students, both Christian and Muslim, the recent war did not increase the salience of their religious identity nor did it increase interreligious conflict. In fact, the above results show that the reverse was true. However, the basic question still remaining, on which there is no adequate data available and which requires further research and study,

is the degree to which these results are equally applicable to the bulk of the Lebanese population.

In short, based mainly on samples of Lebanese university students, both Christians and Muslims, it is clear that while, on the one hand, the Lebanese society is perceived as divided along sectarian lines yet, on the other hand, these subjects ranked religious affiliation quite low in their hierarchy of group affiliations, both before and after the 1975-76 conflict. Furthermore, to these same subjects, interpersonal attraction toward another Lebanese was found to be related, even after the 1975-76 conflict, to this other person's attitudes on important political issues, regardless of his religious affiliation. However, the question still remains as to whether or not these results can be generalized to the Lebanese population in general or, even, to the university student population in Lebanon.

The professional associations which had a mixed membership have generally prolonged the tenure of incumbent officers because of inability to hold elections. The general Federation of Labor Unions was able to hold elections, but the general ambiguity of the economic situation and the influence of many political factors has not allowed the unions to reorganize and exert influence.

In addition to the above phenomenon of reinforcement of the isolation of the main confessional communities both geographically and psychologically, there has also been an exodus of trained people from Lebanon to other Arab countries and to the West. There are no available

statistics, but there are estimates. The exodus was at its height during the war; some certainly have returned, but how many is not known.

Another effect of the war is the apparent reinforcement of differences in general cultural identity. The graffiti still visible on the two sides of Beirut give evidence. "Arabism" is a key word on the west side; it is absent on the East side except when denied. This aspect has heavy political overtones, but it is felt to be more than mere politics.

In some of the documents submitted by the various groups proposing a solution to the crisis, one finds indications of the same division put in terms of "Arabism" and "pluralism". At present this is one of the elements in the discussion on a national accord. One of the major groups advocates "cultural pluralism." Elsewhere the other group regards the mere raising of the problem of pluralism as a crisis against national unity. The supposition is that there is not one Lebanese culture, but at least two cultures which represent two distinct views of reality and which have repercussions on all levels.

No society enjoys perfect cultural homogeneity; there are always sub-cultures which exist within the larger society, but the conflicting values and beliefs are cushioned by an over-all cultural identification and by other "safety valves." A subsystem cannot function smoothly unless there is an identification with the dominant system. This latter identification does not seem to have been achieved in Lebanon despite more than thirty years of "accomodation."

Each of the major groups is either unwilling or unable to make the concessions necessary to surpass narrow community identification. The irony is that there can be neither unity nor plurality without this concession.

Accompanying this reinforced notion of cultural difference and community identity there is also the lingering cynicism with regard to the state -- the only instrument which can facilitate the creation of a true national identity. This aspect was especially evident in the theatre of exile prior to the war. The disintegration of the army and the security forces during the war has left the central government without the least semblance of power to sustain its legitimate authority. The cynical view of government can only have increased, for the government can do little more than arbitrate among the various centers of power.

Commentators on Lebanese theatre remark that the preoccupation with the "little man who bears the burden" is still present in the theatre as it emerges from the long silence of the war, but the semblance of cultural unity, or the hope that cultural unity was attainable has been shattered by the war. A red line divides the theatre of the two sides. The Rahbani brothers musical "Fatra" has captivated both sides, perhaps because it allows each to see itself in its own terms, but the latest piece of Ziyad Rahbani is for West side consumption, while Jabbara's "Chastel" -- the rediscovery of the Lebanese mountain -- is for an East side audience.

Thus, in Lebanon, while recognizing the existence of several other identifications and divisions, and while recognizing the fact that not all of these group affiliations are equally important to the individual and, at times, when social conflict exists between any of these identifications it reveals itself as personal conflict within the individual, yet the sectarian division is considered paramount in the social and political life of the country. According to the recent comprehensive review by Smock and Smock (1975), they state that "a survey of the social, cultural, and religious framework of the Lebanese political system provides convincing evidence that sectarian considerations pervade life in the country". However, sectarian divisions are often confounded and at times reinforced by a number of other variables including social, political, and economic differences.

Therefore, as applied to Lebanon, two basic questions which could be raised concerning sectarianism are the following: (1) To what extent are sectarian differences reinforced and perpetuated by legal, economic, educational, social, and political differences?, and (2) To what extent do sectarian differences serve as a potential source of social conflict and division in the country? It is possible that, in raising these questions about sectarianism and its role in Lebanese social life, we are really belaboring the obvious. On the one hand, sectarian differences are known to be associated with a variety of other differences, though the need for further research is obvious here, and they tend to be perpetuated by a

varisty of legal, administrative, educational, political, and other practices. On the other hand, the answer to the second question came loud and clear in the 1975-76 conflict in which confessional factors played a predominant role. In fact, these two questions are highly interrelated because the importance of studying sectarianism lies in its being a potential source of conflict in the country. If so, and again the recent war in Lebanon supports this point of view, then it is mandatory that the initiation and implementation of any comprehensive development plan for Lebanon must take into consideration the role of sectarianism in Lebanese life as a dangerously divisive element that should be minimized in the short-range and eventually eliminated in the very long run if we are someday to achieve national integration.

The above assertion should not be interpreted to mean that sectarianism per se was the cause of the recent war in Lebanon and, consequently, it should not lead us to naively conclude that deemphasizing sectarianism is all the reform needed in the country. Our conclusion, rather, is simply this: a prerequisite for electoral, economic, administrative, educational, military, and political reform is the determination and willingness to lessen the role played by sectarianism in Lebanese national affairs. In a public statement made on August 4, 1970, the late President Fuad Shauab announced his decision not to be a candidate for President of the Republic of Lebanon because, according to him, the situation of the country at that time offered "no scope for an effective national program of reform" in the economic, electoral and political sectors of the country. He also added, as if he was foretelling,



the 1975-76 conflict, that constitutional reform is not possible because "our country is not ready or willing to accept these changes". The above statement, however, did not go into the reasons behind this lack of readiness or willingness to accept these changes. It is our belief that sectarianism acts both as a hindrance to any effective national program of reform and as a constant threat to the viability and integrity of the state. Of course, what concerns us now is the extent to which Lebanon, now in 1978 and after two years of war, is still neither ready nor willing to accept these changes.

We believe, subject to further research and study, that sectarianism was generally strengthened by the recent war in the country. We also believe that the strengthening of sectarianism was at the expense of even national accommodation, not to say national integration, and therefore it now jeopardizes the very integrity and viability of the state. We also believe that there are several important forces, institutionalized and otherwise, that benefit from this state of affairs and that would probably vigorously oppose any attempts at combatting sectarianism. We also believe that "slogans" and public campaigns based on appeals to such moral values as "brotherly love", "cooperation", "national unity", and the like, were found by social scientists not to be effective means for reducing intergroup conflict, sectarian or otherwise. We further believe that leaders and so-called "third parties", though they cannot be held responsible for either causing or eliminating intergroup conflict and hostility, yet they can and they may exploit, precipitate, and intensify

already-existing bases for conflicts. And, we finally believe that the present time and conditions in the country are favorably conducive for introducing changes which would be essential prerequisites for any development plan and that would, in the long run, pave the way for national accommodation and eventual integration. In line with these beliefs, and in line with our firm conviction that no development plan can be effectively initiated and implemented unless one attends first to the omnipresent divisive phenomenon of sectarianism in the country, we shall now proceed to present some general recommendations for changes that we feel can be realistically introduced.

### III. Suggestions for a solution

If sectarianism is a pervasive phenomenon in Lebanese national life, and if the domination of one or more sect over the others is undesirable and/or impossible, and if sectarian division of the country is equally undesirable and/or impossible, and if sectarianism is a divisive force in the community that threatens the viability of the state and that could be dangerously exploited in any future conflict by forces inside or outside the country, then our course as Lebanese is set: we have to devise means and ways by which we can gradually deemphasize sectarianism and emphasize loyalty to the country as a whole, particularly by introducing changes in the educational, youth, administrative, electoral, military, and informational sectors of the state.

The most direct way of fostering allegiance to the state would be for the state to seriously concern itself with providing services for all citizens. This requires changes which are outside the scope of this paper, ranging from the official's concept of public service through the whole network of clientship and corruption, to the creation of a central government with real power. Obviously these changes cannot be wrought overnight by decree, but the debacle of 1975-76 and the consequent stagnation should be motivation enough for the government to take the lead in putting forward imaginative solutions which respond to the political and economic aspirations of the people. Without this all the suggestions one could make are useless.

The abolition of confessionalism cannot be decreed either, but several aspects of it could be recentered by new legislation already under discussion. A complete laicization of the state resulting in the assimilation of the various sectarian groups is clearly an impossibility. The attempt

would only exacerbate divisions. It is also utopian, for even countries with strong central governments have not achieved it. In any case, for some time to come the state will have to deal with the various sub-cultures which exist, but it must deal with them in a serious manner and try to eliminate the most glaring causes of tension. A lead could be taken in allowing optional civil personal status.

Even though prejudicial laws and discriminatory practices prevalent within a society cannot be credited with initially causing social conflict, yet, once they already exist, they do contribute to the maintenance of intergroup conflict and hostility and they come to act as sources of group prejudice. The existence of sectarian laws and practices facilitates enormously the internalization of prejudicial norms by the child, both at home and in the school, and it also enhances the conformity to prejudicial norms by the adult. It goes without saying, therefore, that succeeding in changing discriminatory laws and practices should, in the long run, reduce appreciably intergroup hostility.

The enactment of antidiscriminative legislation and its support, if the case need be, by the use of legal force, as was done in recent years in the USA on the question of racial integration in universities, puts to question the belief that "statelaws cannot change folkways". In fact, some social scientists go a step further by asserting that "folkways might never change if statelaws do not". Thus, there seems to be general agreement among social scientists that antidiscriminative legislation, once initiated and implemented, does contribute to the reduction of intergroup hostility, yet the major question that remains to be answered has to do with the conditions under which such legislation can be first initiated and then successfully implemented.

In Lebanon accommodation should be possible in the realm of education at least to the extent that a common history be taught to all students, and that standards be set in the control of private education which will eliminate many of the private schools of poorer standard while providing a better public education for a greater percentage of the population.

Any attempt to impose full uniformity would be counter-productive. First, it presumes a strong central government, and secondly, it risks aggravating basic differences and reinforcing cynicism concerning the government. Only a very long period of forced compliance could hope to change attitudes, and even then this result is not guaranteed.

The threat to the real or mythical culture of one or other group is magnified out of proportion for various ends. The problem of cultural plurality is not unique to Lebanon but is found in several other Arab countries where sizeable groups conceive of themselves as culturally distinct because either they are not Arab or not Muslim or both. The most centralized and pervasive regimes have not eliminated this phenomenon.

Hudson points out that separateness of culturally distinct groups in the Arab world should not be over emphasized; they are not water-tight compartments and their members do not have a singular and total identification with the primary community. <sup>Arab Politics</sup> (p. 63) In the period 1950-75 presented in summary above, there are indications of change in the direction of national consciousness. In some areas this feeling may have increased during the recent conflict even though it may be expressed in conflicting contexts. It is to these sensitive points that the government must address itself to aid the process which was underway in society and which was stifled by the war.

Are we still in Lebanon in 1978, as we were thought to be in 1970, neither ready nor willing to accept these changes? If so, are we then going now to reconstruct what was destroyed, under a superficial feeling of national accommodation, only to be weakened by another destruction episode at some time in the future? We hope not, though we also firmly believe that the problem of sectarianism can and should now be faced with wisdom, courage, and determination to help truly pave the way for a unified Lebanon for which, then and only then, can a comprehensive development plan be put into effect without fear of the future.

If the above course of action leading to gradual deemphasis on sectarianism and, consequently, to gradual national integration is not adopted by the authorities, what other policy options are open to the government? Though we firmly believe that, in the long run, the above option is far superior to any other alternative course, yet we realize the availability of several other options. It goes without saying, however, that all these other alternative options fall short of the goal of national integration and, in fact, would ultimately hinder the achievement of this goal. At best, these alternative options, particularly if they specifically emphasize sectarianism in the constitution, may contribute, on a short-term basis, to national accommodation and precarious harmony among the various religious factions in the country.

Ministry of Culture or Supreme Council for Culture

Several countries have formed ministries of culture and/or guidance which have as their function to foster and control literary and artistic production including the publication of books, sponsoring of art exhibits,



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presentation of theatre, music and cinema, to the formation of local libraries. In several cases the cultural centers under the ministry function mainly as places for ideological indoctrination by sponsoring lectures and discussions on the ideology of the ruling party. In this latter case the ministry seems to have the function of assuring a certain level of ideological purity in the areas under its control.

There have been proposals for the creation of a separate ministry of culture in Lebanon. In part the motivation would seem to be a desire to emphasize and advertise Lebanon's cultural contribution in literature and art with the aim of fostering national pride. The fact is that art, theatre and literary production have flourished in Lebanon without government sponsorship. Cinema is perhaps the only area where Lebanon is weak, perhaps because the investment is too risky.

Some sort of cultural organism could possibly make a contribution to fostering allegiance to Lebanon in a secondary way, but only on condition that it present a minimal common vision of culture.

It appears rather obvious that a cultural organism forced without a prior accord would merely become another point of discord or fade into amorphous uselessness. (Clearly, it could not exercise anything approaching ideological control without encountering extreme reactions.) With an accord it could possibly help dissipate the fears which lead to extremism formulated in cultural terms.

A Supreme Council for Culture would perhaps be the best solution and would serve better than a ministry because it would be freer with respect to demands made on the executive.