

## **“Evaluation of ‘co-existence’ as an Educational Value at the Intended level of the Lebanese Curriculum”**

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## Abstract

Coexistence became a crucial need for the Lebanese society after the end of the civil war, and these days after the severe sectarian conflict in the Middle East affecting the Lebanese community, as Lebanon is witnessing very severe political, social and economic tensions that threaten its existence. This article seeks to analyse critically the position of coexistence, as an educational value, at the intended level of the Lebanese formal Curriculum. This aim will be achieved by analysing the official policy texts, legislations and the basic educational frame work of the New Formal Curriculum. In this article, we will re-read the viewpoint of the Lebanese legislators and that of the most important Lebanese thinkers, by using the content analysis method, to figure out how these texts establish the 'intended level' of education on coexistence. Findings from the study showed that there is confusion among the curriculum designers and Lebanese legislators in Lebanon for enhancing the value of coexistence. (Al-Shamat, p: 323)

**Keywords:** Coexistence, Intended level, Lebanese curriculum, Evaluation

## Introduction

The education sector in Lebanon, as in most countries, is governed by a set of educational policies based on formal educational texts determined by educational policy makers. We're going to analyse the intended stage of the Lebanese formal curriculum, to examine and analyse how educational policy makers think about the coexistence, and why the presence of this value increases or disappears during the nation's life: When the ideas of the developers are written down to produce a document or converted into curriculum materials, that constitutes the formal curriculum.

Lebanon resides on the fact that there are 18 religious groups (and very recently very small groups of non-religious minorities) have emerged between two main religions, Islam and Christianity (Bienkowski & Millard, 2000), and other minorities in a relatively small geographical area '10425 km<sup>2</sup>' including a long and ancient history of 'presence' in this region.

We have used the word 'presence' instead of any other word, because in fact it is not possible to determine the quality of this 'joint presence' between these different groups historically. Many recent studies in Lebanon have overlooked the pre-modern phase of Lebanon's independence<sup>1</sup> (Doumit & Slim, 2003) and talked about this common presence as an issue that can only be discussed in terms of the concept of a 'post-independence state'. Nevertheless, the anthropological history of these groups, with the history of religious, military and political turmoil should be taken into consideration.

## The importance of the coexistence in the Lebanese context

The term 'co-existence' appeared in the Lebanese Constitution, after a long time from the establishment of the 'State of Great Lebanon' and the establishment of the Lebanese Constitution in its first version on May 23, 1926 (Zamir & Meir, 1985). The 1990 amendment, witnessed a new constitutional provision in the legal systems of Lebanon, in order to complement the repeated references by politicians and public officials to the ordinary citizen, to apply the 'co-existence' and 'The Charter of Co-existence'<sup>2</sup> as a genuine need and goal in Lebanese life. However, it should be noted that the constitutional introduction that has been added in the 'Taif Charter'<sup>3</sup> emphasizes the importance of co-existence as a supreme value that guarantees the continuity of the Lebanese life.

Although there is no clear definition of this value in the Lebanese Constitution, neither in the official legal documents, nor in the official educational documents adopted in the foundations of the educational curriculum in Lebanon, but we find a great use of it in the Lebanese society in all its sects. This operation is done without revising its relationship with the concept of the 'nation-state' emanating from the French Revolution, and its relation to the sectarian system and the rights of citizens, etc. However, it is used in a general framework that does not clearly distinguish it from the other political forms of the Lebanese meeting.

The recent Lebanese entity has undergone several serious existential crises, such as the events of 1956, as well as the 1975-1990 civil war, and the serious crises prior to the formation of the current Lebanese state, and its own form of living has been subjected to very violent riots. That led to great destruction as well as to 150,000 of victims, in a country of about 4-5 million citizen. (ICTJ, 2013) and (HRW, 2007)

Moreover, the advocacy during the civil war has escalated to the need to transcend the idea of the 'ordinary living together' into the concept of 'Co-existence'. In order to escape from the recognition of the 'separating nature' that cohabitation has, into a kind of unity that co-existence affirms (with the 'declared' adherence to the idea of 'the unity of Lebanon, the land and people, which became the motto of the modern state after the Taif Charter). We assume that this 'declared' conviction of the unity of land and society, is very important in itself in a country that has been trying to create its own identity. However, some senior educators in Lebanon counted the educational sector responsible for the emergence and continuation of civil war in Lebanon (Frayha 2004).

Moreover, the international community, with its institutions, charters and treaties, which is usually approved by the Lebanese state (the Charter of the United Nations, the Incheon Charter 2030 etc.), intervenes in many ways and institutions with the educational system in Lebanon, in order to implement the values that the international community believes in (democracy, citizenship, Co-existence, Peace Education, etc.). They believe that it would 'help' Lebanon to recover from civil war and state-building (Frayha, 2009).

Between the international pressure and the strong internal need for safe and stable living, the issue of 'co-existence' in its educational dimension seems crucial. Despite that the article assumes structural crises that need to be investigated and revised as we shall see.

In our study, we rely on a set of theoretical structures that established a comprehensive conceptual framework for education on coexistence in the context of peace education.

So, the conditions experienced by Lebanon in the early days of its establishment and the complex form of geographical, political and economic centrality in which parties with different sectarian concentrations were attached, in a painful division with the historical and geographical context that the region has experienced throughout history and especially under the Ottoman rule, led to the awakening of a group of Cultural ethnicities that differ in religion, ethnicity and culture, and brought together the idea of the mandate and colonialism under the umbrella of a new homeland called "Lebanon".

The struggle for identity between a dominant cultural and religious group (although that Christians were/are less in number than others) and other groups, in the midst of an Islamic milieu, has given rise to real existential fears for the logic of Coexistence in Lebanon. Factors such as: the fabricated cultural centrality of Christian religious faith, the Western colonial intervention in the national fabric, the shock of building a homogenous and persistent homeland with the history of the region, sectarian marginalization, especially for the Shiites, have taken advantage of the logic and concept of the state in consolidating sectarian differences, and the presence of the Leaders above the level of the "state", which has greatly affected the context of coexistence between the Lebanese

Michel Chiha, the ideologue of the Lebanese Maronite Nationalism (and the first legitimate mind of the Lebanese state), stressed that coexistence stands at the core of what defines Lebanon and that the public acknowledgment of religious identities is the only possible and moral way of participation in this nation:

**"Lebanon is a country of associated confessional minorities. All these minorities must find a place for themselves and have full rights. This is both the raison d'être of the country and the source of its originality.... Since Lebanon is a country made up of many associated confessional, minority communities, it cannot last long, politically speaking, without an assembly which is the meeting-place and the centre of unity for these communities"** (Hartman, M. et al, 2003, p:7)

While many Christians, and especially Maronite, argue that political sectarianism is an institution that secures the concept of coexistence and ultimately Lebanon's existence, Sadr inverted this idea and called the sectarian system evil, an obstacle to true coexistence, and its abolition as the only possible way to Lebanon's further existence. **"To many Christians, submission to the coexistence formula as secured by political sectarianism is an affirmation of the idea of Lebanon as a multi-sectarian nation, and a precondition to be full citizens"** (Hartman, M. et al, 2003, p:37).

So with this historical tendency, to characterize the Lebanese identity in the Maronite Christian nature, and the Lebanese laws and constitution to recognize religious sects from the gateway to religious and sectarian difference, we will find that the Lebanese legislator's view towards coexistence is one that tries to preserve distances between Lebanese groups. Other Lebanese thinkers, such as Imam al-Sayyid Musa al-Sadr, oppose this. "Imam al-Sadr" believes that coexistence in Lebanon should not be based on the secularism of the state, nor its Maronite, but rather on the principle of "social piety". As the Lebanese people, with their diversity of doctrines, are united by faith, which is the sole base for the coexistence between the Lebanese.

The role of the educational curriculum in the formation of the value of 'Co-existence'

For a long time, members of the educational community have been concerned about Co-existence in school centres, regarding it as a complex phenomenon influenced by various factors. Uruñuela (Sánchez et al., 2011) compares the complexities of Co-existence in school centres to the image of an iceberg, which presents a visible behaviour that is seen every day, but also a larger hidden side that consists of ideas, opinions, values and beliefs. Therefore, attention to this unclear aspect is considered to be important in the formulation of rules and other means to develop the school environment.

The 1990's witnessed an increase in the pace of programs and activities aimed at developing the Co-existence environment in school centres, which later emerged in international research on Co-existence. Now, it is possible to see many academic researches, and those associated with governmental and international organizations, on the problems of Co-existence, with the right reasons and how they occur, and the types of aggressive behaviour and contexts in which they occur.

The first studies on school violence and abuse among students in schools took place in the Scandinavian countries during the 1960s after many cases of violence in schools. This issue created sufficient social and educational attention on this issue. (Sánchez et al., 2011)

At an international level, most countries in the world – belonging to any religion, race, and geographic region - are in the process of establishing economic, political and social contacts. They are concerned about the emergence of war and insecurity. At least, at the level of the international law, they strive for peaceful Co-existence among countries to be established and secured. Of course, one of the major obstacles to Co-existence is that today the world is becoming a bloc, and relations among states are largely confined to the countries of the alliance within the blocs and do not easily interact with other countries. However, it is very important to prove the role of education in the realization of Co-existence in each country and in relations between countries.

Therefore, the main objective of the present article is to study peaceful Co-existence as a pedagogical goal. Moreover, studying it in the sources of contemporary Lebanese law and constitution resources, where the important dimension of the education of Co-existence has been mentioned, but in a general way. Therefore, addressing this aspect of education is necessary, in order to create and to strengthen peaceful Co-existence, which can be a platform to its realization in many social levels.

Today, any factor that disperses human societies is a matter of concern for Coexistence, and efforts must be made to eliminate it from all sides. It is anticipated that international organizations, people, democratic governments, and influential institutions such as mass media and education will feel responsible and plan and work in this direction. Desirable values such as human equality, justice, peace, benevolence and security, which are also human beings, are realized in the light of Coexistence and interaction between human beings.

The mutual need of nations and cultures is also one of the serious reasons for the pursuit of peaceful Coexistence. Today, efforts to achieve peaceful Coexistence have become more urgent as international communications and the world shrink, and the need for a peaceful and lasting relationship for the benefit of countries and mutual growth.

Betty Reardon) stated that: "The development of learning that will enable humankind to renounce the institution of war and replace it... with the norms of a peaceful society [as articulated in] the Universal Declaration of Human Rights remains a core of the Peace Education task" (Reardon, p., 1999) . As such, peace educators teach about contemporary social, political, economic, ecological, and ethical problems, exploring the root causes of conflict and facilitating the exploration of nonviolent social strategies to manage social discord without resort to violence.

We may observe that; Coexistence has attracted the attention of the nations of the world in recent decades. This is especially important in the twentieth century, when humanity witnessed two destructive global wars. The presence of violence on the stockpile of nuclear weapons and mass destruction has increased, and the fear of devastating massacres has shone on humanity, hence one of the characteristics of the recent decades of growing social concerns, which has made it essential for Coexistence. In general, several necessities have led to the idea of a peaceful Coexistence, the most important of which are: the need to avoid war and arms races, the need for balance of power, the possibility of exploiting the benefits of life and material benefits, and providing security.

The Middle East region is one of the most important parts of the world, the ups and downs, the cultural, ethnic, and religious diversity and the existence of enormous sources of energy have given this part of the world a special significance. There has been a lot of debate about peace and Coexistence in the Middle East over the last few decades. Occupied Palestine (relations between Arabs and Jews) has always been the focus of the debate and debate, but the issue of peaceful Coexistence has not been well discussed in this regard. Therefore, it is necessary to make a comprehensive study of the foundations of peaceful Coexistence and the role of education in its realization.

In the other hand, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted on December 10, 1948 at the United Nations General Assembly, urges all nations and all individuals and all elements of the community to make this declaration a common goal for all the people and nations of the world. “Always keep in mind and strive to develop these rights and freedoms with the help of education and to provide their universal and effective identification and implementation with increasing national and international measures” .

The Article 26 of the Declaration states:

**“The purpose of education should be the development of human personality and the strengthening of the observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms.”**

Education should help develop goodwill, friendship between all nations and all racial or religious groups, as well as the expansion of United Nations activities to maintain peace. Hence, education plays an essential role in the achievement of peaceful Coexistence in multicultural and multi-ethnic communities like Lebanese community, consisting of 18 sects in a very small land of 10452km<sup>2</sup>.

As we may see, that this multicultural diversity had affected the Lebanese political structure, for example, the Lebanese Parliament shall carry out the legislative functions. It is composed of 128 members. They are elected directly by the people by secret ballot. The number of deputies is divided equally between Muslims and Christians currently, and at the same time, are distributed according to the proportion of schools in each denomination and by regions. Before 1990, the proportion of deputies in the Council was equal to 6 for Christians compared to 5 for Muslims, but the ‘Taef Charter’, which put an end to the Lebanese civil war, amended this matter, bringing the number of Christian deputies equal to the number of Muslim deputies. The members of the Parliament are elected every four years.

While the President of the Republic shall be elected by the Parliament for a period of six years not renewable by a two-thirds majority. The President of the Republic shall be appointed by the President of the Council of Ministers on the basis of binding parliamentary consultations. The prime minister appoints cabinet ministers following the sectarian composition, which allows him to gain the confidence of parliament.

In this unprecedented article in the Lebanese educational researches, especially after the civil war, we will answer this question: Does the intended level of the Lebanese curriculum offer a clear educational view and aims about coexistence as an educational value?

## Previous experiences

### Arigatou Model

The Interfaith Council of Ethics Education for Children, in collaboration with UNICEF and UNESCO, promotes ethics education through learning of different religions and cultures ‘to help groups and communities live together in peace, respecting each other and preserving the dignity of all human beings.’ (Unesco, 2008)

This reference source has been tested within different cultural regions and environments, to ensure that it is appropriate for regional and local environments (Unesco, 2008).

The title ‘Learning to Live Together’ was selected by reference to one of the four pillars of learning contained in the report ‘The Treasure Within Us’, presented to UNESCO by Jacques Delors (Delors, 1998), in the International Committee on Education for the Twenty-first Century.

This is, in our opinion, a direct result of what international institutions have called for the establishment of complex concepts such as the concept of co-existence, a work of a monolithic direction, even though it claims anthropological differences.

Religion, then interfaith communication, is the way to form a common life relationship between people. This is a good thing, although it lacks much data that lies deeply in the structural fabric of the religious phenomenon. Namely the political, economic, historical, and linguistic factors, because it is intricately intertwined to prevent communication between religiously different individuals.

The report, however, lacks precise definitions of the concept of coexistence, the basis for it, and the ways in which it is achieved. In addition, what is the location of cultural and anthropological specificities in communities that have a particular political formula for the rotation of power and governance? As well as being somewhat flawed loosely in its expansion of this concept, it is also consistent with civil society with the Western version of power.

## European Council model (2)

The experience of the European Union in educating on peace and Co-existence is based on several pillars derived from the general orientations of UNESCO:

- 'Participation in democracy.
- Understanding, tolerance and solidarity.
- The free circulation of information and knowledge.
- International peace and security' (Caireta, 2013).

Through these goals and directions, the European Union aims to make the process of peace and Co-existence education more humane and more effective. It's because the education in the eyes of the European Union is one of the most important keys and means for achieving peace. The European Union takes note of these four principles, which Jacques Delors emphasized in his 1996 report to the United Nations: 'The need to 'Learn to know', 'Learn to do', 'Learn to live together' and 'Learn to be' (Delors, 1998) to work specifically on the basic skills of co-existence and peace, and more specifically skills of 'Social and civic skills' and 'Learning to learn'.

This report attempts to expand the 'co-existence' to include all the peoples of the European Union, so we found that its definition of the value of co-existence is vague and does not limit itself to clear conceptual and theoretical limits. The report is smart in some way, because it does not set a sharp approach for European peoples to promote coexistence. It is clear to us that the overall program presented by the European Union can't be approached by the complex Lebanese situation (especially since this great cultural and religious complexity exists in a very small space as Lebanon). Therefore, we need to crystallize the basic concepts of Lebanese coexistence.

## Human Rights Education model 'HRE'

The report explains the most important rights that secure building the democratic and safe societies: 'Respect for life and for physical and psychological integrity, identity and self-esteem, respect and care for others, non-discrimination, freedom, equality, justice, solidarity, participation, and human development' (Glogowski, 2011).

This report supposed that the supervising authorities have to determine the educational contents in the HRE programs. It may be strengthened and developed through the intervention of the human rights education program in the processing of catalysts. Therefore, the teacher and the student can participate in achieving these values and objectives provided by the program, through using the appropriate educational technology and methods. This discussion continued between education experts, practitioners and policymakers on educational models that lead to sustainable and genuine Co-existence in multi-ethnic societies.

However, the ambiguous concept of 'citizenship' remains as an important area of debate because of the multiplicity of worldviews about the concept of citizenship and the political and conceptual form upon which it is based. In many places and societies that have their own form of political governance, the concept of 'citizenship' (in the Western sense) is inconsistent with the nature of their political meeting, as in societies with tribal, religious governance, or 'Society Against the State' communities. (Susan Love, 1993).

These three global programs give a real indication of the desire of the States and the international community to adopt the education sector in countries and formally the issue of education as a fundamental issue in education. Hence, the official texts governing the education sector in Lebanon should be studied, analysed and compared with global and local trends.

## Research Methodology

The Content analysis is a research tool used to objectively and systematically make inferences about the intentions, attitudes, and values of individuals by identifying specified characteristics in textual messages. This scope represents two type of content analysis: conceptual analysis and relational analysis (Palmquist, 1997). The purpose of using the conceptual analysis here, is to study the "Coexistence" concept, through the analysis of the official documents about the formal curriculum, and about the institutional curriculum, and to analyze the communication of people connected with these two types of curriculum. Conceptual analysis deals with 'quantifying the presence frequency of concepts represented by words of phrase'. (Siregar, s. et al. 2009, p: 103)

We also will use a type of content analysis "Relational analysis", which is like the conceptual analysis, that begins with the act of identifying concepts present in a given text or set of texts. 'However, relational analysis seeks to go beyond presence



by exploring the relationships between the concepts identified. Relational analysis has also been termed semantic analysis” (Palmquist, 1997). In other words, the focus of relational analysis is to look for semantic, or meaningful, relationships. This type of analyzing, will help us to reveal the relations happening beyond the texts, the social, political, economic and cultural bonds, that are working to gather in order to produce that kind of Educational Phenomenon of “Coexistence” as a part of the curriculum in school.

We will use this method to analyze the legal and pedagogical texts,:

- the Constitution
- Taif Charter
- Ministerial decisions
- Reform plan
- The New curricula

Where, all of these are the basis from which the Lebanese curriculum derives its understanding and educational vision regarding education on co-existence.

## Findings

### Content Analysis of the Constitutional texts and official visions

The Lebanese Constitution affirms in its preamble: ‘There is no legitimacy for any authority that contradicts the Charter of Coexistence’. (The Lebanese Constitution, 1995) .

Perhaps, it’s necessary at first to question the Lebanese constitution founders and the lawmakers, about why the concept of ‘cultural pluralism’ is incorporated into the constitution without clarifying the reasons for this differentiation. Is this distinction necessary to be established and recognized constitutionally?

Many independent Lebanese scholars believe that emphasizing the division of the Lebanese into non-homogenous categories is problematic (and which is from our opinion contradicts the reality). Thus, preferring to use terms such as ‘affiliation, fusion, consolidation’. Abou stresses that ‘in the eyes of the ideology (or from ideological perspective), the Arab identity of Lebanon declared by the National Accord Document (Taif Charter) imposes on the citizens the building of the unity of the nation by rejecting the sectarianism’. (Abou, 1997)

In an attempt to search for the concept of coexistence in the Lebanese legal texts, we stand in front of a dead-end wall. This concept is ‘ambiguous in both Lebanese internal literature and world heritage’. (Sasin, 2001)

This conceptual absence of the value of co-existence may arise from the fact that the Lebanese found themselves confronted with a great contradiction in the formation of the Lebanese political entity, under the French mandate. In accordance with the form of the nation-state (influenced by the French model) which emphasizes the principle of the citizen’s freedom and equality in front the law. We assume that the political reality is based on political sectarianism that plays a role contrary to this state of law.

However, the introduction to the Constitution lists twelve articles<sup>5</sup> of the general principles on which the Lebanese Republic is based, which are in the origin of its legislation (Lebanese Presidency):

- ‘A) Lebanon is a sovereign, free, and independent country. It is a final homeland for all its citizens.
- B) Lebanon is Arabic in its identity and in its affiliation. It is a founding and an active member of the League of Arab States and abides by its pacts and covenants.
- C) Lebanon is a parliamentary democratic republic based on the respect for public liberties, especially the freedom of opinion and belief, and the respect for social justice and equality of rights and duties among all citizens without discrimination.
- D) The people are the source of authority and sovereignty; they will practice these powers through the constitutional institutions.
- E) The political system is established on the principle of separation of powers, their balance and cooperation.
- F) The economic system is free and ensures private initiative and the right of private property.
- G) The even development among regions on the educational, social, and economic levels will be a basic pillar for the unity of the state and the stability of the system.
- H) The abolition of political confessionals should be a basic national goal and should be achieved according to a staged plan.

- I) Lebanese territory is one for all the Lebanese. Every Lebanese should have the right to live in any part thereof and to enjoy the rule of law wherever he resides. There must be no segregation of the people on the basis of any type of belonging, and no fragmentation, partition, or settlement of non-Lebanese in Lebanon.
- J) There should be no constitutional legitimacy for any authority which contradicts the 'pact of coexistence'.

If we do a conceptual analysis to this introduction, after taking the theme of 'co-existence' as a basic function in it, we will note the following:

**1 -** First, by adopting international and Arab conventions and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Lebanese legislator was 'forced', after 11 articles, to add a final article on the value of coexistence. This is an evidence of the inadequacy of these articles to address the situation of the Lebanese social life that characterizes the Lebanese society, although the legislator omits in this legislation any explanation for his intention of 'co-existence', or referral to an international reference about that, or the international conventions as in the introductory paragraph (a).

**2 -** Second, the linguistic structure of the text, which benefited from the term 'Charter', puts us in the face of the fact that the Lebanese legislator has made the value of co-existence based on the manner that the Lebanese agree with each other as a formula for living together. This maybe good, but when linking it to the rest of the sentence it will turn out to be very dangerous in the political life, where the legitimacy of power is linked to the respect of 'coexistence'. The linking of the legitimacy of power to an ambiguous concept threatens the political life of Lebanon and makes the authority hostage - perhaps - in the hands of those who manage the 'game' of co-existence among the Lebanese groups (this distraction of Lebanese society, is a real game as we assume).

**3 -** Third, when we stand before paragraph (h) in this introduction, which calls for the abolition of the political sectarianism, we have to ask about an important issue: If the political sectarianism is eliminated (which may be the most important element in creating divisions among Lebanese society). Hence, the ineffectiveness of this element, will the article of coexistence still be useful? This possibility shows a clear conceptual deficit that overshadows the term co-existence as we initially assumed

**4 -** Fourth, we see there is a set of terms that constitute an integrated conceptual network, if implemented, the debate about the presence of crisis in the co-existence will have no great value. For example, the Lebanese legislator used the principle of 'equality' and 'freedom' where the Lebanese citizens should enjoy equal rights with the rest of the citizens before the state and the law. Thus, paving a harmonious and safe life with no internal sensitivities. As well as 'social justice', 'respect for freedom of opinion and belief' and 'balanced development', this conceptual network, if implemented, the need for a shared sense of coexistence will be very small. We pretend the reality in Lebanon contradicts this constitutional premise, because the law introduces inequality (by taking sectarianism as a criterion for employment in the state, distributing seats in the parliament, ministries, etc.) and thus restricting freedoms.

It is clear to those who read this introduction that coexistence does not mean a political system, and is not linked to a particular political system. Nevertheless, it defines the limits of politics in the individual and the collective spheres, and does not allow the authority to go beyond the red lines that threaten the way of the Lebanese life. On the other hand, it is undeniable that the principle of coexistence ultimately has positive aspects. The emphasis on coexistence has three positive principles:

- First, to recognize the diversity in which there is a definite richness of society, and to guarantee the various freedoms that have prevented the control of the one coloured system or family.
- Second, the Charter of Coexistence ensures the principles of individual and collective liberty which is characterized by instability and change, unlike the Charter, which has a more stable character, even if it is based on firm rules of truth, law and justice.
- Thirdly, the Lebanese history confirms that there is a very old historical precedent that shows the presence of great and ancient peaceful coexistence among Lebanese society, manifested in marriage, kinship, housing, economic and cultural relations, and so on.

It is possible to note the principle of coexistence in a number of observations.

First of all, we have to mention that the differences between the communities living in Lebanon, in terms of sectarian affiliation, or belonging to two divine religions, aren't considered in the constitution and its laws. The vision of Imam al-Sadr, for example, tends to put the difference between religious groups in Lebanon from the affiliation to the two religions, and not the difference between the sects. Contrary to what promoted by the Maronite political hawks and many politicians, even the non-Christians, that the dispute is between the sects not religions. This confusion and the vacuum of legislation have been the starting point for the duality between a 'nation-state' and a 'consensual system'.



This imbalance, for example, is shown by the first constitutive constitutional views of the so-called 'le père de la libanité' by Michel Chihha. In his book 'Lebanon Today', he presented a set of ideas that will later turn into general literature in Lebanese politics with its Maronite tone. Chihha says:

Lebanon is a country of shared sectarian minorities 'that needs to have a council for making meetings and dialogues, a place to legislate and to take care of citizens' issues away from the sectarian environment. According to his geographical position as a joint between the west and the east, and his featured position for the rest of the Arab countries, Lebanon has been able to bring together different sects and to create a framework for coexistence. (Chihha, 2004)

Massara takes the subject of coexistence to a more advanced stage by relying on the existence of this different religious diversity, as a real and final reason to propose secularism. He notes the secularism, as a solution to the management of religious diversity in Lebanon (Masarra, 2010).

Second, some Lebanese researchers claim that 'the Lebanese regime inherited the Ottoman system of boredom and led it to its maximum limits, where its proof is that 'it gave way to the communities to take care of the personal status laws and thus recognized the moral and mediators between the regime and the citizen, crushing the concept of the state and individual freedoms' (Kawtharani, 2013), and therefore it was necessary to adopt an 'optional law' on personal status that gives individuals the freedom to escape from their communities, which is guaranteed by the state-nation.

Therefore, this Lebanese regime in that version is not approved by the Lebanese, and so is the regime formed after the Taif Charter (which is considered a transitional agreement towards a state without political sectarianism) that re-established political sectarianism in a different way but at a different level of injustice and inequality.

Here, we come to the educational system in Lebanon, where the laws of the social and the political conflict between the Lebanese communities reflected on the structure of the educational system, we note through the process of legislation the following:

- 1 - First: Article 10 of the Constitution: In terms of the Constitution, we find that the sects did not affect Article 10 of the Constitution, which relates to freedom of education, so the freedom to establish private and foreign schools remained opened as wide as they were before the independence. This is normal, in light of the sectarian formation on which the state was built in the continuation of the previous policies that were adopted in 'Lebanon Al-Mutasarrifiyyah'<sup>7</sup>, which was not banned by the French government during the long mandate period.
- 2 - Second: Article 11 was regulated from the state of the Arabic and French languages as the official languages, to the fact that the Arabic is the only official language. This was reinforced by the 1946 decrees. The French language remained the basic language in the scientific courses in the Lebanese curricula, while the English language was a neglected language until the end of the Lebanese civil war. This is because the schools that had secondary schools were all private and foreign schools (depending heavily on French language and culture). The state did not open secondary schools until 1952, when it opened a school in Beirut and two in Tripoli<sup>8</sup>.
- 3 - 1946 decrees: The Lebanese State introduced the official curriculum and examinations in a series of decrees, and the most important of these was the establishment of a comprehensive educational goal for the educational sector. The Ministry considered that 'making education compatible with the new situation in Lebanon, its interests, the interest of its people, and moves alongside the global cultural movement'. Therefore, this is the intention of the Lebanese state to unify education and guide it nationally. Therefore, it was one of the ministry's concerns to: 'establish an insightful, member of the society, worker, a knowledgeable citizen'. This is why the state was very concerned with national, physical, educational, moral and social upbringing.
- 4 - The state tried to impose some kind of direct supervision on private schools, following the promulgation of the 1946 curriculum, through two official decrees. The first was in 1946, which provides stands for the unification of the authority over all private schools and their confinement in the hands of the state. But this was very formal, and at the end it was limited to granting the license of opening the private school in the hands of the state, which in no way is considered a real authority. Moreover, the decree of 1950, emphasizes the issue of license reference, with one-year indulgence to start work at the school.
- 5 - Article 13 of the 1950 decree, which allowed private school principals to add subjects of their choice along with the official curriculum.
- 6 - Article 14 of the 1950 decree, gave schools great freedom in selecting books, and kept only books of history, geography and national education.

The Taif Charter, in its article 10, attempted to restore the formal educational system in Lebanon by calling for a number of articles as follow:

**'E- Education and Teaching:**

- ( 1 ) **Provide science for everybody, and make it compulsory at least in the primary stage.**
- ( 2 ) **Emphasize the freedom of education in accordance with the law and general regulations.**
- ( 3 ) **Protect private education and strengthen state control of private schools and textbooks.**
- ( 4 ) **Reforming, strengthening and developing formal, vocational and technical education to meet the country's development and reconstruction needs, and reforming the Lebanese University and supporting it, particularly in its applied colleges.**
- ( 5 ) **Review and develop the curriculum in order to promote national belonging and fusion, spiritual and cultural openness and the unification of the book in the subjects of history and national education.**<sup>9</sup>

Here we can analyse the concept that the Lebanese, after a long-term civil war, have come to the conclusion that an important part of the solutions and remedies needed to go through the reform of education and educational sector in Lebanon, and therefore it was included in the paragraph of 'Reforms' in the "Taif Charter".

The Charter repeats this ambiguous assertion on the idea of freedom of education in accordance with the law and general regulations. In our view, it is a re-establishment of the same problem that accompanied the educational system in Lebanon and was the base of the civil war (where many Lebanese researchers agree with). Then how did this paragraph come back and entered into the Taif Charter? Who is behind this pressure on 'freedom of education'?

The answer to this question comes directly in article No.(3), which emphasizes the need to protect private education before talking about the official sector. The official sector is almost a self-expression about the strength of the private sector in Lebanon. It also expresses the intervention of its masters and beneficiaries even in a major legislation under the auspices of international Authorities like 'Taif Charter'. This is in order to keep the private sector protected and alive, and to enjoy all the elements of continuity.

The historical precedents of the educational sector assume that vague legislation that does not address the roots of the problem will continue to weaken the official sector. This has happened since the 'Taif' and until today (2019), 29 years later.

The political Maronite at the time of 'Taif', was still possessing all the tools and influences to keep the institutions of private schools alive in the Lebanese entity. According to the traditional mechanism in which it was working, we mean the mechanism to take the advantage of the legislative and regulatory gaps that are deliberately left in the legislation and the administration of the formal educational system. Private sectarian schools are existential institutions that cannot be underestimated for their great ability to transfer their private culture and heritage, and to preserve the identity of the community, even if this undermines the idea of statehood, citizenship and co-existence. The contradiction between the sectarian private sector on these historical and social plurals, and between the official sector in Lebanon, is a structural conflict. All the statistics provided by the Educational Centre for Research and Development support this contradiction. (CRDP, 2001a)

This problem, in strengthening the private sector, has caused a real confusion in the educators' view of constitutive concepts like the co-existence. It's because the focus on coexistence, the breaking of the boundaries between communities and the sovereignty of citizenship (with our remarks to the concept of citizenship because it is not a simple concept), will cause weakness to the very strong sectarian sector in Lebanon.

### **The Educational Reform Plan (1994)**

The educational reform plan (CRDP, 1994b) was launched in 1994 to address the great absence of the Lebanese State during the 15 years of the civil war, in which the official sector was severely damaged, as well as many factors affecting the structure of the Lebanese society, demographically and socially. The serious studies related to the Lebanese educational reality were absent from the CRDP since 1979 till 1993 -when the study of educational costs and expenditure of parents on non-free private schools was released.

On May 8, 1994 the 'Educational Reform Plan for Lebanon' was issued and approved under Resolution No. 15 of the Council of Ministers, which formed the pillar of the new phase of educational life in Lebanon, on which the new educational curriculum and its foundations were built. This plan presented in 96 pages, the main objectives of the plan, their fields, how to implement them, and concluded the expected results thereof.

The plan has fallen in several gaps that have not been fixed by the previous organizational attempts, including:

First, the issue of co-existence was not mentioned entirely in the introduction and objectives, and this is a real loophole since it appears that the authors of the plan did not pay attention to the appropriateness of the provisions of the National Charter and the Constitution accurately with the needs of Lebanon in the post-civil war. There is a need to clarify, explain and incorporate it into educational policies and goals.

Second, the emergence of a new term in educational literature, the term of 'National Fusion'. In Article (1), the plan emphasizes 'the promotion of national belonging and fusion, and spiritual and cultural openness, by reviewing and developing the curricula.' It is not obvious that what is meant by fusion is the equivalent of 'Cultural Fusion', including the recognition of a dominant culture and members of a foreign culture whose integration into the dominant culture is being carried out within three interrelated steps proposed by the researchers (Croucher & Kramer, 2016).

It is not clear at all, what is meant by 'fusion', and there is no evidence in the Lebanese literature that the intention of fusion is only a kind of convergence between the Lebanese groups under the title of 'citizenship'. As well as: Does fusion precede or lag behind 'co-existence'? This is also unclear. It is possible that the deep desire of Lebanese lawmakers and legislators is to push the groups coexistence in Lebanon towards a 'vague' type of unity based on a hidden tussle on the principle of 'division of labor'.

Third: Article (1) reaffirms the importance of re-examining the curricula. This is a recognition by the authors of the educational advancement plan that the old curricula did not meet the needs of the Lebanese society - over forty years of civil war - for peace, a sense of common identity and coexistence.

Fourth: Article 2 mentions a group of 'Lebanese core values' like 'democracy', 'tolerance' and 'non-violence', which should be emphasized, but there is no mention of the value of coexistence as a genuine value affirmed by the Lebanese Constitution. In addition, these three concepts may be the necessary foundations for 'coexistence'. Hence, planners must follow these three values by 'co-existence' as a result, for example. Otherwise, what is the outcome of these values?

Fifth: The general educational objectives (p. 15) show a set of articles derived from the Lebanese constitution, as well as from the 'Taif Charter', as well as many additions from the plan's editors, these articles (A, B, C, D, E, F, H, K, etc.) in particular, revolving around revisiting Lebanon by advocating belonging to the national identity, which reflects the concerns of Internal fighting in the civil war. Pride in Arab identity (b), which is an advanced step in terms of the rejection of the approach to the West, especially France, which prevailed for a long time in Lebanon. The emphasis on the value of 'co-existence' in (f), and other materials aimed at the establishment of educational curricula that establish students on the values of citizenship, freedom, democracy, acceptance and coexistence and spiritual and moral openness toward the other Lebanese, and the world.

### The New Curriculum (1997)

The new educational curricula formed the third station in the process of educational reform, after the Council of Ministers approved the new educational and structural plan and issued it in the 10227/97 decree (CRDP, 1997c). This structure and curriculum came as a result of a basic effort undertaken by the Educational Centre for Research and Development, with the involvement of the majority of the concerned actors in education, both in the formal and private education sectors, and in both university and pre-university education. More than 400 researchers and specialists participated in this process. Each of these committees is supervised by a plan and a follow-up committee and an advisory institution with a general coordinator 'the head of the educational centre', taking advantage of the international expertise provided by the United Nations through the United Nations Development Program, the UNESCO and UNICEF organizations, and international experts especially from France. The plan sets out these stages of application for all stages of undergraduate and pre-university studies. Similarly, Decree 10227 stipulates that the Educational Centre should review the curricula at least every four years.

These new curricula have affected the private and public education sector in Lebanon, while acknowledging the existence of many gaps (some of which will be mentioned). They have shown a great potential for state intervention in the educational sector. It is clear that the decision-making in the development of curricula and their implementation is the responsibility of the official institutions in cooperation with civil society organizations and educational institutions in varying degrees and without that cooperation takes institutional forms with a sustainable capacity.

- Adopting the goals and objectives of unified curricula for all Lebanese, as stipulated in the Education Reform Plan, the Lebanese Constitution and the Taif charter: '... it responds to the necessities of an advanced and integrated society in which its children are united in a climate of freedom and justice.'

- Building the character of the individual in terms of the ability to achieve self-responsibility, moral commitment, and dealing with others in the spirit of citizenship and human participation.
  - Formation of the citizen in terms of building a unified, cohesive Lebanese society capable of exercising its cultural role in the global community in general and in its Arab society in particular. (Frayha et al., 2001).
- However, this set of goals has once again failed to mention coexistence clearly. Moreover, this plan is devoid of a theoretical approach in which educational concepts are refined and rooted in the philosophy of education.

### Results and Suggestions

- (1) The in-depth analysis of the official texts, followed by evidence in all texts and documents, showed these results: We answered the main question of the article, about the un-efficiency of the Lebanese curriculum in designing the intended level of educating on coexistence.
- (2) There is a great emphasis, with a time-scale escalation, from the very beginning of Lebanon, till today, to promote coexistence.
- (3) Official texts, do not show the value of coexistence in a clear definition, and leave it to conflicting interpretations.
- (4) The official texts refer the task of applying the value of coexistence to the educational sector in Lebanon. We see that the conceptual unclearness about the co-existence will be a real obstacle in front the educational sector.
- (5) The official educational texts show a lack of clarity in the educational policy makers on the nature of coexistence in light of the disorder in the structure of Lebanese identity.
- (6) The educational vision of the value of co-existence in formal educational texts is not identical in its secular philosophical foundations and the reality of the social life in Lebanon. The educational vision must be based on great religious diversity.
- (7) The educational policy makers in Lebanon must reconsider the official texts regarding the value of coexistence, and is it really necessary for the Lebanese society.
- (8) We suggest that educational officials agree on a clear and decisive conceptual framework regarding defining the theoretical foundations of the value of coexistence.
- (9) We also suggest that the international curricula and programs be used in relation to the great experience it possesses, in applying the Lebanese state's vision towards coexistence.

### Notes

- 1 - November 22, 1943.
- 2 - It is an unwritten oral charter. It reflects the understanding of the Lebanese among themselves, on the necessity of coexistence among them as the most important social contract regulating their social life.
- 3 - 'The Taif Charter (officially, the Document of National Accord) was the document that provided the basis for the ending of the civil war and the return to political normalcy in Lebanon. This paper examines whether the Taif Charter is a genuine settlement rather than simply a pact; in other words, whether it is a settlement that ensures the final and definitive resolution of the Lebanese conflict'.
- <http://ddc.aub.edu.lb/projects/pspa/conflict-resolution.html>
- 4 - In the book 'Society: Structure and Movement (Secondary stage - First Year)', and under the title 'Building Institutions for Coexistence', we read the following: 'Within three dimensions: the political dimension, the social dimension, the civil dimension. The civic dimension involves civic organizations that achieve behavior in order to ensure coexistence in a single homeland as agreed. Economic dimension (...)'.  
(Educational Center for Research and Development, 1998)
- 4 - The introduction to the Constitution was added by the Constitutional Law of 21 September 1990, which introduced into the text the principles of the "National Accord" document in Taif.
- 5 - The Ottoman system of boredom: "A community "Melal" is composed of local citizens, not foreigners, who are subject to the Bab Al-AAli (the government), having a specific religion, do not belong to one ethnic origin, and have an independent political and social unit."

In the system of boredom, the authority of religious and civil patriarchs grew, The Patriarchs, the chiefs of the Christian and religious faiths, have returned to their positions as intermediaries between God and men and represent their communities with the government".

(Kaldani, 1993).

6 - Al-Mutasirriyya is an Ottoman administrative division of the second level. It is headed by an administrative officer who is appointed by order of the Sultan. The administrators are subordinate to the state. In some cases, they are independent, such as Al-Quds Al-Sharif and Mount Lebanon. (Ceasar , 2000)

7 - Information extracted from the tables of the Directorate of Secondary Education in the Ministry of Education, issued on 5/4/1964.

<https://www.crdp.org/studies?la=ar>.

8 - The presidency official website:

[http. //www.presidency.gov.lb/Arabic/LebaneseSystem/Documents/TaiifAgreementn.pdf](http://www.presidency.gov.lb/Arabic/LebaneseSystem/Documents/TaiifAgreementn.pdf)

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