

**Religion in Education and Conflict:
Lebanon and Northern Ireland Compared**

By
Daniel Cerván

Directed by
Jean-Guy A. Goulet

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ABSTRACT

The Lebanese educational system has been blamed for being a contributing factor to political and social polarization. Assuming that religion in Lebanese private and public schools can enhance integration and cohesion of the Lebanese society or increase conflict through the propagation of fundamentalism, this study compares and contrasts the role of religion in the Lebanese and the Northern Irish educational system. While making the comparison, the advancements made in Northern Ireland are given as examples and by using these examples evaluations are carried out in the framework of conflict transformation, psycho-social theory and peace education approaches. Three major aspects of the Lebanese educational system that arguably need to be reformed include the existence of a majority of private confessional schools; the irresponsible use of education by religious communities in confessional schools to promote sectarianism; and the approach to religious education in both confessional and public schools.

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INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, two major ideas have stimulated great academic interest among peacebuilding theorists: the role of education in the promotion of a culture of peace and the religious component of many conflicts.

Education can promote healing and reconciliation and build capacities for peace and, at the same time, be a source of polarization and conflict (Bush and Saltarelli, 2000: 11). This potential of education to contribute either to conflict or to peace becomes especially important in post-conflict societies such as Lebanon, in which educational efforts need to become a vehicle for learning respect, cooperation and peace in order to nurture individuals and reconcile differences among them. The role of education as a tool to prepare children for a responsible life inspired by the principles of peace, tolerance, understanding and friendship among all peoples, regardless of their ethnic, national or religious background¹ becomes especially important in societies marked by recent history of ethno-religious clashes and violence.

Education is an essential tool in the socialization processes of children. Although socialization occurs in the family, in the peer group, through the media, etc., the type of formal education, the contact between students and membership in groups of peers experienced in schooling years will impact students significantly throughout their lives (Bush and Saltarelli: 2000: 26). Socialization shapes personalities in particular directions by encouraging either negative beliefs and attitudes such as prejudices, stereotypes and hatreds (Volkan, 1990: 85) or,

¹ UN Convention of the Rights of the Child, article 29. Retrieved from <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/crc.htm> on 1 February 2011.

positive dispositions such as understanding, tolerance and critical thinking (Bush and Saltarelli, 2000). For that reason, the creation of educational environments that promote peace, respect and mutual understanding is essential in achieving long-lasting reconciliation.

The second idea that is a matter of interest is the role that religion plays in social or violent conflicts. A few decades ago, experts viewed “ethnicity and religious [extreme positions] either as epiphenomena (that is, expressions of more fundamental group identities such as class) or as anachronisms which [would] soon disappear in an age of economic interdependence and secularization.”(Weiner, 1989: 2) However, development and secularization did not eliminate inter-communal problems and inter-religious clashes. On the contrary, we are experiencing what has been called an “ethnic revival”,² examples of which can be found worldwide. This ethnic revival is characterized by the emergence of particularisms and a strong sense of identification with a specific group that is often religious. These needs for identity are often linked to socio-political struggles and used by leaders to obtain material ends through group mobilization (Lake and Rothchild, 1998: 5). Furthermore, group-consciousness increases when people feel their world view is threatened. This fear, actual or perceived, leads to polarization along ethno-religious lines.

² The term was first coined by Anthony D. Smith in 1981 in his book “*The Ethnic Revival in the Modern World.*” Since then, it has been frequently used to explain the resurgence of ethno-national movements worldwide. See, for instance, Davis, Sara L.M. (2005). *Song and Silence: Ethnic Revival on China’s Southwest Borders.* New York: Columbia University Press; Jacobson, Matthew (2006). *The White Ethnic Revival in Post-Civil Rights America.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press; Gamme, Moshe (2008). *Ethno-nationalism, Islam and the State in the Caucasus: Post-Soviet Disorder.* London; New York: Routledge; and McCarthy, Susan K. (2009). *Communist Multiculturalism: ethnic revival in Southwest China.* Seattle: University of Washington Press.

Religion is one of the most powerful factors in mobilizing individuals. Geertz (1971)

describes religion as:

(1) a system of symbols which acts to (2) establish powerful, pervasive and long-standing moods and motivations in [people] by (3) formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and (4) clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that (5) the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic. (Geertz 1996: 4)

These symbols act as part of cultures as “socially available ‘systems of significance’ – beliefs, rites, meaningful objects – in terms of which subjective life is oriented and outward behaviour is guided.” (Geertz, 1971: 95) Religion is a constructed pattern individuals use to give sense to their existential experience and to guide and direct their actions. Religion is a frame of mind that shapes the way one conceives of the world. Beliefs are understood to be grounded in the inherent structure of reality. What is more, these ‘systems of symbols’ have a great influence on individual ethos, mobilizing individuals to take actions.

Education and religion often go hand in hand. Religion can be present in the educational context in different ways. This thesis will focus on two of them, namely the existence of confessional schools³ and the teaching of Religious Education (RE)⁴. “Religion in education” will refer in this thesis to both the existence of confessional schools and the teaching of RE. The view that religious beliefs are grounded in the inherent structure of reality is at the basis of

³ The term “confessional schools” refers to schools owned and operated by faith-based communities. In this study, the terms religious schools and confessional schools will be used interchangeably to refer to the same type of school.

⁴ There are different approaches to RE: a phenomenology and history of religions; the multi-faith approach in which different religious communities agree on the content of RE and the state provides the funding and other types of assistance for its delivery; and the cooperative approach that consists of a mixture of confessional teachings combined with knowledge about other religions. See section “key terms explained.”

confessional schools. For centuries, religious believers have promoted confessional education as a necessary factor to the integral development of children, a view that has often been complemented by knowledge of the power of education in the transmission of values, principles and ideas. The provision of an environment and experience that helps students to learn about religious beliefs and guide actions according to those religious beliefs, contributes to the integration of students into the faith community.

This socialization role of confessional schools and RE is a matter of concern in societies that have experienced ethno-religious violence. In these societies, religion in education can play a double role in intergroup dynamics. On the one hand, religion in education can contribute to segregation, division and clustering of individuals within their own religious groups. On the other hand, religion in education can play an important role in the spiritual, moral and human integration of the individuals, and, in that sense, contribute to dialogue, reconciliation and social cohesion.

In Northern Ireland, for instance, the role of religion in education has evolved from being a source of conflict to become part of the solution in recent years.⁵ This shift has been made possible through the establishment of a Core Syllabus for RE. The process started in 1985 when the British government announced its intention to initiate educational reforms in Northern Ireland. A milestone was reached in 1993 with the release of the first Core Syllabus for RE in the history of Northern Ireland. This Core Syllabus used an inter-confessional language

⁵ In this regard, see analysis in chapters 5 and 6. Hayes, McAllister and Dowds (2006) and Stringer et al (2009) have highlighted the positive way that religion is being dealt with in integrated schools in the recent years. In addition, parents, students, and teachers have positively received the 2007 Revised Core Syllabus for RE (DENI, 2006).

and material that highlighted commonalities rather than differences of the four Christian denominations of Northern Ireland: the Church of Ireland, the Presbyterian Church, the Methodist Church in Ireland and the Roman Catholic Church. More recently, in 2007, the lack of world religions content was seen as a weakness that was addressed through the Revised Core Syllabus. This Core Syllabus is coordinated with Education for Mutual Understanding,⁶ a program initiated in 1983 under the auspices of the Department of Education for Northern Ireland (DENI) in the context of an increasingly integrated approach to education.⁷

In contrast, confessional education is strongly present in Lebanon. Historical developments, the prestige of private schools and the considerable lack of public schools led to this situation. Currently almost two thirds of the Lebanese students are enrolled in private schools⁸, a majority of which are confessional (see chapter 3). RE has also been a controversial subject in the last decades, in both public and confessional schools. The educational reform initiated after the 1975-1991 civil war did not lead to the establishment of a common curriculum for RE in public schools. Although efforts were made to develop a multi-faith textbook for secondary education, this is not being used yet. In private schools, moreover, the lack of control from government allows for a great heterogeneity in the teaching of RE. An analysis of the manner in which religion is currently dealt with in the Lebanese educational

⁶ See section "Key terms explained."

⁷ Integrated schools are institutions with a Christian ethos that believes in students from different confessions being educated together. Under the management of parents, instead of the churches, the first integrated school, Lagan College, was established in Belfast in 1981. Integrated education will be analysed in depth in chapter 5.

⁸ The Daily Star (September 28, 2009).

system suggests that it is contributing more to polarization along ethno-religious lines than to reconciliation.

This thesis offers a comparative study of the role of religion in education in Lebanon and Northern Ireland to explore *what accounts for the fact that religion is a contributing factor to conflict and polarization among Lebanese ethno-religious communities, whereas it is a contributing factor to reconciliation and social cohesion in Northern Ireland.* The methodology used for this comparative analysis is explained in chapter 1. Several research projects conducted in both Northern Ireland⁹ and Lebanon¹⁰ will inform this study. In addition, in-depth semi-structured interviews have been conducted in English between 10 December 2010 and 6 March 2011 with school teachers, university professors and former students. These interviews were conducted by phone in some cases and by exchange of emails in others.¹¹

In Lebanon eighteen ethno-religious communities now coexist after thirty years of civil war in the only Arab democratic country in the Middle East. The recent history of Lebanon together with the characteristics of this complex country are described in chapter 2. One of the main features of the Lebanese case is the influence of religion in socio-political life. Many of the ethno-religious communities control and manage their own schools. Furthermore, the influence of religion goes well beyond the walls of the schools. The sectarian political system is a form of

⁹ Akenson, 1973; Barnes, 1997, 2002; Richardson, 2001; Nelson, 2004; DENI, 2006; Hayes, Mc Allister & Dowds, 2006; Stringer et al., 2009.

¹⁰ Inati, 1999; Abouchedid & Nasser, 2002; Abu Kasem, 2003; Aisa Diab, 2003; Ali Sanan, 2003; Khalifé, 2005; Chrabieh, 2009.

¹¹ Time and budgetary constraints, as well as the prevailing political climate, prevented me from doing field work in Lebanon to study the role of religion in education.

consociational democracy¹² that allocates a determined number of seats in parliament to the political parties that represent each religious community.

The main principle of consociational democracy is the existence of a balance of power between different ethno-religious groups. In his *The Politics of Accommodation: Pluralism and Democracy in the Netherlands*, Lijphart (1968) described how consociational democracy made Dutch politics stable despite extended social cleavages. Moreover, he suggested the relevance of the Dutch case to other countries with sharp social, ethnic, religious or cultural cleavages which are, as a result, in permanent danger of disintegration. The Dutch system reflects the lack of consensus on a fundamental conception of the country's identity that leads to competing loyalties to one's religious community, and to the whole.

Numerous scholars have blamed the Lebanese educational system for this "lack of political unity and cultural integrity" (Salem, 1967: 238). The evolution of confessional schools and the reform of the educational system enacted after the *Ta'ij*¹³ agreement that ended the civil war in 1990 are discussed in chapter 3. The educational reform initiated after the civil war with "*Al-Haykaliyya al-Ta'lim*" ("framework for education") in 1995 was followed by the reform of the curricula in 1997 aimed at stronger supervision of private teaching institutions and the

¹² Arend Lijphart is the founder of the theory of consociational democracy. Lijphart, Arend (1975). The Comparable-Cases Strategy in Comparative Research. *Comparative Political Studies*, 8 (2), pp.158 – 177.

¹³ In this work, Arabic sources will be transliterated using the romanization tables of the American Library Association and the Library of Congress (ALA-LC). There are several Transliteration Standards. ALA-LC has been chosen for its extensive academic use in North America. Indeed, ALA-LC is the prime resource for Romanization of the *Chicago Manual of Style*. Recently, other forms of transcription that reproduce the sound of words according to the orthography rules of the target language have come into use. These methods, however, make the inverse process (arabization) difficult. The ALA-LC romanization table can be retrieved from <http://www.loc.gov/catdir/cpsol/romanization/arabic.pdf>

reform of public schools and their curricula. This reform implicitly recognized the negative role that education had in the divisions that led to the 1975 civil war. However, fifteen years after the reform, scholars still identify several limitations in the Lebanese educational system (see, Abouchedid, Nasser and Van Blommestein, 2002; Khalifé, 2005; Saad Eddine, 2006; Salami, 2006; and Chrabieh, 2009).

Chapter 4 will present several theories that will help frame the analysis of the Lebanese case specifically. Peacebuilding theories stress the role of education in post-conflict settings. The transformation not only of structures but also of relationships is presented as essential for the attainment of durable peace and reconciliation. The conflict transformation approach believes that transformation of relationships is the deepest level of change in the conflict resolution process (Lederach, 1997: 20). However, changes in the political system as well as the educational system are often opposed by political parties and ethno-religious communities if change is perceived as a threat. Social psychology adds to this perspective by describing the origin of those fears as well as the process of formation of stereotypes, prejudices and hatreds (Volkan, 1991). Since people acquire prejudices against other groups in early childhood and commit themselves to abstract ideals during adolescence, a peace education approach informing educational efforts, especially in secondary education, is an important tool to achieve “peace through education” (Fisk, 2000: 185).

The work of Galtung (1997) and Lederach (1997) on conflict transformation, Volkan (1990; 1997), Potapchuk & Carlson (1987), and Sandole & Lounsberry (2009) on social psychology, and Deutsch (1993), Kriesberg (1998b), Fisk (2000) and Mania et al. (2010) on peace education, represent the framework which underpins the analysis of this study.

These theoretical frameworks will inform the analysis of the literature and the interviews in chapters 5 and 6. Three main topics analysed from a comparative point of view include the existence of confessional schools; the mutual influence of religion, politics and identity; and the current context of RE in Lebanon alongside the curricula. Examples of progress made in Northern Ireland that can inform the Lebanese process include the agreement on a Core Syllabus for RE among the different churches in Northern Ireland; the establishment of integrated schools and the transformation of segregated schools into integrated schools; the coordination between RE and EMU; and the large consultation processes carried out by the DENI among students, teachers, religious communities and parents that led to the development of the Core Syllabus. Given the limitations of this work, the conclusions obtained do not aim to be definitive. Rather, they seek to inform the direction of future research about the unfinished reform of the Lebanese educational system. Indeed, the present work aims to be the first stage of a more extensive and intensive quantitative research project on religion in education in Lebanon.

Key terms explained

a. Coexistence/conviviality

Coexistence refers to the relationships between persons or groups in which none of the parties is trying to destroy the other (Kriesberg, 1998a: 183). Coexistence between different ethnic groups depends on four determining principles, namely, the shared will to coexist; common goals; cooperation to achieve those objectives; and reciprocal respect and mutual confidence (Chrabieh, 2009: 66). In Lebanon, however peacebuilding literature refers more to conviviality than to coexistence (ibid, 67):

“Although long-standing, coexistence is not conviviality yet. Coexistence refers to the juxtaposition of communities and cultures; it calls for tolerance. Conviviality refers to interaction between communities and cultures; it postulates reciprocal comprehension and sympathy.”¹⁴

Following this academic usage, the term conviviality will be preferred throughout this thesis.

b. Conflict

According to Mitchell a conflict is “any situation in which two or more social entities or ‘parties’ (however defined or structured) perceive that they possess mutually incompatible goals.” (Mitchell, 1981: 17) This definition suggests a wider type of struggle than armed conflict. In this study, the term conflict applies to any socio-political conflict whether pursued by the use of force or peaceful means.

c. Education for Mutual Understanding (EMU)

Education for Mutual Understanding (EMU) is an umbrella term that gathers all educational initiatives conducive to encourage better community relations. The curriculum of EMU is implemented in a cross-cutting way throughout different grades and in different subjects. EMU goes in line with practices of informal peace education (see section “key terms explained” of this chapter). According to the Northern Ireland Curriculum Council the goals of EMU are “to learn to respect and value themselves and others; to appreciate the interdependence of people within society; to know about and understand what is shared as

¹⁴ Peter Hans Kolvenbach, 29th Superior General of the Society of Jesus (19 March 2000). Speech at Saint-Joseph University’s patron saint’s day, Beirut, Lebanon, p. 6. (my translation). Retrieved from <http://www.asjel.org/PHK/C.19.03.2000,%20St. Joseph-Lebanon.doc> on 1 March 2011.

well as what is different about their cultural traditions; and to appreciate how conflict may be handled in non-violent ways.” (NICC, 1990)

d. Ethno-religious communities

A national census has not been conducted in Lebanon since 1932. This census was conducted during the French protectorate by French authorities and has been largely criticized for being biased. According to Jaulin (2009: 190; my translation) “confessional ratios [were] modeled to reflect the equilibrium of forces between confessional communities by including certain categories of emigrants in the political body and excluding others.” Indeed, the 1932 census included Lebanese living abroad, most of whom were Christians. The census estimated that Christians accounted for 58.5% of the population and Muslims 40.4% (Journal Officiel, n° 2718, 10 octobre 1932; in Jaulin, 2009: 201).

According to the International Religious Freedom Report 2009 of the US Department of State, in 2010, Lebanon counted 18 officially recognized religious groups. Without describing the procedures used to measure religious affiliation in Lebanon, the US Department of State estimates that currently Muslims account for 59.7% and Christians for 39% of the total population.¹⁵ Sunni Muslim, Shiite Muslim (Imāmites or “Twelvers”, Isma’ilis or “Sevener” and Alawites¹⁶) and Maronites are the largest groups. Other Christian groups comprise the Greek

¹⁵ See <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/le.html>

¹⁶ Sunnites and Shiites are the main two streams of Islam. Shiites originated after the death of the third caliph, Uthmān Bin Affān, when a group supported ‘Ali, cousin and son-in-law of Muhammad as the legitimate guide of the Muslim community. Contrarily to Sunnites who believe that caliphs are chosen by the Muslim community, the party of ‘Ali (“*Shi’atu ‘Ali*”) believe in the hereditary right of succession for the family of the Prophet Muhammad. Considered by the Sunnite majority as a heretical group, three of the main Shiite branches can be found in Lebanon, namely the Imāmites (Twelvers), the Isma’ilis (Sevener) and the Alawites. Imāmites or “twelvers”

Orthodox Christians (8%), Greek Catholics (4%), Armenian Orthodox, Syriac Orthodox, Syriac Catholics, Armenian Catholics, Assyrians, Copts, Chaldeans, Evangelicals (Protestant groups such as the Seventh-day Adventists and the Baptists) and Roman Catholics.¹⁷ This work will refer to these faith communities as ethno-religious or religious communities. The three major ones considered for the purpose of this research are Maronite Christian, Sunni Muslim and Shiite Muslim.

e. Identity

For the purpose of this work, the social dimension of identity is emphasized. Ethnicity, from a constructivist perspective, is a cultural construction. Social identity refers to the “psychological link between individuals and the social group to which they belong. We all belong to several social categories and therefore may have a series of social identifications, one of which is salient at any given time” (Kosic and Senehi, 2009: 173). Individuals are members of various groups and determine their loyalties and priorities in each context. This may not always be a conscious process. Hans Kohn (1951: 8) states that “within these pluralistic and sometimes conflicting kinds of group-consciousness, there is generally one which is recognized by people

recognize Muhammad Al-Mahdi as the twelve Imam who went into "occultation" in 939 AD and will return at the end of time. In the meantime, spiritual (and political) leadership rests in the Islamic jurists who become legatees of Muhammad until Al-Mahdi returns. Isma'ilis or "Sevener" recognize Isma'il as the seventh and last Imam whose son will also return at the end of time. The largest branch within Sevener is the Nizari Isma'ili community. Nizaris believe that since the successor line was never interrupted they have a living Imam. Their current spiritual leader is Aga Khan IV, Prince Karim al-Hussayni, the owner of an economic empire of banks, creditors and hotels and a philanthropist. He is known for the foundation of the Aga Khan Development Network in 1967. Finally, the Alawites are a minority sect within Shiites that has special relevance in Lebanon due to its links with Syria (the Al-Aşad presidential family is Alawite). For an in depth explanation of these branches of Islam, see Laffont (2007).

¹⁷ There is also a minority of 5% Druzes and a minority group of Jews. There are also very small numbers of Baha'is, Mormons, Buddhists, and Hindus that are not recognized as official religious groups.

as the most supreme and most important.” Inter-group conflicts reinforce individuals’ membership with their ethnic or religious group. Indeed, “the greater is the actual or perceived threat to individual existence, the higher the individual’s identity is with the group” (Saha, 2006: 142).

f. Peacebuilding

The term “peacebuilding” was first used by Johan Galtung in the 1960s. Galtung¹⁸ distinguished three approaches to peace: peacekeeping that aimed to “halt and diminish violence of the conflict through the intervention of military forces in an interpositional role”; peacemaking directed at “reconciling political and strategic attitudes through mediation, negotiation, arbitration, and conciliation;” and peacebuilding that addresses “the practical implementation of peaceful social change through socio-economic reconstruction.” Peacebuilding came into widespread use when former United Nations Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali announced his *Agenda for Peace* (Boutros-Ghali, 1992, n.21), distinguishing between four types of international actions to support peace: preventive diplomacy that aims “to prevent dispute from arising between parties” and to avoid the escalation of conflict; peacemaking that refers to article VI of the UN Charter and aims “to bring hostile parties to agreement”; peacekeeping that refers to the deployment of UN forces in the field with the consent of all the parties involved; and peacebuilding that is an international effort “to identify

¹⁸ Galtung, Johan. "Three approaches to peace: peacekeeping, peacemaking and peacebuilding." In *Peace, War and Defence - Essays in Peace Research, vol. 2*. Copenhagen: Christian Ejlertsen, pp. 282-304, cited in Olivier Ramsbotham 2000: 170.

and support structures which will tend to strengthen and solidify peace in order to avoid a relapse into conflict.”

Since then, "peacebuilding" has become a broadly used term. However, the term is not always understood in its narrower sense but as an umbrella concept that encompasses long-term transformative efforts together with peacekeeping, peacemaking and even building of governance structures and institutions. For the purpose of this study, a narrow definition will be considered. *Peacebuilding* underpins the work of peacemaking and peacekeeping by addressing structural issues and the long-term relationships between conflicting parties. Therefore, peacebuilding represent the last stage of different international efforts to promote peace.

g. Peace Education

The Peace Education Working Group at UNICEF defines peace education as

the process of promoting knowledge, skills, attitudes and values needed to bring about behaviour changes that will enable children, youth and adults to prevent conflict and violence, both overt and structural; to resolve conflict peacefully; and to create the conditions conducive to peace, whether at an intrapersonal, interpersonal, intergroup, national or international level. (Fountain, 1999: 1)

This definition is complemented by that of the World Bank (2005: 60) that refers to peace education more as an umbrella term than as a concrete process:

Peace education is a generic term used to describe a range of formal and informal educational activities undertaken to promote peace in schools and communities through the inculcation of skills, attitudes, and values that promote non-violent approaches to managing conflict and promoting tolerance and respect for diversity.

This definition acknowledges the dual nature of peace education that can be formal or informal. For the purpose of this study, instead of a concrete subject or practice, peace

education will be considered as a set of practices, principles and structures that inform the educational system in order to achieve openness of mind, critical awareness of one's cultural position, the respect for others, the necessary cooperation with others of all different beliefs and ideas and building strong relationships between members of different ethno-religious communities. Peace education will be considered as an approach that informs other educational practices. An informal peace education approach in RE, for instance, will emphasize the calls for peace and harmony that come through the world's religions by highlighting the religious teachings that in each tradition offer a vision of peace.

h. Reconciliation

It is difficult to consider reconciliation as a generic concept that has the same implication in different conflicts. Reconciliation here refers to

accommodative ways members of adversary entities have come to regard each other after having engaged in intense and often destructive struggle. They have somehow become able to put aside feelings of hate, fear, and loathing, to discard views of the other as dangerous or subhuman, and to abandon the desire for revenge and retribution.(Kriesberg, 1998a: 184)

In this definition, to set aside does not necessarily mean to have no such feelings. In addition, when great injuries have been inflicted by both sides, as is the case in a civil war, reconciliation becomes a long process that requires acknowledgement of history and of each other's sufferings and anticipated mutual security and well-being (ibid, p. 185).

i. Religious Education

Religious Education (RE) is a subject that is taught as part of the curricula in the majority of countries in the world. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) are partly responsible for this situation. The ICCPR states in Article 18 that countries “undertake to have respect for the liberty of parents and, when applicable, legal guardians to ensure the religious and moral education of their children in conformity with their own convictions.” This is the main legal argument maintained by supporters of RE in schools. However, the ICCPR does not mention the school as the frame where religious and moral education have to be taught. Supporters of RE in schools provide two main arguments. First, they argue that ICCPR allows for RE to be taught in schools. There is no specific prohibition in this regard. And second, schools are entrusted with the integral development of children which includes moral education – and arguably religious education. If schools have to teach about morality, parents have the right to choose the contents that are taught to their children at school.

Nonetheless, in many countries RE remains a controversial topic. Different countries, with their own local, regional or national circumstances and context have chosen different approaches to RE. For the purpose of this work, *RE will be understood as any kind of formal religious teaching in public or private school, not in families or in the organisations of the faith communities.* There is a wide range of models. For instance, countries such as France or Albania do not have RE in public schools. In other countries such as England or Denmark the state has the exclusive responsibility for RE. In those cases, RE becomes a secular analysis of religion and a history of religions. Other countries opt for a cooperative approach where state and religious communities share responsibility for RE. This is common in countries such as Lebanon or

Germany where different religious communities live together and have or have had a significant presence in social life. Finally, other countries have confessional or denominational approaches to RE. This is the case of Ireland, Spain and Muslim-majority countries where RE aims to educate *into* religion rather than educate about religion.

Where RE is taught as part of a general education, the general objectives of RE are to learn *about* religion – history, traditions, dogma, customs and moral (knowledge based); and to learn *from* religion (based on the experience and existential questions of the students). This last objective initiates students into the celebrative dimension of the particular faith (liturgy, prayer, etc.); opens them up to the experiential dimension of the faith, this is to develop their religious imagination;¹⁹ introduces them as active members of the faith community; and, introduces them to religious moral values. This last objective is an important component of the curriculum for confessional RE, which holds that religion cannot be divorced from its moral dimension.

j. Tolerance

The UNESCO's *Declaration on the Principles on Tolerance* states that: "Tolerance is respect, acceptance and appreciation of the rich diversity of our world's cultures, our forms of expression and ways of being human." UNESCO also claims that tolerance is "harmony in difference." (UNESCO, 1995: #1.1.) For UNESCO, far from connoting indifference, tolerance becomes an expansive, diffuse sensibility that automatically offers unconditional respect and

¹⁹ Religious imagination refers to the mental representations that religious individuals have of some object or thing not present to their senses, namely the divine and their relationship with it. Religious imagination emanates from a set of beliefs that is held to be true and is nurtured by religious symbols (Juergensmeyer, 2003).

non-judgmentalism for different views and cultures. This concept of tolerance goes in line with conviviality instead of coexistence.

These terms will be used throughout this thesis and will be especially relevant to the comparative analysis of the Lebanese and Northern Irish cases. In the next chapter, I will explain the grounds for comparison of both cases. As I will state, despite the differences, significant similarities allow for a fruitful comparison between Northern Ireland and Lebanon. In addition, I will describe the goals and methodology that I will use in this thesis. The comparative methodology will be presented as a valuable option to initially test my hypothesis and eventually suggest new lines of investigation for the future.

CHAPTER 1

RESEARCH QUESTION AND METHODOLOGY

According to Deutsch (1993), Kriesberg (1998a), Bush and Saltarelli (2000) and Kasic and Senehi (2009), the creative management of ethno-religious diversity and conflict in schools can contribute to reconciliation, enhancement of social and personal relationships and dialogue based on respect and mutual understanding (see chapter 4). However, ethno-religious diversity in education can also be a source of conflict and polarization (Beckett, 1996; Tannous, 1997; Inati, 1999).

In ethno-religiously diverse societies such as Lebanon, religion continues to play an important role in education. This can be seen especially in three facts that will be analysed in chapters 5 and 6. First, the existence of a large network of confessional schools throughout the country with a de facto autonomy to set their curricula and ethos has been judged problematic. Second, the linkages between religious schools and political parties (which often fund these schools, as in the case of Al-Mahdi and the schools of the Lebanese Forces) make it feasible to pursue political agendas in the educational context. Third, concerns regarding education in Lebanon extend to the teaching of RE. This subject is optional and taught in public schools outside of the teaching schedule as a confessional subject. Despite a multi-faith textbook agreed upon as compulsory in confessional schools, RE remains highly heterogeneous. Indeed, nobody knows exactly which school does what in terms of RE. Only a field visit to every school would reveal what textbooks and what pedagogical approach are used in RE courses.

The role of religion in education in Lebanon has been studied partially by several researchers. Projects that investigate the role of religion in the Lebanese educational system were identified following an extensive review of education and religious studies databases, an examination of articles in newspapers such as *The Daily Star*, *Haaretz* and *Lebanon Now*, and a perusal of reports published by Saint Joseph University.²⁰ The databases used are twelve in total²¹: five in English (Education Full Text, Educator's Reference Complete, Scholars Portal Search, ProQuest and ATLA Religion Database), four in French (Repère, ERIC, FRANCIS, Archives des Sciences Sociales des Religions), and three in Arabic (Shamaa, An-Nahar Documentation Center and EduSearch, the leading database on articles about education in Arabic managed by Qatar University).

This body of literature addresses several issues such as the need for structural transformation, the existence of dual educational systems (schools run by religious congregations and public schools), control over the curriculum, access to high-quality education, teacher training, and teaching methods. In addition, some researchers stress the need for a peace education approach that could contribute to the transformation of interpersonal relationships with methods that foster cooperative learning, address emotions and perceptions, and incorporate topics such as tolerance, religious diversity, citizenship, etc. in the curricula of RE and history, etc.

²⁰ See the series "*L'interaction Islamo-Chrétienne*" published by the Institute of Islamic-Christian Studies ("Institut d'Etudes Islamo-Chrétiennes") at Saint Joseph University. Articles and research reports were written either in French or in Arabic have been translated into English. My knowledge of French and Arabic has facilitated this task.

²¹ Five databases in English were used for the Northern Irish case: Education Full Text, Educator's Reference Complete, Scholars Portal Search, ProQuest and ATLA Religion Database.

To reveal the role that religion plays in education either as a contributing factor to dialogue or conflict in Lebanese society, I will compare the Lebanese case to the Northern Irish one, keeping in mind that this thesis is the first stage of a more extensive and intensive multi-method research project on religion in education in Lebanon to be conducted in the coming years as part of a PhD program.

1. Research question and methodology

Previous research that I conducted in the field of RE, religion in education and citizenship education (Cerván, 2009, 2011), along with the findings of the literature mentioned above, suggest that the way religion is being dealt within the Lebanese educational system contributes more to polarization along ethno-religious lines than to reconciliation. The literature suggests that the reverse is the case in Northern Ireland since the creation of integrated schools and the subsequent introduction of the 1993 Core Syllabus and its revised edition in 2007. In this thesis I will compare the role of religion in education in Lebanon and Northern Ireland to generate insights in response to the following question: *Why RE is a contributing factor to conflict and polarization among Lebanese ethno-religious communities, whereas it has become a contributing factor to reconciliation and social cohesion in Northern Ireland?*

To answer this question this study builds upon several research projects conducted in both Lebanon (Mouzoune, 1998; Inati, 1999; Abouché, Nasser and Van Blommestein, 2002; Khalifé, 2005; Saad Eddine, 2006; Salami, 2006; and Chrabieh, 2009) and Northern Ireland (

Barnes, 1997, 2002; the *Life and Times Survey*, 1999, 2004; Smith, 2001; Nelson, 2004; DENI, 2006; Hayes, Mc Allister & Dowds, 2006; and Stringer et al., 2007). It also draws upon the results of in-depth semi-structured interviews I conducted with Lebanese school teachers, university professors and alumni, either by telephone or by email. There were four such interviews conducted in English between 10 December 2010 and 6 March 2011.²² Interviewees were selected according to their relevance to the research. Seven other potential interviewees declined the invitation to participate in this research.

The interviews covered the following topics: the relevance of religious schooling in socialization processes; the curriculum for RE; who is responsible for the curriculum; the objectives sought in RE lessons; the reasons for including students of different religious affiliations in RE lessons; and the perceptions of the interviewees of the role of religion in school and society. In the course of the interviews I attempted to ascertain if, in their view, religion in education contributes to conflict or dialogue in Lebanon, and if so, how? I asked if they had witnessed fights or controversies based on religious affiliations at school, and if, in their view, perceptions about the world, society and religion had changed in students who have attended RE lessons.

This research is conceptually inspired by the investigation conducted in Europe by the European network RedCo between 2006 and 2009 and coordinated by professor Wolfram Weisse from the University of Hamburg (Germany). The project, involving universities from

²² The four interviewee who participated in this research gave their written informed and free consent to the use of the contents of the interviews via email.

eight European countries (the UK, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Russia, Estonia, France and Spain) involved a comparative analysis of the views that students from different European countries held about the role of religion in education. The study's goal was to promote a joint perspective on the study of religion across Europe (Knauth et al., 2008). The comparative methodology used by the RedCo project informs the present work.

Assuming that religion in Lebanese private and public schools can either enhance integration and cohesion of the Lebanese society or increase conflict through the propagation of extreme positions, this thesis studies the role of religion in the Lebanese educational systems by contrasting it with the Northern Irish experience. Northern Ireland may be compared to the Lebanese context for several reasons. Lebanon and Northern Ireland share a history of coexistence between competing ethno-religious communities that mobilize religious affiliations for political reasons. One finds similar features in both educational systems, for instance, the dichotomy between segregated and integrated schools, the power of religious authorities to set the curricula, determine the philosophy of their schools and so decide on the evolution of RE teaching.

Three main sections of this comparative study cover the general state of confessional schools and their relation to public schools (chapter 5 section 1); the influence of confessional schools on the formation of students' political and religious identity (chapter 5 section 2); and the historical development and condition of RE teaching (curriculum and nature of RE) (chapter 6).

The comparative methodology has been preferred over other approaches because case study analysis is one of the main methods to initially test hypotheses (Lipjhart, 1975: 159) that eventually suggest new lines of investigation for the future:

rather than imitating experimental control, a more promising use of comparative study is to extend the investigator's experience, to make him aware of more possibilities and social capacities, and thus to help his imagination of question-prompting cause-seeking and effect-measurement alternatives, rational models, ideal types, utopias and other useful functions. The function of comparison is less to stimulate experiment than to experiment imagination...Comparison is strongest as a choosing and provoking, not a providing device: a system for questioning, not for answering. (Stretton, 1969: 245-247)

As suggested by Michael C. Coleman, who conducted comparative research on the history, policies and practices in the schooling of Native American and Irish students (2007), it is important to adopt comparative approaches in education studies. It is by doing so that one goes “beyond the purely local and singular, and attempt to develop connections between phenomena and problems encountered in different countries and cultures” (Crook and McCulloch, 2002: 397). Comparing the distinctiveness and similarities of RE in different countries can help educational policy-makers in their work.

2. Grounds for Comparison

I have chosen Northern Ireland as a case study to compare and contrast with Lebanon. While there are similarities between the socio-political and educational contexts in which RE has developed in both countries, it must be acknowledged that Lebanon is certainly a much more complex case than Northern Ireland. In Lebanon we find long-standing ethno-religious coexistence; a large number of coexisting religious communities; and an entrenched sectarian

political system that reaches all the levels of political life, from division of parliamentary seats to distribution of public service positions among the communities. Moreover, Lebanon is shaped by the influences of external powers and the instability of the Middle East which contrasts with the stability brought to Northern Ireland by the European Union. Despite these differences, significant similarities allow for a fruitful comparison between Northern Ireland and Lebanon.

First of all, Lebanon and Northern Ireland share a history of coexistence between ethno-religious communities. The presence of different religious communities and their influence in policy-making remain important in both contexts. Northern Ireland's coexistence between Catholics and Protestants dates back to the twelfth century when Henry II of England amalgamated the surrounding areas of Dublin to his Kingdom. The province of Ulster came under the control of the British Crown in the beginning of the eighteenth century. Since then, dispossessed Catholic Irish clans strongly resisted the English Crown. In Lebanon, coexistence between ethno-religious communities date back to the seventh century when Muslims arrived to what today is Lebanon, during the Caliphate of Abu Bāqr (632–634) shortly after the death of Muhammad. Christian communities already lived in the region since the early beginnings of Christianity. It would be during the Caliphates of the Umayyad (660–750) and the Abbasids (750–1258) that many other groups settled down in Lebanon. For instance, the Maronites originated in Syria; a small Christian group called the Melchites, or Greek Catholics, settled

down in the central part of the Bekaa Valley; and the Druze who left Egypt settled in the South of Lebanon in the eleventh century.²³

Second, in Northern Ireland and Lebanon, religious affiliations were mobilized by elites for politically motivated objectives. In Northern Ireland, several attempts of secession were made by Catholic Irish groups such as the Irish Republican Brotherhood, the Irish Republican Army and its political wing, Sinn Fein. In Lebanon, political parties are aligned along ethno-religious identities. The sectarian political system allocates seats in parliament to the parties representing each of the ethno-religious communities. Moreover, Al-Mawla (2002: 1) maintains that the two major communities, Muslims and Christians, resort to monopolizing and manipulating ideas and sentiments in order to gain solid popular basis among Lebanese of their own faith (see chapter 2).

Thirdly, educational systems in both countries present similar features.

- As in Lebanon, in Northern Ireland the educational system has been religiously segregated since its beginnings (see, Murray, 1985; Smith 2001). Until the eighteenth century, Catholic Irish children were excluded from formal education. In 1801, the Act of Union brought Ireland under direct rule from Westminster. Penal Laws were relaxed and Catholic religious orders began to establish schools, beginning segregated education in Northern Ireland. The Catholic Church manages some fifty percent of the schools in Northern Ireland (Barnes, 1997: 75). Both official and confessional schools (“controlled”

²³ Hamza and Darazi formulated the dogmas for the cult of Al Hakim (996–1021 AD), the Fatimid caliph of Egypt who proclaimed himself the incarnation of God. Originally a Muslim sect, their followers became the Druze. Interestingly, Druze are still counted as Muslims in, for instance, official statistics and the distribution of seats in Parliament.

and “maintained” in Northern Irish terms) are now financed by the government. This is not the case in Lebanon where confessional schools are mainly tuition-based.

- Teaching of RE in the curriculum has been a controversial issue in both the Lebanese and Northern Irish educational system. For almost two centuries, the churches had extraordinary autonomy to set the curricula and the ethos of their schools. This situation was confirmed by the 1948 and 1968 Education Act that safeguarded the teaching of RE by statute (Barnes, 1997: 73). As Akenson (1973) notes, the churches and the government have both tried to control RE for several decades. As is the case in Lebanon, the Irish government has often given up because of the influence of the churches in the stabilization of the region. Both governments have initiated a process of reform of the educational system and both have faced strong opposition from religious communities. This opposition has led governments to withdraw initiatives or postpone reforms on several occasions.
- In the past, religion in the Northern Irish educational system has contributed to the segregation, division and clustering of individuals within their own religious groups. On the other hand, according to the DENI, after the Belfast Agreement (“Good Friday Agreement”) of 10 April 1998, which put an end to thirty years of violent conflict, RE has been an important factor on the promotion of tolerance and understanding among religious communities (DENI, 2006: 3.3.). As will be seen below, this shift has been made possible due to the development of a common curriculum for the four Christian denominations that is coordinated with Education for Mutual Understanding initiatives, in the context of an increasingly integrated education system.

3. Recent developments in Religious Education in Northern Ireland

Religious Education has been part of the Irish curriculum since the enactment of the Act of Union in 1801. For almost two centuries, the churches were autonomous to set the curricula. The 1948 Education act safeguarded the teaching of RE by statute (Barnes, 1997: 73). In 1968, a new Education Act aimed to establish the core aspects for a common educational system, without attempting to modify the RE curriculum. Finally, in 1985 the British government announced its intention to initiate educational reforms in Northern Ireland. Two major motivations for this reform were the lack of a National Curriculum for the different regions and the desire to diminish local authority control over educational funding, policy and practice. The reform would develop a National Curriculum, promote parental choice of schools and grant greater autonomy to schools by establishing new funding mechanisms. These changes were presented as a way to increase schools' competitiveness in a market economy.

In this reform, the government had decided to exclude compulsory RE from schools, suggesting that it was seen as part of the problem in Northern Ireland. In March of 1985, the Department of Education for Northern Ireland (DENI) produced the consultation paper, *Education in Northern Ireland: Proposals for Reform*. The document proposed the creation of a common curriculum with seven compulsory areas of study referred to as "foundation subjects." (DENI, 1988: #11) These areas did not include RE. Two reasons were provided for this decision. The first rationale was that foundation subjects would be considered compulsory. If RE was considered a foundation subject, the freedom of parents to exercise their rights of conscience would have been diminished. Second, RE would have a prescribed programme of study with

attainment levels at various steps in the school curriculum which would have been unrealistic and impractical at that stage of the reform of the Northern Irish educational system.

The consultation paper was highly controversial among the four main Irish Churches (the Church of Ireland, the Presbyterian Church, the Methodist Church in Ireland and the Roman Catholic Church). In their eyes RE was being marginalized. Many members of the clergy and RE teachers reacted strongly against the proposed changes (Barnes, 1997: 74). They objected that if RE was not considered a foundation subject, there would be less time devoted to its teaching; that the incorporation of Education for Mutual Understanding (EMU) would encroach upon the time usually allocated for RE; and, that while certain groups were “encouraging schools to develop Personal and Social Education Programmes with separate timetable allocation from Religious Education” (Barnes, 1997: 75) such a practice would be detrimental to the cohesion of the student body.

All these concerns were brought to the attention of the DENI together with a proposal for an agreed programme of study for RE for the four main churches in Northern Ireland. In October of 1988, following a consultation process with the four main Churches responsible for RE, the DENI issued a new document, entitled *Education Reform in Northern Ireland: The Way Forward*, that corrected the previous policy paper and acknowledged the “central position [of RE] in the curriculum” (DENI, 1988b, #2.5). RE was designated as the first area of study that was compulsory for all students.

In October 1990 a Working Party/Drafting Group met for the first time to elaborate the RE Core Syllabus. This group was composed of twenty-four members including twelve Catholic and twelve Protestants participants. By March of 1991 the group presented its document

entitled *Proposals for a Core Syllabus in Religious Education* with the understanding that this Core Syllabus would be complemented with optional material selected by each school. Following the presentation, a process of public consultation was initiated.

In January 1992 the Working Party/Drafting Group gathered 605 input responses from the process. The results of this consultation led to the use of language that was less confessional and to a reduction of the religious content of the Core Syllabus at all levels of the curriculum. In June 1992, the Minister of Education expressed his disappointment because of the absence of world religions in the Core Syllabus. He encouraged schools to incorporate them in the RE curriculum. Despite the criticism received by the DENI, the Core Syllabus was enthusiastically received by the churches when it was released in 1993. It is interesting to note that regardless of the existence of a Core Syllabus, Catholic schools continued to use their own materials with a strong catechetical tone (Barnes, 1997). According to the Conference of Bishops of Northern Ireland (CBNI) however, their school curriculum covers the main subjects proposed in the Core Syllabus.

Consultations and research conducted among students, teachers and parents showed an interest in learning about other religions, which led the DENI to suggest a revision of the Core Syllabus in 2002. DENI asked the churches to review the Core Syllabus, and, in doing so, the Churches were asked to give particular consideration to education about other world religions. The result came in January 2005 with the Churches' *Final Draft Proposals for a Revised Core Syllabus for RE in Grant-Aided Schools in Northern Ireland*. After further revisions, the four main Churches agreed to a Revised Core Syllabus in 2007. It has the same structure as its predecessor but is more respectful of differences.

- First, it establishes RE as a part of the statutory curriculum for all pupils in publicly supported schools in Northern Ireland while recognizing parents' right to withdraw their children from RE instruction.
- Second, it allows different schools to supplement the Core Syllabus with additional material of their choice. This material however has to be non-denominational in order to avoid extreme positions and must be "based upon the Holy Scriptures according to some authoritative version or versions thereof but excluding education as to any tenet distinctive of any particular religious denomination." (DENI, 2006: 25)
- Finally, in Key Stage 3 (age 11 to 14), a fourth learning objective has been included stating that "pupils should be given an introduction to two world religions other than Christianity in order to develop knowledge of and sensitivity towards, the religious beliefs, practices and lifestyles of people from other religions in Northern Ireland" (DENI, 2007: 29). This directive sets the minimum to be taught about world religions. "Schools can make more provision for world religions, as suits the needs of their pupils, beyond the Core Syllabus and can make links with areas of the revised curriculum, such as Citizenship" (DENI, 2006: 2). The study of the origins, beliefs, sacred writings, worship, family life, traditions, and rituals of these two other world religions only takes place in Key Stage 3. The reason provided by the churches is that an early introduction of world religions can cause confusion in pupils.

4. Limitations of this research

The present research has faced several challenges:

- Time, budgetary constraints and the current political climate have prevented me from traveling to Lebanon to conduct field work. This field work would have provided an in-depth understanding of the Lebanese educational system with special regard to private confessional schools.
- Not much research has been done on religion in education in Lebanon. As Dr. Georges Nahas²⁴ stated in an interview (11 February 2011) “no comprehensive research on religion in education has been conducted ever in Lebanon.” Moreover, all the research has been conducted in a limited number of schools with a small student sample that is not representative of the Lebanese student body, which precludes researchers from making generalizations.
- Research reports written in Arabic used for this work have been translated from Arabic to English. My intermediate knowledge of Arabic has facilitated this task. Yet the help of a translator has been required for quotes and certain parts of the reports.
- Due to the sensitive nature of religious issues and RE in Lebanon, finding teachers and professors willing to be interviewed has been challenging. At times I felt that my questions were digging up issues that they did not want brought up. Some interviewees, on the other hand, were open and willing to reply openly to all the questions.

In addition, several limitations are related to the comparative method:

- The first limitation was the problem of “many variables, small N.” Lijphart (1975: 159)
This problem refers to the existence of numerous dependent variables that remain

²⁴ Professor Georges Nahas is the vice-president of the Orthodox University of Balamand and a renowned scholar in the field of education.

uncontrolled by the researcher and a small sample to use in a research project. When the research design involves many cases, “the comparative method is then nothing but the statistical method under relatively unfavourable, but improvable circumstances.” (Lijphart, 1975: 163) Nonetheless, the comparative method may suggest possible avenues for further research on the role of religion in education.

- There is no comprehensive body of research that addresses all the aspects that have been identified as highly relevant to this thesis. Comparable data are difficult to find, and what data are available are subjected to the biases of multiple observers. Moreover the scope of the comparison is limited by the dependent variables used; differences in the size, age and other independent variables of the student samples limit the general validity of the comparison.

The comparative method used in this thesis will nonetheless help me reveal the role that religion plays in education either as a contributing factor to dialogue or conflict in Lebanese society. Before proceeding to the comparative analysis, I will describe the socio-political context and the features of the educational system in Lebanon in the following two chapters.

CHAPTER 2

LEBANON: SOCIO-POLITICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Lebanon is a small country located on the eastern coast of the Mediterranean Sea in one of the most politically unstable regions of the world. Indeed, Lebanon has recently suffered not only from internal dysfunction but also from the disruptive influence of external powers. The most recent episodes of violence add to a long history of violent conflicts, domination and political unrest. It is not the objective of this research to present a detailed history of modern Lebanon. Nonetheless, for the purpose of this study, I need to analyse three historical and socio-political issues, namely the politically unstable nature of Middle Eastern countries; the causes of the last Lebanese civil war (1975 - 1990); and, the country's demography and its influence on politics in modern times. Each of these three aspects has had a significant impact on the shaping of modern Lebanon and its institutions, including the educational system.

1. Unstable nature of Middle Eastern countries

During the past four decades, Lebanon has been submerged in a continuing struggle between ethno-religious communities. But this condition is by no means accidental. According to Winslow (1996: 3), Lebanon experiences a subset of the problems facing the Middle East. Three mutually reinforcing factors make the country more susceptible and prone to conflict, namely geostrategic vulnerability, economic marginality and ethical relativism.

First of all, geostrategic vulnerability is a factor because Lebanon is positioned at a crossroads of cultures and people. The Middle East in general and Lebanon in particular is a

geopolitical centre that has attracted outside political interference for centuries (El-Masri, 2009). This continued presence of outsiders with their own interests and agendas reinforces the orientation of the Lebanese to particularisms based on kinship ties, and lived in ethno-religious communities (Barakat, 1973: 310; Winslow, 1996: 6). The communitarian mentality adds to that external alienation promoted by foreign powers that prevents the Lebanese from trusting public structures and drives individuals to rely on kinship, factions and religious communities for their social cement. Accordingly, this inclination to defend kinship and religious communities is used by outsiders to “magnify the divisions of the Lebanese as a way of [manipulating their structures] more easily.” (Winslow, p. 6)

Arab societies, including Lebanon, have been traditionally considered more collectivist than Western societies. Buda and Elsayed-Elkhouly (1998) revisited this classical consideration and confirmed that Arab participants in their study were significantly more collectivist than U.S. ones. However, they also found that Egyptians were more individualistic than Arabs from the Gulf. Against generalizations made by orientalists²⁵, their study showed that the Arab culture is not monolithic regarding collectivism-individualism tendencies. In this diversity, Barakat affirms the communitarian tendency of the Lebanese assessed by the lack of loyalty to the country as a whole (Barakat, 1973: 310). This attitude, when generalized, is incompatible with national stability and order. This communitarian condition explains that “the grandest times of cultural efflorescence for [Lebanon] have occurred only when outsiders have provided the political cement” (Winslow, 1996: 6).

²⁵ A paradigmatic critique of Orientalism was made in Said, Edward (1979). *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage.

2. The 1975-1990 civil war: causes, development and aftermaths

The unstable condition of Lebanon as an entity culminated in the outbreak of the Lebanese civil war that started in April 1975 and officially ended in 1991. The long conflict that afflicted the country resulted in a large number of casualties. Estimates of casualties range from 110,000 to 250,000, most of which were civilians (Baroudi and Tamar, 2009). Thousands were also displaced. Tschuy (1997) has identified a number of immediate factors that led to the outbreak of the war, which include demographic and economic issues.

According to Tschuy, one of the decisive causes of the war was the destabilization of the fragile ethno-religious demographic balance that existed in the country. With the creation of the state of Israel in 1948, more than 300,000 Palestinians fled to Lebanon where they were settled by the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees (UNRWA) in fifteen refugee camps, as well as in other UN administered areas in the South.²⁶ As 77 percent of these immigrants were Sunni Muslims, the ethno-religious composition of the country was altered and Christians feared being taken over (Tschuy, 1997: 44).

According to Malik (1997) Christian fears are deep and existential because they concern questions of survival, freedom, and dignity. Malik points out that the origin of these fears can be found in the fact that "Islam has been the dominant religion, demographically and politically, in the Middle East for most of the past fourteen centuries. Non-Muslims in the Middle East have experienced a relentless shrinkage in their numbers and influence over the centuries."²⁷ In

²⁶ UNRWAPR, Statistical Bulletin Lebanon, May 1950- June 1951.

²⁷ Malik, Habib C. (1997). Is there still a Lebanon? *Middle East Quarterly*, 4 (4). Retrieved from <http://www.meforum.org/371/is-there-still-a-lebanon>

addition, the remaining Christians in the majority of those regions have been reduced to a “*dhimmi*.” *Dhimmi*s are non-Muslims populations subjected to the Muslim state. In the first years of Islam, they consisted of Christians, Jews and Zoroastrians who signed a contract, the *dhimma*, with the Muslim ruler. That contract was based on “the recognition by the *dhimmi*s of the supremacy of Islam and the dominance of the Muslim state, and their acceptance of a position of subordination, symbolized by certain social restrictions and by the payment of a poll tax (*jizya*) to which Muslims were not subjected” (Lewis, 2000: 210-212). The term *dhimmi* relegates the conquered Jews and Christians to be second-class citizens in their ancestral homelands. According to Malik, in the Middle East, “only Lebanon's Christians managed to retain a considerable degree of autonomy through the centuries.”²⁸ This explains the nationalistic ideology that a majority of these Christians hold.²⁹ But fear can also be found among Lebanese Muslims who suffered from political under-representation and economic discrimination, first during the French Mandate (1920-1946) and after independence in 1946.³⁰

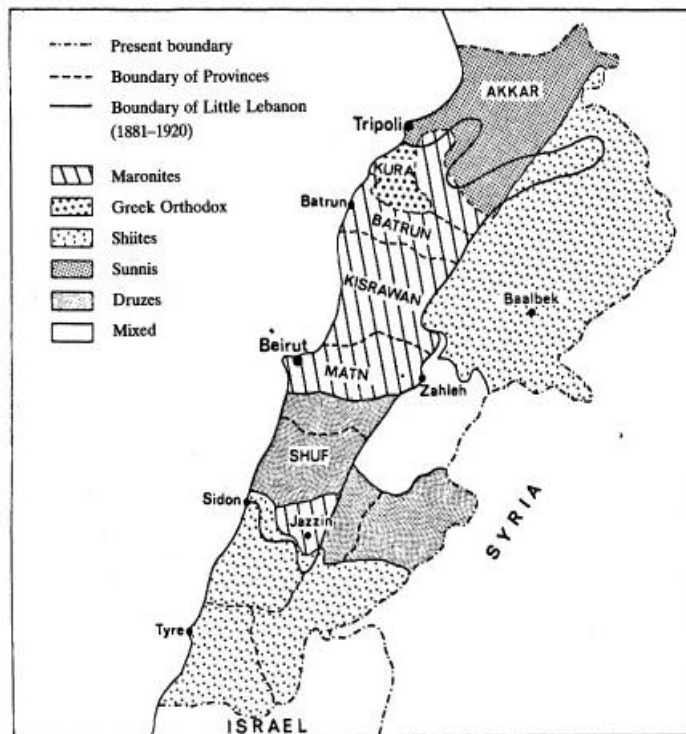
Several scholars have tried to estimate the ethnographic division of the country based on several surveys and fertility differentials. Soffer (1986:199) estimated that in 1956, Christians accounted for 55.6% and Muslims 44.4% of the population. However, this estimate has been criticized by Faour (1991: 633) who considers Soffer to be biased and states that the 1932 French census and the 1970 survey of the economically active population are the only sources widely recognized as reliable, or least biased sources (1991: 632). More recently, Harris

²⁸ Ibid

²⁹ Barakat, Halim, p. 304.

³⁰ Malik, Habib C.

(2005) made calculations drawing on the 1932 census, the 1970 survey of the economically active population, the 1988 Hariri food distribution plan and the fertility differentials among religious groups calculated by Joseph Chamie in 1971 (1977: 365-382). Harris concluded that in 1970, the proportion of Christians was down from 58.5% to 42% (Harris, 2005: 82-85), whereas they were the majority in the Parliament. In fact, the ethno-religious geographical distribution of these groups in the country has remained relatively constant since 1930 (Soffer, 1986: 202) (see map 1).



Map 1: Geographical distribution of ethno-religious communities³¹

The ethno-religious composition was also affected by the economic boom experienced in the 1960s. The establishment of Israel in 1948 also led Lebanon to assume many of Palestine's

³¹ Source: Soffer, Arnon (1986). Where Demography Is the Core of Politics and Life. *Middle Eastern Studies*, 22 (2), p. 203.

economic functions and in the 1960s it became the banking centre of the region, an economic role consolidated by the thriving Arab oil economy (Jupp, 2001: 560). The economic boom attracted thousands of Syrians. As a result, by 1973 this small country of three million had one million immigrants. Moreover, as Vorländer (1980: 44) noticed, the economic growth caused by the rising oil prices in the Gulf in the early 1970s, benefited a small Christian minority that could be considered affluent in contrast to half of the population that lived in absolute poverty, the majority of which were Sunni Muslims.

Another factor that led to the 1975 war was the economic downturn in the early 1970s. Following the increase of oil prices, Western countries succeeded in controlling oil demand by increasing their energy efficiency. The decrease in demand, together with the lack of political unity of OPEC countries who did not decrease their production led to a drop in oil prices (Clarke et al. 2009 : 126). The Lebanese economic boom suddenly came to an end. Beirut was no longer the prosperous city that it was in the past. The culmination of these factors, together with external interests and influence from actors such as Israel, America, Syria and the Palestine Liberation Organization that had set up headquarters in Lebanon, led to the outbreak of civil war.³²

Violent clashes between neighbouring urban and rural sectors during the war resulted in many casualties, most of which were civilians living their daily lives (Corm, 1990: 217). Two-thirds of all Lebanese were driven from their homes and mistrust propagated throughout the communities. Countless efforts for peace and armistice were unfruitful. Authorities lost all

³² For a deeper discussion of the reasons that led to the outbreak of the civil war, see Labaki , B & Abou Rjeily, K. (1993) , *Bilan des Guerres du Liban 1975-1990*. Paris: L'Harmattan.

control. The United States and a multinational Arab force intervened as Iran supported Hezbollah fighters, and the Israelis bombed Palestinians' position. In 1989, a National Accord, the *Ta'if* Accord was agreed to in Saudi Arabia. The Accord officially brought an end to the war in 1991 without settling major divisive issues.³³ This agreement, supported by Saudi Arabia, the United States and Syria, included an amnesty law that pardoned all political crimes except those committed against foreigners and diplomats. Most of the militias have been weakened or disbanded, except those of Hezbollah which have remained armed in the southern part of the country.

Over the last few years, politically motivated murders have been committed against politicians and journalists. 2005 was an especially critical year with the assassination of then Prime Minister, Rafiq Hariri. The Lebanese Government immediately requested the UN to establish a special Tribunal to put on trial the people suspected of committing Hariri's murder. In Resolution 1595, adopted on 7 April 2005 by the Security Council, the UN decided "to establish an international independent investigation Commission ('the Commission') based in Lebanon to assist the Lebanese authorities in their investigation of all aspects of this terrorist act, including to help identify its perpetrators, sponsors, organizers and accomplices" (S/RES/1595, 2005: n. 1)³⁴. The Tribunal did not commence its work until 1 March 2009 in The Hague. Since the adoption of Resolution 1595, Amnesty International has argued that the jurisdiction of the Tribunal should be expanded so that it may judge crimes against human

³³ For more information about the *Ta'if* Accord, see The Lebanese Parliament (1990). *Wathiqat al Wifaq al Watani al Lubnani* (Document of the Lebanese National Conciliation). Beirut, Republic of Lebanon.

³⁴ UN Resolution S/RES/1595. Retrieved from <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N05/299/98/PDF/N0529998.pdf?OpenElement> on 1 March 2011

rights that were committed in recent years, such as the killing of civilians during the 2007 confrontations in the refugee camp in Nahr al-Bared. Other organizations such as the Lebanese Center for Policy Studies, the Center for Sustainable Democracy, the International Center for Transitional Justice and numerous victims support this request and demand that further powers be granted to the Tribunal. They see the amnesty of 1991 as an 'amnesic amnesty' and demand accountability and the implementation of transitional justice mechanisms that may lead to recognition, truth and reconciliation.

Is Lebanon sufficiently stable for measures of transitional justice to be implemented? The topicality of this question remains crucial. In the beginning of January 2011 several media reports pointed at a possible indictment of members of Hezbollah by the Tribunal, sparking a new political crisis in Lebanon.³⁵ Hezbollah has accused caretaker Prime Minister Saad Hariri of not being able to control the work of the tribunal. As a result, on 12 January 2011, 11 Hezbollah ministers stepped down from the Lebanese cabinet, breaking Hariri's coalition government.³⁶ A new government has been formed. A new Prime Minister, the business man Najib Azmi Mikati, was designated on 25 January 2011. Mikati is supported by Hezbollah but questioned by Sunnite and Christian constituencies.

³⁵ Reported by several media outlets. See, for instance, Al-Arabiya News of 17 January 2011: <http://www.alarabiya.net/articles/2011/01/17/133845.html>.

³⁶ Reported by several media outlets. See, for instance, Haaretz of 12 January 2011: <http://www.haaretz.com/news/international/hezbollah-ministers-quit-over-hariri-probe-toppling-lebanon-government-1.336638>.

3. Sectarianism: a political system based on the institutionalization of religious communities

In Lebanon, demography, religion, and politics are intimately connected. Religious divisions prevail in Lebanese society. There are 18 officially recognized religious groups living together in the country, most of which belong to one of two larger clusters: Muslims and Christians. Maronite Christians, Sunni Muslims, and Shiite Muslims are the three major groups that occupy the majority of political representation in Parliament.

In a series of studies conducted shortly before the last Lebanese civil war, the Lebanese-raised sociologist Halim Barakat (1973: 304) identifies seven characteristics of the fragmented Lebanese society. First, Barakat argues that *Lebanese communities have not reached a consensus on a fundamental conception of the country's identity*. Some nationalists, predominantly Christians, conceive of Lebanon as an independent and sovereign entity. On the other hand, other Lebanese, mainly Shiite Muslims emphasize their links to the Arab nation and consider the present borders of the country to be those imposed by France in 1920. Arab Christians perceive this Muslim Arabism as a hidden Islamist agenda, a new *Nahda*³⁷, which they fear.

Kassab (2006: 324) criticises this essentialist definition of identity. In the case of Islamicization, essentialism is particularly dangerous because it ignores the complexity – both historical and demographic – of Arab societies. Indeed, Arab societies witnessed secularization processes in the last centuries. Furthermore, as witnessed in Lebanon, these societies are not monolithic in religious terms. A constructivist approach to identity that considers identity to be

³⁷ Arabic term (in English, 'rise') that refers to the Arab Renaissance period from the early 19th to 20th centuries, characterized by intense debates around Arab culture, religion, society and politics.

constructed and negotiated in a historical process (Harrison 2006: 139) is preferable to an essentialist one. Kassab reminds us that essentialism is reductionist and fosters politics of uniformization:

The call for islamicization claims that Islam is the fundamental identity of Arabs, that it contains the needed answers to the pressing questions, that it is an accomplished tradition to which one can and ought to return and that it is a civilization that is distinctive and self-sufficient. Consequently, it demands a reshaping of individual and political life according to Islamic principles and a re-production of knowledge, especially social scientific knowledge on Islamic bases. (p. 330)

These Islamic movements stress particular religious practices and increase the presence of religion in the government. A mixture of religion and politics contributes to politically mobilize people along ethnic lines. These politics, in turn, cause fears among other groups that perceive danger to their identity, and even their survival as a group. This process of re-ethnicization through political movements has been studied by Saha (2006: 146) in India. He refers to the “*new religious politic paradigm*” as a variant of power politics that has emerged following ethno-social movements.

These different conceptions of the Lebanese identity were demonstrated during the ratification of the *Ta’if* Accord in September 1991, when the Lebanese parliament voted a constitutional law that incorporated the reforms of the *Ta’if* Accord into a new constitution. The aim was to reconcile the aspirations of the Arab Christians for an independent country free from external influences and the claims of the Arab Muslims about its Arab nature. As a result,

the law defined the country as “Arab in its belonging” – a notion that can be subscribed to by Christians – and “the final homeland for the Lebanese.”³⁸

According to Barakat, a second characteristic of fragmented Lebanese society is *the lack of an open and deep dialogue*. Anthropologist Fuad I. Khuri (1968) affirmed that

*The Lebanese is reserved in his communication with members of other community, tactful, polite, and tolerant..., but once in presence of members of his own community, he forgets his tolerance (...) and starts narrating jokes and stories that are harmful to the reputation of the other communities and critical of their ways of life.*³⁹ (In Barakat, 1973: 308)

This idea is prevalent in the work of Al-Mawla (2002: 1) who maintains that since the end of the last civil war the two major communities, Muslims and Christians, resort to monopolizing and manipulating ideas and sentiments in order to gain solid popular basis among Lebanese of their own faith.

A third characteristic of Lebanon is the *competing loyalty* of people to kinship and religious community and to the whole (Salem, 1967: 491; Barakat, 1973: 309; Winslow, 1996: 4)⁴⁰. After the *Ta'if*, Lebanese parties decided to solve the political crisis by establishing a Second Republic that would serve as a transition to an eventual Third Republic in which political sectarianism would be abolished. Ethno-religious communities would be represented in a Senate that would have a decisive voice only on issues affecting national character and identity. However, the 1991 *Ta'if* regime reproduced the sectarian regime with a slight change in the

³⁸ Traboulsi, Fawwaz (2007). *A History of Modern Lebanon*. Pluto Press: London, p. 224.

³⁹ Fuad I. Khuri (1968) “al-Waqi' al-ijtima' i lil-Nizam al-Ta'ifi fi Lubnan” (The social bases of the confessional system in Lebanon; my translation), in Fuad I. Khuri (ed.), *Nizam al-Ta'ifiyyah al-Si'asiyyah fi Lubnan*, (The Political Confessional System in Lebanon). Beirut: Al-Katayb Publications. In Barakat, Halim, p. 308.

⁴⁰ See also Salem, Elie “Modern Lebanon : Development without Revolution”, unpublished manuscript, p. 163. In Barakat, p. 307.

balance of power (Traboulsi, 2007: 244). The major expression of this change was the increase of Parliament seats to 128. This increase allowed for near parity in Parliament seats between Christian and Muslim parties.⁴¹

As a result of this change, the abolition of political sectarianism is no longer a national priority and has become stuck in a deadlock. The resistance to introducing basic changes emanates from the fear of upsetting the political system. This fear is a consequence of the traditionally irreconcilable visions about Lebanese identity held by Muslims and Christians. As a result, twenty years after the *Ta'if* Accord, sectarianism remains unquestioned in the Lebanese political arena. Hilal Khashan, professor of Political Sciences and Public Administration at the American University of Beirut declared recently that “sectarianism is the only institution in Lebanon, and any attempt toward secularization would mean the erosion of the whole system. (...)The political implications of secularism in Lebanon would be devastating. The entire political system is opposed to it”.⁴²

No religious group has strongly and systematically endeavoured to change the system on the basis that “the *status quo* has proved to be the least objectionable course.”⁴³ “Basing political representation in Lebanon on the numerical size of religious groups,” however, “is bound to create political instability. A host of political and socioeconomic factors could lead to changes in the demographic behaviour of groups, thereby modifying their growth rates.”⁴⁴

⁴¹ Before *Ta'if* Muslims had 39 seats in Parliament whereas Christians had 54; after *Ta'if*, Muslims had 56 seats and Christians 64.

⁴² The Daily Star Labenon. Friday, August 03, 2007. Retrived from <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/>

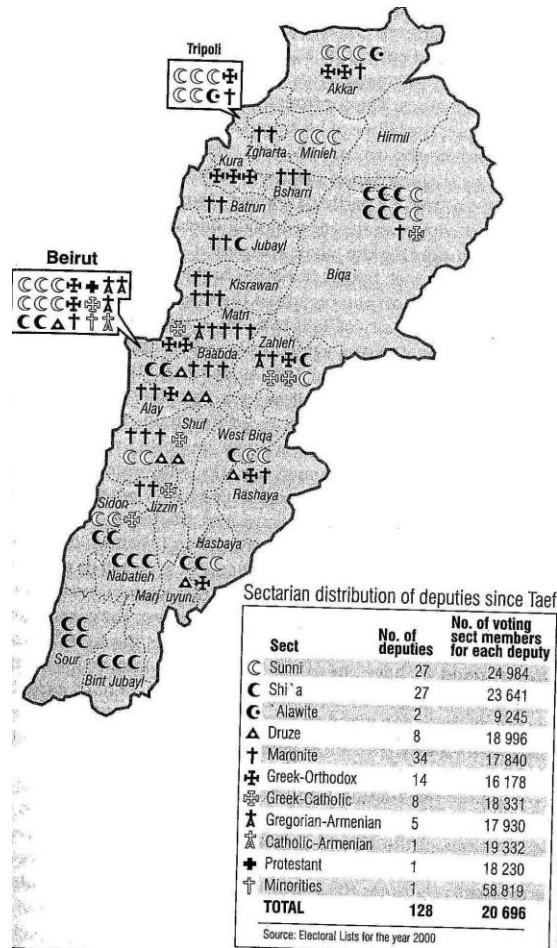
⁴³ Salem, Elie (1967). “Cabinet Politics in Lebanon” in *Middle East Journal*, 21(4), pp. 488-502.

⁴⁴ Faour, Muhammad A. (2007). Religion, Demography and Politics in Lebanon. *Middle Eastern Studies*, 43 (6), pp. 909 – 921.

Ryan (2007: 113) also warned against a sectarian system. Building new democratic structures around ethnic divisions means that the voting system does not give leaders the incentive to appeal for votes from the other community. Or it can lead to what Horowitz (1985: 586) calls the 'frozen quotas' issue, when the system breaks with changing population ratios. This provides an explanation for the refusal of political parties to publish official statistics on the demography of ethno-religious communities. The most recent demographic survey conducted in 2007 by Statistics Lebanon, a Beirut-based research firm, showed 28 percent of the population as Sunni Muslim, 28% as Shiite Muslim and 22% as Maronite Christian, accounting for 78% of the Lebanese population.

A fourth characteristic of Lebanese instability is the *geographical concentration of different religious communities that result in a geographical distribution of seats in the parliament* (map 2). The different religious communities that live and control different regions remain similar even almost 20 years after the end of the civil war.

A fifth characteristic is the *non-separation of religion from the state, and the legitimization of confessionalism*. Ethno-religious communities not only play an important role in the Lebanese political system, they also "legislate and administer the laws of personal status and manage their religious courts." (Barakat, 1973:) Each community has its own family court with jurisdiction on personal status and family law matters, some of which are governed by religious authorities outside Lebanon.



Map 2: Distribution of seats in Parliament after the *Ta'if*.⁴⁵

A sixth characteristic of Lebanese society pointed out by Barakat is the *lack of a unified educational system* which is a major factor of instability in Lebanon. This aspect will be tackled in the next two chapters of this thesis. The final characteristic complements the first one. *Each ethno-religious community has different and conflicting reference groups.* Christian Lebanese, especially Maronites “have looked up to the Western nations for protection, inspiration and education.” (Barakat, 1973:317) In contrast, Muslim Lebanese have done the same with the

⁴⁵ Source: Traboulsi, Fawwaz (2007). *A History of Modern Lebanon*. London: Pluto Press, p. 241.

Arab nation. Seeking the support and protection from two apparently competing groups has led to continued crossed accusations and mistrust.

The presence of these characteristics in Lebanese society represents a challenge to those who seek social and political unity. A structural change that may lead to lasting stability will arguably need a comprehensive plan of action supported by main stakeholders including political parties and religious communities. Furthermore, these seven conditions constitute the background in which a proposed reform of the educational system should take place. This reform of the educational system needs to go hand in hand with socio-political reform. In the next chapter, I will highlight the links between education, religion and politics. I will describe how socio-political interests affect education and show how religion in education influences socio-political life.

CHAPTER 3

RELIGION IN THE LEBANESE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

In this chapter, I will discuss three major aspects of the Lebanese educational system, namely the history and the current status of confessional schools; the evolution in the teaching of RE in public and private confessional schools; and the contributions of RE to students' socialization. Moreover, the use of education by ethno-religious communities in confessional schools to promote sectarianism and the teaching of RE in both confessional and public schools will be presented as topics that need to be addressed (see Inati, 1999: 60; Abouchedid, Nasser and Van Blommestein, 2002: 61).

1. Confessional schools yesterday and today

Beckett (1996), Tannous (1997) and Inati (1999) blame the Lebanese educational system for contributing to the 1975 civil war. They criticize the existence in the country of two parallel educational systems – public and private – and the lack of governmental commitment to change this situation. This situation is certainly problematic. The government has no supervision over private schools and has not established a sufficient number of public schools to counterbalance the views of private schools until quite recently (mid 1950s). Salem also criticises the Lebanese government for its lax approach to creating a unified educational system and claims that the lack of universal educational materials is “largely responsible for the lack of political unity and cultural integrity” (Salem, 1967: 238).

The history of confessional schools in Lebanon dates back to the Ottoman-French Concordat of 1516. During the Ottoman rule, Suleiman the Magnificent allowed France to introduce Western philosophies of Education in the Middle East. Later, during the rule of Ibrahim Pasha (1831-1840), the first missionary schools were founded by both the Jesuits and Protestants. These confessional schools gained momentum under the French Mandate of Lebanon (1920-1943) when religious communities were entrusted with education affairs. This situation would not change until the independence of Lebanon in 1946 (Khalil, 1962: 96).

The first independent Lebanese government tried to delete the cultural imprints of the French Mandate and subjected confessional schools to the supervision of the Ministry of Education. However, political disagreements over this topic and other issues of national identity culminated in the 1958 civil war that froze any attempt to reform the education system. The 1958 war consisted in a series of local, uncoordinated outburst of violence between supporters and opponents of Camille Chamoun, Christian President of Lebanon from 1952 to 1958. Chamoun's alignment with Western powers instead of Nasser's Arabism was seen as a form of "Lebanonism" by some and as a betrayal of the Arab cause by others (Winslow, 1996: 110). In contrast to the 1975 civil war, the 1958 civil war did not question the distribution of power and the system itself, but only a particular government.

During the 1975 civil war, confessional schools played an important role. Despite the violent clashes between ethno-religious communities, most of these schools remained operative and rendered important services to Lebanese society, which enhanced their reputation in the country as a whole.

After the 1975 civil war, the reform of the educational system became a political priority. The government committed itself to stronger supervision of private teaching institutions and to reform of public schools and their curricula. This reform of the educational system came into force in 1995 with the “*al-Haykaliyya al-Ta’lim*” (“framework for education”), followed by the reform of the curricula in 1997. This “framework for education” established several goals for education including compulsory education universally available at the elementary level; academic freedom in universities; protection of private schools combined with greater control over teaching and curricula; adaptation of public, vocational and technological teaching to the new requirements of Lebanese society; and development of curricula in ways that “promote national belonging (*Al-Īntima’*) and integration (*Al-Īnsihar*), spiritual and cultural openness, and unity of textbooks in history and civics” (Inati, 1999: 60).

According to Gallagher (1999) and Bush and Saltarelli (2000), education can contribute significantly to peacebuilding and reconciliation in post-conflict countries. Indeed, after a civil war, education assists democracy and social cohesion in many different ways including sensitizing societies to inequities in the system and fostering tolerance and inter-group understanding. Moreover, education can promote healing and reconciliation and nurture the idea and capacity for peace. Education also has the potential to nurture and integrate individuals within society. That is the main reason scholars, practitioners and politicians direct special attention to educational systems, especially in ethnically divided societies such as Lebanon (Fountain, 1999: 2; Bush and Saltarelli, 2000: 8; McGlynn, 2004: 87).

It is for the same reasons that after the 1975-1991 civil war, the government started to promote a more competitive public educational system. However, the prestige of private

schools, together with the considerable lack of public schools, made the former essential in providing schooling for an increasing number of Lebanese students.

As a result, currently, almost two thirds of Lebanese students are enrolled in private schools. These private schools can be divided into three main groups: subsidized (usually by foreign religious congregations); tuition-based directed by international institutions, mainly American and French; and tuition-based directed by Christian missionaries both Catholic and Protestant and Muslim organizations (there are no official numbers). The latter two groups recruit the highest percentage of students in the Lebanese educational system. As can be seen in Table 1, according to the statistics of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education of Lebanon, 66.24% of Lebanese students attend private primary schools.

	Public Schools	Subsidized Private Schools	Tuition-based Private Schools	UNRWA⁴⁶	Total
Number of students	285 499	126 812	497 530	32 650	942 391
Percentage	30.29%	13.45%	52.79%	3.46%	100%

Table 1: Total number and percentage of students in the academic year 2009-2010.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) was created to assist registered Palestine refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and the occupied Palestinian territory. Part of their mandate includes the provision of education. Palestinians are often denied access to Lebanese public education (especially secondary education).

⁴⁷ Source: Ministry of Education and Higher Education of Lebanon. Data in Arabic retrieved from http://www.crdp.org/CRDP/Arabic/ar-statistics/STAT_AR/2009_2010/PDF09_10/Tables_10/Students_10/Page10_10.pdf

Most Lebanese families are critical of Lebanon’s public school system, and stretch budgets thin to keep their children in private schools. Regardless of the efforts by the Lebanese government to promote the public educational system, enrolment in private schools has increased in recent years. If we compare the percentages of students in private institutions in the academic year 2000-2001 (table 2) to those in 2009-2010 (table 1), we can see two phenomena: a considerable diminution in the total number of students in public schools and an increase of 4.24% in the percentage of student who go to private schools:

	Public Schools	Subsidized Private Schools⁴⁸	Tuition-based Private Schools	Total
Number of students	347 498	111 200	432 822	891 520
Percentage	38.98%	12.47%	48.55%	100%

Table 2: Total number and percentage of students in the academic year 2000-2001.⁴⁹

Those numbers show that parents increasingly prefer private education for their children. Although the Ministry of Education has been promoting public education, these efforts, according to these numbers, have not paid off.

Table 3 shows that the majority of high school students, 51.32%, attend tuition-based private secondary schools. Several factors account for this slight increase in the proportion of

⁴⁸ Statistics included UNRWA schools in the category of Subsidized Schools until 2003-2004.

⁴⁹Source: Ministry of Education and Higher Education of Lebanon. Data in Arabic retrieved from http://www.crdp.org/CRDP/Arabic/ar-statistics/STAT_AR/2000-2001/PDF/JADAWIL/ELEVES/P10.PDF

students in public schools as they move up in the schooling system. First, free private schools do not offer secondary education which leads to an increase in public school enrolment rate. Second, public institutions are the option taken by students who want to obtain the Lebanese Baccalaureate Certificate of Secondary Education (*Shahādat Al-Bakāluriyya al Lubnāniyya lil-Ta'lim al-Thānawiy*) or the Technical Baccalaureate (*Al-Bakāluriyya al-Fanniya*). International Private Secondary Schools usually offer the French Baccalaureate or the International Baccalaureate.

	Public Schools	Subsidized Private Schools	Tuition-based Private Schools	UNWRA	Total
Number of students	56 048	0	62 674	3 397	122 118
Percentage	45.9%	0%	51.32%	2.78%	100%

Table 3: Total number and percentage of students in secondary education in 2009-2010.⁵⁰

The percentages of students attending tuition-based private schools increase considerably in the Greater Beirut Area,⁵¹ where almost 3 out of 4 students attend private schools in Beirut representing 52% of the total population attending tuition-based private schools (Table 4).⁵² The divide between private and public education appears clear in Beirut. It will be important to

⁵⁰ Source: Ministry of Education and Higher Education of Lebanon. Data in Arabic retrieved from http://www.crdp.org/CRDP/Arabic/ar-statistics/STAT_AR/2009_2010/PDF09_10/Tables_10/Students_10/Page12_10.pdf.

⁵¹ Greater Beirut Area includes Beirut and suburbs of Beirut in Mont Lebanon.

⁵² See section "Table of Schools" for a complete list of the 509 private schools in the Great Beirut Area.

keep in mind the preference for private education when making the comparative analysis about segregated education and religious diversity in chapters 5 and 6.

	Public Schools	Subsidized Private Schools	Tuition-based Private Schools	UNWRA	Total
Number of students	48 086	29 632	225 638	5450	308 811
Percentage	15.57%	9.6%%	73.07%	1.76%	100%

Table 4: Number and percentage of students in the Greater Beirut Area in 2009-2010.⁵³

The existence of private confessional schools in Lebanon is not negative in and of itself. National integration can be promoted if school children are socialized along national unity rather than sectarian lines (Abouchedid, 2002: 61). Theoretically this can occur in both private and public schools. Starrett and Abdella (2007: 21) directed a comparative analysis of state-sponsored Islamic RE textbooks used in different countries of the Middle East (Egypt, Iran, Jordan, Kuwait, Oman, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Syria and Turkey) and concluded that promotion of values such as tolerance or inter-faith dialogue in state-controlled schools depended on the textbooks, the affiliation of the school itself, and especially on particular teachers. As part of that study, Toronto and Eissa (2007: 27) analysed the curriculum of RE in Egypt and found that Islamic education played an important role in the government's efforts to achieve political stability and social harmony (see also Starret, 2008). Furthermore, they found out that formal

⁵³ Source: Ministry of Education and Higher Education of Lebanon. Data in Arabic retrieved from http://www.crdp.org/CRDP/Arabic/ar-statistics/STAT_AR/2009_2010/PDF09_10/Tables_10/Students_10/Page15_10.pdf

education only represents a small part of students' religious socialization. These extensive studies of textbooks and teaching of RE confirm findings of numerous studies in Northern Ireland, as analysed in chapter 5.

Schools have a "hidden curriculum" that is transmitted in youth organizations, social services, teachers, and mosque/church-sponsored activities. (Toronto and Eissa, 2007: 28) Indeed, numerous Lebanese private confessional schools seem to have a political agenda and to exert influence on political socialization of youth (Messarra, 2004: 109). Abouchedid, Nasser and Van Blommestein (2002: 64) show that after the 1989 *Ta'if* agreement and the implementation of the new "framework for education," students in confessional schools have continued to be exposed to conflicting patterns of political socialization along ethno-religious lines. This has been possible due to the autonomy of schools in choosing what is taught and how. An example of this freedom is the existence of different history textbooks. Abouchedid et al. studied seven history textbooks from schools controlled by different ethno-religious communities⁵⁴ and interviewed history teachers. In their study, they found, for instance, conflicting interpretations of the creation of Greater Lebanon under the French Mandate in 1920; the presentation of the culture of Lebanon as diverse or Arab in nature; and diverse biases against certain communities (pp. 72 – 74).

Accordingly, Said Ghorayeb, a former teacher at the Sagesse High School and the American Community School in Beirut, believes that "a political agenda is especially being put

⁵⁴ *The Pictured History* in Cedar School (Maronite); *Modern Scientific History* in Beech School (Greek Orthodox); *The Complete in History* in Elm School (Armenian Orthodox); *The Pictured History* in Ash school (Sunnite); *The Enlightening History* in Yew School (Shiite); *Pictured History* in Oak school (Druze); and *The Complete in History* in Pine School (Protestant). In Abouchedid et al. (2002: 72).

forward by schools affiliated with the Christian party of the Lebanese Forces (“*al-quwat al-lubnāniyya*”) and to the Shiite party of Hezbollah – these are *Al-Mahdi* schools.”⁵⁵ Both School Boards are supported and financed by political parties. An example of their influence is evident in the over one hundred *Al-Mahdi* schools and educational institutes managed by the Islamic Association for Education and Teaching, dependent on Hezbollah⁵⁶. Other schools, however, have strict policies against political indoctrination. Hariri Schools, dependent on the Hariri Foundation, for instance, are Sunni Muslim majority schools in which teachers are not allowed to talk about politics (Bassam Al-Hafi, 16 March 2011.)⁵⁷

Politicization of education can happen in different ways. Messarra (2004: 109) lists several examples including Muslim schools that defy the law and open on Christmas Day, which is an official holiday in Lebanon; that act against ministerial decisions on RE; or that devote one classroom exclusively for religious activities and prayer⁵⁸. Public statements by politicians accusing schools of indoctrination also create unease among ethno-religious communities⁵⁹. Political interference in education is found often with respect to the curricula. In October 2009, the Beirut International College (BIC), one of Lebanon’s most renowned private schools, was accused of manipulation by Hezbollah. BIC is an institution founded in 1891 in Smyrna, Turkey, by Reverend Alexander MacLachlan, a Canadian educator and member of the American Board

⁵⁵ Phone interview on 12 December 2010. Quoted with permission.

⁵⁶ For more information see *Al-Mahdi* schools website (in Arabic) <http://www.almahdischools.org/newsite/>

⁵⁷ Personal communication with Bassam Al-Hafi via email. Al-Hafi studied at Hariri II High School and is currently student a at the American University of Beirut. Email of 16 March 2011.

⁵⁸ Press release from eight Islamic associations published in *L’Orient-Le jour* of 1 October 1998

⁵⁹ Speech of former President of Lebanon, Elias Hraoui at the Palace of the UNESCO in 29 September 1998.

of Commissioners for Foreign Missions.⁶⁰ BIC moved to Beirut in 1936 at the invitation of the American University of Beirut.⁶¹ Despite its Christian origins, BIC is currently an independent secular institution that provides a progressive education. BIC was opened, like many other institutions, with the economic support of the US. “According to Philip Hitti, the distinguished historian, from 1820 to 1959 the United States alone, largely through missionary groups, footed a bill of about \$400 million.” (Miller, 1969: 6) This economic support is seen by Miller as a way to put forward a pro-American agenda in the region.

The BIC controversy with Hezbollah was caused by the US textbook entitled *Modern World History*. The book which was used in the BIC defined Hezbollah, Hamas and Islamic Jihad as terrorist organizations. Hezbollah-owned television Al-Manar spoke extensively about it, creating a national debate around the issue. After pressure from Hezbollah MP Mohammed Fneish , Imad al-Ashkar, head of private education for the ministry of education, demanded that BIC plaster opaque stickers over pages of the textbook to hide those contents.⁶² According to al-Ashkar, the controversial parts of the book have already been hidden totally.⁶³ The controversy is no longer in the media.

⁶⁰ The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) was the first American Christian Mission. Formed by Congregationalists in Massachusetts, the ABCFM gathered Presbyterian, Dutch-Reformed and other denominational members. After merging with missions of other Christians denominations in the last century, it became the United Church Board for World Ministries (UCBWM), an organism of the United Church.

⁶¹ See IBC website <http://www.ic.edu.lb/>

⁶² This demand was reported in *Now Lebanon* in 25 October 2009. Retrieved from <http://www.nowlebanon.com/NewsArchiveDetails.aspx?page=3&ID=122101&MID=0&PID=0&FParentID=0&FFParentID=0>

⁶³ Ibid.

Another aspect of a dual educational system about which scholars take different views is the segregation of students. No official data are available regarding the religious affiliation of students in private schools. However, according to Osberg (2008), Catholic schools “enrol students from all communities, whether adjacent, distant, Christian or Muslim. In many parts of Lebanon, they [Catholic schools] represent the last forum where Christian and Muslim youth meet and grow up knowing one another.”⁶⁴ Accordingly, Camille Zeidan, former Secretary General of the Episcopal Commission of the Catholic School Board underscored that “in some of (their) schools, non Christians account for 90% of the pupils.” This situation is especially true in Christian private schools. In the Beirut Greater Area and Tripoli, where the proportion of the major religious groups remain equal, approximately half of the students in Christian private schools are Maronites and half are Sunni Muslims.⁶⁵

However, with the exception of Beirut and Tripoli, the ethnic distribution in the country is very clearly delimited. According to Soffer (1986) “it is assumed that no major changes in the ethnographic map of Lebanon have occurred since 1932” (Soffer, 1986: 202). In other words, scholars believe that no ethnic group has infiltrated the area of any other in any significant way. That is why, in the countryside and smaller towns where the population is either majority Christian, Muslim or Druze, schools tend to be more homogeneous. For instance, schools are mainly Shiite Muslim in the South, Druze in the Shuf Region and Greek Catholic and Maronite in the Bekaa Valley.

⁶⁴ Osberg, Spencer (2008). Pillars of Lebanon: Catholic Schools Buttress a Diverse Nation. *CNEWA Magazine*, 34 (3). Retrieved from <http://www.cnewa.org/mag-article-bodypg-ca.aspx?articleID=3329>

⁶⁵ This information was provided to me face to face by the representative of education at the Embassy of Lebanon in Canada on 2 March 2010.

2. Teaching of Religious Education

In the educational effort to promote integration and democracy, Religious Education (RE) has been a controversial subject in Lebanon. Teaching of RE has followed two different routes in private and public schools. Private schools have enjoyed *de facto* freedom to establish their own curricula. Indeed, one of the big challenges faced by the Lebanese is the right of different ethno-religious communities to own and operate private universities and schools with their own pedagogical objectives with little or no control from the state. This lack of control allows ethno-religious communities to teach material that contradicts that taught by other ethno-religious communities (Inati, 1999: 56).

In the last few decades, on the other hand, public schools have dealt with RE in different ways. Messarra (2004: 102) identified four main stages in the institutional debate about RE in public schools. The first stage begins after the reform introduced between 1968 and 1971. RE was then taught one hour per week as a compulsory subject. Contents were established by the respective ethno-religious communities. In 1995, the Educational Center for Research and Development, reporting to the Ministry of Education, appointed a commission responsible for the development of common textbooks for Muslims and Christians. The commission proposed teaching Muslim and Christian confessional RE one day per week in primary education, and teaching common RE for both Muslims and Christians one day per week in secondary education. Negotiations were, however, blocked by the ethno-religious communities who claimed their right to confessional RE in both primary and secondary education.

Shortly after this breakdown in negotiation, *Al-Haykaliyya Al-Ta'lim* (framework for education) was introduced. The controversial document stated that religious communities

cannot be denied the right to have their own schools and to teach their religion. It added that one of the objectives of secondary education is to prepare the student for “understanding the essence of religion and its role in the spiritual, moral and human integration of the individual.” (*Al-Haykaliyya Al-Ta’lim*, 1995: 53) This proposal entailed the teaching of both Islam and Christianity to all students, Muslims, Christians, Jewish or Druze. As the former President of Lebanon, the Maronite M. Elias El-Hraoui stated at UNESCO: “the freedom of teaching, guaranteed by the constitution, does not mean anarchy, not that education is a luxury or merchandise. We want that education contributes to spread respect and equality, and to strengthen the victory of citizenship over the confessional dissensions” (cited in Khalifé, 2005: 151). Developing citizens to become more conscious of the importance of coexistence was key to *Al-Haykaliyya* although “the pedagogical and didactic means to achieve these objectives were never mentioned.” (Haddad, 1998: 71; my translation). However, the dispositions of *al-Haykaliyya* were never implemented due to the great opposition of ethno-religious communities to this multi-faith approach to RE.

The second stage in the national debate over RE is a consequence of the new framework for education and the opposition of ethno-religious communities to multi-faith RE. As a result of this opposition, Decree n. 10227 of 8 May 1997 suppressed RE from public schools.⁶⁶ This decision created an even stronger controversy among ethno-religious communities each claiming their right to confessional RE even in public schools. The government then accepted the teaching of Islam on Fridays and Christianity on Sundays in public schools. It also decided to reduce the teaching of RE to two hours per week and make it optional for students in private

⁶⁶ See <http://alshahed.free-forums.org/vt4019.html> (in Arabic).

schools. That ministerial order was strongly opposed by the ethno-religious communities because it interfered in RE in confessional schools.

As a result, and this is a third stage in the controversy over RE, the order to eliminate RE in public schools was withdrawn in the Decree n. 1847 of 12 June 1999. It was followed by Decree n.5 of 11 October 1999 that increased the number of hours of RE per week in private schools, with the condition that a common textbook be used in public schools (Khalifé, 2005: 153). The new law would allow public schools to teach confessional RE in primary education with a complementary module about the other religion, and require the use of a common textbook in secondary education.

A final stage is the status quo that remains in place since Decree n.5 of 11 October 1999. In 2002, a commission of twelve Muslim and Christian clergy started working on the development of multi-faith material for RE to be used in public schools (as stated previously, private schools have their own confessional materials). At present, there is no official information regarding the status of this new RE material and Islam and Christianity are still being taught separately in public schools on Sundays and Fridays.

3. Do values promoted by RE in private confessional schools enhance communitarism?

Although the state now controls the core aspects of all subjects except for RE, private schools are free to establish a substantial part of the curriculum for all subjects. The curriculum of RE in private schools is solely determined by religious authorities. In some cases, courses

consist of sermons based on biblical texts or recitations of the Qurān⁶⁷ or the Ḥadith⁶⁸. In other cases, different materials are used, especially when a political agenda is being pursued, as stated above. Regarding the obligation to attend RE classes, there are also different positions. For instance, at the Sagesse High School Muslim students are not obliged to attend RE classes but they must participate in extracurricular religious activities or even in the weekly mass (Said Ghorayeb, 12 December 2010).⁶⁹

Different scholars hold different positions regarding the influence that RE has in educating individuals about respect and pluralism. Abouchedid et al. (2000) studied the role of religion in confessional schools. Their research was conducted in seven private-run confessional schools during the school years 1999/2000 and 2000/2001. One of their goals was “to analyse whether the school policies and practices pertaining to religious instruction and history teaching were conducive to the fostering of multi-faith understanding among schoolchildren” (p.67). They conducted several interviews with teachers, educational decision-makers and administered questionnaires to 236 students. In their school sample, analysis of RE was limited to four schools, Ash, Yew, Cedar and Pine (Sunni, Shiite, Catholic, and Protestant respectively).

⁶⁷ Following romanization tables of the American Library Association and the Library of Congress (ALA-LC), the preferred spelling for the holy book of Muslims will be ‘Qurān’. Other forms of transcription use Qur’an, Koran, or Al-Qurān.

⁶⁸ “Ḥadith” – or in English, ‘story’ or ‘comment’ refers to exceptional and exemplary words pronounced by Muhammad himself. In contrast to the Qurān – the word of God dictated by the Archangel Gabriel to Muhammad, not all the hadith are considered relevant to the Muslim faith. Depending on the reliability of the chain of transmitters, each hadith enjoys more or less authority. The different relations between them and the Qurān originate the numerous legal schools in Islam. Each legal school gives more relevance to a certain set of hadith that complement the contents of the Qurān. For more information see Amir-Moezzi, Mohammad A. (2007). *Dictionnaire du Coran*. Robert Laffont: Paris, p. 379.

⁶⁹ Phone interview on 12 December 2010. Quoted with permission.

They concluded that the four schools lacked multi-faith understanding policies, such as celebrating festivities of other religions. In addition, contents regarding other religions were absent from the curriculum in order to avoid conflict (p. 76). Abouchedid, Nasser and Van Blommestein concluded that communities are not yet prepared to deal with the challenges of pluralism through their educational practices.

Messarra (2004: 105), however, holds a different view warning against exaggerating either the role of schools in the constitution of a citizenship identity, or the polarization along communitarian lines. It cannot be concluded that schools induce behaviours whether compatible or incompatible with conviviality, tolerance or dialogue, through an examination of the composition of school population, the structure of the educational system or even the textbooks. Other indicators to consider include the place of the institution in the country's cultural debate; the existence of discrimination against students; the content of researchers and professors' work; and the level of independence of schools from political forces and the sectarian political game.

In addition, Messarra notes that confessional colleges such as Notre-Dame de Jamhour (Catholic institution founded in 1843 by the Jesuits), Saint-Joseph d'Antoura (Catholic institution founded in 1934 by the Congregation of the Lazarists), College Mont La Salle (Catholic institution founded by the Brother of the Christian Schools – SALLE), *Makassed* (Muslim institution founded in 1878 by the conservative *Makassed* Philanthropic Islamic Association of Beirut), etc.,⁷⁰ have made great contributions to a culture of peace. However,

⁷⁰ Jopin, Émilie (1956). *Le Révérend Père Sarloutte (une belle figure de missionnaire du Levant)*. Préface par le Général Weygand, La colombe, p. 236; Hachem, Victor (1998). *Mémoire d'une école : L'institution Saint-Anne des Sœurs de Besançon*. Beirut; Bassam, Tourbah, (2000). *La mission jésuite: valeurs et engagement*. L'Orient-Le Jour;

Messarra also acknowledges one problematic aspect of RE. Students who study together during the day become divided when RE courses take place. This “ideology of the difference” (Messarra, p. 106) has been challenged many times by students who attend the other group’s RE classes to learn about the other religion or merely because they are curious. This interest in other religions which has been also documented by Abouchédid et al. (2002) and Chrabieh (2009) will be discussed in chapter 6.

Khalifé, a teacher at the Lycée Franco-Libanais established in 1909 by the French Lay mission (Mission Laïque Française), studied the role that religion plays in education in the Lebanese private and public schools. His research does not consider Abouchédid et al.’s (2002) or Messarras’s (2004) work, showing the lack of a coherent body of research on the topic. Khalifé (2005) conducted his research in nineteen schools throughout nineteen different communities and sought to describe the intervention of the religious communities in the school community in Lebanon. The comparative study concluded that, while Christian and Muslim schools transmitted common values, they also imparted very conflictive ones (Khalifé, 2005). As a result, education promotes a plurality of Lebanese identities. Students therefore have different values and visions regarding contemporary problems. These visions are influenced by politics. Khalifé (2005: 157) noted that if religious leaders’ interventions in political life affected the educational context, then education aimed to influence students’ political visions. Indeed, according to Khalifé, Christian schools emphasize the specificities and superiority of Christians while Muslim schools are reactionary and load education with political content.

Hachem, Victor (2003). *Antoura de 1657 à nos jours (Une histoire du Liban)*. Ministère Libanais de la culture: Antoura . Liban, p. 334.

To sum up, certain particularities of the Lebanese educational system have been identified as contributing to conflict (Beckett, 1996; Tannous, 1997; Inati, 1999). Lebanon has a large number of confessional schools controlled by different ethno-religious communities. These schools have considerable autonomy to set the curricula and their ethos. In addition, the lack of control of the government over the curricula, particularly over history and RE has been identified as a major problem (Abouchedid et al., 2002). Although the links between school ethos and religious and political socialization of students remain unclear (Messarra, 2004), the diversity of schools and curricula subjects students to competing socialization processes. This situation appears at odds with the goal of building a sense of the Lebanese (Abouchedid et al, 2002; Khalifé, 2005) that prioritizes a sense of national belonging over communitarism. In the next chapter, peacebuilding and psycho-social theories will be explored that stress the factors that make education a tool for dialogue and reconciliation instead of polarization and conflict.

CHAPTER 4

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS AND THE ROLE OF EDUCATION IN PEACEBUILDING

This chapter discusses different theoretical frameworks about peacebuilding that may help analyse the role that religion plays in education in Lebanon. Peacebuilding, as stated in the introduction to this thesis, refers to the set of initiatives to strengthen and solidify peace in post-conflict societies in order to avoid a relapse into conflict. Three main approaches that consider the role of education in peacebuilding will be discussed in this chapter, namely conflict transformation, psycho-social theories and the peace education approach.

First, I will emphasize the importance of structural factors and power relations within institutions in order for peace efforts to be fruitful. Violence can always re-erupt in post-conflict societies when structural transformation does not take place. However, in peacebuilding, structural change needs to be coupled with a transformation of both interpersonal and intergroup relationships. With Lederach (1997: 24), I will be an advocate of the so-called transformative approach. Conflict transformation will be introduced as an emerging field that underscores contact and interaction between individuals belonging to different groups (wether normal people or leaders), cooperative learning and reconciliation as major vehicles for the creation of an “infrastructure of peace.”

Secondly, social psychology theories (Volkan, 1990, 1997; Sandy, Boardman and Deutsch's, 2006; Sandole and Lounsberry, 2009) applied to ethnic-conflicts and their educational implications will be discussed. Education plays an essential role in addressing stereotypes and negative emotions between members of different communities. These theories help us analyse the influence of integrated/segregated education in bridging the gap

between ethno-religious communities. Accordingly, they offer the framework to understand the positive or negative impact that RE can have in reconciliation.

Third, I will explain why the contribution of human rights, citizenship, intercultural, religious or peace education alone is not enough for the prevention of conflict. A comprehensive approach to peace education in the framework of peacebuilding efforts and its links to RE will be explored.

1. Conflict transformation: from structural to relational transformation

Galtung (1965, 1975) and Curle (1971) emphasize the necessary reform of structural factors and power relations within institutions to enhance peacebuilding efforts in post-conflict societies. To succeed these efforts must also affect the educational system.

Mitchell (1981: 51) advocates for a more comprehensive approach. In his classical hermeneutical triangle, Mitchell argues that conflicts within institutions are comprised of three interrelated components, namely *conflict situations*, *conflict behaviours*, and *conflict attitudes and perceptions*. The interaction of social values, structures and perceptions lead to the perception of mutually incompatible goals that create a *conflict situation*. *Conflict behaviours* refer to the actions undertaken by one party in a conflict situation with the intention of making the other party modify its goals. Finally, *conflict attitudes* refer to “those psychological states (both common attitudes, emotions and evaluations, as well as patterns of perception and misperception) that frequently accompany and arise from involvement in a situation of conflict” (Mitchell, 1981: 27). These three factors are extremely relevant to educational institutions in post-conflict societies. Promotion of reconciliation and peace will have to address

all three of these intertwined factors. To promote reconciliation it is especially important to be aware of the relationship between individuals' needs and structural factors. If structures are not meeting those needs, peacebuilding efforts are not sustainable.

The persistence of protracted conflicts has made analysts aware of the limitations of conventional approaches to conflict settlement. Peacebuilding efforts have not always promoted a radical change but a mere re-establishment of the *status quo* (Ryan, 2007: 12). This failure together with other factors has stimulated a progressive shift of paradigm from peacebuilding to conflict transformation. Other factors include the emergence of extensive literature on peacebuilding by international agencies since 1992 (see, for instance, Kumar, 1997; Maynard, 1998; Cousens et al. 2001); and, the limitations of traditional peacebuilding in promoting social change in the non-violent revolutions in Central and Eastern Europe in 1989 and in the cases of Serbia, Lebanon, Ukraine and Georgia. Leatherman et al. (1999: 73) refer to the need for paradigm change by stating that:

the limitations of diplomacy to achieve durable peaceful outcomes to contemporary conflicts and to prevent others from turning violent, means there needs to be innovation in traditional ideas and practice. We need to go beyond containment of violence and negotiation, to transform social injustices, perceptions, cultural tensions, deep rooted hatreds and issues of institutional legitimacy.

The transformative approach pays special attention to the attitudinal factor. It “focuses on the restoration and building of [interpersonal and intergroup] relationships” in peacebuilding processes (Lederach, 1997: 24). Reconciliation after a violent conflict is challenging because members of a group still have negative emotions, mistrust, prejudice and feelings of hatred towards the other. Lederach argues that for reconciliation to happen, conflicting parties must transform these feelings and see each other as equal human beings. This will only come from

interaction that allows for the transformation of relations complemented with equally necessary structural changes. Thus, the first characteristic of the transformative approach is that it implies a deep transformation in the parties, in their relationships and in the situation that created the conflict. The last represents the deepest level of change in the conflict resolution process. Lederach (1997: 20, 82-83) refers to this transformation as “sustainable reconciliation” that can only be achieved when the political, economic and psychological dimensions of transformation are addressed.

A second feature of the transformative approach is that it understands conflict as dynamic in nature (Ryan, 2007: 22). Transformation is not achieved once and for all because “conflict is not a simple nor linear process involving predictable stages or cycles – rather it is dynamic, changeable and often unpredictable” (Galtung, 1996 and Lederach 1997, in Smith, 2007: 23).

Third, conflict transformation moves beyond immediate conflicting issues to explore the wider cultural background to the conflict. Galtung (1997: 10) states that to “transform you may have to expand the conflict away from immediate issues to underlying problems.”

Finally, deep transformation is a long process, or as Galtung (1997: 16) puts it “for a deep transformation to emerge, some creativity has to be forthcoming, and the more creative a new idea, the more time will be needed for people to get used to the idea. The price paid for creativity is that people need time to get used to new ideas, and even more time to implement them.”

The concept of transformation, despite its increasing relevance in the literature, is a complex and problematic idea for several reasons. First, the term transformation is ill-defined

and can be understood in many different ways. Indeed, there is an important psychological component to transformation that is not described by these theorists. Second, this lack of a precise definition of what transformation is and entails makes it difficult to implement effective transformation strategies. This adds to the lack of human and economic resources, political will and even creativity that represent great challenges to sustainable conflict transformation efforts. Third, transformation can represent a subtle form of cultural imperialism. Lederach (1995: 79) notes that “any practitioner entering a conflict situation in some other culture with an eye toward transformation or peacebuilding must have a formidable amount of substantive knowledge about the other culture.” A fourth criticism refers to the transformation of intercommunal conflicts. Deep structural changes – either political, economic or educational – can result in greater insecurity, especially for those who feel that the status quo best protects their political, economic and identity interests. In Lebanon, changes in the political system as well as the educational system have been opposed by political parties and ethno-religious communities respectively. The prospect of change is perceived as a threat. Thus:

a social reconstruction which is radical and, because radical, prolonged, is bound to uproot and disorient very large numbers of people, thereby creating widespread psychological as well as material adversity, and one must expect at least some people to oppose measures that threaten them with these effects. (Magee, 1985: 104)

Methods to manage those insecurities will need to be developed. The quality and prestige of leaders will be essential in this regard. Nonetheless, I believe that a more modest approach to transformation will lead to more effective changes. As Horowitz says:

Between the naïveté of those who would abolish ethnic differences in short order through ‘nation-building’, the cynicism of those who would simply suppress those differences, and the pessimism of those who would counsel costly and disruptive partition as the only way out – between these shoals,

there lurk passages that are at once less dramatic, less visionary, and more realistic ... there is much more scope for constructive policy innovation in the area of ethnic conflict than policymaker in divided societies have generally acknowledged. (Horowitz, 1985: 599)

A last relevant framework for this study is Ramsbotham's framework for post-conflict peacebuilding. Ramsbotham proposes three shortfalls in peacebuilding processes that must be addressed: "political/constitutional incapacity; economic/social debilitation; and psychological incapacity." (Ramsbotham in Mani, 2001: 17) The first two would refer to structural changes and the last one to building relationships and reconciliation.

Regarding the political/constitutional incapacity, Lebanon faces a crossroads: will there be an evolution from the current sectarianism as a political model to a more integrated liberal democracy in which religion and politics remain separated? As stated in chapter 2, this was a central matter during the 1989 *Ta'if* agreement negotiations. Other political issues include foreign interference in national politics, from Syria and Iran or Israel, the United States and France; the presence of Hezbollah's militias in the southern part of the country which challenges the monopoly by the state over instruments of violence – essential in a process of democratization (Ayoob, 2001: 137); and finally, the tragic situation of the Palestinian refugees that is not only a problem of human rights but also a question of national stability. This is the reason why the right to return to Palestine has been repeatedly claimed by the Lebanese authorities, political parties and ethno-religious communities.

In regards to the economic/social debilitation, the major challenges for Lebanon include the creation of a sustainable economy; the reduction of poverty and debt (Lebanon is the fourth largest holder of debt in the world in percentage of its GDP); the removal of corruption, arbitrary licensing decisions, high taxes, archaic legislation, and weak intellectual property

rights. Those measures may reduce the high rates of unemployment (CIA Factbook, 2009) and facilitate the reform of the educational system mentioned in chapter 3.

Finally, Ramsbotham refers to psychological incapacity as an inability to establish normalized relationships with members of the other community. Vamik Volkan (1990), from the psychoanalytical school, explains the role that defensive mechanisms such as externalization, projection and displacement play in ethnic relations. He concludes that, in ethnic conflicts, the psychological component is as important as or more so than the economic, military and historical issues. The transformative approach acknowledges the importance of the psychological component in building relationships, but avoids falling into psychologism.

2. Psycho-social theories

In order to understand reconciliation processes in the framework of conflict transformation approaches, I will mention first the psychodynamic theory that offers interesting insights about the role of past experiences in relation to present life. According to the psychodynamic school, when an individual has left a conflict unresolved, he becomes anxious about the solution of a current one. Sandy, Boardman and Deutsch (2006: 294-296) give the example of a student who is anxious about his poor intellectual abilities and instead of studying harder, avoids studying as a defence mechanism – to avoid his personal limitations. Avoidance leads to school failure which furthers his anxiety about his ability. His current anxiety is the result of an unresolved previous conflict, namely, his lack of determination to study harder. Psychoanalysis emphasizes the interplay between internal conflict and external conflict. Anxiety for a personal unresolved conflict can turn into conflict with another party. Indeed,

current conflicts are the result of projecting the characteristics of the previous conflicting party (oneself or another individual) into the current conflicting party. Psychoanalysts maintain that people's layered personalities "give rise to a characterological tendency to employ certain defence mechanism rather than others" (Sandy, Boardman and Deutsch, 2006: 295).

Volkan (1990) contributes to the explanation of ethnic conflict by applying psychoanalytical concepts to the psychology of ethnic groups. His main argument is that "the psychodynamics of individual persons find an echo in group relations" (1990: 83). Thus he describes three typical mechanisms of defence proposed by the psychoanalytical school (externalization, projection and displacement) as a means to understand the development of prejudice in ethnic groups. Two important aspects should be discussed regarding Volkan's approach.

Firstly, Volkan (1997: 21) views ethnicity as a social construct. The origin of ethnic identity can be found in two experiences in the lives of children, specifically, when children "learn to take satisfaction in the properties of their own ethnic group" (1990: 84); and when children "feel unique by putting distance between oneself and another ethnic group and its cultural amplifiers" (1990: 85). According to Volkan, the origin of ethnic hatred is a psychological process of externalization. This intuitive idea recognizes the role of socialization in the development of prejudices, stereotypes and hatreds. The socialization process can shape personalities in particular directions by encouraging specific beliefs and attitudes.

Another interesting contribution to the understanding of ethnic conflict is the discussion on the role of leaders. According to Volkan (1990: 87), "Freud believed that because a herd

instinct is innate all human beings are either leaders or followers.” An individual can lose much of his distinctiveness to unite with his group. The individual allows others to exert influence over oneself in order to feel harmonious with the group. Leaders can exert control over the members of a group and even manipulate them. Volkan’s ideas remind us that community leaders can give important support to peacebuilding efforts. Indeed, numerous scholars make reference to the important role played by leaders in transforming structures (see, for instance, Gurr, 1993; Hampson, 1996; Kriesberg, 1998b). Leaders can show their followers that new political and educational institutions will not promote confrontation or destruction of the identity but rather lead to reconciliation (Ferguson, 1980).

Third, much of the literature on peacebuilding focuses on ways of addressing emotions and perceptions. Regardless of the different characteristics of conflict stressed by the main conflict studies scholars, namely, human needs, interests, incompatible goals, etc. (see, for instance, Mitchell, 1981; Tillett, 1991; Burton, 1996), they all acknowledge that emotions and perceptions can be a contributing factor to conflict and the polarization of positions or, on the other hand, to dialogue and reconciliation.

Despite the critical impact that feelings have in conflicts and reconciliation processes, they are not frequently studied in the field of conflict resolution and negotiation (see Thomas 1990; Barry and Oliver 1996; Pillutla and Murnighan 1996). Emotions are present throughout human life and shape our responses to the surrounding environment. Emotions such as hate, mistrust and fear prevent us from experiencing either physically painful or psychologically perceived dangerous situations. In that sense, emotions are essential to human survival, which explains why they are present in every human action. For instance, emotions make us act in a

determined manner, motivate us to engage in long-term projects in which we take delight, or foster a depressive reaction to a particular event or stimulus. This means that emotions will be present in any kind of conflict. Education must pay attention to what sort of emotions are being displayed by pupils from different ethno-religious communities – whether the origins of their emotions are past experiences or are caused by current events; their level of influence in decision-making; and whether their intensity prevents pupils from relating to one another.

Memories of past experiences, socialization processes and personal inner evolution contribute to produce certain emotions in members of one group that differ from those of the other. This is vital when analysing how certain actions may cause fear in pupils from one ethno-religious community or mistrust in the other. As Mitchell (1981: 91) notes, a challenge may be that emotions that are not openly displayed cannot be addressed by education professionals. Individuals use different psychological mechanisms to maintain a positive image of their own person and group. These mechanisms are broadly used to avoid the anxiety produced by the sense that they are unable to control their destructive impulses or their negative emotions (Sandy, Boardman and Deutsch, 2006: 334).

Regarding perceptions, Sandole and Lounsberry (2009: 80) maintain that “stable peace requires more than just ceasefires and formal cessation of warfare; it (is thought to) require[s] reorientation of perceptions so that the parties stop seeing each other as unremitting threats and enemies.” The role played by education in addressing perceptions needs to be underscored. If prejudices, stereotypes and hatreds are rooted in early socialization process of children (Vokan), it is during adolescence that these prejudices against other groups are

justified rationally and ideologically. It is also during adolescence that people commit themselves to abstract ideals. “The ideas that young people form about their national struggles will connect with their emerging notions of right and wrong, truth and fairness, identity and injustice that will deeply influence the rest of their lives” (Minow, 2003: 215).

Potapchuk and Carlson (1987: 32) suggest that reconciliation processes need “to correct misperceptions, reduce unreasonable fears, and improve communication to an extent that will permit face-to-face discussion.” Similarly, Sandy, Boardman, and Deutsch’s (2006: 303) view on Social Learning Theory (SLT) contends that “based on their life-experience [certain individuals] tend to be cooperative, egalitarian and social-emotional in their orientation while others tend to be competitive, power-seeking and task-oriented.” This idea stresses the necessity to know what psychological orientations parties involved in a conflict exhibit, raising important questions for reconciliation processes and for education practitioners. Addressing perceptions will help to build trust and foster reconciliation. Peace education will be of assistance in this regard.

3. Peace education

Article 29 of the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child states that education should include “the preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance equality of sexes, and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origin” (A/44/25, 1989: art. 29). This statement raises the question about the role of education in the child’s development and its

contribution to reconciliation. More specifically, it questions the values that are transmitted in the teaching of subjects such as history, culture or RE.

Peace education is an approach to peace that assumes that shared values and understanding of others will bridge the gap between peoples and communities. As stated in the introduction, informal peace education aims to inform other educational efforts so that they can be a vehicle for learning respect, cooperation and peace. In that sense, peace education is an approach that aims to achieve “peace through education” (Fisk, 2000: 185) rather than “educate about peace.” Kriesberg (1998a: 190) provides a taxonomy of informal peace education methods to foster coexistence and mutual reconciliation: structural, experiential and interpersonal methods. By definition, peace education will have many different faces depending on the context in which it is being implemented. Each form of violence or protracted conflict requires a unique form of peace education to address it.

Structural methods include policies directed at reducing inequalities including an increasing availability of schools and the quality of the services offered; establishment of affirmative action policies against discrimination based on economic or ethnic background as well as the promotion of a culture of human rights in schools; the development of crosscutting ties such as associations that gather pupils from different ethnic backgrounds and emphasize a common history and identity over the particular communitarian one; and, a deep transformation of the very foundations of intolerance in the education system. According to Bush and Saltarelli (2000: 4), curricula that promote tolerance and peace will have little impact

if they are delivered within educational structures that are themselves fundamentally intolerant.

School systems themselves [must] become more equitable and democratic, starting from the experience children have in the classroom. Lessons characterized by rote learning and the absence of open debate, where rules must be obeyed without question, undercut children's confidence and inhibit their participation as active members of their societies. (Bush and Saltarelli, 2000: 30)

Experiential methods include the provision of settings in which members of different communities can interact, exchange information and break down stereotypes. This is more likely to happen if interactions are between pupils of relatively equal status.⁷¹ Deutsch (1993: 510) identified five key elements of cooperative learning, the most important of which is *positive interdependence* which can be achieved through many means including mutual goals; division of labour and resources, materials, or information among group members; and by giving joint rewards. Cooperative learning would help students develop a “considerably greater commitment, helpfulness, and caring for each other regardless of differences in ability level, ethnic background, gender, social class, or physical disability.”

Accordingly, Kasic and Senehi (2009: 163) argue that contact between members of different ethnic groups may lead to improved communication, better understanding and coexistence. They base their assumptions on Allport's contact hypothesis (Allport, 1954) which says that general attitudes of distrust are correlated with interethnic antipathy. In those cases, contact between groups reduces prejudice when it is conducted under certain conditions.⁷²

⁷¹ See, for instance, Hewstone, M. And Brown, R. (eds.) (1986). *Control and Conflict in Intergroup Encounters*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell; and Amir, Y. (1976). “The Role of Intergroup Contact in Change of Prejudice and Ethnic Relations”, in P.A. Katz. (Ed.) *Towards the Elimination of Racism*. New York: Pergamon. In Kriesberg (1998a: 193).

⁷² See, for instance, Allport (1958: 382) and Berkowitz (1962: 152).

Positive conditions include “cooperative contact between equal-status members of the two groups in a situation that allows individuals to get to know each other on a friendly and prolonged, rather than a superficial, basis, to cooperate in achieving common goals, and to have support of relevant social groups and institutions.” (Kosic and Senehi, 2009: 163) In educational contexts, the group of peers represents a space in which students can establish those friendly and prolonged cooperative relations. However, individual contact is not enough. Schools need to make group membership less salient as well in order to improve ethnic relations.

Caution must be used against the tendency to believe that cooperative learning and contact theory provides a cure-all approach. There is little research demonstrating conclusively that contact can reduce conflict between groups (Mania et al., 2010: 89). Intergroup conflict occurs at a collective level whereas research focuses on individuals.

Contact is often proclaimed efficacious when it initiates a favourable change in individuals' attitudes towards an out-group (...) Then it is implied but rarely shown that conflicts between groups are reduced by putting their members into contact with one another. Unfortunately, things may not be so simple. Having a positive attitude toward an out-group is not necessarily associated with opposing aggressive actions toward that out-group. Furthermore, relations between groups are influenced by more than the interpersonal interactions that occur between their members (...) Political and sociological variables, such as social policy and group threats, can powerfully shape intergroup relations. (Mania et al., 2010: 89).

Finally, *interpersonal methods* refer to work carried out in small groups of students and teachers within schools, and between leaders of the communities. For instance, workshops that would address issues of religious diversity and misperceptions or circles where youth would exchange cultural or religious points of view on certain topics.

To recapitulate, recent developments in peacebuilding theory (Lederach, 1995, 1997; Galtung, 1997; Leatherman et al., 1999, Ryan, 2007) stress that lasting reconciliation between ethno-religious communities requires the transformation of emotions, prejudices, stereotypes and hatreds. Structural transformation in post-conflict settings needs to be combined with the transformation of relationships between individuals and groups. However, the transformative approach presents several limitations such as the lack of a precise definition of transformation that makes difficult the implementation of concrete measures. Social psychology theories help to understanding how relationships can be transformed. Volkan (1990, 1997), Sandy, Boardman, and Deutsch's (2006) and Sandole and Lounsberry (2009) explain the origins of prejudices, stereotypes and hatreds and highlight the urgency of addressing them. Informal peace education (Deutch, 1993; Kriesberg, 1998a; Kasic and Senehi, 2009; Mania et al., 2010) contributes to addressing prejudices, stereotypes and hatreds by promoting contact under certain positive conditions and cooperative learning. These theories will inform the analysis of the role that religion is playing in education in Lebanon and Northern Ireland in the next two chapters.

CHAPTER 5

LEBANON AND NORTHERN IRELAND COMPARED

The aim of this chapter is to analyse several research projects on the role of religion in education conducted in both Northern Ireland and Lebanon. As mentioned earlier, there is no single project that addresses all the aspects of this problem that have been identified as highly relevant, namely, the general state of confessional schools and their relation to the public school system; the presence of the religious element in confessional schools and its influence in students' socialization process; and the links between the political identity of students and the historical development and condition of RE teaching. For this reason, I will draw on several projects that address these issues as well as other questions such as the vision of the world gained by students who attend confessional schools; their ideas about diversity and tolerance; their views on conviviality and relations between ethno-religious communities, etc.

Following an introduction to the main research projects that are being analysed, the chapter will be organized around two topics: segregated and integrated education and links between education and religious and political socialization. The nature and curriculum of RE will be analysed in the following chapter.

1. Main research projects considered

Lebanon

Mouzounne (1998) studied the influence of textbooks in students' identification either with their particular ethno-religious community, or with a broader sense of "the Lebanese." Mouzounne assumed that textbooks can disseminate either values based on the principles of

knowledge, tolerance, and openness to diversity, or promote ethno-religious loyalties and divisions (1998: 210). He then analysed three official textbooks in Arabic: “‘History’ (Salem & Kachmar, 1995) for third year primary classes [ages 8 to 9], ‘Geography’ (Albaba Châabane et al., 1996) for fifth-year primary classes [ages 10 to 11] and ‘The clear method in history and geography’ (Haoui & Khalil, 1996) for fourth-year secondary pupils [ages 9 to 10].” He also conducted a survey among an unspecified history and geography teachers and pupils aged 12 to 14.

His study on social identity hypothesized that the use of common textbooks would “merge community identities into a single, more ‘citizen-like’ identity capable of promoting (coexistence).” However, his data contradicted this hypothesis. A majority of pupils “desire(s) to live together while respecting the (various) identities that constitute the Lebanese society.”(p. 222) He concludes that the influence of daily social interaction in the formation of students’ identities is more powerful than the socializing power of schools. Despite the limitations of the methodology including the low number of textbooks used; the lack of information about the schools where those textbooks were being used; and obviating the effects in mainstream society of the existence of a large variety of history textbooks, the value of Mouzounne’s research remains. It represents a first attempt to study citizenship, tolerance and coexistence after the “framework for education” came into effect. The limitations found in his work were overcome in later research.

Abouchedid, Nasser and Van Blommestein (2002) studied the role of religion and history in confessional schools. When designing their research, they addressed the shortcomings of Mouzounne’s research. They conducted several interviews with 7 history teachers and 19

educational decision-makers and administered questionnaires to 236 students from seven private-run confessional schools during the school years 1999/2000 and 2000/2001. Their research aimed at answering two questions. First, to what extent do the policies of several confessional schools foster multi-faith and multi-cultural understanding among students? Second, what is the level of knowledge students have about the beliefs and culture of people who belong to ethno-religious communities different from their own? (p. 66). In their school sample, analysis of RE was limited to four highly segregated schools (see table 5).

SCHOOL NAME	ETHNO-RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION	YEAR OF FOUNDATION	LOCATION	DISTRIBUTION OF STUDENTS
Cedar School	Catholic Maronite	1963	Northeast Beirut	83.5% Maronites; 15.9% Greek Orthodox; 0.5% Sunni Muslim
Pine School	Protestant	1928	Mount Beirut	39.5% Maronite; 34.5% Greek Orthodox; 23.4% Evangelical; 2.3% Sunni
Ash School	Sunni Muslim	1887	Beirut	98.3% Sunni; 0.5% Druze; 1.2% Shiite
Yew School	Shiite Muslim	1941	Beirut	28 Sunni Muslim; Rest Shiite Muslim ⁷³

Table 5: Schools targeted by Abouché et al. to analyse RE

Abouché et al. (2002) found that schools had policies to promote conviviality and cross-cultural understanding that were not being implemented. Indeed, students were not taught about other ethno-religious communities either in RE or history classes even though they showed great eagerness to learn about them.

⁷³ Abouché et al. do not provide information on percentages or number of Shiite students in the school year 2000/2001,

Khalifé (2005), a teacher at the Lycée Franco-Libanais, examined the intervention of the ethno-religious communities in Lebanese schools. His research aimed to determine the particularities of schools controlled by ethno-religious communities in the context of the broader Lebanese education community (p.145). Through a comparative analysis of practices in nineteen schools found in nineteen different communities he found out that while Christian and Muslim schools transmitted common values they also imparted to students very conflictive ones. For instance, he documented that Christian schools encourage students to establish relationships exclusively with members of their own ethno-religious community while Muslim schools teach a fundamentalist Islam that is hardly reconcilable with the recognition of the other that is different. (p. 155) While Khalifé's study contributes important data regarding the way confessional schools operate, it does not provide much information about the schools researched or the methodology used. In addition, it does not consider the perspective of students who were never interviewed or invited to meet in focus groups.

Muhammed Salami, Director of the Center for Studies and Documentation of the Islamic Religious Education Association (Shiite association linked to Hezbollah) conducted a study that sought to detect and determine the efficiency of Islamic RE in the acquisition of religious knowledge and attitudes (Salami, 2006: 217). Questionnaires were distributed among 1508 pupils (14,98% of the total population of students attending Shiite Islamic RE in Lebanon) from grades 3 and 4 of intermediate level (ages 8 to 10) attending Islamic RE. These students who were from all the regions of Lebanon (Beirut, the South, the Bekaa Valley and the rest of the country), were attending four types of schools (28.18% attended Muslim schools; 7.82% Christian; 23.60% private secular; and 40.48% public). Salami found out that appreciation of RE

was high among Shiite students (80% of grade 4 students would like to keep the number of hours and the methodology). In addition, new pedagogical methods were preferred to traditional ones. However, around 80% of those students using textbooks enjoyed the methodology whereas only 35.5% of students using traditional methods such as recitation and memorization of the Qurān were satisfied with the way RE was being taught.

In 2005, Nazha Akl initiated an important research project under the auspicious of Saint Joseph University. It was taken over in 2007 by Pamela Chrabieh after Akl passed away. Their research aimed to establish a link between the vision that students held about inter-confessional and interethnic coexistence/conviviality and the type of school attended (private confessional or secular or public). Chrabieh (2009) used a more qualitative than quantitative methodology. Questionnaires were distributed among 221 pupils and several school directors from secondary schools of Beirut. Targeted schools included 6 confessional schools and 5 public schools (see table 6).

Results showed that youth were subjected to plural dynamics of socialization and that differences in their visions of themselves in the context of ethno-religious communities present in Lebanon did not uniquely emanate from the school they attended (Chrabieh, 2009: 20). The analysis of the mission and philosophy of schools and those of their directors was insufficient to identify the educational agenda that is being pursued by the school administration.

Chrabieh acknowledged that limitation to her work. For instance, when studying the effects of confessional education in the visions of the pupils, the lines between the influence exerted by family, school and group are blurred. Hopefully, future research will provide information on the influence of parents in the formation of their children's visions and beliefs (p.

25). As in previous cases, Chrabieh's work does not have as an objective to generalise beyond

NAME OF SCHOOL	YEAR OF FOUNDATION	LOCATION	RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION PERSONNEL	AFFILIATION OF THE SCHOOL	RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION OF STUDENTS
La Sagesse	1992	Beirut – Al-Āshrafya	Maronite	Maronite Catholic	Mixed with Christian majority
Zahrat Al-Ihsān (Flower of Charity)	1888 ⁷⁴	Beirut – Al-Āshrafya	Greek-Orthodox	Greek-Orthodox	Mixed with Christian majority
Al-Ādvetist al-Īnjyliya (Evangelical Adventists)	2005	Beirut – Msaytbe	Mixed with Evangelical majority	Evangelical	Muslim (Sunnite and Shiite)
Al-Imām Al-Namoudhajya (Modelic Imam)		Beirut – Al-Tharif	Sunnite	Sunnite	Sunnite
Al-Āmiliya (the World)		Beirut – Ras Al-Babe'	Shiite	Shiite	Mixed with Muslim majority
Al-Rawḍa		Beirut – Verdun	Sunnite	Lay	Mixed with Muslim majority
Jbeyl Al-Rasmiya lil-banin (Jbeyl Official School)		Mount Lebanon (Jbeil – Byblos)	Maronite	Lay	Maronite
Laure Moghayzel al-Rasmiya lil-banāt (Official School for Girls)		Beirut – Al-Āshrafya	Christian Maronite and Greek-Orthodox	Lay	Christian
Fakhr ed-edyn al-Ma'ny al-Rasmiya lil-banat		Beirut – Borj Abi-Haidar	Sunnite	Lay	Muslim
Al-Ālāma Ṣobḥy al-Maḥmaṣāny		Beirut – Bir Hassan	Shiite	Lay	Shiite
Al-Mukhtāra Al-Rasmiya		Mount Lebanon	Druze	Lay	Druze

her findings but aims to depict a facet of the situation of education in Lebanon.

⁷⁴ Except for La Sagesse, Zahrat al-Ihsan and Al-Ādvetist al-Īnjyliya, I was unable to find the dates of foundation of other schools targeted by Chrabieh (2009).

Table 6: Schools targeted by Chrabieh⁷⁵

Much of the research conducted in Lebanon appears disconnected. Researchers do not refer to previous work and there is no sense of continuity or progress in the state of the question. As I will describe in next section, this situation differs from the comprehensive and well structured body of research that can be found in Northern Ireland.

Northern Ireland

L. Philip Barnes is a prominent Northern Irish education scholar who actively contributed to the reform of RE curriculum. His article “Reforming Religious Education in Northern Ireland: A Critical Review” (Barnes, 1997) represents a major critique of the status of RE in Northern Ireland and provides suggestions and tools for its reform. Barnes acknowledges the role of RE in promoting religious commitment. He regrets that the 1993 Core Curriculum did not encourage religious discernment (1997: 81), that is, the ability of pupils to think for themselves about religion. Barnes was also a major influence leading to the inclusion of world religions in RE curricula. He nonetheless rejects a multi-faith model of RE because “the chief issue in Northern Ireland is prejudice and intolerance between Christian groups rather than ignorance and intolerance toward adherents of other religions” (Barnes, 2002: 30).

Important sources for the present comparative analysis are the *Life and Times Surveys* which provide useful yearly statistic data (from 1998 to 2010) about different aspects of life and coexistence in Northern Ireland. Set up by Queen’s University and University of Ulster, the 1999

⁷⁵ Source: Chrabieh (2009: 33 – 39); my translation.

and 2004 editions have a special module on the role of religion in education in Northern Ireland. The *1999 Life and Times Survey* asked questions about the teaching of RE at the post-primary level. Face-to-face interviews were conducted with 2200 adults selected through a simple random sample from all over Northern Ireland ensuring the adequate representation of areas with lower population density. Participants responded to questions from different modules such as community relations, education or social inequality. In addition, the *1999 Young Life and Times Survey* distributed questionnaires to 449 students aged 12 to 17, selected through a simple random sample. Students were only asked questions from the education module. In 1999, researchers found, for instance, that a majority of students support the presence of RE in schools and have a strong social religious identity. The *2004 Life and Times Survey* was conducted among 1800 adults all over Northern Ireland also selected through simple random sampling. The *2004 Young Life and Times Survey* chose all those children who celebrated their 16th birthday during February 2004 and where registered on the “Child Benefit Register⁷⁶” (n= 824). The Survey found that religion was important/very important to a majority of students (65%) and that it is slightly more important to Catholics than Protestants (71% and 59% respectively). Indeed, Catholic students have a stronger political identity compared to Protestants (56% of those who think about themselves as Protestants have a strong political ideology whereas the percentage is 90% for Catholics). This data will be analysed in section 2 of this chapter and in chapter 6.

Ron Smith (2001) also studied the impact of schools on inter-communal relations. His research consisted of interviews of 343 individuals across nine schools. In an approach similar

⁷⁶ For more information, see <http://www.borderpeople.info/>.

to Chrabieh's (2009), this research goes further by conducting focus groups not only with students (228) and members of staff (87) but also with 28 parents. Smith explored the views of teachers, parents and pupils on how to improve inter-communal relations. He provides "insights concerning the factors implicated in school effectiveness" (Barr and Smith, 2009: 213) that would promote an inclusive democratic society. The results suggested that "schools were still more akin to 'cultures of partisanship' than 'cultures of diversity' despite over a decade of official support for community relations work" (Smith, 2001: 147).

Smith's recommendations for the reform of RE are problematic. He argues that a new contextualized approach to school effectiveness is required in Northern Ireland. And that cross-cultural and citizenship-related competencies should be prioritized over academic achievement. Against this view, many argue that investing time and resources in education for peace and improved inter-communal relations should not clash with quality education. Quality education is, indeed, one of the requirements proposed by Kriesberg (1998a: 190) to foster coexistence and mutual reconciliation in ethnically diverse societies.

In 2006, the Department of Education of Northern Ireland (DENI) carried out an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) on the *Proposals for a Revised Core Syllabus for Religious Education in Grant-Aided Schools in Northern Ireland*. The aim of this public consultation was to get feedback from students, parents, teachers, churches and other actors about the possible impact of the 2005 *Proposals for the Revised Core Syllabus*. In the elaboration of the EQIA, the department considered several quantitative and qualitative indicators including the 2004/05

school census, the 1999 and 2004 *Life and Times Surveys*, the *Small World Project*,⁷⁷ and some other sources. DENI also held meetings with “representatives of the Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People (NICCY), the Inter-Faith Forum, the Bahá’í Council, the Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities (NICEM) and Dr Philip Barnes (senior lecturer in RE at Kings College London)” (DENI, 2006: 8). The EQIA represented an important tool for education policy-making providing a broad set of political recommendations. It suggested several changes to the 1993 Core Syllabus such as including the right to withdraw from RE and make greater provision for world religions in the Core Syllabus. The EQIA led to the release of the 2007 Revised Core Syllabus for RE that included world religions as a compulsory module.

One of the recent studies on coexistence and integrated education in Northern Ireland is that carried out by Hayes, McAllister and Dowds (2006). They developed a pooled dataset gathering data from the “Northern Ireland Social Attitudes surveys (1989-1996), the Northern Ireland Life and Times surveys (1998-2003), the 1998 Northern Ireland Referendum and Election Survey and the 2003 Northern Ireland Election Study” (Hayes, McAllister & Dowds, 2006: 1) with the aim of exploring the trend of segregated/integrated education over time in order to determine the effects of integrated education in students’ inter-communal relations. Their analysis does not provide a definitive answer on whether integrated schools pull down religious and cultural barriers. However, “they [strongly] do suggest that attendance at an

⁷⁷ The Small World Project is a project coordinated by James Nelson and Norman Richardson from Stranmillis University College. Initiated in the school year 2003-2004, the project aimed to gather information about the beliefs and practices of six different religious traditions. After conducting extensive ethnographic research, two textbooks for Key Stage 3 (11-14 year olds) have been developed to use in local schools. See <http://www.stran.ac.uk/informationabout/research/researchresourcesforre/themallworldproject/>.

informally or formally integrated school has some positive long-term benefits in promoting a less sectarian outlook.” (p. 4)

Building on Hayes, McAllister and Dowds, Stringer et al. (2010) examine the effects of parents and schools on children’s attitudes towards reconciliation and coexistence in a post-conflict environment. From a large cross-sectional survey of 1,732 secondary students and their parents (800), they concluded that “cross-group contacts between children in integrated or mixed school settings within a deeply segregated society hold out the longer term promise of producing an adult population that will challenge traditional group-based positions.” (Stringer et al., 2010: 238) Stringer et al.’s work is one of the largest and more reliable studies conducted on the topic extending previous work. Their results, however, need to be backed up by further longitudinal research. Results will be assessed in the next section.

2. Comparative analysis

2.1. Effects of educational segregation in cross-ethnic relations

Religious segregation in education is a common phenomenon in both Lebanon and Northern Ireland. There are, nonetheless clear differences between both cases, the main of which is the institutionalization of segregation in Northern Ireland that has never been present in Lebanon. Nonetheless, although no official data are available in that respect and research has not been conducted on the topic, it is reasonable to think that Lebanon experiences a high level of *de facto* religious segregation. Since the ethnic distribution in the country is very clearly delimited by regions, it is reasonable to think that schools in rural areas, the South and the Bekaa Valley are mainly segregated. Beirut and Tripoli may be the exception to the rule. As noted by Osberg (2008), Beirut Catholic schools “enrol students from all communities, whether

adjacent, distant, Christian or Muslim. In many parts of Lebanon, they [Catholic schools] represent the last forum where Christian and Muslim youth meet and grow up knowing one another.”⁷⁸

In contrast to the diversity of students found in many schools of Beirut, segregated schools were the only type of school in Northern Ireland until the 1970s. A group of Protestant and Catholic parents in favour of their children being educated together then lobbied for legislation that would allow the creation of the integrated schools. This enabling legislation became known as the 1977 Education Act. Integrated schools refer to institutions that are committed to parental involvement, have a Christian ethos and rely on constitutional and structural safeguards to encourage joint ownership by the two main religious traditions in Northern Ireland (Moffat, 1993; in Smith, 2001: 565). The first integrated school, Lagan College, was established in Belfast, in 1981, under the management of parents themselves. Encouraged by the success of the school, additional integrated schools were opened in Belfast in 1985.

As of September of 2000, there were forty-five integrated schools (twenty-eight primary and seventeen post-primary) with approximately 14,000 pupils, representing only four percent of the school population.⁷⁹ The integrated education movement apparently lost momentum between 1985 and 2000 as shown in the decreasing speed in the creation of new integrated schools. McLeavy, Donegan and O’Hagan (2009) blame the decreasing young population and the excessive number of schools for this situation. They suggest that a reasonable approach is

⁷⁸ Osberg, Spencer (2008). Pillars of Lebanon: Catholic Schools Buttress a Diverse Nation. *CNEWA Magazine*, 34 (3). Retrieved from <http://www.cnewa.org/mag-article-bodypg-ca.aspx?articleID=3329>.

⁷⁹ Source: Integrated Education Fund (http://www.ief.org.uk/AboutUs/chronological_history_40.aspx).

to transform existing schools into integrated schools (“transformed schools”⁸⁰). However, transformed schools have only been created from controlled schools in Protestant areas. Therefore, they have majority Protestant enrolments and are turning into *de facto* Protestant schools (McLeavy, Donegan and O’Hagan, 2009).

Catholic schools are adamantly opposed to transform into integrated ones as it would mean abrogating the rights of their trustees (McLeavy, Donegan and O’Hagan, 2009: 548). According to the Commission for Catholic Education, trustees, which are bishops and religious congregations, are the depositaries of the right of parents to choose the form of education they wish for their children.⁸¹ The government must support this right that is expressed in schools’ autonomy in “establishing their distinct ethos and type of education;” developing their own RE programmes of study (always respecting the Core Syllabus); and “leading, managing and supporting the distinctive contribution of the Catholic sector to the realisation of A Shared Future.⁸²” Although they assert their distinctiveness, trustees of Catholic schools also state to be “committed to ensuring that all these schools play a full part in promoting reconciliation and a shared future.”⁸³ The existence of these rights of Catholic trustees reflects the preferential treatment that Catholic institutions receive from the government. Moreover, the defence of

⁸⁰ “Transformed schools” are maintained or controlled schools that are transformed into integrated schools.

⁸¹ Retrieved from the Commission for Catholic Education Website <http://catholiceducation-ni.com/content/view/39/50/1/1/> on 23 March 2011.

⁸² “A Shared Future” is a policy and strategic framework for good relations in Northern Ireland published on 21 March 2005 by the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister. The project has triennial action plans to which particular religious communities contribute their input.

⁸³ Retrieved from the Commission for Catholic Education Website <http://catholiceducation-ni.com/content/view/39/50/1/2/> on 23 March 2011.

these rights by the Commission for Catholic Education reveals the strong links between politics and religion for Irish Catholics.

The general resistance to establishing more integrated schools meant that as of 2010 there are only 21,000 students in such schools, only 6,000 more than a decade earlier. Currently, there are forty-two integrated primary schools (seventeen of which are transformed schools) and twenty secondary schools (five of which are transformed schools).⁸⁴

The effects of integrated education in the Northern Irish context have been assessed by several researchers. Hayes, McAllister and Dowds (2007: 456) found that individuals that attended integrated school were significantly more likely than their religiously-segregated counterparts to occupy the centre ground in identity politics and to disavow bi-partisan territorial allegiances.

Building on the work of Hayes et al. (2007), Stringer et al. (2009) concluded that pupils who attend segregated schools are less likely to experience intergroup contact with members of the other religious community reinforcing their group identification. Conversely, students attending integrated schools are more likely to reject traditional identities and become more neutral in political positions (Stringer et al., 2009: 237). In segregated schools religious and political socialization ensure that “children adopt the political attitudes deemed appropriate for their own group” (Stringer et al., 2009: 236) so that they “learn to take satisfaction in the properties of their own ethnic group” (Volkan, 1990: 84).

The reason for this change in attitude is not, however, the influence of the school ethos on students’ attitudes (3.1% of the overall variance in children’s attitudes is related to the

⁸⁴ Integrated Education Fund (http://www.ief.org.uk/AboutUs/chronological_history_40.aspx).

school). Cross-group contact, group membership and parents' political attitudes carry more weight in reinforcing group-based attitudes in children (14.4%, 16.2% and 36.6% respectively) (Stringer et al. 2009) and in developing prejudices, stereotypes and hatreds.

The type of education that is chosen (segregated or integrated) is a consequence of parents' intentions rather than an immediate expression of their political attitude (Stringer et al. 2009: 236). Catholic parents with a clear political ideology may believe that integrated instead of Catholic education is the best option for their children. This choice influences the quality and intensity of their children's cross-group contact and their membership in groups of peers from a different faith-community. Stringer et al. also found that contact is more effective in promoting positive attitudes towards members of the other community when it happens in informal and friendly manners. Rather than teacher-managed activities, children's "friendships may be the most important factor in achieving attitude change." (Stringer et al., 2009: 238)

For that reason, not only parents' political attitudes affect children's political stand. Attending integrated schools is also associated with attitude change in students (14.4% of the variance in children's political attitudes). This situation is arguably repeated in numerous Catholic schools of Beirut where children who live in Muslim or Christian neighbourhoods only establish contact with members of other religious communities when they are at school.

Several conclusions:

- **The segregation of minds and the transformation of relationships:** Segregated education has contributed to what Bush and Saltarelli have called the segregation of the minds (Stringer et al., 2009: 236). In ethno-religiously diverse societies, segregation of the minds refers to a state of mind characterized by

mutual ignorance, mutual suspicion and an accent on differences instead of commonalities (Bush and Saltarelli, 2000: 24). Social cohesion will come from interaction that allows for the two groups to deal with emotions, mistrust, prejudice and feelings of hatred. In the process the “enemy” takes on a “human” face. Studies on integrated education in Northern Ireland have showed to be effective in this regard (Hayes, McAllister and Dowds, 2007; Stringer et al., 2009), and so may be in Lebanon.

Stringer et al. (2009) found that parents are the major factor in the segregation of children’s minds (36% of the variance in children’s attitudes) followed by cross-group contact, membership in the group of peers and type of school attended (14.4%, 16.2% and 3.1 % respectively). The 2004 *Young Life and Times Survey* also found out that family was the most important influence regarding youth views on people from other religious community (46% of youth). Other influences include friends (16%), church (10%), school (8%) and other factors (6%).

However, the choice of integrated education (whether it is a consequence of parents’ political stand or driven by any other circumstances) contributes to overcome prejudices, stereotypes and hatreds by affecting children’s cross-group contact and their membership into groups of peers from different faith communities experienced during their school years (Stringer et al. 2009).

This is possible because of the intimacy of the relationship between teaching and learning. This creates the space within which the

character, or biography, of a student may be affected (for good or for ill) in ways that are reflected in their relationship to and their behaviour in the world outside the walls of the classroom. When schooling exercises a positive impact on the processes of de-segregation, it does so through that intimate connection between biography and geography. (Bush and Saltarelli, 2001: 26)

On the basis of previous research, it is clear that integrated education contributes to some degree to the “building of relationships” (Lederach, 1997: 24), that is to dialogue and mutual understanding between members of competing groups (Hayes, McAllister and Dowds, 2007: 456; Stringer et al., 2009: 237). According to Allport’s contact hypothesis, contact between groups reduces prejudice when it happens in a cooperative manner and between “equal-status members of the two groups in a situation that allows individuals to get to know each other on a friendly and prolonged, rather than a superficial, basis.” (Kosic and Senehi, 2009: 163) Stringer et al. confirmed this idea. They documented that contact especially leads to attitude change if it happens in a context of friendship (Stringer et al., 2009: 238).

The contact hypothesis refers only to change in individuals’ attitudes towards an out-group and not to the effects of contact in inter-group relations (Mania et al., 2010: 89). Accordingly, the findings of Stringer et al. refer to individuals’ change of attitude towards members of the out-group but not to the improvement of relationships between groups themselves. Further research on the effects of integrated education in inter-personal and inter-group relations is required to analyse these links in Lebanon.

- **Structural transformation:** Irish integrated schools can be considered an important advancement, not only in terms of promoting intergroup contact at school, something that is already happening in Lebanon, but also in terms of prioritizing parents' involvement in school management. As I have said, parenting has been identified as the decisive factor in students' attitudes of tolerance, dialogue and cooperation among different groups (Hayes, McAllister and Dowds, 2007; Stringer et al., 2009). School boards controlled by parents from different religious backgrounds are a powerful symbol of unity and cooperative efforts to promote reconciliation. As Smith noted (2001: 565):

integrated schools raise fundamental questions about the importance of parent, rather than church involvement in the management and control of education; about the place of religion in schools; and about the challenges of transformation facing all institutions in Northern Ireland as a consequence of the current peace process.

- **Limitations of structural transformation:** As stated in chapter 4, deep structural changes – either political, economic or educational – will be opposed if they results in insecurity for those who feel that the status quo best protects their political, economic and identity interests (Magee, 1985: 104). For the prospects of change not to be perceived as threats, transformation in education has to come by way of a new approach regarding relationships among different actors within the school community: teachers, parents, religious communities and pupils. A greater involvement in school management of Lebanese parents from different religious communities is essential for the promotion of dialogue in confessional schools.

- **Influence in mainstream society:** Schools do not represent an autonomous social framework in themselves. Teachers, directors, pupils and administrative personnel are all members of a broader society. Integrated education is not only about results but about means. The promotion of reconciliation and dialogue in mainstream society must go hand in hand with the transformation of educational structures according to those values. Bush and Saltarelli (2000: 4) already noted that curricula that promote tolerance and peace will have little impact if they are delivered within educational structures that are fundamentally intolerant. Only a deep transformation of the very foundations of the education system will lead to structures that effectively promote dialogue.

2.2. Identity, religion and politics

Confessional schools where students are mainly segregated arguably play a role in reinforcing group-based attitudes in children insofar as they limit cross-group contact and privilege children's membership into groups of peers from the same faith-community. There are several aspects to be considered regarding the role of confessional schools in the socio-political socialization of students. First, as stated above, Stringer et al. (2009: 236) found that the school ethos represents a minor contributing factor to group-based attitudes in children. This conclusion apparently contradicts the findings of Abouchedid et al. (2002: 78) who argue that confessional schools are promoting a negative attitude toward other religions, perpetuating the idea of a clash of cultures and impeding a deep and lasting reconciliation. However, the fact that schools promote a negative attitude toward other religious communities

does not entail that students are being influenced by those pressures. Abouchedid et al. (2002) analysed the policies of seven confessional schools in Beirut regarding multi-faith and multi-cultural understanding among students and found out that some school principals and teachers were promoting highly conflicting values. For instance, Yew school (Shiite⁸⁵) taught RE intertwined with historical and political developments of the Shiite community in Lebanon. Moreover, some Muslim policy-makers interviewed defended compulsory teaching of the Qurān to non-Muslim students.⁸⁶ Surprisingly, Abouchedid et al. also documented the desire of students to learn about their fellow students from other religious communities (79.7% were interested in learning about other religions) and their numerous complaints about school policies in this regard (Abouchedid et al., 2002: 27). Religious affiliation of the school had little impact on the socialization process of these students.

Indeed, and this is the second aspect, this resistance to schools' socialization agenda was documented by Chrabieh in schools of Beirut. Influence of schools in political visions of students is not either direct or generalized (Chrabieh, 2009: 20). Students interviewed by Chrabieh (2009: 57) believe that the main problem of the Lebanese society is not religion but politics (24.88 and 64.7% respectively). 54.75% of students consider that ideology is the main difference that divide Lebanese people followed by political interests and power struggles (27.6%). They acknowledge and refuse, at the same time, the links between politics and religion. Indeed, 71.04% of youth did not recognize themselves as having any political

⁸⁵ See table 5 on page 84 for more information about the school.

⁸⁶ Abouchedid et al. do not specify if these policies of RE for all students regardless of their religious affiliation were being implemented.

affiliation. These results suggest that Lebanese youth refuse a political system intertwined with religion.

However, when asked about the cultural identity of Lebanon, the results are not as decisive. 33.9% of students point at plurality (not only religious but in terms of class, region of origin, language, etc.) as the main feature of the Lebanese identity followed by Arab identity (22.6%). Western identity accounted for 13.57%, multi-religious identity for 9.04% and Phoenician identity only for 6.33% of the variance in students' social identity.⁸⁷ However, a total of 38.17% point at highly politicized identities as the main Lebanese identity (Arab and Western identities). Traditionally, Christians have highlighted the Western dimension of Lebanese identity whereas Muslims have underscored this belonging to the Arab nation (see chapter 2).

In contrast, in Northern Ireland, the *2004 Young Life and Times Survey* showed that 54% of students interviewed considered their religious identity as important/very important, equal in importance to their political identity. The social dimension of their religious identity appears clearer than in Lebanese students. Only 17% of the students didn't see themselves as part of a religious community (39% saw themselves belonging to the Protestant community and 44% to the Catholic community). These numbers contrast with the percentages regarding students' national identity. Those who identify themselves as British account for 22% (unionists), Irish 40% (nationalists) and 31% Ulster/Northern Irish (neutral). When contrasted with data regarding religious affiliation, the percentage of students who identify themselves as Catholic and Irish are similar, showing a strong link between religious and socio-political identity in Catholic youth (90.9% of Catholic students consider themselves as Irish not British). The 31% who identify

⁸⁷ The total is 85.44%. Information about the remaining 14.66% is not provided by Chrabieh.

themselves as Ulster/Northern Irish can be broken down into 17% of non-members of religious communities and 14% of Catholic and Protestant members.

These data in both Lebanon and Northern Ireland show the complexities of identity formation. Lebanese youth interviewed by Chrabieh have apparent contradictory senses of belonging. When asked for their individual identity, they identify themselves as believers and practitioners (63.34%) – with little variance between Muslims and Christians, and non-practicing believers (26.24%) (Chrabieh, 2009: 53). When asked about the main component of Lebanese identity, however, religion appears to be irrelevant (9.04%).

Third, despite the relatively low influence of school ethos in students' socialization (Abouchedid et al., 2002; Chrabieh, 2009; Stringer et al., 2009), students interviewed by Chrabieh in schools in Beirut still showed strong prejudices against members of other communities. 66.52% of the students replied to the question "what are the differences between Christians and Muslims in daily life?" with a series of stereotypes such as: physical appearance (e.g. Muslims wear a beard), religious symbols, place of origin, behaviour (e.g. Muslims are fanatics and Christians liberal-modern), etc. (Chrabieh, 2009: 85).

In Northern Ireland, the *2004 YoungLife and Times Survey* also assessed feelings toward members of the other community. Results show that approximately only around 8% of the students feel unfavourable/very unfavourable towards people of the other community. 77% of students consider that contact with people from other religious communities is positive/very positive. They prefer to live in a mixed neighbourhood (52% versus 36%), work in a mixed workplace (67% versus 18%) but not go to school with people of other communities (47% versus 43%). Considering the important influence that family has on youths' attitudes towards

other religious communities (the most important influence for 46% of the youth interviewed), parental views on schooling are a possible explanation to this unwillingness to attend integrated schools.

Several conclusions:

- **Religion and social conflict:** 64.7% of the Lebanese youth interviewed by Chrabieh believe that the main problem of the Lebanese society is not religion but politics and refuse to identify themselves with a particular political group (71.04%). In contrast, in Northern Ireland, the blending political and religious spheres is not judged as counterproductive or in need of change. Ethno-religious political identification among Northern Irish youth remains high. Several explanations can be given for these differences.

First, one factor is the sample chosen. Schools targeted by Chrabieh (2009) were six private confessional and five secular public, all of them located in Beirut and Mount Lebanon. In addition, five of the schools were not completely segregated. Conversely, the 2004 *Young Life and Times Survey* was conducted in both rural and urban areas among youth attending mainly segregated schools (those who attended integrated schools in Northern Ireland remain a minority). The urban rural divide appears as an important one in determining attitudes and integration of children of different religious faith. However, the lack of reliable data regarding segregation in Lebanon prevents me from arguing this point definitively.

A second explanation for the cause of disaffection with politics in Lebanon is the embers of the horrors of the 1975 civil war. Students interviewed by Chrabieh

did not experience the civil war (they were born between 1992-1997) but they most probably have lived it vicariously through stories told at home and in the neighbourhood.

Third, the Lebanese sectarian system and the limitations placed on the socio-political and personal freedoms – for instance, the prohibition on inter-religious marriage, the regulations on abortion, homosexual marriage, etc. – are a more likely explanation of the political disengagement of Lebanese youth (Chrabieh, 2009: 59). This lack of freedoms has often been defended by political leaders as a lesser wrong to safeguard civil peace. The continuous interference of religion in political decision-making may be the cause of the attitudes of the Lebanese youth that are not found in Northern Ireland, as a region of the EU. Regardless of the causes, based on the research done, one thing is clear: there is disconnect between the political system and youth in Lebanon.

- **Prejudices and attitudes towards others:** Based on the available research, in Lebanon, students lack knowledge of the characteristics and beliefs of other religious communities, but they express a willingness to learn about each other (Abouchedid et al. 2002: 27). This motivation to learn about others may be a psychological mechanism that helps maintain a positive image of their own person and group (Sandy, Boardman and Deutsch, 2006: 334). Most likely, they are genuinely motivated to learn about others. I believe this is the case because when researchers asked students about prejudices they did not show political correctness or desire to save face. For instance, when Chrabieh asked students “are you different than an

individual from another religion?” and “what are the differences between Christians and Muslims in daily life?” (Chrabieh, 2009: 83; my translation), responses showed that stereotypes remain high among youth. Answers show that students believe that religion is a determining factor of people’s values and style of life. Although students believe that equality and dialogue are valuable, their socialization process shapes their personalities in particular directions by encouraging specific beliefs and attitudes such as prejudices, stereotypes and hatreds (Volkan, 1990: 85). Students’ answers regarding difference between Muslims and Christians imply that students acknowledge the existence of particularisms; hold the view that one religion is superior to the other; and believe that freedom for one community can be threatened by another. A peace education approach to RE that helps to reduce fears, correct misperceptions and improve cross-cultural communication would be helpful for promoting reconciliation.

- **Separation between religion and politics:** In Northern Ireland, Catholic youth appear more prone to link religion and politics than Protestants. Indeed, transformed schools are created mainly from Protestant schools, reinforcing this perception that Catholic identity is still linked to national identity.⁸⁸ On the other hand, in Lebanon, both Christian and Muslim youth seem to have a modern approach to separation between the religious and political spheres in which the former remains a personal issue separated from the latter. Is this approach being imposed by foreign influences from the media, social networks, etc? Some politicians are interpreting separation

⁸⁸ See comments of the Commission for Catholic Education on trustees’ rights in section 1 of this chapter.

between religion and politics as alien to the Lebanese culture, as an imposition by Western ideologies (Chrabieh, 2009: 62). As stated in chapter 4, transforming a society could represent a subtle form of cultural imperialism (Lederach, 1995: 79) if it is imposed from outside. True or not, the East and the West are presented as competing visions. Youth refuse the idea that West and East are incompatible. Again, the generational divide is apparent.

- **The role of leaders:** Leaders can show their followers that new political and educational institutions will not promote confrontation or destruction of identity but rather reconciliation efforts (see Ferguson, 1980). The leadership of parents was apparent in the 1970s in Northern Ireland when they acted cooperatively to lobby for the legislation that would allow integrated schools to exist. This leadership has shown its limitations when trying to convince parents at large to send their kids to such schools. The role of church leaders in this situation has been shown to be decisive. Religious leaders have vigorously defended parents' right to choose Catholic education⁸⁹ (see section 1 in this chapter), despite the fact that recent research has shown the positive effects of integrated education in children (Hayes, McAllister and Dowds, 2007; Stringer et al., 2009). In Lebanon, leaders of the ethno-religious communities have also opposed changes in the teaching of RE or resisted control from government in confessional schools (see chapter 3). In both contexts, religious leaders need to be aware that they are essential when implementing policies conducive to dialogue and mutual understanding.

⁸⁹ Commission for Catholic Education Website <http://catholiceducation-ni.com/content/view/39/50/1/2/>.

Research in both Lebanon and Northern Ireland shows that school ethos has a limited influence in religious and political socialization of students (Abouchedid et al, 2002; Hayes, McAllister and Dowds, 2007; Chrabieh, 2009; Stringer et al., 2009). Parents' political attitudes are the most influential factors in children's political and religious attitudes. I have discussed however, the important finding in Northern Ireland that students who attend integrated schools are more likely to reject traditional identity divides and polarized political positions (Stringer et al., 2009: 237). This is so because integrated schools can promote cross-group contact and privilege children's membership in groups of peers from diverse faith-communities.

Many of the schools targeted by Chrabieh and Abouchedid et al. in Beirut are not segregated. This situation appears to be one of the factors that explain the disaffection of these youth with identity politics and its links to religion. However, the lack of reliable data regarding segregation in Lebanon prevents me from stating it is so. The limitations to personal freedoms that emanate from the sectarian political system have been suggested as a more likely explanation of the political disengagement of Lebanese youth.

I have also discussed the eagerness showed by Lebanese youth to learn about other religions (Abouchedid et al., 2002) and noted the existence of prejudices in 66.53% of youth (Chrabieh, 2009: 85). Conviviality must be built on mutual knowledge and respect (see chapter 4). RE can make a great contribution to address this lack of knowledge about other religions. In the next chapter I will tackle the nature and the curriculum of RE to discuss how this subject is contributing or not to tearing down stereotypes and ignorance about other religions in Lebanon.

CHAPTER 6

ABOUT RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

RE is a subject that remains part of the curricula in the majority of countries in the world. The right to RE has been affirmed by The Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and has become the subject of multiple agreements between ethno-religious communities and states. Confessional RE, however, is only one of the possible ways to offer RE instruction. Different approaches can be found around the world including the secular approach in which the contents and methodology of RE are controlled by the state which tends to favour an introduction to a phenomenology and history of religions rather than an indoctrination in a particular religious tradition; the multi-faith approach in which different religious communities agree on the content of RE and the state provides the funding and other types of assistance for its delivery; and the cooperative approach in which state and religious communities share responsibility for RE resulting in a mixture of confessional teachings combined with knowledge about other religions. In Lebanon, a confessional approach has been preeminent in the last decades both in private and public schools. In this chapter, several studies on the perceptions of students in this regard will point at the necessary reconsideration of the nature and curriculum of RE.

1. The nature of RE

The analysis of the available research on the topic, both in Lebanon and Northern Ireland, reveals that the presence of RE in schools is not questioned by students and adults targeted in those research projects.

Salami (2006: 234) asked Shiite Lebanese students about their interest in the RE class and their opinion on the number of hours and methodological approach. He targeted 900 and 608 pupils from grades 3 and 4 of intermediate level (ages 8 to 10) attending Islamic RE. Results showed that 80% of 608 grade 4 students (aged 9 to 10) would like RE classes to maintain the current number of hours and methodology. This percentage coincides with that of grade 3 students (aged 8 to 9). 51% and 55% of grade 4 and 3 students respectively would even like to see the number of hours devoted to RE increased which shows their appreciation for the subject. Salami, however, only aimed at assessing students' degree of interest in RE without considering their attitudes towards different types of RE.

These attitudes correspond to the high level of religious identification expressed by Shiite students. As stated in chapter 5, a vast majority of students interviewed by Chrabieh (2009: 53) identified themselves as believers and non-practicing believers (63.34%) – with little variance between Muslims and Christians – and believers non practitioners (26.24%). Although high levels of religious identification can also be found in Christian and Sunnite students, further research would be required to assess the attitudes of these two groups towards RE.

When asking about pupils' preferred methodology in RE classes, Salami found that some methods and materials are preferred to others. Salami's study analysed student's attitudes toward some textbooks and methodology for Islamic RE in grades 3 and 4, namely "*Al-Islam risalatna*" (The Mission of Islam), "*Al-Kitab Al-Dynni Al-Madrasi*" (School Religion Textbook) and traditional means of RE (recitation and memorization of the Qurān and study of the Al-Ḥadith. Pupils' assessment of the books was positive overall with 80% and 83% preferring the "Mission of Islam" or "School Religion Textbook" respectively. Only 35.5% of the pupils who were taught

RE in the traditional way were satisfied with the methodology. A deeper analysis of the textbooks and participatory observation in class would allow further understanding of the reasons for the disaffection with traditional ways of teaching RE.

A desired change in the teaching of RE is also suggested by Abouchédid et al. (2002). None of the schools targeted in their study included a cooperative or multi-faith approach to RE. However, the researchers documented students' absolute ignorance on religions other than one's own that contrasted with their "great eagerness to learn about other religions" (Abouchédid et al., 2002: 76) (see table 7). Indeed, when asked about the way they would behave if they met someone from a different religion, 79.9% responded that they would get to know his/her beliefs and acquaint him/her with their own. Moreover, students blamed schools for failing to provide knowledge about other religions and promote mutual learning (p. 77)

	Know a lot	Know a lot about some of them	Know little about each of them	Do not know much	Know nothing	χ^2 (df)
How much do you think you know about others' religious beliefs	30 (12.7%)	57 (24.2%)	83 (35.8%)	44 (28.6%)	22 (9.3%)	49,13 (4)**
Knowledge about life styles of different areas of Lebanon	33 (14%)	52 (22%)	75 (31.8%)	63 (26.7%)	13 (5.5%)	51,20 (4)**
How much do you think others know about your religious beliefs	16 (6.8%)	33 (14%)	73 (30.9%)	91 (38.6%)	21 (9.3%)	156,54 (4)**

** Significant at the 0.001 level

Table 7: Frequency distributions on students reporting knowledge about others⁹⁰

⁹⁰ Abouchédid, Nasser and Van Blommenstein (2002: 76).

Interestingly, students who think that they know little/not much/nothing about other religious beliefs account for 63.1% of the total, whereas 78.8% of students think that others know little/not much/nothing about their religious beliefs.

In Northern Ireland, 58% of young students interviewed by the *1999 Young Life and Times Survey* (aged 12 to 17) thought that RE should be taught in schools. The percentage increased to 61% when asked about their interest in the study of religious beliefs in general and of the festivals of all religions and ethnic groups. As in Lebanon, students interviewed in the *2004 Young Live and Times Survey* regarded themselves as belonging to a particular religion (84%) and considered religion as important or very important (65%).⁹¹ In addition, 46% and 42% of adults also considered that post-primary pupils should study Protestant and Catholic beliefs respectively (35% and 26% respectively disagreed) whereas around only 20% preferred pupils to study a general approach to religious beliefs and the traditions and festivals of other religious groups. The generational divide appears clear. Both adults and youth find it necessary to learn about their own religious tradition. Youth, however, give more importance to the knowledge about other religions than adults (61% youth and 20% adults). As in Lebanon, these data would suggest that young people may welcome a RE curriculum that goes beyond their own religious tradition.

Several conclusions:

⁹¹ These data contrast with the NI Curriculum Cohort Study that found students felt that RE was one of the least relevant subjects at school (In DENI, 2006: 4.22). The relevance given to religion does not correspond with the little relevance given to RE. As I stated in chapter 5, the complexities in the formation of identity are a possible explanation for this situation. However, further research is required to decipher this apparent contradiction.

- **Disconnect between students and school policies:** In Lebanon, researchers have documented a gap between students' expectations and schools' policies and educational priorities regarding teaching about other religious traditions (Abouchedid et al., 2002). In Northern Ireland, this disconnect was addressed by the DENI in the 2007 Revised Core Syllabus for RE and needs to be considered by education policy-makers in Lebanon.

- **Appreciation for RE:** Data from the compared studies in Lebanon and Northern Ireland show a contrast on the level of appreciation of RE. Although youth in both contexts mainly identify themselves as members of a faith community (63.34% in Lebanon and 83% in Northern Ireland), preference for of confessional RE appears to be higher in Lebanon, at least among Shiite Lebanese students. Salami (2006) found out that around 80% of grade 3 and 4 Shiite students (aged 8 to 10) would like RE classes to maintain the current number of hours and methodology. In addition, approximately 50% of these students would increase the number of hours. Additional research is required to assess if the interest in RE can be found also in Sunnite and Christian students. In Northern Ireland, 58% of young students interviewed by the *1999 Young Life and Times Survey* (aged 12 to 17) thought that RE should be taught in schools. RE, however, is one of the least relevant subjects for them (NI Curriculum Cohort Study , in DENI, 2006). The different ages of the samples may account for these differences. Different religious traditions that were part of the samples (Muslims and Christians on one hand, and different Christian denominations on the other) may also affect results because Christian churches are

- experiencing a faster process of internal secularization than their Muslim counterpart.⁹²
- **Limitations of current approach to RE:** 78.8% of Lebanese students believe that other students don't know about them (Abouchedid et al., 2009). These perceptions about other students should be a matter of concern for policy-makers. Not knowing about others' beliefs can lead to prejudice, polarization, judgemental attitudes, misunderstanding or lack of interest in building cooperative environments. Even worse, feeling that others don't know about one's beliefs can lead to victimization, promotion of particular identities instead of shared identities, seeking refuge in one's own group, entrenchment of positions, etc. In this regard, teaching about others' beliefs appears essential not only to tear down stereotypes and prejudices but to allow students to develop crosscutting ties by breaking the walls of their own ethno-religious groups. Feelings of mistrust and fear or victimism depend on past experiences, personal developments and different socialization processes (Adler, Rosen & Silverstein, 1998: 165). It is important to help students express those feelings (Mitchell, 1981: 91) through, for instance, workshops or peace circles where youth can exchange cultural or religious points of view on certain topics.
 - **Different approach to RE:** In both case studies, students would prefer a different approach to RE. Lebanese pupils do not state it explicitly (researchers did not ask them directly what they preferred) but they do suggest that traditional methods are

⁹² Internal secularization is a term used by Christian churches to refer to the process experienced by faith communities consisting of a lack of coherence between beliefs and practice in its members. This has been widely identified as a matter of concern for Christian churches.

not of interest to them (Salami, 2006: 234) and that they are eager to learn about other religions (Abouchédid, Nasser and Van Blommenstein, 2002: 76). Conversely, Northern Irish students do express their desire to learn about other religions. Indeed, the 2007 Revised Core Syllabus included world religions in one of the modules because of the consultations made with students, teachers and parents (see chapter 1). Informal peace education can inform RE, for instance, emphasizing the calls for peace and harmony that come through the world's religions by highlighting the religious teachings that in each tradition offer a vision of peace.

- **The nature of RE in a democratic state:** In the end, more than a matter of content, the discussion needs to focus on the nature of RE. What should be the role, if any, of RE in democratic societies? There are certainly differences between a liberal democracy (Northern Ireland) and a consociational democracy (Lebanon). However, as Nelson states (2004: 256-257), for Northern Irish publicly funded schools,

it is surely appropriate that a proper review of religious education (in Northern Ireland) should include a full discussion of such fundamental issues as the aims of publicly funded education, the role of parents and pupils in determining the nature of religious education and the relationship between secular and religious values in publicly funded schools.

The same could apply in Lebanon to subsidized confessional schools and tuition-based private schools. Researchers give the reasons for concern (Abouchédid et al., 2002; Chrabieh, 2009). It is in the interest of students, parents, politicians, religious communities and the broader community to start a dialogue about the nature and scope of RE in Lebanon. This would prevent the ethno-religious gap from growing

- bigger, keeping the past and ongoing conflicts alive or even becoming the source of future social tensions and violent conflicts.
- **The collaborative approach:** Based on the research available, in both case studies students appreciate RE but desire to learn about other religions as well. The preferred approach is one that combines confessional and world religions materials with a shared responsibility between the state and the ethno-religious communities for its delivery. This model is currently in place in Northern Irish secondary education, to the satisfaction of students, parents and professionals (DENI, 2006). In primary education, on the other hand, churches continue to battle against the inclusion of world religions in the curriculum, claiming it may create confusion for pupils.

2. The curriculum

Lebanon does not have a common curriculum for RE. Indeed, RE in Lebanon is characterized by its diversity and fragmentation. Confessional schools enjoy *de facto* autonomy to establish their curriculum which is usually of poor quality and does not respond to students' current needs and to the reality of a modern society (Haddad, 2006: 84). Public schools teach Islam on Fridays and Christianity on Sundays. They will do so until they begin to use the new common textbooks that are being prepared by representatives from the various ethno-religious communities.

Determining the materials and methodology that are being used in each confessional school would require a visit to each school. No one has done this to date. Based on the available information it is nonetheless possible to describe the different approaches used in private

schools run by the Antiochian-Orthodox, the Sunnite and the Shiite. Below I present the current conditions of Antiochian-Orthodox schools according to Dr. Georges Nahas, the Sunnite according to the experiences of Bassam Al-Hafi in Hariri II High School and Ash School according to Abouchedid et al. (2002), and the Shiite according to Salami (2006).

- *Greco-orthodox schools* enjoy great autonomy when establishing their approach to RE. “About one third of them use books edited by a publishing house, another third uses books edited by the Orthodox school board, and the last third do not provide RE to students in class but in the Church on a voluntary basis.” (Nahas, 11 February 2011⁹³) Lebanese Orthodox schools only use RE textbooks in grades 1 to 6 (ages 6 to 12). From grade 7 onwards, the teaching of RE relies on the particular skills of the teacher who uses the materials that he/she considers suitable. These teachers are usually priests and nuns with a considerable theological background but who lack pedagogical training.
- Sunnite schools such as Hariri II High School use a textbook called *Al-silsila al-hadeetha fi al-tarbiya al-islamiyya* (Modern Series in Islamic Religious Education) in grades 1 to 6. From grades 7 to 12 students use the Qurān (Bassam Al-Hafi, 9 December 2010⁹⁴). This teaching according to Al-Hafi, “was more [focused on] morals and duties and rules that Muslims are expected to follow and apply”⁹⁵ and used a traditional methodology of memorizing parts of the Qurān and interpreting some

⁹³ Phone interview with Professor Georges Nahas on 11 February 2011. Quoted with permission.

⁹⁴ Communication via email on 9 December 2010 and 16 March 2011. Information used with permission.

⁹⁵ Bassam Al-Hafi, communication 16 March 2011. Quoted with permission.

- verses. Accordingly, Abouchedid et al. (2002) noted that in Ash School (Sunnite) teachers and director taught materials fashioned after Sunnite Muslim tradition although teachers called for “tolerance and mutual acceptance of Christians.” (p. 75)
- At first glance, it seems obvious that the approach to Shiite RE is clearly confessional and aims at an education in the Islamic faith, linking knowledge and behaviour, contents and morality. Salami’s (2006) research does not address religious diversity issues. However it does help us find data regarding the objectives and curricula of Islamic RE in different types of school. The religious values that are assessed in his study include prohibition of scandal, fasting, prayer, honesty, use of the veil, withdrawal from non-Muslim celebrations, adultery, reading of the blessings, reading of the Qurān and prayer at the mosque (p. 229). It is striking that a study included in a compilation of research projects about the teaching of religion in a multi-religious society does not include any type of question regarding the management of religious diversity, suggesting that Shiite Islamic education does not prioritize teaching of other religions or conviviality. Instead, the identity dimension of RE is expressed through the emphasis on their own tradition.

This impression is shared by Haddad (2006: 86) who believes that Muslim communities are still reluctant to address ethno-religious diversity. That would not be the case of Lebanese Christians, who have started to acknowledge the complexities of this globalized world. These differences may be the result of Lebanese Christians’ historical identification with Western principles as opposed to Muslims’ sense of belonging to the Arab nation, often identified with the Muslim

Umma.⁹⁶ This tendency could reflect a new form of ethnocentrism that some Christians fear may lead to the Islamization of Lebanon (see chapter 2 of this thesis).

Abouchedid et al. (2002: 76) confirm this tendency. Although contents regarding other religions were absent from the curriculum of RE in Cedar and Pine Schools (Catholic and Protestant institutions respectively), they noted that both Cedar and Pine were more likely to adopt a liberal attitude towards education. RE remains non compulsory for non-Christian students in both institutions. On the other hand, Muslim policymakers advocated⁹⁷ for compulsory RE for all students regardless of their religious affiliation. Reasons provided were that “the Qurān emphasizes moral attitudes, the Arabic language, and Arabic heritage” (Abouchedid et al., 2002: 75).

In the Lebanese schools examined, teachers legitimize the lack of teaching about other religions as a way to avoid conflict. Some school principals in Ash School (Sunnite), Cedar (Maronite) and Pine (Protestant) said they believed in the importance of inter-group learning. Cedar and Pine school did not enforce Christian teachings upon Muslims. Accordingly, in Ash School teachers call for tolerance and mutual acceptance of Christians but lacked a practical implementation through specific policies (such as allowing Christian RE) (Abouchedid et al., 2002: 75).

By way of contrast, since 1993, Northern Ireland has had a partially common curriculum for RE. According to the Ministry of Education, the 1993 Core Syllabus has had an important effect on the promotion of tolerance and understanding (DENI, 2006: 3.3.). The Core Curriculum

⁹⁶ Term that is commonly used to refer to the Islamic community all around the world.

⁹⁷ As stated before, Muslim policy-makers defence of RE for all students was not corroborated with implementation of such policies.

has ensured some consistency in the contents that are taught to pupils. At the basic level, it can be said that every pupil has a common knowledge and understanding of RE. Moreover, the introduction of the Core Syllabus “has played an important role in raising the profile of RE and in securing the position of RE as part of the curriculum in schools” (DENI, 1006: 4.15). Finally, the fact that cooperation between churches led to the creation of a Core Syllabus for RE does not only contribute to the improvement of RE teaching but is a symbolic expression of the new roles that churches are willing to play in the transformation of the conflict in Northern Ireland. The powerful actors that once were part of the problem are now determined to become part of the solution.

Despite these positive aspects, two main limitations of the 1993 Core Syllabus can be underscored. First, the Core Syllabus’ content was exclusively Christian, confessional and it was organized only around three “Attainment Targets”: The Revelation of God, the Christian Church and Morality. Second, the 1993 Core Syllabus still allowed for a great level of autonomy for schools to “provide RE in a way that is consistent with the ethos of the school and the interests of the community it serves” (DENI 2006, 3.4). Despite the existence of a common curriculum, this autonomy led schools to continue to focus their teachings on only one denomination. For instance, Nelson conducted research on the teaching of “The Christian Church” at Key Stage 4 (ages 14 to 16). The Core Syllabus only established that pupils had to learn about “Christian practices and worship in two traditions” (DENI, 1993: 3). That broad requirement entailed in practice that controlled schools could teach two different Protestant traditions. Indeed, according to Nelson (2004: 254), 40% of controlled schools were choosing not to teach anything with respect to Catholicism in the study of the Christian Church at Key Stage 4. In this area of

the curriculum which had been designed to introduce an element of diversity in the teaching about the Christian tradition, “there are a significant number of controlled schools who confine Christian diversity to Protestant diversity.” (p. 255) The majority of “maintained” schools, accordingly, would pursue a predominantly Catholic syllabus at Key Stage 4 avoiding any detailed study of the Protestant church.

The Ministry of Education responded to these limitations with the *Equality Impact Assessment on Proposals for a Revised Core Syllabus for Grant-Aided Schools in Northern Ireland* in 2006, a directive that would oblige schools to devote around half of the teaching time of RE to the Core Syllabus (DENI, 2006: 3). The introduction of the 2007 Revised Core Syllabus would include world religions as an essential part of RE. A greater control over schools will be required to make sure that directives are being implemented.

Several conclusions:

- **The value of a core syllabus:** In Northern Ireland, the Core Syllabus has provided every youth with the same minimum opportunity to benefit from RE. This introduction plants roots for the mutual understanding of the experiences of others and different ways of thinking. In addition, the existence of a common curriculum has made it possible for integrated schools to teach RE to both Catholic and Protestants at the same time. This is important, for example, because friends who study together were previously separated only for the study of religion, as is still the case in Lebanon in some schools targeted in the research available (Ash School, Pine School, Cedar School, Yew School, etc.). This reality has a huge symbolic power. The shared materials that are being developed in Lebanon for public schools are a first

step in the same direction. Ideally, this approach would also be used in confessional schools. The collaborative approach could help to prevent the formation of prejudices and stereotypes.

- **The gap between practice and policy:** In both case studies, a gap between policies and practices appears to be a matter of concern (Abouchedid et al., 2002; Nelson, 2004). In the body of research that I have analysed, both Lebanese Christian and Muslim schools have a discourse of tolerance and respect that is not translated into practical measures toward the RE curriculum. This may be because, as Abouchedid et al. concluded, communities are not yet prepared to deal with the challenges of pluralism through their educational practices. In Northern Ireland, the causes of the gap between policies and practices were identified by Barnes (2004) in his study of the Christian Church at Key Stage 4. Barnes found out that Protestant schools were only teaching about 2 different Protestant churches instead of one Protestant and one Catholic. They chose to teach what was familiar and within the range of the experience of the teacher or pupils and was considered 'safe.' In the case of Catholic schools, Barnes identified a “deliberate avoidance of Christian diversity and the reinforcement of uniformity” (p. 255). The gap between educational policies and practices need to be bridged by both Irish and Lebanese educational authorities. In Lebanon, a national debate about the role of RE in a democratic society is required. This debate should lead to a Core Syllabus for RE that includes teachings from all the majority religious communities. Moreover, more effective control over the contents taught in confessional schools should be exerted by the state.

- **The role of teachers:** The implementation of the curriculum and the transmission of values included in the school ethos depend eventually on the teacher. As Smith (2001: 138) noted in his investigation of schools as institutions for peace, it is fairly easy for teachers to “pass on preconceived social-political ideas” that children are quick to pick up on.

The evolution of RE in Northern Ireland has been characterized by strong participation of all stakeholders. Policy-making on sensitive topics such as religion in societies marked by ethno-religious diversity and recent violent conflict needs to engage all parties and, when possible, be consensual. Numerous consultation processes and inter-religious commissions have proved essential in the evolution of RE in Northern Ireland and represent an interesting example for the Lebanese context. In addition, research conducted on the topic shows that appreciation of RE among Shiite Muslim students is high in Lebanon (Salami, 2006). Although further research is required to study the perceptions of Christian and Sunnite Muslim students on RE, students clearly show a generalized interest in learning about other religious traditions that coexist in Lebanon (Abouchedid et al., 2002; Chrabieh, 2009). I have suggested that based on the data, a cooperative approach⁹⁸ to RE in confessional schools that combines confessional and world religions materials would fulfill students’ expectations and be a contribution to conviviality.

⁹⁸ Cooperative RE is a combination of confessional and world religions materials. See section “key terms explained” in the Introduction.

CONCLUSION

As I stated at the beginning of this thesis, the aim of this work is to determine what accounts for the fact that religion is a contributing factor to conflict and polarization among Lebanese ethno-religious communities, whereas it is a contributing factor to reconciliation and social cohesion in Northern Ireland.

Radical transformation of post-conflict societies such as Lebanon requires not only structural changes that may bring about stability and the embodiment of the principles of conviviality, tolerance and reconciliation but also a deep transformation of the relationships between conflicted parties. To achieve this double transformation, policy-makers and religious communities need to pay special attention to the status of the Lebanese educational system. Education must function to develop crosscutting ties, build mutual understanding and bring down stereotypes and mistrust. Much of the literature analysed in the preceding chapters identifies several shortcomings that account for the fact that religion in the Lebanese educational system is contributing to conflict and polarization. Each of these shortcomings points at directions for future research.

First of all, the important social presence of confessional schools and the weak control of the state over them represent a matter of major concern. Due to the large number and diversity of religious affiliations, socio-political integration of Lebanese youth is challenging.⁹⁹ Interviews with former students and teachers show a great diversity in this regard. In Beirut,

⁹⁹ The List of Private Schools in the Greater Beirut Area in page 132 shows an impressive variety in private schools in Beirut. 509 schools are controlled by numerous different organizations.

schools such as the Hariri II High School (Sunnite), Antiochian Orthodox Schools, the Cedar School (Maronite) and the Pine School (Protestant), do not pursue political socialization of students. Two characteristics have been identified as factors that increase the probability for a school to exert political influence on students. The first characteristic is schools' affiliation with political parties, for instance, with the Christian party of the Lebanese Forces and with the Shiite party of Amal (Hezbollah) (see chapter 3). These are not, however, the only schools affiliated with political parties. For instance, schools such as Al-Ṣadiq Al-'āmalya or Global Prep¹⁰⁰ (funded by the Association of Islamic Charitable Projects¹⁰¹), Lyon Naḍryān (funded by the Armenian Public Charity) and Global Girls School (funded by the International Islamic Relief Organization) are also affiliated with organizations of a political nature. Further research is required to study the politicization of students in this type of confessional schools. However, it can be affirmed that Lebanese youth experience differing socialization processes at school.

The second factor that accounts for the contribution of religion in education to conflict in Lebanon relates to the formation of national and group identity. National and group identities are especially formed during adolescence when they elaborate and rationalize the prejudices against other groups that were acquired in early childhood (see chapter 4), and commit themselves to abstract ideals. These notions about the right and wrong identity and belonging to a given ethno-religious community will deeply influence the rest of their lives. It is necessary to provide a certain level of uniformity in education keeping in mind that

¹⁰⁰ See List of Private Schools in the Greater Beirut Area on page 132 for more information about these schools.

¹⁰¹ The Association of Islamic Charitable Projects is part of the Muslim spiritual group of Al-Ahbash (Sufi tradition). Al-Ahbash pursues a moderate Islamist agenda not necessarily political in nature and has offered a moderate alternative to Islamism in Lebanon (Hamzeh, 1997).

“centralization and homogenization of educational policies, historical pasts and institutions can lead to greater levels of disintegrative tendencies” (Bush and Saltarelli, 2000: 22) For that reason, education policy-makers need to both acknowledge the particularities of ethno-religious communities and to work towards socio-conceptual coherency in order to build a more cohesive society. Consistency in the teaching of history and RE appears to be essential to promote a sense of the Lebanese that is compatible with ethno-religious particularities. Without dismissing the relevance of teaching of history, this study has focused on RE.

The way that RE is being taught is a third factor. What the role of RE needs to be in a democratic state is open to discussion. Each society needs to find the formula that works best for its given circumstances. In a society strongly influenced by ethno-religious communities and beliefs, three options appear possible: the elimination of RE; a multi-faith approach; or a confessional approach that includes teaching about world religions.

In this context, the comparison between the role that religion plays in the Lebanese and the Northern Irish educational systems has produced several insights and clues for further research on the topic. First, whereas religious segregation is a long-standing and well studied phenomenon in Northern Ireland, there are no official data or research about this topic in Lebanon. However, it is reasonable to affirm the existence of certain levels of religious segregation due to the clearly delimited ethnic distribution across regions (see Map 1, page 38). Studies on segregated and integrated education in Northern Ireland clearly show that students attending integrated schools are more inclined to dissociate themselves from extreme political positions and have a more open mind towards members of the other community. These

studies, however, show that the influence of the school ethos on group-based attitudes of students is minor compared to cross-group contact, group membership and political attitudes of parents. Keeping in mind that students who attend integrated schools are more likely to have developed these positive attitudes toward members of other religious communities from the interaction with their parents, the type of school chosen by parents also influences the contact between students and membership in groups of peers experienced during schooling years. For that reason, integrated education is a contributing factor to the transformation of relationships required for reconciliation in Northern Ireland. Testimonies of people who benefited from integrated education in Beirut confirm this positive influence (Osberg, 2008; Nahas, 11 February 2011; Ghorayeb, 12 December 2010). Integrated education, however, is not as attainable in other regions or rural areas of Lebanon. In order for RE education to become more integrated and inclusive, I have suggested that confessional schools that already have a relative variety of students from different ethno-religious backgrounds promote further involvement of parents in the management of the schools. The presence of parents from different religious backgrounds would promote dialogue within schools and stand as a powerful symbol of unity and cooperative efforts to promote reconciliation.

Second, whereas Northern Irish youth accept the interaction of political and religious spheres, several researchers have found that Lebanese youth were disaffected with politics and do not have political affiliations. In fact, youth consider politics to be the major problem in Lebanon. Furthermore, they not only believe that religion and politics should be separated, they even refuse to speak about religion in public (Bassam Al-Hafi, 16 March 2011). These

results suggest that Lebanese youth would like to see the current political system reformed. If religion remains a private affair, it has to stay out of the political arena.

Finally, in Northern Ireland, the development of the Core Syllabus for RE and the Revised Core Syllabus included both Christian traditions and world religions. These political decisions were made after extensive consultations that took into consideration the interests of students. Accordingly, a similar process should be initiated in Lebanon, in both private and public schools. Three reasons to support that reform include the high interest shown by students in learning about other religious traditions; the strong presence of stereotypes and prejudices manifested by youth targeted in some of the research; and the perception amongst youth that members of other ethno-religious groups are ignorant of their beliefs. This leads to victimization, promotion of particular identities instead of shared identities, seeking refuge in their own group and entrenchment of political positions.

Informal peace education can inform RE, for instance, emphasizing the calls for peace and harmony that come through world religions. This approach entails a reform of RE that could only result from an open dialogue about the nature and scope of RE in Lebanon among all stakeholders: administration, educational policy-makers, parents and students. The Northern Irish example suggests that a collaborative approach in which confessional and world religion materials are combined and the state and the religious communities share responsibility in the teaching of RE is preferable as it reduces fear, corrects misperceptions and improves cross-cultural communication.

Finally, I would like to underscore the need for serious and in-depth research about the role that religion is playing in education in Lebanon that tackles the issues raised above. What is required is an extensive qualitative and quantitative research on how confessional schools and RE are influencing religious and political socialization of Lebanese youth. This research would involve students, teachers and parents and should be conducted not only in Beirut but in areas where ethno-religious communities are more segregated.

TABLE 8**DISTRIBUTION OF GENERAL EDUCATION SCHOOLS
ACCORDING TO LEVELS OF EDUCATION THEY PROVIDE ON THE SECTORS OF EDUCATION
SCHOOL YEAR 2009 – 2010¹⁰²**

	PRE- SCHOOL	PRIMARY SCHOOLS	INTERMEDIATE SCHOOLS	SECONDARY SCHOOLS	TOTAL
Public schools	46	267	794	258	1365
Subsidized private schools	0	369	0	0	369
Tuition- based private schools	34	89	448	502	1073
UNRWA schools	0	23	44	8	75
TOTAL	80	748	1286	768	2882

¹⁰² Source: Ministry of Education and Higher Education of Lebanon. Data in Arabic retrieved from http://www.crdp.org/CRDP/Arabic/ar-statistics/STAT_AR/2009_2010/PDF09_10/Tables_10/Schools_10/Page51_10.pdf.

TABLE 9

**DISTRIBUTION OF GENERAL EDUCATION SCHOOLS
ACCORDING TO THE PROVINCES ON THE SECTORS OF EDUCATION
SCHOOL YEAR 2009 – 2010¹⁰³**

	Beirut	Mount Lebanon - Beirut Suburbs	Mount Lebanon – except Beirut Suburbs	North Lebanon	Bekaa Valley	South Lebanon	The Mountains Nabataean Region	TOTAL
Public Schools	70	109	185	452	253	156	140	1365
Subsidized Private Schools	18	70	37	77	92	36	39	369
Tuition-based Private Schools	102	319	154	194	145	90	69	1073
UNRWA Schools	8	7	2	18	5	35	0	75
TOTAL	198	505	378	741	495	317	248	2882

¹⁰³ Source: Ministry of Education and Higher Education of Lebanon. Data in Arabic retrieved from http://www.crdp.org/CRDP/Arabic/ar-statistics/STAT_AR/2009_2010/PDF09_10/Tables_10/Schools_10/Page54_10.pdf.

LIST OF 509 PRIVATE SCHOOLS IN THE GREATER BEIRUT AREA¹⁰⁴

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SOUTHERN SUBURBS OF BEIRUT

Subsidized schools

	Total number of pupils	First foreign language
1. Saint Joseph Maronite	162	French
2. Nour Marash – Armenian Orthodox School	192	English
3. Mesrobian Catholic School	315	French
4. Kazarjian Armenian School	137	English
5. Heart of Jesus (Cœur de Jésus)	229	French

¹⁰⁴ Source: Ministry of Education of Lebanon. Data in Arabic retrieved from www.crdp.org on 24 March 2011; my translation.

6.	Saint Mansour Free School	568	French
7.	Bourj Hammoud Civil School	258	French/English
8.	Kilikia Armenian Catholic School (formerly Abcaran School)	110	French
9.	Saint Nohra School Catholic	151	French
10.	Beirut Modern School	243	French/English
11.	Fountain Primary School	315	French/English
12.	National Dignity School	102	French/English
13.	Al-Ṣadiq Al-'āmalya – Association of Islamic Charitable Projects	643	Sunnite
14.	Al-Najaḥ	444	French/English
15.	Ibn Khaldwn National School	218	French/English
16.	Al-Ḍayā al-ḥaditha	126	English
17.	National Lebanese Formation	263	French/English
18.	Al-Āwazā'y – Social Services	291	French/English
19.	Royal School	190	English
20.	Al-Āwazā'y – civil free School	383	English
21.	Saint Rafqa School - Maronite	150	English
22.	Mar Mikhāyl	516	French/English

Tuition-based schools

23.	Saint Joseph – Modern Borj Ḥamwd	197	French
24.	Lebanese Peace	344	French/English
25.	Armenian Catholic Mesrobian High School	420	French
26.	Armenian Evangelical secondary School	315	English
27.	Levon and Sofia Hakobian National College – Armenian	194	English
28.	Wāhan Tkāyan	137	English
29.	Our Lady of Peace – Al-dawra	652	French
30.	Lebanese National High School – Borj Hamwd	215	French/English
31.	Palace of Modern Science for Education	569	French/English
32.	Saint Agnes	263	French
33.	Citizen School	139	French
34.	Promotion of Syriac Secondary School	309	English
35.	Saint Takla Secondary School	292	French
36.	East Foundation Secondary School	249	French
37.	Rosary Sisters Secondary School	969	French
38.	Sāhākyan Lywn Makrdatshyān Secondary School	45	English
39.	Starting School	141	French
40.	Nazarene Evangelical School	167	English
41.	Lyon Naḍryān – Armenian Public Charity	149	English

42.	Tāruhi Hawfākymyān – Armenian	215	English
43.	Christian School of Education CTI	591	English
44.	Lady of Perpetual Help of Saint Maximus Secondary School	284	French
45.	Castle Secondary School	159	French/English
46.	Saint John Supplementary and secondary education	432	French
47.	Sisters of Our Lady of Perpetual Help School	557	French
48.	Saint Vincent Ferrer School	1242	French
49.	Sisters of Saint Theresa Secondary School	321	French
50.	Secondary National Education – Ṭaywna	320	French/English
51.	Civil Modern School	677	English
52.	National Education	209	French
53.	Secondary Cultural School	193	French
54.	Saint Maron – La Sagesse Branch	713	French
55.	Saint Elias	123	French
56.	Intermediate Modern Education	52	French/English
57.	Vanguard Primary School	110	French
58.	Vanguard Secondary School	61	French
59.	Modern Prep	137	French
60.	Fountain intermediate School	78	French/English
61.	National Dignity Secondary School	40	French/English
62.	Jasmine School	368	French
63.	Motherland Bible School	443	French/English
64.	Duha School – Association for Charity and Culture	359	English
65.	The Forefront of People School	258	English
66.	Al-Bustan School	262	English
67.	Al-Bustan School	144	English
68.	Cultural Progress – Elementary and kindergarten Q 0 D	297	English
69.	Cultural Progress – Supplementary School B 0 D	69	English
70.	New Scientific School – Al-Ghubayry	289	English
71.	Heritage High School	295	English
72.	Al-Ṣalāhya Al-Āywbih Secondary School	339	French
73.	Al-Manwr House of Descartes	394	English
74.	Virgin Secondary School	1094	French/English
75.	Promoter School	622	French/English
76.	Modern Beirut	571	French/English
77.	Mediterranean Sea School	236	English
78.	Al-Kawthar Secondary School	2324	French/English
79.	Formation of the Lebanese National	94	French/English

80.	National School	104	English
81.	Al-Āwzā'y Primary School – Young Muslim Women Association	185	English
82.	Evening Civil Intermediate School	120	English
83.	Nasser School	190	English
84.	Extraordinary Flag School	362	English
85.	Modern Lebanese Family Secondary	463	French/English
86.	Mynāt Modern School	353	French/English
87.	Santa Maria	178	English
88.	Ras Beirut National	538	English
89.	Roman Lycee	278	French/English
90.	General Culture	245	English
91.	Lady Shiyah supplementary School	459	English
92.	Al-Shahid Hasan Qaşyr Secondary School	1429	French/English
93.	Shoreline Academy	441	French/English
94.	Modern Fountain Secondary School	34	English
95.	Modern Scientific School	275	French/English

BEIRUT SECTORS 1,2,3

Subsidized schools

96.	Rubinian School	72	English
97.	Kardamnyān School	110	English
98.	Saint Joseph – Sisters of Charity	214	French
99.	Our Lady of Victory – Sisters of Charity	555	French
100.	Camille Chamoun School – Azarian Fathers	377	French
101.	Saint Mansour – Sisters of Charity	457	French
102.	New Generation	185	French/English
103.	Saint Peter and Paul – Syrian Orthodox	145	English
104.	Global girls School – International Islamic Relief Organization	258	French/English
105.	Association Makāram of Islamic Ethics	170	French/English
106.	House of Kids Talk School	204	French/English
107.	'Umar Bin Khiṭāb Primary School	1002	English
108.	'Ali Bin Āby Ṭālib Primary School	354	English
109.	Aisha Mother of the Believers	201	French
110.	'Uthmān Al-Nwryn Primary School	108	English
111.	Saint Louisa – Sisters of Charity	222	French
112.	Khalyl Shihāb	143	English
113.	Khadija The Great Primary School	397	French

Tuition-based schools

114.	Sacred Heart (Sacré Coeur – Freres)	1559	French
115.	Sons of Saint Joseph	289	French
116.	La Sagesse School – Branch Al-Āshrafya	964	French
117.	Annunciation – Orthodox	625	English
118.	Immaculate Conception	339	French
119.	International Armenian Evangelical Central	264	English
120.	Saint Gregory	742	French
121.	Our Lady of Nazareth	1411	French
122.	Saint Charles – Sisters of Charity	212	French
123.	‘Ali Bin Āby Ṭālib Secondary School – Al- Āshrafya	282	English
124.	Greater Beirut Evangelical Secondary School	299	English
125.	Secondary School of the Sisters of Charity	1187	French
126.	Three Grades – Al- Āshrafya	104	French
127.	Zahrā Charity School	1260	French
128.	Great Lycee French-Lebanese	3192	French
129.	Lycée Saint Joseph of the Sisters of the two Sacred Hearts	1788	French
130.	Claire Kindergarten	107	French
131.	Modern Culture, known as the Name of Christ the Saviour	61	English
132.	Comionte Spring School	180	English
133.	Redeemer High School Beirut	469	French
134.	Ibn Syna High School	135	French/English
135.	Destinations for Girls Secondary School	118	English
136.	Dar Al-Ḥanān	60	French/English
137.	Bāb Ydrys Civil School	422	English
138.	Sisters of Saint Anne	767	French
139.	Hariri High School II	1252	English
140.	National Fraternity	633	English
141.	Sisters of the Apparition of Saint Joseph	753	French
142.	Al-Ma’nya School	679	French/English
143.	Patriarchy School	489	French/English
144.	Lebanon Green School	153	French/English
145.	Beirut Arab Secondary School	349	French/English
146.	Lebanon First’s General School	196	French
147.	Baptist School	1222	English
148.	Saint Sirius	302	English
149.	Elite School	576	French
150.	Complex of Churches for Social Service	129	English
151.	Kindergarten Science	95	English

152.	Lady Musaytbeh – Maronite	400	French
153.	Saint Elias Community School	678	French
154.	Lycée National	522	French/English
155.	Lebanon Middle School	472	English
156.	La Martine School	284	French
157.	La Fontaine School	127	French/English
158.	Turnout Kindergarten	157	French/English
159.	Arab Message School	94	English
160.	Arab Message Secondary School	82	French/English
161.	Modern Palace of Culture Secondary School	352	French/English
162.	National Revival School	92	English
163.	Pascal School	246	French
164.	Buds Kindergarten	59	English
165.	Modern Scientific School	202	French/English
166.	Children’s House Model School	235	English
167.	‘Umar Bin Khiṭāb Secondary School	416	English
168.	Islamic Culture Secondary School	1061	English
169.	Māmā Success School	81	English
170.	The Joy of Children School	333	English
171.	Students Committee School	62	English
172.	Modern Primary school	217	English
173.	Modern Kindergarten Zyn Al-‘Ābidyn	110	French/English
174.	Ibn Rashid School	99	English
175.	Ibn Rashid Secondary School	159	French/English
176.	Global Secondary School	402	French/English
177.	Global Prep – Association of Islamic Charitable Projects	314	English
178.	Global Primary School	146	French
179.	Global Supplementary School for Girls	166	French/English
180.	K-Global Model	274	French/English
181.	Lycée Museum	566	French
182.	Our Lady of the Angels – Badaro	713	French
183.	Franciscan Sisters of Mary	250	French
184.	Children’s Home Primary School	460	French/English
185.	Children’s Home Kindergarten	197	French/English
186.	Khāled Bin Al-Walid Secondary School	464	French/English
187.	French-Lebanese School	175	French/English
188.	Louis Wegman College	424	French
189.	Hariri School III	1132	French/English
190.	Beirut Secondary School	203	English
191.	City School International	583	English
192.	American Community School	1044	English
193.	International College	2511	French/English

194.	Armenian Evangelical High School	119	English
195.	Saint Mansour – Sisters of Charity	970	French
196.	La Sagesse School – Branch Saint Elias Street, Clemenceau	427	French
197.	Lebanese General School	54	French
198.	Saint Francis of the Fathers Al-Kabwshyyn	446	French
199.	New Gifts School	39	English
200.	National Evangelical Secondary School	794	English
201.	Our Lady Secondary School – Orthodox	1183	English
202.	Al-Hādy School	113	English
203.	Peace School	12	French/English
204.	Anglican High School French	1594	French
205.	Lycée ‘Abd al-Qāder – Hariri Foundation	1773	French
206.	American Academy of Beirut – Former French-Arabic High School	147	English
207.	Banners School	731	English
208.	Model Faith Secondary School	906	English
209.	Khadija The Great Secondary School	289	French
210.	Lycée French-Lebanese – Verdun	2302	French
211.	Modern International Secondary School	130	French/English
212.	Zahrā – Before noon school	209	English
213.	Evangelical Adventist Secondary School	715	French/English
214.	Bloom of Lebanon	139	English
215.	Ābu Bakr School	144	English

MOUNT LEBANON – SUBURBS NEAR BEIRUT

Subsidized schools

216.	Saint Maron School	147	French
217.	Saint John the Baptist School	351	French
218.	Mother of Perpetual Help School	259	French
219.	Saint George School	1077	French
220.	Frères – Catholic Archbishop	444	French
221.	Saint Rwkaz	215	French
222.	Saint Maximus – Roman Catholic	293	French
223.	Our Lady Free School	282	French
224.	Renaissance School	228	French/English
225.	Imām Al-Khomeyny Primary School	1013	English
226.	Little Prince School	148	French/English
227.	Zahrā Primary School	78	English
228.	Lebanese Education	192	French/English
229.	Lebanese La Sagesse School	497	French/English
230.	Raḍa Modern Kindergarten	338	French/English

231.	Al-Āmyn Modern School	110	English
232.	Luminance School	104	English
233.	Safe School	137	English
234.	Private School for Boys and Girls	427	French/English
235.	Educational Success School	81	English
236.	Muslim Integration School	517	English
237.	Arts Model School	301	French/English
238.	An-Najāḥ National School	153	English
239.	Borj Al-Barājna High School	179	French/English
240.	Al-Ārz National School	236	French/English
241.	True Model School	129	French/English
242.	Lebanese Fraternity Primary School	492	French/English
243.	Union School	294	French/English
244.	Jawād (AS)	246	French/English
245.	Satisfaction School	1082	French/English
246.	Pacific School	316	French/English
247.	Lebanese Free Progress School	1164	French/English
248.	Ms. Zahrā School	423	French/English
249.	Imām Ṣādeq School	469	English
250.	Al-Sanābil School	128	English

Tuition-based schools

251.	Northern Board Secondary School	383	French
252.	La Sagesse de Saint Maron – New Board	1160	French
253.	Modern Mixed School	289	French
254.	Adventist Secondary School	394	English
255.	Sisters of the Two Sacred Hearts	1626	French
256.	Peter and Elisabeth Torossian Armenian	258	English
257.	Care School	729	French/English
258.	Al-Riyaḍ Lebanese	54	French/English
259.	Fathers Clerical College Bushriah		English
260.	Love School	163	French
261.	Sisters of Our Lady of the Apostles	1916	French
262.	George Assyrian	109	French
263.	Education Development School	87	French
264.	Congregation of the Catholic Armenian Sisters	451	French
265.	Sainte-Famille (French)	2088	French
266.	Lebanese Foundation Modern School	398	French
267.	Our Lady of Mount Carmel – Carmelite Sisters	1760	French
268.	Mār Bihnām School – Dominican Nuns	150	French
269.	Armenian-Syrian Khan Ameryan	148	

270.	Saint Elie	151	French
271.	Antonine Sisters of Our Lady	763	French
272.	Lebanese School	33	French
273.	Modern Lycée Saint Joseph	414	French
274.	Center Patriarch Maximus V Ḥakim	436	French
275.	Rosary Sisters Secondary School	1164	French
276.	East Wood College	209	English
277.	Sisters of Saint Joseph of the Two Sacred Hearts – ‘Ain Najm	2213	French
278.	College Mont La Salle	2089	French
279.	La Sagesse – Branch Mary the Mother of Wisdom (English Section)	999	English
280.	Antonine Sisters of Saint Dumat	961	French
281.	Lycée Charlemange	262	French
282.	Antonine Fathers School	304	French
283.	College Ferrer Oni	307	French
284.	Saint Theresa’s Modern Lebanese Secondary School	567	French/English
285.	Foundation Father ‘Afif ‘Osyran “Home Care”	24	French
286.	Al-Mahdi (4) Secondary School	1376	French/English
287.	Antonine Fathers	1829	French
288.	Sainte-Famille	472	French
289.	Lebanese League	88	French
290.	Lebanese Evangelical School for Boys and Girls	1154	English
291.	Sisters of Charity – Al-Bizansun	1016	French
292.	Antonine Sisters Secondary School	1601	French/English
293.	Fathers Selected Schools	185	French/English
294.	Melkârt Secondary School	997	French
295.	Saint Michel	85	French
296.	Dominican Sisters of Dolifrand	650	French
297.	Our Lady (public)	3045	French
298.	Sisters of the Two Sacred Hearts – Saint Kasfarios	1216	French
299.	Brothers Lebanese School	583	French/English
300.	Lycée Pilot	753	French
301.	Modern Lebanese Secondary School	167	French/English
302.	Saint John Modern Secondary School	347	French/English
303.	Brothers Modern School	630	French/English
304.	Sisters of Our Lady of Deliverance – Al- Makhlaşyat	464	French
305.	The Rock School	336	French
306.	Saint Matthew the Apostle School	280	French/English

307.	Saint Rita School – New City	180	French/English
308.	Competencies School	215	French
309.	Beirut Civil School	379	English
310.	La Sagesse – Branch Saint-Jean	1573	French
311.	Model Message School	142	French/English
312.	Saint George School	634	English
313.	Forest Intermediate School	522	English
314.	Saint John the Baptist	611	French
315.	The Lycée	1105	French
316.	Lycée Adonis	1050	French/English
317.	Lycée The Visitation	1977	French/English
318.	Beirut Universal College	326	English
319.	College “Mon Liban”	126	English
320.	Our Lady of Graces	503	French/English
321.	Gothenburg School	73	French/English
322.	School Institute of Toulouse	652	French/English
323.	Lycée Saint Lade	173	French/English
324.	Age International School	659	French/English
325.	New Statement School	889	French/English
326.	Lycée Emmanuel	353	French/English
327.	High School for Deaf	17	English
328.	Lebanese Modern School	707	French/English
329.	Lady of the Annunciation	222	French
330.	Popon Rouge	8	French
331.	Dudu Bonheur	13	French
332.	Saint Maron – Antonine	576	French
333.	Young Women Christian Association – YWCA	57	French
334.	Blue-Blanc-Rouge	20	French
335.	Education House Lebanese School	132	English
336.	Civil Secondary School	264	French/English
337.	Nour Secondary School	165	French/English
338.	Nour Secondary School	51	French/English
338.	Greenland Secondary School	517	English
340.	Lighthouse Arts school	513	French/English
341.	Seven Grades Secondary School	220	English
342.	Safety Intermediate School	88	English
343.	Satisfaction kindergarten – High School	186	French/English
344.	Knowledge Secondary School	331	French/English
345.	Islamic Integration Intermediate School	80	English
346.	Arts Secondary School	287	French/English
347.	Federation Modern Secondary School	94	English
348.	Federation Modern Secondary School	174	English
349.	La Sagesse Supplementary Lebanese	160	French/English

School		
350. World Lebanese Secondary School	417	English
351. Model K-Civil Kindergarten	86	French/English
352. Nour	302	French/English
353. Kindergarten Faith	673	English
354. Lead Secondary School	545	French/English
355. Sunrise School	120	English
356. Roses School	11	French/English
357. Children Kindergarten	528	English
358. Imām Al-Ḥassan – Association of Charities	1651	French/English
359. New Light School	85	French/English
360. Saint Joseph Secondary School	201	French
361. Rābya Lebanese School	120	English
362. Ḥassan Kāmal Al-Ṣabāḥ	135	English
363. Ashbāl Al-Sāḥel School	218	English
364. Ashbāl Al-Sāḥel Secondary School	228	English
365. Friendship Modern Secondary School	472	French/English
366. Saint George	559	French/English
367. Akha Lebanese School.	217	French/English
368. Muṣṭafa Secondary School	355	French/English
369. Palace of Culture	263	French/English
370. Guidelines School	210	French/English
371. Elite Lebanese School	107	French
372. Lycée de Avins	1542	French/English
373. National Primary School	173	English
374. National intermediate School	112	French/English
375. New Brothers School	1359	French/English
376. Friends Secondary School	119	English
377. City Cultural Scientific School	249	French/English
378. Lycée Patriot	568	French/English
379. Love School – Al-Maryja	1337	French/English
380. Nour Supplementary School	140	English
381. Students’ Committee Secondary School	499	English
382. Muṣṭafa School – Bourne	1304	French/English
383. Union Education	451	French/English
384. Muṣṭafa Secondary School	770	French/English
385. Al-Mahdi (AS) Secondary School	2109	English
386. Palmi School	589	English
387. Pioneer Secondary School	132	French/English
388. Divine Providence – Sisters of Love	1027	French
389. Borj International High School	802	English
390. Jāra International College	1312	French/English
391. Imām Al-Khomeyny Supplementary School	635	English
392. Beirut Central School	543	French/English

393.	Najāh National High School	218	French/English
394.	Beirut National School	427	French/English
395.	Borj Al-Hadāya School	304	English
396.	Imām Al-Raḍā Scientific School	297	French/English
397.	Horse Kindergarten	247	French/English
398.	Prince Secondary School	518	English
399.	Şādiq Kindergarten (AS)	393	French/English
400.	Union Contemporary School	80	French/English
401.	Lycée Blunt	220	English
402.	Center for Secondary Education	191	English
403.	Raḍwan Al-'Aytāwy Secondary School	487	French/English
404.	Taḥwyṭa Secondary School	347	English
405.	Al-Sanābil New Secondary School	51	English
406.	Bāqr Science School	291	English
407.	Ruwais Model School	132	English
408.	Imām Al-Hādi for Deaf and Blind	358	English
409.	High School K (civil company)	933	English

MOUNT LEBANON – SUBURBS FAR OF BEIRUT

Subsidized schools

410.	Children Commission School	687	French
411.	Children Commission School	776	French
412.	Bishop's First School	623	French
413.	Gifted Virgin – Sisters of Charity	442	French
414.	Saint John the Baptist Primary School	102	French
415.	Islamic Charitable – Khalda	122	English
416.	Righteous School	852	French/English
417.	Science and Light	187	English
418.	Modern Lebanese School	263	French/English
419.	National College	566	French/English
420.	Lycée Venus	611	French/English
421.	Paradise Kindergarten	410	French/English
422.	Al-Hadāya – Al-Shuyfāt	261	French/English

Tuition-based schools

423.	Dār Lebanese Science	16	French
424.	Saint-Famille (French)	1194	French
425.	Lebanese-German School	423	French
426.	Center for Monks of Lebanese	2296	French/English
427.	Saint Rita	145	French
428.	Saint Rita	29	French

429.	Apostles School	2184	French
430.	Soeurs de la Saint-Famille – Maronite	849	French
431.	Saint Michael High School	348	French
432.	Annunciation	62	French
433.	Saint Joseph – Sisters of Charity	1559	French
434.	Seminary of the Holy Spirit	12	French
435.	Saint Joseph – Fathers of Mazarien	3758	French
436.	Saint John the Baptist	34	French
437.	Notre Dame	4091	French/English
438.	Lycée Deauville	442	French
439.	Sābis International School – Admā	750	English
440.	Iguesha Mānukyāt Secondary School	452	English
441.	Saint Rita	897	French
442.	Bughus Kārmyryān School	115	English
443.	Beirut Evangelical School for Boys and Girls	980	English
444.	Cultural Center Beirut - Şālym	814	French
445.	Icons Secondary School	172	French/English
446.	Our Lady of Lourdes of the Maronite Sisters of the Holy Family	559	French
447.	Phoenicia Secondary School	103	English
448.	Saint Joseph of the Maronite Sisters of the Holy Family	285	French
449.	Shānfyl Brothers of Mary	2928	French
450.	Sisters of the Cross	2100	French
451.	Our Lady of Deliverance of the Maronite Sisters of the Holy Family	639	French
452.	House of Civilization School	216	French
453.	Saint George high School	552	French
454.	Dyr Biz Secondary School	343	English
455.	Saint George – Şālym	533	French
456.	Millington and Hāyk Arslānian	686	French
457.	International Montana College	322	French/English
458.	Don Bosco Intermediate School	244	French
459.	Palace Pine Secondary School	698	French/English
460.	House of Science Secondary School	1089	French/English
461.	Al-Byān School	905	French/English
462.	Healthy Youth School	145	English
463.	Universal High School	250	English
464.	Imām Al-Khaww Secondary School	430	French/English
465.	Al-Shuyfāt National School	1329	English
466.	Lebanese Modern Secondary School	95	French/English
467.	High School of Science and Culture of Lebanon	240	English

468.	My New College	1582	French/English
469.	Al-Gazāli	449	English
470.	Al-Gazāli Secondary School	113	English
471.	Lebanese High School	286	English
472.	Middle East Secondary School	596	French/English
473.	Al-Mujtaba Secondary School	1200	French/English
474.	Lycée National	2366	French/English
475.	Modern Education	249	English
476.	Lycée Phoenix	344	French/English
477.	New Generation Secondary School	648	French/English
478.	International Seng School	745	English
479.	Islamic Orphanage – Pacific Foundation for Visual Impairment	50	English
480.	Lebanese-European School	589	English
481.	Glories School	2247	French/English
482.	Al-Shuyfāt National School	82	English
483.	Lebanese-American School	490	English
484.	New Century School	650	English
485.	Madrasa Al-Bayān	255	French/English
486.	Jesus School	272	French/English
487.	La Cité Culturelle	1214	French/English
488.	Al-Bayāder - 'Aramun	652	English
489.	Green Space School	539	French/English
490.	Madrasa Al-Amyan 1	295	French/English
491.	Faith Model – 'Aramun	608	English
492.	Arts and Sciences School	174	English
493.	Heliopolis Secondary School	160	English
494.	Rābya School	122	English
495.	Intermediate National College of Al-Shuyfāt	293	French/English
496.	Lycée Venus	125	French/English
497.	ASEM	736	French/English
489.	Al-Hadāya Intermediate School – Al-Shuyfāt	137	French/English
499.	Islamic Orphanage – Special Education Foundation	220	English
500.	Smart High School	880	French/English
501.	Panda Play School	77	French/English
502.	International School of Lebanon	307	English
503.	Al-Shuyfāt High School	340	English
504.	Canadian High School	156	French/English
505.	Doha	702	French/English
506.	Carmel of Saint Joseph	683	French
507.	German School/Kindergarten	981	English

508.	Lycée Social	229	French/English
509.	Sisters of the Two Sacred Hearts High School	503	French

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