09 PH
N267

A TRANSCENDENT LEBANESE IDENTITY: MORE THAN A MIRAGE?

Minerva Nasser-Eddine
BA[Hons], MA, Grad.Dipl in Bus.Ent.

Thesis submitted for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
Politics Department
School of Humanities and Social Sciences
The University of Adelaide

December 2003

Table of Contents

List of Tables
List of Figures
Maps
Abstract
Declaration
Acknowledgements

Introduction 1

Part 1 – In Search of Political Identity: The Politicisation of the 'Middle East' & Its People

Chapter 1: The Dynamics of National Identity – The Creation of the 'Modern Middle East' 18
1.1. Domination of a Region: Ottoman & European Colonisation 19
1.2. Cultural Diversity: The Question of Political Identity 28
1.2.1. Phase 1: Pre-Ottoman & Ottoman Periods – Primordialism 32
1.2.1.1. Traditionalism 32
a. Kinship 32
b. Ethnicity 34
1.2.1.2. Feudalism 35
1.2.1.3. Religion 35
1.2.1.4. Primordialism Today 36
1.2.2. Phase 2: 1914-1967 Colonialism, Indepedence & Modern Day Nationalism 40
1.2.2.1. The Emergence of Nationalism in the Arab World 40
1.2.2.2. The Emergence of Arab Nationalism 47
1.2.2.3. The Failure of Arab Nationalism 51
1.2.3. Phase 3: 1967 to the Present Day – The Period of Disillusionment 64
1.2.3.1. State Nationalism 70
1.2.3.2. Islamic Political-Cultural Identity 74
a. Diversion Towards Islamic Political-Cultural Identity 75
b. Attraction to Islamism 79
1.3. Conclusion 86

Chapter 2: The Dynamics of National Identity – Recent Historical Developments 88
2.1. The Failures of Post-Independence: National Identity in the Arab World 88
2.1.1. Neopatriarchy 88
2.1.2. Eurocentrism & The Act of Mimicry 92
2.1.3. Nativism 98
2.1.4. External Intervention 99
2.1.5. The Question of Political Legitimacy 109
2.2. Constructing Post-National Identity 118
2.2.1. The Question of National Identity 118
2.2.2. The Failure of Decolonisation 129
2.2.3. How to Achieve Decolonisation 130
2.3. Conclusion 134

Chapter 3: The Dynamics of National Identity – Localism, Statism, Regionalism & Globalism 136
3.1. Globalisation 136
3.1.1. Economic – Capital Globalisation 141
3.1.2. Cultural Globalisation 144
3.2. Alternative views to Globalisation: Arab-Islamists Thoughts 151
3.2.1. The Islamist School of Thought 151
3.2.2. Advocates of Globalisation 159
3.2.3. The Marxist View 160

3.2.4. Opponents of Globalisation 162
3.2.5. The Liberal View 163
3.2.6. Arab Nationalist View 164
3.2.7. School of Modernisation Theory 166
3.3. Lebanese Thoughts 169
3.3.1. Lebanese Intellectuals 169
3.4. Conclusion 173

Part 2 – Lebanon: The Precarious Republic 175

Chapter 4: Lebanon, *Zah'rat il-Sharq?* (The Flower of the East?) 176
4.1. The Historical Development of Lebanese National Identity 177
4.2. Socio-Cultural Factors Impeding Lebanese National Identity: The Nature of Lebanese Society 196
1. The Politics of Traditionalism and Primordialism 196
2. The Politics of Nobility – Modern Day Feudalism 198
3. The Politics of Legitimacy, Accountability, Cronyism & Nepotism 204
4. The Politics of Faith 207
i. The Status Quo Coalition 208
ii. Reformists 211
5. The Politics of External Intervention 217
4.3. Conclusion 226

Chapter 5: Lebanon's Precarious Balance of Power: A Government of Men or of Laws? 227
5.1. Consociational Democracy 228
5.2. Lebanon's Political Apparatus 233
5.3. Problems with the Lebanese Political Structure 238
The Failures of Consociational Democracy 239
5.3.1. Distinct Lines of Cleavage 239
5.3.2. Multiple Balance of Power 241
5.3.3. Popular Attitudes Favourable towards a Grand Coalition 243
5.3.4. An External Threat 245
5.3.5. Moderate Nationalism 246
5.3.6. Low Total Load on the System 250
5.3.7. Stable Coalition 251
5.3.8. Proportionality 253
5.3.9. De-politicisation 255
5.3.10. Compromise 256
5.3.11. Concession by the Stronger to the Weaker 258
5.4. The Taef Agreement: The Agreement of National Understanding 261
5.5. Conclusion 279

Chapter 6: Survey Results 281
6.1. Overview 281
6.2. Hypothesis & Predictions 281
6.3. Methodology 282
6.3.1. Target Population 282
6.3.2. Sampling 286
6.3.3. General Survey Design 286
6.4. Results
6.4.1. Associations between background Characteristics 287
6.4.2. Identification 288
6.4.3. Identification by Gender 291
6.4.4. National Identification by Religion 291
6.4.5. National Political Identification by Institution 294
6.4.6. How the Respondents perceive the Identification of fellow Lebanese 296

6.4.7. Multiple Identity 298
6.4.8. Existence of Identity 298
6.4.9. The Development of National Culture 299
6.5. Contentiousness of Key Socio-Political Issues 299
6.5.1. National Identity Formation 301
6.5.2. Desirable Characteristics of a Lebanese State 302
6.5.3. Confessionalism 303
6.5.4. Civil Marriage Services 304
6.5.5. Religious Affiliation 305
6.5.6. Socio-Economic Factors 305
6.5.7. On Regionalisation 305
6.5.8. On Globalisation 308
6.5. Conclusion 310

Chapter 7: The Art of Myth Making 312
7.1. Nation Building 313
7.1.1. Invoking National Sentiment 316
7.1.2. Education 321
7.1.3. Media 327
7.2. Deconfessionalisation 330
7.3. Conclusion 337

Conclusion 339
Afterword 344

Appendices 346
Appendix 1 – Sample Survey 347
Appendix 2 – Taef Agreement 348

Bibliography 349

Abstract

Comprising both theoretical and empirical components, this thesis attempts to convey how the conceptualization of interests, identifications, boundaries, historical forces and tensions in the pre-20th Century Arab world persist today among new forms of internationally recognized states and regional organisations. The central actor is Lebanon and the thesis examines its progress towards becoming a 'nation-state' with its own unique culture and identity, and its aspiration to be politically and economically independent. In reality, however, the interests held by other nation-states concerning Lebanon's geo-strategic position often results in their resistance to Lebanon's independent political development.

This study investigates contemporary resonances in the new globalised era of identifications and conceptions of political boundaries, which originally appeared in pre-20th Century Arab world. This thesis argues that within a 'supra-nationalising' 'Middle Eastern' or regional entity, neither national identity nor nationalism have disappeared as cultural and political phenomena. Rather they persist and manifest in variable forms at popular and elite levels. The basis for the region's fragmented or only partial unity, is due primarily to the failure of the decolonisation project, of which, post-war Lebanon stands as a quintessential case in point. Lebanon is torn between primordial indices and on the other hand balancing a delicate confessional equation, and remains geo-strategically entwined in the broader Arab-Israeli conflict. Conversely it exhibits a desire to drive the region into the globalised era of competition, freedom, democracy and development.