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AN EXPLORATIVE STUDY ON THE APPROACH OF
PRIVATE SCHOOLS IN LEBANON
PREPARING STUDENTS FOR A
SOCIETY WITH RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY

by
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A thesis
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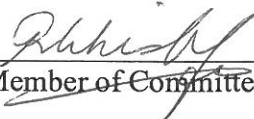PREPARING STUDENTS FOR A
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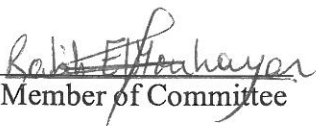

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AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

Christelle Samir Naddaf   for   Masters of Arts
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Title: An Explorative Study on the Approach of Private Schools in Lebanon Preparing Students for a Society with Religious Diversity

Since there is a concentration of religious diversity found in Lebanon the purpose of this qualitative naturalistic study is to document and describe how religious education in terms of the teaching of religion as well as teaching about religious diversity is approached in private Lebanese schools. Moreover, the study collected data on the goals, policies, and practices, in place in schools that are related to teaching of religions and religious diversity and compares these goals, practices, curriculum, and extracurricular activities between religious schools and secular schools. It is a case study that takes a look at six private schools. These schools consist of a Sunni Muslim school, Shiite Muslim school, Orthodox Christian school, Maronite Christian school, and two secular schools. Data was collected through interviews with the principals, academic coordinators and teachers, and triangulated through examination of existing documented policies and related curricular material. The study followed the guidelines of grounded theory methodology analyzing data using the constant comparative method.

The results showed that all the religious schools have a stated goal of educating their students religiously and religion diversity education is addressed in a minimal manner. Religious diversity is brought up in the Civics, History, and Arabic courses. Religion is further mentioned in the science courses in the Islamic Schools, and in the form of World Religions in Secular School 2. Extracurricular activities which promoted religious diversity were rarely in religious schools, yet are found in the Shiite school in the form of a student exchange program and in Secular School 1 in the form of religious holiday celebrations. The policies of the religious schools mandated that students follow the norms of the majority: in the Christian School no hijab, in the Muslim Schools all wore the hijab, in the Orthodox School no religious symbols were allowed. The main difference found between the religious and secular schools is that religious schools focused on the majority's confessional identity and did not provide for religious diversity whereas the secular schools accepted the religious diversity of the students. The study also found that similar to the findings of other schools around the world, Lebanese schools address only few dimensions of multicultural education (Banks,2009), and show evidence of practices under the first three levels of multicultural education based on Rodriguez and Sjostrom (1996) model.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Around the world, there is a rise in the interest of understanding the value of learning about religions that diverge from one's own beliefs (Colbert, 2010). Many societies, however, are still unwilling to prepare their students for this diversity by educating them about different faiths, henceforth neglecting all spiritualities (Jaschok & Chan, 2009). However, scholars assert that "it is not differences in themselves that cause the problems, but how people respond to differences" (Derman-Sparks, 2001). However, with the increasing of religious diversity in countries as well as in schools, it is noteworthy to acknowledge how limiting it is for schools to cast aside such a prominent topic. The question that springs afterwards is: How do educational institutions in a diverse society deal with diversity? Are differences just relinquished or neglected, or are they brought to light, celebrated and understood?

In Lebanon, the society is mainly considered to be diverse in terms of religion. In Lebanese schools, the topic of religion is either utterly disregarded or is solely taught for the purpose of religiously educating and expanding on the affiliated confessional identity (Salameh, 2000). In Lebanon, the constitution gives religious denominations the right to open their own private schools and grant them a considerable degree of freedom when it comes to the content of their curriculum, especially when it comes to religious education (Bashshur, 1999). Article 10 of the Lebanese Constitution states: "Education shall be free in so far as it is not contrary to public order and morals, and does not affect the dignity of any of the religions or sects. There shall be no violation of the right of religious communities to have their own schools, provided they

follow the general rules issued by the state regulating public instruction" (Lebanese Constitution, 1926). This grants religious denominations the right to have their own schools. As a result, a great percentage of private schools are owned by religious institutions whose aims and approaches are set to teaching their own religion, which they integrate in their curriculum. The purpose in regards to teaching religion in schools is questioned by Salameh (2000): whether it is used for historical purposes or to preach. First and foremost schools must decide if their goal is to teach religion or to teach about religions (Rose, 2006; Salameh, 2000). There are no studies in Lebanon that describe in detail how this is implemented within the curriculum.

In the Western World religious diversity is only a part of many other forms of diversity. Around the world, diversity is encountered in every aspect of life and has various features and sources. In the United States, race counts as one of the prominent types of diversity. Teachers try to approach the topic of racial diversity in schools, through history and literature classes in addition to other extracurricular activities. Whether there is only one diversifying factor to be found in a society or multiple factors, there are unique qualities and differences present within each country in regards to its citizens. In other parts of the world, when World War II (WWII) took place, the scale of immigration has dramatically widened, especially with group migration of ethnic groups, increasing in different countries around the world (Banks, 2009). When it came down to the education of these immigrants' children throughout the United States, the field of education started to see the implementation of various programs in order to enhance the children's comprehension and performance outcome. The prominent purpose for founding these programs was not only narrowed to improving the migrant students' achievements; It has also sought to "help students and teachers develop more positive attitudes toward racial, cultural, ethnic, and language diversity" (Banks, 2009, p.5).

As a result, educational institution's interest in educating for these diversities arose leading to approaches to education that embraces this diversity and prepare students for life in a diverse society. Banks (2009) states, that multicultural education has evolved as an approach that can build up awareness of differences in order to unify through similarities and understanding. Multicultural education consists of shaping educational services in a way to include the voice, perspective and experiences of different sectors, gender, race, ethnicity, able-ism, social class, language, exceptionality, and religion (Banks, 2009). A main component throughout many studies on multicultural education indicates that multicultural education has at least one out of the three main purposes: to promote tolerance, spread justice and evoke a social change (Stevens & Charles, 2005). These purposes can be applicable to multicultural education in social systems where it is taught regardless of the region. Multicultural Education becomes a requirement in order to bring awareness and increase understanding of differences within the population found in schools and the greater society. This brings about a consistently emerging need for programs that addresses diversity that is deeply integrated into the curriculum. Programs which are not deeply integrated into the curriculum are found not to have enduring effects on students learning (Banks, 2009). Today's world is an interconnected system. Given that, many believe it has become adamant for students to develop a global knowledge.

Demands from underrepresented groups were that their cultures, histories, and perspectives be portrayed in the curriculum along with hiring more diverse faculty and staff within the schools seeking to represent a tangible example of role models for the students (Banks, 2009; Delpit, 2006; Derman-Sparks, 2001). The majority of the reforms in the United States which came about when the above requests were made included the call for observation of different ethnic holidays and the implementation of ethnic studies as elective courses in schools.

However, these ethnic elective courses were only provided to students who hold the same ethnicity that the course covered (Banks, 2009). Another aspect that was greatly scrutinized and revamped was the textbooks that were used within schools (Banks, 2009; Delpit, 2006). As a result of all these contributing factors, "multicultural education emerged from the diverse courses, programs, and practices that educational institutions devised to respond to the demands, needs, and aspirations of the various groups" (Banks, 2009, p.7).

If differences are expected to be embraced, then they first need to be understood. Thus, to cease the propagation of these misconceptions, schools ought to tackle these facts alongside their students as to reduce the spread of mistaken hearsays (Banks, 2009). Similar to other forms of diversity, research shows it to be necessary that students are introduced to some form of religious education, because; ignorance has the potential to breed unjustified stereotypes and prejudices (Banks, 2009; Bell, 2007; Gutmann, 2003; Howard, 1999).

The Context of the Study: Lebanon Educational System

Lebanon has a majority of private schools, with public schools being the minority (Bashshur, 1999). For the 2010-2011 academic year, 66% of the student population is enrolled in private schools whereas only 30% are in public schools (Yaacoub & Badre, 2012). Article 10 of the Lebanese constitution grants the freedom of education and the right for each community to have its own schools by stating that: "Teaching is a free enterprise … no constraint will be imposed on the right of any community to have its own schools… as long as it does not violate public order and values" (Lebanese Constitution, 1926). The Lebanese constitution further emphasizes that freedom is to be given to all religions, as long as the religious groups share a mutual respect with the government itself and each other (Lebanese Constitution, 1926). In

private schools in Lebanon, private-run confessional schools teach religion at their discretion without guidance from the Ministry of Education (Abouchedid, Nasser, & Jeremy, 2002).

In Lebanon one form of diversity is religious affiliation. There are two main confessional identities that the Lebanese citizens claim to be a part of, which are Christian and Muslim. In order to perceive the current dichotomy that Lebanon is currently in, one must explore into its past, as to have a better understanding of its present. Lebanon has encountered a rich history. It was in 1920 when this country regained its own sovereignty from Syria by the French. It was granted its independence in 1943. Lebanon has seen many wars, including a destructive civil war which took place from 1975 till 1990 (Central Intelligence Agency, 2011). At the root of this war were tensions and political struggles along the religious line. The various confessional groups were competing for political power. Tensions between the two main religious groups, Christians and Muslims, reached their climax during the civil war. An accord was decided upon when the Ta'if agreement of 1989 was signed, which stabilized in form of law which had already informally been in practice, which is how the highest positions of the government would be divided according to religious affiliation (Bashshur, 1999).

Rationale

Multicultural education may comprise of various constituents. Some purposes for utilizing multicultural education are to teach about race, special needs, gender, social class and religion. On the international front, teaching of multicultural diversity has been greatly discussed through various studies and researchers. However, it is the topic of race which receives the most attention from researchers for the reason that it is considered to be the most prominent form of diversity found in the Western World (Banks, 2009; Bell, 2007; Gutmann, 2003; Howard, 1999). However, each author states that their findings do not only pertain to the specific type of

diversity they discuss; One needs to understand that "any theory of multicultural education should be both principled and adapted to variations among groups and contexts" (Gutmann, 2003). Therefore, practitioners should not be deterred from utilizing the main concepts and approaches of studies which refer to different types of diversity because the concepts used in multicultural education can be utilized throughout the different forms of diversity (Banks, 2009; Bell, 2007; Howard, 1999).

Not to the same extent as race, the topic of religious diversity and how to teach about religion education has been a topic which is somewhat discussed by studies such as: Grajales, Leon and Elias (2010), Kantor and Lowe (2007), Keast (2008), O'Grady (2010), Milson (1997), Morelli and Spencer (2000), Raditoaneng (2011), Rose (2006), Sears and Carper (1998). The main topic discussed about religious education in schools has been primarily focused on the necessity of having it taught (Kantor & Lowe, 2007). However, none of these studies and position papers looks at the methods a school is utilizing in order to instruct its students about religious diversity. Moreover, on the international front, there is a gap in the literature in regards to explorations or descriptions concerning how schools deal with the issue of religious diversity (Kantor & Lowe, 2007) especially between religious and secular schools. This is the area in which this study will fill this gap in the research on the international front.

In Lebanon, religion occupies the main national stream of diversity in schools and throughout the country. Students, administrators and teachers are constantly interacting with individuals belonging to variant confessional identities from their own. However, until this day there is no national textbook or policy implemented as to educate students about the diversity they observe on a daily bases (Abi Nader, 2004; Abouchedid, Nasser, & Blommestein, 2002; Bashshur, 2003). There are no set standards in the schooling system regarding education about

religions or religious diversity and the procedures regarding how the topic of religion is handled is left up to the schools discretion (Abi Nader, 2004; Abouchedid, Nasser, & Blommestein, 2002). Researching how private schools in Lebanon educate their students about religious diversity would be important to document because of its predominance in Lebanon (Abouchedid, Nasser, & Blommestein, 2002). This study will fill in this gap by documenting the manner in which Lebanese private schools are educating their students about religions and religious diversity.

Purpose of the Study

This study aims to examine the methods private schools in Lebanon are putting into use in order to prepare their students to live in a society with religious diversity. The purpose of the study has four components, first to identify the goals of each school in teaching about religions, whether it is to religiously educate or to educate about religion diversity; second, to examine and describe the strategies and practices which are utilized to educate students on the topic of religion and religious diversity; third, to identify and describe the policies and organizational practices which have impact on religions and their diversity; fourth, this study will look at the differentiating factors between the religious and secular schools in regards to the abovementioned practices.

Research Questions

1. What are the goals, policies, and practices of teaching about religion in Lebanese private schools in terms of:

    a. Teaching students to become proficient in understanding and practicing their confessional identity?

    b. Educating students about the religions diversity found in their society and world community?

2. In light of the above, what are the similarities and differences that can be found in the above practices among religious and secular schools?

Significance

"Children begin to notice differences and construct classificatory and evaluative categories very early [on]" (Derman-Sparks, 2001). This brings about the dangers of stereotypes arising, yet introduces the opportunity to teach about diversity. This should stimulate parents, teachers, administrators, policy makers, and government officials to address diversity in a practical manner, in order to promote multicultural awareness at a young age. Abiding by this, would provide pupils with the opportunity to grow having grasped the notion that "individuals should be treated and treat one another as equal citizens, regardless of their race, ethnicity, race, or religion" (Gutmann, 2003).

In terms of research this study provides an in-depth description of Lebanese private schools approach to teaching about religious diversity inside the classroom. In terms of the methods utilized within the school to teach the topic, the findings of this study will describe how education about religious diversity in private schools in Lebanon, is approached. It is insistently needed since there is a gap in research regarding schools in Lebanon and approaches followed by schools to educate about religious diversity. Internationally, the main topic discussed about religious education in schools, is still mainly focused on whether it should be taught or not (Kantor & Lowe, 2007; Milson, 1997). The fact that this question subsists solely, proceeds to portray a major issue.

The importance of this study lays in its capacity to impact practices of school administrators, teachers, and parents who strive to build schools which try and educate students about religious diversity. This aids administrators in shedding light on whether or not they are

educating their students on the topic of religious diversity in the Lebanese community and to what extent inclusivity is promoted within the school system. The main question which may be effective for school administrators to pose is not if they are merely promoting an inclusive atmosphere, but whether or not they are offering an education for their student body, to learn and build unity among diverse students (Adams, 1997).

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

There are many facets to multicultural education. This review will cover multicultural education from different aspects. First, the concept of multicultural education will be juxtaposed to the concept of intercultural education and from which the conceptual framework of this study will be established. Second multicultural education will be surveyed in three countries: the United Kingdom, the United States of America and Lebanon. The third section discusses tolerance as a goal for multicultural education and the other purposes of multicultural education. The fourth point looks at the different dimensions and stages of multicultural education. The fifth section of the review explores the implementation of useful policies which are utilized in order to create an integrated and structural change. This change can be complemented through extracurricular activities. The sixth is to identify the different approaches used to teach multicultural education. The seventh section deals with the question if multicultural education should be considered indispensable in certain environments where diversity is scarce. Having handled the above mentioned question, the importance of training for teachers and administrators, in regards to dealing with diversity in the school is discussed. At this stage, the review will delve deeper into multicultural education and focus on the sector of religious diversity. This will take place by focusing more on the teaching and the approaches to religion and religious diversity through action research, discussions and various approaches. Finally, literature on the mentality of teaching in sectarian specified schools will also be explored.

Multicultural Education: Experiences from Various Countries

In Lebanon there is no form of multicultural education which is taught. However, many called for educational reform to take place in order to prepare students for tolerance of religious diversity. In order to make this a possibility the first question, vital to be asked, is the one which Salameh (2000) proposes making the choice of teaching religion education or educating about religions in Lebanese schools. The initial question which Salameh (2000) raises is if information of any form should be included in the curriculum. If the response is an accord, he forms a list of questions which should be asked before any such program is implemented. First, Salameh (2000) questions what the purpose is, for teaching about religion in schools; if it is applied in order to preach or to educate about historical information. Next, Salameh (2000) demands to devise strategies to implement, such a curriculum, by deciding what content and subjects will be taught, and which documents should be used to deliver this information. Furthermore, one should ask if students may acquire this knowledge through a narrative form or discussions and by first hand experiences, for example, simulating mass or the offering of certain Muslim prayers. Lastly, Salameh (2000) recapitulates the importance of identifying the purpose behind which religion is being taught and the different strategies adopted to teach the subject. Throughout these stages of questions, Salameh (2000) reiterates the importance of realizing whether the goal is to teach religion or to teach about religions. The question at hand, asks if schools are merely to educate their population about the majority's religion. Is religious education rooted to make students more proficient in the understanding of their confessional identity, or is it used to educate about the religious diversity found in the world and community? This is the question that Salameh (2000) and Rose (2006) suggest as absolutely essential for schools to ask themselves before the implementation of religion in their curriculum.

The Case of the United Kingdom

The United Kingdom is a country which, like many others, is a melting pot of diversity found amongst its citizens. Given this diversity, the question that arouses in the schools of the United Kingdom is: which religious beliefs and nonreligious beliefs should be incorporated into the curriculum? The dominant religion of the country and the monarchy is Anglican- a sect of Christianity. However, in recent years, in addition to religious sects, nonreligious groups and their followers, such as atheism, agnosticism, humanism, and sectarianism, were demanding to have their voice included in education. Members of these non-religious sects felt victimized. Eventually, the decision was a matter of the school's perspective on whether or not they want to incorporate such religious beliefs into their curriculum (Thomas, 2006).

The Standing Advisory Committee for Religious Education (SACRE), the statutory body responsible for religious education at a local level, in the United Kingdom has expressed their desire "for more involvement by all faith communities rather than one or two; more focus on religious issues, including interfaith aspects; and a greater recognition of the generic aspects of religion" (Rose, 2006). With the goal of joining the education of all the faiths together, Rose (2006) also mentions that policies, concerning religious education, tend to favor the dominant religious group over the others by offering more curricular integration on the topics of the dominant religion. This causes schools to teach about one confessional identity with barely a slight regard for other religions in the curriculum. In order to prevent that, the SACRE members gave great importance in creating a national framework for the teaching of religious education which would guarantee the inclusion of all major religions into the curriculum. The implementation of this framework would, therefore, promote awareness of religious diversity in schools and amongst students (Rose, 2006).

The Case of the United States of America

Like the United Kingdom, the United States of America is a blend of people ascending from a multitude of races, religions, and ethnicities who work, live, and learn together. Accepting and recognizing diversity amongst students sprang in the schooling system after the civil rights movement. One of the demands of the Civil Rights Movement was to eliminate discrimination of African Americans in public institutions within the U.S.A. One of the main public institutions, sought after to change in order to incorporate integration, was the public school system. After the plight of the African-Americans, the civil rights movement was triggered. Other ethnic groups then started to follow suit and demand that their rights and voices be heard and their inclusionary demands be met. These actions gave birth to what would later be known as multicultural education (Morelli & Spencer, 2000). At the start of the civil rights movements, students were only legally able to attend a public school in their district; however this still was looked down upon. In recent decades, the United States education system found it discriminatory that white students who are financially able to live in more prominent neighborhoods benefited from better public education, where as families of lower socio-economic backgrounds, mostly made up of minorities, went to local Title One public schools with lower funding (Benjamin, 2012). The Fourteenth Amendment led the school system to call for the integration of socioeconomic, racial and ethnically diverse individuals so that all had a fair chance at receiving the best possible education (Benjamin, 2012). The busing program was introduced in the 1970s in order to solve this problem. Bus rides for students can take up to one hour but the benefits of the integration have been found to outweigh the possible inconvenience that a long drive might bring about. Integration, that busing brought about, helped schools

simulate a more real world scenario, because students will be faced with diversity once they entered the workforce (Benjamin, 2012).

Moreover, in order to approach the matter more appropriately, with this diversity found in the United States of America especially in the schools, there has been a new movement in the government which made it necessary that even pre-service teachers would receive multicultural training to enable them to acquire their teaching license (Stevens & Charles, 2005). In the past decade, this has become the case; for, these teachers will be working with a diverse student population, faculty and administration in their schools and classes. Prior to the Civil Rights Movements taking place, the theory of multicultural education did not exist. These new requirements provide teachers with multicultural training, which consequently will increase their effectiveness as teachers. Training enables teachers to deal with a variable student population and implement effective curricular changes and activities which promote acceptance and tolerance amongst students. These programs were helpful because "knowledge shapes dispositions and influences behavior" (Stevens & Charles, 2005). The more students are aware of the world around them and the different components that the world is composed of, then in accordance with Stevens and Charles (2005) their behavior and disposition will take on a more respectful and tolerant approach.

The Case of Lebanon

Unlike the racial and ethnic diversity that the United States faces, religion is a very critical issue that dissolves in many aspects of social life in Lebanon moving from places of worship to politics. The situation in Lebanon is dissimilar to the one found in Europe and the United States, where religious traditions no longer have a large affect on political life (Keast, 2008). Since religion plays such a predominate role in the life of all the Lebanese citizens, one

would not be able to acquire a comprehensive education from school if "major influential aspects of the human experience are omitted" (Milson, 1997).

The schooling system in Lebanon based on the 2010-2011 school year statistics is split between the private and public sector, where 66% of the student population are enrolled in private school where as only 30% are in public schools (Yaacoub & Badre, 2012). In the public school sector, the government and Ministry of Education describe and delineate how religious education will be taught to both Christian and Muslim students (and any other individual who is of a different sect). Bashshur (2003) points out that before the Ta'if accord, students in public schools were given one hour of religious education a week by a religious authority as part of the curriculum, during which Christian and Muslim students were separated. After the Ta'if accord was reached, the government tried to stop the teaching of religion in public schools; however, all religious sects expressed a common refusal towards the issue. Hence, controversy ensued until the decision was reversed. Committees were formed by each religious sect in order to write religious education books which would be adequate to teach in public schools; however, till this day, there is no consensus on a book in place (Bashshur, 2003). Efforts were made on behalf of Christians when the Patriarch of the Eastern Catholic Church, the Patriarch of the Orthodox Church along with representatives from the Maronite and Evangelic Church formed a committee and wrote a school text book for the purpose of teaching religion for the Christians denominations (Abi Nader, 2004). There has not yet been a textbook teaching about the Muslim religions (Abi Nader, 2004). Therefore, it is perceived that in religiously mixed public schools, religion might not even be addressed and schools which have a majority of a certain religion, give religious courses as they did before the Ta'if accord which is done so by separating Christians and Muslims. The minister of education John Obeid (1998) wrote a letter to the

ministry asking to implement religion education in public schools, since up to this point study of religions in school was left up to the public or private schools discretion. However, what urges the minister of education to apply the teaching of religion in schools is the "special situation" Lebanon finds itself in, which is the country's concentrated coexistence of Christians and Muslims (Obeid, 1998). Given the freedom, both private and public schools have the ability to bring in a religious authority once a week to teach students, in which case students who belong to a different religion would be dismissed from the class/lecture. In Lebanon, when these authorities on religion are brought into the school it is in order to teach students only their faith not the faiths of their neighbors. Muslims are taught about Islam and Christians about Christianity (Bashshur, 1999). Salameh (2000) states, if the Lebanese government is to be responsible for implementing the teaching of religion as part of the school curriculum, there should be specific guidelines on how to teach Christians about Islamic religion and vice versa. Another guideline which the government should set is the age range which this education will first start to be covered. (Salameh, 2000). Salameh (2000) proposes putting emphasis on spreading knowledge about religions in schools instead of religiously educating; Doing so, would deepen faith, especially in a country with mixed religions like Lebanon.

In Lebanon, Messarra (2004) proclaims that the problem lies in the dichotomy of the way religion is approached in the country. Religion is present and spoken about in all aspects of life. Nevertheless, there is mutual ignorance among Christians and Muslims towards the other' religion and its impact on their daily lives. This ignorance Messarra (2004) claims is dangerous. The common consequence would be, that students' can be mislead by an unreliable and opportunist source. This is the main issue which Messarra (2004) asserts should be avoided. In order to evade this issue, Messarra (2004) recommends that two religion books be made one

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Muslim and one Christian, taught to students in middle and elementary classes. Nonetheless, in the secondary classes, one book is for the purpose of educating students about religions and promoting the notions of acceptance and coexistence.

In the private sector, a different dilemma arises; private schools do not have to abide by the curriculum set by the government and each school may develop their own curriculum (Bashshur, 1999). Thus, there is no standard curriculum for all. At Lausane Conference (March 1984), President Kamil Sham'oun on behalf of the Phalangists stated: "Education is used to bring up children to believe that they are a unified society. In reality education must have done the opposite. It must have stressed the necessity for mutual recognition among the sects so that Christians come to understand that Muslims are not carbon copies of them and vice versa" (as cited in Karami, 1990). It is this lack of students' understanding of religion which proves the crucial need for an adequate education to be reinforced.

Purposes of Multicultural Education

A main component throughout many studies on multicultural education indicates that multicultural education has at least one out of the three main purposes: to promote tolerance, spread justice and evoke a social change (Stevens & Charles, 2005). Tolerance is a term whose adequacy has been questioned (Derman & Sparks, 2001). Stevens and Charles (2005) emphasize that "it is important to be respectful of the learning and growth process and afford individuals the time and support to develop the authentic dispositions of tolerance, which may emerge into appreciation and celebration given time" (p.19). As a summation, tolerance is merely a stepping stone to achieving the main goal of multicultural education which is acceptance.

However, Gutmann (2003) addresses the purposes of multicultural education from a different perspective. She believes individuals must not only strive for tolerance but recognition

as well. In Gutmann's (2003) view, tolerance means individuals are allowed to follow their cultural differences in private, and recognition means offering these different individuals respect. Gutmann (2003) states that when these two aforementioned above function harmoniously, advancement will have been made and progress is what society should strive for. Both tolerance and recognition are the key factors to producing and educating a culturally aware and accepting society. One cannot tolerate an individual or group without recognizing their presence, just as in order to truly accept others, one cannot merely recognize them but tolerate them as well (Gutmann, 2003).

Researchers believed that school administrators have an obligation towards the students of their schools because "[students] need to understand the dynamics of past and present dominance, face how we have been shaped by myths of superiority, and begin to sort out our thoughts, emotions, and behaviors relative to race and other dimensions of human diversity" (Howard, 1999, p.4). Personal transformation should be attained for two main reasons as pointed out by McCray, Wright, and Beachum (2004): First, there is the possibility of having included hidden diversities in the school which the principal is not aware of. Letting these differences go unaccounted for, may be detrimental. Second, these students, afterwards, will be employed at various job positions and/or universities, where diversities will be encountered. The mission of a school is to train its students for the future: to be a part of the work force and to be productive members in society. If schools do not prepare students to deal with the realities which surround them, then these schools are not reaching their main purpose. Hence, the principal's duty becomes to "create an environment that promotes cultural diversity regardless of the amount of recognizable diversity in the school" (McCray, Wright, & Beachum, 2004). As Keast (2008) points out, schools are not educating for the dominant or in spite of the minority but instead they

are educating on "learning to live together" (p.15). Attitudes towards multicultural education are also greatly affected by the size and socioeconomic status of a school. A study conducted by McCray, Wright, and Beachum (2004) found that principals of bigger schools believe they need more multicultural education because of their diverse population. The large school principals, who participated in the study, were also found to have more training and longer education paths. Whereas the principals from the smaller schools (which tend to be in rural areas), were less open to promoting and incorporating multicultural education in their schools. These principals were also found to have less training and a shorter educational path (McCray, Wright, & Beachum, 2004). Because of these outcomes, it was recommended that measures be taken when dealing with small school principals, in order to help them see the necessity of multicultural education. Teaching tolerance would aid in the betterment of their students regardless of how homogenous or heterogeneous the students are.

Ngo (2010) takes the discussion on the necessity of tolerance one step further, when he states two differing topics necessary to be discussed. First, that diversity should be addressed and celebrated in order to form a society of acceptance and understanding. Second, a society which is already truly tolerant does not even need to bring differences to light because of its potentially adverse effects (Ngo, 2010).

For example, at the school where Ngo (2010) conducted his study, an emphasis on "celebration" and "understanding" alone was incapable of successfully addressing racial and ethnic tensions. Teachers and administrators were aware of this situation   and understood that the methods they were following were only "tokenizing" the differences. Moreover, they were conscious of the insufficiencies in the programs created; however, they did not know how to overcome this quandary. Some teachers believed "highlighting differences is contradictory

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because a truly diverse school and society would not need to point this out" (Ngo, 2010, p.487).

On the other hand, some may argue that the lack does not consist of bringing diversity to light but of understanding the way to perform this intent (Skerrett, 2007). It is not only the immediate diversity which is fundamental for students to deal with. It is crucial to bring up diversity amongst students because their social and occupational surroundings will change and they should have the resources to deal with any such alterations (McCray, Wright, & Beachum, 2004).

Educational Policies and Multicultural Education

The foundations of a school are embodied in its policies. Policies are the basis of all future actions of a school. Morelli and Spencer (2000) found that in diverse schools found in the United States, which had both racial and religious diversity and ranged from small to large in student population, the policies adopted were irrelevant to dealing with racism or multicultural education. Without such policies, the topic of religious diversity is scarcely incorporated into the curriculum. Even with the existence of multicultural educative policies in some countries, there still is a crucial need for more explicit policies along with their formal fulfillments (Morelli & Spencer, 2000).

Promoting and implementing Multicultural education goes beyond planning the curriculum and setting conditions at the school. It is performed by formulating mission statements which are more explicit, as to specifically mention the tolerance and promotion of learning by means of multicultural education. Another approach would be to spread awareness of the policies which pertain to multicultural education in the school. Morelli and Spencer (2000) note that "policies look good on paper but are largely ignored", therefore emphasizing their importance could help in the implementation process and the sustainment of that implementation. Unlike the United States and Europe where school policies are well

documented, Lebanon has a documentation deficiency. Since allowing religion education is a matter of the school's convenience, the Ministry of Education and government abstain from implementing nationwide policies which lead to a lack of documentation (Obeid, 1998).

Approaches to Multicultural Education

Policies, curriculum, and extracurricular activities which promote multicultural awareness become constituents of school culture when implanted in students' daily lives. Studies have shown that multicultural education that is fundamentally integrated into the curriculum is more effective in internalizing students' acceptance amongst them than sporadic activities that do not require much analysis on the students' behalf. Ngo (2010) presents posters displaying diversity. The acceptance of diversity may be used as the initiative to apply multicultural education as a daily share of school life. However, Ngo (2010) reported that one cannot solely depend on these elementary methods, such as the use of cultural clubs, to promote the acceptance of diversity. These clubs served a purpose of enriching the members belonging to the same orientation as the club topic (Ngo, 2010). However, these clubs should also educate students of different cultures about their own culture. These methods establish the starting point; however, a deeply integrated curricular change is mandatory for multicultural education to flourish. The "multicultural education's manifestation as [self] affirmation and celebration [does] not address racial tensions that [are] part of school life" (Ngo, 2010, p.485).

To assert that tolerance and acceptance are within the student's beliefs, multicultural education must be integrated at every level of the school and curriculum, as previously discussed (Banks, 2009). In the school where Ngo (2010) conducted his study, administrators and teachers tried to educate students about diversity by using "Issues Day". "Issues Day" is a special day, in

the school year, dedicated to talking about problems and how students might differ through gender, ethnicity, race etc. (Ngo, 2010).

Additive Multicultural Education

Papanastasiou and Conway (2001) researched other schools which had also tried to schedule a similar concept of days that have been dedicated to training teachers for multicultural education and diverse students. These types of approaches are referred to as an "additive" form of multicultural education where it is slightly added onto the curriculum or school culture (Derman-Sparks, 2001; Ngo, 2010). "Additive education" acts as a very superficial form of multiculturalism where curricular integration does not have time to be tackled. Alternatively, it is recommended that another form of multicultural education be integrated into the curriculum; one that is embedded into the school, well integrated into the curriculum and every aspect of the school from policies to extracurricular activities. As Banks (2009) announces, it is not merely a class or a day that one can implement in order to educate about diversity, it is an all encompassing climate that is lead by purposeful and meaningful guidelines. In Ngo's (2010) study, one teacher observed that a meaningful change would result from incorporating personal life experiences and discussions in all classes. Ngo (2010) detected that the school reached its goal by striking up conversations about diversity, through open forums in classroom discussions, where students can freely and respectfully voice their opinions. This led to a better environment. Communication between students of different races, ethnicities, and religions were taking place. This shed light on similarities between the diverse groups and built bridges between groups of students. However, it is important to maintain the durability and expansion of these types of integrative discussions unlike the additive multicultural education's case (Derman-Sparks, 2001; Ngo, 2010). It has been recommended, throughout studies, that they be continuously

incorporated into and throughout the curriculum (Derman-Sparks, 2001; Mileski, 1998; Ngo, 2010; Papanastasiou & Conway, 2001). This is when multicultural education will be truly highlighted.

Mileski (1998) like Ngo (2010) found that after these one-day additive programs finished, problems amongst diverse student groups remained visible. Teachers did not realize the long lasting benefit of these multicultural days which consisted of a one-day event where students would wear clothes from their culture, bring in food and discuss the characteristics of each culture. Dealing with these issues and topics once a year is not sufficient when it comes to teaching about diversity (Mileski, 1998). Mileski (1998) also inferred the fact that teaching about diversity on a continuous basis in classes gives students a better chance of internalizing the information, reevaluating their beliefs and then applying more beliefs; those beliefs do not breed intolerance towards diverse groups such as acceptance and recognition (Mileski, 1998). For some schools, the lack of tolerance propagates in every branch of the system from policies to curriculum. In this case, the only solution would be a complete reform (Morelli & Spencer, 2000).

Longitudinal Approach

A "longitudinal approach" suggested by Mileski (1998) refers to teaching multicultural education on a continuous bases throughout the year and throughout the curriculum; it is not only confined to day events. The longitudinal approach requires an in-depth observation of particular (or repetitive) cultural issues. Especially for teachers, it was shown that a more "longitudinal approach that facilitated more in-depth understanding of cultural issues" would be more beneficial. Dedicating more time to multicultural activities would produce the opportunity for internalization of concepts. For example, Papanastasiou and Conway (2001) believe the first step

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is to simulate the professional development by making teachers aware of the various cultures, or in the case of Lebanon, religions. Teachers are often in need for training when it comes to dealing with and giving multicultural education. They have few resources at their disposal, and often times they would describe their approach to their lesson as "winging it" since they, themselves, did not understand the topic they are teaching about (Morelli & Spencer, 2000). Training aids teachers in becoming more comfortable in dealing with diverse individuals, namely students; it also grants the needed resources to enable them to approach the topic of diversity which is found in the classroom and also the greater community (Papanastasiou & Conway, 2001). Hence, the second phase is to make sure that teachers receive training on the mentioned topic and then make connections between what teachers learned throughout professional development and their classroom practices. In order to put the concepts of how to implement multicultural education to practice, it is advantageous to make teachers work from the personal experiences of the participants. Papanastasiou and Conway (2001) found that when this method was advanced, it integrated various forms of multicultural education into their classroom after the teachers had been properly trained.

Teaching Aids for Curriculum

Even with some forms of multicultural programs being labeled as one-dimensional integration, Farmer, Knapp and Benton (2006) prove it to be evident that both extracurricular activities such as fieldtrips and primary sources are good teaching aids for delivering curriculum for the promotion of multicultural education. According to them, these methods are effective in having students internalize concepts. Some materials that Farmer, Knapp and Benton (2006) recommend would work well as primary sources are "diaries, journals, speeches, letters, autobiographies, government or organizational records, photographs, audio or video recordings,

anthropological field notes, as well as artifacts that may consist of tools, toys, buildings, furniture, and much more". All these sources can be used to teach about diversity and help broaden students' world views.

Methods for Implementing Multicultural Education

When Rodriguez and Sjostrom (1996) examined the manner through which teachers and pre-service teachers incorporate the five different levels of multicultural education, they stated that it is important to note that one method for,

> Addressing diversity in classroom settings mandates that the teacher utilize
> alternatives to traditional pedagogy. This can be accomplished by the creation of a
> culturally responsive pedagogy that is appropriate for the students in that particular
> classroom…In teaching for diversity instead of teaching about groups as isolated
> topics, a multicultural perspective of inclusion is the foundation of all planning,
> instruction and evaluation. (Rodriguez & Sjostrom, 1996)

When fronted by diversity inside the classroom, teaching and emphasizing inclusion is the procedure which Rodriguez and Sjostrom (1996) recommend in order to unify all students and break the boundaries built by the stigmas of diversity.

Previous studies showed that religious education contributes to students understanding of multicultural diversity. These studies exemplify the best way to spread such information about multiculturalism is through: teacher training and education on diversity, textbooks (Stevens & Charles, 2005; Papanastasiou & Conway, 2001; Rodriguez & Sjostrom, 1996), teaching strategies (Rodriguez & Sjostrom, 1996; Mileski, 1998), primary sources and interactive fieldtrips (Farmer, Knapp, & Benton, 2006) and policies and practice (Bell, 2007). More specifically, curricular designs of courses such as history, literature and religion have been

hypothesized to hold the ability of addressing inclusivity of different and various religions (Gutmann, 2003; Grajales, Leon, & Elias, 2010). As these designs incorporate collaborative work between diverse students, another way of learning is added to the process and the students learn interpersonally. This leads students to internalize the concept of tolerance and develop skills which promote profound learning in the midst of diversity. According to Adams (1997), this will produce a drive towards tolerance, recognition and inclusion. In various studies such as Adams (1997), Delpit (2006), Gutmann (2003), Howard (1999), and Morelli & Spencer (2000), it is confirmed that group solidarity is the level of multicultural education that schools should aim for. The concept of group solidarity is promoted through a foundation of practices, mission statements, codes of conduct and policies of the school. These formers occur between the various cultures in regards to the students, faculty, and staff (Adams, 1997; Delpit, 2006; Gutmann, 2003; Howard, 1999; Morelli, & Spencer, 2000). In addition to group solidarity programs, such as extracurricular activities and/or teacher training can familiarize students with different aspects of diversity with the intention of joining individuals together (Adams, 1997; Derman-Sparks, 2001; Gutmann, 2003; Morelli, & Spencer, 2000; Papanastasiou & Conway, 2001). Despite providing this variety of options, some individuals believe that one will solely understand their culturally different neighbor only if they are exposed and immerse themselves in their lives for a period of time (Howard, 1999).

Teachers & administrators training on multicultural education. From Skerrett's (2007) study, the need for ongoing professional development is brought to light. It is a necessity in order to train teachers and support them through multicultural education. This is the case because as Derman-Sparks (2001) emphasizes it is teachers whom are responsible for implementing preventative measures to secure students from harboring prejudice. Skerrett (2007)

found a direct correlation between the manner and degree to which teachers dealt with multicultural education. This correlation also exists between the teachers' professional training, experiences in the beginning stages of their career and their experiences with diversity. Along with these factors, "multicultural curriculum-in-use stemmed more directly from teachers' appreciation of their students' diversity and the recognition that a culturally responsive curriculum would promote engagement and achievement" (Skerrett, 2007, p.1817). Differences should be recognized, distinguished and discussed. When these three factors are put into motion, the interest of students will be aroused through a curriculum which appeals to them. Skerrett (2007) found that teacher preparation programs were successful and exposed teachers to a variety of teaching and learning strategies. When approached with the task of incorporating multicultural education into their curriculum, teachers used the classic literature that was originally integrated in their lessons but extracted themes of human experience. Younger teachers used their researching skills as to find more contemporary texts supplementary to their purpose. Whereas the older generation teachers, abided mainly by the classic texts. However, both young and older teachers viewed biographies in their classes as further exemplification of the human experience. This being the case, all age-group teachers put an effort to incorporate multicultural education in their classes. The main difference was that the process represented a less challenging task to the younger teachers. Skerrett (2007) rendered this to the fact younger teachers lived in a more diversified society from a younger age. Another factor stems from the training they had received in dealing with diversity in the domain. After assigning these sources for the pupils to read, teachers urged students to talk about their own experiences and beliefs during their class discussions. This helped students internalize the concepts which then lead them to discussions on the manners to engender needed changes in their society and communities. A

consistent demand springs since "less than half of the teachers in the wider sample reported that their teacher education programs had a multicultural focus and none of the programs were antiracist in nature" (Skerrett, 2007, p.1824). These learning experiences will supply teachers with resources and training in order to initiate dialogue with their colleagues and other departments so that multicultural education can flourish within the school (Skerrett, 2007).

Skerrett (2007) surveyed English literature teachers on the way they can contribute to multicultural education within their schools. He found that three major factors played a role in the English literature teachers' ability to deal with diversity and successfully teach about diversity: "professional preparation, prior experiences with diversity and generational status" (Skerrett, 2007). These factors can even be expanded to teachers of religion and history. The three factors are the means to ensure the production of the highest quality of religious education (Skerrett, 2007).

Effectiveness of Multicultural Education

The necessity of multicultural education has been questioned by schools whose population is homogonous. McCray, Wright, and Beachum (2004) conducted a study where numerous principals noted the pointlessness of incorporating multicultural education in their schools. This belief derives from the lack of diversity found in the school and surrounding community. However, this diversity in the school may only be the immediate situation encompassing the student. Surroundings are bound to change and be changed. Lessons in tolerance and acceptance teach crucial lessons on how to cope with change (Keast, 2008). Other "Multicultural theorists have indicated that school principals have an obligation to create an environment that promotes cultural diversity regardless of the amount of recognizable diversity in the school" (McCray, Wright, & Beachum, 2004). Adopting multicultural education in all

schools is a must, even if the population might not be diverse since students will one day venture out into an increasingly diverse society (Keast, 2008). Learning these concepts take time and effort to accomplish. Students should not be expected to preeminently have these skills in place, if they have not been acquired. "We cannot fully and fruitfully engage in meaningful dialogue across the differences of race and culture without doing the work of personal transformation" (Howard, 1999, p.4). Individuals must first be made aware of the differences around them in order to make an inner transformation if needed.

Teaching on Religion

Under the umbrella of multicultural education, education about religious diversity is found. Along with multiculturalism globalization entails that education rise to the test innate in the expansion of cultural and religious diversity in order to build citizens whom are capable to coexist peacefully (Keast, 2008). Attention given to the religious dimension of multicultural education makes a considerable contribution to "peace, openness to other cultures, tolerance and respect for human rights" (Keast, 2008). Religious dissimilarities continue to be a source of apprehension, conflict and inequity (Keast, 2008).

Action Research and Religious Education

In regards to education on religion, some studies observed the conditions that facilitate the execution of multicultural education in the main curriculum. Grady (2010) alleged action research to be a beneficial tool and supportive method for teachers to use when it comes to effectively implementing a religion education program and for multicultural education in general. This would aide to increase and perfect its impact in order to achieve the goals set in place by the institution. Action research is a crucial component to integrate into the school and classroom system, in order to adjust any problems that might arise within the program itself.

Being as that diversity is constantly evolving, the system requires continuous evaluation and reevaluation as to certify its utmost effectiveness for the students' benefit (Morelli & Spencer, 2000). Just as with any program, it is crucial that it is not merely implemented and then forgotten. Especially with the delicate nature of discussing religious diversity, it is crucial to utilize action research in order to see which parts of the program are beneficial to the students and make sure they do not infringe on anyone's rights. Action research would be utilized in order to solve any problems which may arise in the material being offered and in order to rate how beneficial the material and the manner in which it is being presented. The action research process may represent a magnanimous task for a school to undertake. In the United States, it is the teachers and administrators who, through conducting action research, can make sure its policies are being upheld by their students and school community. There needs to be a communal effort between students, administrators and teachers to attain awareness and education encompassing the entire school (Morelli & Spencer, 2000).

Teaching about Religious Diversity through Dialogue, Discussion & Debate

Along with training, dialogue is also considered a vital part in the success of implementing multicultural education, especially when it comes to teaching about religious diversity. Rose (2006) focuses on teaching about religions by showing that not only is it acceptable to teach religion in schools, but it would also be considered useful if one incorporated students' experiences in the dialogue. The participants in the study believed it would not arouse any possible discrimination or discomfort amongst students and staff. On the contrary, they approached it as a required component. However, the participants in this study made it noteworthy that a recurrent problem stands in the way religious education is being taught; "the issue is that we are religiously educating not educating about religions" (Rose, 2006).

Participants believed in the existence of an appropriate way to teach religion. Teaching of religious diversity should be approached like any other topic in schools; just like history, one should teach about the beliefs that each religion holds (factually based) (Rose, 2006). This would enable the constitution of a world religion class where facts about each religion and their agreed upon beliefs are presented not merely to teach students about their own confessional identity.

Through a synthesis of research on religious education, O'Grady (2010) further synthesizes common findings about religion diversity education. The main factor found in all of these articles is: the importance of dialogue, discussion, and debate. Some research studied by O'Grady (2010) found that students went through curricular integrated learning when they were asked to "interpret their own backgrounds, ideas and experiences in relation to the religious material studied" and reflect on their findings (p.127). Empirical studies, which O'Grady reviewed, found that common discussions and reflections helped students view and form a broader picture of how their values, ideas and thinking are evolving. Secondly, after the course of religion and methods of delivery are decided, students' personal experiences and background should be included. A third point found to be quintessential to religious education is concretizing current issues and discussing possible solutions. O'Grady (2010) found that encouraging discussions works best towards building interest in the students. In order to transform students into accepting individuals, teachers would need to be properly trained and their growth sustained. Especially when it comes to religious education, dialogue is important; since people of certain religions are not uniformly the same. Individuals differ in beliefs and interpretations; hence, when students are allowed the freedom to talk about their beliefs, this will uphold a profound learning experience (Keast, 2008; Sears & Carper, 1998). In accordance with Keast (2008) dialogue is used in order for students to discover four objectives. First they must discover each

others: horizons, values and beliefs. These three aspects would be brought up during the different discussion held in class between the students. Another component of dialogue would also allow students to get to know oneself better, through comparison and interaction with others. Thirdly Keast (2008) believes that dialogue would help students acquire the skill of empathy, which he describes as "a highly valuable outcome and an essential precondition" in order to accomplish the fourth task of dialogue which would bring about the "practical co-operation between faiths and among the adherents of different faiths, which is impossible without the empathy referred to in the third stage" (Keast, 2008, p.91). Keast (2008) states these four objectives in order to initiate discussion amongst students. These objectives will help students learn new information about others which in turn can help them get familiar with their own selves. This will help foster empathy amongst students which then in turn can lead to cooperation and collaboration amongst students and individuals of different faiths (Keast, 2008).

Approaches to Religious Education & Religious Diversity

Religious diversity education is a subcategory of multicultural education (Banks, 2009). In many regions, religion has become a very controversial topic. The private nature of religion adds to a lack of discussion amongst diverse populations. However, there are other various reasons for not regularly integrating religion into a school's curriculum; this is especially the case for schools with a diverse student body (Kantor & Lowe, 2007; Milson, 1997). Milson (1997) asserts few teachers are qualified and trained to present the topic of religious diversity in their community, not to mention the big scope of religions of the world. Even with these downfalls, Milson (1997) states that because of the unavoidable predominance of religion in societies, it is important to improve the instructor's knowledge and proceed with the incorporation of religion into the curriculum.

In case it is not fortified, "neglect [will] result in further misunderstanding and prejudice" (Milson, 1997).

Raditoaneng (2011) observed religious education (which is compulsory for primary grades and optional for higher grades) in Botswana, a predominantly Christian country. When regarding teachers' perceptions of religious education, the majority viewed religions education beyond teaching a certain religion. Teachers perceived religion as teaching about values, morals and also different religions. However, teachers lacking training on how to conduct courses about religious education, faced difficulty in beneficially conducting the course. The main issue, forward to the lack of training, was also found in the lack of knowledge held about religious groups different than one's own. This lack of training causes students to "remain as recipients rather than contributors to what is to be learned" (Raditoaneng, 2011, p.32). Most of the participating teachers felt training workshops would help solve the previously mentioned problem. A solution recommended by teachers is: To bring religious leaders from other religions to teach students more accurately about other religions. Raditoaneng (2011) concluded, since teachers are expected to teach religious education, none of whom were trained or specialized to instruct about it, it would be necessary to bring in authorities for each religion. Teachers and administrators in the study, believed training was needed in order to overcome the difficulties that were faced in implementing the multicultural education of religious diversity programs. However, even with such inexperience, all teachers and students who were part of the study stated that religious education is necessary and should be carried out (Raditoaneng, 2011). Teachers and students could no longer imagine their curriculum without these religious diversity programs.

Teaching in Sectarian Associated Schools

Another perspective is from schools whose main objective is to religiously educate their students. Grajales, Leon and Elias (2010) dealt with schools in Chile which tried to incorporate and teach religious ideology of a specific religion throughout their institution as a whole (all content areas, the climate and every other aspect of the school). Some parents/guardians positioned that teachers in this school should pertain to the same background of belief in order to teach the faith through example/role modeling. The study tried to compare the "ratings of importance of educational-religious objective" (Grajales, Leon, & Elias, 2010, p.236). After analysis, the most striking finding was that, in Christian schools, parents/guardians of different Christian sects had differing views on the topics they found most important for their children to learn. Some considered religious education to be corresponding to teaching the facts about religious beliefs while others regard teaching about a certain religion as a means to helping one's belief and growth in faith. This discussion is based on the difference between utilizing a world religions class in order to educate students about religious diversity; while another set of parents believed religion education was meant to religiously educate in order to deepen one's own faith and understanding. However, for either of these viewpoints to come to fruition, it is necessary that "any effort to implement Christian education first demands that its constituents come to an agreement regarding beliefs and religious practices" (Grajales, Leon, & Elias, 2010, p.225). This is indispensable, if different parties (teachers, parents, students, religious leaders) bring about their own views contradictions and misunderstandings will occur. However, Grajales, Leon, and Elias (2010) do not finally answer the vital question: "to what degree should the beliefs and practices of an individual teacher or sponsored religious institution be present in the educational

process" (p.226)? One can possibly infer from their study, that the answer to this question highly depends on the type of school at which this interrogation is held.

However, when Milson (1997) observed how religious teachers as opposed to non-religious ones would respond to teaching religion in schools, he did not encounter a significant difference between the two. Both parties felt the same about including this topic in public schools of the United States. This finding showed an intermediate attitude from both parties; neither strongly negative nor positive. Even though the findings in this study did not indicate a preference, an important aspect that one could decipher is that teachers with very strong religious convictions were not biased towards teaching various religions and both parties believe that the topic of religious diversity is an important topic which should be covered (Milson, 1997).

Definitions and Conceptual Framework

This section will present the definitions adopted for this study and the conceptual framework that will guide its data collection and analysis. Schools educate in order to bring about development, progression and improvement. These outcomes must be acquired whether it is through the curriculum, extracurricular activities, and/or any other additional resources branching to either formal or informal.

Multicultural Education

Definitions & components. Multicultural education is conceived as a version of "democratic education [which] is committed not to tolerating but to opposing educational programs that perpetuate civic inequality or intolerance" (Gutmann, 2003, p.94). Banks (2009) describes multicultural education as "a reform movement designed to change the total educational environment so that students from diverse racial and ethnic groups, both gender

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groups, exceptional students, and students from each social-class will experience equal educational opportunities in schools, colleges, and universities" (p.474). Banks (2009) defines multiculturalism as "a philosophical position and movement that assumes that the gender, ethnicity, racial, and cultural diversity of a pluralistic society should be reflected in all of the institutionalized structures of educational institutions, including the staff, the norms, and values, the curriculum, and the student body" (p.474). In summation multicultural education is a movement in instruction methodology which asks for changes in the curriculum in order to grant and educate about equal opportunity in regards to all races, ethnicities, genders, creeds, and socioeconomically backgrounds.

Proponents of this approach also consider that this topic "should be viewed as [a] sound instructional practice rather than as a political agenda" (Rodriguez & Sjostrom, 1996). When multicultural education becomes naturally viewed as an essential must in society's educational systems and not merely a political agenda, all aspects of this educational theory, such as a deep seeded integration into the curriculum and sound educational practice, will come to fruition.

Levels for understanding multicultural education. Tolerance, acceptance, and recognition are not mentalities that one can suddenly acquire through one field trip or a multicultural day; such acquisitions take time and thought especially if one did not grow or witness such diversity in their own families, homes or communities. It is a process which brings about a different perspective of thinking about the world and people. Parallel to Gutmann (2003), Rodriguez and Sjostrom (1996) affirm that tolerance is not an adequate goal for providing multicultural education.

However, tolerance is the most significant concept to incorporating multiculturalism into education. Rodriguez and Sjostrom (1996) composed a framework for

multicultural education which is described as a process composed of five levels. This process helps in classifying and understanding the approaches of multicultural education incorporated in the curriculum when dealing with diversity; the five levels it includes are: mono-cultural perspective, tolerance, acceptance, respect and the final level constitutes of affirmation, solidarity and critique. To have a more accurate perspective of the different ways in which multicultural education is taught in schools, it is necessary to take a look at each level on its own.

The first level, the mono-cultural, does not take student diversity into account. At this level, the student's background is completely disregarded; what matters is the culture of the majority. Education is approached in this manner since diversity is seen as an obstacle towards learning. The second level, tolerance, is where multicultural education is first introduced. This level describes the basic form of multicultural education. The practices and policies of a school are considered to be the preliminary position in eradicating discrimination. They are the foundations of multicultural education. However, this is merely the beginning of transferring multicultural understanding to students. A multicultural perspective should not be secluded from the curriculum but integrated into all educative aspects. The sporadic nature of this level of multicultural education leaves the environment unbalanced. However, these approaches would not be substantial enough to generate a lasting change in the education and thinking of the student (Rodriguez & Sjostrom, 1996). Hence, Rodriguez & Sjostrom (1996) recommend that the society proceeds to the third and deeper level of multicultural awareness. At this next level, acceptance, multicultural content is progressively infused into the curriculum; it is no longer a completely separate entity only approached under some circumstances. A predominant part of this level is the dialogue, which occurs when students share their views about their own lives.

Multicultural education reaches a higher level at the final two stages which Rodriguez and Sjostrom (1996) propose to be the ideal manner for educating. The fourth level, entitled respect, includes two main incorporated components. Discussions on various multicultural topics take place among a diverse group of students, which are put together in order to become increasingly aware of diverging individuality. Students would then grow more conscious about beliefs, policies and practices which may act with prejudice. The final stage, affirmation, solidarity, and critique is when students are taught and trusted to be critical of their surroundings. Critical thinking would allow students to dispel any stereotypes and false beliefs in order to stand in solidarity with the diverse populations around them, leading to affirmation.

Referring to these five levels and their study, Rodriguez and Sjostrom (1996) infer that there is significance in teaching the values of collaboration. Cooperation and collaboration are the pathways to multicultural education which is created by "teaching to and for diversity by definition it is cooperative rather than competitive" (Rodriguez & Sjostrom, 1996). The study elaborates its reasoning by asserting that teaching the final level of affirmation, solidarity and critique is more complex than teaching merely at the tolerance and acceptance level; for, it goes beyond the walls of the conventional teacher-based lecture, rote memorization, open classroom discussions and debates on sometimes taboo topics. The study which Rodriguez and Sjostrom (1996) conducted was capable of proving that most teachers' methods fall under the parameters of the first three levels, few teach at the respect level while none taught at the affirmation, solidarity and critique level.

Dimensions of multicultural education. In alignment with this model, Banks (2009) proposes the dimensions of multicultural education as consisting of five stages: the first, content integration, should be logical not contrived; it is the extent in which examples are used. And the

content of various cultures and groups exemplifies central principles, concepts, generalizations, and theories in a range of subject areas or disciplines. The second is the knowledge construction process in which teachers reinforce students to be aware of aspects of society that influence how their knowledge is constructed. Thirdly, prejudice reduction refers to the lessons and activities teacher may incorporate into their classroom in order to aid students in developing positive attitudes toward diverse groups. Intending to increase the ratio of these lessons benefits, it is recommended that four conditions are fostered amongst the students. These factors are: equal status, cooperation rather than competition, guidelines to be set by teachers and/or administrators, and interpersonal interactions in which students get acquainted with one another as individuals. The fourth dimension, an equity pedagogy, teachers adjust their teaching with the intentions of facilitating the attainment of academic achievement by students from diverse groups. The final dimension, an empowering school and social structure, as all members of school faculty and staff should examine and restructure different aspects of their institution such as: grouping and labeling practices, disproportionality in achievement and the interaction of faculty/staff and students for the sake of creating an empowering school and social structure (Banks, 2009).

Intercultural education

Another perspective which the Council of Europe has proposed, is that multicultural education is not sufficient; hence, they have coined the new term of intercultural education defined as:

> Education which develops personal autonomy and a critical spirit, tolerance,
>
> openness to diversity and a feeling of belonging to the community as a
>
> whole. This type of education should ensure that it nurtures an understanding

of the phenomena of both belief and non-belief and the ability to reflect on

the different world views to be found in pluralist societies. It concerns the

fundamental educational interests of children. These interests cover not only

matters relating to general cognitive aptitudes but also a child's right to be

prepared appropriately for life as a citizen playing a full part in democracy. It

should also nurture a sense of trust uniting citizens beyond their moral and

religious differences and disagreements. (Keast, 2008, p. 201)

This description by Keast (2008) explains the importance of enlightening students about

the different aspects found in the world in order to unite them. He also describes the aims of

intercultural education to be the development of tolerance, openness, a feeling of belonging, and

understanding. More specifically, intercultural education deciphered by The Council of Europe

focuses on the religious dimension. They clearly advocate that the religious dimension of

intercultural education, "is not used to refer to some type of religious education, but is aimed

primarily at fostering reciprocal awareness, respect, and learning how to live together in order to

promote social cohesion and civic participation by all in a democratic context, in which everyone

feels accepted as an equal in terms of rights and dignity" (Keast, 2008, p.22). Keast (2008) goes

on further to emphasizes his opinion of the prevailing importance of intercultural education on

multicultural education, stating that it is intercultural education which possesses the capability to

accomplish all the aforementioned, multicultural education does not have this same capacity.

Keast (2008) believes multicultural education to be a vague celebration of differences summed

up in a day where as he sees intercultural education as being integrated into every aspect of the

curriculum on a daily bases. By relying on these affirmations, Keast (2008) discerns between the

two terms. The Council of Europe takes the concept of intercultural education to the next level,

placing it as a critical part of education which is mandatory to be transmitted to students. Anything short of the incorporation of intercultural education to the school curriculum would be considered as unsatisfactory from teachers. It is noteworthy to mention that the European council signalizes the difference between the two terms, when it comes to comparing intercultural education to the beginnings of when the theory of multicultural education first flourished. They perceive intercultural education as a rich and in-depth form of academia in comparison to the earlier multicultural versions which they describe as only taking a superficial role instead of being profoundly integrated into the curriculum (Keast, 2008). However, another school of thought in a majority of studies shows multicultural education to have evolved into a concept that has been established today finding itself in every part of the curriculum to the same level as intercultural education (Banks, 2009). It is also the case that the majority of studies and position papers utilize the term multicultural education; hence, the term which will be utilized throughout this study is multicultural education.

Summary

Multicultural education can be incorporated throughout many topics in the curriculum and can include promoting awareness of religious diversity. Spreading this knowledge has shown to be beneficial. In order for multicultural education to truly be integrated in schools, some components must be incorporated. First, policies need to be set to deal with multicultural education and diversity at a deeper level. Afterwards, individuals have to be made aware of these policies which should then be carried out. Thirdly, there needs to be teacher-training programs which provide teachers with resources to relay the correct information to their students and evaluate their teaching strategies. Fourth, teachers must plan and provide the right conditions for students to have open discussion and debates, share their personal life experiences, reflect, and

evaluate the topics they are learning. This brings about deeper and internalized learning. The curriculum in literature courses can also aid the process, if literature teachers persist in drawing out the human experience from the different class readings students interpret. This would help the students connect the curriculum to their tangible real life situations. Another main aspect that is found to be crucial to the teaching of religious diversity is: teaching about world religions. However, all of these aspects should not be merely added as a side curriculum. They should be integrated into the curriculum, with open forums in order for students to have the ability to discuss and debate topics. When this occurs, students are found to be more likely to internalize the different concepts they have learned. When these factors come together, schools formally embed religion diversity education into their curriculum and school as a whole. These components are utilized in various schools worldwide. From the United Kingdom, to the United States diversity and multiculturalism has increasingly, more so, become embraced. It is the goal of this study to analyze the standing of religious diversity education in schools; to describe the instructional methods being utilized in Lebanese schools in dealing with religious diversity education.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Since there is a concentration of religious diversity found in Lebanon the purpose of this study is to document and describe how religious education in terms of the teaching of religion as well as teaching about religious diversity is approached in private Lebanese schools and to compare those practices to a conceptual framework/model based on what the literature recommends as effective approaches, and practices of multicultural education. Moreover the study compares these practices between religious schools and secular schools. In order to accomplish the above mentioned, this study collected data on the policies, practices, and curriculum in place in schools that are related to teaching about religions and religious diversity. The information collected through the checklist (Appendix III) utilized in the school visits and the principal structured interview, academic supervisors structured interview, and teachers structured interviews (Appendix II) were analyzed using the constant comparative method (Strauss & Corbin, 2008) to categorize the data under goals, policies and instructional practices taking into consideration the type of school [secular vs non-secular]. The results of the analysis were then examined and compared to the five levels predetermined by Rodriguez and Sjostrom (1996). Dominant characteristics of the schools were identified and the schools' approaches are classified as falling underneath one of the following five categories: Monocultural (Level 1); Tolerance (Level 2); Acceptance (Level 3); Respect (Level 4); Affirmation, Solidarity and Critique (Level 5). The categorized data was also discussed in regards to the dimensions of multicultural education based on Banks (2009) to examine the extent to which the goals, policies

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and practices address the five categories which are: Content Integration; Knowledge Construction Process; Prejudice reduction, Equity Pedagogy; Empowering School. The study also collected descriptive data about the available practices, giving thus an in-depth understanding about this issue.

Research Questions

1. What are the goals, policies, and practices of teaching about religion in Lebanese private schools in terms of:

    a. Teaching students to become proficient in understanding and practicing their confessional identity?

    b. Educating students about the religions diversity found in their society and world community?

2. In light of the above, what are the similarities and differences that can be found in the above practices among religious and secular schools?

Research Design

This study uses qualitative design to explore the goals, and strategies adopted by private schools as reflected in the schools' policies, instruction, curriculum, and extracurricular activities that target education about religions through various courses (religion, civics, history, and literature). The major purpose of qualitative research is to examine reality as it is created by individuals interacting in their social environment (Merriam, 1998; 2010). One further utilizes qualitative research to "discover the nature of the meanings associated with social phenomena" (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2010).

For this study, a qualitative case study design is utilized in order to attain an in depth understanding of the beliefs, and practices related to teaching religion and religious diversity with an emphasis on the perspectives of the school practitioners on the matter. Qualitative case

study research is defined as "a type of qualitative investigation that usually involves the in-depth study of instances of a phenomenon in its natural context, both from the participants' and researchers' perspective, and with concern for the validity and applicability of the findings" (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2010). The case study design allows the researcher to focus on the different aspects of the school and its curriculum which deal with religious education and promoting awareness of religious diversity in an in-depth and detailed manner.

A multi-case study investigation is suitable for this research because its objective is to distinguish how and to which level schools are approaching the topic of religious diversity both inside and outside the classroom. The distinctive characteristic of a multi-case study is that it looks at its study in a holistic manner so that each detail is analyzed. This study examines the school as it is based in its socio-cultural system and the characteristics of its organizational culture in terms of policies, beliefs, and practices that pertain to education on religions and awareness of diversity.

The study follows a multi-case design where four private Lebanese schools were selected based on their religious affiliation and two private secular Lebanese schools also chosen. Each of these six sites were studied holistically where courses which have the possibility of having the topic of religion and religious diversity discussed in their curriculum, such as: religion, civics, history, and literature courses, are analyzed. Then each of the six cases are compared in their totality to one another. Specifically, the goals, policies, practices and strategies are identified and described in each case. The six cases are compared to one another under those categories.

Study Site

To make sure that an in-depth study is feasible we focused on six cases. The population that these six cases are taken out of is the middle to large scale private schools (above 300

students) with mid level socioeconomic status found in the Greater Beirut area (CERD, 2012).

The six school denominations which were chosen are Sunni Muslim school, a Shiite Muslim

school, a Catholic Christian school, an Orthodox Christian school and finally two secular

schools. These sects represent the type of private schools found in Lebanon and combined make

up the majority of the population and represent the major religions (Yaacoub & Badre, 2012).

The study was conducted in one school from each denomination and two schools which have

secular standing. The table below depicts the schools which participated in the study. The six

schools were selected based on which accept to participate in the study. The two secular schools

were chosen in spite of their small enrollment standings because of the nature of these schools

themselves. Both of these schools have a diversified student body and purposely choose to

diversify their students; making them prime candidates for this study. Despite their small size

The Sunni School was chosen because it grant access in order to conduct the study because of

prior professional engagement of the primary investigator.

Table 1.
Student Body Population

School	Number of Students
Orthodox	1245
Shiite	2248
Catholic	2838
Secular 2	360
Secular 1	398
Sunni	400

*CERD (2012)

Participants

The selection method for this study is purposeful sampling in which participants are

chosen by the degree of useful information they possess (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2010). The purpose

of the study is to examine in-depth the different methods and approaches to policies and

curriculum which are being used in a school related to religious education as well as infer the

underlying values and beliefs. The academic supervisors and principal were a part of the study since they have the data related to the school's organizational, academic and extra-curricular activity especially when there is absence of documented policies. For the purpose of this study the definition of the academic supervisor depends on the interpretation each school allots to this position. For example the academic supervisor can be an academic coordinator, or an academic director. He/She is a person with responsibility to administer the instructional program and who occupies a middle management position in the school and has direct contact with the teachers.

Research has shown that multicultural education is usually found to be addressed in courses such as history, literature and religious education because of the nature of the topics (Banks, 2010). This being the case, the teachers of these content areas were selected as participants.

Table 2.
Interview List of Participants

School	Administration & Teachers Interviewed	Total Number of Participants
Shiite	Principal Religious Coordinator Religion Teacher/Religion Textbook compiler Science Coordinator/Secondary School Head English Literature Coordinator Arabic Literature Teacher Civics/History Coordinator	7
Orthodox	Principal Arabic Coordinator Civics/History Coordinator Advisory Teacher	4
Catholic	President/Rector Religion Coordinator Religion Teacher Civics/History Coordinator	4
Sunni	Principal	4

	Religion Coordinator	
	English Literature Teacher	
	Civics/Science/Philosophy Teacher	
	Head of Division	
	Arabic Teacher	
Secular 1	English Literature Teacher	4
	Civics/History Teacher	
	Principal	
	Academic Director/English Coordinator/Social Studies Teacher	
Secular 2	English Teacher	6
	Arabic Coordinator	
	Social Studies/World Religions Teacher	

Methods of Data Collection

In order to cover every aspect in which education about religion as well as religious diversity can be found, this qualitative study relied on interviews and artifacts collected from the school sites. What was needed were interviews with the principal, and the academic supervisors in charge of planning the curriculum, and with the teachers of the following courses: religion, civics, literature, and history (Appendix II). Artifacts pertaining to education about religion were collected from policies, textbook samples, and observations of what is displayed around the school (Appendix III; Appendix IV). Since the policies are a focus of the study, policies if written were acquired, however when there was no documentation about the policies pertaining to religious diversity, or the educating about religions, this information was sought in the interviews with administrators, and teachers regarding the subject. Any other artifacts found to be related to the topic were also collected. When focusing on the curriculum there were structured interviews conducted with teachers who teach religious education, literature, history, civics, and science (Appendix II). Teachers were also asked about their lesson plans and to share samples of these lesson plans. The lesson plan of the religious education classes for all grades

was only extracted from the Catholic School via their webpage. The other schools did not share this information other then what was mentioned in the interviews. When textbooks were used in the religion, literature, history, or civics classes they were read in order to see the references to religion and if so in which manner. When items were found in the textbooks then teachers were asked in the interview if they teach that information and if yes the relevant sections in the textbook were considered as data and examined as part of document analysis. Finally, in the structured interviews with the teachers and administrators it was inquired if any extracurricular activities are set in place in the school that contribute to religious education (Appendix II).

Data Collection Procedures

The first stage of data collection contains interviews with the principals in order to receive a general understanding of the school operation and the services it provides (Appendix II). This was followed by structured interviews with the academic supervisors, this was only applicable in Secular School 2, in order to attain a grasp on what they believe would be beneficial to collect as artifacts (Appendix II). Then observations around the school were used to document and collect relevant observations and artifacts. Along with the artifact collection the textbooks which are utilized in religion, civics, history, and literature were scanned for any mention of religious diversity (Appendix IV). Finally, structured interviews with the teachers took place to inquire about their practices and in order to enrich information obtained from the school observations and within the artifacts and textbooks (Appendix II; Appendix III; Appendix IV). Note that interviews about the subjects (religion, civics, history, and literature) in larger school were conducted with the subjects' coordinators in order to acquire a view about the subject taught at all grade levels.

The main source of data came from the interviews which were conducted with the principals, coordinators and teachers. Webpage examination was also utilized in order to verify the goals, policies, missions, and visions of the school. In order to verify information which was stated in interviews about the curriculum, textbook examinations were also conducted. All the above were examined in order to see if the topic of religion was mentioned.

Data Analysis Procedures

All interviews which occurred were transcribed, sorted and categorized (Strauss & Corbin, 1990; Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Themes which emerged from the data collection were compared from the findings of different studies mentioned in the literature review (Merriam, 1998; Merriam, 2010). Data was triangulated by comparing the findings from the different sources analyzed such as artifacts and interviews to the framework adopted (Merriam, 1998; Merriam, 2010).

The data which was obtained was analyzed in the following manner. First each school case was built by categorizing and examining the goals, policies, and practices of the school under two levels. The first level is on educating religiously, the second level is educating about religious diversity. The goals, policies, and practices of the secular schools were only examined under the latter category which is educating students about religious diversity. After each case was examined, a comparison between the religious schools and then a comparison between the secular schools were both conducted along the lines of the goals, policies, and practices. Then a comparison between the secular and religious schools was conducted in regards to the previously examined findings, in terms of the goals, policies and practices.

The above mentioned results were examined and discussed through the lens of Banks' model of the (2009) Dimensions of Multicultural Education and then categorized based on the

Levels of Multicultural Education as defined by Rodriguez and Sjostrom (1996). This examination was not meant to take on an evaluative stance. Rather, it is only meant to highlight and explain the goals, policies, and practices in terms of the conceptual understanding of multicultural education in an attempt to draw conclusions from the study with regard to the presence and nature of their approach to educate about diversity. When categorized amongst the levels and dimensions, the policies and practices of the schools were considered to be either fully or partially pertaining to a certain level depending if all the policies or practices of the school fell under a certain level or if some were under a certain level whereas others were in a different one. The data was also considered to be formal or informal. The policies were considered formal if they were written either on the webpage or in a handbook and informal if they were only verbalized in interviews. The practices were considered formal if viewed in the textbook or time was specifically allotted for this form of practice through lesson planning. The practices were considered informal if the practice such as discussion just happened to come about.

Quality Criteria

Persistent observation was first utilized in order to decipher whether sufficient data had been collected by means of artifacts and interviews in order to avoid premature closure (Merriam, 1998; Merriam, 2010). This data was then triangulated by looking for instances of similar input from the individuals interviewed and by examining and accounting for invalidating evidence (Merriam, 1998; Merriam, 2010). The contextual features of the school and the participants were vigilantly illustrated to make sure that the reader understands the dynamics of communication and the setting in which the study will be done.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH FINDINGS

This chapter will present the results obtained in attempt to address the research questions raised on educating religiously and educating about religious diversity through goals, policies, and practices, and how this differs between religious schools and secular schools in Lebanon. It will provide a detailed description of the various ways and strategies that the topic of religion and religious diversity is taught in the schools which participated in the study. Data on how religion is taught at the schools was collected in the form of interviews with the Principal, academic coordinators and teachers of religion (in religious schools), civics, history, and literature. A school observational walk around, document and textbook analysis, and handbook and webpage analysis were also performed in one Catholic School (CS), one Orthodox School (OS), one Sunni School (SuS), one Shiite School (ShS), Secular School 1 (SecS1), and Secular School 2 (SecS2). In each school data was collected through persistent observation and then triangulated through document analysis and interview comparison in order to preserve quality criteria. The results will be presented as the case of each school.

First, the religious school cases will be presented followed by the secular school cases. Under each religious school case the data collected is categorized under two main headings: either as educating students about their confessional identity, or educating students about religious diversity. In regards to the secular schools only the later will be discussed. Each of these themes will be analyzed in regards to first, the goals and policies, and second, the practices that the school implements.

<center>**Religious Schools**</center>

Four Religious schools participated in the study. The four schools consist of a Shiite School, and Sunni School, a Catholic School, and an Orthodox School. All four cases educate their students religiously and also about religious diversity. The religious schools all have goals to educate their students about their confessional identity; however they all have policies which reference the tolerance and acceptance of other religions. All the religious schools have religious education programs. The Catholic School teaches students about the Christian religion, the Shiite and Sunni Schools emphasize the Islamic religion specifically about the Shiite religion and the Sunni beliefs respectively. The Orthodox School does not educate the students about the Christian Orthodox religion but aims to teach and make their students believers in God.

The Case of the Catholic School

The Catholic school which participated in the study is located in the suburbs of Lebanon and is a large school with 2,855 students ranging from preschool till secondary. When it comes to interfaith religious diversity the school is very homogenous, only five families in the school's population are of the Muslim religion and the remaining student body is made up of varying sects from the Christian denomination. The school staff and faculty are all Christians.

In the case of the Catholic School (CS), four individuals were interviewed. The President of the school (CSp), the civics and history coordinator (CScc-hc), the religious education coordinator/animator (CSrc), and religion teacher (CSrt) were interviewed.

Educating religiously. The Catholic School's goal is to educate their students religiously. This is reflected in both their goals and practices. Educating the students religiously is clearly stated in their mission and policies. Religious education classes are held for all students. The majority of the information on religious education came from the interviews. Analysis of the

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student handbook, webpage, and the civics textbook were also conducted and confirmed the information reported in the interviews.

Goals and policies. One of the goals of the school is to religiously educate their students about Christianity and how to become a better Christian. This is found in the mission statement of the school which states that the school must "provide the proper context for acquiring Christian moral and patriotic values, which will enable the child to become a faithful, truthful, lawful citizen, and an active member of the society and the church." The Christian mission was reemphasized by the President (CSp) of the school when he affirmed that the mission of the school is to have the children grow and be active members in the church by teaching them about Christian values. The religious education coordinator (CSrc) confirmed that the religion teachers all focus on achieving the goal of instilling Christian mission and values. During the interviews both the President and the Religious Education Coordinator (CSrc) mentioned that one unwritten policy is that all students must attend mass in order to attain this goal, regardless of their religion. The President reported that until this day, no family or student has opposed attending mass regardless of their religious background.

Moreover, the school is headed by a "rector" and some of the leadership positions are occupied by members of the clergy. Strategic decisions related to the school are to be in accordance with the Catholic Church educational goals and regulations.

Practices. In the Catholic School that participated in the study, the practices that are found to be targeting educating students religiously included incorporating religious education classes in the curriculum, as well as extracurricular activities organized by the Spiritual Animation Department. The schools Spiritual Leadership Coordinator (animator) stated that the purpose of the religious education courses is to make students better Christians and to

have them grow in their faith. Both the religious education coordinator and the priest who teaches the religion courses confirmed that in the secondary school the discussions in the religion education class have a moral direction since there is no religion textbook. Examples of topics which are discussed are marriage, abortion, divorce, and sex. The Religious Education Coordinator explained that students are first given the Church's perspective on these topics and then that of other religions as well. The topics taught in each grade level are found in the chart below.

Table 3
Religious Education Course Content for Catholic School by Grade Level

GRADE	OBJECTIVES
KG1,2,3	God the creator who loves us and sent Jesus his son to earth.
1	To discover that God is Love.
2	Discover that God gives us happiness.
3	Hearing the words of God, and participating in the Eucharist.
4	Getting to know Jesus as a teacher who lived on Earth with man, died, resurrected, and established the church.
5	Sacraments of the Church.
6	The history of salvation from Abraham to Jesus and then the Church.
7	To learn about Jesus who opens the doors of Heaven and create the Church.
8	To learn about the Sacraments of the Church.
9	Students discover their calling.
Secondary 1	Old and New Testament.
Secondary 2	The Christian Church, its history and ideology. How to be an active member
Secondary 3	The principals and values you should adapt to be successful in life.

Note. Comprehension of each of these Objectives is assessed through test, class participation, class work, projects, and homework.

The schools tries to make students active members in the Church is accomplished through the practices of the religious education courses, but also accomplished by mandating all students to attend mass, and spiritual retreats yearly. All four members interviewed confirmed that all students must attend mass once a week. The President and the Religious Coordinator also confirmed that the school has a festival each year with the diocese where students take part in various competitions that have a religious spin such as memorizing Bible verses.

School appearance and teacher training. The decorations around the school which pertain to the school mission and values all have a religious Christian connotation. There are pictures of saints, quotes from the New Testament, Bibles and crucifixes in every classroom. None of the decorations have any reference to other religions.

From the individuals from the Catholic School case who participated in the study only three would be considered too of had some form of training about religion. The President of the school and the Religion Teacher are all priests so they had religious training on the Christian religion. The Religion Coordinator received a master's degree in theology and Bible studies and has attended workshops on coexistence.

Educating about religious diversity. The Catholic School mentions the topic of the tolerance and acceptance of individuals of different religions within their goals and practices. The majority of the information on religious diversity education came from the interviews. Religious diversity education is not explicitly mentioned in the goals or curriculum. The topic of religious diversity is discussed in the religion, civics, and history classes.

Goals and policies. There is no direct mention about educating the students on the subject of religious diversity, in the mission statement, goals, and policies of the school. Nevertheless, the School President states that the basic values which are verbalized at the school

are diversity, freedom and respect of others. The President affirmed that the Christian values

which are clearly stated in the mission and vision statements and translated in the teaching and

curriculum are "one and the same with basic human values" and hence speak to the concept of

accepting diversity. He continued to state that the Christian belief is that "you are mostly

Christian when you are mostly human" making the value system across all religions one and the

same. However, the respect and understanding of others is directly mentioned in the school's

handbook. One of the requirements stated in the handbook is that students must "understand,

appreciate and interact with other cultures and traditions in a spirit of acceptance and tolerance of

diversity... establish good relations with others within an atmosphere of positive interactions and

mutual respect." This intent resonated through all four of the interviews with the Civics and

History Coordinator (CScc-hc), the Religious Education Coordinator (CSrc), and Religion

Teacher (CSrt) as they all offered examples of how this requirement is reinforced through the

curriculum of their courses (this will be discussed in detail in the Practices section). The

President of the school (CSp) explained that first and foremost, the goal of the school is to raise

students to be respectful and fully functioning human beings. This is then believed to necessitate

building respect for the diverse others. This belief is exemplified in the handbook which states

that the school "respects the traditions of other faiths and makes no effort to proselytize."

   Practices. The President of the school explained that educating the students about

religious diversity is indirectly addressed in the classrooms as teachers respond to students'

inquiries. He pointed out that diversity "forces itself on discussion topics in classrooms because

the children are exposed through media and society and their homes to all forms of religions and

other diversity so they come with questions. So [teachers] need to address this in a direct manner.

They have different people all around them." The Religion Coordinator and the Civics and

History Coordinator agreed when they stated that the main source of the questions they receive in classes comes from the curiosity of the students about the diversity they see and experience in society. The President of the school also explained, that discussions about diversity do not have a center stage, rather the main focus is on teaching the subject matters prescribed by the curriculum. He stated that "teachers are not told in such a straight forward matter to discuss the diversity that students see because it is more prevalent that they focus on the curriculum." Teachers, especially in the higher levels, he added, are instructed to stick to the curriculum and discuss issues of diversity when they arise only if they are aligned with the objective and content of the curriculum. According to the respondents from the participating catholic school, the topic of diversity, specifically religious diversity, is discussed more in the secondary level then in the lower levels as it is easier to integrate in the curriculum. However, they pointed out that the topic of the monotheistic religions is mostly brought up in the religion, civics, and history courses.

Moreover, all the respondents agreed that the religion classes in the secondary level along with the civics courses, address indirectly the topic of religious diversity through teaching students about the common human values which, in their opinions, are common to all religions. The Civics-History Coordinator, Religion Coordinator, and Religion Teacher assert that they share the same objective, that of showing students that religions share common human values. The Civics and History Coordinator remarked that as part of the high school curriculum, the monotheistic religions are compared and students are shown that all religions in the end have the same human values. This was confirmed through analysis of the civics textbook. He stated that the way in which he delivers the lesson, is by having students look at the Buddhist, Christian and Islamic religions and compare their common value systems through themes such as forgiveness, and charity. He also pointed out that the monotheistic religions are specifically compared in the

civics classroom through the commonalities between the Ten Commandments, the Beatitudes and a section from the Qur'an. The students along with the teacher then discuss and compare their meanings. He noted that the students truly were interested and embraced this discussion. In the religion classroom the Religion Coordinator and Religion Teacher reported that they look at values in general through the eyes of all the monotheistic religions. Topics such as marriage, abortion, divorce, and sex are discussed. The students are first given the standpoint of the Church on these matters, then they are informed of other religions perspectives. The topic is then debated and students ask questions in regards to their own religion and the religion of "the other". The Religious Education Coordinator explained that students "are taught to respect all religions and come together as one by seeing how the image of Christ is reflected in others." This format "is great for getting rid of misconceptions" claims the Religious Coordinator.

Religion, history and civics teachers and coordinators are found to incorporate common themes in their classes as a way to address the issue of diversity. The Religion Teacher and Religion Coordinator both report that they bring on the issue of how students' view "the other." They report that they inform the students that "the other" does not have to be like us or us like them noting that their aim is to help students to know "the other" in order to build better relationships and let go of any bias. This aim is shared by the civics and history coordinator and teachers at the school. The Civics and History Coordinator noted that the concept of "the other" with "its misconceptions" begins to appear in middle school and that teachers aim at eliminating these misconceptions and building tolerance and acceptance among the students. He explained: "Lebanon is a religiously classified society, so people might have misconceptions about others". It is because of the attempts to eliminate these misconceptions that teachers at the civics and religion departments teach students about respect of "the other" and the freedom of each

individual in practicing their own religion. The Civics and History Coordinator shared the following example which he always gives to his students: "I tell my students that there are two students one Christian and one Muslim, both whom come from the same village and both are Lebanese, the only difference is one prays on Friday and the other prays on Sunday; when we pass each other on the road we do not know who is Muslim and who is Christian. It is because of this all should be respected."

Another theme which is highlighted in both religion and civics classes is the difference between religiousness and fanaticism. In the religion education course one concept students must understand is that it is important that they are religious but not fanatics, reports the Religion Coordinator and Religion Teacher. This concept is also highlighted in civics courses. The Civics Coordinator states one main point during many class discussions around this theme is to help the students differentiate between being religious versus being a fanatic. He defines a fanatic to be one who believes that everyone who is not a part of their specific religion is their enemy. Respondents all emphasize that the eradication of fanaticism is a main reason why the religion department and the civics and history department feel it is crucial that they educate the students about "the other". The Civics Coordinator states "it is important that students understand 'the other' because if they do not know then they are more likely to categorize them as the enemy." He continues to say that "when we know the others, then we get close to them because in the end we are all human and we all share the same values. It is because of this that the school is extending the hours of [the civics] program because they feel it [the issue of knowing the other] is important."

In addition to the themes covered, analysis of the data reveals that class discussion is the dominant teaching approach followed while teaching about religion and diversity. Data point at

the fact that class sessions where the teaching of diversity is the topic, the classes are discussion based instead of exclusively lecture based. This was confirmed by both coordinators. They pointed out that instead of lectures, in the civics and religion classes, there are discussions between the students, and that students find these topics more interesting because of the way that their teacher guides these discussions. In addition, the coordinators pointed out that students are also required to fulfill projects in civics and religion classes where students are assigned to groups and each group is responsible on researching and presenting a different religion. After all the presentations are concluded the religions are compared. This helps students see how many similarities there are between the religions in both classes.

In addition to the activities and themes covered as part of the regular curriculum, data reveals that there are extra-curricular activities that address the issue of diversity and teaching about religion. Among the extracurricular activities that were pointed out as addressing religious diversity is the assembly for the school. The Spiritual Animation Department is responsible for an assembly every morning, five minutes in length, where the theme of the year is discussed which is "Anchored in value and harmony." The Religion Education Coordinator and the Religion Teacher both affirmed that during these assemblies and under this theme they speak about common values and recite the prayer of the patron saint of the school, and inform and explain to the students about any religious holidays which are coming up for all religions. Another activity which the respondents pointed out as an example of addressing the issue of diversity is the participation of the school in the Model United Nations. The President and Civics/History Coordinator believe that it is through this activity student are also exposed to different types of diversity which broaden the students understanding of "the other".

In sum, the Catholic School's main goal is to educate their students about their confessional identity. This objective seems to be rooted in the belief that their own religious values cover the acceptance of diversity in a substantive manner. Hence, the educator's main role is to raise a productive and active member of the Church while simultaneously pointing at the commonalities with the other faiths. This goal is the driving factor behind the schools curricular model. As a result, they have a formal religious education curriculum that is part of the scheduled classes that are offered to all grade levels along with the religious extracurricular activities such as weekly mass. On the other hand, educating their students about religious diversity is not a set goal in the formal school curriculum, rather, it is indirectly addressed in the classrooms as teachers respond to students' inquiries. Though the topic of other religions is discussed in the religion, history and civics courses through lectures, discussion, and debates, it does not occupy center stage. According to the respondents, the main focus remains on teaching the subject matters prescribed by the curriculum. This is despite what they pointed out about the heightened interest among higher grades' students in discussing issues of diversity, as well as the increased number of misconceptions about other religions in the higher grades. Moreover, the approaches followed in regards to teaching about religious diversity are informal and part of the extra-curricular activities, like the Model United Nations.

The Case of the Orthodox School

The Christian Orthodox School which participated in the study is affiliated with the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Beirut and is a medium to large school with 1,245 students ranging from preschool till secondary. When it comes to interfaith religious diversity the school is heterogeneous, with a majority of students from the Muslim religion (75%) and the remaining

student body is made up of varying sects from the Christian persuasion along with a faculty and staff made up of a majority of Christians.

In the case of the Orthodox School (OS), four individuals were interviewed. The Principal of the school (OSp), the Civics and History Coordinator (OScc-hc), the Arabic Coordinator (OSac), and a Religion Education Teacher who is referred to as the Advisory Program Teacher (OSrt) were interviewed.

Educating religiously. The Orthodox School's goal is to create and nurture students' belief in God. This is reflected in both their goals and practices. Educating the students religiously is clearly stated in their mission and policies. Religious education classes are held for all students. The majority of the information on religious education came from the interviews. Analysis of the webpage, the civics textbook, and Arabic literature textbook were also conducted and confirmed the information reported in the interviews.

Goals and policies. The stated goal of the school is to graduate individuals who believe in God. The documented mission statement of the school found on the webpage is to "build the personality of a human being who believes in God." This mission was reiterated in the interviews with the Advisory Teacher, and the Principal. Based on the school's handbook this is to be done through the exploration of each students' own relationship with God. This means that each student will encounter God through their own confessional identity. The school's goals as well as the belief behind adopting them are elaborated on the school's webpage as follows:

> to form learners who believe in God and can discover His image in His creation
> everywhere around them, all are encouraged to reach deeper in the faith of their own
> family. And through maintaining an atmosphere of freedom and discipline, the schools

become a space of encounter where learners get to know each other, and to accept each other, without prejudice simply as they are.

When asked if they teach religious education at their school the Principal stated "Our main concern is to nurture the mind and the soul of our students. Because of the diversity and the plurality of the communities we serve, the religious education is given outside the school schedule, keeping in mind that we raise all of our students to have faith in God." According to the Advisory Teacher, the reason why religious education is not stressed at the school is because "the school is not to take the role of the church in proselytizing because they are to cater to all learners of all religions." However all respondents agreed that the core value espoused at the school is rooted in their consideration of "the learner as a holistic learner, body mind and soul." At the school, both the school President and the head of the advisory program are members of the clergy. The school strategic direction is set in line of the Orthodox Church policies and emerges from the directives of the Orthodox Church Patriarch.

Practices. In the Orthodox School there are two types of programs that are part of the formal curriculum which educate the students religiously, one is the advisory program and the other is youth talk. During the sessions of these two programs, the advisory coordinator explained, students are taught how to build their relationship with God through their own confessional identity in a general sense.

According to the Principal and the Advisory Teacher, the advisory program is one of the main vehicles to achieving the goal of preparing a graduate who believes in God. The Advisory program is offered to students in fifteen minute sessions every morning. In this program, data from the interviews with the principal and advisory teachers pointed out that the values which are taught are human and religious values, such as forgiveness and perseverance. The Advisory

teacher further explains that this time is also used to bring about the critical thinking of the learners. They talk about topics which relate to the theme of the year which is "listen to see" for the current year, and they conduct activities such as discussing a quote. Within these fifteen minutes advisors can also discuss values and spirituality with their students. Some of the different lessons for a school year have been: listen to God, listen to yourself, listen to others, seeking the truth, gift of senses, talents, seek the meaning, hope, responsibility, and willingness. The advisory program is not necessarily all about religion, stories taken from the Bible are used for targeting the learning of human values without directly eluding to the Bible. The Advisory Teacher explained, being a Christian teacher, with a majority of Muslim students, he does a lot of research as to not offend anyone or say something incorrectly and makes sure to conduct his classes with respect to the other religions represented in the school. He states that it is especially important to teach the students about the beliefs that the Muslims and Christians share in order to bring them both closer to God together.

In addition to the advisory program, data collected in the Orthodox school revealed that the school also has a program known as Youth talk that targets intermediate classes seven, eight, and nine once a week. This program includes lessons that address teenage issues, diversity, and tolerance. Other lessons that were mentioned are Geniuses, and the difference between faith and science (Creationism vs. Evolution). The Advisory Teacher explained that during these lessons he introduces the students to the notion that "faith does not get rid of science theories, and that one does not have to overpower the other." The Advisory Teacher also noted that, similar to the advisory programs, many of the topics that are discussed are still intended to teach about God, however, they do not include an explicit reference to Him rather, they focus on topics such as jealousy, friendship, and perseverance. The Advisory Teacher further noted that eighth grade

students are invited to discuss teenage issues such as spiritual changes, tendency to criticize, diversity, accepting each other, and religious values. During these lessons students are encouraged to discuss their opinions claimed the Advisory Teacher, Principal, and Arabic Coordinator. The Advisory Teacher reported that, in grade nine, they elaborate on topics which are a little more controversial, like Jehovah witnesses, the worshiping of Satan, the Masons, cloning, abortion, and euthanasia.

In the absence of classes that are integrated in the school curriculum that teaches students to become members of the Orthodox faith, all respondents reported that the school does offer Christian Education through classes outside the school hours-mainly on Friday. The Advisory Teacher and the Principal reported that there are also religious meetings for the students, after school hours if they wish to attend.

Religiously educating students is not found in the curriculum of any other subject areas. The interviews with the other respondents such as the Arabic, Civics and History Coordinators revealed that there is no mention of religion as part of the curriculum in their subject matters; nor is there mention of it in the class discussion. Teachers of Civics, History and Arabic, did not see it as their role to address this issue in their classes.

School appearance and teacher training. Despite the focus on teaching religion in the mission statement of the school, during the school observation the only observed reference to religion were calendars with the picture of Mary on them in the offices of some of the teachers. No other religious symbols displays were observed. From the individuals interviewed there were no respondents who stated having any religious education training.

Educating about religious diversity. The Orthodox School mentions the topic of the tolerance and acceptance of individuals of different religions within their goals and practices.

The majority of the information on religious diversity education came from the interviews. Religious diversity education is not explicitly mentioned in the goals or curriculum. The topic of religious diversity is discussed in the religion, Arabic, civics, and history classes.

Goals and policies. The school is presented to be very accepting of diversity as claimed the Principal. All respondents substantiate this claim by pointing at the school's diverse student body. They emphasized that since the majority of the students' affiliation does not belong to the Orthodox faith to which the school is affiliated with, the main goal of the administration becomes to focus that no one is able to differentiate between them based on their religion. As a result a stated policy at the school includes statements regarding getting to know and accept others.

Moreover, the Principal and the Civics-History Coordinator pointed that both students and teachers are not allowed to wear or hold any items which disclose the religion they affiliate themselves with. It is written on the schools' webpage in the school code that "any publication related to politics or to any issue diverging from ethical values should not be discussed at school." These measures are taken in order to eradicate intolerance within the school and amongst students and faculty explained the Principal and the Civics and History Coordinator. All the respondents added that the mission of the school is to build the students to hold human values and practice tolerance.

Practices. The respondents pointed out that the topic of religious diversity is infiltrated in the curriculum through the approach used to discuss religion. All respondents explained that when discussions about religious diversity occur, the main goal is for students to learn how to respect the views of others and learn human values and behavior. The Principal explains that in the practice of each class, when discussing the topic of religion, the main purpose

is to "encourage them to respect others' beliefs." She added that the topic of religion is discussed in Civics and History courses, however they are approached in a historic and fact based manner in order for the students to have information and an understanding about all the major religions and their practices and history. This was observed in the civics textbook and the history textbook compiled by the Civics/History department of the Orthodox School. This information, they insist, is not used to religiously educate. The Civics-History coordinator explained, in grade seven, students look at two topics which have to do with religion. One is the appearance and development of Christianity during Roman times. The second is a look at Arabs before Islam until the appearance of Islam. In grade ten the class looks at the same topics discussed in grade seven however in more elaborate details. Civics and history courses are not designed to teach about religion in a manner which is used to preach or convert others. Instead the focus is on concepts of respect and getting to know others and other religions, and freedom of belief. The Civics-History Coordinator related that during these lessons students have many questions about religions which differ from their own. However, she affirmed that the questions asked and the topics discussed are very general, not deep by any means. This being the case, the teachers resort to assignments where they ask the students to research the topics in order to get to know "the other". These research projects address the student's curiosity, and attempts to minimize their intolerance.

Only general knowledge is required from the students when learning about religious diversity. The main learning objective is for students to identify the similarities between the religions. The Civics and History Coordinator's responses reflected their belief that it is not only important to know about Christianity and Islam but Judaism as well. Students tend to have many misconceptions regarding these religions she claims. Giving the example of Judaism, she

explained, that "they do not even know it is a religion, they just think it is a political party. She adds that in her view, students should be able to tell the difference between the Jews and the Zionists, and know that it is spread all over the world." When asked if there were ever any issues between the students regarding the concept of religious diversity, she stated that:

there were students that were not able to accept the concept so easily but there were never 'problems' because they have grown up with the knowledge that there are people of different religions and different beliefs. But it comes back to the teacher and how he/she is able to spin the class in a positive direction. Because you can either leave the students and let them get into a fight or you can steer the conversation the way you want and get them to your goal.

However, approaching the topic of diversity from this angle was sometime faced with resistance. The Civics and History teacher related that there was one instance in one of her lessons on Judaism, after she stated how they are a very tight knit community she received a backlash from parents stating that they prefer this topic not to be discussed. She affirmed that this letter did not stop her from teaching about the topic "because the context in which religion is discussed in the book is not in a very deep manner." She reported that the school stresses the civics curriculum should show the students the similarities amongst the religions, so teachers discuss human and shared values. Teachers utilize the book which was created by the school's Civics-History Department, but in addition to the book, extra resources are used from the internet and videos and students are encouraged to conduct their own research most of the time.

The Arabic Literature Coordinator takes much of the same approach as the Civics and History Coordinator with a slight difference in the experience. In the Arabic courses, she explains, the only objective is to have the students know about religions not to make them

religiously devout. Thus, when the topic of religion comes up in Arabic classes, it is also factually and historically based. He describes that the students are learning about historical occurrences which took place in varying religions. Moreover, all the teachings follow the government program. He stated that "the government has put specific boundaries and we are inside of it; you are not that flexible to go off topic, so these subjects must be discussed, but not in-depth." As a result, parents have not protested the parts of the Arabic class curriculum which addresses the topic of religion. The Arabic coordinator explained that in grade ten he starts looking at the topic of religion beginning with a lesson on Islam and how it developed during the different eras. They look at this lesson from the view of the community, politics, actions and beliefs of the people, and how these changed once Islam began. The program also takes a look at how women were before Islam and how the religion came about to give women rights. In addition to the historical facts, the Arabic coordinator stated that human values held by all the religions are also discussed. Along with the discussion about Islam, the Arabic program also talks about the early beginning of the Christian church and how they evolved. Even if students are to ask their teachers some questions about the human values which are not a part of the curriculum, teachers in the department are encouraged to take time to answer these quandaries. However, he went on to state that this discussion takes on more of a political then religious nature. Still, the coordinator stated that there have been a couple of incidents where the students try "to get a rise out of the class in order to get off topic and waist time, but the teacher was always able to control the situation, convince them, and bring them back to the main topic." The coordinator also pointed out that because of the focus on communicating facts, the classes take on the form of a lecture and debates and discussions are not prevalent in the Arabic classes.

The data collected show that in addition to discussing the issue of religious diversity in the civics, Arabic and History classes, the advisory program also target educating the students about religious diversity. The beliefs of each religious sect are brought about as well as the fact that the beliefs might disagree with one another. During these discussions it is the teachers' duty to guide students. He explains that, because some students do not have the maturity and are unable to responsibly control themselves, the teacher must guide class discussions in a manner not to allow for any misunderstandings or arguments between students. During the interview, the Advisory Teacher reported that he showed the students a TV add called "cheife halak" followed by a discussion which looks at students from different religions and how they are intolerant with one another. This lesson aimed at teaching them that each one has their own view points but that does not mean that others cannot also have theirs.

In sum, the Orthodox School's stated goal is to educate their students about God in order for them to form a relationship with Him through their own perspective and beliefs with no emphasis on one religion. This is due to the fact that the school is an Orthodox school which caters to a majority of Muslim students. Given the demographics of the student body the role of the teacher and course curriculum pertaining to religion becomes to point out the similarities between the monotheistic religions. Their curriculum includes religious education classes that are offered to all grade levels in the form of Youth talk and the Advisory program. From the perspective of the respondents, educating about diversity is infiltrated into the curriculum both through class discussions and debates, as well as some planned curricular content that exposes the students to other religions through the history, civics, and Arabic courses. The discussions about religious diversity were reported to predominantly emerge from the inquiry of some students in their courses.

The Case of the Sunni School

The Sunni School which participated in the study is affiliated with the Islamic Charity Association and is located in the Southern suburbs of Beirut. It is a medium size school with 400 students ranging from preschool till secondary. When it comes to interfaith religious diversity the school is very homogenous with a student body made up of varying sects from the Muslim persuasion, with a majority of Sunni students along with a faculty that is made up of predominantly Sunni Muslims.

In the case of the Sunni School (SuS), four individuals were interviewed: The Principal of the school (SuSp), the civics, philosophy, and science teacher (SuSct-pt-st), an English teacher (SuSet), and a religion education coordinator who is the Sheik of the school (SuSrc).

Educating religiously. The Sunni School's goal is to educate their students religiously. This is reflected in both their goals and practices. Educating the students religiously is specifically stated in their mission and policies. Religious education classes are held for all students. The majority of the information on religious education came from the interviews. Analysis of the webpage was also conducted and confirmed the information reported in the interviews.

Goals and policies. According to the school stated mission, the school aims to teach their students about the Sunni Islamic religion, and to prepare graduates that are "righteous humans and peacemakers." The school's goal is to develop a balanced, civilized, and Islamic character who has scientific knowledge and ample leadership skills which help him invest his energies in the management of his life and the advancement of his society. The mission continues by stating that the previous is accomplished through a family form of education, consistent of an educational system distinguished by religion, knowledge and values and effective management,

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and supportive sustainable guidance education. The school's written goals have references to educating students religiously which are the empowerment of the Islamic faith, character building and mastering of the Arabic language, the language of the Qur'an. The encompassing goals as stated on the webpage and emphasized by the Principal and Sheik are to get students to know Allah in accordance to Islamic teaching. Another goal of the school is for students to be "scientific thinkers in order to help the Lebanese society as a whole and the Islamic society as well." The vision, mission, and goals of the school that are found on their website were reiterated by the school Principal. The Principal specifically reaffirms the school's goal when he states "The goal is to get students to know Allah in accordance to Islamic teaching, to know that someone is watching them in order for them to do good towards others." He continued to remark that the school aims at helping the students learn the Islamic values which are also common human values in order for them to have a correct view and understanding of Islam. The Principal believes it is crucial for students to learn the values that Islam holds to teach the students since especially in today's world there are many misconceptions about Islam.

There are unwritten school policies which were verbalized by the Principal and the Sheik during their interviews. They reported that all students are expected to attend religious ceremonies and girls are to wear the hijab, however, students are to follow these two guidelines by their own volition. The Principal and Sheik continued by emphasizing that no faculty or staff member in the school will force them to do so. The Principal states "their love for Allah should draw them to prayer."

Practices. To achieve the goal of educating their students to become better Muslims, the school requires the students to attend religious education courses. The Sheik explained, that elementary grade one takes religion courses everyday for thirty minutes a day.

Grades two till six, three days a week for an hour each, and grades seven till secondary take religion courses two hours per week. These religious education courses are broken up in two paths. The first is the study of the Qur'an which is both through memorization and understanding. The memorization takes place in each grade where a different section of the Qur'an is memorized. The second portion is the applicable part of Islamic education. The Sheik explained that in these lessons, students learn about the sayings of the prophet, how to apply them, and also memorizing the sayings. Unlike the other subjects, religion is taught with the students sitting on the floor so that they can differentiate the importance of the religion course from the other subjects which are taught at the school. In this hour boys and girls are also separated.

The Sheik and the Principal both stated that the goal of the religious education courses is not only to understand Islam but also so that societies' picture of the Islamic faith is better by teaching students to model the faith's values and behavior in order to break stereotypes. To show that it is about love and togetherness not a religion that invokes fear and problems. When all of the different components come together there are six objectives that the Sheik believes the students must acquire through the religious education program which are: First, to know Allah. Second, follow Mohammad; third, to know how to pray and continue to pray; fourth, have the ambition to learn and ask questions about their faith and all forms of education in general; fifth, practicing good morals when dealing with others in the same faith and also other faiths; sixth, to spread the information about the Islamic religion to all.

Along with the religious education courses there is also thirty minutes of prayer everyday for all students and staff. The Sheik and Principal both mentioned the presence of the prayer time in their interviews. The Sheik explained that everyone is expected to cleanse themselves by following the Islamic ritual before they go to prayers and women are to wear the hijab during the

prayer. Furthermore, during prayer time, boys are separated from girls. Prayer time also consists of a word from Sheik who speaks about how they must act with other people. Within the prayer area there is a box where students are able to put their questions anonymously at any time and after the Sheik has delivered his words he will answer these questions.

When the topic of religion is brought up in other courses such as civics, literature, philosophy and science, teachers stated they do not go in-depth into the topic of religion. If questions are raised, the students are told to ask the Sheik for clarification or the Sheik will come in and address the class. Discussions are allowed and encouraged, however, the Principal pointed that the school considered it necessary that an authority on the topic answer the more challenging questions. The Sheik, Literature Teacher, and Science-Civics-Philosophy Teacher all confirmed this point.

In Science class, religious views are discussed during most topics. The science teacher insisted that science and religion are interrelated according to Islam. She states that there have been many discoveries which have first been written in the Qur'an and were later developed and brought about by others. Since the goal of the school is to create a generation of believers in God she teaches them about the scientific facts, but then informs the students about the Islamic view on the subject (e.g. abortion, genetically modified foods, gene therapy, evolution). She also includes a lesson on the important Muslim scientists who have made discoveries such as Ibn Haytham. Students even have debates about the topic and bring quotes from the Qur'an in order to validate their stance. She continues her thought by emphasizing that it is crucial that students have all the facts.

The literature classroom does not have the topic of religion set into the curriculum. The English literature teacher explained the only time that concept and beliefs pertaining to religion

appear in the classroom is when the students have questions, or during a discussion between students. He states that the only mention in literature class about religion is when students ask questions pertaining to evaluation of the actions of a certain literary character or the events and incidents in certain literary pieces. Whenever such questions arise, the teacher explained that the students always relate it back to the values of their religion as their frame of reference to make judgments. For example, he recalls that there was a story about hunting humans, and the student's response was value based "this is hideous, this is very violent, this is 'haram', this is forbidden in Islam." However, similar to the Principal, he believes that emphasizing the Islamic values is important because he considers that "these are not only Islamic values these are more human values."

The Sheik noted that along with the religious education courses, and prayer time students also have extracurricular activities which are designed to promote their religious education. Once a year students go on overnight religious retreats to the city of Saida and participate in activities related to learning about the Islamic religion. He also pointed out that there are multiple religious day retreats that the students are asked to participate in throughout the school year.

School appearance and teacher training. Evidence of religious education was not only present in the school goals and curricular and extracurricular activities but also in the abundance of artifacts around the school that all speak to the school's abidance by the Islamic faith. The main decorations were for the Hijjrieh New Year. Other decorations included Adha holiday posters, models of Mecca and a list of individual character traits in line with those of the prophet's which include: honesty, humbleness, generosity, patience, and trustworthiness.

In regards to teacher training on the topic of religion and religious diversity only the religion coordinator at the Sunni School who is the Sheik has training because he is a member of the clergy. His training and education is on the Islamic religion.

Educating about religious diversity. The Sunni School mentions the topic of the tolerance and acceptance of individuals of different religions within their goals and practices. The majority of the information on religious diversity education came from the interviews. Religious diversity education is not explicitly mentioned in the goals or curriculum. The topic of religious diversity is discussed in the religion, science, civics, and English literature classes.

Goals and policies. When asked about educating about religious diversity, the Principal and Sheik mentioned in their interviews that the school's goal is to eradicate fanaticism. They believe that students must be tolerant, respectful, and accepting of others views and beliefs. However, there are neither specific policies nor explicit goals pertaining to educating about religious diversity. However, the Principal did note that all individuals from all religions are welcome to attend the school. He emphasized that one of the main goals of the school is to build tolerance and acceptance of diversity in the students' hearts and minds.

Practices. According to the data collected, religion classes are not only used to teach the students about the Islamic religion, but also to help them learn about the other religions which are found in the country such as Christians, Jewish, Shiite, Druze, Armenian as well. Students learn about these religion's views on certain topics so that they will have knowledge on what "the others" believe confirmed all the respondents.

Moreover, respondents pointed out that the views of other religions on certain topics are brought up during other subject matter classes. Since one of the school's goals is to eradicate fanaticism the Science-Civics-Philosophy Teacher related that she tells her students that "it is not

a fact that if you are not with me then you are against me". In her science classes, she related that she has informed the students about other religions' perspectives on certain scientific concepts because she believes that they should know all perspectives. She expects students to know facts about others, because she believes ignorance of others and their beliefs is not an option. Debates are conducted in the class in order to get the students thinking and to know about "the others". However, unfortunately she states that this cannot be easily achieved since, "some students come from "close minded families," and pose a challenge to this teaching. However, she pointed out that they still have to listen to the teacher, and learn about the different schools of thought so that they are not ill-informed."

During class-time in the courses on religion, civics, philosophy, science, and literature, students are welcome to ask questions and are invited to debate topics regarding different religions. The school administration and policy are not against debate and welcome discussion in class on these topics stated all the respondents. The respondents continued to specify that teachers can talk about topics through their own knowledge, however they cannot go into detail because they do not know everything; so they would refer students back to the Sheik for any in depth religious questions. The Literature teacher refers most of the religion questions he receives from the students to the Sheik because his main objective is to teach English Literature not Religion. Still, the English teacher related situations where he handles the discussions that emerge. He related that in his English class there are some stories that could contradict the students' religious values or the values of the Lebanese culture. For example The English Teacher specifically noted the book his classes read entitled *The Most Dangerous Game* where humans hunt one another for food. He explains that students have a hard time accepting the story because the concept goes against their Islamic ethical beliefs. When this occurs he asks the

students to reflect on the topics based on their beliefs. The English Literature Teacher summed up his interview by affirming that:

> The task/moral responsibility of all teachers is to have the students graduate into a world which is full of changes and to deal with these changes with a moral foundation which is well rooted in their religion. However, these moral foundations are promoted in every religion.

When asked about activities that promote students' learning about religious diversity, the Principal and the Civics-Philosophy-Science Teacher mentioned the Model United Nations as an extracurricular activity adopted at the school and as one that teaches the students about all types of diversity. In this program, they explained, students debated different topics which include information about diversity and what different religions think of various topics. With all of these different class debates and with the activities of the Model UN, she believes that through this program the students get a good perception of the various religions found in Lebanon.

In sum, the Sunni School's goal is to educate their students about their confessional identity. Their practices with regard to educating religiously and about other religions seem to be rooted in the belief that their own religious values cover the acceptance of diversity in a "de facto" manner. As such the main role of the school and its teachers become one of preparing the students to be good Muslims and to point at the commonalities between the values and practices of Islam with the other faiths. This goal seems to be integral to every aspect of the school's teaching and learning process. Consequently, teaching about religion occupies a substantial amount of the formal curriculum, and many religious practices are structured within the school schedule. In regards to their curriculum, religious education classes are offered to all grade levels. The topic of other religions is not only discussed in the religion class but also history and

civics courses and in science class through lectures, discussion, and debates. However, the majority of the teaching practices related to diversity seem to be carried outside the formal academic curriculum and in response to the students' queries and interests as it arises. Few practices are available as part of the extra-curricular activities, like Model United Nations, that they perceive as an effective approach to expose their students to the "others" and to diversity.

The Case of the Shiite School

The Shiite School which participated in the study is affiliated with an association of Shiite Schools and is located in the Southern suburb of Beirut. It is a large size school with 2,248 students ranging from preschool till secondary. When it comes to interfaith religious diversity the school is very homogenous with a student body made up of varying sects from the Muslim persuasion with over a 90% majority of Shiite students along with a faculty and staff made up of predominantly Muslims, majority Shiite, with only two Christian staff members.

In the case of the Shiite School (ShS), six individuals were interviewed. The Principal of the school (ShSp), the English Coordinator (ShSec), the Civics and History Coordinator (ShScc-hc), the Religion Education Coordinator who is the Sheik of the school (ShSrc), a Religious Education Teacher (ShSrt) who is writing the religion books, and a Science Teacher (ShSst) who is also the Principal for the Secondary School were interviewed.

Educating religiously. The Shiite School's goal is to educate their students religiously. This is reflected in both their goals and practices. Educating the students religiously is specifically stated in their mission and policies. Religious education classes are held for all students. The majority of the information on religious education came from the interviews. Analysis of the webpage, religion textbook, yearbooks, and religious student data collection were also conducted and confirmed the information reported in the interviews.

Goals and policies. The mission of the school as stated on its website is to "build a human believer in God". The objective of the school is to develop a good and balanced citizen who helps in building a society based on the principles of the messages of the monotheistic religions. It is a stated policy in the school that all female individuals must wear the Hijab, it is viewed as part of the school uniform. Boys and girls are separated in different classes. All individuals who were interviewed also mentioned this policy. The religious holidays which are celebrated are government based however there are some Islamic holidays in which students are given an extended vacation beyond the one officially mandated by the government. This is balanced by reducing the number of days allocated to some Christian holidays.

Practices. The school has a well-developed religious education curriculum and is currently working on revising its standards. The Principal, the Human Resources, and the English Coordinator also spoke about their extensive evaluation system to see if the students' performance meet those standards to ensure that their practices reflect what the school believes are the appropriate characteristics of a graduate who abides by the Islamic faith in a "proper manner." The Human Resources Director of the school reported that students receive points on whether they pray regularly and if they pray correctly, if they wear the Hijab, if they treat others well. All teachers take part in scoring the students and then the counselors see if any intervention is needed, depending on each case.

According to the analysis of the data collected, religious education is incorporated into nearly all the subject areas except for math. In English literature class when they are discussing a certain topic, for example sibling rivalry, the English teacher will bring the students a quote from the Qur'an which discusses this matter, states the English Coordinator. He will also have the students look at the Prophet's sayings. He also related that, in certain cases, when the questions

about the religion topic require more expert answer she refers his students to go ask the Sheik for answers. Even in the science curriculum the Science Coordinator takes the time to inform the students about the views of Islam in regards to, abortion, sex, in-vitro, and cloning. She gets quotes from the Qur'an to be used as frame of reference and then have students debate the topic.

The Principal noted that new religion textbooks are in the process of being prepared to be used by teachers for all grade levels in the school. The Religion Teacher who is putting the books together and the Principal stated that the new religion curriculum as reflected in the textbooks stresses faith and also good deeds. The textbooks contain passages from the Qur'an, quotes from the Prophet's sayings and exemplar stories from his deeds. Each lesson culminates in an activity, and then an open ended question. The Principal explained that the textbook does not teach the students about the Islamic religion in a directive way instead students are taught the lessons through stories and examples. The Principal also stated that they have revamped the religion textbooks in order to make the Qur'an a part of the student's hearts. The textbooks also gives the students the Islamic religions perspective and thinking behind certain topics and provides them with the information they need if they are in situations where they have to explain and rationalize their beliefs and actions to others states the Principal. The most important part of the textbook the Principal states is that the textbook and the teaching always gets tied back to the concept of one God. The Sheik agrees and he notes that he believes that students need to be convinced of their religion not forced into it.

The Arabic classes also include religiously educating students but with the main objective of having the students speak and interpret the language of Arabic. The Arabic teacher stated that quotes would be pulled out of the Qur'an and she might have her students do research on that passage. Each year she has the students also write plays about different Islamic beliefs and

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prominent figures in the Muslim religion. They also write and interpret poetry from the Islamic tradition.

In addition, and as part of their extracurricular activities, students in the Shiite schools have to participate in group prayers at prayer time every day but especially on Friday they will take the students to a mosque to pray. Even though prayer time is optional all students participate. For the elementary students each year they reenact the pilgrimage to Mecca in the schools court yard.

School appearance and teacher training. Evidence of religious education was not only present in the school goals and curricular and extracurricular activities but also in the abundance of artifacts around the school that all speak to the school's abidance by the Islamic faith. The main decorations were for Ashoura. Other decorations included pictures of the founder of the Sheik who founded the school and is a prominent figure in the Shiite Islamic religion. Posters about the sayings of Prophet Mohammad and quotes from the A'Immah are located in the school hallways, and playground. Each classroom also contains a Qur'an in the front of the classroom.

In regards to teacher training and education on the topic of religion and religious diversity only the religion coordinator at the Shiite School who is a Sheik has training because he is a member of the clergy. His training and education is predominantly on the Islamic faith.

Educating about religious diversity. The Sunni School mentions the topic of the tolerance and acceptance of individuals of different religions within their goals and practices. The majority of the information on religious diversity education came from the interviews. Religious diversity education is not explicitly mentioned in the goals or curriculum. The topic of

religious diversity is mentioned in the religion, English, Arabic, civics, science and history classes.

   Goals and policies. The Founder of the School held the belief that every individual from various religions has the same belief system but the only difference is how one worships. It is based upon this belief that he created the school and stated that all would be accepted at the school, and they must be accepted as they are. The school still follows this ideology states the Principal, all are welcome to the school regardless of their religion. She assures that it is the second main goal of the school to graduate students who are not only religious but also tolerant and open minded.

   Practices. Since the school student population is very homogenous, the practices of the school are made to educate the students about religious diversity. Students are taught about other religious view points in their classes such as Religion, Civics, History, Arabic and English class; however the main source of learning about other religions is through the extracurricular activities that students participate in. The Sheik emphasized that there is no topic regarding religion or religious diversity which is considered taboo. Students are able to ask or discuss any topic they wish too. In the Arabic, science, civics, history, and religion classes the monotheistic religions are all discussed. All the individuals interviewed confirmed that the viewpoints of the monotheistic religions are taught in class and students have debates and discussions when it comes to these matters. The English Literature class takes the topic of religious diversity further as he consider it to also discus human values which are found between all religions.

   The main way that students learn about religious diversity in the school is through the extracurricular activities which are planned for every school year. One of these activities is the school exchange where students from a Catholic school come to this Shiite school and spend a

day with the students getting to know one another. Then the students from this Shiite school will go to the Christian school. This activity takes place approximately two to three times per year. All discussions are open at this time states the Sheik. All persons interviewed mentioned this activity in their answer on educating about religious diversity in the school. The Sheik and the Science Coordinator-Secondary Principal state that at first the students are nervous to be around one another but then by the end of the day they have built friendships between one another. This according to them helps educate the students about other religion as well bridge the gap between the religions.

Another extracurricular activity is that a priest is brought into the school multiple times per year in order to speak to the students about the Christian religion. Students are able to ask any questions they might have. The Priest and the Sheik come give a talk about "living together with the other." The students of the school even came together with the students of a Christian school and tried to make the biggest sandwich. All respondents also mentioned the Model United Nations as part of the extracurricular activities targeting education about diversity. They related that the School also participates in the MUN so students are informed about other religions and also interact with students from various religions at the meetings.

In sum, the Shiite School's main goal is to educate their students about their confessional identity. This goal seems to be integral to every aspect of the school's teaching and learning process. Consequently, teaching about religion occupies a substantial amount of the formal curriculum, and religious practices are structured within the school schedule. They have a formal religious education curriculum that is part of the scheduled classes that are offered to all grade levels. On the other hand, educating their students about religious diversity is not a set goal in the formal school curriculum in other than the religion courses where it is minimally integrated.

Rather, it is addressed in extracurricular programs and indirectly addressed in the classrooms as teachers respond to students' inquiries. The topic of other religions is not only discussed in the religion class but also history and civics courses and in science class through lectures, discussion, and debates.

<div align="center">**Secular Schools**</div>

Two secular schools participated in the study. The secular school participants were asked the same questions as the participants in the religious schools. Both cases educate their students about religious diversity in their courses through discussion, debates, and lectures. Both schools have policies which reference the tolerance and acceptance of others, this includes the religiously diverse.

The Case of Secular School 1

The first Secular School which participated in the study has no religious or other affiliations. It is located in Beirut and is a medium school with approximately 400 students ranging from preschool till secondary. When it comes to interfaith religious diversity among the students the school is heterogeneous, with a mixture of Muslim, Christian, and Druze students. The faculty and staff are also heterogeneous with both Muslims and Christians.

In the case of Secular School 1 (SecS1) four individuals were interviewed. The Head of Division (SecS1hd), a Civics and History Teacher (SecS1ct-ht), an English Literature Teacher (SecS1et), and Arabic Literature Teacher (SecS1at) were interviewed.

Educating about religious diversity. Secular School 1 mentions the topic of tolerance and acceptance of individuals of different religions within their goals and practices. The majority of the information on religious diversity education came from the interviews and webpage. Diversity education is explicitly mentioned in the goals of the school.

Goals and policy. The school's goals reflect that it accepts, and celebrates all religions because it is secular and is not affiliated with any religion. The Head of Division stated that the overall profile of the type of students they wish to graduate from their school is a student with individuality (flexible, tolerant, independent, autonomous learners), and who accepts other people even with different viewpoints.

The Head, Civics Teacher, and Arabic Literature Teacher all state that the policy which is held throughout the school is that students are allowed to wear religious symbols, such as hijab or a cross as long as it does not simultaneously hold a political meaning. A religious symbol which also gives reference to a specific hizib or political party is not allowed. This is the case because of the political unrest which is currently plaguing the country. The Head further explained:

> Unfortunately politics is related to religion in this country. Technically the school is not allowed to forbid students from wearing anything as long as they are in uniform, even if it has to do with politics. However, because of the religious and political tension which is occurring in the country, they are not allowed to wear religious symbols which have political meaning incorporated in them. And the students abide by it without any problems.

According to the school handbook, the three pillars which govern the school are to instill in the students a sense of self-confidence, respect, and compassion. Graduates of the school are "primed to [work] collaboratively within a diverse environment" and to "take responsibility for their future and to be active citizens engaged in local, regional, and global issues" as stated in the handbook.

A stated objective of the school is to develop their students socially in order to exhibit tolerance and self-respect. Community and parental involvement are also claimed in the handbook to be used in order to safeguard students from the "rapidly changing value system".

The Head stated that the polices/ bylaws of the school which speak towards religion state that "They can talk about religion and any form of controversial issues as long as it is dealt with in a respectful, academic, and objective manner."

Even though the school is identified as secular they still have a policy to celebrate religious holidays. The Head reported that holidays which are celebrated are the ones mandated by the government. He continued to explain that it is the students who decide which holidays they would like to celebrate, "no one forces the students to decorate for Christmas, Adha, Easter, or Ramadan, but they do, all the classes decorate. There has never been a class that did not decorate or take part in the activities." Along with the Head the Arabic Teacher also confirmed that holidays are celebrated through decorations, school wide activities, and individual class activities.

There have been very limited forms of opposition from parents in regards to the school policies regarding religion, only about four to five incidents, and in all these cases the Head of Division related that the administration tells the parents "we are a non sectarian school and it does not mean that we are against religion, we embrace all religions and do not specifically celebrate any specific religion. We embrace diversity so because of this we embrace all sorts of religions." The Arabic Teacher and Head recall that the majority of parents who filed the complaints were convinced, but others who were not convinced still did not pursue the matter any further because they like the school and their kids are comfortable in the school. There was

only one incidence where parents removed their kids and took them to a religious school because they did not want them to get influenced by "ideas different then their own" recalls the Head.

Practices. The curriculum in Secular School 1 does not include courses that are targeted to specifically teach about religion. However, they do educate the students about the topic of religion and religious diversity throughout other subjects found in their curriculum such as; civics, history, English literature, and Arabic literature.

When exploring the topic of religion in classes, and in the curriculum, it is mostly approached through the study of the commonalities found between the religions. The Civics-History teacher stated that in the civics courses the curriculum does not go deep into the concept of religion, however, they do look at the commonalities between the religions and students are made to memorize these facts. One example she shows the students is that there is no religion which promotes killing, but instead the values of forgiveness and love, and how to treat one another properly. When talking about religion the classes focus on the monotheistic religions however they also look at some of the religions that do not worship one God. It is a part of the curriculum to look at texts from the Qur'an, Bible, and Torah which do show their similarities. However, the class is not geared towards teaching the students about religion, but instead educating the students on how to become patriotic and productive citizens and not to belong to a specific "hizib".

In Arabic class the same format is followed as well. The Arabic teacher reports that the main discussions in class mostly examine the fact that the monotheistic religions all have one purpose and the same values which are love and respect. The Arabic teacher explains religion topics which are discussed in class are not in order to learn about religion but appear as references in stories instead. This was confirmed when the Arabic textbook was analyzed. He

teaches his students that disagreements pertaining to religion are caused by humans not religion. He explains there is no monotheistic religion which says to kill the person of another religion or not to acknowledge or accept them. So in the monotheistic religions we all follow the same God, but how it is celebrated is where it differs. He continues by stating that "the discussions which are conducted in class try to separate religion from politics as much as possible. But when the students are going back to their communities, which have brainwashed them, then they go back to their misconceptions even though in school they learned and accepted the facts." The only time he recalls the students' conversation getting heated was right after the war of 2006. When heated debates occur and students get riled up he explains to them that "you should always think of the road back. Just because you are of a different sect does not mean you are enemies. You are brothers living together all the time."

The school has a character education program which focuses on the teaching of values confirms the Head of Division. In the last month, the main value was respect; respect for yourself and others, and respect as a virtue or a value in all religions. In this course students are always taught about the values through activities and teachers try and avoid lecturing. However, the course does not discuss religion as much as it informs the students about basic human values described the Head.

During discussions and class time, teachers are not allowed to voice their religious views and convictions to students, or try to make them believe in their ideologies and beliefs. The Head of Division states that these discussions "have to be academic and scientific at the same time". It is the administrations expectation that class discussions which refer to religions should be approached in the same way that they would discuss history or geography. Classes should try and highlight what all the religions have in common and deal with them in regards to the school's

code of values insisted the Head. The Civics-History and Arabic teachers both confirmed that in all courses, students are able and expected to voice their opinions. This teaching method is utilized in order to teach them to voice their opinions respectfully. Everyone has the freedom to be exactly the way that they are and the school is with freedom of expression. The Head continues by stating that "even in high school social studies, Judaism is even discussed like any other religion. And for example if the issue of religion is raised in math class the teacher can take a couple of minutes to address the topic." In Arabic class discussions and debates are also vital to the class. The Arabic Teacher feels that in high school, debate is more important than the lectures that they have in their classes because students learn how to interact with individuals who might have a difference of opinions and learn how to respectfully state their own opinions. This is very beneficial for when they graduate from school the Arabic Teacher claims. However, they need to follow the rules of how to behave properly during these discussions. If they will be wasting time, then they will stop the discussion but if there is true discussion then he believes it is fine.

The Civics and History Teacher insisted that discussion is a vital factor to all her classes, even if the students have differing opinions from her own. She feels that the material being taught is used to enlighten the students and teach them the facts so that they are not taught false beliefs by fanatics. She informs her students that in order for them to acquire the correct information they must "open their eyes and ears" by taking a look at the many different news sources. In this way, they would be able to extract the facts from all of the opinion based news. She states that some students will listen and other will not and just hold on to which ever opinions they initially held. However, there are no problems regardless of how enthusiastic the debates get because the students know that they are debating using a democratic perspective and that a difference of opinion is healthy. In addition, they learn that "no one has the right to tell you

where, how, and what to pray to. It is your own decision." Also that "politics are political not religious and the two should not be integrated." In closing each discussion, she brings them back to the fact that they are all Lebanese in the end, and that the country of Lebanon should be looked at as a model country because there are so many different religions which are integrated together in such a small space.

The topic of religion is also somewhat mentioned in the English literature course. The English literature teacher stated that religion is only mentioned as a modern form of ancient mythology, the existence of superior beings and forces which control our lives and destiny. This is the basic form that religion comes out in the curriculum. There are no religious texts in which to teach the students. It is only if a question comes up from a student that opposing religious views would be discussed. Unlike the civics, history, and Arabic literature courses when the topic is discussed in the English literature class, the teacher stated that students do not usually go deep into discussion; they just take them in as facts. He believes that this is the case not because they are not thinking about it, but because they are shocked and surprised that there are other points of view to be seen and discussed. The English Literature Teacher exclaims, "these values are not only found in religion they can also be found outside the religious niche." He recalls that a couple of years ago his class did look at old texts from the Qur'an, however, they were only looked upon as pieces of art.

However, respondents brought up that the school approach to dealing with topics on religion does not always go unchallenged. The English Teacher notes, that "there is usually this unspoken fear amongst teachers where they believe it is better not to delve deep into religious issues or discussions, in order for them not to form a certain clash between sects within the school." Because there is always this fear among teachers to upset or antagonize the parents, the

subject of religion is rather avoided. However, throughout his years of teaching at the school, and having open discussions, the English teacher reported that he has never had any problems. He has only heard of other teachers having issues in class and with parents when it came to discussions on the topic of religion. He exclaimed that he has heard that in other classes students had gotten into arguments about religion and in other circumstances parents had called the school to complain about certain topics about religion being discussed. He believes this is the case because he is carful in the approach and the language that he uses. He believes this helps avoid arguments when it comes to discussing religion in class, because it is not directly reflected on the students and the parents. The Arabic Teacher explained there have never been big problems in class because of the topic of religion because "the students know the rules of the school so they only get upset for a while, they do not talk to each other, and then they forget about it and everything is ok." All respondents explained that the school does not shy away from discussing religious topics in classes because of the fear of creating problems, even though they sometime might occur in a subdued manner.

Regarding extracurricular activities the debate club held debates about accepting differences, and there were groups of students which were religious and others who were not religious. The Head of Division adds that "the most important thing was that they all listened to each other and respected one another."

School appearance and teacher training. Around the school's campus there are no religious symbols or mention of religion through design and decoration anywhere. No respondents who were interviewed in Secular School 1 had any teacher training and education on religion and religious diversity.

In sum, Secular School One's goal is to educate their students about accepting people from other religions and have students grow in their individuality. The school has a religiously diverse student body population which enriches the debates and discussions which informally occur in class about religions. In regards to their curriculum, religious education classes are not offered. The topic of religions is discussed in the Arabic literature, history, and civics courses through lectures, discussion, and debates. From the perspective of the respondents, educating about diversity is infiltrated into the curriculum both through class discussion, as well as some planned curricular content that exposes the students to religions. Students are also made aware of religious diversity through the religious holidays which the students plan and celebrate and other extracurricular activities, like Model United Nations.

The Case of Secular School 2

The second Secular School which participated in the study has no religious or other affiliations. It is located in the suburbs of Beirut and is a medium school with approximately 350 students ranging from preschool till secondary. When it comes to interfaith religious diversity the school is heterogeneous, with a mixture of students from various faiths, however, Muslim and Christian students make up the majority. The faculty and staff however are homogenous with a majority of Christians and only a couple of Druze.

At the beginning of this academic school year the school has entered a transitional period in which they are shifting from a religious school to an international school. This change was brought about by their diverse student population. Since the school holds such a diverse student population, the administration decided it was best to cater to their students and have their schools identity truly match their student demographics explained the Principal and the Academic Director.

In the case of Secular School 2 (SS2) five individuals were interviewed. The Principal of the school (SS2p), the Academic Director who also teaches English literature and history (SS2ad-et-ht), an English Teacher (SS2et), the Arabic Coordinator (SS2arc), and the World Religions teacher who also teaches History (SS2rt-ht) were interviewed.

Educating about religious diversity. Secular School 2 mentions the topic of tolerance and acceptance of individuals of different religions within their goals and practices. The majority of the information on religious diversity education came from the interviews and code of conduct. Diversity education is explicitly mentioned in the curriculum of the World Religions course.

Goals and policies. In response to the shift of the school vision and goals from a religiously affiliated school where religion is taught to a secular school that caters to students from diverse religious background, the vision of the school, stated on the webpage, embodies this transformation which is to "strive to be a leading educational community in the Middle East for students of all nationalities and religions."

The values which the Principal and the Academic Director of the secular school believe their students should acquire by the time they graduate, is to have integrity, and to be a thoughtful and aware citizen to all religions and all people from different walks of life. The Principal affirmed that this is crucial because not all individuals come from the same background so the students need to be aware of this. The written code of conduct states that the school, teachers, and students need to accept all types of differences. The Academic Director explains that this includes religious diversity.

The Principal of the school believes that learning about the monotheistic religions is very crucial, but also learning about the other religions such as, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Sheiks, are

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important as well because "we have become a very global society. People are applying to universities in different parts of the world. So the school needs to prepare the students not to have a culture shock." The History-World Religion Teacher reaffirms this belief that it is crucial that students learn about religious diversity because they need to know the information for college. The Principal feels however that the school environment already plays a vital role in making the students aware/conscientious of the different forms of diversity, because, he reported, they have thirty-five different nationalities represented in the school's student population.

Government' set religious holidays have always been observed at this school. However, now that the school is following international standards and changing to non religious, the Principal feels that they should be more conscientious in spreading holiday vacations equally. In regards to celebrating these holidays at school, he would prefer that the school does not celebrate any holiday as to not accidently give preference to certain religions. However, he explained that the school is "no more Jesus centered as to God centered." The school no longer follows a Christian identity. The references to Jesus in the "chapels" which were held are no longer a part of the school. The Principal explained that when there is religious referencing in the school, it is not referring to a specific sect or belief system anymore but to the all encompassing image of God found in monotheistic religions.

The Academic Director believes that "it is the little things that add up and make the school truly respectful of diversity." One of the factors that she believes plays a role in creating an atmosphere of religious diversity acceptance is the fact that the school cafeteria has always been conscientious about the food it serves. The Academic Director adds that the school takes into consideration the Christian and Islamic fasting periods, so faculty are told to be understanding if the student is hungry or tired or needs to eat.

Practices. There are religious courses that are obligatory for all students to take which is a World Religions course offered at the secondary level as a trimester course. The textbook was created by the World Religion Teacher specifically for the course. The Principal believes that there should be no objections from parents or students when it comes to taking this course because it is teaching about all the religions and it is organized just like a history course. The World Religions class looks at the monotheistic religions along with Buddhism, and is very factual based states the History and World Religion Teacher. She shows them that monotheistic religions are related with the base being Judaism. Another portion of the curriculum talks about topics which are currently happening and how religions view them. The topics are taken from current event news sources. After the facts are learned the class takes on more of a discussion format. The History-World Religions Teacher affirms that the objective of the class is to have students know and respect all religions not one specific religious belief, because it is a diverse school with diverse students. No problems between students have ever occurred in her classes because they know from the beginning that each student has their own beliefs and that individuals are born into their religion. She remarked that the students just have a sense of respect for one another when it comes to the topic of individual religious beliefs.

History is taught to all grade levels and religion is discussed in a more general and simplified form which talks about the different civilizations and cultures and their points of view. The History and World Religion Teacher explained that they tackle the subject of Christianity and Islam. Since she identifies with the Christian religion herself, she knows more about the Christian religion and is able to teach it easily. However, in all her classes when it comes to the topic of Islam she relies on her research, and she also asks her Muslim students to help her by having them ask a Sheik. Both the Academic Director and the History-World Religion Teachers

confirmed that in history class students will learn about mythology, the Islamic crusades, Christianity and the Roman empires in a historical and factual manner.

When interviewing the English Literature Teacher, and Academic Director who is also the English Coordinator they both stated that religion is not mentioned in their classes. Religion is only briefly discussed when setting the time period for a story. An example of how religion is discussed in English is when the students are reading Frankenstein and they have a debate about evolution versus creationism. Another example is when they are discussing Khalil Gibran's books and he references a belief in God. Otherwise religion is not discussed or even noted in the literature classes.

When it comes to other academic subjects the respondents explained that their school teaches students about the morals that all faiths believe in and the values that all the religions follow which are more of encompassing human values. In the Arabic classes the discussion about religion tends to take place in second secondary where they discuss the coming about of Islam and the rules and rituals of the Islamic faith confirms the Arabic coordinator.

Discussion and debates are expected to take place in the classroom. The Principal believes that discussions and dialogue play an integral role when it comes to learning about the topic of religion. When asked if this topic would be considered somewhat of a taboo subject in his school he exclaimed that:

> It is not a touchy subject when given the proper parameters and guidelines. There are of course some topics you would not discuss. However, you will look at their values, beliefs, how they integrate with one another, and why it is important to understand other religions and respect them. It is even ok to say wars have happened because of religion.

Students need to learn from past mistakes and be shown what the negative aspects of religion can be when taken to the extreme.

The Academic Director and History-World Religion Teacher remarked that in social studies and world religion classes the discussion start out as more factual based but then morph into a debate amongst the students. The Academic Director affirms the notion that debates and discussions about religion in school do not cause any problems because she believes that the students are already aware and expect these differences. She states that "here in Lebanon everyone is already labeled by their religious identity whereas abroad this is not the case you are labeled by your race." During her interview, the History-World Religion teacher echoes these same sentiments. In elementary school the students have an activity called "singing chapel" where students sing to God. The Academic Director states that it used to be songs about God and Jesus however, now with the transition, everything is becoming God centered, as the Principal has previously noted. There was only one incident where a parent whose family is Jehovah's witness requested that their child not participate in the "singing chapel" because of their religious beliefs and the school accepted their wishes. There are extracurricular activities for the grade eight history class reported the Academic Director. The class will go and visit Churches because they are learning of ancient Rome, not because it is a religious trip.

There are currently no extracurricular events in the secondary level that specifically talk about religion but the school does hold a United Nations day which educates the students about cultural diversity in general. What the Principal envisions for the future is to hold events at the school which teach and promote understanding of religious diversity. His one condition is that various religions are promoted at the same time equally. This would take the form of an after school activity or an awareness or educational activity.

School appearance and teacher training. The school only contains two areas where there are religious symbols. There is a cross located in the Principals office and other decorations about religious diversity in the world religions classroom. The rest of the school does not have any religious symbols on campus. As for religion and religious diversity training only the Academic director confirmed receiving training while acquiring her teaching diploma abroad. She received religious diversity training on how to deal with students from various backgrounds.

In sum, this year has been a transitional period for Secular School Two, shifting from a religious school to a secular international school. Secular School Two's goal is to educate their students to be helpful and respectful citizens, this includes but is not limited to respect of diverse religions. The school does not seek to religiously educate but does make an effort to educate about religions. In regards to their curriculum, religious education classes are not offered, however they are the only school in the study to offer a World Religions class to all secondary students. The topic of religions is discussed in the Arabic literature, and history courses, as well, through lectures, discussion, and debates. From the perspective of the respondents, educating about diversity is infiltrated into the curriculum both through prompted class discussion, as well as some planned curricular content that exposes the students to religions. This school also partakes in the Model United Nations as an extracurricular activity that is seen as exposing the students to diversity and will begin a multicultural day in the coming year.

Comparison between Schools

This section will take a look at the similarities and differences between first the religious schools, then between the secular schools. After these two have been analyzed, the religious schools will be compared against the secular schools. All of these comparisons will be done

across the schools' approaches to educate religiously and educate about religious diversity in light of the findings on the goals, policies, and practices, in each school.

Educating about Religion in Religious Schools

This section will look at the similarities and differences between the four religious schools which participated in the study. First the goals will be compared and then the practices of the religious schools will be compared. This will be done about both the religious education of the students along with the education about religious diversity.

Goals and policies. All the religious schools which participated in the study were similar in regards to explicitly stating the goal to educate their students religiously. Their practices also reflect an unstated goal, that of educating students religiously in regards to their respective sect. The only difference is that the Orthodox School's goal is to educate about God, not specifically the Orthodox sect. On the other hand, all four religious schools participating in the study did not have a stated goal for educating their students about religious diversity though members in these schools who were interviewed all asserted their school's intent to promote tolerance and acceptance of others by introducing their students to religious diversity. However, in all four schools, the focus was on enlightening the students about the commonalities amongst the religions, and by presenting their own religious values as common "human values" which make them automatically shared by all others.

Practices. Practices related to teaching about religion and educating religiously are all similar among the four religious schools. All four schools offer a religious education class at all grade levels as part of their academic curriculum. Moreover, in all schools religion as a topic was included in their civics, and history curriculum.

However the schools differ in the extent to which they spent time on discussing religion in the non-religion classes. Out of the four schools, discussions about religion seem to be more dominant in the academic curriculum in the two Islamic affiliated schools [Shiite and Sunni]. In these schools results showed that teachers of different subject matters discussed and incorporated religious opinions, even in their science classes.

On the other hand, practices in the four religious schools reflect that religious diversity as a topic is not included in the curriculum; rather it is only indirectly addressed in the classrooms as teachers respond to students' inquiries. Only the Shiite School had planned activities intended to educate their students about religious diversity through incorporating activities in their extracurricular programs. These activities were designed to inform the students the facts and commonalities amongst the various religions. When discussing the topic of the diversity in religious beliefs the monotheistic religions were the ones that were mostly discussed and compared in the four religious schools.

The four religious school practices used lecturing and fact acquisition, however, students were also expected to attain the next level of thinking by utilizing debates and discussions. The discussions were predominantly instigated by students inquiries in the four religious schools. The four religious schools who participated in the study had similar topics of discussion about the different religions in the Civics, and History courses that were in accordance with the topics mandated by the National Lebanese curriculum, set for the schools.

In sum, the Sunni, Shiite, and Catholic schools offered religious education courses to their students in order to make them proficient in understanding and practicing their confessional identity. The Orthodox School also religiously educates their students but not to enhance their confessional identity but to enhance their belief in God. They offer religious classes in the

Orthodox faith as after school and optional. The four religious schools followed very similar

goals and practices when educating religiously and about religious diversity.

Educating about Religion in Secular Schools

This section will look at the similarities and differences between the two secular schools

which participated in the study in regards to the manner they educate students about religious

diversity. First the goals will be compared and then the practices of the secular schools will be

compared.

Goals and policies. Secular School One and Two have similar goals and policies when it

comes to educating their students about religious diversity. Both Secular Schools' had a stated

goal to educate their students about tolerating and accepting people on all aspects of diversity,

including religious diversity. Both schools accept students from different denominations, and

allow both their students and staff to display their religious affiliations. In their schools, both

staff and students wear religious symbols such as the hijab or jewelry with the cross. As for

religious holidays, both schools observe all major religious holidays as mandated by the

government. However, while policies in Secular School 1, allow their students to decide on the

form [decorations or activities] of celebration they want to have at the school during religious

holidays, in Secular School 2 their principal explained that they avoid these celebrations as a way

to not risk giving unequal attention to one religion at the expense of another.

Practices. In regards to both Secular Schools' curriculum, religion classes are not offered.

While courses addressing religious diversity are not offered in Secular School 1, Secular School

2 does mandate that all students take a course on World Religions. Results showed that in both

schools the topic of religions is only discussed when it is mandated by the national curriculum or

in response to students' inquiries in the Arabic literature, history, and civics courses through lectures, discussion, and debates.

On the other hand, from the perspective of the respondents in both secular schools, educating about diversity is infiltrated into the curriculum both through class discussions, as well as some planned curricular content that exposes the students to the various religions. Both schools seem to be striving to educate their students to embrace, celebrate, and learn about all religions.

Comparison between Religious and Secular Schools

In this section the results will be presented under two headings: religious education versus educating about diversity. Under each, the goals and practices will be compared across school type [religious schools vs secular schools] to provide answers to the third research question that explores the similarities and differences in both types of schools

Religious Education. This section looks at how the schools who participated in the study educate their students to become practicing members of the religious denomination. It focuses on the goals for religious education as well as the practices followed. Religious education is only found in the religious schools, the secular schools did not attempt at all to religiously educate their students.

Every religious school which participated in the study shared the same goal which was to religiously educate their students about their confessional identity or in the case of the Orthodox School about God. This goal was vocalized throughout each of the interviews which took place in the religious schools and were explicitly written on the schools' webpages. The aim of the school is not only to make the students proficient in their confessional identity but also to make

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them active members of their religious community. The table below shows the specific goals

which were found in all four religious schools related to religious education.

Table 4.
Religion Mentioned in School Goals.

School	Mention of Religion in Policy
Sunni	Produce a better Muslim
Shiite	Produce a better and active Muslim
Catholic	Produce a student as an active member of the Church
Orthodox	Have a relationship with God
Secular 1	
Secular 2	Tolerant and Accepting school of all religions

The commitment to educate the students religiously in religious schools was evident throughout

the Catholic, Sunni, and Shiite Schools because of the decorations found around the schools. All

of the decorations found around these three campuses paralleled the schools confessional

identities. There were absolutely no decorations about other religions anywhere to be found.

These symbols were found all throughout these three schools in vast proportions. In contrast, the

secular schools which did not attempt or even want to educate their students religiously and the

Orthodox School which educated about God in general did not have religious symbols. The

religious symbols which were found in the Orthodox School and Secular School 2 were of

personal possession and use for the Principal and some teachers. Secular School 2 was the only

school among all participating schools which had a display of religious images in order to

educate about religion and diversity as part of their World Religions class. This is portrayed in

the table below.

Table 5.
Religious Artifacts: Comparison Among Schools.

Observations	Maronite	Orthodox	Sunni	Shiite	Sectarian 1	Sectarian 2
Classrooms						
Bulletin Boards & Decorations						
Religious Images	✓					
Religious Sayings	✓			✓		
Decorations about Religion	✓			✓		✓
Hallways						
Bulletin Boards & Decorations	✓		✓	✓		
Religious Images	✓		✓	✓		
Religious Sayings	✓		✓	✓		
Decorations about Religion	✓		✓	✓		
Playground						
Bulletin Boards & Decorations	✓			✓		
Religious Images	✓					
Religious Sayings	✓			✓		
Decorations about Religion	✓			✓		
Administration Office						
Bulletin Boards & Decorations	✓			✓		
Religious Images	✓	✓		✓		✓
Religious Sayings	✓			✓		
Decorations about Religion	✓			✓		

Educating about Religious Diversity. When it came to educating students about religious diversity there were some similarities and few differences found between the religious and secular schools which participated in the study. The main similarity was in the presence of a stated goal in all of the schools to accept and tolerate people of all forms of diversity. This includes, but is not limited to religious diversity. However, no school mentioned how it is they will have students reach this goal other than the fact that they welcome students from all religious groups to attend their schools. No school measured to see if they in fact are succeeding in promoting acceptance and tolerance.

In the religious schools when the topic of religion was mentioned in the courses the main focus was on the schools confessional identity. In the secular schools the mention of religion in the courses was set more towards diversity education. However, a similarity in the practices found amongst all six schools, in both the religious and secular schools, was that the focus was set on educating the students about the monotheistic religions and their similarities. The table below shows the courses in which religion was mentioned.

Table 6.
Religion mentioned in academic courses in the schools.

Course	Schools					
	Catholic	Orthodox	Sunni	Shiite	Secular One	Secular Two
Religion	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Civics/History	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Literature		✓	✓	✓	✓	
Science			✓	✓		

*Note: Religion course mentioned under Secular School 2 is the World Religions course.

The six schools did not bring mention about atheism at all and most ignored the other world religions. Only the Catholic School and Secular School Two mentioned in their interviews that they taught about Eastern religions. The remaining four cases discuss and learn about the monotheistic religions. All six of the cases focused their teachings about the similarities found in

Judaism, Islam, and Christianity, however they focused more so on Islam and Christianity because many found Judaism to be a touchy subject. The main difference in practice was the frequency with which the schools presented the topic of religious diversity. The only school to offer a world religions course was Secular School 2. In this course all the main religions of the world were discussed, even the Eastern religions.

All the schools which participated in the study were similar in that they mostly relied on their extracurricular activities in order to teach students about diversity. They all participate in the Model United Nations, which all respondents mentioned this program to be used to educate the students about diversity. The manner in which the MUN is believed to educate the students about diversity is through the research the students have to complete about the country they are assigned. The respondents further claimed that this program exposes the students to diversity through the diverse participants which the students interact with during the conference. The Shiite School was the only case which had many extracurricular programs in order to introduce the students to other religions such as the student exchange program with a Christian school. Another extracurricular activity which was only found in Secular School 1 is that they would let their students decorate the classrooms and the school for each religious holiday.

Another similarity across all schools was that the majority of the respondents in the study had not received any training when it comes to religion or dealing with religious diversity. The only two individuals who received religious diversity training were the Religion Coordinator from the Catholic School and the Academic Director from Secular School 2. The rest of the respondents who affirm having religion training all come from the religious schools and are clergymen who have received training in their confessional identities.

Table 5.
Teacher Training on Religion Education and Diversity.

School/Faculty		Yes	Description
Catholic School			
	Religion Coordinator	✓	-Workshops on Coexistence -Master's Degree in Theology & Bible Study
	Civics/History Coordinator		
	Religion Teacher	✓	Priest: religious training
Orthodox School			
	Advisory Teacher		
	Civics/History Coordinator		
	Arabic Coordinator		
Sunni School			
	Religion Coordinator	✓	Sheik: religious training
	Civics/History Teacher		
	Religion Teacher		
Shiite School			
	English Coordinator		
	Civics & History Coordinator		
	Science Teacher		
	Arabic teacher		
	Religion teacher		
	Religion Coordinator	✓	Sheik: religious training
Sectarian School 1			
	English Teacher		
	Civics & History teacher		
	Arabic Teacher		
Sectarian School 2			
	Academic Director	✓	Religious diversity training while receiving her teaching diploma. How to deal with students from various backgrounds
	World Religions Teacher		
	English Teacher		
	Arabic Coordinator		

The main difference in policies between the religious and secular schools was the fact that the religious schools did not allow the students to wear religious symbols that were different from the majority's confessional identity, or did not allow students to wear any religious symbol at all. In the Catholic School the hijab is not allowed to be worn, in the Shiite School the hijab is expected to be warn, in the Sunni School the norm is to wear the hijab, and in the Orthodox School no religious symbols are to be worn at all. On the other hand, the secular schools were the only ones which did not have such mandates and allowed their students to wear religious symbols if they choose to. Participants from the secular schools held this open policy in order to comply with their goal of building a tolerant and accepting school community.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSIONS AND RECOMENDATIONS

In this chapter, the results of the study will be discussed with reference to the theoretical and empirical literature in chapter two. The discussion will mainly focus on examining the extent to which the current practices related to religious education in the participating schools address religious diversity and prepare students for a diverse society. Insight from the data analysis and this discussion will then serve as the basis for the recommendation made at the end of this section on how to prepare students for a religiously diverse society by educating students about religious diversity.

The Schools Approach to Religiously Educating

Salameh (2000) and Rose (2006) stated that schools must decide if they want to educate their students religious or teach them about religious diversity because once the school's main goal is to religiously educate then religious diversity education takes a back seat (Salameh, 2000; Rose, 2006). This is what the data also confirmed. The religious schools had the stated goal to religiously educate their students; however there were no explicit goals or policies about educating the students about religious diversity. Since religiously educating was the goal, religious diversity education was not prominent. Given that religious education was so prominent in the practices and goals of the religious schools, they also had policies which followed the norms of the confessional identity. In the Catholic School no hijabs were allowed, and in the Sunni and Shiite Schools all the girls wore the hijab. This is most likely the case because chiefly all of the students in the religious schools share the same confessional identity as the norm.

The Schools Approach to Religious Diversity

The main purpose of this study is to explore how schools in Lebanon are educating their students about religious diversity in the context of Lebanon's multi-religious society. The review of the literature revealed that there is broad agreement that societies with a high level of diversity need to adopt a special approach if they are to achieve equity and tolerance in their educational system. Scholars also agree that these societies need to make it a priority to adopt widely accepted practices that are specifically designed and aimed at preparing their students to live under the conditions of diversity as was mention in Rodriguez and Sjostrom (1996), Morelli and Spencer (2000), Salameh (2000), Rose (2006), Keast (2008), Banks (2009), and Benjamin (2012). Among these approaches, multicultural education as defined by Banks (2009) and Rodriguez and Sjostrom (1996) was reviewed and selected to serve as the conceptual framework for this study. Multicultural education is defined as an educational movement aimed at preparing students to live in a diverse society. It proposes that educators engage in identifying if and how this diversity is accepted and if it is reflected and taught through the staff, norms, values, curriculum, student body, and instructional methodology in an attempt to identify what actions are needed. The results of the study will be discussed and categorized based on Banks's (2009) Dimensions of Multicultural Education and Rodriguez and Sjostrom (1996) Levels of Multicultural Education. This examination was not meant for evaluative purposes. Rather, it is just intended to draw attention to and explain the nature of the existing goals, policies, and practices in light of the theoretical levels and dimensions of Multicultural Education as conceived by Banks (2009) and Rodriguez and Sjostrom (1996).

Two main aspects were investigated in this study and used as indicators of the approach followed at the schools for educating the students about religion. The first was the school's goals

and policies which reference religion and religious diversity. The second was the practices, curricular and extracurricular activities which teach about religion and religious diversity.

Goals and Policies

All the schools which participated in the study stated that they are welcoming and accepting of students of any religious background to attend their school. They all shared that they have a goal, to graduate tolerant and accepting students. However, they all viewed their own religious values and beliefs to be "universal" human values and considered that enforcing them and emphasizing their similarity with those of other religions is sufficient to promoting tolerance and acceptance of all other religions. However, no school explicitly stated policies outlining how they would reach the goal of promoting the acceptance of diversity.

Meanwhile, religious schools explicitly required their students and faculty of religious identities which differed from the majority to abide by and practice the religious views of the school. Examples of this were that in the Catholic school students are not allowed to wear the hijab even if they are of the Islamic religion, and in the Shiite School all girls and teachers are to wear the hijab even if they are not of the Islamic religion. In the Orthodox School no one from the faculty or students could wear any religious symbols at all. These policies do not model tolerance or acceptance of diversity nor do they promote an accepting school environment which is critical in diverse societies as Milson (1997) mentioned needs to be the case. Milson (1997) confirmed that if religion plays such a predominate role in the life of all the citizens, one would not be able to acquire a comprehensive education from school if "major influential aspects of the human experience are omitted."

The data collected and analyzed showed that all the four religious schools which participated in the study had a goal to religiously educate their students. Hence forth, the

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Catholic school had Christian norms and values integrated into their goals and policies while the Sunni, and Shiite schools had Islamic norms and values incorporated into their goals and policies. The Catholic school's main goal was to make the students active members in the Church. The Sunni and Shiite Schools' goal is to educate their students to be thoughtful and practicing Muslims. Only one of the schools, the Orthodox School had a goal that did not focus on highlighting one particular religious view which is to have the students build a relationship with God. This form of religious education does not focus on the majorities' confessional identity and tries to incorporate all religions at once. Still, in all religious schools, the focus on these goals puts religion diversity education in the back seat to educating religiously in the four religious school cases. As Salameh (2000) and Rose (2006) stated schools must identify and differentiate between teaching religiously versus teaching about religions otherwise one will overshadow the other.

On the other hand, the stated policy of the two Secular Schools is to be tolerant and accepting institutions for all forms of diversity. They all had explicit goals addressing promoting tolerance and acceptance among students to all forms of diversity. This was exemplified through the accepting school atmosphere where students are allowed to wear their religious symbols. The Secular Schools do serve as a mockup of the Lebanese society because Lebanese citizens do wear their religious symbols and students of the Secular School will be accustomed to this type of visual diversity.

Practices

Curricular and more so extracurricular activities were used to teach about religious diversity in the schools which participated in the study. All schools mentioned religious diversity in their curriculum. However, what differed between the schools was the degree to which they

discussed the topic. The commonalities found between the schools stemmed from the fact that they were all following the mandated national curriculum, and this curriculum include topics for study that introduces different religions. However, this national curriculum mostly focuses on teaching in a historical and factual manner and does not leave much room to prompt other discussions. The only schools which stood out and formally and specifically made it a point to teach about religious diversity were Secular School 1 through their World Religions course and the Shiite School through an extensively planned extracurricular programs and student exchange programs. In the rest of the religious and secular schools, there were no planned activities infiltrated into their academic programs (religious education, history, civics, literature, science courses), the majority of the education about diversity was left to be acquired via student inquiry. Even though the schools did make their students aware of the similarities between the religions, specifically the monotheistic religions, in both the secular and religious schools it was done in a minimal manner and was not a set goal of the curriculum. Religiously educating the students was always the main focus in the religious schools. This would cause the students to be experts in their own religion however, will not give them a deep understanding of other religions as was mentioned would be the case by Salameh (2000) and Rose (2006).

Levels and Dimensions of Religious Diversity Education

This section will analyze and discuss the results through the lens of the dimensions of Multicultural Education defined by Banks (2009) and then the levels of Multicultural education as set by Rodriguez and Sjostrom (1996). The main purpose of this analysis is to assess the extent to which each of Banks' dimensions are covered, and where does each type of school falls in terms of the Rodriguez and Sjostrom (1996) levels.

Banks' model (2009) outline five dimensions that are required in order to educate students about diversity and eradicate prejudices and intolerance. Banks (2009) identifies these dimensions to be: content integration, knowledge construction process, prejudice reduction, equity pedagogy, and finally an empowering school and social structure. According to Banks (2009), the more of these dimensions a certain school covers the closer it is to effectively educating about diversity. Rodriguez and Sjostrom (1996) found there to be five levels towards instituting multicultural education which are: mono-cultural perspective, tolerance, acceptance, respect and the final level consists of affirmation, solidarity and critique.

Dimensions of Multicultural Education in Participating Schools

This section will look at the results through the dimensions of multicultural education set by Banks (2009). It will identify which elements are found and practiced in the six cases while pointing at the similarities and differences between religious and secular schools.

Content integration. Banks (2009) first dimension of multicultural education is content integration. This is where references to diversity are interjected in the curriculum and class discussion in a natural manner (Banks, 2009). All participating schools were functioning on the first level of this dimension formally where they reference religious diversity in the civics and Arabic textbooks. The United Kingdom unlike Lebanon faced this as a problem. Their schools only were entering the majority's religion into the curriculum as stated by Rose (2006). However, they adopted a new framework which insured that all major religions are taught about in schools. All the religious plus Secular School 1 utilized this method in an informal manner, in regards to class discussion. Class discussions were not prompted by the teachers in the religious and Secular School 1, the discussions only came about if student inquiry brought up the topic. This is because the teachers were mostly focused on finishing the government prescribed

curriculum and felt their classes should always remain on topic in order to finish in time. Only Secular School 2 formally incorporated their World Religions class in order to teach about diversity to all students and to bring about class discussions and debates. The religious schools as opposed to the secular schools also incorporated some mention and discussion of religious diversity in their religious education courses. Other then this there was no main difference between the secular and religious schools, with the exception of Secular School 2.

Knowledge construction process. The second dimension, the knowledge construction process is where teachers help students understand, investigate, and determine how the content they are learning in it of itself contain and are formed through biases (Banks, 2009). Knowledge construction practices were found to a degree in the Sunni School, Shiite School, the Catholic School, Secular School 1, and Secular School 2. This dimension was rarely visited in the religious schools because most of their approaches are aimed towards making students abide by their own beliefs so addressing the biases would not be to the schools advantage. The four schools who did incorporate this dimension to a certain extent mentioned in their interviews that they encourage their students to critically think about the information they hear on the propaganda filled media. They also inform their students that the community in which they live should not build them up to be fanatics. However, the only respondent who mentioned that she tells her students to be critical of the curriculum they are given is the Science Teacher in the Sunni School. She asks the students to look at the scientific concepts they are learning and investigating and see how they contradict the different religious views.

The Catholic, Orthodox, Sunni and Secular School 2 all mentioned that they assign projects to the students in order to investigate and understand the concepts that they are learning and to see if there is any new information or differences of opinions from the curriculum which

was presented in class. However, these were not official projects; these projects only occurred if a student's inquiry led the class to need further explanation. There were no notable differences which distinguished the secular from the religious schools in this dimension. This ignorance Messarra (2004) further claims is dangerous because students' can be mislead by an unreliable and opportunist source. Howard (1999) furthered this theory by confirming that "[students] need to understand the dynamics of past and present dominance, face how we have been shaped by myths of superiority, and begin to sort out our thoughts, emotions, and behaviors relative to race and other dimensions of human diversity" (p.4).

Prejudice reduction. Prejudice reduction refers to the activities and lessons the school uses to help students develop positive attitudes towards different groups of people (Banks, 2009). All of the participating schools had lessons and activities aimed at reducing prejudice against the other incorporated into their practices. In all the classes where religions were discussed in all six schools, there were discussions and debates in which the students took part in, in order to develop positive attitudes toward other religious groups by means of identifying the similarities between the religions in order to see the beliefs are not different. This dimension was incorporated because the official Lebanese curriculum already allotted time to learning about the monotheistic religions. The Shiite school was the only case which took this one step further and systematically utilized the extracurricular program of the school to engage students in activities in order to make sure they have firsthand accounts of interactions and discussion with students from other religions. Another school which stood out was Secular School 1 which had students decorate and celebrate all religious holidays. They were the only school which utilized celebrations to introduce their students to religious diversity. The Shiite school and Secular School 1 were the only schools which stood out in this dimension, other than this there was no

noticeable distinguishing factor between the religious and secular schools in regards to this dimension. Ngo (2010) stated that many schools in the United States also have these types of multicultural days. However, he found that these do not have lasting effects on the students. So Rose (2006), O'Grady (2010), Keast (2008), and Sears & Carper (1998) considered highlighting the similarities between different diversities to be essential in educating about religious diversity in a more longitudinal manner. In regrades to Ngo's (2010) it is questionable if the exchange programs which are conducted in the Shiite School would suffice to reduce prejudice.

Equity pedagogy. This dimension consists of teachers evaluating their teaching procedures and methods to determine if and how much they reflect "multicultural issues and concerns" (Banks, 2009). There was no evidence that this dimension was practiced in any of the participating schools. There are multiple factors which hinder teachers from evaluating their teaching practices. First teachers mostly followed the curricular program which was usually set by the Lebanese government. Most teachers seem to adopt a "passive" approach as they believe that they have no discretion to make any modifications to the curriculum that the schools prescribe to. Another factor is that the majority of respondents except for two, the religion coordinator from the Catholic School and the Academic Director from Secular School 2, had training on dealing with religious diversity. It is because of this lack of training that teachers are not even aware that they should evaluate their teaching practices on diversity, and they do not even know how to complete this evaluation. The only school that implemented a form of program evaluation is the Shiite School. However, this program did not look at religious diversity. The school was only interested in seeing if their religious education program is effective in educating their students religiously about the Islamic religion. Stevens and Charles (2005) stated that in the United States used to face the same lack of teacher self evaluation

because of the lack of training when it comes to the topic of dealing with religious diversity. However, in the past decade there was a change in the government which made it necessary that teachers receive multicultural training. Papanastasiou and Conway (2001) believe the first step toward multicultural education is to stimulate professional development by making teachers aware of the need to evaluate their teaching style. Skerrett's (2007) further believed that an ongoing form of professional development is needed in order to keep up with diversity education.

Empowering school. In the empowering school dimension, all members of the school examine and then restructure the culture and organization of the school to see if it promotes religious equity. In this level every single aspect of the school is examined (Banks, 2009). There was no evidence from the analysis of the data collected from the participating schools that any of the schools, both religious and secular, have practices in line of this dimension. None of the schools tried to evaluate their programs, policies or teaching practices to examine their effectiveness of educating about religious diversity. This is probably the case because teachers and administrators did not have any training so they were not aware of the fact that they must even evaluate the culture of the school.

Table 8

Categorization of School's Policies & Practices under Dimensions of Multicultural Education

School		Dimensions of Multicultural Education				
		Content Integration	Knowledge Construction Process	Prejudice Reduction	Equity Pedagogy	Empowering School
Catholics						
	Policies					
	Practices	✓	✓	✓		
Orthodox						
	Policies					
	Practices	✓	✓	✓		
Sunni						
	Policies					

	Practices	✓	✓	✓
Shiite				
	Policies			
	Practices	✓	✓	✓
Secular 1				
	Policies			
	Practices	✓	✓	✓
Secular 2				
	Policies			
	Practices	✓	✓	✓

In sum the only practices which were achieved were content integration, knowledge construction and prejudice reduction. The main component which was missing in every school was the evaluation and reconstruction of the programs to see if they are truly teaching about religious diversity. Despite the claims made in the goals and policies of all the six schools on aiming for tolerance, their practices are still very limited and informal. In addition, there are no evaluative measures in place in order to assess whether they are achieving these claimed goals. The research found that action research is needed on a school level in order for diversity education to be truly effective (Grady, 2010; Morelli & Spencer, 2000). Grady (2010) and Morelli and Spencer (2000) noted that with the ever evolving nature of diversity it is crucial for the school to constant evaluate and alter the way their school functions.

Levels of Multicultural Education

Describing the methods used to teach about religion education and diversity in classes was the first step. The second step was to determine the level of multicultural education in order to decipher at which level set by Rodriguez and Sjostrom (1996) each school is operating. The schools fell into the first three levels out of the five categorized by Rodriguez and Sjostrom (1996). Their goals and practices were unable to qualify for the fourth and fifth level of multicultural education.

Level 1: Mono-cultural perspective. At this level the schools do not take student

diversity into account. The student's background is completely disregarded; what matters is the

culture of the majority at this level (Rodriguez & Sjostrom, 1996). The schools which are

completely functioning at this level through their goals and policies are the Catholic, Shiite,

Sunni, and Orthodox schools. The Catholic School does not allow students of the Muslim

religion to wear the hijab and the Shiite School makes all students wear the hijab, even if they

are not Muslim. The Sunni School does not force students to wear the hijab or attend prayer,

however they are still expected to do that "for their love for Allah" which the school works very

hard to instill in them. These schools all have daily/weekly prayer services worked into their

schedule for the majority and the schools are very homogenous in their religious demographics

when it comes both to students and staff. The schools are predominantly concerned with the

confessional identity of the school. This is probably the case because the confessional identity of

basically all of the students at the Sunni, Shiite and Catholic schools are of the same confessional

identity as the school so there is no diversity to take into account in the first place. The Orthodox

School does not allow any faculty or staff to wear any form of religious symbol. This shows that

the school tries to put aside the different religious views and beliefs of the students. This is

probably done because the majority of the students who attend the school come from different

confessional identities then the schools'. Policies that ban the display of religious symbols are

strictly enforced because of the political tension in a country torn by a civil war where political

affiliations are divided along confessional beliefs. The policies are probably put in place in order

to avoid any conflicts on the school grounds that might escalate into problems. This aspect serves

as the main difference between the religious and secular schools because unlike the religious

schools, both secular schools allow their students to wear their religious symbols. Lebanon has a

very similar case to that of the United Kingdom. Rose (2006) mentioned that in the United Kingdom policies concerning religious education tend to favor the dominant group. As stated by Stevens & Charles (2005) "knowledge shapes dispositions and influences behavior." The more students are aware of the world around them and the different components that the world is composed of, then in accordance with Stevens and Charles (2005) their behavior and disposition will take on a more respectful and tolerant approach. Gutmann (2003) paralleled this theory by stating that one cannot tolerate an individual or group without recognizing their presence, just as in order to truly accept others, one cannot merely recognize them but must tolerate them as well. Keast (2008) also pointed out, schools are not educating for the dominant or in spite of the minority but instead they are educating on "learning to live together" (p.15). Morelli and Spencer (2000) also found this to be the case in other countries, and stated that even with the existence of multicultural educative policies in some countries, there still is a crucial need for more explicit policies along with their formal fulfillments (Morelli & Spencer, 2000). Morelli and Spencer (2000) note that "policies look good on paper but are largely ignored", therefore emphasizing their importance could help in the implementation process and the sustainment of that implementation. Schools in Lebanon indeed face a double challenge, first adopting these norms and second, documenting them in the form of implementable policies.

Level 2: Tolerance. In this level the practices and policies of a school are considered to be the preliminary position in eradicating discrimination (Rodriguez & Sjostrom, 1996). The religious schools are marginally addressing this level through their practices yet have no policies in place to enforce them. Religious diversity is mentioned in the Arabic and civics textbooks and the history textbook in the Orthodox School. This is because they discuss the different religions in their courses and highlight their similarities. However, it is their policies which keep them at

the monoculture level. Secular School 2's policies and goals partially place the school under this level. This is because the Principal prefers not to celebrate any religious holidays as to not give more attention to one or the other. Secular School 2 surpasses this level and falls under level 3. Morelli and Spencer (2000) stated that in the United States there are a plethora of laws that arose after the civil rights movements in order to dictate against discrimination of diversity in schools. These laws are predominantly used to stop discrimination in public organizations in the United States (Morelli & Spencer, 2000). Lebanese schools on the other hand, seem to still have a long way to go to reach that level.

　　　　Level 3: Acceptance. At this level, multicultural content is progressively infused into the curriculum (Rodriguez & Sjostrom, 1996). Only Secular School 1's goals and policies are aligned with this level. Secular School 2's policies are partially aligned with this level while their practices are completely aligned with this level. In this level Religion is no longer a completely separate entity only approached under some circumstances. A predominant part of this level is the dialogue and the debates, which occurs when students share their views about their own lives and their experiences. Debates and discussions occur in all the six cases which were observed, however they only happened by chance from the students' inquiries, which does not qualify the religious schools in this level. They were not purposefully planned. Debates and discussions were mentioned and found to be a crucial component in the students' education specifically in the secular schools. However, the majority of the respondents stated that it was a teacher's job to bring back the students to the curriculum when these discussions and debates occur because they were reactive and not planned. This is most likely the case because teachers feel bound to the prescribed curriculum which they believed did not allow them any extra time in order to stray off topic. In Secular School 1 the practice which also put them in the acceptance level, unlike

Secular School 2 is the fact that the students celebrate all religious holidays. In both Secular School 1 and 2 debates and discussions amongst the students were expected to take place in order to increase the students critical thinking. As for the goals and policies of Secular School one and two the determining factor which placed them at this level was the acceptance of the students as is. The Secular Schools are the only cases which allow students to wear their religious symbols. Ngo (2010) reported that one cannot solely depend on these elementary methods to promote the acceptance of diversity. Papanastasiou and Conway (2001), Derman-Sparks (2001), and Mileski (1998) say that is only an additive form of multicultural education and is not enough to truly teach about diversity in a lasting manner.

Level 4: Respect. The level of respect includes two main components, discussions and growth in conscientiousness. At this level various multicultural topics take place among a diverse group of students, which are put together in order to become increasingly aware of diverging individuality. From this, it is believed that students would grow more conscious about beliefs, policies and practices which may act with prejudice (Rodriguez & Sjostrom, 1996). No schools which participated in this study reached this level of multicultural education. The Secular Schools did not formally utilize their diverse student body in order to educate their students about religious diversity. It was mentioned in Sears and Carper's (1998), Keast (2008), and O'Grady (2010), that discussions and debates were necessary in order for students to learn about diversity and internalize the concept of acceptance. They found that encouraging discussions works best towards building interest in the students. However, the results of the study found that participating Lebanese schools are not functioning at this level. This once again is occurring because the teachers are bound to the Lebanese curriculum and do not feel they have time to give

time to anything else. Rodriguez and Sjostrom (1996) found that schools in the United States rarely functioned at this level.

Level 5: Affirmation, solidarity, and critique. At this stage students are taught and trusted to be critical of their surroundings. None of the schools which participated in the study were educating the students at this level. Rodriguez and Sjostrom (1996) also had found in their study, that no schools in the United Stated are operating at this level. Keast (2008) believed that a main component of multicultural education is that students have a "critical spirit" and reflect on the religions and morals around them. He stated that this component must happen in order for the learner to truly benefit. However, the lack of freedom in the curriculum does not allow for much trust and freedom for the students.

Table 9.

Categorization of School's Policies & Practices under Levels of Multicultural Education

School		Level of Multicultural Education				
		Level 1 Mono-cultural Perspective	Level 2 Tolerance	Level 3 Acceptance	Level 4 Respect	Level 5 Affirmation Solidarity & Critique
Catholics						
	Policies	✓				
	Practices		✓			
Orthodox						
	Policies	✓				
	Practices		✓			
Sunni						
	Policies	✓				
	Practices		✓			
Shiite						
	Policies	✓				
	Practices		✓			
Secular 1						
	Policies			✓		
	Practices			✓		
Secular 2						
	Policies		✓	✓		
	Practices			✓		

In sum, the schools are trying to educate their students about the religious diversity that they find outside in their surrounding society through their practices however none are approaching this issue systematically by making it part of their stated policies. The religious schools mostly mirror the practices in the first level of Rodriguez and Sojstrom (1996). All the schools as well do not incorporate the last two dimensions from Banks (2009). All of the participating schools in Lebanon are operating within the parameters of the first three levels and none have made it to level four or five yet. In order for the religious schools to truly eradicate intolerance the schools must change their policies. All schools must also form an evaluation system in order to see if their school is truly educating and succeed to educate about religious diversity. This was found to be the case of the schools in Lebanon as well.

Conclusion

The results of the study lead to the conclusion that in Lebanon religious schools main focus is to educate their students about their confessional identity, as I presumed would be the case. This caused religion diversity education to come in second place. The study showed that the schools are not functioning at the highest levels of multicultural education when it comes to religious diversity. The main reason why the schools are only maintaining to educate their students at levels one, two, and three as defined by Rodriguez and Sjostrom (1996) is because of the homogenous student body and faculty which are found in all four religious affiliated schools, the lack of evaluation systems, the lack of teacher training, the intolerant policies when it comes to dress codes and expressions of religious diversity, and the lack of planned discussions and debates.

While religious schools have guidelines/policies about educating students about their confessional identity, these schools do not have specific guidelines and policies in regards to

teaching students about other religions or guidelines and policies about dealing with religious diversity. All of the schools' principals spoke about accepting the religiously diverse, however, there were no policies which spoke to educating about the different religions or religious diversity. This resonates very much with Messarra's concern and recommendation a decade ago that government makes textbooks about religion, specifically Islam and Christianity in order to formally make sure that the information is integrated into the curriculum (2004).

The majority of teachers in the schools did not have any training when it came to teaching about and dealing with religious diversity. This is why teachers in the Islamic schools would send their students to the Sheik, a religious authority, when they had questions about their own religion or others. Papanastasiou and Conway (2001) and Raditoaneng (2011) mention the importance in making sure that teachers receive training on diversity and then make connections between what teachers learned throughout professional development and their classroom.

However, in the end, schools did not all accept the religiously diverse as their policies stated. All the religious schools wanted the students to strictly abide by the mono-cultural norms of the school and to educate their students religiously only. Morelli and Spencer (2000) mentioned this to be the case also in schools in the United States. Morelli and Spencer (2000) stated that most schools still have a crucial need for more explicit policies along with their formal fulfillments. I believe that Lebanon's schools still have a ways to go in order to be considered to be effectively preparing their students for a religiously diverse society by educating them about religious diversity. The Secular Schools are on their way to reaching the higher echelons of multicultural education however some modifications still have to be made in order to purposefully add in class discussions.

Recommendations

Recommendations for Goals and Practice

Schools which participated in the study along with other schools in Lebanon can utilize the findings of this study to get ideas and rethink their curriculum and extracurricular activities. For example, schools can take the idea from the Shiite School and also hold student exchange days which are very beneficial in teaching about diversity as mentioned in Farmer, Knapp and Benton (2006) and Skerrett (2007). Schools which are homogenous when it comes to religion would especially benefit from this because they can spend days with students of a school who are also of a different confessional identity.

Moreover, it would be important for all the schools to have written policies about educating students about religious diversity. It would be also useful for schools to go one step further and have a World Religions course which addresses and teaches about these topics in an organized and official manner. This can only be accomplished if the staff, teachers would receive professional development training in order to help them teach their students about religious diversity practices.

Since students begin to notice differences and construct classificatory and evaluative categories early in life as mentioned by Derman-Sparks (2001) it is important for students to be taught about religious diversity early in school in order to stop any misconceptions from arising from misleading sources as mentioned in Massarra (2004). It would be effective to start discussing religious diversity as early as elementary school. This will make it more likely that students treat others with equality regardless of their religion as mentioned in Gutmann (2003) and Adams (1997). All the schools which participated in the study start to discuss with the students about religious diversity in middle school. It would be effective to start discussing

religious diversity as early as elementary school. This will make it more likely that students treat others with equality regardless of their religion as mentioned in Gutmann (2003) and Adams (1997). Moreover, students should be taught about all major religions, not only the monotheistic ones. Religions such as Buddhism, and Hinduism should also be taught to the students because these are also major religions found around the world even though they are not directly found in Lebanon. As mentioned in McCray, Wright, and Beachum (2004) it is not only the immediate diversity which is fundamental for students to deal with. It is crucial to bring up the diversity in the broader context that these students might be exposed to because their social and occupational surroundings will change and they should have the resources to deal with any such alterations.

Recommendations for Further Research

Several suggestions for further research emerged from this study. This study was only able to take a look at six private Lebanese schools and their approach to religion and religious diversity. With the lack of description on how the topic of religion is discussed in schools in Lebanon, it is necessary that this research is continued. A larger number of schools, if not all the schools in Lebanon, should be observed in order to formulate a description of how they all undertake the topic of religion and religious diversity. Results from this study can be used to build a questionnaire to survey a large number of schools in order to have a more comprehensive picture of current practices.

This study was also limited to the four main sects which are found in Lebanon. It would be important to include schools from other denominations such as Druze, Armenian, and Evangelical. Some respondents suggested that another study is needed to interview the students in order to see their perceptions about the matter. The research questions which were suggested on this matter were to determine if in fact they know about other religions. To measure if they

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are accepting of individuals of a differing religion. Where do students get their information about other religions, through school, their community, and/or society? These further studies will aid in determining at which level Lebanon's youth and schools are in regards to diversity education and the acceptance and tolerance of the religiously diverse.

APPENDIX I

TEACHERS' BACKGROUND FORM

Name:

Age:

Gender:

Subject Area:

Grade level:

Years of teaching experience in Total:

Years of teaching experience at the School:

Educational Background:

Previous training on teaching religious education or teaching about religious diversity before joining the school: If any, please explain.

APPENDIX II

SCHOOL HEAD, ACADEMIC SUPERVISORS AND TEACHERS

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

I am interested to learn what it is you do as a school when it comes to educating your students religiously and about religion.

1) What are the goals that are related to the teaching about religion in your school?
   Probes:
   - o Is your goal to teach about the religions diversity found in the society and world community?
   - o Is your goal to teach students to become proficient in understanding and practicing their confessional identity?

2) What is the "profile" of the student that you want to graduate from your school?
    Probe:
   - o Does it include preparing them religiously?

3) Which are the policies in place which have to do with education on religions or religious diversity? (please give me specific examples)
      Probes:

   - Which religious holidays are celebrated at your school?
   - How?
   - If you give religious courses, is it obligatory that students attend religious courses and who should attend those?

4) What are the practices (curricular, extracurricular, events, content taught, and textbooks) used to achieve these goals?

   Probes if teach religious education courses:

- o Do you offer religious courses at your school? If yes what are the courses offered?
- o What are the textbooks used in these courses?
- o What is the content which is taught in these courses?
- o Do you offer any extra-curricular activities which aim at religious education or education about religious diversity?
- o Are discussions on various religious topics allowed to take place among a diverse group of students?
- o Are discussions on religious diversity encouraged to take place among a diverse group of students?

Probes about non-religion courses:

- o Is religious diversity education indirectly incorporated in other academic subjects such as literature, civics, history? If so which ones and how?
- o What is the content which is taught in these courses?
- o What are the textbooks used in these courses and the sections which pertain to religion education and diversity?
- o Do you offer or host any events which promote religious education or religious diversity?

APPENDIX III

SCHOOL OBSERVATION CHECKLIST

	Title	Present	Description
Observation in Classrooms	Bulletin Boards & Decorations		
	Religious Images		
	Religious Sayings		
	Decoration about Religion		
Observation in Hallways	Bulletin Boards & Decorations		
	Religious Images		
	Religious Sayings		
	Decoration about Religion		

Observation in Playground	Bulletin Boards & Decorations		
	Religious Images		
	Religious Sayings		
	Decoration about Religion		
Observation in Administration Office	Bulletin Boards & Decorations		
	Religious Images		
	Religious Sayings		
	Decoration about Religion		

APPENDIX IV

DOCUMENT EXAMINATION

 Textbook Analysis:

Topic	Name of Book	Chapters & Sections Relating to Religion	Which of these sections are studied	Content of Lesson
Religion				
Civics				
History				
Literature				

Collect written and documented policies

Collect written Mission Statement

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