

**AN INQUIRY INTO THE CULTURAL AND SOCIAL ADJUSTMENTS OF
AMERICAN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN LEBANON**

by

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PREFACE

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION.	1
The General Problem	1
The Significance of the Study	4
The Limitations of the Study.	4
The Subjects of the Study	5
THE OVER-SEAS AMERICAN.	6
Why Do Americans Live Over-Seas	6
Reasons for Staying Abroad.	6
BACKGROUND OF THE AMERICAN COMMUNITY SCHOOL AND THE STUDENTS	8
Historical Background	8
The Academic Standards.	9
Students' Social Life in Host Countries	9
Description of Study Sample	10
THE PROBLEM	13
Cultural Differences and Adjustments.	13
Scope of the Investigation.	14
The Purpose of the Investigation.	14
Definition of Terms	14
THE STUDENTS' EXPERIENCES	17
Social Life in the United States.	17
The Student as a Member of the Family	17
The Student as a Member of a Social Group	18
The Student as a Member of the Community.	19
The Student and Sex	20
Social Life in the Middle East.	21

	PAGE
The Lebanese Student and Sex.	21
The Lebanese Teen-age Student	21
The Students' Impressions of Lebanon.	22
METHOD OF PROCEDURE	24
The Questionnaire	24
Advantages and Limitations of the Questionnaire	25
The Seniors' Response to the Questionnaire	26
The College Freshman's Response to the Questionnaire.	26
RELEVANT EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH (CROSS-CULTURAL).	28
Examples of Cross-Cultural Research	28
Cultural Shock.	29
Cultural Adjustment	30
DATA.	33
Findings.	34
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION.	64
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH.	67
BIBLIOGRAPHY.	68
APPENDIX.	71

INTRODUCTION

There are approximately two hundred thousand American school children between the ages of five and eighteen years of age living over-seas. Their families are working for the military, private companies, the State Department and a multitude of agencies sponsored by the United States government and various missionary organizations. Little is known by American educators about the attitudes of these students, their experiences abroad or the effects of living over-seas.

The American teen-ager living and attending school in Lebanon is different from the average teen-ager living and studying in the United States. In some ways teen-agers over-seas are more mature than their counter-part in the United States and in other ways they are not, probably because of the lack of opportunity to live a normal teen-age life in the American sense.

The General Problem

The Teen-ager in America

Some teen-age Americans living in the United States have part-time employment so that they are not too dependent upon their parents for spending money. When they want to buy something they can do so with their own money. In addition to this, they gain working experience that may benefit them in their choice of life's

vocation. Many of the American teen-agers live in one community and attend the same school throughout their high school experience. They have security in a permanent home and friends that they have learned to know and depend upon. Their day by day experience is centered around their having a part-time or summer job, having some financial independence, attending the same school and participating in activities of the school. Their life in many ways is "care-free" and secure.

The American Teen-ager Living in Lebanon

The American teen-ager living in Lebanon has a different experience. He has little opportunity for part time employment, so he is dependent on his parents for money. He does not have the opportunity to gain working experience and to know what it is to buy things with his own money. Coupled with this, the head of the family, usually the father, is transferred from one area to another and in many cases he is in danger of being considered surplus, so he has no job security. Transferring from one area to another also has its problems for the mother. It causes unhappiness in having to set up housekeeping so often. To the teen-ager it demands that he change schools and leave his friends. His new school can be more demanding academically. He will have new teachers and new teaching methods to contend with. If the parents are moved during the school year, he may

necessarily be admitted to a boarding school, which is vastly different than living with his family.

Whenever the student is not in school, he is "on display" as an American living in a foreign country. Often the American movies magazine, newspapers and television give a distorted idea of Americans and American living, so the student is expected by nationals of his host country to act in accordance with their stereotype of Americans. This disposes a student to certain unnatural modes of behavior. When he is with his fellow countrymen in and around the school his code of ethics and behavior are typically American but when he leaves the school he tries to comply with the code of ethics of his host country. In many cases he is inhibited from doing what comes naturally to him as an American. He must be an actor and comply with the mores of the country lest his behavior be misinterpreted and he brings reproach on his family, school and country. When he does leave the school to buy personal effects or attend some type of recreation, he may have a problem of language. He may not be able to communicate with the people in the way he intends.

When the overseas student goes back to the United States for a visit, he goes almost as a tourist, only staying a month or two and then returns to his post overseas again. This may give rise to permanent feelings of resentment toward fellow Americans, nationals and institutions with which he comes in

contact over-seas.

The Significance of the Study

Cultural Differences

About two years ago the writer submitted a questionnaire to a group of the Junior and Senior high school students of the American Community School in Beirut, Lebanon. The questionnaire asked various questions about their families, homes, school experiences and about themselves as students. The study seemed to indicate that American students living over-seas have peculiar problems of which the school may not be aware. Few other studies have been made of American school youth living abroad and very little information seems available that could be applied to American students living in the Middle East.

The Limitations of the Study

This study concerns itself with problems of social adjustment in Lebanon of high school students from a particular culture: that of the United States. The process of adjusting is complex. It involves internal and external, personal and cultural factors. One limitation of this study lies in the fact that some problems of maladjustment may have deep psycho-neurotic origins, somewhat removed from cultural or geographical factors.

It is hoped that this study will serve as a stimulus for a more extensive study by more competent researchers.

The Subjects of the Study

The American teen-agers chosen were all seniors at the American Community School of Beirut, Lebanon, because they are presumed by the writer to represent a fairly homogeneous group in that they have been over-seas for at least two years. Thirty-two of the sixty senior students were boarding students with an equal distribution of boys and girls.

The other subjects of the study were the members of the graduating class of 1966 at the American Community School who are now studying as college freshmen in the United States.

THE OVER-SEAS AMERICAN

Why Do Americans Live Over-seas?

Americans living over-seas appear to have a culture of their own. They identify themselves with America because America is their heritage. They prefer living over-seas because of the advantages it offers as to travel, a better look at the world, and a slower pace. "The over-seas American comes into every society outside of the United States with automatic membership if not in the local aristocracy, at least in a class several notches above his social position at home. His country has bought it or him with its military power, political prestige and high industrial productivity. He deals not only with governments at top level but he has the kinds of special opportunities which would never come to him at home. Almost at will he can meet princes, generals or prime ministers."¹

Reasons for Staying Abroad

"The idea of going home to the United States is distasteful even to the imagination. If I were to go back there right now and walk down Broadway, I'd have hay-seed sticking out of my ears."² Another over-seas American did not worry about

¹Adams, J. C. Cleveland, H., and Magone, G., The Overseas American, McGraw Hill Book Company, Inc., New York, 1960, p. 24.

²Loc. Cit.

ridicule but recoiled from boredom. "The first time we got home-leave, we rushed around and we saw everyone we knew. It was really one of the most shocking experiences I've ever had. We talked to them about interesting things that were going on in the world and what-not; they talked about what roses would grow best in the shade. It was just terrible. In my home town there are probably many people who still don't realize that the world is round."³ "They profess interest in things abroad, but they really aren't interested. Despite all that, I could probably go back and live perfectly well in the States. In a couple of years I would be just like them."⁴

³Loc. Cit.

⁴Op. Cit., p. 26.

BACKGROUND OF THE AMERICAN COMMUNITY SCHOOL AND ITS STUDENTS

Historical Background

The American Community School offers a full twelve year program and has boarding facilities for boys and girls in grades seven through twelve. The school is situated in Ras Beirut, a district in Beirut, capital of Lebanon, one block from the Mediterranean Sea. It is a private school chartered under the New York State Board of Regents and is sponsored by the American University of Beirut, the Commission of Ecumenical Mission and Relations of the United Presbyterian Church, and the Arabian-American Oil Company with its affiliate, the Trans-Arabian Pipeline Company. It is a continuation of the Faculty School founded in 1905 to provide education for the children of the American faculty of the American University of Beirut, then called the Syrian Protestant College, and of the members of the Presbyterian Mission of Lebanon. The first class was graduated in 1911 and the school continued as a day school until 1921 when its name was changed to the American Community School and a boarding department was planned. In the late 1940's the Arabian-American Oil Company became the third sponsor as it wanted a boarding school for the high school dependents of its employees in the Middle East. A grant from the oil company allowed the school to move to its present location and to construct the nucleus of its

present modern facilities. The American Community School moved into its new quarters in 1950. The school has grown from 116 pupils in 1950 to its current enrollment of more than 850.

The Academic Standards

The academic program at the American Community School is geared to college preparation and admission. The student body is chosen on the basis of evidenced ability to handle a college preparatory program and the work is accelerated. As advanced placement courses are offered in English, history, math, chemistry, and French, a student can enter college with an advanced status.

All of the students of the last two graduating classes of the American Community School have gone on to college. Many of them went to the college of their first choice. Some of the graduates are now attending highly competitive colleges such as Yale and Harvard. Other students have continued their studies in technical schools that require specific and adequate preparation.

Students' Social Life in Host Countries

Over one half of the senior class are boarding students. The parents of these students are employed in various places in the Middle East. Most of the fathers are employed with oil companies in Saudi Arabia. Geographically, this is a desert area. The families live together in communities where they enjoy most

of the material comforts known in the United States. The salaries are arranged so that the families do not suffer economically. The loneliness of the area contributes to a social night life that is not compatible to a healthy home environment.

The other students in the senior class live at home with their families in Beirut. Most of these homes are beautifully constructed apartment buildings situated in the heart of Ras Beirut which is a locality where the establishments are designed to cater to the comforts of the foreigner.

Description of Study Sample

A total of fifty-five seniors of the American Community School were studied. Thirty-two of the seniors were living in the boarding department. The other twenty-three were non-boarders living with their parents. Also included were twenty-seven former students of the American Community School who are now freshmen in colleges in the United States. They were chosen because of their similar background of living and studying in the Lebanon. They were contacted by correspondence. Fifty per cent of these students replied to the questionnaire.

The Boarders

The boarding seniors have been at the American Community School for an average of three years. They have, however, lived

over-seas an average of nine years. Most of the senior boarders have come to the school from the Persian Gulf, a section of Saudi Arabia, where their fathers are employed by the Arabian-American Oil Company. In the three months of the year when these students are not in school, they live in an isolated, segregated community of Americans with most of the American conveniences and luxuries.

The average age of the boarding students is seventeen and one half years of age.

The Non-boarders

These students have been at the American Community School for an average of four years and they have lived over-seas an average of seven years. Most of the non-boarders parents live and work in Lebanon. However, in some cases where the father has to travel, the family remains in Lebanon while he is gone much of the time. The students live in apartment buildings that are generally quite modern, i.e., central heating, air conditioning, elevator and telephone. The apartment buildings, generally, are occupied solely by other Americans or non-Lebanese.

The average age of the non-boarding seniors is eighteen years of age.

Freshman College Students

The graduating seniors of the class of 1966 now studying

in the United States were over-seas an average of over six years. Eighty per cent of them lived in the boarding department while attending the American Community School. The parents of these students are still working and living in the Middle East.

Several seniors have lived over-seas all of their lives. They know little of their own native country. These same students plan to return to their homeland, a land that is foreign to them, to attend college and prepare for a vocational future. After graduating from college, several have expressed a desire to come back over-seas to work. They would prefer to live in Europe rather than the Middle East, because Europeans are more "like" the Americans.

THE PROBLEM

Cultural Differences and Adjustments

There is much that is not known about the process by which American high school students adjust to life and study in Lebanon. It thus would seem important to have a more thorough understanding of the kinds of problems American high school students face and the manner in which they resolve them, if they do.

Some of the ways in which the Middle East differs from the United States are well known. The Middle Eastern political and economic systems are different as are patterns of friendship, family relations, the role of religion and the status of women.

Some students adjust more easily to life in Lebanon than do others. It is assumed that the factors in question are cultural and social differences in the student's personal background.

To know how much of an adjustment an American student must make to the cultural and social life in Lebanon, one must know something of the social life to which he was accustomed before coming here to attend school.

Scope of the Investigation

1. Do American students have difficulty in adjusting to the social and cultural life of Lebanon?
2. If they do have problems of adjustment, how are they observed or measured?
3. What adjustment problems recur with the greatest frequency?
4. What can the American Community School administration do to assist the students in adjusting to Lebanon and re-entering the United States for college?

The Purpose of the Investigation

The purpose of the research is to discover:

1. Which cultural differences are the most difficult to adjust to for American high school students in Lebanon?
2. Do the senior students associate themselves with the Lebanese during their leisure time? (If they do, we would suspect a measure of cultural empathy.)
3. Do American students, after their sojourn over-seas, have difficulty in adjusting when they re-enter the United States for college?

In the context of these overall problems and purposes, the present study has been undertaken to benefit the school administration in understanding the students and to assist them, and to serve as a stimulus for a more extensive study by competent researchers.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Definition of Social Adjustment

When the term "social adjustment" is used, it will refer to situational adjustment. It would be preferable to understand the two terms as being synonymous in this study. "Social adjustment" will refer here to an individual's successful achievement of the kinds of relationships he prefers to have with other persons with whom he may wish to be in contact in his non-academic activities. This includes in the "adjusted" category any individual whose primary concern is with academic work and who has no particular interest in meeting new companions or in making friends with the Lebanese.

The combination of maladjustment to a new culture and poor academic attainment could possibly inhibit a student's progress. Understanding the ramifications of the problems such a student might encounter is of the utmost importance to the educator and school counselor. "Modern education is concerned not merely with the acquisition of information and academic skills but with the development of the pupil as a whole personality. Each course and each activity is designed to contribute to this goal. Development must be evaluated in behavioral terms and both group and individual data are important."⁵

⁵Balinsky, Ben., Blum, M. L., Counseling and Psychology, New York, Prentice-Hall, Third edition, 1954, p. 218.

The American Community School with its demanding academic standards challenges its students to maximum effort. It is reasonable to believe that a student who may have adjustment problems will be unable to attain his academic goals.

Definition of Tension

The writer would define tension as irritability, annoyance or anger directed toward the situation or persons responsible for the situation. Existence of tension is of interest to the counselor in his desire to assist the student in "becoming" his unique self.

Definition of Cultural Empathy

This is the skill to understand the inner logic and coherence of other ways of life, plus the restraint not to judge them negatively simply because they are different from one's own mores.

Definition of Cultural Shock

It is the term used to "try and explain feelings of inadequacy that result from not knowing quite how to act among strangers."⁶

⁶Adams, J. C., Cleveland, H. and Mangone, G. The Overseas American, McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., New York, 1960, p. 26.

THE STUDENT'S EXPERIENCES

Social Life in the United States

To know how much of an adjustment an American student must make to social life in Lebanon, one must know something of the social life to which he was accustomed before leaving the United States.

Adolescence, in the United States, tends to be a period of relatively great stress and strain. The problems of adolescents are the object of widespread interest, discussion and concern.

The Student as a Member of the Family

The most important environment of an adolescent is his home and family. (This is true for a child or an adult as well.) "Parents, in general, have realized this fact and at present there is a movement in the United States to define the role of the adolescent both within and outside the family, so as to give him a wholesome and adequate status."⁷

In discussing parent and adolescent relationships Hollingshead⁸ says, "It is no more a question of 'should he or should he not' but it is a matter of 'how much and when'." For example, it is understood that the adolescent can use the

⁷Hollingshead, A. B., Elmstown's Youth, Science Edition, Inc., New York, 1961, p. 295.

⁸Loc. Cit.

family car. This is a right that boys and girls get as soon as they reach an age when they can get a driving license. The conflict comes when parents say, "teen-agers want to monopolize the family car."

In these years parents still determine many of the conditions and hours that their children must observe but may (never-the-less) expect adult deportment of them in some activities. Many parents, realizing that boys and girls of this age are drawn towards members of the opposite sex, try to encourage their children to proffer and accept invitations for social activities within the home. Occasionally parents provide and arrange opportunities for hikes, picnics and swimming parties because they are convinced that young people who are busy and are actively doing things together can learn to know one another in many wholesome ways.

The Student as a Member of a Social Group

As a member of a social group the American teen-ager has a "care-free" life. In high school he has a chance to compete in athletics against other students either individually or as a member of a team. There are often after-school activities such as school dances and clubs that permit social contact. Gangs are another form of teen-age social activity springing from the more socially accepted school clubs. Teen-agers like

the gang activity because it takes them away from the too vigilant eyes of their parents or other social supervisors.

The church and community programs also play their part in encouraging the student with regard to religious convictions and social responsibilities.

The Student as a Member of the Community

There is conflict for a student arising from the class structure of society. Ordinarily a five-class social system is considered typical of most American communities. "The family life in a class is found to conform to its specific sub-culture."⁹

In speaking of social classes, A. B. Hollingshead states that, "the classes are cultural differences in the people's mode of life, relative possession of power and prestige in the society. Of specific factors, perhaps the economic status of individuals measured by their type of employment and the size of income ranks first in classifying them. In addition, these classes are further designated by the kind and source of education of their members, their church connections, location of residence, etc."¹⁰

Regardless of the class division, the student belonging to any social class is provided with free education in the same public school. This, in a way, gives cultural uniformity among

⁹Ibid., p. 305.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 296.

classes and teen-agers of all strata participating in the benefits and pleasures provided by the culture.

The American teen-ager has his own problems as he plays his role as a member of the community. Chief among them is that he is never entirely sure whether he will be taken for a child or an adult in his community.

A. B. Hollingshead further says, "Youngsters are not free to quit school or to hold a job without a permit until they are sixteen years of age, but they are sometimes liable for their criminal acts by fourteen years of age. They are legally defined as dependents until they are sixteen or eighteen years of age and until this latter age they are under the jurisdiction of the juvenile court."¹¹

The Student and Sex

Dating frequently starts a pattern of behavior that boys and girls feel is expected of them, rather than as a reaction to a physio-logical stimulus.

In the preceding pages certain aspects of the life of a typical American teen-ager living in the United States were characterized. When the American teen-ager goes to the Middle East he is usually confronted with a new way of life that may be quite different to him. It will in some circumstances require

¹¹Ibid., p. 297.

him to behave differently from what he is accustomed. This new experience may cause varying degrees of social maladjustment.

Social Life in the Middle East

A point of central importance is that in the Arab Middle East there are people who possess a formula for living which is deeply rooted in centuries of practice and which is at present being challenged by the forces generated through cross-cultural contacts and through pressures growing out of the need for establishing a place in the society of the modern world.

The Lebanese Student and Sex

The most pervading feature of the Lebanese family is the strong code governing relations between sexes. The highest value is placed upon premarital chastity in women and upon their marital fidelity. Loss of chastity in a girl is still viewed, in most classes and communities, as the gravest kind of misbehavior, to be punished by her father and brothers. The penalty varies from severe disgrace to banishment and even to death in some traditionally minded communities.

The Lebanese Teen-age Students

In the family the teen-ager is restricted and has to abide by the rules set by his parents. In his social group activities the adolescent joins gangs just to release himself

from the tension he has accumulated during his earlier parent-child relationship.

Because of the family and community restrictions, the teen-ager is deprived of playing his sex role adequately. There are always a long series of "don'ts" or "should notes" that he has to observe. After reaching puberty he should no longer address or speak to the daughter of an old acquaintance because now he is a "man." He also should not participate in conversations or express his views in the presence of elders because he is still a "child" and is not yet mature.

The above are some of the aspects of cultural reality in Lebanon which cause adjustment difficulty for American teen-agers.

The Students' Impressions of Lebanon

Many of the American students in this study have had considerable time to adjust their ideas to living in Lebanon. We noted that over one-half of the students have lived in or are living in the Persian Gulf, a very conservative Arab cultural area. Many of the students have received their major impressions of Lebanon from frequent visits as tourists, from occasional trips to scenic sites or from dealing with shopkeepers in Beirut.

The American student who lives over-seas in Lebanon faces the necessity of making important physical and psychological

adjustments to both the living conditions and to school work.

The success or failure of his sojourn abroad may depend largely on how well he can make these adjustments.

METHOD OF PROCEDURE

The Questionnaire

The information sought from each student in the questionnaire was:

1. The number of years over-seas and at the American Community School.
2. Students' preference as to place of study - the United States or the Middle East.
3. Their use of leisure time.
4. The benefits of studying at the American Community School and over-seas.
5. The problems of social adjustment to Lebanon.

Questions of social adjustment included a ranking of the frequency of problem incident. There were: social manners, language, school work, food, sex, living quarters, home, sickness and others.

The questionnaire was given to every student during his English class period. It was structured to cover both problems of adjustment and topics on social and school life. This method was not intended to lend itself to statistical treatment. The information that we sought was intended to facilitate the formulation of a general picture of the social adjustment process and problems of the members of the group. This can be considered as a first step to a more refined study of such a group.

Advantages and Limitations of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire technique, like any other, presents problems. The first is knowing what to cover. As was indicated, the questions included were about high school life and its activities as well as questions about interaction with the Middle Eastern society. It was felt that such information would help isolate the difficulties faced and point the way to questions which could be investigated more systematically.

The questionnaire that was given required no signature. Thus it may have elicited candid and more objective replies than would one which required signatures. For example: questions concerning the reactions of the students toward their school would probably have been avoided or evaded in a personal interview because of the writer's identification with the school administration as a member of the school staff. On the other hand, the questionnaire does not permit the investigator to note the apparent reluctance or evasiveness of his respondent.

The advantages of the questionnaire are more apparent than its disadvantages. The major weakness of the questionnaire is undoubtedly the problem of non-returns. However, in our study we had an excellent response from the students now studying in the United States.

The Seniors' Response to the Questionnaire

The senior students were willing to fill in all of the questions. They all seemed to be completely involved during the fifty minute class period, the time allotted for responding to the questions. In some cases students did not finish the questionnaire in the time available, so they asked permission to take it with them and return it the next day. Some of them did this.

Most of the students answered the questions at length and in some cases they had to continue on the opposite side of the paper. They offered examples to clarify a statement they had made.

Rapport seemed to be no problem. An explanation was prefaced prior to the administration of the test. On hearing about the questionnaire, all of the students made a special effort to be in class.

The College Freshman's Response to the Questionnaire

The response from the graduates that are now studying in the United States was most gratifying. Out of the twenty-seven letters that were sent to them, fifteen responded. This represented 56 per cent of the number distributed. It would appear that they also caught the spirit of research. They thanked the writer for the "thought-provoking questions."

In the questions concerning adjustment to American student life on the "re-entry" after their sojourn abroad, it was expected that difficulty would be experienced. However, this assumption did not prove to be completely valid. If we understand the unique life of American students living in Lebanon, living in a so-called "American Ghetto," the answers would seem justified because the students had not really entered into the Lebanese culture. The inhibitions they had here would be removed so that they no longer had to act but could live a "natural" life of a teen-age American.

While none of these arguments conclusively demonstrates that the statements made by the students are completely reliable, they will be considered sufficiently persuasive as to enable us to accept them provisionally.

RELEVANT EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH (CROSS-CULTURAL)

An analysis of international students in a foreign country suggests that many of them will have problems of adjustment to the new culture with its different customs.

Examples of Cross-Cultural Research

Tsung Koo Yieh¹² discovered four significant adjustment problems of Chinese students studying in the United States:

1. Those derived from personal habits and personal problems.
2. Those arising in social relations.
3. Those relating to academic work.
4. Those involving national and international relations.

James Paterson and Martin Newmeyer¹³ made a study of South American students in the United States. They list the following problems:

1. Academic problems, getting acquainted with American educational methods and standards, examination methods, textbooks, and reports.
2. Problems arising from the economic status of the student, such as: the lack of funds to meet school requirements.

¹²Tsung Koo Yieh. "The Adjustment Problems of Chinese Graduate Students in American Universities," Private Edition, University of Chicago Libraries, Chicago, Illinois, 1934, p. 103.

¹³Paterson, James A., Newmeyer, Martin H. "Problems of Foreign Students," *Sociology and Social Research* No. 32, March-April 1948, p. 787.

3. Problems that were social in nature, such as: finding suitable "dates", making friends with other students, and getting acquainted with American customs and laws.

The authors of the study suggest that better counseling procedures may be needed for international students and that an adequate orientation program be provided for them. They also suggested that counseling programs should consider the student's country of origin in dealing with their needs and problems.

Cultural Shock

Cultural shock or "dissonance"¹⁴ is precipitated by "the anxiety that results from losing all our familiar signs and symbols of social intercourse. These signs or cues include the thousand and one ways in which we orient ourselves to the situations of daily life. When an individual enters a strange culture all or most of these familiar cues are removed. He or she is like a "fish out of water." No matter how broad-minded or full of goodwill he may be, a series of props has been knocked out from under him followed by a feeling of frustration and anxiety. People react to the frustration in much the same way."¹⁵

1. "They reject the environment which causes the discomfort."

¹⁴Festinger, Leon, and Aronson, Elliot, The Arousal and Reduction of Dissonance in Social Contact, New York, Row, Peterson and Co., 1960, p. 201.

¹⁵Adam, J. C., Cleveland, H., Mangone, G. The Overseas American, McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1960, p. 30.

2. "Through regression the home environment suddenly assumes a tremendous importance. Everything in his native country becomes irrationally glorified. All the difficulties and problems are forgotten and suddenly the good things back home are remembered."¹⁶

It is possible that by studying the problems of international students in a cross-cultural situation we would find that cultural shock or dissonance does exist. A person who is maladjusted will have problems and may not be able to accomplish his goals and aspirations unless he has guidance by someone who knows of his particular difficulties.

Cultural Adjustment

It is known that students from some areas of the world adjust more easily to life in the United States than do students from other areas. Students from Europe are shown to be better adjusted to American life than non-European students. After a study of foreign student adjustment, Claire Sellitz and her co-authors, can conclude no more than that "it seems possible that there may be factors inseparably linked to national origin that lead to differences" in the degree to which foreign students achieve satisfactory inter-actions with Americans."¹⁷

To know how much of an adjustment a foreign student must make to social life in America, one must know something of the

¹⁶Ibid., p. 27.

¹⁷Sellitz, Claire; Christ, June; Havel, Joan and Cook, Stuart. Attitudes and Social Relations of Foreign Students in the United States, Minneapolis, University Press, 1963, p.42.

social life to which he is accustomed before leaving his home country. That is why it is important to make a careful study of the experiences of more than one group of foreign students and thus make it a meaningful comparison.

American students over-seas constitute a situation in the reverse of what we have been discussing; namely, international students studying in the United States. Patterson¹⁸ discovered that many American college students experience frustration and unhappy experiences as well as "cultural shock" after a month abroad.

Moon¹⁹ found elementary students living in Morocco were cautious in acquiring emotional ties with their peers and to the community in which they lived.

O'Neill's²⁰ results indicate that the longer the students live over-seas, the more experiences related to the culture of the host country they have. The attitudes of the students were the same whether female or male and the length of residence appeared to have no effect on student attitudes.

¹⁸Patterson, Given D. "Students on the Move the Academic Year Abroad," Saturday Review, February 2, 1965, p. 20-27.

¹⁹Moon, Mary A. "A Study of the Personal and Social Adjustment of a Group of American Children in a Dependent's School in Morocco," Unpublished Master's Thesis, Department of Education, Mankato State College, 1963, p. 10.

²⁰O'Neill, Ralph C. "Attitudes and Experiences of High School Students Living in Turkey," The Personnel and Guidance Journal, Vol. 45, No. 1, September, 1966, p. 43.

Do American teen-agers living over-seas with their parents and attending an American school experience cultural shock? It would appear that Americans attending an American institution would experience limited contact with the foreign culture and as a consequence any dissonance would be in relation to the frequency that the student engaged in social interactions with the nationals of the host country. Americans living in Beirut, Lebanon, form a considerable community that is considered "America transplanted over-seas." The socio-cultural adjustment loses some of its trauma by virtue of the easy access to the English-speaking American community.

DATA

The questionnaire that was given to the seniors of the American Community School and the former students who are now college freshmen in the United States will be evaluated in terms of their problems of adjustment to life in Lebanon.

The questionnaire that we will discuss will be in the following order:

1. "What do you do during your 'free time?' Do you participate in activities with other Americans or with the Lebanese?"
2. "Where would you have preferred to study after your present experiences of high school and living in the Middle East? Would you have preferred Lebanon, the United States or some other country?"
3. "If you had no obligations of loyalty to America, where would you like to live?"
4. "Americans have been said to be extremely nationalistic and self-confident. Do you agree or disagree with this statement? What do you think of Arabs in general?"
5. "What elements of the Arab life would you like introduced into the United States?"

6. The ranking by the students of problems of adjustment to Lebanon.
7. A question directed to the college freshmen, now studying in the United States was: "After being overseas for a number of years, what were the re-entry problems of adjustment to the United States?"

All of the above items will be discussed under separate headings. The comments of the seniors (boarders and non-boarders) and the college freshmen will be quoted. In some cases the writer has chosen to use percentages to show how the students may like, or in some cases, dislike a given question under discussion.

It is the author's intention to show the relationship between the above questions from the questionnaire and the student's social and cultural adjustment to Lebanon.

Findings

Leisure Time

Leisure time will be defined as time spent on non-scheduled activities of the school, usually for personal pleasure and relaxation.

Most of the students expressed dissatisfaction with their current social life and free-time activities. The boarding school girls spend their leisure time studying, shopping, listening to music, participating in drama (plays), sporting activities and

attending movies. Sporting activities were listed by forty per cent of the girls as leisure time activities; this is followed by thirty per cent who indicated reading for enjoyment; twenty-five per cent: attending movies and twenty-five per cent: studying.

Seventy-five per cent of the boarding school boys engage in sports activities during their free time. This was followed by twenty per cent for reading, and of other activities which included movies, shopping, drama, the school paper and working with audio equipment.

The boarding students are restricted to certain areas of Ras Beirut. In general, these are the boundaries: Hamra Street on the South, Sadat Street on the West, the Corniche to the North and the American University of Beirut to the East. However, with special permission they are allowed to leave these restricted areas. They are not allowed to sign out of the school alone but must be in the company of someone else, and must sign in at a scheduled time. Weekends offer less restriction and they are allowed a "date to the movies" with a teacher as chaperone.

Ninety-five per cent of the boarders participate in leisure time activities with other Americans, but on occasion they have participated in sporting activities with Lebanese students. They have played basketball, volleyball, engaged in track and wrestling matches with students from Lebanese schools. Most of these activities are played on the American Community

School campus.

The non-boarding students are living at home with their parents and are allowed more freedom around Beirut. Forty per cent of the non-boarding girls listed movies and driving in Lebanon as their most frequent activities. Others were sports, which would include bowling, swimming, tennis and skiing and reading. The non-boarders, both boys and girls, did not mention studying as a leisure time activity.

Eighty per cent of the non-boarding boys engage in sports during their free time, followed by movies. Many activities were listed but with such great variety that they reveal no set pattern of behavior.

Eighty-five per cent of the non-boarding girls engage in leisure time activities with other Americans, occasionally Europeans, but rarely with Lebanese.

Ninety per cent of the non-boarding boys listed fellow Americans as their companions on leisure time activities. Several listed Lebanese boys as frequent companions.

Because of school restrictions, boarding students are limited in their leisure time activities. Much of their time is spent with fellow Americans at the school. They have little contact with the Lebanese.

Non-boarders, with a variety of activities and fewer restrictions, spend more time with non-Americans. Their social

life appears to develop intensity because:

1. The families have servants and the mother has ample time to engage in her own activities.
2. There is a lack of familiar and congenial ways of using leisure time.
3. From the answers given in the questionnaire, it appears to be difficult for Americans to develop activities that cross cultural lines.
4. It is thought that American administrators deliberately promote many social activities to raise the morale of their employees by keeping their families busy.

When the question was asked, "What type of activity or subject matter would have made your stay at the American Community School more enjoyable," ninety per cent (both boys and girls) of the boarding department wanted "fewer restrictions." Eighty per cent of the girls wanted to see Lebanon, climb mountains, have picnics with small groups of students and go on archeological trips.

Forty per cent of the girls expressed a desire for more honor courses in the curriculum of the school; such as: sociology and anthropology. Twenty-five per cent expressed a wish for "a more homey atmosphere in the dorm," "less pressure on the boarders," and "a place to be alone and think."

The boys in the boarding department expressed a desire for more freedom. Fifty per cent would like to go on trips into the mountains and to the sea. Several of the quotes were: "Why

can't we enjoy some of the beauty of the sea and the mountains?" The boys gave a variety of additional responses that could be coupled with a general feeling of the pressure of being restricted. Several boys expressed it as, "A desire for closer faculty-student relationships."

Eighty-five per cent of the non-boarding girls expressed a desire for more variety in the curriculum such as the introduction of home economics courses and honor courses. Ninety per cent of the non-boarding boys expressed a desire for greater variety in the curriculum with Middle Eastern studies, anthropology and archeology. Fifteen per cent of the boys mentioned trips outside of Beirut "to see the country." Again, as the boarders suggested, a desire for "closer student-faculty relations."

Preference as to Place of Study - the United States or Middle East

Seventy-five per cent of the boarders would choose the American Community School to study because it is "good academically, good climate, small school and travel opportunities."

Twenty per cent of the boarders would choose the United States. However, most of the students have never gone to high school in the United States. They gave their reasons for this choice, "Don't like Arabs, better school facilities in the U.S.A., more freedom in the U.S.A., can have my own car, less restrictions."

Others said, "We move too much, where is home?" The other five per cent would choose Europe.

The question of the choice of school gave the boarding students a chance to express themselves. The writer was aware from a previous questionnaire that there was discontent among the boarders. They like the American Community School and appreciate the academic advantages it affords but fifty per cent, both boys and girls, listed as "not allowed to think for yourself" as the biggest short-coming of the school. One boarder said, "We are supposed to be superior students with better than average intelligence, yet we have to be conditioned to a bell, like Pavlov's dog. We are told when to study, when to eat, and when we can go to the bathroom. We have lost our individuality. We are simply controlled by bells." Others said, "There is no quiet place to just think." "Too much homework, always thinking of studies, no place to let off steam." "Why can't more teachers be doing things with kids?" "Administrators don't understand the students."

Ninety-five per cent of the non-boarders would choose the American Community School and gave as reasons, "Broader experiences; to see the world and its people; to travel, and cultural advantages." Of this same group, ninety-five per cent would choose the school for academic advantages. However, five per cent would choose the U.S.A. because it is "difficult

to make friends here; better athletics in the U.S.A.; it is hard to make good grades at this school." Several would choose Europe because it has a culture like the United States.

The non-boarding students also had complaints to make. Fifty per cent of the girls expressed "too much pressure" because of the emphasis on grades. Thirty per cent of the boys thought they should be encouraged to mix more with local groups of young people, not Arabs in particular, but other nationalities and other Americans unable to attend this school. Other grievances listed were: "Stifled social life; poor school spirit; the students are over-protected; petty rules, and teachers too young."

Although the students expressed dissatisfaction with restrictions, it appears that they recognize the value of studying at the American Community School for its academic excellence. This was perceived as more important than studying in the United States or Europe. A possible reason for this attitude would be that the students know that their academic preparation will better equip them for college acceptance and success.

When the college freshmen were asked the question, "Would you have preferred to study in Lebanon or the United States?" the writer expected to make a comparison of the senior students with the college freshmen as the latter group has now lived and studied for nearly one year in the United States and has had the

opportunity to experience the life of a teen-ager in America. It is reasonable to believe, however, that any such comparison would have to take into consideration the "new experience" which might effect the responses.

Sixty per cent of the college freshmen would choose the American Community School if they could have made their own choice. Thirty per cent would prefer to have gone to schools in the United States. Ten per cent of the freshmen made a condition, they would prefer the American Community School if they didn't have to be a boarding student.

Some of their comments were: "If a boarder, I would have rather studied in the United States." "I wouldn't have given up my high school experience in the Middle East for the world." "I used to wish that I could go to high school in the States so I could be a 'normal American teen-ager' if there is such a thing, but I'm really glad I spent the time in the Middle East." "I feel that I would not have wanted to change my experiences over-seas. I'm grateful to have been able to live in a culture that was so different than the one here in the United States." "I think that I have gained far more than I have lost." "I would have preferred the States because of the wider scope of life."

A comment from an unhappy graduate, now a college freshman, "Not at the American Community School! This school was responsible

with its absurdly strict code of petty rules and regulations for spoiling almost entirely a potentially most enjoyable two years in Lebanon."

It appears that the comments of the college freshmen agree favorably with the seniors: that in spite of the shortcomings and difficulties, they gained a valuable experience by studying over-seas and would welcome the opportunity again. It appears that one year of living in the United States has not radically changed their outlook on the value of studying at the American Community School.

A Question of Loyalty

The senior students and college freshmen were asked a hypothetical question, "If one had no obligation of loyalty to America, where would you like to live?" and the writer anticipated that the students' evaluation of their present and past experiences of living in Lebanon would indicate either adjustment to Lebanon or a lack of it. This would be based on the assumption that if they chose the Middle East and Lebanon, they may have adjusted to a degree to its culture and social life. A negative response would possibly show a lack of adjustment. It was purposely left as an "open-ended" question so that they could freely express themselves as choosing Lebanon, the Middle East, the United States or any other country. Based on the

comments of the students our purpose was accomplished to some degree.

Where Would You Like to Live?

Seventy-five per cent of the boarding students, both boys and girls, chose the United States. By making this selection they were aware of the disadvantages of living in the United States. These were listed as:

1. "Life moves at a fast pace in the United States in comparison to the slower life in Lebanon."
2. "The Americans are very materialistic, in that they must have everything new and the best."
3. "In America there is a lack of individuality because of the fast pace and most people try to compete with everyone else to be not thought of as 'different.' "
4. Living conditions are too expensive in comparison to living in Lebanon.

Twenty-five per cent of the boarding students chose the Middle East and Lebanon because of its advantages. These were identified by students as:

1. Cultural - "The Middle East is the cradle of civilization, therefore it has interesting ruins to see. The slower way of life allows more time to visit and enjoy people."
2. Travel Opportunities - "Lebanon is ideally situated geographically so that easily you can go to Europe, Africa and Asia."
3. Climate - "It is ideal the year-round for sporting activities."

4. Arab Family Life - "The devotion, loyalty and love for their children is to be emulated."

Sixty-five per cent of the non-boarding students preferred to live in the United States. However, they also had reservations because of the same disadvantages cited by the boarding students. Thirty per cent of the non-boarding students thought it would be advantageous to live in the Middle East because:

1. "Life is more relaxed, one doesn't always have to be in a hurry."
2. "One matures faster by living in the Middle East in that you get a greater prospective of the world and its people."

Two students chose Europe because they "don't like Arabs."

Fifty per cent of the freshmen college students would prefer the United States. Twenty-five per cent would choose the Middle East but with a reservation that they could go back to the United States often. Another twenty-five per cent would prefer to live in Europe.

Some of the comments of the college freshmen are as follows: "I would live in the United States for here there is a better opportunity for me to fulfill myself as an individual." "I would choose the United States because it offers a 'bustling' life compared to the more peaceful life of that over-seas. It is an 'electric atmosphere.'" One young man expressed his thoughts this way: "I would probably

live in Europe if I had a choice. As a matter of fact, I plan to try and get a job over-seas when I graduate from college. I'm planning to live in Turkey. I feel no sense of American citizenship. I speak fluent Turkish and German. Life in the United States would represent a boring existence." This boy has lived outside the United States for nine years.

It is interesting to note that only fifty per cent of the college freshmen would prefer to stay in the United States permanently as compared to the high school seniors of whom seventy-five per cent would choose the United States. The writer noted that comments from the college freshmen who have lived outside the United States for a number of years tend to indicate a choice of a foreign country in which to live, providing they did not have to live permanently away from the United States but could go back often.

The writer would again like to investigate these same college freshmen after they have completed their college experience. Would we find that they would then prefer the United States and that their present choice of living outside the United States could be traced to maladjustment of living for only one year in the United States? When they are accustomed to living the "American way of life" will they prefer it over the Middle Eastern?

One of the girls summed up the comments quite frankly:

"Many students from over-seas high schools decide they would like to live over-seas for the rest of their lives. I believe this choice is based on: a fear of trying to make it anew in a different environment, and the love of the comfortable, smug feeling of knowing you're a 'worldly traveler' and privileged American among lowly foreigners."

It would appear that even though as Americans living over-seas they belong to a somewhat elite group and have advantages, both the boarding and non-boarding students overwhelmingly would prefer living in the United States even though they have experienced living there only to a limited degree.

Several of the students thought that they would choose the Middle East but with the reservation that they could return to the United States often.

National Stereotypes

To probe further into the students' attitudes toward the United States, Americans were described as "extremely nationalistic and self-confident." "Would you agree or disagree with this?" In this context we asked, "What do you think of Arabs in general?" It was hoped that by placing these two questions in sequence it would provoke an evaluation of their personal attitudes with regard to the two national identities involved.

Ninety-five per cent of the students agreed with the

statement that Americans are nationalistic and self-confident. In their statements about the Arabs in general, several of the girls said, "the Lebanese men are dirty because they pinch us when we walk on the street." Others said, "They are dishonest." However, along with these unfavorable comments they did appreciate the Lebanese "loyalty to their religion" and the "hospitality of the shop keepers."

The girls, both boarders and non-boarders, were quite negative in their comments about the Arab men. The boys, in contrast, were much more complimentary. It is possible that the uncomplimentary attitude of the girls is derived from the limited contacts with Lebanese so any unfortunate experience would tend to make them generalize and assume "all are bad."

"What elements of the Arab way of life would you like or dislike to see introduced into the United States?" Of this question, the boarding and non-boarding girls expressed themselves very frankly and in some instances were unkind in their generalizations. Seventy-five per cent said, "nothing Arab." They listed the negative elements which they would not like to see introduced into the United States as:

1. "Animal sex life." (By this they meant behavior of men with women on the streets.) This refers back to the unfortunate experiences the girls had while walking along the streets.
2. Toilet habits.

3. Treatment of women.

4. Morals.

These statements by the girls are not necessarily in order of intensity but simply convey their comments. However, they also said that they would like to see hospitality, family, loyalty, domestic servants, "the ability to put things off until tomorrow," and "the easy going life," introduced into the United States.

The male students were more complimentary. They did express negative feelings. Thirty-five per cent said, "nothing Arab." In contrast, fifty per cent liked the hospitality and food. One young man expressed a desire to begin a "Shwarmah" chain in the United States.

The non-boarding boys tended to be even more complimentary. Could it be because of their greater freedom to movement in meeting the Lebanese?

Problems of Adjustment to Lebanon

The questionnaire asked the students to rank the problems of adjustment of American students living in Lebanon. A pilot study was conducted among senior students to ascertain areas where it was thought there would be problems in social manners, language, sex, school work, living quarters, home, food, sickness and other. These were listed in the following order of significance:

1. Social manners
2. Language
3. Sex
4. Home
5. Living quarters
6. School work
7. Food
8. Sickness

1. Social Customs. Forty per cent of the seniors were privately interviewed, both boarders and non-boarders, to ascertain their understanding of the question of social manners and it was found to include a wide variety of subjects and incidents.

Generally, the social manners consisted of these items:

- a. It was difficult for a student to accept adults urinating on the street with little thought of privacy.
- b. No consideration of courtesy was shown while walking on the sidewalk or buying a ticket to the theatre. There was deliberate pushing and no order of alignment.
- c. To see two men walking and "holding hands" or "embracing one another" is interpreted as homosexuality to an American.

- d. While walking with a companion it was disturbing to be "talked about" or "whistled at."
- e. The thought of the lowly state of women and the predominate position of the men was difficult to understand and accept.
- f. When speaking to a Lebanese, careful consideration had to be taken to guard against misinterpretation.

Ninety per cent of all the senior students selected these social customs as their biggest problem of adjustment to Lebanon. Even though they have been in Lebanon more than one year, they could not accept the social incidents they witnessed.

Another side of the social custom problem was the belief among the students that they could not live as "natural teen-age Americans." They constantly had to comply with the mores of the country lest they would be considered poor representatives of America.

2. Language. It is not surprising that the students would rank language as second. Without language ability there is difficulty in communicating with the Lebanese. One student described the lack of communication as making him feel as if he "was cut off" from Lebanon. Another student said it was difficult to shop as not all of the stores have English speaking clerks.

Several students said they knew nice people but because of the language barrier they could not know them better.

3. Sex. The meaning of sex interpreted by the students was this:

a. Lack of freedom for expression of affection.

"The culture prohibits overt expression; you can't behave like you would or want to." "Always frustrated; never at ease; trying to present the American image." "We have to be actors."

b. "We have to live up to a code of ethics that is foreign to us; if we don't, we are looked 'down on.' "

The non-boarding students have more opportunity for freedom of sexual expression because they do not have the restrictions of the boarding department. They can visit other American homes. In some cases they have access to a car and can be alone with their companions without adult interference.

4. Home. Home was ranked fourth by the senior students as an adjustment problem. A number of girl boarders ranked home as second for these reasons:

"Where is home?" "Nine months of the year I am in school." "I hardly ever see my parents."

Living away from home without parental love and affection seems to be a problem of adjustment for senior girls. Identification

with the security of a home atmosphere appears to be an adjustment problem to teen-age boarders.

5. Living Quarters. Both boarders and non-boarders ranked living quarters as fifth.. The boarding students reacted by mentioning their lack of privacy, the strict rules, unreasonable teachers, and the lack of understanding by the faculty. Non-boarders expressed dislike for apartment living. They wanted a private home with trees and grass.

6. School Work. This was ranked third by non-boarders, fifth by girl boarders and fourth by male boarders. "Always something to do." "Never through." "Too much pressure for grades." These are legitimate comments, but it is interesting to note that ninety-five per cent appreciate the "high academic standard" of the American Community School. Because of this they may be more or less reconciled to the fact that they must study.

7. Food. Little comment was made about food. However, the boarding students notoriously were not pleased with the food. Several made comments of how well they liked various Arab foods.

8. Sickness. Sickness was ranked last. A person who has been over-seas for some time gets used to the various "spells" of up-set stomach and accepts them as a matter of course.

It is quite evident that American students living in Lebanon do experience problems of adjustment and that they do experience tension when they leave the school and go out into

the streets of Beirut. Another problem is the lack of communication in the Arabic language.

The American teen-ager is notorious for his overt expression of affection. However, in Lebanon, because of cultural taboos he is inhibited. Mention could be made of this expression from several students, "By living over-seas we mature more quickly than youth in America." It could be possible that this maturity is due to the sense of responsibility they take in conducting themselves as gentlemen and women in the eyes of the Lebanese.

Problems of Adjustment to Lebanon as seen by College Freshmen

The college freshmen were sent a questionnaire asking them to rank problems of adjustment of students going to school in Lebanon. They rated these problems of adjustment in the following order:

1. Social Customs
2. Sex
3. School Work
4. Living Quarters
5. Food
6. Home
7. Language
8. Sickness

The seniors and the college freshmen rated social customs as first or the greatest problem of adjustment for American students living in Lebanon. The seniors ranked language as

second and the college freshmen ranked sex as second. It is significant that in both cases the problem of sex was very close to the top of the list. The seniors ranked language as second but the college freshmen ranked language as seventh. An explanation of this could be that almost all of the freshmen were former boarding students while attending the American Community School. In their limited contact outside of the school, evidently language was not a problem. The present senior class is well represented by non-boarders hence more contact with the Lebanese. The college freshmen ranked school work as third while the present senior class ranked school work as sixth. The writer is surprised that the college freshmen ranked school work as third as academically they were a superior class. The mean I. Q. of that class was one-hundred and twenty-five (125). Added to this, twelve of the class were finalists and semi-finalists in the National Merit Examination, and it was felt this was an exemplification in favor of the American Community School.

While seniors at the American Community School, the college freshmen had several unfortunate experiences. During the school year there was constant friction between several students and members of the administration; consequently, some of the members of the graduating class were expelled before their graduating exercises. This unfortunate experience, the writer believes, is a possible reason for these college freshmen

to rank school work and living conditions along with social customs and sex. Their senior year seems to have been a difficult one. The senior class of this year, 1966-1967, is nearly double in size and yet they have had limited disciplinary problems in comparison.

Ninety per cent of the college freshmen ranked social customs first with the following comments:

"American students have few problems if they stay in their own, unrealistic 'Little America' over-seas which we create. The unrealism and isolation are the biggest problems. Since total isolation is impossible (A.C.S. students have to go to movies and uptown, etc.) I feel the biggest problem is accepting the fact (realizing at first,) that each of us has responsibility as Americans to be PERFECT so we don't rankle any international relations. This entails accepting Lebanese, Jordanian and other Arab social customs once they are learned. Kids are flexible but to change cultural characteristics is the most difficult, added to all this is the resentment of not being able to act like other American kids do in public in America." "It is hard for a kid who has been raised to be independent and rebellious to accept the culture switch that is tough to accept. It makes you grow up fast, you realize quickly, if you have any kind of

perceptive, out-ward-oriented person that there is no time to fool around being a dumb teen-ager. Responsibilities to the needs of others call you and the call is much clearer and louder than here."

"Adjusting to the way Arabs react to you as an American and adjusting to their way of life, their way of doing business. There are things which one does every day in America which cause very wrong reactions among Arabs. Such things as going bare-foot, girls wearing pants, girls out alone at night, even if it is just to walk the dog. I think the simplest way to express this is to say that Americans have to get it through their heads that they aren't in America."

These comments made by the college freshmen certainly are articulate and appear to focus on the problem of adjusting to Lebanon. They are aware to a great measure that tension does exist. They seem to have found this through comparison of being a teen-ager in Lebanon and now a teen-ager in America.

The senior students are cognizant of this problem of adjustment also. In their indications that tension exists, however, they fail to realize that the implications of their adjusting to the Lebanese culture could be their lack of cultural empathy, insight and maturity to cope with the

problems of adjustment. This could possibly explain some of their rebellion against the many "restrictions" that appear to be imposed on them.

It is apparent to the writer that the college freshmen understand the inner logic and coherence of other ways of life, plus the restraint not to judge them as bad because they are different from one's own ways.

Problems of social adjustment to Lebanon by an American student is a real problem and any measure of adjustment that he may have must be based on a broad understanding of the Lebanese and their culture (cultural empathy) and an assessment of the benefits and responsibilities that are his by living overseas as a teen-age American.

One student wrote about sex, "Even without the aggravation and complications of being over-seas, this is a No. 1 American teen-age problem." Another commented, "All the other physical things like getting used to food, living quarters, sickness, is all easily adapted to."

The Re-entry to the United States for College

The seniors were asked, "How do you feel about going back to the United States after being over-seas so many years?" Seventy-five per cent of all the students expressed anxiety in varying degrees. Some of the comments were:

1. "Not emotionally ready.
2. Don't know anyone in my school.
3. Might fail in college.
4. American (U.S.) teen-agers are 'slobs'.
5. Don't know how to act; teen-agers allowed more freedom.
6. Everybody has a car; don't even have a driver's license.
7. The only contact with the States has been through
Time and Life magazines. Afraid of the crime.
8. The longer you live over-seas, the more tension.
How people would look at you.
9. Just a number; loss of identity."

All of these comments deserve the utmost concern. However, it appears that little is being done to alleviate and condition the students for their re-entry.

An inquiry was made as to probable difficulties of adjusting to student life that the college freshmen had in the United States after being over-seas for a number of years. They made the following comments:

"If I had come back to the United States during high school I would have had a terrible time, I'm sure. As it is, however, in college an interested and mature group of students met me and my interests half way and I had little trouble adapting." "After three and one-half years over-seas, I found little or no difficulty whatever in adjusting to student life in the United States." "It took me almost the entire first semester to adjust not only to the student life here

but also to being on my own for the first time. My study habits were well established by the time I left the American Community School. Social life was perhaps the most difficult to adjust to." "I really did not have too much difficulty in adjusting. I caught the hang of their way of life, e.g. football games, rah, rah, quite quickly. But their value and interests are different from mine. Kids are not interested in intellectual discussions. They have no real interest in learning, it seems, but are interested in just getting by." "It wasn't too hard to adjust, of course, there were a lot of new social customs to learn and a lot more freedom."

The following is a quotation from a young man who has lived twelve years outside of the United States of which three and one-half years were spent at the American Community School:

"Evidently my adjustment wasn't good enough because when your letter did arrive, I was in the infirmary convinced that I was on the edge of a nervous breakdown. Admittedly, that's not so uncommon here at M.I.T. but it means that I have to answer 'Yes' that I did have difficulty in adjusting to student life here. The problem for me was primarily a social one"

Fifty per cent of the college freshmen expressed little or no difficulty in adjusting to life in the United States. It

was noted by the writer that students who expressed little or no adjustment problems had been over-seas only a short time or had part of their high school in the United States before coming to Lebanon. The degree of adjustment to the American way of life appears to be in direct ratio to the length of time over-seas.

The question arises, "If the degree of difficulty of adjustment of the college freshmen is in direct ratio to the length of time over-seas, then the college freshmen may have adopted a cultural milieu of their own and the American culture or cultures are not theirs. The students appear to make the adjustment academically but the comments: "Their values and interests are different from mine," and "The social life of the students is so different from what I know," would lead the writer to suppose that over-seas living in Lebanon and the Middle East has generated different interests and values that are not compatible to the teen-age American way of life. This probably is what is meant by a statement of a college freshman that was previously quoted: "Living over-seas makes you grow up fast, you realize quickly, if you have any kind of perceptive, out-wardly-oriented person that there is no time to fool around being a dumb teen-ager. Responsibilities to the needs of others call you and the call is much clearer and louder than here."

The college students were asked to make their suggestions on how the American Community School could better prepare them

for the "re-entry" into the United States. Ninety per cent of those who answered were boarding students when they attended the American Community School. Most of their comments were directed to the situations and restrictions of the boarding department. Several of their comments were:

"The American Community School could have prepared me much better. The liberty of seniors in the boarding department should be greatly increased. This school plans every minute of the student's day for him. For college-bound students this is a tragic mistake. A student must be allowed to mature and plan his time properly by himself."

"American Community School is too socially restricted and as such has prepared most of us to live in fear of authority in our every action. The school should prepare its students for life in an American college by giving in to the students' emotional needs. This would not only help in adjustment to the States but it will make your students happier while at the American Community School. It would relieve the tension in the boarding department." "The American Community School did very little preparing for United States' life. Our life was so sheltered compared to that

of a teen-ager in the United States."

The non-boarding students have the following comments:

"I don't think there was much the school could have done to better prepare me for coming back to the United States. My adjustment was a social adjustment. What the school and Beirut did for me have at least been conversation pieces."

In the questionnaires nothing was ever said about the school's boarding department. But when any problem was discussed by the college freshmen or high school seniors they often made reference to the boarding department, its strengths or weakness in their overall adjustment to life both in Beirut and college life in the United States.

It appears that many of the comments of the students indicate that the American students in Lebanon are under pressure but not necessarily because of school restrictions. However, these could be re-evaluated in view of the present findings of the students' experiences of trying to conform to a culture that they really don't understand.

It would be possible that the "ill feeling" they have toward the school and the boarding department is based on a misunderstanding of the reasons for the "restrictions." Because of not understanding the Lebanese ways and the problem of adjusting to them, the students appear to take the rules

and restrictions of the school as a personal attack on their desire for independence and freedom to act like teen-age Americans.

The "ways" of the Lebanese cannot be overtly opposed because of the "American Image." The students must conform even against their will. The tension that builds up because of the problem of adjustment manifests itself through the negative attitude the students have toward the boarding department.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The past several years has seen a flow of American students to the Middle East. The sojourn of many of these teen-agers is usually marred by various problems of adjustment which arise from the discrepancies between their own culture and that of the Middle East.

The present research has been an attempt to discover and analyze the association between certain variables and adjustment to the Lebanese culture in order to determine what factors are associated with problems of adjustment and a certain degree of acculturation on the part of the senior high school students studying in the American Community School of Beirut, Lebanon.

The questionnaire results reported here indicate that American students living in Lebanon do have difficulty adjusting to the Lebanese culture. The senior students stated that their biggest problem of adjustment to Lebanon was the social customs of the Lebanese. These findings were also confirmed by former students of A.C.S. who are now college freshmen studying in the United States.

The senior students tend to spend most of their leisure time activities with other Americans; however, some of their leisure activities do bring them into contact with Lebanese when

they go shopping, sightseeing or to an occasional movie.

The general attitude of the boarding students toward the Lebanese was that they did not like them. The reason for their decision was based on unfortunate incidents while away from the school.

The non-boarding students tended to be more favorable and not as prejudiced toward the Lebanese.

It is the writer's opinion that much of the cultural adjustment problems are based on a lack of cultural empathy. The students appear to judge the Lebanese as "bad" because their ways of life are different from American ways. Because of the tension of not understanding and accepting the Lebanese way of life, the students isolate themselves and live in an "American Ghetto."

The social customs of Lebanon inhibit the students in enacting the role of a care-free American teen-ager and the complexity of trying to conform to a way of life that they neither understand or appreciate just to maintain the "American image." Meanwhile they have all the problems of growing up as adolescents in society with its problems of adjusting to the opposite sex, choosing a career, independence, etc. Fifty per cent of the college freshmen of those who replied to the questionnaire, experienced difficulty in their "re-entry" into the United States after a sojourn of a period of several years

in the Middle East. It is the writer's opinion that the difficulty in adjustment to life in the United States could in part be a latent response caused by a lack of adjustment while attending school in Lebanon.

The college freshmen suggest that the American Community School boarding department relax some of its stringent rules to allow the senior students more freedom of expression and independence so that their transition to college life in the United States would be made easier.

The writer suggests that the American Community School needs to provide a planned orientation program for students just arriving and a continuous program of help for at least several months. This could contribute to a better understanding between the boarding students, in particular, and the administration of the school.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The present research is only a beginning of what is needed to discover much more about life of American students receiving part of their education over-seas. Any further research should include students of all ages, interviews with parents and a study of students returning to the United States, after their sojourn abroad.

A study designated to test the conclusions suggested in the present report could be made. A further suggestion is that a new study could be made to include more students in the early stages of their sojourn in Lebanon and at intervals so that a comparative statement can be formulated.

It appears that educators in over-seas schools have a responsibility that so far has not been recognized. The writer's present research is only a beginning of what is needed to discover much more about the life of American students receiving part of their education over-seas. Increased knowledge of the factors involved in the adjustment of American students in the cross-cultural contest of educational experience can benefit not only school administrators, the teaching and counseling staff, parents, and the students themselves.

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APPENDIX

QUESTIONNAIRE

Sex _____ Years at A. C. S. _____
Age _____ Boarder _____ Non-Boarder _____ Years over-seas _____

1. After your present experiences of high school and living in the Middle East, where would you have preferred to study if you could have made your own decision? Why?

2. If you have no obligations of loyalty to America, and if you have the freedom of choice, where would you like to live? In the Middle East or in the United States? If you prefer the United States, what disadvantages do you see? If you prefer the Middle East, what advantages do you see in life here?

3. How do you use your leisure time here? What kinds of activities do you participate in? Of what nationality are those who participate in these activities in which you take part?

4. What benefits do you personally get in studying at A. C. S.? What shortcomings do you find at A. C. S.? What do you think of the extra curricular activities at A. C. S.?

5. Psychologists have described Americans as "happy-go-lucky", materialistic, extremely nationalistic and self-confident. Do you agree or disagree? Why? What do you think of Arabs in general?

6. Would you list in order problems of adjustment in your opinion that are most common to the American students living in the Middle East.

Social manners Language School Work Food

Sex Living quarters Home Sickness Other

(Please rate them in order)

7. What elements of the Arab way of life would you like or dislike to see introduced into the United States?
8. What type of activity or subject matter would have made your stay at A. C. S. more enjoyable?